

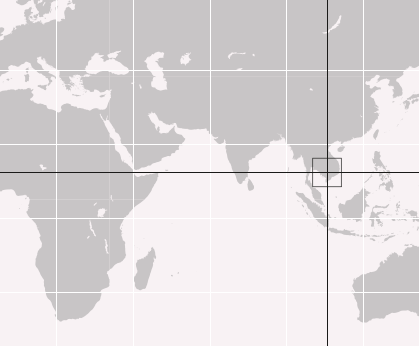
FEBRUARY 2018

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
APRIL 2-29, 2018



COVER IMAGE:  
**CAMBODIA**

A Witness couple share the Bible's message of good news with a mother who picked up her son from school. She wears a traditional head scarf

PUBLISHERS  
**1,021**

BIBLE STUDIES  
**2,524**

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE (2016)  
**2,790**

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# Imitate the Faith and Obedience of Noah, Daniel, and Job

*“Noah, Daniel, and Job . . . would be able to save only themselves because of their righteousness.”—EZEK. 14:14.*

ARE you dealing with trials, such as ill health, financial problems, or persecution? Do you at times find it hard to maintain your joy in Jehovah’s service? If so, take courage from the examples of Noah, Daniel, and Job. They were imperfect, and they faced many of the challenges we face, including some that were life threatening. Yet, they held on to their integrity, becoming models of faith and obedience in the eyes of God.—**Read Ezekiel 14:12-14.**

<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel wrote the words of our theme text in Babylonia in 612 B.C.E.\* (Ezek. 1:1; 8:1) Apostate Jerusalem was nearing its foretold destruction, which occurred in 607 B.C.E. Only

\* Ezekiel was taken into exile in 617 B.C.E. Ezekiel 8:1-19:14 is dated “in the sixth year” of that exile, or 612 B.C.E.

1, 2. (a) Why can we take courage from the examples of Noah, Daniel, and Job? (b) Under what circumstances did Ezekiel write the words recorded at Ezekiel 14:14?

SONGS: 89, 119

IN WHAT WAYS WILL YOU TRY TO IMITATE THE FAITH OF . . .

Noah?

Daniel?

Job?

relatively few individuals reflected the qualities of Noah, Daniel, and Job and were thus marked for survival. (Ezek. 9: 1-5) Among those few were Jeremiah, Baruch, Ebed-melech, and the Rechabites.

<sup>3</sup> Likewise today, only those whom Jehovah considers blameless—people like Noah, Daniel, and Job—will be marked for survival when the present system of things comes to an end. (Rev. 7:9, 14) So let us consider why Jehovah used those men as examples of righteousness. As we discuss each one, we will focus on (1) what challenges the man faced and (2) how we can imitate his faith and obedience.

#### NOAH—FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT FOR NINE CENTURIES

<sup>4</sup> *Challenges that Noah faced.* By the time of Noah's great-grandfather Enoch, people had become very ungodly. They were even saying "shocking things" against Jehovah. (Jude 14, 15) Violence was increasing. In fact, in Noah's day, "the earth was filled with violence." Wicked angels materialized as humans, took wives, and produced brutal, hybrid offspring. (Gen. 6:2-4, 11, 12) But Noah stood out as different. "Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah. . . . He proved himself faultless among his contemporaries. Noah walked with the true God." —Gen. 6:8, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Consider what those words say about that righteous man. For one thing, Noah did not walk with God in that wicked pre-Flood world for a mere 70 or 80 years—the life span of many today. He lived in

that world for almost 600 years! (Gen. 7: 11) And unlike us today, he did not have a congregation of fellow worshippers—evidently not even his siblings—to turn to for spiritual support.\*

<sup>6</sup> Noah was not content just to lead a good life. He also became a bold "preacher of righteousness," publicly confessing his faith in Jehovah. (2 Pet. 2:5) "Through this faith he condemned the world," wrote the apostle Paul. (Heb. 11:7) It stands to reason, therefore, that Noah faced ridicule and opposition, perhaps even threats of violence. But he was not "trembling at men." (Prov. 29:25) Rather, he had the courage that Jehovah gives to his faithful servants.

<sup>7</sup> After Noah had walked with God for more than five centuries, Jehovah told him to build an ark for the saving of human and animal life. (Gen. 5:32; 6: 14) How difficult that project must have seemed—and not just from the construction point of view! Noah surely knew that it would bring on even more ridicule and opposition. Still, he obediently went ahead in faith. "He did just so."—Gen. 6:22.

<sup>8</sup> Another challenge for Noah was that of providing materially for his wife and children. Before the Flood, people had to work extra hard to grow food, and Noah was surely no exception. (Gen. 5: 28, 29) Even so, he centered his life, not

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\* Noah's God-fearing father, Lamech, died about five years before the Flood. If Noah's mother and siblings were alive when the Flood began, they did not survive it.

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6. In what ways did Noah show great courage?
  7. When building the ark, what challenges did Noah face?
  8. In what ways did Noah trust in Jehovah as his Provider?

3. What will we consider in this article?

4, 5. What challenges did Noah face, and why was his endurance remarkable?

on material concerns, but on God. Even when building the ark, which may have taken as long as 40 or 50 years, Noah kept his spiritual focus. And he continued to do so for another 350 years after the Flood. (Gen. 9:28) What a fine example of faith and obedience!

<sup>9</sup> *How we can imitate Noah's faith and obedience.* We do so by upholding God's righteousness, by being no part of Satan's world, and by keeping Kingdom interests in first place. (Matt. 6:33; John 15:19) To be sure, our way of life does not win us the world's approval. Indeed, even now, our firm stand for God's laws, such as those concerning marriage and sexual morality, has led to negative publicity in some lands. **(Read Malachi 3: 17, 18.)** Like Noah, however, we fear Jehovah, not men. We know that he alone gives everlasting life.—Luke 12:4, 5.

<sup>10</sup> But what about you personally? Will you keep 'walking with God,' even when others mock or criticize you or when economic pressures test your faith in your Provider? If you imitate the faith and obedience of Noah, you can be confident that Jehovah will care for you.—Phil. 4:6, 7.

#### DANIEL—FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT IN A WICKED CITY

<sup>11</sup> *Challenges that Daniel faced.* Daniel lived as a captive in Babylon, a city filled with idolatry and spiritism. Moreover, the Babylonians looked down on the Jews, mocking both them and their God, Jehovah. (Ps. 137:1, 3) How this

9, 10. (a) How can we imitate Noah's faith and obedience? (b) How does God view all who uphold his standards?

11. What big challenges did Daniel and his three companions face in Babylon? (See opening picture.)

must have hurt faithful Jews like Daniel! Also, he and his three companions—Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—were in the spotlight, as it were, because they were to be trained in the king's service. Even their diet was set for them. In fact, food and drink soon became an issue because Daniel did not want to "defile himself with the king's delicacies."—Dan. 1: 5-8, 14-17.

<sup>12</sup> A more subtle challenge for Daniel could have involved his exceptional abilities, which led to his receiving special privileges. (Dan. 1:19, 20) But instead of becoming arrogant and opinionated, he remained humble and modest, always giving due credit to Jehovah. (Dan. 2: 30) In fact, it was while Daniel was still a young man that Jehovah counted him worthy of being mentioned as an example of righteousness, along with Noah and Job. Was God's confidence in Daniel misplaced? Not at all! Daniel stayed faithful and obedient to the very end of his life. Indeed, he was likely in his late 90's when God's angel warmly said to him: "O Daniel, you very precious man."—Dan. 10:11.

<sup>13</sup> As a result of divine favor, Daniel was made a high official under both Babylonian and Medo-Persian rule. (Dan. 1: 21; 6:1, 2) Perhaps Jehovah maneuvered matters this way so that Daniel could be a blessing to his own people, as were Joseph in Egypt and Esther and Mordecai in Persia.\* (Dan. 2:48) Imagine how

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\* The same may have been true of Daniel's three companions, who were also given positions of authority.—Dan. 2:49.

12. (a) What fine qualities did Daniel display? (b) How did Jehovah view Daniel?

13. How may Daniel have been a blessing to his fellow Jews?



Jehovah views as precious those who maintain their integrity  
(See paragraphs 14, 15)

comforting it must have been for the Jewish captives, including Ezekiel, to see Jehovah's hand in matters in this way!

<sup>14</sup> *How we can imitate Daniel's faith and obedience.* Today, we live as foreigners, as it were, in a world that has been morally and spiritually corrupted by Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, "a dwelling place of demons." (Rev. 18:2) Hence, we too stand out as different, even becoming targets for ridicule. (Mark 13:13) Like Daniel, therefore, let us draw close to Jehovah, our God. When we humbly and obediently trust in him, we too will be precious in his eyes.—Hag. 2:7.

<sup>15</sup> Parents can learn from the example of Daniel's parents. How so? Despite the wickedness that prevailed in Judah during Daniel's early childhood, the boy grew to love God. This, of course, was no accident. It reflected good parental training. (Prov. 22:6) Even Daniel's name, which means "My Judge Is God," points to God-fearing parents. (Dan. 1:6, ftn.) So parents, do not give

14, 15. (a) In what ways are our circumstances similar to those of Daniel? (b) What can parents today learn from Daniel's parents?

up on your children, but teach them patiently. (Eph. 6:4) Also, pray with them and for them. When you strive to impress Bible truth on their hearts, you invite Jehovah's rich blessing.—Ps. 37:5.

#### JOB—FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT WHETHER RICH OR POOR

<sup>16</sup> *Challenges that Job faced.* The life of Job is a study in contrasts. Before his trial, he was "the greatest of all the people of the East." (Job 1:3) He was wealthy, well-known, and highly respected. (Job 29:7-16) Yet, despite all of this, Job did not develop a lofty view of himself or feel that he did not need God. In fact, Jehovah called him "my servant," adding: "He is an upright man of integrity, fearing God and shunning what is bad."—Job 1:8.

<sup>17</sup> In a very short space of time, Job's life changed dramatically. He was driven to the depths of poverty and despair. The cause, we know, was the slanderer Satan, who lyingly accused Job of worshipping God out of self-interest. **(Read Job 1:9, 10.)** Jehovah did not sweep aside that

16, 17. What contrasting challenges did Job experience?



wicked accusation. Instead, he gave Job the opportunity to prove his integrity, to show that his worship stemmed from a pure, unselfish heart.

<sup>18</sup> Satan launched a series of vicious attacks against Job, leading Job to assume that God was to blame. (Job 1:13-21) Then three false comforters arrived and attacked Job with cruel words, basically saying that God was giving him what he deserved! (Job 2:11; 22:1, 5-10) Yet, Job maintained his integrity. Yes, he spoke rashly at times, but Jehovah understood the pain Job felt. (Job 6:1-3) God saw a deeply depressed man who never turned his back on Him, even though Satan, in effect, threw Job to the ground and then verbally kicked him with lying insults. When the trial was over, Jehovah gave Job double what he had before the trial began, as well as an added 140 years of life. (Jas. 5:11) During that time, he continued to give Jehovah exclusive devotion. How can we be sure? Job had been dead for many centuries when Ezekiel recorded the words of our theme text.

<sup>19</sup> *How we can imitate Job's faith and obedience.* No matter what our circumstances may be, let us always keep Jehovah at the center of our lives, trusting him fully and obeying him with a complete heart. Indeed, we have even more reason to do so than Job had! Consider: We know a lot about Satan and his tactics. (2 Cor. 2:11) Thanks in part to the book of Job, we know why God permits suffering. From Daniel's prophecy, we understand that God's Kingdom is a world gov-

ernment in the hands of Christ Jesus. (Dan. 7:13, 14) And we know that this Kingdom will soon bring a permanent end to all suffering.

<sup>20</sup> Job's experience also highlights our need to show compassion to fellow Christians who may be enduring hardships. Like Job, some may even speak rashly at times. (Eccl. 7:7) But instead of judging them, let us show insight and compassion. In this way, we imitate our loving and merciful Father, Jehovah. —Ps. 103:8.

### JEHOVAH "WILL MAKE YOU STRONG"

<sup>21</sup> Although Noah, Daniel, and Job lived at different times and under very different circumstances, they endured the challenges they faced. Their life stories call to mind the words of the apostle Peter, who wrote: "After you have suffered a little while, the God of all undeserved kindness . . . will himself finish your training. He will make you firm, he will make you strong, he will firmly ground you." —1 Pet. 5:10.

<sup>22</sup> Through Peter's inspired words, Jehovah assures us that he will make his servants firm and strong. These words also apply to God's people today. All of us desire to be made strong by Jehovah and to remain firm in our worship. Therefore, we want to imitate the faith and obedience of Noah, Daniel, and Job! As we shall see in the next article, the key to their integrity was that they truly knew Jehovah. In fact, they 'understood everything' he required of them. (Prov. 28:5) The same can be true of us.

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18. (a) What impresses you about Job's integrity? (b) What do Jehovah's dealings with Job reveal about Him?

19, 20. (a) How can we imitate Job's faith and obedience? (b) In our dealings with others, how can we reflect God's compassion?

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21. How do the words at 1 Peter 5:10 reflect what occurred in the lives of Noah, Daniel, and Job?

22. What will we consider in the next article?



## Do You Know Jehovah as Did Noah, Daniel, and Job?

*“Evil men cannot understand justice, but those who seek Jehovah can understand everything.”—PROV. 28:5.*

SONGS: 126, 150

HOW WERE FAITH  
AND GODLY WISDOM  
SHOWN BY . . .

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Noah?

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Daniel?

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Job?

AS THE last days near their end, the wicked continue to “sprout like weeds.” (Ps. 92:7) It comes as no surprise, therefore, that moral standards are being abandoned. In this environment, how can we “be young children as to badness” yet “full-grown in [our] understanding”?—1 Cor. 14:20.

<sup>2</sup> The answer is found in our theme text, which says in part: “Those who seek Jehovah can understand everything”—that is, everything necessary to please him. (Prov. 28:5) A similar thought is expressed at Proverbs 2:7, 9, which says that Jehovah “treasures up practical wisdom for the upright.” As a result, the upright are able to “understand what is righteous and just and fair, the entire course of what is good.”

<sup>3</sup> Noah, Daniel, and Job acquired that wisdom. (Ezek. 14:14) The same is true of God’s people today. What about you personally? Do you “understand everything” necessary to please Jehovah? The key is to have accurate knowledge of

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1-3. (a) What will help us to remain faithful to God during these last days? (b) What will we consider in this article?



him. With that in mind, let us consider (1) how Noah, Daniel, and Job came to know God, (2) how that knowledge benefited them, and (3) how we can develop a faith like theirs.

### NOAH WALKED WITH GOD IN A WICKED WORLD

<sup>4</sup> *How Noah came to know Jehovah.* Since early in human history, men and women of faith have learned about God in three primary ways: by observing the visible creation, from other God-fearing humans, and by experiencing the blessings of living in harmony with God's righteous standards and principles. (Isa. 48:18) By observing the physical creation, Noah would have seen abundant evidence not only of God's existence but also of his many invisible qualities, such as "his eternal power and Godship." (Rom. 1:20) As a result, Noah did more than believe in God; he developed strong faith in him.

<sup>5</sup> Faith "follows the thing heard." (Rom. 10:17) How did Noah hear about Jehovah? He no doubt learned much from his relatives. These included his father, Lamech, who was a man of faith and whose life overlapped Adam's. (See opening picture.) They also included his grandfather Methuselah and his great-great-grandfather Jared, whose life overlapped Noah's by 366 years.\* (Luke 3:36, 37) Perhaps from these men and possibly

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\* Noah's great-grandfather Enoch also "kept walking with the true God." However, "God took him" some 69 years before Noah was born.—Gen. 5:23, 24.

4. How did Noah come to know Jehovah, and how did accurate knowledge help him?

5. How did Noah become familiar with God's purpose for mankind?

from their wives, Noah learned about mankind's start, God's purpose that a righteous human family fill the earth, and the rebellion in Eden—the results of which Noah could see for himself. (Gen. 1:28; 3:16-19, 24) In any event, what Noah learned touched his heart, moving him to serve God.—Gen. 6:9.

<sup>6</sup> Faith is reinforced by hope. Imagine, then, how Noah must have felt when he learned that his name, which probably means "Rest; Consolation," embodied hope! (Gen. 5:29, ftn.) Under inspiration, Lamech said: "This one [Noah] will bring us comfort from . . . the painful toil of our hands because of the ground that Jehovah has cursed." Noah had hope in God. Like Abel and Enoch before him, he believed in the "offspring" who would bruise the serpent's head.—Gen. 3:15.

<sup>7</sup> While Noah may not have grasped the details of the prophecy recorded at Genesis 3:15, he no doubt saw in it the hope of deliverance. Moreover, that Edenic promise harmonized with the message proclaimed by Enoch, who also foretold God's judgment of the wicked. (Jude 14, 15) Enoch's message, which will have its final fulfillment at Armageddon, surely reinforced Noah's faith and hope!

<sup>8</sup> *How accurate knowledge of God benefited Noah.* Accurate knowledge gave Noah faith and godly wisdom, which protected him from harm, especially spiritual harm. For instance, because Noah "walked with the true God," he did not walk, or associate, with the ungodly. He was not fooled by the materialized

6, 7. How did hope reinforce Noah's faith?

8. In what ways did accurate knowledge of God protect Noah?

demons, who surely impressed faithless, gullible humans with their superhuman abilities—perhaps even to the point of becoming objects of idolatry. (Gen. 6: 1-4, 9) Also, Noah knew that *humans* were told to reproduce and fill the earth. (Gen. 1:27, 28) Hence, he must have known that sexual unions between women and materialized spirits were both unnatural and wrong. That conclusion was no doubt confirmed when those unions produced abnormal offspring. In time, God warned Noah that He was going to bring a flood upon the earth. Noah's faith in that warning moved him to build the ark, thus saving his household.—Heb. 11:7.

<sup>9</sup> *How we cultivate faith like Noah's.* The key is to be good students of God's Word, to take to heart what we learn, and to let that knowledge mold us and guide us. (1 Pet. 1:13-15) Then faith and godly wisdom will protect us from Satan's clever designs and from the world's evil spirit. (2 Cor. 2:11) That spirit fosters a love for violence and immorality. And it impels people to focus on fleshly desires. (1 John 2:15, 16) It may even move the spiritually weak to ignore the evidence of the closeness of God's great day. Note that when Jesus compared our time with Noah's, he focused, not on violence or immorality, but on the dangers of spiritual apathy.—**Read Matthew 24:36-39.**

<sup>10</sup> Ask yourself: 'Does my way of life indicate that I truly know Jehovah? Does my faith impel me not only to live in harmony with God's righteous standards but also to proclaim them?' May your answers show that you too 'walk with the true God.'

9, 10. How can we imitate Noah's faith?

## DANIEL SHOWED GODLY WISDOM IN PAGAN BABYLON

<sup>11</sup> *How Daniel came to know Jehovah.* Daniel was evidently well-instructed by his parents, who taught him to love Jehovah and his written Word. Moreover, that love stayed with Daniel all his life. Even in his old age, we find him poring over the Scriptures. (Dan. 9:1, 2) Daniel's intimate knowledge of God, including God's dealings with Israel, is beautifully reflected in the prophet's heartfelt and contrite prayer recorded at Daniel 9: 3-19. Why not take a few moments to read that prayer and meditate on it, taking special note of what it tells you about Daniel as a person?

<sup>12</sup> *How accurate knowledge of God benefited Daniel.* For a faithful Jew, life in pagan Babylon presented big challenges. For instance, Jehovah told the Jews: "Seek the peace of the city to which I have exiled you." (Jer. 29:7) Yet, at the same time, he required their exclusive devotion. (Ex. 34:14) What enabled Daniel to balance the two requirements? Godly wisdom helped him to grasp the principle of relative subjection to secular authorities. Centuries later, Jesus taught the very same principle.—Luke 20:25.

<sup>13</sup> Consider what Daniel did when an official decree forbade prayer to any god or man other than the king for 30 days. (**Read Daniel 6:7-10.**) Daniel could have made excuses, saying, 'Thirty days is not forever!' But he refused to let a royal edict override his Scriptural obligations. Of course, he could have

11. (a) Daniel's godly devotion as a youth reveals what about his upbringing? (b) What qualities of Daniel would you like to imitate?

12-14. (a) In what ways did Daniel show godly wisdom? (b) How was Daniel blessed for his courageous loyalty to God?

prayed discreetly so as not to be observed. He knew that his daily custom was well-known. So while it meant risking his life, Daniel decided not to give even the impression that he was compromising in his worship.

<sup>14</sup> Jehovah blessed Daniel's conscientious and courageous decision by miraculously sparing him a cruel death. In fact, the outcome resulted in a marvelous witness for Jehovah that reached the farthest parts of the Medo-Persian Empire!—Dan. 6:25-27.

<sup>15</sup> *How to cultivate faith like Daniel's.* The key to strong faith is not simply to read God's Word but to 'get the sense' of it. (Matt. 13:23) We want Jehovah's mind on matters, which includes grasping Bible principles. Hence, we need to meditate on what we read. Also important is regular heartfelt prayer, especially when we face trials or other challenging situations. When we pray in faith for wisdom and strength, Jehovah will generously give them to us.—Jas. 1:5.

15. How can we cultivate faith like that of Daniel?

## JOB APPLIED GODLY PRINCIPLES IN GOOD TIMES AND BAD

<sup>16</sup> *How Job came to know Jehovah.* Job was not an Israelite. He was, however, a distant relative of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Jehovah had revealed details to them about himself and his purpose for mankind. In some undisclosed way, Job learned many of those precious truths. (Job 23:12) "My ears have heard about you," he said. (Job 42:5) Moreover, Jehovah himself stated that Job spoke truthfully about Him.—Job 42:7, 8.

<sup>17</sup> Job also saw many of God's invisible qualities in the visible creation. (Job 12:7-9, 13) Later, both Elihu and Jehovah used aspects of creation to remind Job of man's insignificance compared with God's greatness. (Job 37:14; 38:1-4) Jehovah's words reached Job's heart, for he humbly said to God: "Now I know that you are able to do all things and that nothing you have in mind to do is impossible for you. . . . I repent in dust and ashes."—Job 42:2, 6.

16, 17. How did Job gain an accurate knowledge of God?

Our faith is strengthened  
when we see God's  
invisible qualities  
in the visible creation  
(See paragraph 17)





<sup>18</sup> *How accurate knowledge of God benefited Job.* Job had outstanding insight into godly principles. He truly knew Jehovah, and he acted on that knowledge. Consider: Job knew that he could not profess to love God and at the same time be unkind to his fellow man. (Job 6:14) He did not elevate himself above others but showed brotherly concern for all, rich and poor. “Did not the One who made me in the womb also make them?” he said. (Job 31:13-22) Clearly, Job had not allowed his earlier prestige and wealth to warp his view of himself or others. What a contrast to many of the powerful and wealthy in the world!

<sup>19</sup> Job rejected all forms of idolatry—even in his heart. He knew that false worship, including devotion to material riches, would be a denial of “the true God above.” **(Read Job 31:24-28.)** He viewed marriage as a sacred bond between a man and a woman. He even made a covenant with his eyes not to look immorally at a virgin. (Job 31:1) Keep in mind that this was at a time when God tolerated polygamy. So Job could have taken a second wife had he wanted to.\* Evidently, though, he took as a pattern the marital union that God established in Eden, making that example a law to himself. (Gen. 2:18, 24) Some 1,600 years later, Jesus Christ taught his listeners to adhere to the same righteous principles regarding marriage and sexual morality.—Matt. 5:28; 19:4, 5.

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\* The same could be said of Noah. He had just one wife, even though polygamy began to be practiced soon after the rebellion in Eden.—Gen. 4:19.

18, 19. In what ways did Job show that he truly knew Jehovah?

<sup>20</sup> *How we cultivate faith like Job’s.* The key, once again, is to have accurate knowledge of Jehovah and to let that knowledge guide us in every aspect of life. For example, the psalmist David states that Jehovah “hates anyone who loves violence,” and David warns against associating “with deceitful men.” **(Read Psalm 11:5; 26:4.)** What insight do those scriptures give you into God’s thinking? How should that insight influence your priorities, use of the Internet, and choice of associates and entertainment? Your answers may help you to see how well you know Jehovah. To remain blameless in today’s complex and wicked world, we must train our “powers of discernment” so that we can distinguish not just right from wrong but also wise from unwise.—Heb. 5:14; Eph. 5:15.

<sup>21</sup> Because Noah, Daniel, and Job searched for Jehovah with all their heart, he let himself be found by them. He helped them to “understand everything” necessary to please him. They thus became examples of righteousness, and they led truly successful lives. (Ps. 1:1-3) So ask yourself, ‘Do I know Jehovah as well as Noah, Daniel, and Job did?’ In fact, thanks to increased spiritual light, you can know him even more fully! (Prov. 4:18) So dig deeply into God’s Word. Meditate on it. And pray for holy spirit. Then you will draw ever closer to your heavenly Father. And you will act with insight and wisdom in today’s ungodly world.—Prov. 2:4-7.

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20. How does accurate knowledge of Jehovah and of his standards help us in choosing good associates and wholesome entertainment?

21. What will enable us to “understand everything” we need to know to please our heavenly Father?



# All Things Are Possible With Jehovah

AS TOLD BY  
BEISHENBAI BERDIBAEV

“DEATH will be no more, and even the dead will be brought back to life.” My wife, Mairambubu, overheard these words while traveling on a bus. She was curious and wanted to learn more. Once the bus stopped and the passengers disembarked, she chased after the woman who had spoken those words. Her name was Apun Mambetsadykova, and she was one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Talking to the Witnesses in those days was risky, but what we later learned from Apun transformed our lives.

## WORKING FROM DAWN TO DUSK

I was born in 1937 on a kolkhoz, or collective farm, near Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan. Our family belong to the Kyrgyz people, and we speak the Kyrgyz language. My parents were farmworkers, and they worked on the kolkhoz from dawn to dusk. Peasants were given regular food supplies, but cash wages were paid only once a year. Mother struggled to care for my younger sister and me. After just five years of schooling, I too began working full-time on the kolkhoz.

In the region where I lived, poverty was widespread, and the work it took to make ends meet was exhausting. As a young man, I gave little thought to the purpose of life or to the future. I never imagined that the wonderful truths about

Jehovah God and his purpose would transform my life. How that message reached Kyrgyzstan and spread here is a thrilling story. It all started in my home region of northern Kyrgyzstan.

## FORMER EXILES BRING THE TRUTH TO KYRGYZSTAN

The truth about Jehovah God took root in Kyrgyzstan in the 1950’s. To do so, the truth had to overcome a powerful ideology. Why? What is now Kyrgyzstan then belonged to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). All over the USSR, Jehovah’s Witnesses remained neutral in political matters. (John 18:36) Hence, they were persecuted as enemies of the Communist state. But no ideology can stop the Word of God from reaching the hearts of honest people. Indeed,

one of the most valuable lessons I have learned in all my long life is that with Jehovah, “all things are possible.”—Mark 10:27.

The persecution of Jehovah’s Witnesses led to their expansion in Kyrgyzstan. Why is that? The USSR included the region of Siberia, where enemies of the State were exiled. When these exiles were released, many came to Kyrgyzstan, and some of them brought the truth with them. One such former exile was Emil Yantzen, who had been born in Kyrgyzstan in 1919. Emil was sent to a labor camp and met the Witnesses there. He accepted the truth and returned home in 1956. Emil settled near Sokuluk, in my home region. Sokuluk is where the first congregation in Kyrgyzstan was formed in 1958.

About one year later, Victor Vinter moved to Sokuluk. This faithful brother suffered repeated hardships. Twice he served three-year sentences for upholding neutrality; then he spent a further ten years in prison plus five years in exile. Still, persecution did not stop the expansion of true worship.

### TRUTH COMES CLOSER TO HOME

By 1963 there were about 160 Witnesses in Kyrgyzstan, many of them originally from Germany, Ukraine, and Russia. They included Eduard Varter, an exile who had been baptized in Germany in 1924. In the 1940’s, the Nazis had sent him to a concentration camp, and a few years later, Communists in the USSR had sent Eduard into exile. In 1961 this faithful brother

moved to the town of Kant, which lies very close to my hometown.

Elizabeth Fot, a loyal servant of Jehovah, also lived in Kant. She earned her living as a seamstress. Because she was skilled in her craft, such professionals as doctors and teachers ordered clothes from her. One of her clients was a woman named Aksamai Sultanalieva, who was married to an official of the public prosecutor’s office. Aksamai came to Elizabeth for some clothing but asked many questions about the meaning of life and the condition of the dead. Elizabeth answered her questions straight from the Bible. Aksamai became a zealous preacher of the good news.

At about that time, Nikolai Chimpoesh, from Moldova, was appointed a circuit overseer and served as such for almost 30 years. Not only did Nikolai visit congregations but he also organized the duplication and distribution of our literature. His activities did not go unnoticed by the authorities. Hence, Eduard Varter gave Nikolai some encouraging advice: “When the authorities question you, tell them openly that we get our literature from headquarters in Brooklyn. Look the KGB agent right in the eye. You have nothing to fear.”—Matt. 10:19.

Soon after this conversation, Nikolai was summoned to KGB headquarters in Kant. He related what happened next: “The agent asked where we got our literature. I told him we get it from Brooklyn. He did not know what to say to that. He just let me go and never called me in



Emil  
Yantzen



Victor  
Vinter



Eduard  
Varter



Elizabeth  
Fot

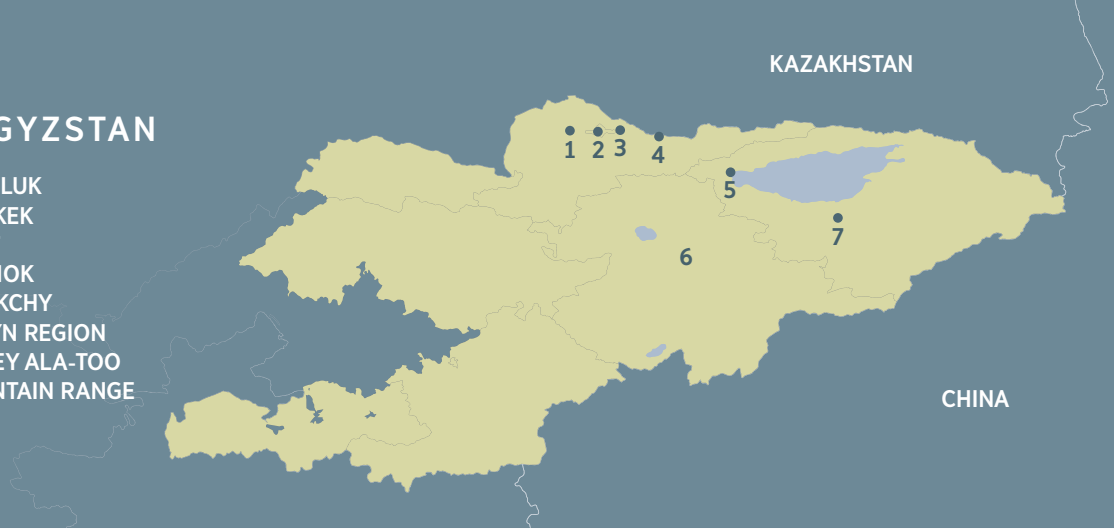


Aksamai  
Sultanalieva



## KYRGYZSTAN

1. SOKULUK
2. BISHKEK
3. KANT
4. TOKMOK
5. BALYKCHY
6. NARYN REGION
7. TESKEY ALA-TOO MOUNTAIN RANGE



CHINA

again.” Such intrepid Witnesses kept on cautiously spreading the good news in my home region of northern Kyrgyzstan. When the precious truth about Jehovah finally reached my own family in the 1980’s, my wife, Mairambubu, heard it first.

#### MY WIFE QUICKLY RECOGNIZES THE TRUTH

Mairambubu comes from the Naryn Region of Kyrgyzstan. One day in August 1974, she visited my sister’s home, which is where we first met. I liked Mairambubu straight away. We got married that same day.

In January 1981 when Mairambubu was in a bus on her way to a local market, she overheard the conversation mentioned earlier. My wife wanted to hear more, so she asked the woman for her name and address. She gave her name, Apun, but she was cautious because even in the 1980’s, the activities of the Witnesses were banned. Instead

of giving my wife her address, Apun took note of our address. My wife arrived home excited.

“I heard wonderful things,” said Mairambubu. “A woman told me that soon people will no longer die. Even wild beasts will be tamed.” To me, it sounded like a fairy tale. “Let’s wait until she visits to tell us the details,” I replied.

Apun visited us three months later. Further visits followed, whereby we met some of the first Witnesses belonging to the Kyrgyz people. These sisters introduced us to the amazing truths about Jehovah and his purpose for mankind. They read to us the book *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*.<sup>\*</sup> And since there was just one copy of this book in Tokmok, we copied it by hand for ourselves.

One of the first things we learned was the prophecy at Genesis 3:15. This prophecy will be fulfilled through Jesus as God’s Messianic King. That is an important message that everyone must hear! All the more reason for us to join in the proclamation. (Matt. 24:14) Soon, Bible truth began to transform our lives.

#### MEETINGS AND BAPTISM UNDER BAN

A Christian brother in Tokmok invited us to a wedding. My wife and I soon noticed that the Witnesses behaved differently. There was no

<sup>\*</sup> Published by Jehovah’s Witnesses but now out of print.



Nikolai  
Chimpoesh



Apun  
Mambetsadykova

With my wife and eight  
of our children in 1989



alcohol at the wedding, and the festivities were orderly. This was a big contrast to other weddings we had attended, where guests often got drunk, behaved badly, and used foul language.

We also attended some Christian meetings of the congregation in Tokmok. These were held in the woods, weather permitting. The brothers and sisters knew that the police kept a close watch on us, so the brothers posted a lookout. In winter, we gathered for meetings in a house. A couple of times, the police came to the house and demanded to know what we were doing. When Mairambubu and I got baptized in July 1982 in the Chüy River, we had to be cautious. (Matt. 10:16) Brothers arrived in small numbers and assembled in the forest. We sang a Kingdom song and listened to the baptism talk.

#### **WE SEIZE THE CHANCE TO EXPAND OUR MINISTRY**

In 1987 a brother asked me to visit an interested person living in the town of Balykchy. Getting there from our home involved a four-hour journey by train. After several preaching trips to Balykchy, we discovered widespread interest there. This was clearly an opportunity to expand our ministry.

Mairambubu and I often traveled to Balykchy. We stayed there most weekends, went in the ministry, and held Christian meetings. Demand for our publications rose dramatically. We carried the publications from Tokmok in a *mishok*, a sack used to transport potatoes. Two sacks full of lit-

erature per month barely met the demand. Even on the train to and from Balykchy, we were able to witness to passengers.

In 1995 a congregation was formed in Balykchy—eight years after our first visit to that town. Those years of traveling between Tokmok and Balykchy cost a lot of money. Our personal means were limited, so how did we manage? A Christian brother regularly gave us money to make up for the shortfall. Jehovah saw our desire to expand our ministry, and he opened “the floodgates of the heavens” to us. (Mal. 3:10) Surely all things are possible with Jehovah!

#### **BUSY WITH FAMILY AND MINISTRY**

In 1992, I was appointed to serve as an elder, the first Kyrgyz elder in the country. In our home congregation of Tokmok, new avenues of service opened up. We had numerous Bible studies with young Kyrgyz students at educational institutes. One of these young people with whom we studied now serves on the Branch Committee, and two others are special pioneers. We also reached out to help others at our meetings. In the early 1990’s, our publications as well as the meetings were in the Russian language. But an increasing number in the congregation spoke Kyrgyz as their mother tongue. So I interpreted, which helped them grasp the truth more readily.

Mairambubu and I were also kept busy raising our growing family. We took our children in the preaching work and to the congregation meetings. Our daughter Gulsayra—then just 12 years

old—enjoyed speaking to passersby on the street and telling them about the Bible. And our children loved memorizing Scripture texts. In this way our children, and later grandchildren, were very much involved in congregation activities. Of the 9 children and 11 grandchildren still living, 16 serve Jehovah or attend the meetings with their parents.

### REMARKABLE CHANGES

The dear brothers and sisters who started Jehovah's work in our area in the 1950's would be astounded to see the changes we have experienced. For one thing, since the 1990's, we have enjoyed more freedom to preach the good news and to assemble together in large numbers.

In 1991 my wife and I attended our first-ever convention in Alma-Ata, now known as Almaty, in Kazakhstan. And in 1993 the brothers in Kyrgyzstan hosted a convention at Spartak Stadium in Bishkek for the first time. Publishers spent a week cleaning the stadium beforehand. The director was so impressed that he allowed us to use the facilities without cost.

In 1994 we reached another milestone when the first of our publications was printed in the Kyrgyz language. Literature is now regularly translated into Kyrgyz by a translation team at the branch office in Bishkek. Indeed, in 1998 the work of the Witnesses was granted legal recognition in Kyrgyzstan. The organization has grown, and we now number well over 5,000 publishers. Today, we have a total of 83 congregations and 25 groups in Chinese, English, Kyrgyz, Russian, Russian Sign Language, Turkish, Uighur, and Uzbek. All these dear brothers and sisters from different backgrounds serve Jehovah unitedly. Jehovah made all these remarkable changes possible.

Jehovah also transformed my life. I grew up in a lowly peasant family and had just five years of schooling. Yet, Jehovah used me to serve as an elder and to teach precious Bible truths to people who were more educated than I was. Indeed, Jehovah makes the most unusual things happen. My own experience moves me to continue loyally testifying about Jehovah, with whom “all things are possible.”—Matt. 19:26.



Teskey Ala-Too mountain range



With my wife in the ministry





# What Does It Mean to Be a Spiritual Person?

*“May [God] grant you to have among yourselves the same mental attitude that Christ Jesus had.”—ROM. 15:5.*

SONGS: 17, 13

## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How can we identify a spiritual person?

What can we learn from exemplary spiritual people?

Why should we strive to have “the mind of Christ”?

“BEING a spiritual person has made me happier, and it has helped me deal successfully with daily trials,” says a sister in Canada. A brother in Brazil states, “Our 23 years of marriage have been very happy—thanks to our efforts to be spiritually-minded.” And a brother in the Philippines notes, “Being a spiritual person has allowed me to have peace of mind, and it has helped me improve in my dealings with brothers from different backgrounds.”

<sup>2</sup> Expressions like those portray spirituality in a favorable way. As a result, we may be moved to ask ourselves, ‘How can I grow as a spiritual person and enjoy more fully the benefits described above?’ However, before we answer that, we need to understand clearly what the Bible says about spiritual, or spiritually-minded, people. In this article, we will answer three key questions. (1) What does it mean to be a spiritual person? (2) What examples will help us to progress in our spirituality? (3) How will our effort to have “the mind of Christ” help us to be spiritual people?

1, 2. (a) How do many view spirituality? (b) What key questions about spirituality will we consider?

## WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL PERSON?

<sup>3</sup> The apostle Paul helps us to understand what a spiritual person is by drawing a contrast between a “spiritual man” and “a physical man.” (**Read 1 Corinthians 2:14-16.**) What is the difference? The “physical man” is described as not accepting “the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot get to know them.” On the other hand, “the spiritual man” is someone who “examines all things” and who has “the mind of Christ.” Paul encourages us to be spiritual people. In what other ways do physical and spiritual individuals differ?

<sup>4</sup> Consider first the attitude of a physical individual. The world has a predominant attitude that centers on the flesh. Paul describes it as “the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.” (Eph. 2:2) This spirit influences most humans to adopt a common attitude—simply follow the crowd. They are focused on the flesh. As a result, the majority of them do what feels right in their own eyes and make no effort to live up to God’s standards. A physical, or fleshly-minded, person is often excessively concerned about prestige and material pursuits or about defending what he feels are his rights.

<sup>5</sup> What else might identify a physical person? People who engage in any of “the works of the flesh” fall into that category. (Gal. 5:19-21) Paul’s first letter to the Corinthian congregation identifies a number of other characteristics of those who have a fleshly attitude.

These include: promoting divisions, taking sides, fostering dissensions, taking one another to court, showing a lack of appreciation for headship, and being self-indulgent in food and drink. When confronted with temptation, the fleshly-minded person weakens and gives in. (Prov. 7:21, 22) Jude spoke of those who would deteriorate even to the point of “not having spirituality.”—Jude 18, 19.

<sup>6</sup> What, then, does it mean to be a “spiritual man”? A spiritual person is inclined toward God, the opposite of the physical person. Spiritually-minded individuals strive to “become imitators of God.” (Eph. 5:1) This means that they make an effort to have Jehovah’s thinking on matters and to look at things from his point of view. God is very real to them. In contrast with fleshly-minded individuals, they try to bring all their ways into harmony with Jehovah’s standards. (Ps. 119:33; 143:10) Rather than focus on fleshly works, the spiritually-minded person endeavors to show “the fruitage of the spirit.” (Gal. 5:22, 23) To clarify the expression “spiritually-minded” further, think of this comparison: An individual who is skillful in commercial affairs is said to be business-minded. Similarly, someone who keenly values spiritual or religious interests is called spiritually-minded.

<sup>7</sup> The Bible speaks highly of spiritually-minded people. Matthew 5:3 says: “Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the Kingdom of the heavens belongs to them.” Romans 8:6 shows the advantage of being spiritually-minded, saying: “Setting the mind on the flesh

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3. How does the Bible’s description of a physical man differ from that of a spiritual man?

4, 5. What are the characteristics of a physical person?

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6. What identifies a spiritual person?

7. What does the Bible say about spiritually-minded people?

means death, but setting the mind on the spirit means life and peace.” By focusing on spiritual things, we gain peace with God and with ourselves now and the prospect of everlasting life in the future.

<sup>8</sup> However, we live in a dangerous environment. Since fleshly attitudes are all around us, we need to put forth real effort to develop spirituality and to guard it once we have it. If a person loses his spirituality, he creates a moral vacuum and the polluted “air” of this world will rush in. What can help us to prevent that from happening? How can we grow spiritually?

#### EXAMPLES TO LEARN FROM

<sup>9</sup> A child can become mature by observing his parents and copying their

8. Why is effort needed to develop and maintain spirituality?

9. (a) What can help us to grow spiritually?  
(b) What examples of spiritual people will we consider?

good example. In like manner, we can grow spiritually by observing and imitating spiritually strong people. Conversely, fleshly-oriented people serve as warning examples for us. (1 Cor. 3:1-4) The Bible contains both types of examples. But since our goal is to grow as spiritual people, let us take a look at several positive examples of individuals we can imitate. We will consider the examples of Jacob, Mary, and Jesus.

<sup>10</sup> First, take the example of Jacob. As is true of most of us today, Jacob did not have an easy life. He had to put up with his fleshly-minded brother, Esau, who intended to kill him. On top of that, he had to deal with a deceitful father-in-law, who repeatedly tried to exploit him. Yet, despite being surrounded by “physical” men, Jacob was a spiritual man. He had faith in the promise made to Abraham

10. How did Jacob show himself to be a spiritual man?

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What can we learn from the examples of Jacob and Mary?

(See paragraphs 10, 11)





and devoted himself to caring for the family who would play a special role in the outworking of Jehovah's purpose. (Gen. 28:10-15) Jacob's words and actions reveal that he had God's standards and will in mind. For example, when he felt threatened by Esau, Jacob said to God: "Save me, I pray you . . . You have said: 'I will certainly deal well with you, and I will make your offspring like the grains of sand of the sea.'" (Gen. 32:6-12) He obviously put faith in Jehovah's promises to him and his forefathers and wanted to act in harmony with God's will and purpose.

<sup>11</sup> Now consider another example, that of Mary. Why did Jehovah choose Mary to become Jesus' mother? No doubt because she was a spiritually-minded person. How do we know that? She showed clear evidence of spirituality in her beautiful expressions of praise when she visited the home of her relatives Zechariah and Elizabeth. **(Read Luke 1:46-55.)** Mary's statements show that she had a deep love for God's Word and was thoroughly familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures. (Gen. 30:13; 1 Sam. 2:1-10; Mal. 3:12) Note, too, that she and Joseph, although newly married, refrained from sexual relations until Jesus was born. What does that indicate? It shows that both of them were more concerned with Jehovah's will than with satisfying their personal desires. (Matt. 1:25) As time passed, Mary carefully noted what took place in Jesus' life and paid attention to the words of wisdom he spoke. Furthermore, she "kept all these sayings in her heart." (Luke 2:51) She was clearly interested in God's purpose in connection

with the Messiah. Does not Mary's example help us to think of how we can put God's will first in our life?

<sup>12</sup> Yet, of all the people who have lived, who is the most outstanding example of a spiritual person? It is Jesus, of course. Throughout his life and ministry, he showed that he wanted to imitate his Father, Jehovah. He thought, felt, and acted like Jehovah and lived in harmony with God's will and standards. (John 8:29; 14:9; 15:10) Note, for example, how Jehovah's feelings of compassion are described by the prophet Isaiah, and compare that description with what the Gospel writer Mark reports about Jesus' feelings. **(Read Isaiah 63:9; Mark 6:34.)** Are we like Jesus, ever ready to show compassionate concern when we meet people who need help? In addition, Jesus devoted himself to the work of preaching and teaching the good news. (Luke 4:43) All such feelings and actions are marks of a spiritual person.

<sup>13</sup> Aside from Scriptural examples, there are many modern-day examples of spiritually-minded individuals who have made great progress in reflecting a Christlike personality. Perhaps you have noticed their zeal in the ministry, their outstanding hospitality, their compassion, or other fine qualities. They, like us, have battled weaknesses and imperfections while trying to develop those godly qualities. Rachel, a sister in Brazil, says: "I loved to follow the world's fashions. As a result, I did not dress

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11. What shows that Mary was a spiritual person?

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12. (a) In what way did Jesus resemble his Father? (b) How can we imitate Jesus' example? (See opening picture.)

13, 14. (a) What can we learn from modern-day examples of spiritually-minded people? (b) Relate an example.

very modestly. But learning the truth moved me to make the needed effort to be a spiritual person. Making changes was not easy, but I became happier and found real purpose in life.”

<sup>14</sup> Reylene, from the Philippines, had a different challenge. She focused on pursuing higher education and good employment in order to get ahead in life. She says: “My spiritual goals started to fade. But I began to realize that something was missing in my life, something far more important than my job. As a result, I redirected my focus to serving Jehovah.” Since then, Reylene has been a living example of putting faith in Jehovah’s promise found at Matthew 6:33, 34. She says: “I know for sure that Jehovah will take care of me!” Perhaps you know of similar examples in your congregation. Are we not moved to imitate such faithful ones as they follow the Christ? —1 Cor. 11:1; 2 Thess. 3:7.

#### HAVE “THE MIND OF CHRIST”

<sup>15</sup> How can we personally imitate Christ? The Bible at 1 Corinthians 2:16 speaks of having “the mind of Christ.” And Romans 15:5 refers to having “the same mental attitude that Christ Jesus had.” Therefore, to be like Christ, we need to know his pattern of thinking and the full range of his personality. Then we need to follow in his footsteps. Jesus’ mind is focused on his relationship with God. So being like Jesus makes us more like Jehovah. For these reasons, it becomes clear how important it is to learn to think as Jesus does.

<sup>16</sup> How can we do this? Jesus’ disciples saw his miracles, heard his discourses,

watched how he dealt with all kinds of people, and observed how he applied godly principles. They said: “We are witnesses of all the things he did.” (Acts 10:39) We, however, cannot observe him directly. But Jehovah has lovingly provided the Gospel accounts that can make Jesus’ personality come alive in our mind. By reading and meditating on the Bible books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we expose our mind to Christ’s mind. We thus can “follow his steps closely” and “arm [ourselves] with the same mental disposition” as Christ had.—1 Pet. 2:21; 4:1.

<sup>17</sup> How will learning to think like Christ help us? Just as nourishing food strengthens the physical body, feeding our mind on Christ’s thinking fortifies our spirituality. Gradually, we come to know what Christ would do in any situation. This, in turn, helps us to make decisions that leave us with a clean conscience and God’s approval. Do you not agree that these benefits give us good reason to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ”?—Rom. 13:14.

<sup>18</sup> We have considered what it means to be a spiritual person. We have also seen that we can learn from good examples of spiritual people. Finally, we have learned how having “the mind of Christ” helps us to grow as a spiritual person. However, there are several other aspects of spirituality that we should consider. For example, how can we analyze the strength of our own spirituality? What more can we do to cultivate it? And how will our spirituality impact our daily life? The next article will help to answer these questions.

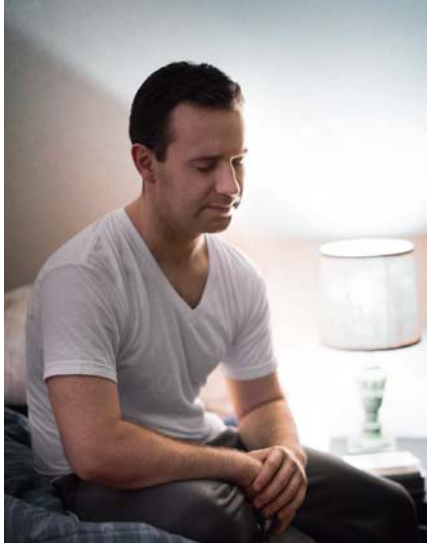
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15, 16. (a) To be like Christ, what do we need to do? (b) How can we expose our mind to “the mind of Christ”?

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17. How will thinking like Christ help us?

18. What have you learned from this discussion on being a spiritual person?



# Move Forward as a Spiritual Person!

*“Keep walking by spirit.”—GAL. 5:16.*

ROBERT got baptized as a teenager, but he did not really take the truth seriously. He says: “I never did anything wrong, but I was just going through the motions. I looked spiritually strong, being at all the meetings and serving as an auxiliary pioneer a few times a year. But something was missing.”

<sup>2</sup> Robert himself did not perceive what was wrong until later when he got married. He and his wife began passing time by quizzing each other on Bible subjects. His wife, a spiritually strong person, had no problem answering the questions, but Robert found himself constantly embarrassed, not knowing what to say. He says: “It was as if I knew nothing. I thought to myself, ‘If I am going to be my wife’s spiritual head, I have to do something.’” And Robert did. He says: “I studied the Bible and studied and studied some more, and the pieces started to fit together. I got understanding and, most important, developed a close relationship with Jehovah.”

<sup>3</sup> We can learn important lessons from Robert’s experience. We may have some Bible knowledge and may regularly

1, 2. What did one brother find lacking with regard to his spiritual condition, and what did he do about it?

3. (a) What can we learn from Robert’s experience? (b) What key points will we now discuss?

SONGS: 22, 75

## CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

What might we consider when analyzing our spirituality?

What do we need to do to move forward as a spiritual person?

How will having the mind of Christ affect your daily life?

associate with the Christian congregation, but these things in themselves do not necessarily make us into a spiritual person. Or we may have already made progress, but when we examine ourselves further, we find that we can still improve our spirituality. (Phil. 3:16) To help us to *continue* progressing, we will answer three key questions in this article: (1) What will help us to analyze the true state of our spirituality? (2) How can we cultivate spirituality and keep growing as a spiritual person? (3) How can strong spirituality help us in our daily life?

### ANALYZING OURSELVES

<sup>4</sup> When we became servants of God, we made a transformation. This change affected every area of our life. And it was not over when we got baptized. We are told to “*continue* to be made new in [our] dominant mental attitude.” (Eph. 4:23, 24) Since we are not perfect, we all need to continue making changes. Even long-time servants of Jehovah need to maintain their spirituality.—Phil. 3:12, 13.

<sup>5</sup> To improve and maintain our spirituality, we need to analyze ourselves honestly. Whether we are young or old, we can ask ourselves these questions: ‘Do I notice changes in myself that indicate that I am moving toward becoming a spiritually-minded person? Is my personality becoming Christlike? What do my disposition and conduct at Christian meetings reveal about the depth of my spirituality? What do my conversations show about my desires? What do my study habits, dress and grooming, or

4. To whom does the counsel found at Ephesians 4:23, 24 apply?

5. What questions can help us analyze ourselves?

reaction to counsel reveal about me? How do I react when faced with temptations? Have I progressed beyond basics to maturity, becoming full-grown as a Christian?’ (Eph. 4:13) Thinking about our answers to these questions can help us measure our spiritual progress.

<sup>6</sup> To analyze the state of our spirituality, we may at times need help from others. The apostle Paul pointed out that the fleshly person cannot see the wrongness of his position before God. On the other hand, the spiritual person understands God’s viewpoint as well as the erroneous course of the physical man. (1 Cor. 2:14-16; 3:1-3) Elders who have the mind of Christ often see early warning signs of fleshly thinking. If they bring these to our attention, do we accept and apply their counsel? By doing so, we give evidence of our desire to develop our spirituality.—Eccl. 7:5, 9.

### CULTIVATING SPIRITUALITY

<sup>7</sup> Keep in mind that having knowledge of the Bible is not enough to become a spiritually-minded person. Ancient King Solomon had a lot of knowledge about Jehovah’s ways. His sayings later became part of the Bible. But in the end, he failed to stay faithful to Jehovah as a spiritual man. (1 Ki. 4:29, 30; 11:4-6) So in addition to Bible knowledge, what is needed? We need to continue to make spiritual progress. (Col. 2:6, 7) But how do we do so?

<sup>8</sup> Paul urged first-century Christians

6. To analyze the state of our spirituality, what else may be needed?

7. Why is having Bible knowledge not enough to become a spiritually-minded person?

8, 9. (a) What will help us to develop spiritual stability? (b) What is our goal when we study and meditate? (See opening picture.)



to “press on to maturity.” (Heb. 6:1) In order to apply Paul’s counsel today, what steps can we take? One important step is to study the publication *“Keep Yourself in God’s Love.”* Completing your study of that book will help you to see how to apply Bible principles in your life. If you have already finished studying that book, can you move on to other study materials that can help you to stabilize your faith? (Col. 1:23) Do you prayerfully meditate on how you can apply in your life what you are studying?

<sup>9</sup> Keep in mind that as we study and meditate, we should do so with the goal of developing a heartfelt desire to please Jehovah and obey his laws. (Ps. 40:8; 119:97) At the same time, we work to reject things that will hinder our spiritual growth.—Titus 2:11, 12.

<sup>10</sup> If you are a youth, do you have clear spiritual goals? When attending circuit assemblies, a brother who serves at Bethel has made it his custom to speak with baptism candidates before the program. Many candidates are youths. The brother asks them what spiritual goals they have. Many give answers that reveal that they have a clear vision of what they want to do to serve Jehovah—perhaps by entering some form of full-time service or by serving where there is a greater need for Kingdom proclaimers. Occasionally, however, there are youths who do not seem to have an answer. Might that indicate that they have not yet resolved in their heart that they should have clear spiritual goals? As a youth, ask yourself: ‘Am I participating in spiritual activities just because my parents expect me to? Am I drawing closer to

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10. What can young people do to cultivate spirituality?

God by nurturing a personal relationship with him?’ Of course, the counsel to have spiritual goals applies not just to youths. Having such goals will help all of us as Jehovah’s servants to deepen our spirituality.—Eccl. 12:1, 13.

<sup>11</sup> Once we have identified areas for improvement, we need to take positive steps that will help us move forward. Becoming a spiritual person is very important. In fact, it is a life-and-death matter. (Rom. 8:6-8) However, for us to be spiritually mature does not mean to be perfect. Jehovah’s spirit can help us to make the needed progress. Still, we do need to put forth effort. In commenting on Luke 13:24, John Barr, who served as a member of the Governing Body, pointed out some years ago, “Many fail because they are not diligent enough to grow mighty.” We need to be like Jacob, who did not give up wrestling with an angel until he got a blessing. (Gen. 32:26-28) Although Bible study can be enjoyable, we should not expect the Bible to read like a novel that is written just to entertain. We need to work at finding spiritual gems that will help us.

<sup>12</sup> As we work at cultivating spirituality, holy spirit will give us the power to transform our mind. With the spirit’s help, we can gradually begin to think more and more as Christ did. (Rom. 15:5) Additionally, it will help us root out fleshly desires and cultivate qualities pleasing to God. (Gal. 5:16, 22, 23) If we

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11. (a) To make real spiritual progress, what do we need to do? (b) What Bible example can we imitate?

12, 13. (a) What will help us to apply Romans 15:5? (b) How can the apostle Peter’s example and counsel help us? (c) What can you do to cultivate spirituality? (See the box “Steps You Can Take to Progress Spiritually.”)

## Steps You Can Take to Progress Spiritually

- Study God's Word diligently, and meditate on what you read
- Zealously apply the things you learn
- Keep your mind and heart open to the influence of the holy spirit
- Gratefully accept help from others

find that our mind pushes us toward materialistic thinking or fleshly desires, we should not give up. Keep asking for the spirit, and Jehovah will help you to redirect your mental attitude to focus on proper things. (Luke 11:13) Remember the apostle Peter. Several times in his life, he did not respond as a spiritual man should. (Matt. 16:22, 23; Luke 22:34, 54-62; Gal. 2:11-14) But he did not give up. Gradually, with Jehovah's help, Peter developed Christlike thinking. We can do the same.

<sup>13</sup> Peter, in fact, later spelled out specific things we can work on. (**Read 2 Peter 1:5-8.**) As we “put forth all earnest effort” to develop such qualities as self-control, endurance, and brotherly affection, we will be helped to continue to move ahead as spiritually-minded individuals. Each day, why not ask yourself, ‘What can I work on today to progress spiritually?’

### APPLYING BIBLE PRINCIPLES IN DAILY LIFE

<sup>14</sup> Our Christlike thinking will influence our speech, our conduct at work or

14. How will being spiritually-minded affect our life?

in school, and the decisions we make each day. Those decisions will reveal that we strive to be followers of Christ. As spiritual people, we want nothing to jeopardize our relationship with our heavenly Father. When we are confronted with temptations, our Christlike attitude will move us to push them away. When making decisions, we will stop and ponder over these questions: ‘What Bible principles will help me decide? What would Christ do in this situation? What decision will please Jehovah?’ To train ourselves to think this way, let us take a look at a few sample situations. In each example, we will identify a Scriptural principle that can help us make a wise decision.

<sup>15</sup> *Selecting a marriage mate.* The Scriptural principle is found at **2 Corinthians 6:14, 15. (Read.)** Paul's words clearly state that a spiritual person cannot enjoy complete harmony with a physical person. How can this be applied to choosing a marriage mate?

<sup>16</sup> *Associations.* Note the Scriptural principle found at **1 Corinthians 15:33. (Read.)** A godly person will not mix with those who could endanger his spirituality. What questions could help you to make practical application? For example, how does this apply to social networking? Or what should you do if invited to play online games with strangers?

<sup>17</sup> *Activities that hinder spiritual growth.* Paul's words to fellow Christians contain

15, 16. Give examples of how Christlike thinking helps us when making decisions about (a) selecting a marriage mate. (b) choosing our associations.

17-19. How will having a spiritual viewpoint help you (a) to avoid vain pursuits? (b) to set goals in life? (c) to deal with disputes?

a warning. **(Read Hebrews 6:1.)** What are the “dead works” that we should avoid? Any pursuits that are spiritually dead, vain, or fruitless. This principle can help us with many questions that could arise in our life, such as: ‘Does this activity fall in the category of fleshly works? Should I get involved in this money-making proposal? Why should I not join worldly reform movements?’

<sup>18</sup> *Spiritual goals.* Jesus’ words spoken in the Sermon on the Mount give us clear guidance about setting goals. (Matt. 6: 33) A spiritual person pursues spiritually oriented goals. Keeping this principle in mind helps us answer such questions as: ‘Should I pursue plans for an advanced education? Should I accept a certain job offer?’

<sup>19</sup> *Disputes.* How does Paul’s counsel to the congregation in Rome help us in dealing with disputes? (Rom. 12:18) As followers of Christ, we work to “be

peaceable with all men.” When disputes arise, how do we react? Do we find it difficult to yield, or are we known as those who are “making peace”?—Jas. 3:18.

<sup>20</sup> These are just a few examples to show how reflecting on godly principles can help us make decisions that harmonize with what is expected of a spiritual person. Being spiritually-minded can help us to make our daily life happier and more satisfying. Robert, whose experience was considered at the beginning of this article, says: “After I developed a real relationship with Jehovah, I was a better husband and a better father. I was content and happy.” We can enjoy similar blessings if we make spiritual progress our priority. As spiritual people, we will enjoy a more satisfying life now and “the real life” to come.—1 Tim. 6:19.

20. Why do you want to move forward spiritually?

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Will my decisions help me to grow spiritually, set spiritual goals, and “be peaceable”?

(See paragraphs 17-19)



# JOY

## A Quality We Acquire From God

LOVE

**JOY**

PEACE

PATIENCE

KINDNESS

GOODNESS

FAITH

MILDNESS

SELF-CONTROL

PEOPLE normally want to live a joyful life. But in these last days, everyone faces trials that are “hard to deal with.” (2 Tim. 3:1) Injustice, poor health, unemployment, grief, or other causes of anxiety and sorrow may gradually cause some to lose their joy. Even servants of God may become discouraged and see their joy slip away. If this has happened to you, how can you regain your joy?

To answer that question, we first need to understand what genuine joy is and how others have remained joyful despite trials. Then we will learn what we can do to maintain our joy and even add to it.

### WHAT IS JOY?

We should not confuse being joyful with simply being jovial or cheerful. To illustrate: After too many drinks, a drunkard may be in a hilarious mood. However, when he sobers up, he laughs no more, and he may return to a life full of sorrow and troubles. His momentary exuberance was not true joy. —Prov. 14:13.

Joy, in contrast, is a deep-seated quality of the heart. It has been defined as “the emotion excited by the acquisition or expectation of good.” Joy is a state of happiness or gladness that remains whether the conditions around us are pleasant or not. (1 Thess. 1:6) In fact, a person can

be disturbed about something but still have joy in his heart. For example, the apostles were flogged for speaking about the Christ. Yet, they “went out from before the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name.” (Acts 5:41) Obviously, they were not rejoicing over the flogging they had received. But as servants of God, they found true joy in keeping their integrity to him.

We are not born with such joy; nor does it develop automatically. Why not? Because true joy is part of the fruitage of God’s holy spirit. With the help of God’s spirit, we can fully develop “the new personality,” which includes joy. (Eph. 4:24; Gal. 5:22) And when we develop joy, we are better able to cope with the stresses of life.

### EXAMPLES WE WANT TO IMITATE

Jehovah intended for good things to develop on the earth, not the bad things that we see so often today. Yet, the wicked deeds of others do not rob Jehovah of joy. God’s Word states: “Strength and joy are in his dwelling place.” (1 Chron. 16:27) Furthermore, the good things that are being accomplished by his servants make “[Jehovah’s] heart rejoice.”—Prov. 27:11.

We can imitate Jehovah by not becoming overly concerned when things do not work



out as we had expected. Rather than lose our joy, we can focus on the good things we have now and wait patiently for the better things ahead.\*

We can also find many Biblical examples of humans who maintained joy in the face of trying circumstances. Abraham is one who endured life-threatening situations and difficulties caused by others. (Gen. 12:10-20; 14:8-16; 16:4, 5; 20:1-18; 21:8, 9) Despite such pressures, Abraham maintained joy in his heart. How did he do so? He had clearly in mind his hope of living in the new world under the Messiah's rule. (Gen. 22:15-18; Heb. 11:10) Jesus said: "Abraham your father rejoiced greatly at the prospect of seeing my day." (John 8:56) We can imitate Abraham by pondering the joys ahead.—Rom. 8:21.

Like Abraham, the apostle Paul and his companion Silas were focused on God's promises. They had strong faith, and they kept their joy alive despite negative experiences. For example, after they had endured a dreadful beating and were thrown into prison, in "the middle of the night, [they] were praying and praising God with song." (Acts 16:23-25) In addition to drawing strength from their hope, Paul and Silas were joyful because they were suffering for the sake of Christ's name. We can imitate Paul and Silas by keeping in mind the good that comes from serving God faithfully.—Phil. 1:12-14.

Today, our brotherhood includes many fine examples of individuals who maintained joy in the face of trials. For instance, in November 2013, Super Typhoon Haiyan ripped through the central part of the Philippines, destroying the homes of over 1,000 Witness families. George, whose home in the

city of Tacloban was obliterated, said: "In spite of what happened, the brothers are happy. It's hard for me to express the joy we feel." Whenever we experience great difficulties, we will remain joyful if we meditate appreciatively on what Jehovah has done for us. What else has Jehovah provided that gives us reason for joy?

## OUR REASONS FOR JOY

What greater reason for joy could we have than our relationship with God? Think of it: We know the Universal Sovereign. He is our Father, God, and Friend!—Ps. 71:17, 18.

We also treasure the gift of life and our ability to enjoy it. (Eccl. 3:12, 13) As intelligent creatures who have been drawn by Jehovah, we understand God's will for us. (Col. 1:9, 10) Hence, we have real meaning and direction in our lives. On the other hand, the majority of mankind have no clear concept of life's purpose. Highlighting this contrast, Paul wrote: "'Eye has not seen and ear has not heard, nor have there been conceived in the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love him.' For it is to us God has revealed them through his spirit." (1 Cor. 2:9, 10) Do we not rejoice over our understanding of Jehovah's will and purpose?

Consider what else Jehovah has done for his people. Are we not happy that our sins can be forgiven? (1 John 2:12) Because of God's mercy, we have a living hope that a new world will soon be here. (Rom. 12:12) Even now, Jehovah provides a wholesome group of fellow worshippers. (Ps. 133:1) God's Word also assures us that Jehovah protects his people from Satan and his demons. (Ps. 91:11) If we meditate on all these blessings from God, we will see our joy deepen and grow.—Phil. 4:4.

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\* The quality of patience will be considered in a future article in this series on "the fruitage of the spirit."

## HOW TO INCREASE YOUR JOY

Can an already joyful Christian increase his joy? Jesus said: “These things I have spoken to you, so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be made full.” (John 15:11) Does this not indicate that we can grow in joy? You can compare your efforts at increasing joy to stoking a fire. You must feed the fire to intensify the heat. Likewise, you must feed your spirituality to increase your joy. Remember: Joy is fueled by God’s spirit. Hence, you will develop greater joy by regularly requesting the help of Jehovah’s spirit and prayerfully meditating on his spirit-inspired Word.—Ps. 1:1, 2; Luke 11:13.

You also increase your joy by being active in works that please Jehovah. (Ps. 35:27; 112:1) Why? Because we were created to “fear the true God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole obligation of man.” (Eccl. 12:13) In other words, we were designed to do God’s will. So when we serve Jehovah, we naturally get the most enjoyment from life.\*

## THE GOOD THAT RESULTS FROM JOY

As we develop godly joy, we will experience benefits that go beyond simply how we feel inside. For example, we will become

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\* For additional ways to enhance your joy, see the box “Other Ways to Increase Joy.”

more pleasing to our heavenly Father as we joyfully serve him no matter what problems we may face. (Deut. 16:15; 1 Thess. 5:16-18) Also, as a result of having true joy, we will reject a materialistic way of life and will instead seek to make greater personal sacrifices in behalf of God’s Kingdom. (Matt. 13:44) When we see the good that this accomplishes, we will grow in joy, experience a greater sense of well-being, and add to the happiness of others.—Acts 20:35; Phil. 1:3-5.

“If you are happy and satisfied with your life now, you are more likely to be healthy in the future.” That is what a researcher at the University of Nebraska in the United States wrote after reviewing a number of studies on health. This is in agreement with the Bible, which says: “A joyful heart is good medicine.” (Prov. 17:22) Yes, as you increase your joy, you are likely to have better physical health.

So despite living in stressful times, we can develop true and lasting joy as we acquire holy spirit by means of prayer, study, and meditation on Jehovah’s Word. We also increase our joy as we reflect on our current blessings, imitate the faith of others, and seek to do God’s will. In all such ways, we can share in the truth of Psalm 64:10, which says: “The righteous one will rejoice in Jehovah and take refuge in him.”

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### Other Ways to Increase Joy

- Keep your life simple and uncluttered.—Luke 12:15.
- Be modest in your expectations.—Mic. 6:8.
- Make sure that your schedule (for employment, schooling, recreation, and so forth) allows you to pursue spiritual goals.—Eph. 5:15, 16.
- Be reasonable with yourself and others.—Phil. 4:5.

# Public Talks Spread the Good News in Ireland

AS THE boat steamed up the Belfast Lough, a sea inlet, the little cluster of passengers standing on deck caught sight of green hills bathed in early morning light. It was May 1910. For one man in their midst, Charles T. Russell, this was the fifth trip to Ireland. Looming before Brother Russell were two massive ocean liners under construction, the ill-fated *Titanic* and her sister ship *Olympic*.<sup>\*</sup> Beyond the shipyard, a dozen Bible Students stood on the quay, awaiting his arrival.

Some 20 years earlier, seeking the best way to spread the good news worldwide, Brother Russell had decided to make a series of tours outside of America. His first tour started with Ireland, in July 1891. Aboard the *City of Chicago*, he viewed the sunset over the approaching coastline at Queenstown and may well have remembered his parents' description of their homeland. As Brother Russell and his traveling companions passed through tidy towns and beautiful countryside, they realized that here was a field "ready and waiting to be harvested."

Brother Russell visited Ireland seven times in all. The interest stirred on the first trip evidently led to hundreds, sometimes thousands, turning out to hear him speak on later visits. By his second trip, in May 1903, public meetings in Belfast and Dublin were being advertised in local newspapers. Russell recounted that the "audiences were very attentive" to the subject "The Oath-Bound Promise" about Abraham's faith and the future blessings for mankind.

Because of the considerable interest found there, Ireland was also included in Russell's third European trip. Five brothers greeted him as he

stepped onto the dock at Belfast one April morning in 1908. The advertised public talk, "The Overthrow of Satan's Empire," drew an "intelligent audience of about 300" later that evening. One objector in their midst was swiftly handled by skillful use of the Scriptures. In Dublin a more determined opposer—Mr. O'Connor, secretary of the YMCA—attempted to turn the audience of more than 1,000 against the Bible Students. What happened?

Let us go back in time and reconstruct in our minds what could well have happened at that event. A man interested in finding Bible truth decides to attend a public talk advertised in *The Irish Times*. He barely manages to find a seat in the packed auditorium. The man pays rapt attention to the white-haired, bearded speaker wearing a long black coat. As the speaker delivers his lecture, he moves across the platform, gesturing

Public talk advertised in *The Irish Times*,  
May 20, 1910



<sup>\*</sup> Within two years the *Titanic* sank.

Brother C. T. Russell aboard  
the *Lusitania*



freely, methodically building one scripture on another and opening up the man's ears of understanding to Bible truths. Even without the use of sound equipment, the speaker's voice carries to every part of the hall, holding the audience's attention for one and a half hours. Then, in a question-and-answer session, he is challenged by O'Connor and friends but ably defends the message with the Bible. The audience applaud their approval. When the dust settles, the interested man approaches the brothers to learn more. According to eyewitness accounts, many learned the truth in this way.

Leaving New York in May 1909 on the *Mauretania* for his fourth visit, Brother Russell took along a stenographer, Brother Huntsinger, so that the time traveling across the ocean could be used to dictate *Watch Tower* articles. Brother Russell's public talk in Belfast drew 450 locals, about 100 of whom had to stand because of a lack of room.

The fifth trip, mentioned at the outset, followed the same pattern. After the public talk in Dublin, a renowned theologian brought along by O'Connor received Scriptural answers to his questions, much to the audience's enjoyment. On the next day, the travelers caught the fast mail

boat to Liverpool and boarded the famed *Lusitania* for New York.\*

Advertised public talks were also featured during Brother Russell's sixth and seventh trips, in 1911. In the spring, 20 Bible Students in Belfast hosted 2,000, who heard the talk "Hereafter." O'Connor showed up in Dublin with yet another minister asking questions, but the audience applauded the Scriptural replies. Autumn of the same year saw other towns visited, with good attendances. O'Connor plus 100 rowdies attempted to disrupt the Dublin meeting once more, but the audience enthusiastically supported the speaker.

Although Brother Russell took the lead in presenting public talks at that time, he recognized that "no man is indispensable," since "this is not man's work; it's God's work." Advertised public talks—forerunner of the Public Meeting—provided excellent opportunities to present Scriptural truths. The result? Public talks helped spread the good news, and congregations sprang up in numerous cities throughout Ireland.—*From our archives in Britain.*

\* The *Lusitania* was torpedoed off the southern coast of Ireland in May 1915.

