



THE WATCHTOWER

JANUARY 15, 2008

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

STUDY EDITION

STUDY ARTICLES FOR THE WEEKS OF:

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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

PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

Study Articles 1-3 PAGES 4-17

These three study articles will strengthen your determination to continue sharing in the Christian ministry. They will remind you of why you need to be zealous, show you how to improve your "art of teaching," and encourage you by demonstrating that many are still responding to the preaching work.

Study Articles 4, 5 PAGES 20-28

These two study articles discuss in depth the hope that true Christians have. Whether you hope to make your home with Christ in the heavens or to live forever on earth under Kingdom rule, the articles will greatly strengthen your appreciation for Jehovah's loving-kindness and unsearchable wisdom.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

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PAGE 29



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The New Study Edition of *THE WATCHTOWER*

THE magazine that you are reading is the first issue of the study edition of *The Watchtower*. We would like to explain some of the features of the new format of this magazine.

The study edition is published for Jehovah's Witnesses and progressive Bible students. It will appear once a month and will contain either four or five study articles. The schedule for considering these study articles is printed on the cover of the magazine. Unlike the public edition of *The Watchtower*, the study edition will not have different cover illustrations for each issue, since it will not be offered in the field ministry.

On page 2 of the magazine, you will find a very helpful short summary of the purpose of each study article or series as well as a list of the secondary articles. *Watchtower* Study conductors will find that feature very helpful as they prepare for a meaningful discussion of the articles at the congregation meeting.

You will notice that the study articles are a little shorter than they were previously. As a result, more time is allowed for the consideration of key scriptures during the *Watchtower* Study. We warmly encourage you to look up all the cited scriptures each week. Some cited scriptures are marked "read" and should be read and discussed during the *Watchtower* Study. Other scriptures may also be read as time allows. In some articles, you may find scriptures marked "compare." Since such scriptures do not directly prove the main points in the paragraph, they will usually not be read at the congrega-

tion meeting. Still, "compare" scriptures do contain interesting supplementary information, or they may provide indirect support for the points under discussion. We encourage you to check them while preparing for the *Watchtower* Study. Perhaps you will be able to refer to them in your comments.

The annual report will no longer appear in *The Watchtower*. Starting in 2008, it will appear as an insert in *Our Kingdom Ministry* as well as in the *Yearbook*. However, as indicated above, the study edition does include secondary articles. Although many of these will not be discussed at a congregation meeting, you are encouraged to read them carefully. They too contain spiritual food from "the faithful and discreet slave."

—Matt. 24:45-47.

Finally, the study edition and the public edition of *The Watchtower* are not two different magazines. They are both *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*. They have on page 2 identical paragraphs explaining the purpose of *The Watchtower*. Both will be included in the annual bound volume. And material from both will be found in the "Do You Remember?" feature, which will be published in the study edition.

Since 1879, through periods of war, economic hardship, and persecution, *The Watchtower* has faithfully proclaimed truths about God's Kingdom. We pray that with Jehovah's blessing, it will continue to do so in its new format. And we pray that Jehovah will bless you, the reader, as you make good use of the new study edition of *The Watchtower*.

"KEEP WATCHING THE MINISTRY WHICH YOU ACCEPTED IN THE LORD"

"Keep watching the ministry which you accepted in the Lord, that you fulfill it."—COL. 4:17.

WE HAVE a serious responsibility toward the people who live around us. The decisions they make now will mean life or death during "the great tribulation." (Rev. 7:14) The inspired writer of the book of Proverbs said: "Deliver those who are being taken away to death; and those staggering to the slaughter, O may you hold them back." Striking words indeed! Failure to assume the responsibility of warning people of the choice that lies before them could result in our incurring bloodguilt. In fact, the same passage continues: "In case you should say: 'Look! We did not know of this,' will not he himself that is making an estimate of hearts discern it, and he himself that is observing your soul know and certainly pay back to earthling man according to his activity?" Clearly, Jehovah's servants cannot say that they 'do not know of' the danger that people are facing. —Prov. 24:11, 12.

² Jehovah values life. He urges his servants to make all possible efforts to help save as many lives as they can. Each minister of God must make known the lifesaving message found in God's Word. Our task is similar to that of a watchman who sounds a warning when he sees an impending threat. We do not want the blood of those in danger of perishing to be upon our heads. (Ezek. 33:1-7) How vital, therefore, that we persevere in our

1, 2. What responsibility do Christians have toward mankind?

efforts to "preach the word"!—Read 2 Timothy 4:1, 2, 5.

³ This article will consider how you can overcome obstacles to your lifesaving ministry and how you may be able to help a greater number of people. The article that follows will examine how you can cultivate the art of teaching vital truths. The third study article will report on some of the encouraging results that are being obtained by Kingdom proclaimers worldwide. Before we consider these topics, however, it would be good to review just why our times are so critical.

Why Many Are Without Hope

⁴ World events indicate that we are living in "the conclusion of the system of things" and that the end is very near. Mankind is experiencing the events and conditions that Jesus and his disciples said would mark "the last days." "Pangs of distress," including wars, food shortages, earthquakes, and other calamities, plague humanity. Lawless, selfish, and ungodly attitudes abound. Even for people who endeavor to live by Bible standards, these are "critical times hard to deal with."—Matt. 24:3, 6-8, 12; 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

⁵ The vast majority of mankind, however, are unaware of the real significance of world

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3. What topics will this and the following two articles discuss?
 - 4, 5. What is mankind experiencing, and how do many people react?

events. As a result, many are anxious about their own safety and that of their families. The loss of loved ones in death or other personal tragedies leave many distraught. Without accurate knowledge of why such things happen and where the solution lies, these people are without hope.—Eph. 2:12.

⁶ “Babylon the Great,” the world empire of false religion, has brought little comfort to the masses. On the contrary, by means of “the wine of her fornication,” she has made multitudes stagger in spiritual confusion. Moreover, by acting like a harlot, false religion has seduced and controlled “the kings of the earth,” using lying doctrines and spiritistic practices to keep the masses in passive subservience to their political masters. False religion has thus gained power and influence, but at the same time, she has completely rejected religious truth.—Rev. 17:1, 2, 5; 18:23.

⁷ Jesus taught that most of mankind are traveling along the broad road that leads to destruction. (Matt. 7:13, 14) Some individuals are on that broad road because they have made a deliberate choice to reject what the Bible teaches, but many others are there because they have been deceived, or kept in the dark, as to what Jehovah really requires of them. Perhaps some would change their lifestyle if they were given sound Scriptural reasons to do so. But those who re-

6. Why has “Babylon the Great” not been able to help her followers?

7. What prospect stands before the majority of mankind, but how may some be helped?

Courage is needed to preach in the face of opposition

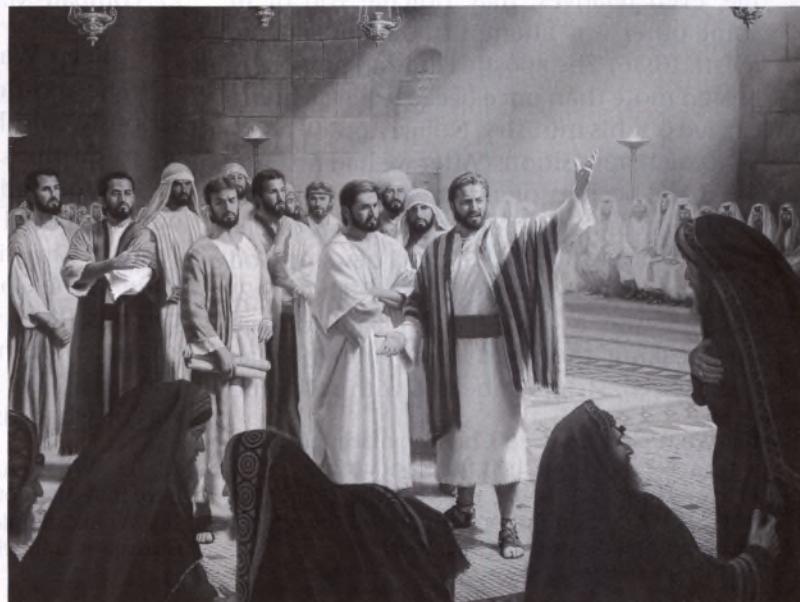
main in Babylon the Great and who continue to reject Bible standards will not be spared through “the great tribulation.”—Rev. 7:14.

Keep On Preaching “Without Letup”

⁸ Jesus said that his disciples would preach the good news of the Kingdom and make disciples. (Matt. 28:19, 20) True Christians, therefore, have always considered participation in the preaching work to be a matter of loyalty to God and a fundamental requirement of their faith. Hence, Jesus’ early followers persevered even in the face of opposition. They relied upon Jehovah for strength, praying that he would enable them to continue “speaking [his] word with all boldness.” In response, Jehovah filled them with holy spirit, and they boldly spoke the word of God.—Acts 4:18, 29, 31.

⁹ When opposition turned violent, did Jesus’ followers waver in their determination to preach the good news? Not at all. Irritated by the apostles’ preaching, Jewish

8, 9. How did first-century Christians react when faced with opposition, and why?



religious leaders arrested the apostles, threatened them, and flogged them. Yet, the apostles "continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus." They clearly saw that they had to "obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:28, 29; 40-42.

¹⁰ Most servants of God today have not had to endure beatings or imprisonment because of their preaching activities. However, all true Christians face tests and trials of some kind. Your Bible-trained conscience might, for example, impel you to adopt an unpopular course of conduct or one that makes you stand out as different. Colleagues, schoolmates, or neighbors might think you are odd because you base your decisions on Bible principles. Nevertheless, their negative response should not deter you. The world lies in spiritual darkness, but Christians must "[shine] as illuminators." (Phil. 2:15) Perhaps some sincere observers will see and appreciate your fine works and give glory to Jehovah as a result.—*Read Matthew 5:16.*

¹¹ Courage is needed for us to keep on preaching the Kingdom message. Some people, even relatives, may ridicule you or in some other way attempt to discourage you. (Matt. 10:36) The apostle Paul was physically beaten more than once because he faithfully carried out his ministry. Notice how he reacted to such opposition: "After we had first suffered and been insolently treated," he wrote, "we mustered up boldness by means of our God to speak to you the good news of God with a great deal of struggling." (1 Thess. 2:2) Surely it was a challenge for Paul to keep on speaking the good news after he had been seized, stripped, beaten with rods, and

10. What challenges do Christians face today, yet what may result from their fine conduct?

11. (a) How may some react to the preaching work? (b) What kind of opposition did the apostle Paul face, and how did he react to it?

thrown into prison. (Acts 16:19-24) What gave him the boldness to continue? His overriding desire to carry out his God-given preaching commission.—1 Cor. 9:16.

¹² It can also be a challenge to maintain our zeal in territories where people are rarely at home or where there is little response to the Kingdom message. What can we do in such circumstances? We might find it necessary to muster up extra boldness to speak to people in informal settings. We may also have to adjust our schedule or concentrate our efforts on preaching in areas where we can contact more people.—Compare John 4:7-15; Acts 16:13; 17:17.

¹³ Other difficulties that many have to contend with are advancing age and poor health, which may limit what they can reasonably do in the preaching work. If that is true of you, do not be discouraged. Jehovah is well aware of your limitations and appreciates what you can do. (*Read 2 Corinthians 8:12.*) Whatever kind of adversity you may be facing—opposition, apathy, or ill health—do all that your circumstances allow you to do in sharing the good news with others.—Prov. 3:27; compare Mark 12:41-44.

'Keep Watching Your Ministry'

¹⁴ The apostle Paul took his ministry very seriously, and he encouraged fellow believers to do the same. (Acts 20:20, 21; 1 Cor. 11:1) One individual whom Paul singled out for special encouragement was a first-century Christian named Archippus. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul wrote: "Tell Archippus: 'Keep watching the ministry which you accepted in the Lord, that you fulfill it.'" (Col. 4:17) We do not know who Archippus was or what his circumstances were, but he

12, 13. What challenges do some face, and how have they attempted to overcome them?

14. What example did the apostle Paul set for fellow Christians, and what counsel did he give?



had evidently accepted a ministry. If you are a dedicated Christian, you too have accepted a ministry. Are you continuing to watch the ministry in order to fulfill it?

¹⁵ Prior to our baptism, we dedicated our lives to Jehovah in heartfelt prayer. This meant that we were determined to do his will. So we do well to ask ourselves now, ‘Is the doing of God’s will *really* the most important thing in my life?’ We may have various responsibilities that Jehovah expects us to care for—such as providing for our family. (1 Tim. 5:8) But how do we use the rest of our time and energy? What is our priority in life?—*Read 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.*

¹⁶ Are you a young dedicated Christian who has finished or is close to finishing your required schooling? Likely, you do not yet have weighty family responsibilities. So,

15. What does Christian dedication entail, leading to what questions?

16, 17. What possibilities might young Christians or those with relatively few responsibilities consider?

What can you do if you preach in territories where people are rarely at home?

what do you plan to do with your life? What decisions will best enable you to fulfill your promise to do Jehovah’s will? Many have organized their affairs in order to pioneer, and they have reaped great joy and satisfaction as a result.—Ps. 110:3; Eccl. 12:1.

¹⁷ Perhaps you are a young adult. You have a full-time secular job but have few responsibilities except to care for yourself. Doubtless you enjoy participating in congregation activities to the extent that your schedule allows. Could you perhaps have even greater joy? Have you thought about expanding your share in the ministry? (Ps. 34:8; Prov. 10:22) In some territories, much work still needs to be done to reach everybody with the life-giving message of truth. Could you make adjustments in your life, perhaps to serve in an area where the need for Kingdom proclaimers is greater?—*Read 1 Timothy 6:6-8.*

¹⁸ Consider the example of Kevin and Elena, from the United States.* As was normal for young newlyweds in their area, they felt that they had to buy a house. Both worked full-time and could maintain a comfortable lifestyle. Yet, their work schedule

* The names have been changed.

18. What adjustments did one young couple make, and with what results?

How Would You Answer?

- What responsibility do Christians have toward mankind?
- How should we cope with obstacles to our preaching work?
- How can we fulfill the ministry that we have accepted?

and jobs around the home left little time for field service. They realized that they were dedicating almost all their time and energy to their possessions. However, when they observed the simple lifestyle of a happy pioneer couple, Kevin and Elena decided to change the focus of their lives. After seeking Jehovah's direction in prayer, they sold their house and moved into an apartment. Elena reduced the hours she worked secularly and became a pioneer. Encouraged by the experiences his wife was enjoying, Kevin quit his full-time job and began pioneering. Some time later, they moved to a South American country to serve where the need for Kingdom preachers is great. "We always had a happy marriage," says Kevin, "but when we worked toward spiritual goals, our happiness reached an even deeper level."—*Read Matthew 6:19-22.*

¹⁹ The preaching of the good news is the most important work being done on earth today. (Rev. 14:6, 7) It contributes to the sanctification of Jehovah's name. (Matt. 6:9) The Bible's message improves the lives of the many thousands who embrace it each year, and this can lead to their salvation. Yet, "how . . . will they hear without someone to preach?" asked the apostle Paul. (Rom. 10:14, 15) How, indeed? Why not be determined to do all you possibly can to fulfill your ministry?

²⁰ Another way that you can help people understand the importance of these critical times and the consequences of the decisions they make is by improving your teaching ability. How you can do this will be discussed in the following article.

19, 20. Why is the preaching of the good news the most important work today?

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR “ART OF TEACHING”

“Preach the word, . . . reprove, reprimand, exhort, with all long-suffering and art of teaching.”—2 TIM. 4:2.

DESPITE the wonderful works of healing that Jesus performed during his earthly ministry, he was primarily known, not as a healer or a miracle worker, but as a teacher. (Mark 12:19; 13:1) Declaring the good news of God's Kingdom was Jesus' priority, and so it is for his followers today. Christians have a commission to continue the work of disciple-making by *teaching* people to observe all the

things that Jesus commanded.—Matt. 28:19, 20.

² In order to fulfill our commission to make disciples, we constantly seek to improve our ability to teach. The apostle Paul underlined the importance of this skill when writing to his preaching companion Timothy. He said: "Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. Stay by

2. What do we need to do in order to fulfill our preaching assignment?

1. What command did Jesus give to his disciples, and what example did he set?

these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you." (1 Tim. 4:16) The kind of teaching that Paul had in mind is not the mere imparting of knowledge. Effective Christian ministers reach the hearts of people and motivate them to make changes in their lives. That is an art. So how can we develop the "art of teaching" when presenting to others the good news of God's Kingdom?—2 Tim. 4:2.

Developing the "Art of Teaching"

³ One dictionary defines "art" as a "skill that is attained by study, practice, or observation." We need to pay attention to all three of these elements to become effective teachers of the good news. We can gain a correct understanding of our subject only by studying it prayerfully. (*Read Psalm 119:27, 34*) Observing effective ministers as they teach helps us to learn their methods and to imitate them. And striving on a regular basis to practice what we learn will help us to refine our abilities.—Luke 6:40; 1 Tim. 4:13-15.

⁴ Jehovah is our Grand Instructor. Through the visible part of his organization, he provides his servants on earth with guidance as to how they should fulfill their preaching commission. (Isa. 30:20, 21) In this regard, every congregation holds a weekly Theocratic Ministry School, which is designed to help all those enrolled become effective proclaimers of God's Kingdom. The main textbook of this school is the Bible. Jehovah's inspired Word tells us what to teach. Moreover, it indicates what teaching methods are effective and appropriate. The Theocratic Ministry School regularly reminds us

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- 3, 4. (a) How can we develop the "art of teaching"? (b) How does the Theocratic Ministry School help us to become effective teachers?

*Are you enrolled in the
Theocratic Ministry School?*

that we will become more skilled as teachers if we base our teaching on God's Word, use questions effectively, teach with simplicity, and show a sincere interest in others. Let us examine each of these points separately. Then we will discuss how to reach a student's heart.

Base Your Teaching on God's Word

⁵ Jesus, the greatest of all human teachers, based his teachings on the Scriptures. (Matt. 21:13; John 6:45; 8:17) He spoke, not in his own name, but in the name of the One who sent him. (John 7:16-18) That is the example we follow. So, what we say either in the door-to-door ministry or at home Bible studies should center on the authority of God's Word. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) No amount of clever reasoning on our part can possibly equal the effectiveness and power of the inspired Scriptures. The Bible has authority. Whatever point we are striving to help a student grasp, the best method we can use is to have him or her read what the Scriptures say about it.
—*Read Hebrews 4:12.*

⁶ That is not to say, of course, that a Christian teacher need not prepare for a Bible

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5. What should be the basis for our teaching, and why?
6. How can a teacher make sure that the student gets the point of the material being considered?





Why is it important to invite your student to read from the Bible?

you study the Bible will quickly be able to answer the printed questions, using the information in the corresponding paragraphs. Still, the discerning teacher will not be satisfied simply with the right answers. For example, a student may be able to explain correctly what the Bible says about fornication. (1 Cor. 6:18) Tactful viewpoint questions, however, can indicate what the student really thinks about what he is learning. The teacher might thus ask: "Why does the Bible condemn sexual relations outside of marriage? What do you think about this God-given restriction? Do you think that there is any benefit from living according to God's moral standards?" The response to such questions can reveal what is in the student's heart.—*Read Matthew 16:13-17.*

study. On the contrary, careful forethought should be given to deciding which of the cited scriptures the teacher or the student will read from the Bible during the study. Generally speaking, it is good to read those scriptures that provide the basis for our beliefs. It is also necessary to help the student get the sense of each text he reads.—1 Cor. 14:8, 9.

Use Effective Questions

⁷ The skillful use of questions stimulates thinking and helps the teacher to reach the student's heart. So instead of explaining scriptures to your student, ask him to explain them to you. Sometimes an additional question or even a series of questions might be needed to help your student arrive at the right understanding. When you involve the student in the learning process in this way, you are, in effect, helping him not only to grasp the reasons behind any given conclusion but also to make that conclusion his own conviction.—Matt. 17:24-26; Luke 10: 36, 37.

⁸ The study method used in our publications is that of questions and answers. No doubt, the majority of people with whom

7. Why is the use of questions a good teaching method?
8. How can we discern what is in a student's heart?

Keep It Simple

⁹ Most truths contained in God's Word are in themselves relatively simple. It may be, though, that people with whom we study the Bible have been confused by the doctrines of false religion. Our role as teachers is to make the Bible easy to understand. Effective teachers convey information simply, clearly, and accurately. If we follow this guideline, we will not make the truth more complicated than it needs to be. Avoid unnecessary details. There is no need to comment on every aspect of a scripture that we read. Simply focus on what is essential to clarifying the point under consideration. The student will come to appreciate deeper Scriptural truths as he progresses in his understanding.—Heb. 5:13, 14.

9. What should we bear in mind when sharing Scriptural information?

¹⁰ How much material should be covered in one study session? For this, discernment is needed. The abilities and circumstances of both student and teacher will vary, but we should always bear in mind that our objective as teachers is to help our student build solid faith. So we allow him sufficient time to read, grasp, and accept the truths presented in God's Word. We do not consider more material than he can grasp. At the same time, we keep the study moving. Once our student has grasped a point, we move on to the next.—Col. 2:6, 7.

¹¹ The apostle Paul kept the message of the good news simple when speaking to new ones. Even though he was very well educated, he avoided using high-sounding language. (*Read 1 Corinthians 2:1, 2.*) The simplicity of Scriptural truth attracts and satisfies sincere people. No one needs to be an intellectual to understand it.—Matt. 11:25; Acts 4:13; 1 Cor. 1:26, 27.

Help Students Appreciate What They Learn

¹² To be effective, our teaching needs to touch a student's heart. The student has to understand how the information applies to him personally, how it benefits him, and how his life would improve if he followed Scriptural direction.—Isa. 48:17, 18.

¹³ For example, we may be considering Hebrews 10:24, 25, which encourages Christians to gather with fellow believers for Scriptural encouragement and loving association. If the student is not yet attending congregation meetings, we might briefly describe how they are conducted and what will be discussed. We might mention that congregation

10. What factors determine how much material to cover during a Bible study?
11. What lesson regarding teaching can we learn from the apostle Paul?
- 12, 13. What may motivate a student to act on what he is learning? Illustrate.

meetings are part of our worship and show that they benefit us personally. We then might invite the student to attend. His motivation for responding to Scriptural commands should be his desire to obey Jehovah, not to please the person who is studying with him.—Gal. 6:4, 5.

¹⁴ A fundamental benefit that students derive from studying the Bible and applying its principles is that they come to know and appreciate Jehovah as a person. (Isa. 42:8) Not only is he a loving Father and the Creator and Owner of the universe but he also reveals his personality and abilities to those who love and serve him. (*Read Exodus 34:6, 7.*) When Moses was about to lead the nation of Israel out of Egyptian captivity, Jehovah identified himself using the expression: "I shall prove to be what I shall prove to be." (Ex. 3:13-15) This implied that Jehovah would become whatever was necessary for him to become in order to carry out his purposes in regard to his chosen people. The Israelites thus came to know Jehovah in the roles of Savior, Warrior, Provider, and Fulfiller of promises and in other capacities.—Ex. 15:2, 3; 16:2-5; Josh. 23:14.

¹⁵ Our students may not experience intervention by Jehovah in their lives as dramatically as Moses did. Nevertheless, as our students grow in faith and in appreciation for what they learn and as they begin to apply it, they will doubtless see the need to lean on Jehovah for courage, wisdom, and guidance. As they do so, they too will come to know Jehovah in the roles of a wise and trusted Counselor, Protector, and generous Provider of all their needs.—Ps. 55:22; 63:7; Prov. 3:5, 6.

Show Loving Interest

¹⁶ If you feel that you are not as skilled

- 14, 15. (a) What can a Bible student learn about Jehovah? (b) How can knowledge of God's personality benefit a Bible student?
16. Why is natural ability not the most important factor in our effectiveness as a teacher?

Pray with and for your student

at teaching as you would like to be, take heart. Jehovah and Jesus are supervising the educational program that is being carried out worldwide today. (Acts 1:7, 8; Rev. 14:6) They can bless our efforts so that our words have the desired effect on a righthearted person. (John 6: 44) A teacher's sincere love for his student can more than make up for any lack of natural ability. The apostle Paul showed that he understood the importance of loving those who are being taught.—*Read 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8.*

¹⁷ Similarly, we can show a sincere interest in each Bible student by taking time to get to know him. As we discuss Scriptural principles with him, it is likely that we will become acquainted with his circumstances. We may observe that he is already living his life in harmony with some of the points that he has learned from the Bible. In other areas, he may still need to make adjustments. By helping the student to see how the information presented during Bible study sessions applies to him personally, we can lovingly assist him to become a genuine disciple of Christ.

17. How can we show a sincere interest in each Bible student?

Do You Recall?

- Why do Christians need to develop the “art of teaching”?
- Using what methods can make our teaching more effective?
- What can make up for any lack of natural teaching ability on our part?



¹⁸ Most important of all, we can pray with our student and for our student. It should be clear to him that our objective is to help him come to know his Creator more intimately, draw closer to Him, and benefit from His guidance. (*Read Psalm 25:4, 5.*) When we pray for Jehovah's blessing on a student's efforts to apply what he is learning, the student will see the importance of becoming a ‘doer of the word.’ (Jas. 1:22) And as the student listens to our sincere prayers, he too will learn how to pray. What a joy it is to help Bible students develop their own relationship with Jehovah!

¹⁹ It is encouraging to know that more than six and a half million Witnesses worldwide are busy developing the “art of teaching,” with the aim of helping honesthearted individuals to observe all the things that Jesus commanded. What results are being obtained by our preaching activity? The answer to this question will be considered in the following article.

18. Why is it important to pray with and for our student?

19. What will be considered in the following article?

"RIGHTLY DISPOSED" ONES ARE RESPONDING

"All those who were rightly disposed for everlasting life became believers."—ACTS 13:48.

THE Bible book of Acts preserves the exciting account of how the early Christians responded to Jesus' prophecy that the good news of the Kingdom would be preached throughout the inhabited earth. (Matt. 24:14) Zealous preachers blazed the trail, so to speak, for all those who would follow them. As a result of the fervent witnessing of Jesus' disciples in Jerusalem, thousands of people, including "a great crowd of priests," flocked to the first-century congregation.—Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:7.

² Early missionaries helped many more to embrace Christianity. Philip, for one, went to Samaria, where crowds paid attention to his words. (Acts 8:5-8) Paul traveled widely with various companions, preaching the Christian message in Cyprus, parts of Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, and Italy. In cities where he preached, multitudes of both Jews and Greeks became believers. (Acts 14:1; 16:5;

17:4) Titus carried on a ministry in Crete. (Titus 1:5) Peter was busy in

1, 2. How did early Christians respond to Jesus' prophecy that the good news would be preached in all the inhabited earth?

Thousands of honesthearted individuals are responding



Babylon, and by the time he wrote his first letter, about 62-64 C.E., the activity of the Christians was well-known in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. (1 Pet. 1:1; 5:13) What exciting times those were! So zealous were those first-century Christian preachers that their enemies claimed that they had "overturned the inhabited earth."—Acts 17:6; 28:22.

³ In modern times too, the Christian congregation has been blessed with remarkable growth. Are you not encouraged when you read the annual report of Jehovah's Witnesses and see the results that are being obtained worldwide? Does it not warm your heart to know that Kingdom proclaimers conducted more than six million Bible studies during the 2007 service year? Moreover, the attendance at the Memorial of Jesus Christ's death last year indicates that some ten million people who are not Witnesses of Jehovah were sufficiently interested in the good news to attend this important commemoration. This indicates that there is still much work to do.

⁴ Today, as in the first century, "all those who [are] rightly disposed for everlasting life" are responding to the message of truth. (Acts 13:48) Jehovah is drawing such people into his organization. (*Read Haggai 2:7*) What attitude toward the Christian ministry do we

3. What results are being obtained today by Kingdom proclaimers in their preaching activities, and how does that make you feel?

4. Who are responding to the Kingdom message?

need to maintain in order to cooperate fully with this ingathering work?

Preach Impartially

⁵ The first-century Christians understood that "God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35) Whether a person has a good relationship with Jehovah or not depends on his exercising faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice. (John 3: 16, 36) And it is Jehovah's will that "all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth."—1 Tim. 2:3, 4.

⁶ It would be wrong for proclaimers of the good news to prejudge people on the basis of their race, social status, appearance, religious background, or any other characteristic. Consider for a moment: Are you not grateful that the person who first spoke to you about Scriptural truths was free of prejudices toward you? So why hold back from offering a potentially lifesaving message to anyone who might listen to it?—*Read Matthew 7:12.*

⁷ Jehovah has appointed Jesus as Judge; hence, we do not have the right to judge anybody. That is fitting, since—unlike Jesus—we can judge only by the "mere appearance to [our] eyes" or "the thing heard by [our] ears," whereas Jesus can read the intimate thoughts and reasonings of the heart.—Isa. 11:1-5; 2 Tim. 4:1.

⁸ People from virtually every background have become servants of Jehovah. One outstanding example is that of Saul of Tarsus, who came to be known as the apostle Paul.

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5. What kind of people have Jehovah's favor?
 6. Against what must Kingdom preachers guard, and why?
 7. Why must we refrain from judging those to whom we preach?
 - 8, 9. (a) What kind of person was Saul before he became a Christian? (b) What should the apostle Paul's experience teach us?

Saul, a Pharisee, was a bitter opposer of Christians. His sincere conviction that they were wrong led him to persecute the Christian congregation. (Gal. 1:13) From a human standpoint, he must have seemed to be one of the least likely people to become a Christian. Yet, Jesus saw something good in Saul's heart and chose him to fulfill a special commission. As a result, Saul became one of the most active and zealous members of the first-century Christian congregation.

⁹ What does the experience of the apostle Paul teach us? In our territory, perhaps there are groups of people who seem hostile to the message we bear. Though it may appear doubtful that any of them will ever become true Christians, we should not stop trying to reason with them. Sometimes even the most unlikely individuals prove to be receptive. Our commission is to keep on preaching to all "without letup."—*Read Acts 5:42.*

Blessings Await Those Who Preach "Without Letup"

¹⁰ Appearances can be deceptive. Ignacio,* for example, began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses while he was in prison in a South American country. He was feared because of his violent nature. Consequently, inmates who made and sold items to fellow prisoners used Ignacio to collect debts from those who were slow to pay. However, as Ignacio made spiritual progress and applied what he was learning, this once violent bully became a kind person. No one uses him to collect debts anymore, yet Ignacio is content that Bible truths and God's spirit have transformed his personality. He is also grateful for the open-mindedness of the Kingdom pub-

* Some of the names have been changed.

10. Why should we not hold back from preaching to people who may seem intimidating? Relate local experiences.

lishers who made the effort to study with him.

¹¹ One of the reasons why we keep returning to visit people with whom we have already spoken about the good news is that their circumstances and attitudes can and do change. Since our last visit, some may have been affected by serious illness, loss of a job, or the death of a loved one. (*Read Ecclesiastes 9:11.*) World events may motivate people to think seriously about their future. Such developments can cause a person who was previously apathetic—or even opposed—to respond favorably. Hence, we should not hold back from sharing the good news with others on every suitable occasion.

¹² Classifying and judging other people appears to be a human tendency. Yet, Jehovah sees people as individuals. He sees the potential of each one. (*Read 1 Samuel 16:7.*) In our ministry, we should strive to do the same. Many experiences show the good that results from having a positive view of all to whom we preach.

¹³ Sandra, a pioneer sister, was engaged in the house-to-house ministry on an island in the Caribbean when she met Ruth, who was deeply involved in carnival celebrations. Ruth had twice been crowned national carnival queen. She showed an unusual interest in what Sandra was saying, so a Bible study was arranged. Sandra recalls: “As I walked into her living room, I was greeted by a large photo of Ruth in full carnival regalia, as well as trophies that she had won. I wrongly assumed that someone who was so popular and so involved in carnival festivities could not have

11. Why do we keep returning to visit people?
12. How should we view the people to whom we preach, and why?
- 13, 14. (a) Why did a pioneer react negatively to a woman she met in the ministry? (b) What can we learn from this experience?

What can we learn from the changes made by the apostle Paul?

an interest in the truth. So I stopped calling on her.”

¹⁴ Some time later, Ruth appeared at the Kingdom Hall, and when the meeting was over, she asked Sandra, “Why have you stopped coming to study with me?” Sandra apologized and arranged to resume the study. Ruth made rapid progress, took down her carnival pictures, began engaging in all congregation activities, and dedicated her life to Jehovah. Of course, Sandra came to recognize that her initial reaction was wrong.

¹⁵ Positive results have also come to many who have witnessed to unbelieving family members, even when it seemed unlikely that these would respond favorably. Take, for example, the case of Joyce, a Christian sister in the United States. Her brother-in-law had been in and out of jail ever since he was a teenager. “People said that his life amounted

- 15, 16. (a) What resulted from one publisher’s witnessing to a relative? (b) Why should a relative’s background not discourage us from witnessing to him or her?





Proclaimers of the good news do not prejudge people

know what is in another person's heart? That person may be searching in all sincerity for religious truth. Hence, do not hold back from giving him or her the opportunity to find it.—*Read Proverbs 3:27.*

An Effective Bible Study Aid

¹⁷ Reports from countries around the world show that many honesthearted individuals are responding well to the Bible study aid *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* Penni, a pioneer sister in the United States, started several studies using this publication. Two of them were with older people who were devout members of their churches. Penni was not sure how they would react to Scriptural truths presented in the *Bible Teach* book. Nevertheless, she writes, “Because of the clear, logical, and concise way in which the information is presented, they readily accepted what they were learning as the truth, without argument or emotional turmoil.”

¹⁸ Pat, a publisher in Britain, began to study the Bible with a woman who was a refugee from an Asian country. The woman was forced to flee her country after her husband and sons had been taken away by rebel soldiers, never to be seen again. Her life had been threatened, her home had been burned down, and she had been gang-raped. All of this made her feel that she had nothing to live for, and she considered suicide on a number of occasions. The Bible study, however, gave her hope. “The simplicity of the explanations and illustrations in the *Bible Teach* book had a dramatic effect on her,” writes Pat. The student made rapid progress,

17, 18. (a) What do reports from around the world indicate about the value of *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* (b) What positive experiences have you had using this book?

How Would You Answer?

- Who are responding to the good news?
- Why should we avoid prejudging those to whom we preach?
- What results are being obtained with the publication *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*

qualified to become an unbaptized publisher, and expressed her desire to be baptized at the next assembly. What a joy it is to help sincere people understand and appreciate the hope offered by the Scriptures!

"Let Us Not Give Up in Doing What Is Fine"

¹⁹ With each passing day, the urgency of our commission to preach and make disciples becomes more pressing. Thousands of rightly disposed ones respond to our preaching every year. Yet, "the great day of Jehovah is near," meaning that those who remain

19. Why is the preaching work so urgent?

in spiritual darkness are "staggering to the slaughter."—Zeph. 1:14; Prov. 24:11.

²⁰ We can still help such people. But for us to do so, it is vital that we imitate the first-century Christians, who "continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus." (Acts 5:42) Follow their example by persevering despite adversity, by paying attention to your "art of teaching," and by preaching to all without partiality! "Let us not give up in doing what is fine," for if we persevere, we shall reap the bounteous blessings of divine approval.—2 Tim. 4:2; read *Galatians* 6:9.

20. What should each of us be determined to do?

They Enriched Their Life Can You Do the Same?

MARC, a brother in Canada, was employed by a firm that builds sophisticated robotic systems used by space agencies. He worked part-time and served as a regular pioneer. Then, a supervisor offered Marc a promotion—a full-time position with a big salary. What did Marc do?

Amy, a sister in the Philippines, served as a regular pioneer while completing her schooling. After graduation, she was offered a full-time position that demanded much of her time but paid handsomely. What choice did Amy make?

Marc and Amy made different decisions, and the results of their choices illustrate the wisdom of the counsel given to Christians in ancient Corinth. The apostle Paul wrote: "Let . . . those making use of the world [be]

as those not using it to the full."—1 Cor. 7:29-31.

Use the World but Not to the Full

Before we learn what happened to Marc and Amy, let us briefly consider the meaning of the expression "the world" (or, *ko'smos* in Greek) that Paul used in his letter to the Corinthians. In that Bible passage, *ko'smos* refers to the world system in which we live—human society as a whole—and it includes the mundane things that are part of daily life, such as housing, food, and clothing.* To obtain such daily necessities, most of us must hold a job. Indeed, we have no choice but to use the world to carry out our Scriptural obligation to provide for ourselves and our

* See *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, pages 1207-8.

families. (1 Tim. 5:8) However, at the same time, we realize that "the world is passing away." (1 John 2:17) Therefore, we use the world to the extent necessary but not "to the full."—1 Cor. 7:31.

Motivated by that Bible counsel to limit it to the extent possible their use of the world, numerous brothers and sisters have reassessed their circumstances, cut back on employment, and simplified their lifestyle. After doing that, they soon discovered that they actually enriched their life because they had more time to spend with their families and in Jehovah's service. Moreover, their simple life made them depend less on the world and more on Jehovah. Can you do the same—simplify your life in order to advance the interests of God's Kingdom?—Matt. 6:19-24, 33.

"We Feel Closer to Jehovah Than Ever Before"

Marc, mentioned in the introduction, heeded the Bible's advice not to use the world to the full. He turned down the lucrative promotion offered to him. A few days later, Marc's supervisor offered him an even larger salary to persuade him to accept the new job. "It was a test," says Marc, "but again I declined." He explains why: "My wife, Paula, and I wanted to build our lives around serving Jehovah as fully as possible. Therefore, we resolved to simplify our lifestyle. We prayed to Jehovah for wisdom in reaching our goal and set a specific date for making ourselves available to serve Jehovah to a fuller extent."

Paula observes: "I worked three days a week as a secretary at a hospital and received a good salary. I also served as a regular pioneer. However, like Marc, I wanted to make myself available to serve Jehovah wherever there was a greater need for Kingdom proclaimers. Yet, when I handed in my resigna-



Marc and Paula in the ministry

tion, my supervisor said that I qualified for the position of executive secretary that had just opened up. It was the highest paying secretarial job in the hospital, but I stuck to my decision to resign. When I gave my supervisor my reason for not applying for the position, she commended me for my faith."

Soon thereafter, Marc and Paula received an assignment to serve as special pioneers in a small congregation in an isolated part of Canada. How did their move work out? Marc says: "After leaving a financially stable job that I had done for almost half of my life, I was apprehensive, but Jehovah blessed our ministry. We feel the tremendous joy that comes from sharing spiritual gifts with others. Full-time service also enriched our marriage. Our conversations center on things that are truly important—spiritual topics. We feel closer to Jehovah than ever before." (Acts 20:35) Paula adds:

"When you leave your job and the comforts of a familiar home, you have to place all your trust in Jehovah. We did, and Jehovah blessed us. The dear brothers and sisters in our new congregation make us feel loved and needed. I now use the energy that I formerly spent on my job to help people spiritually. I am overjoyed to serve in this assignment."

'Well-Off but Not Happy'

Amy, mentioned earlier, chose a different course. She accepted the lucrative full-time position offered to her. Amy says: "For the first year, I remained active in the ministry but found that the focus of my life gradually shifted from Kingdom interests to career promotion. I received tempting offers for advancement and began to expend my energy on climbing the corporate ladder. As the responsibilities of my job increased, I spent less and less time in the ministry. Eventually, I stopped preaching altogether."

Looking back on that time, Amy notes: "Financially, I was well-off. I traveled a lot and enjoyed the prestige that came with my professional position. Yet, I was not happy. Despite having money, I had numerous problems. I wondered what was wrong. Then I finally realized that by pursuing a career in this world, I had nearly been 'led astray from

the faith.' As a consequence, exactly as God's Word states, I was suffering 'many pains.'" —1 Tim. 6:10.

What did Amy do? She says: "I asked the elders to help me regain my spiritual health and began attending meetings. During a song, I began to cry. I remembered how happy I was during the five years that I shared in the harvest as a pioneer, although I was materially poor then. I knew that I had to stop wasting my time chasing money and that I had to put Kingdom interests first. I took a demotion at work, which meant the loss of

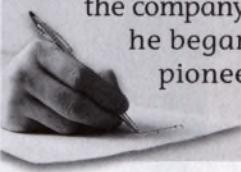
Can you adjust your circumstances and simplify your lifestyle?

50 percent of my salary, and began to share in the preaching work again." Amy happily notes: "I had the joy of serving as a pioneer for a few years. I now have a feeling of fulfillment that I never experienced when I spent most of my time working for the world."

Can you adjust your circumstances and simplify your lifestyle? If you use the time that will become available in order to advance Kingdom interests, you too will enrich your life.—Prov. 10:22.

"I Love It Already!"

David, a Christian elder in the United States, desired to join his wife and children in the full-time service. He was able to arrange for part-time employment at the company where he worked, and he began to serve as a regular pioneer. Did the change en-



rich his life? Some months later, David wrote to a friend: "There is nothing more satisfying than being fully involved in serving Jehovah with one's family. I really thought that it would take some time for me to get used to pioneering, but I love it already! It is so refreshing."

COUNTED WORTHY TO RECEIVE A KINGDOM

"This is a proof of the righteous judgment of God, leading to your being counted worthy of the kingdom of God."—2 THESS. 1:5.

ABOUT the year 50 of our Common Era, the apostle Paul was in Athens. Irritated by the rampant idolatry that he saw there, he was moved to give a masterly witness. He climaxed his words with a declaration that must have caught the attention of his pagan listeners. He said: "Now [God] is telling mankind that they should all everywhere repent. Because he has set a day in which he purposes to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and he has furnished a guarantee to all men in that he has resurrected him from the dead."

—Acts 17:30, 31.

² How sobering it is to reflect on the fact that God has set a future judgment day for mankind! That judgment will be by the one whom Paul did not name in his talk in Athens but whom we know to be the resurrected Jesus Christ. Judgment by Jesus will mean either life or death.

³ That Judgment Day will be 1,000 years long. Jesus will preside over it in Jehovah's name as King of God's Kingdom, but he will not be alone. Jehovah chooses others from among mankind to reign with Jesus and judge during that millennium-long day. (Compare Luke 22:29, 30.) Al-

1, 2. What is God's purpose as to judging, and who will do the judging?

3. Why did Jehovah make a covenant with Abraham, and who play a special role in its fulfillment?

most 4,000 years ago, Jehovah laid the groundwork for that Judgment Day when he made a covenant with his faithful servant Abraham. (*Read Genesis 22:17, 18.*) That covenant evidently went into effect in 1943 B.C.E. Of course, Abraham was unable to grasp fully what the covenant would mean for mankind. We today, though, can see that under its terms, Abraham's seed play a special role in the fulfillment of God's purpose to judge mankind.

⁴ The primary part of the seed of Abraham turned out to be Jesus, who in 29 C.E. was anointed with holy spirit and became the promised Messiah, or Christ. (Gal. 3:16) Jesus would spend the next three and a half years

4, 5. (a) Who is the primary part of the seed of Abraham, and what did he say about the Kingdom? (b) When was the hope to be part of the Kingdom arrangement opened up?

Jesus encouraged his followers to reach out for the Kingdom



preaching the good news of the Kingdom to the Jewish nation. After the arrest of John the Baptist, Jesus showed that others could hope to share in that Kingdom when he said: "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of the heavens is the goal toward which men press, and those pressing forward are seizing it."—Matt. 11:12.

⁵ Interestingly, immediately before speaking of those who would 'seize' the Kingdom of the heavens, Jesus said: "Truly I say to you people, Among those born of women there has not been raised up a greater than John the Baptist; but a person that is a lesser one in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he is." (Matt. 11:11) Why was that? Because the hope of being part of the Kingdom arrangement was not fully opened up to faithful ones until holy spirit was poured out at Pentecost 33 C.E. By that time, John the Baptist had died.—Acts 2:1-4.

Abraham's Seed Declared Righteous

⁶ Abraham was told that his seed would multiply and become "like the stars of the heavens" and the grains of sand on the seashore. (Gen. 13:16; 22:17) In other words, in Abraham's time it was impossible for humans to know how many would make up this seed. However, the exact number of his spiritual seed was eventually revealed. In addition to Jesus, it was to number 144,000. —Rev. 7:4; 14:1.

⁷ Regarding Abraham's faith, God's Word states: "[Abraham] put faith in Jehovah; and he proceeded to count it to him as righteousness." (Gen. 15:5, 6) True, no human is ab-

6, 7. (a) In what way was Abraham's seed to become "like the stars of the heavens"? (b) What blessing did Abraham receive, and what similar blessing does his seed receive?



At Pentecost 33 C.E., Jehovah began selecting the secondary members of Abraham's seed

solutely righteous. (Jas. 3:2) Nevertheless, because of Abraham's outstanding faith, Jehovah dealt with him as if he were righteous and even called him his friend. (Isa. 41:8) Those who make up the spiritual seed of Abraham along with Jesus have also been declared righteous, and this brings them even greater blessings than Abraham received.

⁸ Anointed Christians are declared righteous because they exercise faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice. (Rom. 3:24, 28) In Jehovah's eyes, they are acquitted of sin and can be anointed with holy spirit to be spiritual sons of God, brothers of Jesus Christ. (John 1:12, 13) They come into the new covenant and form a new nation, "the Israel of God." (Gal. 6:16; Luke 22:20) What a magnificent privilege all of that represents! As a result of these actions by God in their behalf, anointed Christians do not hope to live eternally on earth. They sacrifice that prospect for the unspeakable joy of being associated with Jesus during Judgment Day and ruling with him in the heavens.—*Read Romans 8:17.*

⁹ At Pentecost 33 C.E., a group of faithful humans were given the opportunity to be

8. What blessings are opened up to members of Abraham's seed?

9, 10. (a) When were Christians first anointed with holy spirit, and what lay ahead of them? (b) What help did anointed Christians receive?

among those who would rule with Jesus during Judgment Day. About 120 of Jesus' disciples were baptized with holy spirit and thus became the first anointed Christians. However, for them, that was only a beginning. From then on, they had to demonstrate their loyalty to Jehovah despite all the tests that Satan would bring upon them. They had to be faithful until death if they were to receive the crown of heavenly life.—Rev. 2:10.

¹⁰ To this end, Jehovah through his Word and by means of the Christian congregation provided anointed Christians with the exhortation and encouragement that they needed. For example, the apostle Paul wrote to anointed Christians in Thessalonica: "As a father does his children, we kept exhorting each one of you, and consoling and bearing witness to you, to the end that you should go on walking worthily of God who is calling you to his kingdom and glory."—1 Thess. 2:11, 12.

¹¹ In the decades after the first members of the congregation of anointed Christians were chosen, Jehovah saw fit to have a permanent record made of the earthly ministry of Jesus as well as His dealings with and counsel to first-century anointed Christians. Jehovah thus added the inspired Christian Greek Scriptures to the already existing inspired Hebrew Scriptures. The Hebrew Scriptures were written in the first place for the fleshly nation of Israel during the time that they had a special relationship with God. The Christian Greek Scriptures were written primarily for "the Israel of God," those anointed as brothers of Christ and spiritual sons of God. Of course, that in no way suggests that non-Israelites could not derive great benefit from studying the Hebrew Scriptures. Similarly, Christians who are not anointed with holy spirit derive immeasurable bene-

11. What written provision did Jehovah make for members of "the Israel of God"?

fits from studying and living according to the counsel found in the Christian Greek Scriptures.—*Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17.*

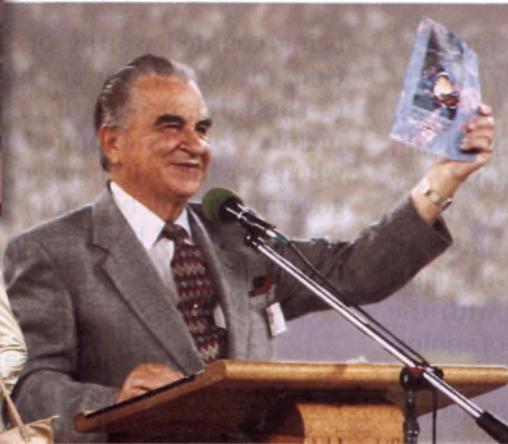
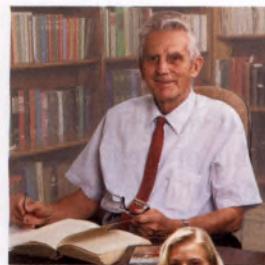
¹² First-century Christians were declared righteous and anointed with holy spirit for the purpose of enabling them to receive their heavenly inheritance. Their anointing did not elevate them to kingship over fellow anointed Christians while still on earth. Evidently, some early Christians lost sight of that fact and began seeking undue prominence among their brothers in the congregation. As a result, Paul was moved to ask: "You men already have your fill, do you? You are rich already, are you? You have begun ruling as kings without us, have you? And I wish indeed that you had begun ruling as kings, that we also might rule with you as kings." (1 Cor. 4:8) Therefore, Paul reminded anointed ones of his day: "Not that we are the masters over your faith, but we are fellow workers for your joy."—2 Cor. 1:24.

Completing the Foretold Number

¹³ Not all 144,000 anointed Christians were selected in the first century. Their calling continued throughout the apostolic period and then apparently slowed down. However, it did continue throughout the succeeding centuries into modern times. (Matt. 28:20) Eventually, after Jesus began to reign in 1914, things moved ahead rapidly.

¹⁴ First, Jesus cleansed the heavens of all vestiges of opposition to godly rule. (*Read Revelation 12:10, 12.*) Then he turned his attention to the gathering of the remaining prospective members of his Kingdom government so as to complete the number of 144,000. By the mid-1930's, that task was ev-

12. What reminder did Paul give to anointed Christians?
13. How did the calling of the anointed progress after 33 C.E.?
- 14, 15. What has occurred in our time with regard to the calling of the anointed?



The other sheep are grateful that anointed Christians have been with them during the last days

idently well along and many of those responding to the preaching work did not have the desire to go to heaven. The spirit it was not bearing witness

with them that they were sons of God. (Compare Romans 8:16.) Rather, they identified themselves with the "other sheep," who have the hope of living forever on a paradise earth. (John 10:16) Hence, after 1935 the thrust of the preaching work turned to the gathering of "a great crowd," those whom the apostle John saw in vision and who would survive "the great tribulation."—Rev. 7:9, 10, 14.

¹⁵ Even so, over the years since the 1930's, a few individuals have been called to a heavenly hope. Why? In some cases, it could be that they replaced individuals previously called who had become unfaithful. (Compare Revelation 3:16.) Paul even spoke of personal acquaintances who had left the truth. (Phil. 3:17-19) Whom would Jehovah call to serve as such replacements? Of course, that is his decision to make. Still, it would seem reasonable that he would call, not newly

converted ones, but individuals who—like the disciples to whom Jesus spoke when he initiated the Memorial observance—have already proved their loyalty to an extent.*—Luke 22:28.

¹⁶ It seems, however, that not all who have been called to a heavenly hope since the 1930's are replacements for ones who have fallen away. Jehovah has evidently made sure that we will have anointed Christians among us all through the final days of this system of things until the destruction of "Babylon the Great."# (Rev. 17:5) And we

can be confident that the full number of 144,000 members will be completed in Jehovah's due time and that all will eventually take their place in the Kingdom government. We can also believe the prophetic Word that the ever-growing great crowd will as a group continue to prove itself faithful. Soon it will "come out of the great tribulation" brought upon Satan's world and will joyfully move on into God's new world.

God's Heavenly Government Is Almost Complete!

¹⁷ Since 33 C.E., tens of thousands of anointed Christians have manifested strong faith and have endured faithfully until death. These have already been counted worthy of receiving the Kingdom and—evidently starting in the early days of Christ's

* See the March 1, 1992, issue of *The Watchtower*, page 20, paragraph 17.

See "Questions From Readers" in the May 1, 2007, issue of *The Watchtower*.

16. Regarding the anointed, for what are we grateful, and what can we confidently believe?

17. According to 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 and Revelation 6:9-11, what has happened to anointed Christians who died faithful?

presence—have been rewarded accordingly.
—Read 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Revelation 6:9-11.

¹⁸ Those of the anointed who still remain on earth are absolutely confident that if they remain faithful, they will soon receive the reward for their faithful course. Millions of other sheep, when contemplating the faith of their anointed brothers, agree with the words of the apostle Paul, who said of anointed brothers in Thessalonica: “We ourselves take pride in you among the congregations of God because of your endurance and faith in all your persecutions and the tribulations that you are bearing. This is a proof of the righteous judgment of God, leading to your

18. (a) Those of the anointed who still remain have what confidence? (b) How do those of the other sheep view their anointed Christian brothers?

being counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are indeed suffering.” (2 Thess. 1:3-5) With the passing of the last member of the anointed from the earth, whenever that will happen, God’s heavenly government will be complete. What a cause for joy that will be—both in heaven and on earth!

Can You Explain?

- What did God reveal to Abraham that had a bearing on Judgment Day?
- Why was Abraham declared righteous?
- What does being declared righteous lead to for those of Abraham’s seed?
- What confidence do all Christians have?

COUNTED WORTHY TO BE GUIDED TO FOUNTAINS OF WATERS OF LIFE

“The Lamb . . . will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life.”—REV. 7:17.

GOD’S WORD identifies anointed Christians who are caring for Christ’s interests on earth as “the faithful and discreet slave.” When Christ inspected the “slave” in 1918, he found those anointed ones on earth to be faithful in providing spiritual “food at the proper time.” Hence, Jesus, the Master, was pleased thereafter to appoint

1. How does God’s Word identify anointed Christians, and what responsibility did Jesus give them?

them “over all his belongings.” (Read Matthew 24:45-47.) In this way, before receiving a heavenly inheritance, anointed ones serve other worshippers of Jehovah here on earth.

² A master has authority over his belongings, or possessions, and he can use them as he chooses. The belongings of Jesus Christ, Jehovah’s enthroned King, embrace all King-

2. Describe Jesus’ belongings.

dom interests on earth. That includes "a great crowd" seen by the apostle John in vision. John describes the great crowd as follows: "Look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; and there were palm branches in their hands."—Rev. 7:9.

³ Members of that great crowd are among those referred to by Jesus as his "other sheep." (John 10:16) Their hope is to live forever on a paradise earth. They are confident that Jesus "will guide them to fountains of waters of life" and that "God will wipe out every tear from their eyes." With that in mind, they have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:14, 17) They exercise faith in Jesus' sacrifice, and thus in God's eyes they have 'white robes.' They are declared righteous as friends of God, like Abraham.

3, 4. How are those of the great crowd highly privileged?

Those of the great crowd have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb



⁴ Moreover, since the growing great crowd of other sheep are viewed by God as righteous, they can hope to survive the destruction of this system of things at the great tribulation. (Jas. 2:23-26) They can draw close to Jehovah, and as a group, they have the wonderful prospect of surviving Armageddon. (Jas. 4:8; Rev. 7:15) They are not independent but willing to serve under the direction of the heavenly King and his anointed brothers on earth.

⁵ Anointed Christians have met and will continue to meet severe opposition from Satan's world. Nevertheless, they can rely on the support of their companions of the great crowd. While anointed Christians are now few in number, the great crowd yearly increases by hundreds of thousands. The anointed are unable to oversee personally each of the some 100,000 Christian congregations throughout the world. Thus, one aspect of the support that the anointed receive

5. How do those of the great crowd support Christ's anointed brothers?

from the other sheep is that qualified men of the great crowd serve as congregation elders. They help care for the millions of Christians now entrusted to “the faithful and discreet slave.”

⁶ The willing support given to anointed Christians by their companions of the other sheep was foretold by the prophet Isaiah. He wrote: “This is what Jehovah has said: ‘The unpaid laborers of Egypt and the merchants of Ethiopia and the Sabeans, tall men, will themselves come over even to you, and yours they will become. Behind you they will walk.’” (Isa. 45:14) In a symbolic way, Christians with an earthly hope today walk behind the anointed slave class and its Governing Body, following their leadership. As “unpaid laborers,” the other sheep willingly and wholeheartedly expend their strength and their resources in support of the worldwide preaching work that Christ assigned to his anointed followers on earth.—Acts 1:8; Rev. 12:17.

⁷ As they lend their support to their anointed brothers, members of the great crowd are being trained as the foundation of the new human society that will exist after Armageddon. That foundation must be solid and stable, and its members must be willing and able to carry out the direction of the Master. Each Christian is being given the opportunity to demonstrate that he can be used by the King, Christ Jesus. By exercising faith and displaying loyalty now, he shows that he will respond well when the King gives him directions in the new world.

The Great Crowd Prove Their Faith

⁸ The other sheep companions of the congregation of anointed Christians prove their

6. How was the support of anointed Christians by their other sheep companions prophesied?
7. For what is the great crowd being trained?
- 8, 9. How are those of the great crowd proving their faith?

faith in various ways. First, they support the anointed in proclaiming the good news of God’s Kingdom. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) Second, they willingly submit themselves to the direction provided by the Governing Body.—Heb. 13:17; *read Zechariah 8:23.*

⁹ Third, members of the great crowd support their anointed brothers by living in harmony with Jehovah’s righteous principles. They strive to cultivate “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.” (Gal. 5:22, 23) Today, displaying such qualities, rather than producing “the works of the flesh,” may not be popular. Still, members of the great crowd are determined to avoid “fornication, uncleanness, loose conduct, idolatry, practice of spiritism, enmities, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, contentions, divisions, sects, envies, drunken bouts, revelries, and things like these.”—Gal. 5:19-21.

¹⁰ Since we are imperfect, it can be a challenge to produce spiritual fruitage, avoid the works of the flesh, and resist the pressure exerted by Satan’s world. Nevertheless, we are determined not to allow discouragement resulting from personal weaknesses, temporary failures, or physical limitations to affect the strength of our faith or diminish our love for Jehovah. We know that Jehovah will do as he has promised—preserve the great crowd alive through the great tribulation.

¹¹ All the same, we are constantly on guard because we know that our real enemy is the Devil, and he does not give up easily. (*Read 1 Peter 5:8.*) He has tried to use apostates and others to convince us that the teachings we follow are false. But that tactic has usually failed. Similarly, although persecution has sometimes slowed down the

10. What is the determination of members of the great crowd?
11. What tactics has Satan used in his efforts to weaken the faith of Christians?

What do you hope to learn from resurrected faithful ones?

preaching work, often it has served only to strengthen the faith of those persecuted. Hence, Satan increasingly uses a method that he likely feels will offer a greater chance of weakening our faith. He exploits feelings of discouragement. First-century Christians were warned about this danger when they were told: “Consider closely the one [Christ] who has endured such contrary talk by sinners against their own interests.” Why? “That you may not get tired and give out in your souls.”—Heb. 12:3.

¹² Have you ever felt like giving up? Do you at times feel that you are a failure? If so, do not allow Satan to use those feelings to hinder you from serving Jehovah. In-depth Bible study, fervent prayer, and regular meeting attendance and association with those of like faith will strengthen you and keep you from ‘giving out in your soul.’ Jehovah has promised to help those serving him to regain power, and his promise is sure. (*Read Isaiah 40:30, 31.*) Keep your eye on Kingdom service. Avoid time-consuming distractions, and focus on helping others. Then you will be strengthened to endure despite discouragement.—Gal. 6:1, 2.

Out of the Tribulation and Into a New World

¹³ After Armageddon, multitudes of unrighteous resurrected ones will need instruction in Jehovah’s ways. (Acts 24:15) They will need to learn about Jesus’ ransom sacrifice; more than that, they must be taught to exer-

12. How does the Bible’s counsel strengthen those who are discouraged?

13. What task awaits those who survive Armageddon?



cise faith in that sacrifice in order to receive its benefits. They will need to reject previously held false religious ideas and to abandon their former way of life. They must learn to put on the new personality that identifies true Christians. (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9, 10) Those of the other sheep who survive to that time will have much work to do. What a joy it will be to perform such service to Jehovah, free of the pressures and distractions of the present wicked world!

¹⁴ Faithful servants of Jehovah who died prior to Jesus’ earthly ministry will also have

14, 15. Describe the interchange that will take place between survivors of the great tribulation and resurrected righteous ones.

much to learn at that time. They will learn the identity of the promised Messiah, whom they longed for but never got to see. In their former lives, they already indicated their willingness to be instructed by Jehovah. Imagine what a joy and privilege it will be to help them—for example, to explain to Daniel the fulfillment of the prophecies he wrote down but did not understand!—Dan. 12:8, 9.

¹⁵ Of course, while the resurrected ones will have much to learn from us, we will have many questions to ask them. They can fill us in on events that are mentioned in the Bible but not described in detail. Think how thrilling it will be to learn personal details about Jesus from his cousin John the Baptist! The things we learn from such faithful witnesses will doubtless give us an even greater appreciation of God's Word than we have at present. Faithful servants of Jehovah who have died—including those of the great crowd who die during the time of the end—will come forth to “a better resurrection.” They began their service to Jehovah in a world dominated by Satan. What a joy it will be for them to continue their service under the much more favorable circumstances of the new world!—Heb. 11:35; 1 John 5:19.

¹⁶ At some point during Judgment Day, scrolls will be opened. Along with the Bible,

16. According to prophecy, how will Judgment Day proceed?

Do You Remember?

- What do Jesus' belongings include?
- How do those of the great crowd support their anointed brothers?
- What privileges and prospect do those of the great crowd enjoy?
- How do you view Judgment Day?

they will form the basis for judging all alive as to their worthiness to gain everlasting life. (*Read Revelation 20:12, 13.*) By the end of Judgment Day, each individual will have had ample opportunity to show where he stands on the issue of universal sovereignty. Will he uphold the Kingdom arrangement and allow the Lamb to guide him to “fountains of waters of life”? Or will he resist, refusing to subject himself to God's Kingdom? (Rev. 7:17; Isa. 65:20) By then, all on earth will have had an opportunity to make a personal decision, unhampered by inherited sin or a wicked environment. No one will be able to question the rightfulness of Jehovah's final judgment. Only the wicked will be everlastingly destroyed.—Rev. 20:14, 15.

¹⁷ Anointed Christians today, having been counted worthy to receive a Kingdom, eagerly look forward to ruling during Judgment Day. What a grand privilege will be theirs! The very prospect motivates them to follow the counsel that Peter gave to their first-century brothers: “Do your utmost to make the calling and choosing of you sure for yourselves; for if you keep on doing these things you will by no means ever fail. In fact, thus there will be richly supplied to you the entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”—2 Pet. 1:10, 11.

¹⁸ The other sheep rejoice with their anointed brothers. They are determined to support them. As friends of God today, they are motivated to do their utmost in God's service. During Judgment Day, they will be thrilled to support wholeheartedly God's arrangements as Jesus guides them to fountains of waters of life. Then—at last—they will be counted worthy to be Jehovah's earthly servants for all eternity!—Rom. 8:20, 21; Rev. 21:1-7.

17, 18. With what joyful anticipation do anointed Christians and the other sheep view Judgment Day?

Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Book of Matthew

THE first person to write a thrilling account of Jesus' life and ministry is Matthew—a close associate of Jesus Christ and a onetime tax collector. Originally written in Hebrew and later translated into Greek, the Gospel of Matthew was completed about 41 C.E. and serves as a bridge connecting the Hebrew Scriptures to the Christian Greek Scriptures.

Apparently intended primarily for a Jewish audience, this moving and meaningful Gospel portrays Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Son of God. Paying close attention to its message will strengthen our faith in the true God, his Son, and His promises.—Heb. 4:12.

"THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS HAS DRAWN NEAR" (Matt. 1:1–20:34)

Matthew highlights the Kingdom theme and Jesus' teachings, even though doing so means deviating from presenting matters in strict chronological order. For example, the Sermon on the Mount is related early in the book, although Jesus delivered it about halfway through his ministry.

During the course of his Galilean ministry, Jesus performs miracles, gives ministerial instructions to the 12 apostles, denounces the Pharisees, and relates Kingdom illustrations. Then he departs from Galilee and comes to "the frontiers of Judea across the Jordan." (Matt. 19:1) Along the way, Jesus tells his disciples: 'We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man will be condemned to death, and on the third day he will be raised up.'—Matt. 20:18, 19.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

3:16—In what way were 'the heavens opened up' at the time of Jesus' baptism? This seems to indicate that Jesus' memory of his prehuman existence in heaven returned to him.

5:21, 22—Is giving vent to anger more serious than harboring it? Jesus warned that a person who harbors smoldering wrath against his brother is committing a serious sin. However, giving expression to wrath by speaking a word of contempt is more serious, making one accountable to a court higher than the local court of justice.

5:48—Is it really possible for us to be "perfect, as [our] heavenly Father is perfect"? Yes, in a relative sense. Jesus was here discussing the subject of love, and he told listeners to imitate God and be perfect, or complete, in their love. (Matt. 5:43–47) How? By expanding it to include their enemies.

7:16—What "fruits" mark the true religion? These fruits include more than our conduct. They also involve our beliefs—the teachings to which we adhere.

10:34–38—Is the Scriptural message to be blamed for family rifts? Not at all. Rather, rifts are caused by the position taken by unbelieving family members. They may choose to reject or oppose Christianity, bringing about divisions in the family.—Luke 12:51–53.

11:2–6—If because of having heard God's voice of approval John already knew that Jesus was the Messiah, why did he ask if Jesus was "the Coming One"? John might have asked this in order to get a personal

confirmation from Jesus. More than that, though, John wanted to know if there was to be "a different one" who would come with Kingdom power and fulfill all the hopes of the Jews. Jesus' answer showed that there was to be no successor.

19:28—What is represented by "the twelve tribes of Israel" that will be judged? They do not represent the 12 tribes of spiritual Israel. (Gal. 6:16; Rev. 7:4-8) The apostles to whom Jesus was speaking were going to be part of spiritual Israel, not judges of its members. Jesus made 'a covenant with them for a kingdom,' and they were to be 'a kingdom and priests to God.' (Luke 22:28-30; Rev. 5:10) Those of spiritual Israel are to "judge the world." (1 Cor. 6:2) Hence, "the twelve tribes of Israel," whom those on the heavenly thrones judge, evidently represent the world of mankind who are outside that royal, priestly class, as pictured by the 12 tribes on Atonement Day.—Lev., chap. 16.

Lessons for Us:

4:1-10. This account teaches us that Satan is real and not a quality of evil. He uses "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life" to tempt us. Nevertheless, applying Scriptural principles will help us to remain faithful to God.—1 John 2:16.

5:1-7:29. Be conscious of your spiritual need. Be peaceable. Shun immoral thoughts. Keep your word. When praying, give spiritual concerns priority over material interests. Be rich toward God. Seek first the Kingdom and God's righteousness. Do not be judgmental. Do God's will. What practical lessons are included in the Sermon on the Mount!

9:37, 38. We should act in harmony with our request to the Master to "send out workers into his harvest," zealously engaging in the disciple-making work.—Matt. 28:19, 20.

10:32, 33. We should never be afraid to speak about our faith.

13:51, 52. Getting the sense of Kingdom truths brings with it the responsibility of teaching others and sharing these treasures with them.

14:12, 13, 23. Periods of solitude are essential for purposeful meditation.—Mark 6:46; Luke 6:12.

17:20. We need faith to overcome mountainlike obstacles that interfere with our spiritual progress and to cope with difficulties. We should not be negligent about building and strengthening our faith in Jehovah and his promises.—Mark 11:23; Luke 17:6.

18:1-4; 20:20-28. Human imperfection and a religious background that emphasized position made Jesus' disciples overly concerned about greatness. We should cultivate humility as we guard against sinful tendencies and maintain a proper view of privileges and responsibilities.

"THE SON OF MAN IS TO BE DELIVERED UP"

(Matt. 21:1-28:20)

"Mounted upon an ass," Jesus comes to Jerusalem on Nisan 9, 33 C.E. (Matt. 21:5) The next day, he comes to the temple and cleanses it. On Nisan 11, he teaches in the temple, denounces the scribes and the Pharisees, and thereafter gives his disciples "the sign of [his] presence and of the conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 24:3) The following day, he tells them: "You know that two days from now the passover occurs, and the Son of man is to be delivered up to be impaled."—Matt. 26:1, 2.

It is Nisan 14. After having instituted the Memorial of his imminent death, Jesus is betrayed, arrested, tried, and impaled. On the third day, he is raised from the dead. Before his ascension to heaven, the resurrected

Jesus commands his followers: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations."—Matt. 28:19.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

22:3, 4, 9—When do the three calls to the marriage feast go out? The first call to gather the bride class went out when Jesus and his followers began preaching in 29 C.E., and it continued till 33 C.E. The second call extended from the time of the outpouring of the holy spirit at Pentecost 33 C.E. to 36 C.E. Both calls were directed only to the Jews, Jewish proselytes, and Samaritans. However, the third call was issued to the people from the roads outside the city, that is, to the uncircumcised Gentiles, beginning in 36 C.E. with the conversion of the Roman army officer Cornelius and continuing into our day.

23:15—Why was a proselyte, or a convert, of the Pharisees "a subject for Gehenna twice as much" as the Pharisees themselves? Some who became proselytes of the Pharisees may formerly have been gross sinners. By converting to the extremism of the Pharisees, however, they took a turn for the worse, possibly becoming more extreme than their condemned teachers. Thus, they

were 'subjects for Gehenna,' doubly so in comparison with the Jewish Pharisees.

27:3-5—Over what did Judas feel remorse? There is no indication that Judas' remorse was true repentance. Rather than seeking God's forgiveness, he confessed his wrongdoing to the chief priests and older men. Having committed "a sin that does incur death," Judas was rightly overwhelmed with feelings of guilt and despair. (1 John 5:16) His remorse was prompted by his being in a desperate state.

Lessons for Us:

21:28-31. Our doing the divine will is what really counts with Jehovah. For example, we should have a zealous share in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work.—Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20.

22:37-39. How succinctly the two greatest commandments summarize what God requires of those who worship him!



Matthew highlights the Kingdom theme

Are you zealously engaging in the harvest work?

WHEN CHRISTIANS ARE Sifted as Wheat

SHORTLY before his death, Jesus warned his disciples: "Look! Satan has demanded to have you men to sift you as wheat." (Luke 22:31) What did he mean by that?

In Jesus' day, harvesting wheat took much time and effort. First, harvesters gathered the wheat stalks from the field. Then, they beat the stalks against a hard surface or used farm animals to pull a threshing sledge over the stalks to break them into pieces. This process dislodged the grain from the stalks and the husks. Next, the farmers tossed the mixture into the air. The kernels, or whole seeds of grain, fell back onto the threshing floor, while the breeze blew the chaff away. Finally, the kernels were carefully sifted to remove from them any undesirable materials.

True to Jesus' words, Satan relentlessly attacked Jesus' disciples back then, and he attacks us today. (Eph. 6:11) It is true, not every difficulty we face in life is directly caused by Satan. (Eccl. 9:11) Still, Satan is eager to use any means at his disposal to break our integrity. For example, he may tempt us to follow a materialistic lifestyle, to choose unwholesome entertainment, or to engage in immoral sexual behavior. He may also use associates at school or at work and unbelieving relatives to pressure us into pursuing to the full all

that this world has to offer in schooling and careers. Furthermore, Satan may use outright persecution in an effort to break our integrity to God. Of course, there are many other ways that Satan uses to sift us, as it were.

How can we stand against this powerful enemy? We cannot do so in our own strength. Satan is stronger than we are; however, we know that Jehovah is immeasurably stronger than Satan is. If we have full confidence in Jehovah, pray earnestly for the wisdom and courage to endure, and rely fully on his guidance, he will strengthen us to resist Satan's attacks.—Ps. 25:4, 5.

When under test, we need to have the ability to "distinguish both right and wrong" and thus avoid being misled by Satan's schemes. (Heb. 5:13, 14) Jehovah can help us to develop that ability. Then we need to stick to the right course, no matter what. If we follow Jehovah's guidance, he will unfailingly support our courageous determination to do what is right.—Eph. 6:10.

Satan may try to sift us as wheat. But in Jehovah's strength, we can take our stand against him, solid in the faith. (1 Pet. 5:9) Yes, Jehovah's Word assures us: "Oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you."—Jas. 4:7.