

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



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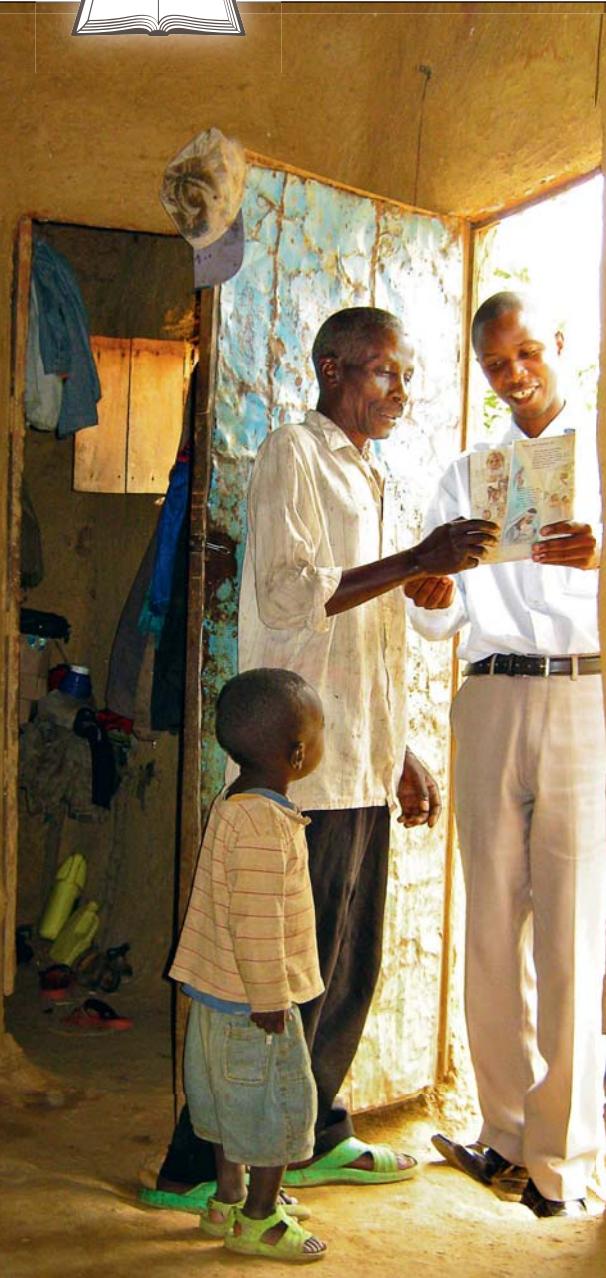
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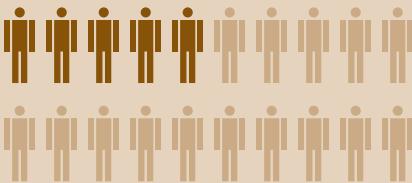




RWANDA

COVER: House-to-house witnessing in Bukimba, Runda, Rwanda

One fourth of the Witnesses in the country share in some form of pioneer service, and the rest of the zealous Witnesses average 20 hours in the ministry each month



WITNESSES

22,734

BIBLE STUDIES

52,123

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE IN 2012

69,582

STUDY ARTICLES

- “Tell Us, When Will These Things Be?”
- “Look! I Am With You All the Days”

These articles consider parts of Matthew chapters 24 and 25. They present several clarifications of our understanding of the timing of events in Jesus' prophecy about the last days and in his parable about the wheat and the weeds. The articles also consider how we can personally benefit from these clarifications.

- **Feeding Many Through the Hands of a Few**
- **“Who Really Is the Faithful and Discreet Slave?”**

Whether miraculously providing food to crowds of people or spiritually feeding his followers, Jesus followed a pattern—he fed many through the hands of a few. The first article discusses the few through whom he fed his first-century anointed followers. The second article examines this vital question: Who are the few through whom Christ feeds us today?

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32 “Look at the Artwork!”

THE WATCHTOWER®
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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"What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?"

—MATT. 24:3.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What parallels are there between the two fulfillments of Jesus' prophecy about the great tribulation?

How does the parable of the sheep and the goats affect our view of the preaching work?

In Matthew chapters 24 and 25, to what time did Jesus refer when he spoke about his coming?

"TELL US, WHEN WILL THESE THINGS BE?"

JESUS' ministry on earth was coming to an end, and his disciples were eager to find out what the future held for them. So just a few days before his death, four of his apostles asked him: "When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" (Matt. 24:3; Mark 13:3) Jesus answered by means of an extensive prophecy, recorded in Matthew chapters 24 and 25. In that prophecy, Jesus foretold many noteworthy events. His words have profound meaning for us because we too are keenly interested in knowing what the future holds.

² Through the years, Jehovah's servants have prayerfully studied Jesus' prophecy about the last days. They have sought to get a clearer understanding of the timing of the fulfillment of Jesus' words. To illustrate how our understanding has been clarified, let us consider three "when" questions. When does the "great tribulation" begin? When does Jesus judge "the sheep" and "the goats"? When does Jesus 'arrive,' or come?—Matt. 24:21; 25:31-33.

WHEN DOES THE GREAT TRIBULATION BEGIN?

³ For a number of years, we thought that the great tribulation began in 1914 with World War I and that "those days were cut short" by Jehovah in 1918 when the war ended so that the remnant would have the opportunity to preach the good news to all nations. (Matt. 24:21, 22) After the completion of that preaching work, Satan's empire would be destroyed. Thus, the great tribulation was thought to have three phases: There would be a beginning (1914-1918), the tribulation would be interrupted

1. Like the apostles, what are we eager to find out?
2. (a) Through the years, of what did we seek to get a clearer understanding? (b) Which three questions will we consider?
3. In the past, what was our understanding of the timing of the great tribulation?

THE GREAT TRIBULATION AND BEYOND

MODERN
FULFILLMENT

United Nations (“disgusting thing”) will attack Christendom (“holy place”) and the rest of false religion (Rev. 17:16-18)



THE LAST
DAYS

Jehovah will “cut short” the attack on false religion; God’s people will be saved



O F U N K N O W N

DESTRUCTION OF FALSE RELIGION

CORRESPONDING
EVENTS IN THE
FIRST CENTURY

Roman army (“disgusting thing”) attacked Jerusalem and its temple (“holy place”)

Roman army cut short its attack; Christians in Jerusalem and Judea fled

“The disgusting thing . . . standing in a holy place”
(Matt. 24:15, 16)
(See paragraph 6)

“On account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short”
(Matt. 24:22)
(See paragraph 7)

(from 1918 onward), and it would conclude at Armageddon.

4 Upon further examination of Jesus’ prophecy, however, we perceived that a part of Jesus’ prophecy about the last days has two fulfillments. (Matt. 24:4-22) There was an initial fulfillment in Judea in the first century C.E., and there would be a worldwide fulfillment in our day. That insight led to several clarifications.^[4]

5 We also discerned that the first part of the great tribulation did not begin in 1914. Why not? Because Bible prophecy reveals that the great tribulation will start, not with a war among nations, but with an attack on false religion. Thus, the events that began in 1914 were, not

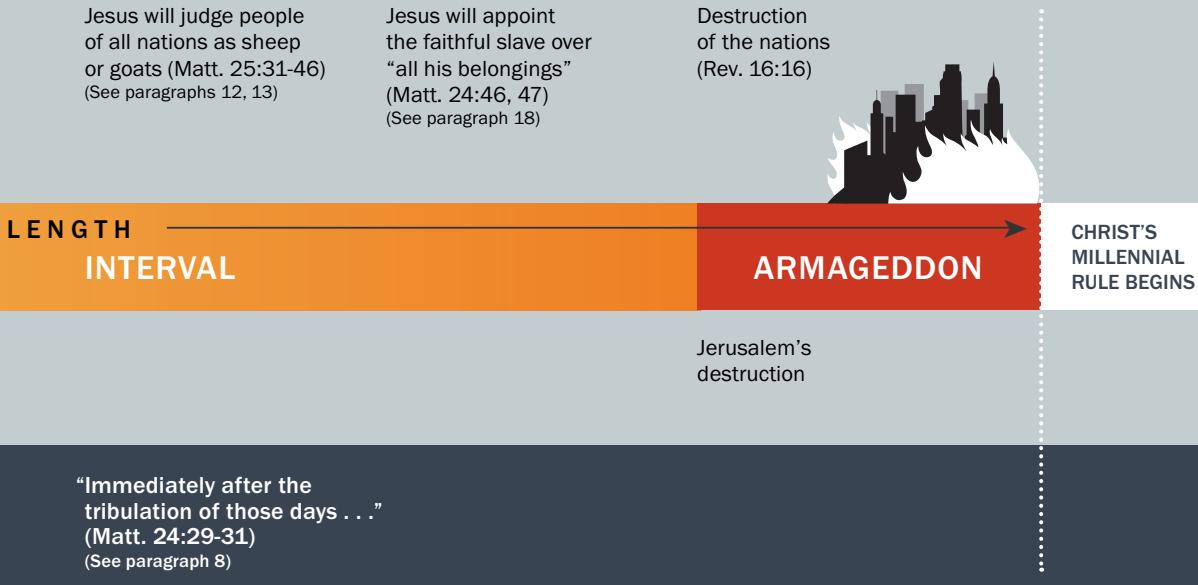
4. What insight led to a clearer understanding of Jesus’ prophecy about the last days?

5. (a) What difficult period began in 1914?
(b) That period of distress corresponds to what time period in the first century C.E.?

the beginning of the great tribulation, but the “beginning of pangs of distress.” (Matt. 24:8) These “pangs of distress” correspond to what took place in Jerusalem and Judea from 33 C.E. to 66 C.E.

6 What will signal the start of the great tribulation? Jesus foretold: “When you catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation, as spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in a holy place, (let the reader use discernment,) then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains.” (Matt. 24:15, 16) In the first fulfillment, the “standing in a holy place” occurred in 66 C.E. when the Roman army (“the disgusting thing”) attacked Jerusalem and its temple (a place holy in the eyes of the Jews). In the larger fulfillment, the “standing” will occur when the United Nations (the modern-day “disgusting thing”) attacks

6. What will signal the beginning of the great tribulation?



Christendom (which is holy in the eyes of nominal Christians) and the rest of Babylon the Great. The same attack is described at Revelation 17:16-18. That event will be the beginning of the great tribulation.

⁷ Jesus also foretold: “Those days will be cut short.” In the initial fulfillment, this happened in 66 C.E. when the Roman army “cut short” its attack. Then, anointed Christians in Jerusalem and Judea fled, allowing for their ‘flesh, or life, to be saved.’ (*Read Matthew 24:22; Mal. 3:17*) So, what can we expect will happen during the coming great tribulation? Jehovah will “cut short” the attack of the United Nations on false religion, not allowing true religion to be destroyed with the false. This will ensure that God’s people will be saved.

7. (a) How was ‘flesh saved’ in the first century? **(b)** What can we expect will happen in the future?

8 What happens after the initial part of the great tribulation has passed? Jesus’ words indicate that there will be a period of time that will last until the start of Armageddon. What events will occur during that interval? The answer is recorded at Ezekiel 38:14-16 and **Matthew 24:29-31. (Read.)**^[2] After that, we will witness Armageddon, the climax of the great tribulation, which parallels Jerusalem’s destruction in 70 C.E. (Mal. 4:1) With the battle of Armageddon as its climax, that coming great tribulation will be unique—an event “such as has not occurred since the world’s beginning.” (Matt. 24:21) When it has passed, Christ’s Millennial Rule will begin.

8. (a) What events will take place after the initial part of the great tribulation has passed? **(b)** At what point, apparently, will the last member of the 144,000 receive his heavenly reward? (See endnote.)

⁹ This prophecy about the great tribulation strengthens us. Why? Because it assures us that no matter what hardships we may face, Jehovah's people, as a group, will come out of the great tribulation. (Rev. 7:9, 14) Above all, we rejoice because at Armageddon, Jehovah will vindicate his sovereignty and he will sanctify his holy name.—Ps. 83:18; Ezek. 38:23.

WHEN DOES JESUS JUDGE THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS?

¹⁰ Consider now the timing of another part of Jesus' prophecy—the parable of the judgment of the sheep and the goats. (Matt. 25:31-46) Previously, we thought that the judging of people as sheep or goats would take place during the entire period of the last days from 1914 onward. We concluded that those who rejected the Kingdom message and who died before the start of the great tribulation would die as goats—without the hope of a resurrection.

¹¹ In the mid-1990's, *The Watchtower* reexamined Matthew 25:31, which states: "When the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne." It was noted that Jesus became King of God's Kingdom in 1914, but he did not "sit down on his glorious throne" as Judge of "all the nations." (Matt. 25:32; compare Daniel 7:13.) However, the parable of the sheep and the goats describes Jesus primarily as Judge. (*Read Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46.*) Since Jesus

9. What effect does Jesus' prophecy about the great tribulation have on Jehovah's people?

10. In the past, what was our understanding of the timing of the judgment of the sheep and the goats?

11. Why could the judgment of people as sheep or goats not have started in 1914?

was not yet active as Judge of all nations in 1914, his judgment of people as sheep or goats could not have started in that year.^[3] When, then, will Jesus' judgment begin?

¹² Jesus' prophecy about the last days reveals that he will for the very first time act as Judge of all nations after the destruction of false religion. As mentioned in paragraph 8, some of the events that will occur during that time are recorded at Matthew 24:30, 31. When you examine those verses, you will note that Jesus there foretells events that are similar to the ones he mentions in the parable of the sheep and the goats. For example, the Son of man comes with glory and with angels; all tribes and nations are gathered; those judged as sheep "lift [their] heads up" because "everlasting life" awaits them.^[4] Those judged as goats "beat themselves in lamentation," realizing that "everlasting cutting-off" awaits them.—Matt. 25:31-33, 46.

¹³ So, then, what can we conclude? Jesus will judge people of all nations as sheep or goats when he comes during the great tribulation. Then, at Armageddon, the climax of the great tribulation, the goatlike ones will be 'cut off' forever. How does that understanding affect our view of our ministry? It helps us to see how important our preaching work is. Until the great tribulation begins, people still have time to change their thinking and start walking on the cramped road "leading off into life." (Matt. 7:13, 14) To be sure, people may now display

12. (a) When will Jesus for the first time act as Judge of all nations? (b) What events are described at Matthew 24:30, 31 and Matthew 25:31-33, 46?

13. (a) When will Jesus judge the people as sheep or goats? (b) How does this understanding affect our view of our ministry?



Until the great tribulation begins, people still have time to change their thinking
(See paragraph 13)

a sheeplike or a goatlike disposition. Nevertheless, we should remember that the final judgment of who are sheep and who are goats is during the great tribulation. Therefore, we have good reason for continuing to offer as many people as possible the opportunity to listen to and respond to the Kingdom message.

WHEN DOES JESUS ARRIVE, OR COME?

14 Does a further consideration of Jesus' prophecy reveal that our understanding of the timing of other significant events needs to be adjusted? The prophecy itself gives the answer. Let us see how.

15 In the part of his prophecy that is recorded at Matthew 24:29–25:46, Jesus focuses primarily on what will happen during these last days and during the coming great tribulation. There, Jesus makes eight references to his "coming," or arrival.^[5] Regarding the great tribulation, he states: "They will see the Son of man *coming* on the clouds." "You do

not know on what day your Lord is *coming*." "At an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is *coming*." And in his parable of the sheep and the goats, Jesus states: "The Son of man *arrives* in his glory." (Matt. 24:30, 42, 44; 25:31) Each of these four references applies to Christ's future coming as Judge. Where in Jesus' prophecy do we find the remaining four references?

16 Regarding the faithful and discreet slave, Jesus says: "Happy is that slave if his master on *arriving* [“having come,” ftn.] finds him doing so." In the parable of the virgins, Jesus states: "While they were going off to buy, the bridegroom *arrived* [“came,” *Kingdom Interlinear*]." In the parable of the talents, Jesus relates: "After a long time the master of those slaves *came*." In the same parable, the master says: "On my *arrival* [“having come,” *Int*] I would be receiving what is mine." (Matt. 24:46; 25:10, 19, 27) To what time do these four instances of Jesus' coming refer?

14, 15. Which four scripture references apply to Christ's future coming as Judge?

16. Jesus' coming is mentioned in what other scriptures?

17 In the past, we have stated in our publications that these last four references apply to Jesus' arriving, or coming, in 1918. As an example, take Jesus' statement about "the faithful and discreet slave." (*Read Matthew 24:45-47.*) We understood that the "arriving" mentioned in verse 46 was linked to the time when Jesus came to inspect the spiritual condition of the anointed in 1918 and that the appointment of the slave over all the Master's belongings occurred in 1919. (Mal. 3:1) However, a further consideration of Jesus' prophecy indicates that an adjustment in our understanding of the timing of certain aspects of Jesus' prophecy is needed. Why so?

18 In the verses that lead up to Matthew 24:46, the word "coming" refers consistently to the time when Jesus comes to pronounce and execute judgment during the great tribulation. (Matt. 24:30, 42, 44) Also, as we considered in paragraph 12, Jesus' 'arriving' mentioned at Matthew 25:31 refers to that same future time of judgment. So it is reasonable to conclude that Jesus' arrival to appoint the faithful slave over all his belongings, mentioned at Matthew 24:

17. What have we stated about the arrival mentioned at Matthew 24:46?

18. A consideration of Jesus' prophecy in its entirety leads us to what conclusion about Jesus' coming?

46, 47, also applies to his *future* coming, during the great tribulation.^[6] Indeed, a consideration of Jesus' prophecy in its entirety makes it clear that each of these eight references to his coming applies to the future time of judgment during the great tribulation.

19 In review, what have we learned? In the beginning of this article, we raised three "when" questions. We first considered that the great tribulation did not begin in 1914 but will start when the United Nations attacks Babylon the Great. Then, we reviewed why Jesus' judgment of the sheep and the goats did not begin in 1914 but will occur during the great tribulation. Finally, we examined why Jesus' arrival to appoint the faithful slave over all his belongings did not occur in 1919 but will take place during the great tribulation. So, then, all three "whens" apply to the same future time period—the great tribulation. How does this adjusted view further affect our understanding of the illustration of the faithful slave? Also, how does it affect our understanding of other parables, or illustrations, of Jesus that are being fulfilled during this time of the end? These important questions will be considered in the following articles.

19. What adjustments in understanding did we consider, and what questions will be answered in the following articles?

ENDNOTES:

(To be read as footnotes with the corresponding paragraphs.)

Paragraph 4: [1] For more information, see *The Watchtower*, February 15, 1994, pages 8-21 and May 1, 1999, pages 8-20.

Paragraph 8: [2] One of the events mentioned in these verses is the 'gathering of the chosen ones.' (Matt. 24:31) Hence, it appears that all anointed ones who still remain on earth after the initial part of the

great tribulation has passed will at some point be raised to heaven before the outbreak of the battle of Armageddon. This adjusts what was stated on this subject in "Questions From Readers" in *The Watchtower* of August 15, 1990, page 30.

Paragraph 11: [3] See *The Watchtower*, October 15, 1995, pages 18-28.

Paragraph 12: [4] See the parallel account at Luke 21:28.

Paragraph 15: [5] The words "coming" and "arriving" translate forms of the same Greek verb, *er'kho-mai*.

Paragraph 18: [6] As noted, the Greek word rendered "on arriving" at Matthew 24:46 is a form of the same Greek verb that is rendered "coming" at Matthew 24: 30, 42, 44.



"Look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things."

—MATT. 28:20.

**LOOK FOR THE ANSWERS
TO THESE QUESTIONS:**

Why can we conclude that from the first century C.E. until today, there have always been anointed Christians on earth?

Starting in 1914, what inspection by Jesus took place?

What events depicted in Jesus' illustration about the wheat and the weeds still lie ahead?

"LOOK! I AM WITH YOU ALL THE DAYS"

ONE of Jesus' Kingdom illustrations describes a farmer who sows fine seed of wheat and an enemy who sows weeds among the fine seed. The weeds overgrow the wheat, but the farmer orders his slaves to "let both grow together until the harvest." During harvest season, the weeds are destroyed and the wheat is gathered. Jesus himself explained the illustration. (*Read Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43.*) What does this parable reveal? (See the chart "The Wheat and the Weeds.")

² The events taking place in that farmer's field illustrate how and when Jesus would gather out of mankind the entire wheat class—anointed Christians who will rule with him in his Kingdom. The sowing began at Pentecost 33 C.E. The gathering will be complete when the anointed who are alive at the end of this system of things receive their final sealing and then are taken to heaven. (Matt. 24:31; Rev. 7:1-4) Just as a lookout point on a mountain provides a person with a sweeping view of his surroundings, so this parable gives us a panoramic view of developments that would occur during a period of some 2,000 years. From our vantage point, what developments related to the Kingdom do we discern? The parable describes a time of sowing, growth, and harvesting. This article will focus mainly on the harvest-time.^[1]

UNDER JESUS' WATCHFUL CARE

³ At the dawn of the second century C.E., "the

1. (a) Summarize the illustration of the wheat and the weeds. (b) How did Jesus explain its meaning?
2. (a) What is illustrated by the events taking place in the farmer's field? (b) What part of the parable will we consider?
3. (a) What condition developed after the first century? (b) According to Matthew 13:28, what question was raised, and by whom? (See also endnote.)

● 33 C.E.
SOWING
BEGINS

THE WHEAT AND THE WEEDS

SOWER:
Jesus

FINE SEED
IS SOWN:
Anointing with
holy spirit



ENEMY:
The Devil

MEN WERE SLEEPING:
Death of the apostles



WHEAT:
Anointed Christians



WEEDS:
Imitation Christians



● 1914
HARVEST
BEGINS



SLAVES/
REAPERS:
Angels

Weedlike Christians are
separated from the anointed
“sons of the kingdom”



THE FIELD: The world of mankind

‘A man sowed fine seed in his field’
(Matt. 13:24)

‘While men were sleeping,
the enemy oversowed weeds’
(Matt. 13:25)

“Both grow together until
the harvest”
(Matt. 13:30)

The weeds are
collected and bundled
(Matt. 13:30)
(See paragraphs 10, 11)

weeds appeared” when imitation Christians became visible in the world field. (Matt. 13:26) By the fourth century, weedlike Christians had greatly outnumbered anointed Christians. Recall that in the parable, the slaves asked their master for permission to uproot the weeds.^[2] (Matt. 13:28) How did the master respond?

4 Speaking about the wheat and the weeds, Jesus said: “Let both grow together until the harvest.” This command reveals that from the first century until today, there have always been some anointed wheatlike Christians on earth. That conclusion is confirmed by what Jesus later told his disciples: “I am with you *all* the days until the conclu-

sion of the system of things.” (Matt. 28:20) So anointed Christians would be protected by Jesus all the days leading up to the time of the end. However, since they were overgrown by weedlike Christians, we do not know for certain who belonged to the wheat class during that long period of time. However, some decades before the start of the harvest season, the wheat class became discernible. How did that come about?

A MESSENGER ‘CLEARS UP A WAY’

5 Centuries before Jesus gave the illustration of the wheat and the weeds, Jehovah inspired his prophet Malachi to foretell events that are reflected in Jesus’ illustration. (*Read Malachi 3:1-4.*) John the Baptizer was the ‘messenger who

4. (a) What is revealed by the answer of the Master, Jesus? (b) When did wheatlike Christians become discernible?

5. How was Malachi’s prophecy fulfilled in the first century?

● 1919

GATHERING INTO

THE STOREHOUSE:

Anointed Christians
are gathered into the
restored congregation



HARVEST SEASON

'Gathering the wheat
into the storehouse'
(Matt. 13:30)
(See paragraph 12)

SHINING BRIGHTLY

Shortly before Armageddon, the remaining faithful anointed ones are gathered to the heavens

ARMAGEDDON

At Armageddon, the weeds are pitched into the fire



The righteous ones shine brightly in the Kingdom
(Matt. 13:43) (See paragraphs 16, 17)

The weeds are pitched into the fiery furnace
(Matt. 13:42) (See paragraph 15)

cleared up the way.' (Matt. 11:10, 11) When he came in 29 C.E., a time of judgment for the nation of Israel had drawn close. Jesus was the second messenger. He cleansed the temple in Jerusalem twice—first at the start of his ministry and second toward the end. (Matt. 21:12, 13; John 2:14-17) Hence, Jesus' cleansing work involved a period of time.

6 What is the larger fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy? During the decades leading up to 1914, C. T. Russell and his close associates did a work like that of John the Baptizer. That vital work involved restoring Bible truths. The Bible Students taught the true meaning of Christ's ransom sacrifice, exposed

6. (a) What is the larger fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy? (b) During what time period did Jesus inspect the spiritual temple? (See also endnote.)

the hellfire lie, and proclaimed the coming end of the Gentile Times. Still, there were numerous religious groups who claimed to be Christ's followers. So a crucial question needed to be answered: Who among those groups were the wheat? To settle that question, Jesus began to inspect the spiritual temple in 1914. That inspection and cleansing work involved a period of time—from 1914 to the early part of 1919.^[3]

YEARS OF INSPECTION AND CLEANSING

7 When Jesus began his inspection, what did he find? A small group of zealous Bible Students who for well over 30 years had given their strength and fortunes to pursue a vigorous preaching campaign.^[4] What a joy it must have

7. When Jesus began his inspection in 1914, what did he find?

been for Jesus and the angels to find that those relatively few but sturdy wheat stalks had not been choked by Satan's weeds! Still, there arose a need to "cleanse the sons of Levi," the anointed ones. (Mal. 3:2, 3; 1 Pet. 4:17) Why so?

8 In late 1914, some Bible Students were disheartened because they had not gone to heaven. During 1915 and 1916, opposition from outside the organization slowed down the preaching work. Worse, after Brother Russell's death in October 1916, opposition arose from inside the organization. Four of the seven directors of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society rebelled against the decision to have Brother Rutherford take the lead. They tried to cause division among the brothers, but in August 1917, they left Bethel—a cleansing indeed! Also, some Bible Students gave in to the fear of man. Still, as a whole they willingly responded to Jesus' cleansing work and made the needed changes. Hence, Jesus judged them to be true Christian wheat, but he rejected all imitation Christians, including all of those found within the churches of Christendom. (Mal. 3:5; 2 Tim. 2:19) What happened next? To find out, let us return to our consideration of the parable of the wheat and the weeds.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE HARVEST SEASON BEGINS?

9 "The harvest is a conclusion of a system of things," said Jesus. (Matt. 13:39) That harvest season began in 1914. We will consider five developments that Jesus foretold for that time.

10 First, **collecting the weeds**. Jesus

8. What developments took place after 1914?

9, 10. (a) What will we now consider about the harvest season? (b) What took place first during the harvest season?

says: "In the harvest season I will tell the reapers, First collect the weeds and bind them in bundles." After 1914, the angels began to "collect" weedlike Christians by separating them from the anointed "sons of the kingdom."—Matt. 13:30, 38, 41.

11 As the collecting work progressed, the distinction between the two groups became ever clearer. (Rev. 18:1, 4) By 1919, it became evident that Babylon the Great had fallen. What especially set true Christians apart from imitation ones? The preaching work. Those taking the lead among the Bible Students began to stress the importance of sharing personally in the Kingdom preaching work. For instance, *To Whom the Work Is Entrusted*, a pamphlet published in 1919, urged *all* anointed Christians to preach from house to house. It stated: "The work appears stupendous, but it is the Lord's, and in his strength we will perform it. You have the privilege of sharing in it." What was the response? From that time onward, reported *The Watch Tower* in 1922, the Bible Students stepped up their preaching activities. Before long, preaching from house to house became a hallmark of those faithful Christians—as it is till this day.

12 Second, **gathering the wheat**. Jesus commands his angels: "Go to gathering the wheat into my storehouse." (Matt. 13:30) Since 1919, anointed ones have been gathered into the restored Christian congregation. For those anointed Christians who will be alive at the end of this system of things, the final gathering will take place when they receive their heavenly reward.—Dan. 7:18, 22, 27.

11. Till this day, what has set true Christians apart from imitation Christians?

12. Since when has the wheat class been gathered?

Christendom's close association with political leaders will soon come to an end
(See paragraph 13)



13 Third, **weeping and gnashing**. After the angels bundle the weeds, what happens? Speaking about the condition of the weed class, Jesus states: "There is where their weeping and the gnashing of their teeth will be." (Matt. 13:42) Is that happening right now? No. Today, Christendom, as part of the harlot, still says about herself: "I sit a queen, and I am no widow, and I shall never see mourning." (Rev. 18:7) Indeed, Christendom feels very much in charge, even presuming to 'sit as a queen' atop the class of political leaders. Presently, those represented by the weeds are boasting, not weeping. But that is about to change.

14 During the great tribulation, after all organized false religion has been destroyed, former adherents will run for cover but will find no secure place to hide. (Luke 23:30; Rev. 6:15-17) Then, realizing that there is no escape from destruction, they will weep in desperation and 'gnash their teeth' in anger. As Jesus

13. What does Revelation 18:7 reveal about the present attitude of the harlot, or Babylon the Great, including Christendom?

14. (a) When and why will imitation Christians 'gnash their teeth'? (b) How does our adjusted understanding of Matthew 13:42 harmonize with the thought expressed at Psalm 112:10? (See endnote.)

foretells in his prophecy about the great tribulation, at that dark moment, they "will beat themselves in lamentation."^[5]
—Matt. 24:30; Rev. 1:7.

15 Fourth, **pitched into the furnace**. What will happen to the bundles of weeds? The angels "will pitch them into the fiery furnace." (Matt. 13:42) That means complete destruction. Hence, those former adherents of false religious organizations will be destroyed during the final part of the great tribulation, Armageddon.—Mal. 4:1.

16 Fifth, **shining brightly**. Jesus ends his prophecy by saying: "At that time the righteous ones will shine as brightly as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. 13:43) When and where will that be? The fulfillment of these words still lies ahead. Jesus foretold, not an activity currently taking place on earth, but a future event occurring in heaven.^[6] Consider two reasons for this conclusion.

17 First, the "when" question. Jesus said: "At *that time* the righteous ones will shine." The phrase "at that time"

15. What will happen to the weeds, and when will that event occur?

16, 17. (a) What is the final event that Jesus mentions in his illustration? (b) Why do we conclude that the fulfillment of that event still lies ahead?

evidently refers to the event that Jesus had just mentioned, namely, the ‘pitching of the weeds into the fiery furnace.’ That occurs during the final part of the great tribulation. Thus, the ‘shining brightly’ of the anointed must occur at that future time as well. Second, the “where” question. Jesus said that the righteous ones will ‘shine *in* the kingdom.’ What does that mean? All faithful anointed ones who are still on earth after the initial part of the great tribulation has passed will already have received their final sealing. Then, as indicated in Jesus’ prophecy about the great tribulation, they will be gathered to heaven. (Matt. 24:31) *There* they will shine “*in* the kingdom of their Father,” and shortly after the battle of Armageddon, they will share as Jesus’ joyous bride in “the marriage of the Lamb.”—Rev. 19:6-9.

HOW WE BENEFIT

18 How do we personally benefit from

18, 19. In what ways does an understanding of Jesus’ parable of the wheat and the weeds benefit us personally?

the panoramic view that this parable provides? Consider three ways. First, it deepens our insight. The parable reveals an important reason why Jehovah permits wickedness. He “tolerated . . . vessels of wrath” to prepare the “vessels of mercy”—the wheat class.^[7] (Rom. 9:22-24) Second, it strengthens our confidence. As the end draws near, our enemies will intensify their fight against us, “but they will not prevail.” (*Read Jeremiah 1:19.*) Just as Jehovah through the ages protected the wheat class, so our heavenly Father by means of Jesus and the angels will be with us “*all* the days” to come.—Matt. 28:20.

19 Third, the parable enables us to identify the wheat class. Why is that of vital importance? Knowing who the wheatlike Christians are is essential to finding the answer to a question raised by Jesus in his extensive prophecy about the last days. He asked: “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave?” (Matt. 24:45) The following two articles will provide a satisfying answer to that question.

ENDNOTES:

(To be read as footnotes with the corresponding paragraphs.)

Paragraph 2: [1] To refresh your memory on the meaning of the other parts of the parable, we encourage you to read the article “The Righteous Ones Will Shine as Brightly as the Sun” in *The Watchtower* of March 15, 2010.

Paragraph 3: [2] Since Jesus’ apostles had died and the remaining anointed ones on earth were pictured, not by slaves, but by wheat, these slaves well picture the angels. Later in the illustration, those reaping the weeds are identified as angels.—Matt. 13:39.

Paragraph 6: [3] This is an adjustment in understanding. Previously, we thought that Jesus’ inspection took place in 1918.

Paragraph 7: [4] From 1910 to 1914, the Bible Students distributed nearly 4,000,000 books and over 200,000,000 tracts and pamphlets.

Paragraph 14: [5] This is an adjustment to our understanding of Matthew 13:42. Previously, our publications stated that imitation Christians have been ‘weeping and gnashing their teeth’ for decades, bewailing that “the sons of the kingdom” expose them for what they are—“sons of the wicked one.” (Matt. 13:38) It should be noted, however, that the idea of the gnashing of teeth is connected to destruction.—Ps. 112:10.

Paragraph 16: [6] Daniel 12:3 states that “the ones having insight [anointed Christians] will shine like the brightness of the

expanse.” While still on earth, they do this by sharing in the preaching work. However, Matthew 13:43 points to the time when they will shine brightly in the heavenly Kingdom. Previously, we thought that both scriptures referred to the same activity—the preaching work.

Paragraph 18: [7] See the book *Draw Close to Jehovah*, pages 288-289.



"After breaking the loaves, [Jesus] distributed them to the disciples, the disciples in turn to the crowds." —MATT. 14:19.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What pattern did Jesus follow when feeding the crowds?

How did Jesus use the apostles and older men in Jerusalem?

When was it time for Christ to appoint one organized channel to dispense spiritual food?

FEEDING MANY THROUGH THE HANDS OF A FEW

IMAGINE the scene. (*Read Matthew 14:14-21.*) It is just before the Passover of 32 C.E. A crowd of some 5,000 men, besides women and young children, are with Jesus and his disciples at a deserted place in the vicinity of Bethsaida, a village on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee.

² Upon seeing the crowd, Jesus is moved with pity for the people, so he heals the sick among them and teaches them many things about God's Kingdom. When it gets late, the disciples urge Jesus to dismiss the people so that they might go to nearby villages and buy some food for themselves. But Jesus tells his disciples: "You give them something to eat." His words must seem puzzling to them, for the provisions at hand are meager at best—five loaves and two small fish.

³ Moved by compassion, Jesus performs a miracle—the only miracle that is recorded by all four Gospel writers. (Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13) Jesus has his disciples tell the crowd to recline on the green grass in groups of 50 and of 100. After saying a blessing, he begins breaking the bread and dividing up the fish. Then, rather than giving the food to the people directly, Jesus distributes it "to the disciples, the disciples in turn to the crowds." Miraculously, there is more than enough for everyone to eat! Just think: Jesus has fed thousands through the hands of a few—his disciples.^[1]

⁴ Jesus was even more concerned about providing spiritual food to his followers. He knew that taking in spiritual food, the truths found in God's Word, leads to everlasting life. (John 6:26, 27; 17:3) Moved

1-3. Describe how Jesus fed a large crowd in the vicinity of Bethsaida. (See opening image.)

4. (a) Jesus was even more concerned about providing what kind of food, and why? (b) What will we discuss in this study article and in the next one?

by the same compassion that impelled him to feed bread and fish to the crowds, Jesus spent many hours personally teaching his followers. (Mark 6:34) But he was aware that his time on earth would be short and that he would return to heaven. (Matt. 16:21; John 14:12) How would the heavenly Jesus keep his followers on earth well-fed spiritually? He would follow a similar pattern—he would feed many through the hands of a few. Who, though, would be the few? Let us see how Jesus used a few to feed his many first-century anointed followers. Then, in the next article, we will discuss this question of vital importance to each one of us: How can we identify the few through whom Christ feeds us today?

JESUS CHOOSES THE FEW

5 A responsible family head makes arrangements so that his family will be cared for in the event of his death. Similarly, Jesus—who would become Head of the Christian congregation—made arrangements to ensure that his followers would be cared for spiritually after his death. (Eph. 1:22) For example, about two years before he died, Jesus made a weighty decision. He selected the first of the few through whom he would later feed the many. Consider what happened.

6 After praying all night, Jesus gathered his disciples and from among them chose 12 apostles. (Luke 6:12-16) For the next two years, he was especially close to the 12, teaching them both by word and by example. He knew that they had much to learn; in fact, they continued to

5, 6. (a) What weighty decision did Jesus make in order to ensure that his followers would be well-fed spiritually after his death?
(b) How did Jesus prepare his apostles for taking on a key role after his death?

be called “disciples.” (Matt. 11:1; 20:17) He gave them valuable personal counsel and extensive training in the ministry. (Matt. 10:1-42; 20:20-23; Luke 8:1; 9:52-55) He was evidently preparing them for a key role after his death and return to heaven.

7 What would be the role of the apostles? As Pentecost 33 C.E. drew near, it was clear that the apostles would serve in an “office of oversight.” (Acts 1:20) What, though, would be their primary concern? Following his resurrection, Jesus provided a clue in a conversation he had with the apostle Peter. (*Read John 21:1, 2, 15-17.*) In the presence of some of the other apostles, Jesus told Peter: “Feed my little sheep.” Jesus thereby indicated that his apostles would be among the few through whom he would provide spiritual food to the many. What a touching and telling indication of how Jesus feels about his “little sheep”!^[2]

FEEDING THE MANY FROM PENTECOST ONWARD

8 Starting at Pentecost 33 C.E., the resurrected Christ used his apostles as the channel through which he fed the rest of his anointed disciples. (*Read Acts 2:41, 42.*) That channel was clearly recognized by the Jews and proselytes who became spirit-anointed Christians that day. Unhesitatingly, they “continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles.” According to one scholar, the Greek verb rendered “continued devoting themselves” can mean having “a steadfast and singleminded fidelity to a certain course of action.” The new believers had a deep hunger for spiritual

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7. How did Jesus provide a clue about what would be the primary concern of the apostles?
 8. How did new believers at Pentecost show that they clearly recognized the channel that Christ was using?



Thousands were fed through
the hands of a few
(See paragraph 4)

food, and they knew exactly where to get it. With unwavering loyalty, they looked to the apostles to explain the words and deeds of Jesus and to shed fresh light on the meaning of the scriptures pertaining to him.^[3]—Acts 2:22-36.

9 The apostles kept their responsibility to feed Jesus' sheep clearly in focus. For example, notice how they handled a sensitive and potentially divisive issue that arose in the newly formed congregation. Ironically, the matter involved food—*material* food. Greek-speaking widows were being overlooked in the daily food distribution, but Hebrew-speaking widows were not being overlooked. How did the apostles resolve this delicate issue? “The twelve” appointed seven qualified brothers to oversee the “necessary business,” the food distribution. The apostles—most of whom had no doubt shared in distributing food to the crowds whom Jesus had miraculously fed—saw that it was more important for them to focus on *spiritual* feeding. Thus, they devoted themselves to “the ministry of the word.”—Acts 6:1-6.

9. How did the apostles show that they kept their responsibility to feed Jesus' sheep clearly in focus?

10 By 49 C.E., the surviving apostles had been joined by certain other qualified elders. (*Read Acts 15:1, 2.*) “The apostles and older men in Jerusalem” served as a governing body. As the Head of the congregation, Christ used this small group of qualified men to settle doctrinal issues and to oversee and direct the preaching and teaching of the Kingdom good news.—Acts 15:6-29; 21:17-19; Col. 1:18.

11 Did Jehovah bless the arrangement by means of which his Son fed the first-century congregations? Most definitely! How can we be sure? The book of Acts gives us this report: “Now as they [the apostle Paul and his traveling companions] traveled on through the cities they would deliver to those there for observance the decrees that had been decided upon by the apostles and older men who were in Jerusalem. Therefore, indeed, the congregations continued to be made

10. How did Christ use the apostles and older men in Jerusalem?

11, 12. (a) What shows that Jehovah blessed the arrangement by means of which his Son fed the first-century congregations? (b) How was the channel that Christ used for spiritual feeding clearly recognizable?

firm in the faith and to increase in number from day to day." (Acts 16:4, 5) Notice that those congregations prospered as a result of their loyal cooperation with the governing body in Jerusalem. Is that not proof of Jehovah's blessing on the arrangement by means of which his Son fed the congregations? Let us remember that spiritual prosperity is possible only with Jehovah's rich blessing.—Prov. 10: 22; 1 Cor. 3:6, 7.

12 Thus far we have seen that Jesus followed a pattern when feeding his followers: He fed many through the hands of a few. The channel he used for spiritual feeding was clearly recognizable. After all, the apostles—the original members of the governing body—could provide visible proof of heavenly backing. "Through the hands of the apostles many signs and portents continued to occur among the people," states Acts 5:12.^[4] Hence, there was no reason for those who became Christians to wonder, 'Who really are the ones through whom Christ is feeding his sheep?' But by the end of the first century, the situation changed.

WHEN THE WEEDS WERE MANY AND THE BLADES OF WHEAT FEW

13 Jesus foretold that the Christian congregation would come under attack. Remember, in his prophetic illustration of the wheat and the weeds, Jesus warned that a newly planted field of wheat (anointed Christians) would be oversown with weeds (imitation Christians). The groups, he said, would be allowed to grow side by side—undisturbed until the harvest, which would come

13, 14. (a) What warning did Jesus give about an attack, and when did his words begin to come true? (b) From what two quarters would the attack come? (See endnote.)

at "a conclusion of a system of things." (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43) It was not long before Jesus' words began to come true.^[5]

14 The apostasy made some inroads in the first century, but Jesus' faithful apostles acted "as a restraint," holding back the contamination and influence of false teachings. (2 Thess. 2:3, 6, 7) However, once the last of the apostles died, the apostasy took root and flourished during a long growing season that lasted for many centuries. Additionally, during that time, the weeds became many and the blades of wheat were few. There was no consistent, organized channel for dispensing spiritual food. That would eventually change. But the question is, When?

HARVESTTIME —WHO WOULD DO THE FEEDING?

15 As the end of the growing season neared, there were strong stirrings of interest in Bible truth. Recall that in the 1870's, a small group of sincere truth-seekers got together and formed Bible classes apart from the weeds—imitation Christians within the churches and sects of Christendom. With humble hearts and open minds, those sincere Bible Students, as they called themselves, made a careful and prayerful search of the Scriptures.—Matt. 11:25.

16 The Bible Students' diligent study of the Scriptures yielded rich results. Those loyal men and women exposed false doctrines and spread spiritual truths, publishing and distributing Bible literature far and wide. Their work won the hearts and convinced the minds of many who were hungering and thirsting for spiritual truth. An intriguing ques-

15, 16. The Bible Students' diligent study of the Scriptures yielded what results, and what question arises?

tion therefore arises: Were the Bible Students in the years that led up to 1914 the appointed channel through which Christ would feed his sheep? No. They were still in the growing season, and the arrangement for a channel to provide spiritual food was still taking shape. The time had not yet come for the weedlike imitation Christians to be separated from the true Christian wheat.

17 As we learned in the preceding article, the harvest season began in 1914. In that year, a number of important developments began to unfold. Jesus was enthroned as King, and the last days began. (Rev. 11:15) From 1914 to the early part of 1919, Jesus accompanied his Father to the spiritual temple to do a much-needed inspection and cleansing work.^[6] (Mal. 3:1-4) Then, starting in 1919, it was time to begin gathering the wheat. Was it finally the time for Christ to appoint one organized channel to dispense spiritual food? Yes, indeed!

18 In his prophecy about the time of the end, Jesus foretold that he would

17. What important developments began to unfold in 1914?

18. Jesus foretold that he would make what appointment, and what was the critical question as the last days got under way?



In the first century, there was clear evidence of whom Jesus was using to feed the congregation
(See paragraph 12)

appoint a channel to give out spiritual “food at the proper time.” (Matt. 24:45-47) Which channel would he use? True to the pattern he set in the first century, Jesus would once again feed many through the hands of a few. But as the last days were just getting under way, the critical question was, Who will be the few? That and other questions about Jesus’ prophecy will be discussed in the next article.

ENDNOTES:

(To be read as footnotes with the corresponding paragraphs.)

Paragraph 3: [1] On a later occasion, when Jesus miraculously fed 4,000 men, besides women and children, he again gave the food “to the disciples, the disciples in turn to the crowds.”—Matt. 15:32-38.

Paragraph 7: [2] During Peter’s lifetime, the “little sheep” who would be fed all cherished the heavenly hope.

Paragraph 8: [3] The fact that new believers “continued devoting themselves to the

teaching of the apostles” implies that the apostles were teaching on a regular basis. Some of the apostles’ teaching was permanently recorded in the inspired books that are now part of the Christian Greek Scriptures.

Paragraph 12: [4] While others besides the apostles received miraculous gifts of the spirit, it seems that in most cases, the miraculous gifts were passed on to others directly by or in the presence of an apostle.—Acts 8:14-18; 10:44, 45.

Paragraph 13: [5] The apostle Paul’s words found at Acts 20:29, 30 show that the congregation would be attacked from two quarters. First, imitation Christians (“weeds”) would “enter in among” true Christians. Second, “from among” true Christians, some would become apostates, speaking “twisted things.”

Paragraph 17: [6] See the article “Look! I Am With You All the Days,” in this issue, page 11, paragraph 6.



"Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics?"—MATT. 24:45.

CAN YOU FIND THE ANSWERS?

Who is the faithful and discreet slave?

Who are the domestics, and when did Jesus appoint the faithful slave over them?

When will Christ appoint the faithful slave over all his belongings, and what will they include?

"WHO REALLY IS THE FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE?"

"BROTHERS, I cannot begin to count the times you have put into my hands articles that contained just what I needed when I needed it most." That is how one sister expressed her appreciation in a letter to the brothers who work at our world headquarters. Can you identify with her? Many of us can. Should that surprise us? Not really.

² The timely spiritual food we receive is proof that Jesus, the Head of the congregation, is keeping his promise to feed us. Through whom is he doing so? When giving the sign of his presence, Jesus said that he would use "the faithful and discreet slave" to give "food at the proper time" to his domestics.^[1] (*Read Matthew 24:45-47.*) That faithful slave is the channel through which Jesus is feeding his true followers in this time of the end. It is vital that we recognize the faithful slave. Our spiritual health and our relationship with God depend on this channel.—Matt. 4:4; John 17:3.

³ How, then, are we to understand Jesus' illustration about the faithful slave? In the past, our publications have said the following: At Pentecost 33 C.E., Jesus appointed the faithful slave over his domestics. The slave represents all anointed Christians on earth as a group at any one time since then. The domestics refer to the same anointed ones as individuals. In 1919, Jesus appointed the faithful slave "over all his belongings"—all his earthly Kingdom interests. However, further careful study and prayerful meditation indicate that our understanding of Jesus' words about the faithful and discreet slave needs to be clarified. (Prov. 4:18) Let us examine the illustration and

1, 2. Through what channel is Jesus feeding us today, and why is it vital that we recognize that channel?

3. What have our publications stated about the illustration of the faithful slave?

how it involves us, whether we have the heavenly or the earthly hope.

WHEN IS THE ILLUSTRATION FULFILLED?

⁴ The context of the illustration of the faithful and discreet slave shows that it began to be fulfilled, not at Pentecost 33 C.E., but in this time of the end. Let us see how the Scriptures lead us to this conclusion.

⁵ The illustration of the faithful slave is part of Jesus' prophecy about "the sign of [his] presence and of the conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 24:3) The first portion of the prophecy, recorded at Matthew 24:4-22, has two fulfillments—first, in the years from 33 C.E. through 70 C.E., and second, in a more far-reaching way in our day. Does this mean that Jesus' words about the faithful slave would also have two fulfillments? No.

⁶ Starting with the words recorded at Matthew 24:29, Jesus focused primarily on events that would happen in our day. (*Read Matthew 24:30, 42, 44.*) Speaking about what will happen during the great tribulation, he said that people "will see the Son of man *coming* on the clouds of heaven." Then, in words meant for those living during the last days, he urged vigilance, saying: "You do not know on what day your Lord is *coming*" and, "At an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is *coming*."^[2] In this context—when speaking about events that would take place in the last days—Jesus related the illustration of the faithful slave. Therefore, we may conclude that his words about that faithful slave began to be fulfilled only *after* the last days began in 1914. Such a conclusion makes sense. Why is that?

4-6. Why may we conclude that Jesus' illustration of the faithful slave began to be fulfilled only after 1914?

⁷ Think, for a moment, about the question: "Who *really* is the faithful and discreet slave?" In the first century, there was hardly a reason to ask such a question. As we saw in the preceding article, the apostles could perform miracles and even transmit miraculous gifts as proof of divine backing. (Acts 5:12) So why would anyone need to ask who really was appointed by Christ to take the lead? In 1914, however, the situation was much different. The harvest season began in that year. The time had finally arrived to separate the weeds from the wheat. (Matt. 13:36-43) As the harvest season began, a vital question thus arose: With many imitation Christians claiming to be Jesus' true followers, how could the wheat—anointed Christians—be identified? The illustration of the faithful slave provided an answer. Christ's anointed followers would be the ones who were well-fed spiritually.

WHO IS THE FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE?

⁸ The faithful slave must be made up of *anointed* Christians on earth. Such ones are called "a royal priesthood" and have been commissioned to "'declare abroad the excellencies' of the one that called [them] out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Pet. 2:9) It is only fitting that members of that "royal priesthood" have a direct share in teaching fellow believers the truth.—Mal. 2:7; Rev. 12:17.

⁹ Do *all* anointed ones on earth make up the faithful slave? No. The reality is

7. What vital question arose as the harvest season began, and why?

8. Why is it fitting that the faithful slave be made up of anointed Christians?

9. Do *all* anointed Christians make up the faithful slave? Explain.

DID YOU GET THE POINT?

“The faithful and discreet slave”:

A small group of anointed brothers who are directly involved in preparing and dispensing spiritual food during Christ’s presence. Today, these anointed brothers make up the Governing Body

“His domestics”:

All who are fed, whether they are of the anointed or of the other sheep

“Appointed over his domestics”:

In 1919, Jesus selected capable anointed brothers to be his faithful and discreet slave

“He will appoint him over all his belongings”:

Those who make up the composite slave will get this appointment when they receive their heavenly reward. Along with the rest of the 144,000, they will share Christ’s vast heavenly authority

Whether our hope is heavenly or earthly, we are all domestics and need the same timely spiritual food



that not all anointed ones have a role in dispensing spiritual food to fellow believers worldwide. Among the wheat are anointed brothers who may serve as ministerial servants or elders in their local congregation. They teach from house to house and in their congregation, and they loyally support the direction from headquarters. But they do not have a part in dispensing spiritual food to the worldwide brotherhood. Also among the anointed are humble sisters, who would never try to assume the role of teachers in the congregation.—1 Cor. 11:3; 14:34.

10 Who, then, is the faithful and discreet slave? In keeping with Jesus’ pattern of feeding many through the hands of a few, that slave is made up of *a small group of anointed brothers who are directly involved in preparing and dispensing spiritual food during Christ’s presence*. Throughout the last days, the anointed brothers who make up the faithful slave have served together at headquarters. In recent decades, that slave has been closely identified with the Gover-

ning Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Note, however, that the word “slave” in Jesus’ illustration is singular, indicating that this is a *composite* slave. The decisions of the Governing Body are thus made collectively.

WHO ARE THE DOMESTICS?

11 It is noteworthy that in Jesus’ illustration, the faithful and discreet slave receives *two* distinct appointments. The first is over the domestics; the second is over all the master’s belongings. Since the illustration is fulfilled only in this time of the end, both appointments would have to come after Jesus’ presence in kingly power began in 1914.

12 When did Jesus appoint the faithful slave over his domestics? To answer that, we need to go back to 1914—the beginning of the harvest season. As we learned earlier, at that time many groups claimed to be Christian. From which group would Jesus select and

11, 12. (a) What two appointments does the faithful and discreet slave receive? (b) When did Jesus appoint the faithful slave over his domestics, and whom did he select?

10. Who is the faithful and discreet slave?



appoint the faithful slave? That question was answered after he and his Father came and inspected the temple, or spiritual arrangement for worship, from 1914 to the early part of 1919.^[3] (Mal. 3:1) They were pleased with a small band of loyal Bible Students who showed that their heart was with Jehovah and his Word. Of course, they needed some cleansing, but they humbly responded during a brief period of testing and refining. (Mal. 3:2-4) Those faithful Bible Students were true Christian wheat. In 1919, a time of spiritual revival, Jesus selected capable anointed brothers from among them to be the faithful and discreet slave and appointed them over his domestics.

¹³ Who, then, are the domestics? Put simply, they are those who are fed. Early in the last days, the domestics were all anointed ones. Later, *the domestics came to include the great crowd of other sheep*. The other sheep now make up the vast majority of the “one flock” under Christ’s leadership. (John 10:16)

13. Who are included in the domestics, and why?

Both groups benefit from the same timely spiritual food that is dispensed by the faithful slave. What about the Governing Body members who today make up the faithful and discreet slave? Those brothers also need to be fed spiritually. Hence, they humbly recognize that *as individuals* they are domestics just like all the rest of Jesus’ genuine followers.

¹⁴ Jesus placed a weighty responsibility on the faithful and discreet slave. In Bible times, a trusted slave, or steward, was a house manager. (Luke 12:42) The faithful and discreet slave is thus charged with the responsibility to manage the household of faith. That responsibility includes overseeing material assets, the preaching activity, assembly and convention programs, and the production of Bible literature for use in the field ministry and in personal and congregation study. The domestics depend on all the spiritual provisions dispensed by the composite slave.

14. (a) The faithful slave is charged with what responsibility, and what does this include? (b) What warning did Jesus give to the faithful and discreet slave? (See the box “If Ever That Evil Slave . . .”)

"IF EVER THAT EVIL SLAVE . . ."

Jesus has placed the weightiest of responsibilities on the faithful and discreet slave—namely, overseeing the domestics and giving out spiritual food at the proper time. Jesus knew that those with greater responsibility have greater accountability. (Luke 12:48) Hence, he concluded his illustration about the faithful and discreet slave with a powerful warning.

Jesus warned about an evil slave who concludes in his heart that the master is delaying and who starts to beat his fellow slaves. When the master arrives, said Jesus, he will punish that evil slave “with the greatest severity.”

—*Read Matthew 24:48-51.*

Was Jesus foretelling that there would be an evil slave class in the last days? No. Granted, some individuals have manifested a spirit similar to that of the evil slave described by Jesus. We would call them apostates, whether they were of the anointed or of the “great crowd.” (Rev. 7:9) But such ones do not make up an evil slave class. Jesus did not say that he would appoint an evil slave. His words here are actually a warning directed to the faithful and discreet slave.

Notice that Jesus introduces the warning with the words “if ever.” One scholar says that in the Greek text, this passage “for all practical purposes is a hypotheti-

cal condition.” In effect, Jesus was saying: ‘If the faithful and discreet slave were ever to mistreat his fellow slaves in these ways, this is what the master will do when he arrives.’ (See also Luke 12:45.) However, the composite faithful and discreet slave has continued to keep on the watch and to provide nourishing spiritual food.

The anointed brothers who together serve as the faithful slave recognize that they are accountable to the Master for the way they care for his domestics. The heartfelt desire of these anointed brothers is to fulfill their responsibility loyally so that they might hear a “well done” from the Master when he finally arrives.

APPOINTED OVER ALL THE MASTER'S BELONGINGS—WHEN?

15 When does Jesus make the second appointment—“over all his belongings”? Jesus said: “Happy is that slave if his master on arriving [literally, “having come,” ftn.] finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings.” (Matt. 24:46, 47) Note that Jesus makes the second appointment after he arrives and finds that the slave has been “doing so,” that is, faithfully dispensing spiritual food. So there would be an interval between the two appointments. To understand how and when Jesus appoints the slave over all his belongings, we need to know two things: when he arrives and what his belongings include.

15, 16. When does Jesus appoint the faithful slave over all his belongings?

16 When does Jesus arrive? The answer is found in the context. Remember that when the preceding verses speak of Jesus as “coming,” the word refers to the time when he comes to pronounce and execute judgment at the end of this system.^[4] (Matt. 24:30, 42, 44) Hence, Jesus’ “arriving,” or “coming,” mentioned in the illustration of the faithful slave takes place during the great tribulation.

17 What do “all [Jesus’] belongings” include? Jesus did not qualify the word “all,” as if to limit his belongings to earthly things. In fact, Jesus has vast heavenly authority. “All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth,” he said. (Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-23) His belongings now include the Messianic Kingdom, which has belonged to him since 1914 and which he

17. What do Jesus’ belongings include?

will share with his anointed followers.
—Rev. 11:15.

18 In view of the foregoing, what can we conclude? When Jesus comes for judgment during the great tribulation, he will find that the faithful slave has been loyally dispensing timely spiritual food to the domestics. Jesus will then delight in making the second appointment—over all his belongings. Those who make up the faithful slave will get this appointment when they receive their heavenly reward, becoming co-rulers with Christ.

19 Does the faithful slave receive a greater reward in heaven than the rest of the anointed? No. A reward promised to a small group in one setting may ultimately be shared by others. For example, consider what Jesus said to his 11 faithful apostles the night before he died. (*Read Luke 22:28-30.*) Jesus promised that small group of men that a fine reward awaited them for their faithfulness. They would share his throne of kingly authority. But years later, he indicated that *all* of the 144,000 will sit on thrones and share his rulership. (Rev. 1:1; 3:21) Similarly, as stated at Matthew 24:47, he promised that a small group of

18. Why will Jesus delight in making the appointment over all his belongings?

19. Does the faithful slave receive a greater reward in heaven than the rest of the anointed? Explain.



All of the 144,000 will share Jesus' vast heavenly authority
(See paragraph 19)

men—the anointed brothers who make up the faithful slave—will be appointed over all his belongings. In reality, all of the 144,000 will share his vast heavenly authority.—Rev. 20:4, 6.

20 By means of the faithful and discreet slave, Jesus is following the pattern he set in the first century—feeding many through the hands of a few. Jesus appointed that faithful slave to ensure that his genuine followers—whether of the anointed or of the other sheep—would have a steady supply of timely spiritual food throughout the last days. Let us be determined to show our appreciation by giving our loyal support to the anointed brothers who make up that faithful and discreet slave.—Heb. 13:7, 17.

20. Why did Jesus appoint the faithful slave, and what is your determination?

ENDNOTES:

(To be read as footnotes with the corresponding paragraphs.)

Paragraph 2: [1] On an earlier occasion, Jesus related a similar illustration in which he referred to the “slave” as a “steward” and to the “domestics” as “his body of attendants.”—Luke 12:42-44.

Paragraph 6: [2] Christ’s “coming” (Greek, *er’kho-mai*) is different from his “presence” (*pa·rou·si’ā*). His invisible presence begins before his coming to execute judgment.

Paragraph 12: [3] See the article “Look! I Am With You All the Days,” in this issue, pages 10-12, paragraphs 5-8.

Paragraph 16: [4] See the article “Tell Us, When Will These Things Be?” in this issue, pages 7-8, paragraphs 14-18.



A New Member of the Governing Body

On Wednesday morning, September 5, 2012, it was announced to the United States and Canada Bethel families that a new member had been added to the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. Effective September 1, 2012, Mark Sanderson began to serve in that capacity.

Brother Sanderson was raised in San Diego, California, U.S.A., by his Christian parents and was baptized on February 9, 1975. He began to serve as a pioneer in Saskatchewan, Canada, on September 1, 1983. In December 1990, he graduated from the seventh class of the Ministerial Training School (now called the Bible School for Single Brothers) in the United States. Brother Sanderson was appointed to serve as a special pioneer on the island of Newfoundland, Canada, in April 1991. After serving as a substitute circuit overseer, he was invited to become a member of the Canada Bethel family in February 1997. In November 2000, he was transferred to the United States branch, where he worked in Hospital Information Services and later in the Service Department.

In September 2008, Brother Sanderson attended the School for Branch Committee Members and thereafter was appointed as a member of the Philippines Branch Committee. In September 2010, he was invited to return to the United States, where he served as a helper to the Service Committee of the Governing Body.

Present Members of the Governing Body

Back row, left to right:
D. H. Splane, A. Morris III,
D. M. Sanderson, G. W. Jackson,
M. S. Lett. Front row, left to right:
S. F. Herd, G. Lösch, G. H. Pierce.
All members of the Governing Body
are anointed Christians



Never before had I preached on my own. I was so nervous that my legs were shaking each time I went out. To make matters worse, the territory was extremely unreceptive. Some people were outright aggressive and threatened to beat me up. During the first month of my pioneer service, I placed only one booklet!

—Markus.

THAT was in 1949, more than 60 years ago, but my story begins many years earlier. My father, Hendrik, worked as a shoemaker and gardener in Donderen, a small village in north Drenthe, in the Netherlands. I was born there in 1927, the fourth of seven children. Our house stood on a dirt road in a rural district. Most of our neighbors were farmers, and I enjoyed farm life. In 1947, when I was 19 years old, I came in contact with the truth through one of our neighbors, Theunis Been. I remember that I didn't like Theunis when I first met him, but shortly after World War II, he became one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and I noticed that he was much friendlier than he had been before. This change in personality intrigued me, so I listened to him when he talked to me about God's promise of a paradise earth. I quickly accepted the truth, and we became lifelong friends.*

I started preaching in May 1948, and the very next month, on June 20, I was baptized at a convention in Utrecht. On January 1, 1949, I began pioneering and was assigned to Borculo, in eastern Netherlands, where there was a small congregation. I had to travel some 80 miles (130 km) to get there, so I decided to go on my bicycle. I thought it would take me about 6 hours, but because of the heavy rain and a strong headwind, it took 12 hours, even though I took the train for the final 55 miles (90 km)! Late in the evening, I at last

* Over the years, my father, my mother, an older sister, and two of my brothers also became Witnesses.



Eager to Serve Jehovah —No Matter Where

AS TOLD BY
MARKUS AND JANNY
HARTLIEF

reached my destination, the home of a Witness family with whom I stayed while I pioneered in that area.

In those postwar years, people had few possessions. All I had was one suit and a pair of pants—the suit too big, the pants too short! As I mentioned in the introduction, the first month in Borculo was difficult, but Jehovah blessed me with several Bible studies. After nine months, I was assigned to Amsterdam.

FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE TO THE CITY

Having been raised in an agricultural district, I now found myself in Amsterdam, the largest city in the Netherlands. The ministry was very productive. In the first month, I placed more literature than I had in the previous nine months. I was soon conducting no fewer than eight Bible studies. After being appointed as congregation servant (now called the coordinator of the body of elders), I received an assignment to give my first public talk. To me, it was a daunting prospect, so I heaved a huge sigh of relief when I was transferred to another congregation just before I was scheduled to deliver it. Little did I know then that over the years, I would give more than 5,000 talks!

In May 1950, I was assigned to Haarlem. I then received an invitation to the circuit work. I could hardly sleep for three days. I told Robert Winkler, one of the brothers serving at the branch office, that I didn't feel qualified, but he said: "Just fill out the papers. You'll learn." Shortly after that, I was given a month's training and started to serve as a circuit servant (overseer). During a visit to one of the congregations, I met Janny Taatgen, a cheerful young pioneer with a deep love for Jehovah and a self-sacrificing spirit. We got married in 1955. But before I continue my story, Janny will explain how she became a pioneer and how we served together after we got married.

SERVING AS A MARRIED COUPLE

Janny: My mother became a Witness in 1945 when I was 11 years old. She immediately saw

the importance of studying the Bible with her three children, but my father was opposed to the truth, so she taught us when he was not at home.

The first meeting I attended was a convention in The Hague in 1950. One week later, I attended my first meeting at the local Kingdom Hall in Assen (Drenthe). My father was furious and put me out of the house. My mother said, "You know where you can live." I knew she was referring to my spiritual brothers and sisters. I first moved in with a Witness family who lived nearby, but my father was still making life difficult for me, so I moved to the congregation in Deventer (Overijssel), which was some 60 miles (95 km) away.



Top: Markus (far right) doing street work near Amsterdam in 1950

Bottom: Janny (far right) vacation pioneering in 1952

Right: Our wedding day in 1955

However, I was a minor, so my father got in trouble with the civil authorities for making me leave his house. As a result, he told me I could come back home. Although my father never accepted the truth, he eventually allowed me to attend all the meetings and to go out preaching.

Shortly after I returned home, my mother became severely ill and I had to do all the housework. In spite of this, I continued to make spiritual progress and was baptized in 1951 at the age of 17. In 1952, after Mother recovered from her illness, I served together with three pioneer sisters for two months as a vacation (auxiliary) pioneer. We lived on a houseboat and preached in

two towns in Drenthe. I became a regular pioneer in 1953. One year later, a young circuit overseer visited our congregation. That was Markus. We got married in May 1955, as we felt that we could serve Jehovah better as a couple.—Eccl. 4:9-12.

Markus: After our wedding, at first we were assigned as pioneers to Veendam (Groningen). We lived in a tiny room that measured only about seven by ten feet (2 by 3 m). All the same, Janny made the room nice and cozy. Every night, we had to move our table and two small chairs out of the way to let down the wall bed.

After six months, we were invited to the traveling work in Belgium. In 1955, there were only about 4,000 publishers in the country. Now there are six times that number! In Flanders, in the north of Belgium, people speak the same language as in the Netherlands. However, the Belgian accent is quite different, so initially we had to overcome a language barrier.

Janny: The traveling work calls for a genuine self-sacrificing spirit. We visited the congregations on our bicycles and stayed in the homes of the brothers and sisters. Because we did not have a place of our own to go to between congregations, we stayed through Monday, traveling to the next congregation on Tuesday morning. But we always viewed our service as a blessing from Jehovah.

Markus: At first, we did not know any of the brothers and sisters in the congregations, but they were very kind and hospitable. (Heb. 13:2, ftn.) Over the years, we visited all the Dutch-speaking congregations in Belgium several times. This brought us many blessings. For instance, we got to know almost all the brothers and sisters in the Dutch district, and they have become very dear to us. We have seen hundreds of youngsters grow to physical and spiritual maturity and dedicate themselves to Jehovah, putting Kingdom interests first in their lives. It's a real joy to see many of them serve Jehovah faithfully in the full-time service. (3 John 4) This "interchange of encouragement" has made it easy



for us to continue wholeheartedly in our assignment.—Rom. 1:12.

A GREAT CHALLENGE AND A REAL BLESSING

Markus: From the day we got married, it was our desire to attend the Gilead School. Every day, we studied English for at least an hour. However, it wasn't easy to learn English from books, so we decided to go to England during our vacation to practice the language while preaching there. Finally, in 1963 we received an envelope from the world headquarters in Brooklyn. It contained two letters, one for me and one for Janny. My letter was an invitation to attend a special ten-month class of Gilead. The course would focus mainly on training brothers and giving them organizational instruction. So of the 100 students who were invited, 82 were brothers.

Janny: In the letter I received that day, I was asked to consider prayerfully whether I would be willing to stay in Belgium while Markus attended Gilead. I must admit that I was disappointed at first. It seemed that my efforts to reach out had not been blessed by Jehovah. Nonetheless, I reminded myself of the purpose of Gilead School—to help those who attend to accomplish the work of preaching the good news worldwide. So I agreed to stay behind and was assigned to serve as a special pioneer in the Belgian city of Ghent with Anna and Maria Colpaert, two experienced special pioneers.

Markus: Because I had to improve my English, I was invited to go to Brooklyn five months before the start of the school. I worked in the Shipping and Service departments. Serving at world headquarters and helping prepare literature shipments to Asia, Europe, and South America made me more aware of our international brotherhood. I especially remember Brother A. H. Macmillan, who had been in the pilgrim (traveling overseer) work in the days of Brother Russell. He was old by then and quite deaf, yet he faithfully attended all the congregation meetings. That left a deep impression on me and taught me that we should



never take our Christian association for granted.
—Heb. 10:24, 25.

Janny: Markus and I corresponded several times a week. We missed each other so much! Yet, Markus enjoyed the training he was receiving at Gilead, and I found real joy in my ministry. By the time Markus came home from the United States, I was conducting 17 Bible studies! Our being separated for 15 months was certainly a challenge, but I could see that Jehovah blessed us for the sacrifices we made. The day Markus came back, the plane was delayed for several hours, so when he finally arrived, we cried in each other's arms. Since then, we have been inseparable.

THANKFUL FOR EVERY PRIVILEGE OF SERVICE

Markus: When I came back from Gilead in December 1964, we were assigned to serve at Bethel. Although we did not know it at the time, that would not be our permanent assignment. Only three months later, we were assigned to the district work in Flanders. When Aalzen and Els Wiegersma were sent as missionaries to Bel-



“We firmly believe that it is not important where we serve nor in what capacity but, rather, whom we serve”

gium, they were assigned to the district work, and we went back to Bethel where I served in the Service Department. From 1968 to 1980, our assignment changed several times from serving at Bethel to serving in the traveling work. Finally, from 1980 until 2005, I served again as a district overseer.

Although our assignment often changed, we never lost sight of the fact that we had dedicated our lives to serve Jehovah whole-souled. We really enjoyed every assignment that we received, confident that the purpose of any changes in our service was to advance Kingdom interests.

Janny: I especially enjoyed the exciting privilege of going with Markus to Brooklyn in 1977 and to Patterson in 1997 when he received additional training as a Branch Committee member.

JEHOVAH KNOWS OUR NEEDS

Markus: In 1982, Janny underwent surgery and recovered well. Three years later, the congregation in Louvain kindly offered us an apartment above their Kingdom Hall. For the first time in 30

years, we had a little place of our own. On Tuesday, when we packed up to start our visit to a congregation, I had to go down and up the 54 steps several times to take our luggage down! Thankfully, in 2002 arrangements were made so that we could have an apartment on the ground floor. After I turned 78 years of age, we were assigned as special pioneers in the town of Lokeren. We are very happy that we can serve in this way and that we can still go in service every day.

Janny: Altogether we have spent over 120 years in the full-time service! We have experienced firsthand the truthfulness of Jehovah's promise that 'he will by no means leave us' and that if we serve him faithfully, we will 'not lack a thing.'—Heb. 13:5; Deut. 2:7.

Markus: When we were young, we dedicated ourselves to Jehovah. We never looked for great things for ourselves. We have been willing to accept any assignment offered to us because we firmly believe that it is not important where we serve nor in what capacity but, rather, whom we serve.

“Look at the Artwork!”

How many times have you said that to yourself or to others when you opened a new issue of this magazine? The beautiful pictures and photographs that are painstakingly produced are there for a purpose. They are teaching aids that make us think and feel. They can be especially helpful when we prepare for and participate in the Watchtower Study.

For example, give some thought to why the first illustration of each study article was chosen for that article. What does it portray? How does it relate to the title of the article or to the theme scripture? With every other illustration, think of how it relates to the subject under discussion and to your own life.

The Watchtower Study conductor will want to give the congregation the opportunity to comment on each picture, to tell how it applies to the lesson or what impact it has on them personally. In some cases, a note is provided in the caption that links a picture to a specific paragraph. In others, the conductor may decide with which paragraph it would be best to discuss each picture. In this way, all will benefit fully from what has been done to help the reader visualize the lessons that are found in God's Word.

One brother put it this way, “After reading a wonderfully written article, the pictures are the icing on the cake.”

