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# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
APRIL 3-30, 2023

## SONG 96

God's Own Book  
—A Treasure

## PREVIEW

The Bible helps us to draw close to Jehovah. What can we learn from that sacred book about God's wisdom, his justice, and his love? What we learn can help us to deepen our appreciation for God's Word and to see the Bible as it really is—a gift from our heavenly Father.

# What the Bible Reveals About Its Author

*“Write in a book all the words that I speak to you.”*

—JER. 30:2.

HOW grateful we are to Jehovah God for the Bible! Through its pages, he provides us with wise counsel that can help us to cope successfully with the problems we face today. He also gives us a wonderful hope for the future. More important, Jehovah has used the Bible to reveal many aspects of his personality. As we meditate on his beautiful qualities, our hearts are deeply touched and we are moved to draw close to our God by developing a warm friendship with him.—Ps. 25:14.

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah wants people to know him. In the past, he revealed himself by such means as dreams, visions, and even angels. (Num. 12:6; Acts 10:3, 4) But how could these dreams, visions, or messages from angels be studied unless they were written down? For good reason, Jehovah had men “write in a book” what he wanted us to know. (Jer. 30:2) Because “the way of the true God is perfect,” we can be confident that this method of communicating with us is excellent and beneficial.—Ps. 18:30.

<sup>3</sup> **Read Isaiah 40:8.** God's Word has provided sound guidance to faithful men and women for thousands of years. How has that been possible? After all, the Scriptures were recorded long ago on perishable material, so none of the original documents are known to exist today. But Jehovah saw to it that copies were made of

1. Why are you grateful for the Bible?
2. In what different ways has Jehovah revealed himself to humans?
3. How did Jehovah see to it that the Bible was preserved? (Isaiah 40:8)

the sacred text. Although the copyists were imperfect, they were extremely careful. Regarding the Hebrew Scriptures, for example, one scholar wrote: “It may be safely said that no other work of antiquity has been so accurately transmitted.” So despite the passage of time, the perishable materials used, and the imperfections of the copyists, we can be confident that the words we read in our Bible today convey the thoughts of its Author, Jehovah.

<sup>4</sup> Jehovah is the Source of “every good gift and every perfect present.” (Jas. 1: 17) The Bible is one of the best gifts that Jehovah has given us. A gift tells us something about the giver—how well he knows us and our needs. The same is true about the Giver of the Bible. When we examine this gift, we learn much about Jehovah. We learn how well he knows us and what we need. In this article, we will discuss how the Bible reflects three of Jehovah’s attributes: his wisdom, his justice, and his love. Let us first consider ways in which the Bible reflects God’s wisdom.

#### THE BIBLE REFLECTS GOD’S WISDOM

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah knows that we need his wise counsel. And his gift, the Bible, is filled with his wisdom. The Bible’s counsel has a positive effect on people. The Bible changes lives. When the first books of the Bible were composed, Moses told God’s people, the Israelites: “This is no empty word for you, but it means your

life.” (Deut. 32:47) Those who obeyed the Scriptures could enjoy a successful and happy life. (Ps. 1:2, 3) Time has not drained God’s Word of its power to improve people’s lives. For example, on [jw.org](http://jw.org), in the series “The Bible Changes Lives,” you will find over 50 real-life examples that reveal how the Bible has been powerfully “at work in [its] believers” today.—1 Thess. 2:13.

<sup>6</sup> No other book is like God’s Word. Why is that so? Because the Author of that book, Jehovah God, is almighty, is eternal, and has unparalleled wisdom. Many other books outlast their authors, but the advice those books contain does not always stand the test of time. On the other hand, the wise principles found in the Bible are everlasting; they have proved to be beneficial to people living in every time period. As we read that sacred book and meditate on what we learn, the Author uses his powerful holy spirit to help us see how we can apply the Bible’s counsel in our life. (Ps. 119:27; Mal. 3:16; Heb. 4:12) Yes, the Bible’s living Author is eager to help you. What an incentive to read the Bible regularly!

<sup>7</sup> Another outstanding way in which the Bible reflects divine wisdom is by the unifying effect it has on God’s people. When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, they settled over a wide area. Some became fishermen, others raised cattle, and still others farmed the land. Israelites living in one area could easily have lost interest in the welfare of

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4. What will we discuss in this article?

5. What is one way that the Bible reflects God’s wisdom?

6. Why can we say that the Bible is like no other book?

7. How did the Bible unite God’s people in the past?



**How has the Bible united Jehovah's people, both in the past and in our day?**  
(See paragraphs 7-8)

fellow Israelites living in other parts of the country. But Jehovah arranged for the Israelites to gather together on various occasions to hear his written Word read and explained. (Deut. 31:10-13; Neh. 8:2, 8, 18) Imagine how a faithful Israelite must have felt as he arrived in Jerusalem and saw perhaps millions of his fellow worshippers from every part of the country! Jehovah thereby helped his people to remain united. Later, when the Christian congregation was formed, it was made up of men and women who spoke many languages and who were from many social and economic backgrounds. But because of their love

of the Scriptures, they were united in worship of the true God. Those who became believers could understand God's Word only with the aid of fellow worshippers and by meeting together with them.—Acts 2:42; 8:30, 31.

<sup>8</sup> Our wise God continues to inform and unite his people by means of the Bible. It is the source of the spiritual food that we enjoy so much. We regularly gather together at our congregation meetings, assemblies, and conventions to hear the Scriptures read, explained, and discussed. The Bible thus plays a vi-

8. How does the Bible unite Jehovah's people today?

tal role in Jehovah's purpose to have his worshippers "serve him shoulder to shoulder."—Zeph. 3:9.

<sup>9</sup> Consider another evidence of Jehovah's wisdom. He had many parts of the Scriptures written in such a way that they would be understood only by humble readers. **(Read Luke 10:21.)** People everywhere read the Bible. As one scholar noted, the Bible "has been not only the most widely read, but also the most carefully read, book of all." But only the humble truly understand and apply what it says.—2 Cor. 3:15, 16.

<sup>10</sup> We discern Jehovah's wisdom in the Bible in yet another way. Jehovah uses the Scriptures not only to teach us as a group but also to instruct and comfort us as individuals. All of us can sense Jehovah's personal interest in us as we read his Word. (Isa. 30:21) When facing a problem, how often have you turned to the Scriptures and read a verse that seemed written just for you? Yet, the Bible appeals to millions of people. How can it contain such up-to-date information that is tailored to *your* personal needs? This is possible only because the Bible is the work of a uniquely wise Author.—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

### THE BIBLE REFLECTS GOD'S JUSTICE

<sup>11</sup> Justice is another attribute of Jehovah. (Deut. 32:4) Justice is closely linked with impartiality, and Jehovah is

impartial. (Acts 10:34, 35; Rom. 2:11) His impartiality is reflected in the languages that were used to write the Bible. The first 39 Bible books were written mostly in Hebrew, which was easily understood by God's people at that time. However, by the first century C.E., the Greek language was widely used, so the last 27 books of the Bible were composed mainly in that language. Jehovah did not restrict his Word to any one language. Today, the nearly eight billion people on earth speak many languages. How can so many people come to learn about Jehovah?

<sup>12</sup> Through the prophet Daniel, Jehovah promised that in the time of the end, "the true knowledge" found in the Bible would "become abundant." Many would understand it. **(Read Daniel 12:4.)** One way that such knowledge has become abundant is through the translating, publishing, and distributing of Bibles and Bible literature. The Bible has become the most widely translated and distributed book in the world. Bible translations produced by commercial enterprises are sometimes very expensive. Jehovah's people have so far translated God's Word, in whole or in part, into over 240 languages, and anyone can obtain a copy without charge. As a result, people of all nations are responding to the "good news of the Kingdom" before the end comes. (Matt. 24:14) Our God of justice wants to give as many people as possible the opportunity to get to know him by reading his

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9. What quality is essential to understand the Bible's message? (Luke 10:21)

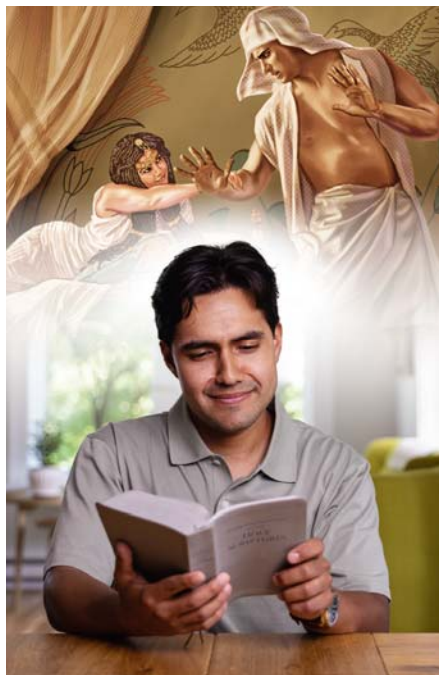
10. What is another way that the Bible reflects Jehovah's wisdom?

11. How did God show impartiality when the Bible was being written?

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12. What is one way in which Daniel 12:4 has been fulfilled in these last days?





Why should we meditate on how Jehovah dealt with his servants in the past?  
(See paragraph 15)

Word. That is because he loves us all very much.

### THE BIBLE REFLECTS GOD'S LOVE

<sup>13</sup> The Bible gives evidence of its Author's greatest quality—love. (1 John 4:8) Consider what Jehovah included in the Bible and what he left out. He provided just what we need in order to have a relationship with him, to lead a happy life now, and to gain everlasting life. However, because Jehovah loves us, he did not overwhelm us with more details than we can handle.—**Read John 21:25.**

<sup>14</sup> Jehovah also showed love by com-

municating with us in a style that dignifies us. In the Bible, he does not give us an endless list of rules, micromanaging every aspect of our life. Rather, he appeals to our thinking ability through real-life stories, stirring prophecies, and practical counsel. In these ways, God's Word moves us to love and obey him from our heart.

<sup>15</sup> The Bible reveals that Jehovah is keenly interested in us. How so? His Word is filled with accounts that express human emotion. We can relate to Bible characters because they were people “with feelings like ours.” (Jas. 5:17)

13. Why can we say that the Bible reflects Jehovah's love? (John 21:25)

14. How else is God's love evident in what the Bible contains?

15. (a) How has Jehovah shown his interest in those who read his Word? (b) In the picture, which Bible characters are the little girl, the young brother, and the elderly sister meditating on? (Gen. 39: 1, 10-12; 2 Ki. 5:1-3; Luke 2:25-38)

More important, by observing how he dealt with people like us, we are able to understand more clearly that “Jehovah is very tender in affection and merciful.” —Jas. 5:11.

<sup>16</sup> The Bible reveals Jehovah’s love for us in another way. The Scriptures assure us that our God will not abandon us when we make mistakes. The Israelites sinned against Jehovah again and again; yet, when they sincerely repented, God forgave them. **(Read Isaiah 55:7.)** First-century Christians were also made aware of God’s love. Under inspiration, the apostle Paul urged fellow believers to “forgive and comfort” a man who had pursued a course of serious sin but who had repented. (2 Cor. 2:6, 7; 1 Cor. 5:1-5) How remarkable that Jehovah did not reject his worshippers just because they had erred! Rather, he lovingly reached out to them, corrected them, and invited

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16. What do we learn about Jehovah when we read in the Bible of individuals who made mistakes? (Isaiah 55:7)

them back into his arms. He promises to do the same for all repentant sinners today.—Jas. 4:8-10.

### TREASURE THE “GOOD GIFT” OF GOD’S WORD

<sup>17</sup> Jehovah has given us a beautiful gift. Why is his Word so remarkable? As we have learned, the Bible reveals God’s wisdom, his justice, and his love. This book proves that Jehovah wants us to come to know him. He wants us to become his friends.

<sup>18</sup> We do not want to take for granted the “good gift” of God’s Word. (Jas. 1:17) Let us therefore continue to show gratitude for it. We can do so by prayerfully reading its sacred words and meditating on them. As we do, we can be certain that its grand Author will bless our efforts and that we “will find the knowledge of God.”—Prov. 2:5.

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17. Why is the Bible such a remarkable gift?

18. How can we show that we are grateful for Jehovah’s “good gift” of the Bible?

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## HOW DOES THE BIBLE REFLECT JEHOVAH’S . . .

■ wisdom?

■ justice?

■ love?

**SONG 97**

Life Depends  
on God's Word

**PREVIEW**

All of us who worship Jehovah strive to read his Word daily. Many others also read the Bible; yet, they do not really understand what they read. That was true of some people in Jesus' day too. By examining what Jesus said to those who read God's Word, we will draw lessons that can help us get more out of our Bible reading.

## Get More out of Your Bible Reading

*"How do you read?"*—LUKE 10:26.

IMAGINE what it was like to listen to Jesus teach. How often he referred to the Holy Scriptures from memory! In fact, in his first recorded words after his baptism and in some of his last words before his death, Jesus quoted from the Scriptures.\* (Deut. 8:3; Ps. 31:5; Luke 4:4; 23:46) And during the three and a half years between those two events, Jesus often publicly read and quoted from the Scriptures and explained them.—Matt. 5:17, 18, 21, 22, 27, 28; Luke 4:16-20.

<sup>2</sup> Years before he began his ministry, Jesus read and heard God's Word repeatedly. At home, he no doubt heard Mary and Joseph quote from the Scriptures during daily family conversations.<sup>#</sup> (Deut. 6:6, 7) We can be sure that Jesus attended the synagogue every Sabbath with his family. (Luke 4:16) While there, he must have listened carefully as the Scriptures were read. In time, Jesus learned to read those Sacred Writings on his own.

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\* At the time of his baptism and his being anointed with holy spirit, Jesus' memory of his prehuman existence was evidently restored to him.—Matt. 3:16.

<sup>#</sup> Mary knew the Scriptures well and referred to them. (Luke 1:46-55) Likely, Joseph and Mary could not afford personal copies of the Scriptures. They must have listened carefully when God's Word was read at the synagogue so that they could recall it later.

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1. What shows that the Scriptures were important to Jesus?
  2. As he grew up, what helped Jesus to get well-acquainted with the Scriptures? (See cover picture.)



As a result, Jesus not only came to know the Scriptures well but also loved them and allowed them to influence his actions. For example, recall the incident in the temple when Jesus was just 12 years old. The teachers who were well-versed in the Mosaic Law were in “amazement at [Jesus’] understanding and his answers.”—Luke 2:46, 47, 52.

<sup>3</sup> We too can come to know and love God’s Word as we regularly read the Scriptures. How, though, can we get the most out of what we read? We can learn from what Jesus said to those familiar with the Law, including the scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. Those religious leaders read the Scriptures often, but they failed to benefit from what they read. Jesus highlighted three ways in which these men were not getting the most out of the Scriptures. His words to them will help us improve in our ability (1) to understand what we read, (2) to find spiritual treasures, and (3) to allow God’s Word to mold us.

### READ TO UNDERSTAND

<sup>4</sup> We want to understand the meaning of what we read in God’s Word. Otherwise, our reading may not fully benefit us. For example, consider Jesus’ conversation with “a man versed in the Law.” (**Read Luke 10:25-29.**) When the man asked what he needed to do to gain everlasting life, Jesus directed him to God’s Word by asking: “What is written in the Law? **How do you read?**” The man was able to give the right answer by quot-

ing the scriptures about loving God and loving neighbor. (Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:5) But note what he said next: “Who really is my neighbor?” The man revealed that he did not understand the real meaning of what he had read. As a result, he did not know how to apply those scriptures correctly in his life.

Reading to understand is a skill that we can develop

<sup>5</sup> We can increase our understanding of God’s Word by developing good reading habits. Here are some suggestions that can assist you. **Pray** before you begin reading. We need Jehovah’s help to understand the Scriptures, so we can ask him for his holy spirit in order to concentrate. Then **read at a slow pace**. That will help you comprehend the material. You might find it beneficial to read aloud or to follow along with an audio recording of the Bible. You will thereby engage more of your senses, which can deepen the impression that God’s Word makes on your mind and heart. (Josh. 1:8) When you are finished reading, **pray again** to thank Jehovah for the gift of his Word and to ask for his help to apply what you have read.

<sup>6</sup> Here are two more suggestions to enhance your understanding of the Bible. **Ask yourself questions** about what you read. As you consider a particular

3. What will we consider in this article?

4. What does Luke 10:25-29 teach us about reading God’s Word?

5. How can prayer and reading at a slow pace enhance our understanding?

6. Why can asking yourself questions and taking brief notes help you as you read? (See also picture.)



Why can taking brief notes help you to understand and remember what you read?  
(See paragraph 6)

account, ask: ‘Who are the main characters? Who is speaking? To whom is he speaking, and why? Where and when is the action taking place?’ Such questions will help you to think about and follow the main ideas of the passage. Also, **take brief notes** as you read. When you write, you force yourself to put thoughts into words, which helps to clarify your thinking. Writing also helps you remember what you read. You might jot down questions, record the results of your research, summarize main points, note how you can use what you have read, or simply record your feelings. You may find that writing down such notes can help you view God’s Word as his personal message to you.

<sup>7</sup> Jesus identified an important quality

7. What quality do we need as we read, and why?  
(Matthew 24:15)

that we need if we are to understand what we read in God’s Word—discernment. **(Read Matthew 24:15.)** What is discernment? It is the ability to grasp how one idea relates to another and how it differs from another and to see what is not immediately obvious. In addition, as Jesus indicated, we need discernment to identify events that fulfill Bible prophecy. We also need this quality so that we can benefit fully from everything we read in the Bible.

<sup>8</sup> Jehovah gives his servants discernment. So turn to him in prayer, and ask him to help you develop this quality. (Prov. 2:6) How can you work in harmony with your prayer? Carefully analyze what you read, and note how it relates to other things you know. To assist you, consult our Bible study aids,

8. How can we read with discernment?

such as the *Research Guide for Jehovah's Witnesses*. These tools will help you to discern the meaning of a Bible passage and to see ways in which you can apply it in your life. (Heb. 5:14) As you read with discernment, your understanding of the Scriptures will grow.

### READ TO FIND SPIRITUAL TREASURES

<sup>9</sup> The Sadducees were thoroughly familiar with the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures, but they overlooked important truths contained in those inspired books. For example, consider how Jesus responded when the Sadducees challenged him about the resurrection. He asked them: ***“Have you not read*** in the book of Moses, in the account about the thornbush, that God said to him: ‘I am the God of Abraham and God of Isaac and God of Jacob?’” (Mark 12:18, 26) Although the Sadducees had surely read that passage many times, Jesus’ question revealed that they had overlooked an important Scriptural truth—the teaching of the resurrection.—Mark 12:27; Luke 20:38.\*

<sup>10</sup> What lesson is there for us? When we read, we want to be alert to all that a verse or a Bible account can teach us. We want to perceive not only basic teachings but also deeper truths and principles that lie hidden beneath the surface.

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\* See the article “Draw Close to God—‘He Is the God . . . of the Living’” in the February 1, 2013, issue of *The Watchtower*.

9. What important Scriptural truth did the Sadducees overlook?

10. What should we be alert to as we read?

## Jesus’ Words Can Help You to Understand What You Read

- Strive to understand what you read, and cultivate discernment so that you know how to apply it.—Matt. 24:15; Luke 10:25-37.
- Examine Bible accounts carefully to uncover spiritual treasures.—Mark 12:18-27.
- Allow God’s Word to mold you and to affect how you treat others.—Matt. 12:1-8.

<sup>11</sup> How can you find spiritual treasures when reading the Bible? Consider what **2 Timothy 3:16, 17** states. (**Read.**) Note that “*all* Scripture is . . . beneficial” for (1) teaching, (2) reproving, (3) setting things straight, and (4) disciplining. You can obtain those four benefits even from Bible books that you do not use often. Analyze the account to see what it ***teaches*** you about Jehovah, about his purpose, or about godly principles. Consider how it is helpful for ***reproving***. Do this by noting how the verses help you to identify and reject wrong tendencies or attitudes and to remain on a faithful course. Examine how the passage can be used to ***set straight***, or correct, a wrong viewpoint, perhaps one you have encountered in the ministry. And look for any ***discipline*** the verses provide that can train you to reflect Jehovah’s thinking.

11. In line with 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, how can you find treasures in the Bible?



How can we determine if we are allowing God's Word to mold us?  
(See paragraph 14)

When you keep these four benefits in mind, you will find spiritual treasures that can enrich your Bible reading.

#### LET YOUR READING MOLD YOU

<sup>12</sup> Jesus also asked the question ***“Have you not read?”*** to reveal that the Pharisees had a wrong view of the Scriptures. (Matt. 12:1-7)\* On that occasion, the Pharisees claimed that Jesus' disciples had violated the Sabbath. In reply, Jesus cited two Scriptural examples and quoted a verse from Hosea to show that the Pharisees had missed the point of the Sabbath law and had failed to show mercy. Why were these men not molded by

\* See also Matthew 19:4-6, where Jesus asked the Pharisees this same question: “Have you not read?” Although they had read the creation account, they overlooked what it taught about God's view of marriage.

12. Why did Jesus ask the Pharisees the question “Have you not read?”

their reading of God's Word? Because they read it with a critical and proud spirit. Their attitude kept them from getting the sense of what they read.—Matt. 23:23; John 5:39, 40.

<sup>13</sup> We learn from Jesus' words that we need to read the Bible with the right attitude. Unlike the Pharisees, we must be sincere and teachable. We must ***“accept with mildness*** the implanting of the word.” (Jas. 1:21) If we are mild, we will allow God's Word to take root in our heart. Only if we avoid a critical or proud spirit will the Bible's lessons about mercy, compassion, and love shape us.

<sup>14</sup> The way we treat others can indicate

13. With what attitude should we read the Bible, and why?

14. How can we tell if we are allowing the Bible to mold us? (See also pictures.)



if we are allowing God's Word to mold us. The Pharisees failed to let God's Word reach their heart, and as a result, they "condemned the guiltless ones." (Matt. 12:7) In a similar way, how we view and treat others reveals whether we have let God's Word mold us. For example, are we inclined to mention the good we see in others, or are we quick to point out their flaws? Are we merciful and ready to forgive, or are we critical and given to holding grudges? Such self-examination can reveal whether we are letting what we read shape our thoughts, feelings, and actions.—1 Tim. 4:12, 15; Heb. 4:12.

#### READING THAT LEADS TO HAPPINESS

<sup>15</sup> Jesus loved the Holy Scriptures, and his feelings were prophetically expressed in the words found at Psalm 40:8: "To do your will, O my God, is my delight, and your law is deep within me." As a result, he was happy and successful in serving Jehovah. We too can enjoy happiness and success if we work on getting God's Word into our heart.—Ps. 1:1-3.

15. How did Jesus feel about the Holy Scriptures?

<sup>16</sup> In harmony with Jesus' words and example, let us sharpen our Bible-reading skills. We can improve our understanding of Bible passages by praying, reading at a slow pace, asking questions, and taking brief notes. We can use discernment by carefully analyzing what we read with the help of our Bible-based publications. We can expand our use of the Scriptures, even passages we are less familiar with, by looking for spiritual treasures in such accounts. And we can let God's Word mold us by maintaining the right attitude as we read. When we apply ourselves in these ways, we will get more out of our Bible reading and draw ever closer to Jehovah.—Ps. 119:17, 18; Jas. 4:8.

16. In what ways do you hope to get more out of your reading of God's Word? (See the box "Jesus' Words Can Help You to Understand What You Read.")

**PICTURE DESCRIPTION** Page 12: During a meeting at the Kingdom Hall, one of the brothers who assists in caring for the audio and video makes several mistakes. Yet, after the meeting, the brothers commend him for his efforts rather than focus on his mistakes.

#### AS YOU READ THE BIBLE, WHAT CAN HELP YOU TO . . .

- understand what you read?
- find spiritual treasures?
- allow God's Word to mold you?



**SONG 144**

Keep Your Eyes  
on the Prize!

**PREVIEW**

In this article, we will consider how we can keep our spiritual balance and remain watchful. Further, we will see how we can pay attention to ourselves and how we can make the best use of our time.

## “Keep Your Senses, Be Watchful!”

*“Keep your senses, be watchful!”*—1 PET. 5:8.

A FEW days before Jesus’ death, four of his disciples asked him: “What will be the sign . . . of the conclusion of the system of things?” (Matt. 24:3) Those disciples were likely wondering how they would be able to tell when the Jewish system of things was coming to an end. In his answer, Jesus spoke not only about the end of the Jewish system but also about “the conclusion of the system of things” in which we now live. With regard to the timing of the end, Jesus said: “Concerning that day or the hour nobody knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but the Father.” Then he warned all his disciples to “keep awake” and to “keep on the watch.” —Mark 13:32-37.

<sup>2</sup> Jewish Christians in the first century had to remain watchful; their life depended on it. Jesus told his followers what to look for to determine when the Jewish system of things was coming to its end. He said: “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near.” At that moment, they were to heed Jesus’ warning and “begin fleeing to the mountains.” (Luke 21:20, 21) Those who paid attention to this warning survived when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem.

1. What did Jesus tell his disciples regarding the timing of the end, and what warning did he give them?
2. Why was it important for those living under the Jewish system of things to keep on the watch?



When discussing Bible prophecy, what should we avoid and what should we do?  
(See paragraph 5)



<sup>3</sup> Today we are living in the time of the end of this wicked system of things. So we too must keep our senses and keep on the watch. In this article, we will discuss how we can be balanced while keeping a close watch on world events, how we can pay attention to ourselves, and how we can make the best use of the remaining time.

#### BE BALANCED WHEN WATCHING WORLD EVENTS

<sup>4</sup> For good reason, we are interested in seeing how current world events are fulfilling Bible prophecy. For instance, Jesus provided a list of specific events to help us know when the end of Satan's system is drawing near. (Matt. 24:3-14) The apostle Peter encouraged us to pay attention to the fulfillment of prophecy so that our faith will remain strong. (2 Pet. 1:19-21) The last book of the Bible begins with the words: "A revelation by Jesus Christ, which God gave him, to show his slaves the things that must shortly take place." (Rev. 1:1) So we have a keen interest in current world events and in knowing how they may fulfill Bible prophecy. And we may be eager to discuss such events with one another.

<sup>5</sup> When discussing Bible prophecy, however, we should avoid speculating. Why? Because we would not want to say anything that could cause disunity in the congregation. For instance, we

may hear world leaders talk about how they can solve a particular conflict and bring peace and security. Instead of speculating that such a statement fulfills the prophecy at 1 Thessalonians 5:3, we need to keep up-to-date with the latest published information. When we base our discussions on material published by Jehovah's organization, we help the congregation to remain united "in the same line of thought."—1 Cor. 1:10; 4:6.

<sup>6</sup> **Read 2 Peter 3:11-13.** The apostle Peter helps us to keep a balanced view when considering Bible prophecy. He urges us to "keep close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah." Why? Not because we want to work out the "day and hour" when Jehovah will bring Armageddon, but because we want to use the time we have left to perform "holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion." (Matt. 24:36; Luke 12:40) In other words, we want to maintain upright conduct and make sure that our efforts in Jehovah's service reflect our deep love for him. To keep that focus, we must pay attention to ourselves.

#### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PAY ATTENTION TO OURSELVES?

<sup>7</sup> Jesus told his disciples to pay attention not only to world events but also to themselves. That point is made clear in the warning recorded at **Luke 21:34. (Read.)** Notice Jesus' words: "Pay attention to *yourselves*." A person who

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3. What will we discuss in this article?

4. Why should we be interested in seeing how current world events are fulfilling Bible prophecy?

5. What should we avoid, but what should we do? (See also pictures.)

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6. What lessons can we learn from 2 Peter 3:11-13?

7. How do we show that we are paying attention to ourselves? (Luke 21:34)

pays attention to himself is alert to any dangers that threaten his relationship with Jehovah, and he takes steps to avoid them. In this way, he keeps himself in God's love.—Prov. 22:3; Jude 20, 21.

<sup>8</sup> The apostle Paul admonished Christians to pay attention to themselves. For example, he told the Christians in Ephesus: "Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons." (Eph. 5:15, 16) Our spirituality is under constant threat, so the Bible counsels us to "keep perceiving what the will of Jehovah is" so that we can deal with any type of threat.—Eph. 5:17.

<sup>9</sup> The Bible does not identify every danger that could threaten our friendship with Jehovah. We must often make decisions on matters that are not directly discussed in the Scriptures. To make wise choices, we need to perceive, or sense, "the will of Jehovah." We can do this by regularly studying God's Word and meditating on it. The more we understand Jehovah's will and cultivate "the mind of Christ," the more likely we will walk "as wise persons," even when we do not have specific rules to guide our conduct. (1 Cor. 2:14-16) Some dangers are relatively easy to identify; others are more subtle.

<sup>10</sup> Some dangers that we must avoid include flirting, heavy drinking, overeating, engaging in hurtful speech, as well as viewing violent entertainment, pornography, and similar things. (Ps.

101:3) Our adversary, the Devil, is constantly looking for opportunities to damage our friendship with Jehovah. (1 Pet. 5:8) If we are not watchful, Satan can plant in our mind and heart seeds of envy, dishonesty, greed, hatred, haughtiness, and resentment. (Gal. 5:19-21) At first, these inclinations may not be very strong. But if we do not take immediate steps to uproot them, they will continue to grow like a poisonous plant and cause trouble.—Jas. 1:14, 15.

<sup>11</sup> One subtle danger is bad association. Consider this scenario. You work secularly with someone who does not share your Christian beliefs. You want your workmate to have a good impression of Jehovah's Witnesses, so you are kind and helpful. You might also agree to have lunch with this person now and then. Before long, you do so on a regular basis. Occasionally, the conversation turns to immoral subjects, which you try to ignore at first. With time, you become so used to such talk that you are no longer offended by it. Then one day, your workmate invites you to have a drink after work, and you accept. Eventually, you begin to think like your workmate. At this point, how long will it take before you begin to act like him? Of course, we are kind and respectful to all, but we must remember that we will be strongly influenced by those with whom we choose to spend our time. (1 Cor. 15:33) If we pay attention to ourselves, as Jesus urged us to do, we will avoid unnecessary association with those who do

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8. What admonition did the apostle Paul give to Christians?

9. How do we perceive Jehovah's will for us?

10. What are some dangers that we must avoid?

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11. What is one subtle danger that we must avoid, and why?





How can we make the best use of our time?

(See paragraphs 14-15)

not live by Jehovah's standards. (2 Cor. 6:15) We will see the danger and steer clear of it.

### MAKE THE BEST USE OF YOUR TIME

<sup>12</sup> Jesus' disciples were not to be idle while they awaited the conclusion of the system of things. Jesus gave them work to do. He commanded them to preach the good news "in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8) What an enormous assignment Jesus'

12. What were Jesus' disciples to do while they awaited the conclusion of the system of things?

followers received! By devoting themselves to that assignment, they made the best use of their time.

<sup>13</sup> **Read Colossians 4:5.** In order to pay attention to ourselves, we need to consider how we use our time. "Unexpected events" can affect any one of us. (Eccl. 9:11) Our life can suddenly be cut short.

<sup>14</sup> We can make the best use of our time by doing Jehovah's will and

13. Why do we need to make the best use of our time? (Colossians 4:5)

14-15. How can we make the best use of our time? (Hebrews 6:11, 12) (See also picture.)



strengthening our friendship with him. (John 14:21) We need to “be steadfast, immovable, always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord.” (1 Cor. 15:58) Then when the end comes—whether it is the end of our life or the end of this wicked system—we will have no regrets. —Matt. 24:13; Rom. 14:8.

<sup>15</sup> Today, Jesus continues to direct his disciples as they preach about God’s Kingdom in all the earth. He has done his part. Through Jehovah’s organization, Jesus trains us how to preach and he provides us with the tools we need to spread the good news. (Matt. 28:18-20) We do our part by being industrious in our preaching and teaching work and by keeping watchful as we wait on Jehovah to bring an end to this system of things. By applying the counsel found at **Hebrews 6:11, 12**, we will hold fast to our hope “down to the end.”—**Read.**

<sup>16</sup> Jehovah has a fixed day and hour when he will bring an end to Satan’s system. When that day comes, Jehovah will without fail fulfill the prophecies that he had recorded in his Word. Meanwhile, it may at times seem that the end of this system has been delayed. However, Jehovah’s day “will not be late!” (Hab. 2:3) So may we be determined to “keep on the lookout for Jehovah,” showing “a waiting attitude for the God of [our] salvation.”—Mic. 7:7.

16. What are we determined to do?

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTION** **Page 15: (Top)** A couple watch the news. Later, after a congregation meeting, they share with others their strong personal opinions about the meaning of news events. **(Bottom)** A couple watch a Governing Body update in order to stay current with the latest understanding of Bible prophecy. They offer to others Bible-based publications that are provided by the faithful slave.

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## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| ■ How can we be balanced when watching world events? | ■ What is involved in paying attention to ourselves? | ■ How can we make the best use of our time? |
|--|--|---|

**SONG 141**

The Miracle of Life

**PREVIEW**

This article will help us build our appreciation for God's gift of life. We will see what specific steps we can take to protect our health and life when a disaster strikes as well as to minimize the potential for harmful accidents. We will also discuss what we must do to be prepared for a medical emergency.

## Cherish God's Gift of Life

*"By him we have life and move and exist."*—ACTS 17:28.

IMAGINE that a friend gave you a very old but priceless painting—a masterpiece. It has some discoloration, stains, and cracks. Despite the imperfections, the painting is valued at millions of dollars. Surely you would appreciate and protect that piece of art. Similarly, Jehovah has given us a valuable gift, the gift of life. In fact, Jehovah shows how much he values our life by giving his Son as a ransom for us.—John 3:16.

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah is the Source of life. (Ps. 36:9) The apostle Paul acknowledged this truth when he said: "By him we have life and move and exist." (Acts 17:25, 28) So we can appropriately refer to our life as a gift from God. He lovingly provides us with what we need to stay alive. (Acts 14:15-17) But Jehovah does not preserve our lives miraculously. Rather, he expects us to care for our physical and spiritual health to the best of our ability. (**Read 2 Corinthians 7:1.**) Why should we protect our health and life, and how can we do so?

### VALUE THE GIFT OF LIFE

<sup>3</sup> One reason why we should try to stay healthy is that

1. How valuable is our life to Jehovah?
2. As indicated at 2 Corinthians 7:1, what does Jehovah expect from us?
3. What is one reason why we should try to stay healthy?

we can serve Jehovah to the best of our ability. (Mark 12:30) We desire to present our “bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God,” so we avoid choosing to do things that we know will harm our health. (Rom. 12:1) Granted, there is only so much that we can do to stay in good health. But we do what we can because we want to show our heavenly Father that we appreciate the gift of life.

<sup>4</sup> King David explained why he cherished God’s gift of life when he wrote: “What profit is there in my death, in my going down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?” (Ps. 30:9) David may have written those words toward the end of his life. But he was determined to stay alive and well as long as possible so that he could praise Jehovah. No doubt, all of us have that same determination.

<sup>5</sup> Sickness and old age may prevent us from doing many of the things we once did. As a result, we may feel frustrated and sad. But never should we give up and neglect our health. Why not? Because no matter how old or how sick we are, we can still praise Jehovah, as did King David. How touching it is to realize that our God treasures us despite our being imperfect! (Matt. 10:29-31) Even if we were to die, he would long to resurrect us. (Job 14:14, 15) While we are alive, we want to do what we can to protect our health and life.

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4. What did King David want to do?

5. No matter how old or how sick we are, what can we do?

## AVOID HARMFUL HABITS

<sup>6</sup> Although the Bible is not a health-care book or a dietary manual, it does reveal Jehovah’s thinking in these areas. For example, he exhorts us to “ward off harmful things” that could damage our body. (Eccl. 11:10) Gluttony and drunkenness, both life-threatening, are condemned in the Bible. (Prov. 23:20) Jehovah expects us to exercise self-control when deciding what and how much to eat and drink.—1 Cor. 6:12; 9:25.

<sup>7</sup> We can make decisions that show deep appreciation for God’s gift of life by using our thinking ability. (Ps. 119:99, 100; **read Proverbs 2:11.**) For instance, we show good judgment in what we eat. If we like a certain food but know that it makes us sick, common sense moves us to avoid eating it. We also prove that we are sound in mind when we get sufficient sleep, exercise regularly, maintain a good routine of personal hygiene, and keep our home clean.

## BE SAFETY CONSCIOUS

<sup>8</sup> Jehovah’s Law to the nation of Israel included guidelines that would help prevent serious accidents from occurring at home and at work. (Ex. 21:28, 29; Deut. 22:8) Fatal accidents had serious consequences for unintentional manslaughter. (Deut. 19:4, 5) The Law required that

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6. What does Jehovah expect from us concerning our eating and drinking habits?

7. How does the counsel found at Proverbs 2:11 help us make good decisions about our health?

8. What does the Bible reveal about God’s thinking on the matter of personal safety?



**In these situations,  
how can we show  
respect for life?**

(See paragraph 9)

even those who unintentionally harmed an unborn child be punished. (Ex. 21:22, 23) The Scriptures make it clear that Jehovah wants us to be safety conscious.

<sup>9</sup> We show that we appreciate God's gift of life by taking safety measures at home and at work. For example, we dispose of sharp objects, toxic chemicals, or medicines in a safe way, and we keep such items out of the reach of young children. We are cautious when

9. What precautions can we take to avoid accidents? (See also pictures.)

handling open flames, hot liquids, and power tools, not leaving them unattended. We do not drive a car while our judgment is impaired by medication, alcohol, or lack of sleep, and we do not allow ourselves to be distracted by using a handheld device while driving.

#### **WHEN CALAMITY STRIKES**

<sup>10</sup> At times, we are not able to prevent life-threatening events. This is especial-

10. What can we do before and during a life-threatening calamity?

ly true of natural disasters, epidemics, and violent conflicts. However, when such calamities strike, we can try to reduce risks and improve our likelihood of survival by obeying curfews, evacuation orders, and emergency restrictions. (Rom. 13:1, 5-7) Some threats can be anticipated, so we do well to follow any guidelines issued by the local authorities to help us prepare for a disaster. For instance, we may find it practical to store a supply of water and nonperishable food and a basic first-aid kit.

<sup>11</sup> What should we do if a contagious disease is spreading where we live? We should obey emergency regulations, such as those regarding washing our hands, social distancing, wearing a mask, and quarantining. Our diligence in these areas shows how deeply we appreciate God's gift of life.

<sup>12</sup> During emergencies, inaccurate information may circulate among friends, among neighbors, and in the media. Rather than believe "every word" we hear, we do well to listen to the most reliable governmental and medical sources available. **(Read Proverbs 14:15.)** The Governing Body and the branch offices make every effort to obtain accurate information before giving direction regarding congregation meetings and the preaching work. (Heb. 13:17) By being cooperative, we protect

ourselves and others from harm. We may also enhance the congregation's reputation in the community.—1 Pet. 2:12.

### PREPARE TO ABSTAIN FROM BLOOD

<sup>13</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses are well-known for their respect for the sacredness of blood. We obey Jehovah's law regarding blood by refusing to accept a blood transfusion, even during a medical emergency. (Acts 15:28, 29) However, that does not mean that we want to die. On the contrary, we cherish God's gift of life. We seek the help of medical professionals who are willing to provide high-quality care that does not involve a blood transfusion.

<sup>14</sup> We can reduce the likelihood of needing a serious medical procedure by following the health suggestions mentioned earlier in this article. The healthier we are, the more resilient we will be during and after any surgery that we must undergo. We can also reduce the risk of needing an emergency surgery by removing safety hazards at home and at work and by strictly obeying traffic laws.

<sup>15</sup> Because we appreciate the gift of life, we fill out a durable power of attorney (advance health-care directive) and

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11. When threatened by a contagious disease, what should we be willing to do?

12. How does the principle found at Proverbs 14:15 help us to be selective when it comes to information that circulates during a calamity?

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13. How do we show that we cherish God's gift of life when it comes to the issue of blood?

14. How can we reduce the likelihood of needing a serious medical procedure?

15. (a) Why is it important that we carry a current durable power of attorney? (See also picture.) (b) As shown in the video, how can we make informed decisions about the medical use of blood?





**Because we value the gift of life, we fill out a durable power of attorney and carry it with us at all times**  
(See paragraph 15)

carry it with us at all times.\* By means of this document, we express our wishes regarding blood transfusions and some medical treatments. Is your durable power of attorney current? If you need to fill out or update one, do not procrastinate. Clearly expressing our wishes in writing will help to avoid causing unnecessary delays in our treatment. We will also help the medical staff avoid any misunderstandings that can harm us.†

\* This document is also called a DPA.

† See on [jw.org](http://jw.org) the video *How to Make Health-Care Decisions Regarding Blood*.

<sup>16</sup> Regardless of how young or how healthy we are, we are all susceptible to accidents and sickness. (Eccl. 9:11) Therefore, it would certainly be wise to fill out a durable power of attorney. If you are unsure about how to fill out this document, ask your local elders to help you. They strive to be familiar with how to fill out the document, but they will not make medical decisions for you. That is your responsibility. (Gal. 6:4, 5) They can, however, help you to under-

16. What can we do if we are unsure about how to fill out a durable power of attorney?

stand your options and to express your wishes in writing.

### BE REASONABLE

<sup>17</sup> Many of the choices we make regarding our health and medical treatment are rightly determined by our Bible-trained conscience. (Acts 24:16; 1 Tim. 3:9) When making decisions and discussing them with others, we do well to apply the principle recorded at Philippians 4:5: “Let your reasonableness become known to all men.” When we are reasonable, we do not become overly concerned with our physical health; nor do we pressure others into adopting our viewpoint. We love and respect our brothers and sisters, even if the decisions they make are different from ours. —Rom. 14:10-12.

17. How can we show that we are reasonable about health matters?

<sup>18</sup> We show our gratitude to Jehovah, the Source of life, by safeguarding our life and by giving him our best. (Rev. 4:11) For now, we must deal with sicknesses and calamities. But this is not the life our Creator intended for us. Soon he will give us everlasting life without pain and death. (Rev. 21:4) In the meantime, how good it is to be alive and to serve our loving heavenly Father, Jehovah!

18. How can we show our gratitude for the gift of life?

**PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 24:** A young brother fills out his durable power of attorney and makes sure to take it with him.

## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- Why should we value our life?
- What are some ways in which we can show that we value our life?
- How can we show that we are reasonable about health matters?

# I Have Seen Faithful Ones Thrive

AS TOLD BY ROBERT LANDIS

YOU can probably remember conversations you had that were especially important to you. For me, there was one that took place about 50 years ago while a friend and I were sitting beside a campfire in Kenya. Tanned and toughened from months of travel, we were discussing a movie that touched on a religious theme when my friend said, “It misrepresented the Bible.”

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I laughed—my friend did not strike me as a religious person. “What do you know about the Bible?” I asked. He was not quick to answer. Finally, he told me that his mother was one of Jehovah’s Witnesses; he had learned some things from her. Curious, I pressed him to tell me more.

Our conversation lasted far into the night. My friend told me that the Bible identifies Satan as the ruler of the world. (John 14:30) Perhaps you have known that all your life, but for me, the idea was both new

and intriguing. I had always heard that a benevolent God was in charge of the world. But that didn’t tally with what I had seen in life. Although I was only 26 years old, I had seen a lot that troubled me.

My father had been a pilot in the United States Air Force. So as a youngster, I was keenly aware that nuclear war was a real possibility; the military had its finger on the trigger. The war in Vietnam overshadowed my college years in California. I joined student protests. Police with clubs chased us, and we ran, choking and half-blinded because of tear gas. It was a time of turmoil and rebellion. There were political assassinations, protests, and riots. Ideas and opinions swirled like leaves in a windstorm. It was all so confusing.

In 1970, I took a job on the north coast of Alaska and made a lot of money. Then I flew to London, bought a motorcycle, and rode south with no destination in mind. Months later, I reached Africa. Along the way, I met people who also wished they could get away—break free somehow and run from the circumstances that enchained them.

So because of what I had seen and heard, the Bible’s teaching that an evil spirit creature was manipulating earth’s affairs



made sense to me. But where was God in all of this? I wanted to know.

In the months that followed, I found the answer. And over time, I also came to know and love many men and women who, under all sorts of circumstances, have proved faithful to the one true God.

### **NORTHERN IRELAND—“THE LAND OF THE BOMB AND THE BULLET”**

When I returned to London, I contacted my friend’s mother, and she gave me a Bible. Later, when I went to Amsterdam, the Netherlands, a Witness saw me reading it under a streetlight, and he helped me to learn more. Next, I went to Dublin, Ireland, and found the branch office of Jehovah’s Witnesses. I knocked at the front door. That’s where I met Arthur Matthews, a wise, experienced brother. I asked for a Bible study, and he agreed to study with me.

I threw myself into my study, voraciously reading the books and the bound volumes that the Witnesses published. And, of



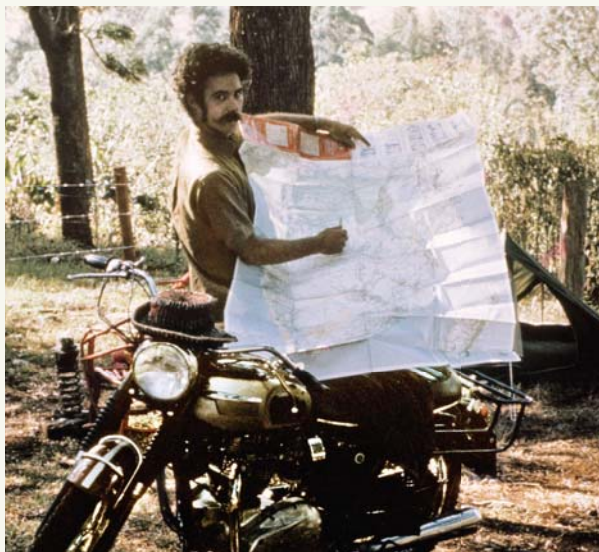
**Nigel, Denis, and me**

course, I read the Bible itself. It was so exciting! At congregation meetings, I saw that even children knew the answers to questions that learned men had pondered for centuries: ‘Why is there evil? Who is God? What happens at death?’ I associated exclusively with the Witnesses. That was easy because I didn’t know anyone else in the entire country. They helped me come to love Jehovah and to want to do his will.

In 1972, I got baptized. A year later, I began to pioneer and joined a tiny congregation in Newry, Northern Ireland. I rented an isolated stone cottage on a mountainside. There were cows in the adjacent field, and I practiced my talks in front of them. They appeared to listen attentively while chewing their cud. They could offer no counsel, but they helped me with audience contact. In 1974, I was appointed as a special pioneer and was joined by Nigel Pitt, who became a lifelong friend.

“The Troubles” plagued Northern Ireland at that time. Some aptly labeled the North “the land of the bomb and the bullet.” Street fighting, sniper attacks, shootings, and car bombings were common. Political and religious issues were intertwined. However, both Protestants and Catholics

### **From London to Central Africa**







On our wedding day, March 1977

recognized that the Witnesses do not take sides in politics, so we were able to preach freely and safely. Householders often knew when and where there would be violence, and they would warn us so that we could keep clear of it.

Still, there were dangerous situations. One day, Denis Carrigan, also a pioneer, and I preached in a nearby town where there were no Witnesses and where we had been only once before. A woman accused us of being undercover British soldiers, perhaps because neither of us spoke with an Irish accent. The accusation frightened us. Just being friendly to soldiers could get you killed or kneecapped—shot through the knee. As we stood outside, cold and alone and waiting for the bus, we saw a car pull up to the café where the woman had accused us. She came out and talked to the two men in the car, pointing at us excitedly. The men then slowly drove up to us and asked us a few questions about the bus schedule. When the bus arrived, they spoke to the driver. We couldn't hear what they were saying. There were no other passengers, so we were convinced that arrangements were being made to deal with us outside of town. But that didn't happen. As I stepped off the

bus, I asked the driver: "Those lads back there, were they wondering about us?" He replied: "I know who you are, and I told them. Don't you worry. You're quite safe."

In 1976 at a district assembly\* in Dublin, I met Pauline Lomax, a special pioneer who was visiting from England. She was a spiritual, humble, and lovely sister. She and her brother, Ray, had known the truth all their life. A year later, Pauline and I were married and we continued special pioneering in Balymena, Northern Ireland.

We were in circuit work for a time, serving our brothers in Belfast, Londonderry, and other hot spots. We were moved by the faith of our brothers and sisters who had abandoned deeply entrenched religious beliefs, prejudices, and hatreds to serve Jehovah. How he blessed and protected them!

I had lived in Ireland for ten years. Then in 1981 we were invited to attend the 72nd class of Gilead. After graduating, we were assigned to Sierra Leone, West Africa.

### SIERRA LEONE—FAITH AMID POVERTY

We lived in a missionary home with 11 wonderful people. We shared one kitchen, three toilets, two showers, one telephone, one washing machine, and one dryer. Electricity outages were frequent and unpredictable. Rats invaded the roof space, and cobras slithered into the basement.

Though living conditions were not ideal, the ministry was a joy. People respected the Bible and listened attentively. Many studied and accepted the truth. The locals addressed me as "Mister Robert." Pauline was "Missus Robert." After a while, though, as work at the branch office took more of my time and I was out in the field ministry less, people began calling Pauline "Missus Pauline." I became "Mister Pauline." Pauline liked that!

\* Regional conventions were then known as district assemblies.



Many of the brothers were poor, but Jehovah always cared for their needs, sometimes in remarkable ways. (Matt. 6:33) I remember one sister who had only enough money to buy food for that day for herself and her children, but she gave it all to a sick brother who lacked the money to buy malaria medication. Later that day, a woman came unexpectedly to the sister and paid her to style her hair. There were many situations like that.

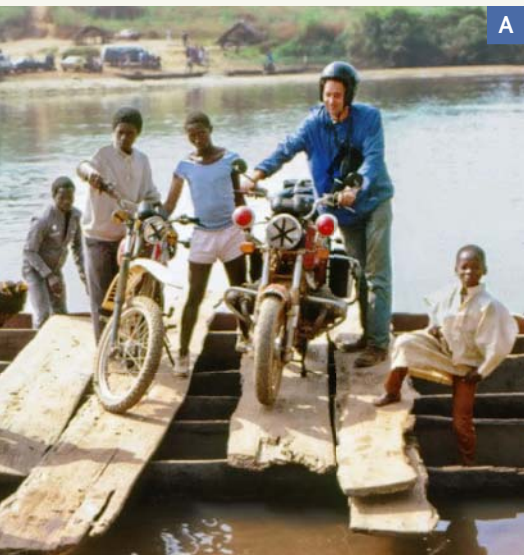
### NIGERIA—LEARNING A NEW CULTURE

We were in Sierra Leone for nine years. Then we were transferred to Bethel in Nigeria. We were now in a large branch office. I was doing the same type of office work that I had done in Sierra Leone, but for Pauline, it was a big change and a difficult one. She had been spending 130 hours every month in the ministry, and she had productive Bible studies. Now she was assigned to the sewing room, where she spent her days repairing damaged clothing. It took a while to adjust, but she came to realize that others deeply appreciated the work she was

doing, and she concentrated on taking opportunities to encourage fellow Bethelites.

The Nigerian culture was new to us, and we had much to learn. On one occasion, a brother came to my office to introduce a sister who had just been accepted to Bethel. As I reached out to shake her hand, she prostrated herself at my feet. I was stunned! Two scriptures flashed through my mind: Acts 10:25, 26 and Revelation 19:10. I wondered, ‘Should I tell her not to do that?’ At the same time, I realized that she had been accepted to Bethel; she knew what the Bible teaches.

Awkwardly, I muddled through the rest of the introduction and then did some research. I learned that the sister had acted in accord with a traditional custom that at the time was still practiced in some parts of the country. Men would prostrate themselves in the same way. It was a way of showing respect. It was not worship; there are Scriptural precedents. (1 Sam. 24:8) I was glad that I had not, in my ignorance, said anything that might embarrass my sister.



A



B



C

A. Crossing a river to attend a convention in neighboring Guinea

B. Off on a preaching expedition in Sierra Leone

C. Meeting an orphaned rhino in Kenya



With Pauline at Warwick Bethel

We met many Nigerians who had shown remarkable faithfulness over the years. Consider Isaiah Adagbona.\* He learned the truth as a young man, but then he was diagnosed with leprosy. He was sent to a leper colony where he was the only Witness. Despite opposition, he helped more than 30 lepers to accept the truth and established a congregation at the colony.

#### **KENYA—THE BROTHERS WERE PATIENT WITH ME**

In 1996 we were assigned to the Kenya branch. This was my first time back in the country since my visit mentioned at the outset. We lived at Bethel. And among the visitors to the property were vervet monkeys. They would “mug” the sisters who carried fruit. One day, a sister at Bethel had left her window open. When she came home, she found a family of monkeys enjoying the food they found in her room. She screamed and ran out the door. The monkeys shrieked and jumped out the window.

\* The life story of Isaiah Adagbona appears in the April 1, 1998, issue of *The Watchtower*, pp. 22-27. He died in 2010.

Pauline and I joined a Swahili congregation. After a short time, I was assigned to conduct the Congregation Book Study (now called Congregation Bible Study). However, my grasp of the language was still at the level of an infant. I would study the material in advance, so I was able to read the questions. But if the comments from the audience varied even slightly from what was written, I did not understand them. It was so awkward! I felt sorry for the brothers and sisters. I was impressed that they calmly accepted the arrangement with patience and humility.

#### **UNITED STATES—FAITH AMID PROSPERITY**

We were in Kenya for less than a year. Then in 1997 we were invited to Bethel in Brooklyn, New York. Now we were in a country where there was material prosperity, which can bring its own problems. (Prov. 30:8, 9) But even in such a country, spirituality abounds. Our brothers use their time and assets, not to enrich themselves, but to support the good work of Jehovah’s organization.

Over the years, we have seen the faith of our fellow Witnesses in a variety of circumstances. In Ireland, faith amid civil strife. In Africa, faith amid poverty and isolation. In the United States, faith amid prosperity. How joyful Jehovah must be as he looks down and sees people who show their love for him in all sorts of situations!

The years have flown by—“more quickly than a weaver’s shuttle.” (Job 7:6) We now work with others at world headquarters in Warwick, New York, and we have the joy of continuing to serve with people who truly love one another. We are happy, contented, and delighted to do what we can to support our King, Christ Jesus, who will soon reward his countless faithful ones.—Matt. 25:34.

# They Saw Love in Action

YOMARA and her brothers—Marcelo and Hiver—live in a small village in Guatemala. Yomara started studying the Bible with the Witnesses, and eventually her brothers joined in the study. But there was a problem. All three siblings are blind, and they could not read braille. Therefore, their Bible teacher would read the study material and the Bible verses of the lesson to them.

Congregation meetings presented another challenge. On their own, they could not make the 40-minute trip to the nearest Kingdom Hall. But the brothers in the congregation arranged to take them to all the meetings. And when the siblings started to give student assignments at the midweek meeting, the brothers helped them memorize their presentations.

In May 2019, congregation meetings began to be held in their village. By then, a regular pioneer couple had moved to the village. They made it their goal to teach the three siblings to read and write braille, even though this couple did not know how to do it themselves. They went to a library to learn about the braille system and to study the methods used to teach it.

In a few months, the three siblings could read braille with ease, and that allowed them to make further spiritual progress.\* Now Yomara, Marcelo, and Hiver serve as regular pioneers. Marcelo is a ministerial servant. All week long, they are very involved in spiritual activities. Their enthusiasm is contagious.

The three siblings are grateful for the loving support of the congregation. “From our very first contact, the Witnesses have

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\* A brochure entitled *Learn to Read Braille* is designed to help someone who is blind or visually impaired to learn how to read and write braille.



**A.** [from left to right] Marcelo, Yomara, and Hiver. Each holds a volume of the *Spanish New World Translation in braille*

**B.** Marcelo giving a comment during a congregation meeting

shown us true Christian love,” says Yomara. “We have wonderful friends in our local congregation, and we are part of an international brotherhood bound together in love,” adds Marcelo. Yomara and her brothers long for the day when they will see the earth transformed into a paradise.—Ps. 37:10, 11; Isa. 35:5.

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## WEBSITE TIP

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### COVER PICTURE:

Throughout his life, Jesus showed that he loved the Scriptures and allowed them to influence his actions (See study article 7, paragraph 2)

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