

SEPTEMBER 2022

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
NOVEMBER 7–DECEMBER 4, 2022

## SONG 124

Ever Loyal

## PREVIEW

We need to trust our brothers. That is not always easy because at times they disappoint us. In this article, we will consider how applying Bible principles and meditating on examples from the past can help us to build our trust in our fellow believers or to rebuild trust if they fail to meet our expectations.

## You Can Trust Your Brothers

*“Love . . . believes all things, hopes all things.”—1 COR. 13:4, 7.*

PEOPLE in Satan’s world do not know whom they can trust. They are constantly disappointed by the conduct of commercial, political, and religious leaders. That feeling extends to friends, neighbors, and even family members. This should not surprise us. The Bible foretold: “In the last days . . . , men will be . . . disloyal, . . . slanderers, . . . betrayers.” In other words, people would reflect the personality of the god of this system of things, who is far from trustworthy.—2 Tim. 3:1-4; 2 Cor. 4:4.

<sup>2</sup> As Christians, however, we know that we can put our full trust in Jehovah. (Jer. 17:7, 8) We are convinced that he loves us and that he “will never abandon” his friends. (Ps. 9:10) We can also trust in Christ Jesus because he gave his life for us. (1 Pet. 3:18) And we have learned from personal experience that the Bible provides reliable guidance. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) We are confident that we can trust in Jehovah, Jesus, and the Bible. But some may wonder whether they can always trust the brothers and sisters in the congregation. If the answer is yes, why can we trust them?

### WE NEED OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

<sup>3</sup> Jehovah has chosen us to be part of his worldwide family of worshippers. Just think what a privilege that is and what benefits it brings! **(Read Mark 10:29, 30.)** Around the world, we have brothers and sisters who share our love for Jehovah and who try their best to

1. Why are we not surprised to see that a lack of trust exists in the world?
2. (a) In whom can we confidently put our full trust? (b) What may some wonder?
3. What remarkable privilege do we have? (Mark 10:29, 30)



Around the world, we have trustworthy brothers and sisters, who share our love for Jehovah  
(See paragraph 3)

---

live by his standards. Our language, culture, and dress may be different from theirs, but we feel close to them, even when meeting them for the first time. We especially love to be with them to praise and worship our loving heavenly Father.—Ps. 133:1.

<sup>4</sup> Now more than ever, we need to remain united with our brothers and sisters. At times, they help us to carry our burdens. (Rom. 15:1; Gal. 6:2) They also encourage us to stay active in Jehovah's service and to keep spiritually strong. (1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 10:23-25) Think how we would feel if we did not have the protection of the congregation to help us stand firm against our common enemies—Satan the Devil and his wicked world. Satan and those whom he controls will

soon attack God's servants. Imagine how grateful we will be to have our brothers and sisters by our side!

<sup>5</sup> Some, however, find it difficult to trust their brothers and sisters, possibly because a fellow believer betrayed a confidence or failed to keep a promise. Or perhaps someone in the congregation said or did something that hurt them deeply. Such experiences may make it difficult to trust others. What, then, can help us to build our trust in our fellow worshippers?

#### LOVE HELPS US TO BUILD TRUST

<sup>6</sup> Love is the basis for trust. First Corinthians chapter 13 describes many

---

4. Why do we need our brothers and sisters?

5. Why might some be reluctant to trust their brothers and sisters?

6. How can love help us to build trust? (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)



aspects of love that can help us to build or rebuild our trust in others. **(Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.)** For example, verse 4 says that “love is patient and kind.” Jehovah is patient with us even when we sin against him. Certainly, then, we can be patient with our brothers if they say or do things that irritate or hurt us. Verse 5 adds: “[Love] does not become provoked. It does not keep account of the injury.” We would not want to “keep account of the injury,” making a mental record of our brothers’ offenses for future reference. Ecclesiastes 7:9 notes that we should “not be quick to take offense.” How much better it is to apply the words found at Ephesians 4:26: “Do not let the sun set while you are still angry”!

<sup>7</sup> Another aid in building trust is to see our brothers and sisters as Jehovah sees them. God loves them and does not keep track of their sins. Neither should we. (Ps. 130:3) Instead of focusing on their faults, we should strive to look for their fine qualities and consider their potential to do good. **(Read Matthew 7:1-5.)** We give them the benefit of the doubt because love “believes all things.” (1 Cor. 13:7) That statement does not mean that Jehovah expects us to trust others blindly; rather, he expects us to trust them because they have shown themselves to be trustworthy.\*

---

\* The Bible warns that some in the congregation may not be worthy of our trust. (Jude 4) In rare cases, false brothers may try to mislead others by speaking “twisted things.” (Acts 20:30) We choose not to trust such ones or listen to them.

7. How will the principles found at Matthew 7:1-5 help us to build trust?

<sup>8</sup> Trust, like respect, needs to be earned, and that takes time. How can you develop trust in your brothers? Get to know them well. Speak with them at congregation meetings. Arrange to work with them in the ministry. Be patient with them, giving them the opportunity to demonstrate that they are trustworthy. At first, you may want to be selective in what personal matters you reveal to someone you are just getting to know. As your relationship strengthens, you may feel more comfortable opening up about your feelings. (Luke 16:10) But what can you do if a brother betrays your trust? Do not be quick to give up on him. Instead, give the matter time. And do not allow the actions of a few to discourage you from trusting your brothers. In this regard, we will consider the example set by a number of faithful servants of Jehovah who despite feeling disappointed by some maintained trust in others.

### LEARN FROM THOSE WHO MAINTAINED THEIR TRUST IN OTHERS

<sup>9</sup> Have you ever been disappointed by the conduct of a responsible brother? If so, you may benefit by considering the example of *Hannah*. The foremost spiritual authority at the time in Israel was High Priest Eli. But he did not have an exemplary family. His sons, who were serving in appointed positions, regular-

8. How can you develop trust in your brothers?

9. (a) How did Hannah maintain trust in Jehovah’s arrangement despite the shortcomings of some of his representatives? (b) What does Hannah’s experience teach you about trusting Jehovah’s arrangement? (See the picture.)



Despite Eli's initial response, Hannah maintained her trust in Jehovah's arrangement (See paragraph 9)

ly engaged in disgraceful, immoral conduct; yet, their father did little to correct them. Jehovah did not immediately remove Eli from office. Still, Hannah did not turn her back on God's arrangement by refusing to worship at the tabernacle as long as Eli was the high priest. When Eli saw Hannah praying in great distress, he wrongly concluded that she was drunk. Without stopping to check the facts, he criticized this distraught woman. (1 Sam. 1:12-16) Even so, Hannah vowed that if she had a son, she would bring him to serve at the tabernacle, where he would be under the care of Eli. (1 Sam. 1:11) Did the matter involving Eli's sons need to be corrected? Yes, and Jehovah took action in due time. (1 Sam. 4:17) Meanwhile, God rewarded Hannah with a son, Samuel.—1 Sam. 1:17-20.

<sup>10</sup> Have you ever felt betrayed by a close friend? If you have, consider

10. How did King David maintain his trust in others despite having had a bad experience?

**King David's** experience. One of his friends was a man named Ahithophel. But when David's son Absalom tried to take the kingship away from his father, Ahithophel joined Absalom in the rebellion. What a blow it must have been to David to lose the support of both his son and a man he considered to be a friend! David, though, did not allow this betrayal to stop him from trusting others. He continued to trust another loyal friend, Hushai, who refused to join the revolt. David's confidence was well-founded. Hushai proved to be a good friend, even risking his life to help David.—2 Sam. 17:1-16.

<sup>11</sup> Consider also the example set by **one of Nabal's servants**. David and his men had kindly provided protection for the servants of an Israelite named Nabal. Sometime later, David asked wealthy Nabal to provide food for David's men, whatever Nabal could spare. When

11. In what way did one of Nabal's servants display trust?

Nabal refused this modest request, David became so angry that he decided to kill every male in Nabal's household. A servant reported the situation to Nabal's wife, Abigail. As a member of the household, he knew that his life was in Abigail's hands. Instead of running away, he trusted that Abigail would be able to correct the situation. He could have such confidence because she was known to be a discerning woman. As it turned out, his confidence was justified. Abigail acted with courage by dissuading David from carrying out his plan. (1 Sam. 25:2-35) She trusted that David would act reasonably.

<sup>12</sup> **Jesus** trusted his disciples despite their failings. (John 15:15, 16) When James and John asked Jesus for a special position in the Kingdom, Jesus did not question their motives for serving Jehovah or remove them as apostles. (Mark 10:35-40) Later, all of Jesus' disciples abandoned him on the night he was arrested. (Matt. 26:56) Jesus, however, never lost faith in them. He was well-aware of their imperfections; yet, he "loved them to the end." (John 13:1) The resurrected Jesus even assigned his 11 faithful apostles the weighty responsibility to take the lead in the disciple-making work and to care for his precious sheep. (Matt. 28:19, 20; John 21:15-17) His confidence in these imperfect men was not misplaced. All of them served faithfully until the end of their earthly course. Certainly, Hannah, David, Nabal's servant, Abigail, and Jesus set a fine example in trusting imperfect humans.

---

12. How did Jesus show that he trusted his disciples despite their failings?

## REBUILDING OUR TRUST

<sup>13</sup> Have you trusted a brother with confidential information, only to find out later that he betrayed your trust? That can be devastating. Once, a sister confided a personal matter to an elder. The next day, the elder's wife called to encourage the sister, obviously knowing what was told to the elder in confidence. Understandably, the sister's trust in that elder was shaken. To her credit, though, the sister reached out for help. She approached another elder, and he helped her to rebuild her trust in the elders.

<sup>14</sup> One brother had a long-standing difference with two elders whom he felt he could not trust. However, he started thinking about something that was said by a brother whom he greatly respected. This simple yet powerful statement was: "Satan is the enemy, not our brothers." The brother gave that statement considerable, prayerful thought, and he was eventually able to make peace with both elders.

<sup>15</sup> Have you ever lost a privilege? That can be a painful experience. Grete and her mother were loyal Witnesses in Nazi Germany during the 1930's when our work was banned. Grete enjoyed the privilege of typing copies of *The Watchtower* for her fellow believers. But when the brothers learned that her father was opposed to the truth, they took away that privilege, out of fear that her father would betray the congrega-

---

13. What is a potential obstacle to trust?

14. What helped one brother to rebuild trust?

15. Why may rebuilding trust take time? Give an example.

tion to the opposers. Grete's trials did not end there. Throughout the Second World War, the brothers would not entrust Grete and her mother with copies of the magazines and refused to speak to them when they met on the street. That really hurt! The wounds were deep, and Grete said that it took a long time for her to forgive and to trust those brothers again. In time, though, she acknowledged that Jehovah must have forgiven them, so she should too.\*

## “Satan is the enemy, not our brothers”

<sup>16</sup> If you have had a similar disheartening experience, work to rebuild your trust. You may need time, but your efforts will be worth it. To illustrate, if we have ever experienced food poisoning, we may be more cautious about what we eat. However, one bad meal will not make us stop eating. Similarly, we should

\* For details on Grete's experience, see the 1974 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pp. 129-131.

16. Why must we overcome any obstacles to building trust?

not let one bad experience weaken our trust in all our brothers and sisters, who we know were born imperfect. When we rebuild our trust, we will be happier and better able to focus on what we can do to contribute to the atmosphere of trust in our congregation.

<sup>17</sup> Trust is rare in Satan's world, but trust based on love permeates our worldwide brotherhood. Such trust contributes to our joy and unity now and will be a protection as we face difficult times ahead. What if you have suffered the pain of a broken trust? Try to look at matters from Jehovah's perspective, apply Bible principles, cultivate deep love for your brothers, and learn from Bible examples. We can overcome our hurt feelings and rebuild our trust in others. As we do, we will enjoy the blessing of having countless friends 'who stick closer than a brother.' (Prov. 18: 24) Trust, however, is a two-way street. In the next article, we will discuss how we can prove to be worthy of our brothers' trust.

17. Why is trust so important, and what will we discuss in the next article?

---

## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- Why is it vital that we trust our brothers?
- What Bible examples can help us to maintain our trust in others?
- What can you do if a brother or a sister betrays your trust?

## SONG 101

Working Together in Unity

## PREVIEW

If we want others to trust us, we must first prove that we are trustworthy. In this article, we will review why trust is so important and what qualities will help us to be the kind of person others can trust.

## Prove Yourself Trustworthy

*“The trustworthy person keeps a confidence.”*—PROV. 11:13.

A TRUSTWORTHY person strives to keep his promises and tells the truth. (Ps. 15:4) People know that they can depend on him. We want our brothers and sisters to feel that way about us. What can help us to earn their trust?

<sup>2</sup> We cannot force others to trust us. Trust must be earned. It has been said that trust is like money. Earning it is hard; losing it is easy. Jehovah certainly has earned our trust. He will never give us reason to lose trust in him because “everything he does is trustworthy.” (Ps. 33:4) And he expects us to imitate him. (Eph. 5:1) Let us consider some examples of Jehovah’s servants who imitated their heavenly Father and proved themselves to be trustworthy. We will also identify five qualities that will help us to be trustworthy.

### LEARN FROM TRUSTWORTHY SERVANTS OF JEHOVAH

<sup>3</sup> The prophet **Daniel** set an excellent example of being trustworthy. Although he had been taken into captivity by the Babylonians, he soon earned a reputation as a man who could be trusted. His reputation grew when, with Jehovah’s help, he interpreted the dreams of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. On one occasion, Daniel had to tell the king that Jehovah was displeased with him

1. How can we recognize a trustworthy person?
2. How can we prove to be trustworthy?
- 3-4. How did the prophet Daniel prove to be trustworthy, and what should that move us to consider?





Nehemiah selected trustworthy men to handle important tasks

(See paragraph 5)

—not the kind of message a king would want to hear. That took courage, for Nebuchadnezzar had a violent temper! (Dan. 2:12; 4:20-22, 25) Many years later, Daniel again proved to be trustworthy when he accurately interpreted a mysterious message that appeared on the palace wall in Babylon. (Dan. 5:5, 25-29) Still later, Darius the Mede and his appointed officials also noticed “an extraordinary spirit in” Daniel. They acknowledged that Daniel “was trustworthy and no negligence or corruption could be found in him.” (Dan. 6:3, 4) Yes, even pagan rulers recognized that this worshipper of Jehovah could be trusted!

<sup>4</sup> With Daniel’s example in mind, we do well to ask ourselves: ‘What reputation do I have outside of the congregation? Am I known as someone who fulfills his responsibilities and who can be trusted?’ Why answer those questions? Because we bring praise to Jehovah when we are trustworthy.

<sup>5</sup> In 455 B.C.E., after Governor Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, he looked for dependable men who would take good care of the city. Nehemiah selected, among others, the chief of the Fortress, **Hananiah**. The Bible describes Hananiah as “a most trustworthy

5. Why was Hananiah known as being trustworthy?

man [who] feared the true God more than many others.” (Neh. 7:2) Love for Jehovah and fear of displeasing him moved Hananiah to take seriously any assignment he was given. Those qualities will also help us to be dependable in our service to God.

<sup>6</sup> Note the example of *Tychicus*, a trusted companion of the apostle Paul. When Paul was under house arrest, he relied on Tychicus, describing him as a “faithful minister.” (Eph. 6:21, 22) Paul trusted him not only to deliver letters to the brothers in Ephesus and Colossae but also to encourage and comfort them. Tychicus reminds us of the faithful, reliable men who care for our spiritual needs today.—Col. 4:7-9.

<sup>7</sup> Today we deeply appreciate our trustworthy elders and ministerial servants. Like Daniel, Hananiah, and Tychicus, they take their responsibilities seriously. When we attend the midweek meeting, for example, we have no doubt that all the parts on the program have been assigned. And how the elders appreciate it when those assigned can be counted on to prepare and present their parts at the meeting! To illustrate, we do not hesitate to invite our Bible students to attend the weekend meeting, fearing that someone will have forgotten to organize a public talk. And we trust that the literature we need for the ministry will be available. We are well cared for by these faithful brothers, and we

thank Jehovah for them! In what ways, though, can we prove ourselves to be trustworthy?

### BE TRUSTWORTHY BY KEEPING A CONFIDENCE

<sup>8</sup> We love our brothers and sisters, and we are interested in their well-being. However, we must be balanced and respect their privacy. Some in the first-century Christian congregation were “gossipers and meddlers in other people’s affairs, talking about things they should not.” (1 Tim. 5:13) We certainly do not want to be like them. But suppose someone shares with us personal information with the understanding that it is not to be repeated. For instance, a sister might tell us about a health problem she is experiencing or some other trial she is facing, asking us to keep the matter to ourselves. We should respect her wishes.\* **(Read Proverbs 11:13.)** Now let us consider a number of other situations in which it is important that we keep a confidence.

<sup>9</sup> *In the family.* Each member of the family has a responsibility to keep sensitive, family matters private. For example, a Christian woman may have a habit that her husband finds amusing. Would he talk about it to others and thus cause her embarrassment? Of course not! He

---

\* If we learn that someone in the congregation has become guilty of serious wrongdoing, we should urge him to seek help from the elders. If he does not do so, loyalty to Jehovah and to the Christian congregation should move us to report the matter to the spiritual shepherds.

---

6. How did Tychicus prove to be a trustworthy friend to the apostle Paul?

7. What can you learn about being trustworthy from the elders and ministerial servants in your congregation?

8. How must we be balanced when showing interest in others? (Proverbs 11:13)

9. How can family members prove that they are trustworthy?



Elders do not reveal confidential matters to their family members

(See paragraph 11)

loves his wife, and he would never want to do anything to hurt her. (Eph. 5:33) Teenagers want to be treated with a measure of respect. Parents do well to recognize this. They would not humiliate their children by revealing their mistakes to others. (Col. 3:21) Children need to learn to be discreet, not disclosing information to outsiders that could embarrass other members of the family. (Deut. 5:16) When each family member does his part to keep personal family matters private, the family bond is strengthened.

<sup>10</sup> **In our friendships.** At one time or another, most of us feel the need to confide in a close friend. Sometimes that may be difficult. We may not be accustomed to revealing our innermost thoughts to anyone, and we would be

10. What is involved in being a true friend? (Proverbs 17:17)

devastated if we learned later that our friend told others what we said. On the other hand, how we appreciate someone who can keep a confidence! He is “a true friend.”—**Read Proverbs 17:17.**

<sup>11</sup> **In the congregation.** Elders who are known to keep a confidence are “a hiding place from the wind, a place of concealment” for their brothers. (Isa. 32:2) We know that we can talk freely to these men, certain that what we say to them will be kept confidential. We do not pressure them to tell us things that they should keep private. In addition, we appreciate our elders’ wives because they do not try to pry information out of their husbands. Really, it is a blessing that an elder’s wife is not told personal

11. (a) How do elders and their wives show that they are dependable? (b) What lesson can we take to heart from an elder who handled a confidential congregation matter and later was with his family? (See the picture.)

information about her brothers and sisters. One elder's wife commented: "I am grateful that my husband keeps information confidential regarding those he meets on shepherding calls or those needing spiritual assistance, not even telling me their names. I appreciate not being burdened with issues I can do nothing about. I am able to interact naturally with all in the congregation. And I can trust that when I confide in my husband about my personal feelings or problems, these too will remain confidential." Of course, we all want to have the reputation of being trustworthy. What qualities will help us to achieve that goal? Let us consider five of them.

#### DEVELOP QUALITIES THAT HELP YOU TO BE TRUSTWORTHY

<sup>12</sup> **Love** is the foundation of trust. Jesus said that the two greatest commandments are to love Jehovah and to love our neighbor. (Matt. 22:37-39) Our love for Jehovah impels us to imitate his perfect example of trustworthiness. For instance, love for our brothers and sisters moves us to keep their personal matters private. We would never want to reveal something that could cause them harm, embarrassment, or pain.—John 15:12.

<sup>13</sup> **Humility** will help us to be trustworthy. A Christian who is humble does not try to impress others by being the first to reveal a matter. (Phil. 2:3) He does not exaggerate his own importance by suggesting that he is aware of information

that he is not allowed to reveal. Humility will also prevent us from spreading speculations about matters that are not discussed in the Bible or in our Bible-based publications.

<sup>14</sup> **Discernment** will help a Christian to distinguish between "a time to be silent and a time to speak." (Eccl. 3:7) "Speech is silver, but silence is golden" is a common expression in some cultures. In other words, there are times when it is better to keep quiet than to speak. Appropriately, Proverbs 11:12 advises: "The man of true discernment remains silent." Consider an example. One experienced elder is often asked to help other congregations with their challenging problems. Commenting on this, a fellow elder said, "He is always careful never to share sensitive information about other congregations." The elder's discernment has earned him the respect of the brothers with whom he serves on the body of elders. They are certain that he will not reveal their confidential matters to others.

<sup>15</sup> **Honesty** is another element of trust. We trust an honest person because we know that he will always speak the truth. (Eph. 4:25; Heb. 13:18) For instance, suppose you want to improve your teaching ability. So you ask someone to listen to your talk and offer helpful suggestions on how you can improve. Whom would you trust to give you honest feedback? Would it be someone who tells you what you want to hear

---

12. Why can we say that love is the foundation of trust? Give an example.

13. In what way does humility help us to be trustworthy?

---

14. How does discernment help us to be trustworthy?

15. Give an example that shows how being honest can win the trust of others.



or someone who kindly tells you the truth? The answer is obvious. The Bible says: “Open reproof is better than concealed love. The wounds inflicted by a friend are faithful.” (Prov. 27:5, 6) Although difficult to hear at first, a friend’s honest comments are what will benefit us in the long run.

<sup>16</sup> **Self-control** is indispensable if we are to gain the trust of others. That quality helps us to keep our lips in check when we are tempted to reveal something we were told in confidence. (**Read Proverbs 10:19.**) We may find that our self-control is put to the test when we are using social media. If not careful, we could unintentionally reveal confidential matters to a large audience. And once we broadcast the information electronically, we have no control over how it will be used or how much damage it will cause. Self-control also allows us to remain silent when opposers try to trick us into revealing things that could endanger our brothers and sisters. This might occur when we are being interro-

16. How does Proverbs 10:19 highlight the need for self-control?

gated by the police in a land where our work is banned or restricted. We can apply the principle to “guard [our] mouth with a muzzle” in these and other situations as well. (Ps. 39:1) Whether we are dealing with our family, our friends, our brothers and sisters, or anyone else, we need to be trustworthy. And to be trustworthy, we need self-control.

<sup>17</sup> How thankful we are that Jehovah has drawn us to a brotherhood made up of people who are loving and trustworthy! We all have a responsibility to earn the trust of our brothers and sisters. As we individually work at showing love, humility, discernment, honesty, and self-control, we contribute to a spirit of trust in our congregation. Building trust is an ongoing process. May we imitate our God, Jehovah, and keep proving that we are trustworthy.

17. How can we contribute to the spirit of trust in our congregation?

**PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 11:** An elder does not reveal to his family a confidential matter that he had a share in handling.

---

## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| ■ What do we learn from Bible examples of trustworthiness? | ■ In what situations can you show that you are trustworthy? | ■ What qualities will help us to be trustworthy? |
|--|---|--|

**SONG 61**

Forward, You Witnesses!

**PREVIEW**

This article presents an adjustment in our understanding of Jesus' words recorded at John 5:28, 29 regarding "a resurrection of life" and "a resurrection of judgment." We will learn what these two resurrections refer to and who are included in each one.

## Is Your Name in "the Book of Life"?

*"A book of remembrance was written before him for those fearing Jehovah."*—MAL. 3:16.

FOR thousands of years, Jehovah has been writing a special book. This book consists of a list of names, beginning with the name of the first faithful witness, Abel.\* (Luke 11:50, 51) Down through the centuries, Jehovah has added names to the book, and today it contains millions of names. In the Bible, that book is called "a book of remembrance," "the book of life," and "the scroll of life." In this article, we will refer to it as "the book of life." —**Read Malachi 3:16; Rev. 3:5; 17:8.**

<sup>2</sup> This special book contains the names of all those who worship Jehovah with fear, or awe, and who treasure his name. They are in line to receive everlasting life. Today we can have our name written in that book if we develop a close, personal relationship with Jehovah based on the ransom sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ. (John 3:16, 36) All of us want our name to be found in that book—whether we hope to live in heaven or on the earth.

<sup>3</sup> Does this mean that all those who have their name written in this book are guaranteed everlasting life? We

---

\* The writing of this book began at "the founding of the world," that is, the world of people who can be redeemed from sin. (Matt. 25:34; Rev. 17:8) So righteous Abel is apparently the first one whose name is written in the book of life.

---

1. According to Malachi 3:16, what book has Jehovah been writing, and what does it contain?

2. Whose names are written in the book of life, and how can we have our name included in that book?

3-4. (a) Will we live forever if our name is presently written in the book of life? Explain. (b) What will be discussed in this article and in the following one?



Down through history, Jehovah has added names to “the book of life”

(See paragraphs 1-2)

find the answer to that question in Jehovah’s words to Moses, quoted at Exodus 32:33. Jehovah said: “Whoever has sinned against me, I will **wipe him out** of my book.” Thus, names that are presently in that book can be wiped out, or erased, as if Jehovah had initially written the names in pencil. (Rev. 3:5, ftn.) We must make sure that our name remains in that book until it is written permanently in ink, as it were.

<sup>4</sup> Some questions naturally arise. For example, what does the Bible say about those whose names are written in the book of life as well as those whose names are not recorded there? When will those whose names remain in that book receive everlasting life? What about those who died without ever having an opportunity to know Jehovah? Is it possible for their names to be recorded in that

book? These questions will be answered in this article and in the following one.

### WHOSE NAMES ARE IN THE BOOK?

<sup>5</sup> Whose names are written in this figurative book? To answer that question, we will consider five different groups of people. Among these, some have their names written in the book of life, others do not.

<sup>6</sup> The first group is made up of **those who have been selected to rule with Jesus in heaven**. Are their names presently written in the book of life? Yes. According to the apostle Paul’s words to his “fellow workers” in Philippi, the names of the anointed ones, who have

5-6. (a) As highlighted at Philippians 4:3, whose names are among those written in the book of life? (b) When will they have their names written permanently in the book of life?

been invited to rule with Jesus, are now in the book of life. (**Read Philippians 4:3.**) But in order to keep their names in that figurative book, they must remain faithful. Then when they receive their final sealing, whether before they die or before the outbreak of the great tribulation, their names will be written permanently in this book.—Rev. 7:3.

<sup>7</sup> The second group consists of *the great crowd of other sheep*. Are their names now written in the book of life? Yes. Will their names still be in the book of life after they survive Armageddon? Yes. (Rev. 7:14) Jesus said that these sheeplike ones will depart “into everlasting life.” (Matt. 25:46) But those Armageddon survivors will not immediately receive everlasting life. Their names will remain written in the book of life in pencil, as it were. During the Thousand Year Reign, Jesus “will shepherd them and will guide them to springs of waters of life.” Those who respond positively to Christ’s guidance and are finally judged faithful to Jehovah will have their names recorded permanently in the book of life.—**Read Revelation 7:16, 17.**

<sup>8</sup> The third group comprises *the goats, who will be destroyed at Armageddon*. Their names are not in the book of life. Jesus says that they “will depart into everlasting cutting-off.” (Matt. 25:46) Under inspiration, Paul tells us that “these very ones will undergo the judi-

cial punishment of everlasting destruction.” (2 Thess. 1:9; 2 Pet. 2:9) The same could be said of those who, down through time, have deliberately sinned against the holy spirit. They too receive everlasting destruction, not everlasting life. Clearly, they will not be resurrected. (Matt. 12:32; Mark 3:28, 29; Heb. 6:4-6) Let us now take a closer look at two groups of people who will be resurrected on earth.

### THOSE WHO WILL BE RESURRECTED

<sup>9</sup> The Bible speaks of two groups of people who will be resurrected with the prospect of living forever on earth, “the righteous” and “the unrighteous.” (**Read Acts 24:15.**) “The righteous” are those who faithfully served Jehovah while they were alive. On the other hand, “the unrighteous” did not serve Jehovah faithfully. In fact, in most cases their conduct was far from righteous. Because both groups are resurrected, can we say that their names are written in the book of life? To answer that question, let us consider each group in turn.

<sup>10</sup> “*The righteous*” are the fourth group. Before dying, they had their names written in the book of life. Were their names taken out of that book when they died? No, because they are still “living” in Jehovah’s memory. Jehovah “is a God, not of the dead, but of the living, for they are all living to him.” (Luke 20:

7. What do we understand from Revelation 7:16, 17 as to when the great crowd of other sheep will have their names written permanently in the book of life?

8. Whose names are not written in the book of life, and what will happen to them?

9. As shown at Acts 24:15, what two groups of people will be resurrected on earth, and what is the difference between these two groups?

10. Why will “the righteous” be resurrected, and what privilege will some of them enjoy? (See also in this issue “Questions From Readers” regarding the resurrection on earth.)



# Whose Names Are in “the Book of Life”?

## In the book

---

**The anointed.** Those who have been selected to rule with Jesus in heaven.

---

**“The righteous.”** Jehovah’s worshippers who died faithful to him. They will be resurrected on earth.

---

### **The great crowd of other sheep.**

Current worshippers of Jehovah who have an earthly hope.

## Not in the book

---

**The goats.** Wicked ones who reject Jehovah and who deliberately sin against the holy spirit. They will be destroyed at Armageddon.

---

**“The unrighteous.”** Those who did not serve Jehovah faithfully but who will be resurrected on earth. They will be given an opportunity to have their names written in the book of life.

38) This means that when the righteous are restored to life on earth, their names will be found written in the book of life, although “in pencil” at first. (Luke 14: 14) No doubt, some of these resurrected ones will receive the privilege of serving as “princes in all the earth.”—Ps. 45:16.

<sup>11</sup> Finally, consider the fifth group, “*the unrighteous*.” Perhaps because they were ignorant of Jehovah’s requirements, they did not live righteous lives before they died. So their names were not written in the book of life. But by resurrecting them, God gives them an opportunity to have their names eventually written in that book. These “unrighteous” ones will need a lot of help. In their former life, some of them practiced horrible, vile things. They will therefore need to be taught how to live according to Jehovah’s righteous standards. To

---

11. What will “the unrighteous” need to learn before their names can be written in the book of life?

meet that need, God’s Kingdom will direct the greatest educational program in all human history.

<sup>12</sup> Who will teach the unrighteous? The great crowd and the resurrected righteous ones. In order for the unrighteous to have their names written in the book of life, they will need to develop a relationship with Jehovah and dedicate themselves to him. The progress of all these unrighteous ones will be followed with great interest by Jesus Christ and his fellow judges. (Rev. 20:4) Any who refuse to respond favorably to such help will be removed—even though they may be 100 years of age. (Isa. 65:20) Jehovah and Jesus can read hearts and will see to it that no one will be allowed to cause any ruin in the new world.—Isa. 11:9; 60:18; 65:25; John 2:25.

---

12. (a) Who will teach the unrighteous? (b) What will happen to those who refuse to apply what they have learned?

## RESURRECTIONS TO LIFE AND TO JUDGMENT

<sup>13</sup> Jesus also spoke about those who would be resurrected here on earth. For example, he said: “The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who **did** good things to a resurrection of life, and those who **practiced** vile things to a resurrection of judgment.” (John 5: 28, 29) What did Jesus mean?

<sup>14</sup> In the past, we understood Jesus’ words to refer to the deeds the resurrected ones will practice **after** their resurrection; that is, some will come to life and practice good things while others will come to life and practice vile things. However, note that Jesus does not say that those who have just come out of the memorial tombs **will** do good things or **will** practice vile things. He uses the past tense. He speaks of those who “**did** good things” and those who “**practiced** vile things.” This indicates that these actions took place **before** their death. That makes sense, does it not? After all, no one will be allowed to practice vile things in the new world. The unrighteous must have practiced these vile things before their death. How, then, are we to understand Jesus’ words about “a resurrection of life” and “a resurrection of judgment”?

<sup>15</sup> The righteous, who did good things before their death, will receive “a resurrection of life” because their names

---

13-14. (a) In the past, how did we understand Jesus’ words found at John 5:29? (b) What do we need to note about those words?

15. Who will receive “a resurrection of life,” and why?

will already be written in the book of life. This means that the resurrection of “those who did good things” described at John 5:29 is the same as the resurrection of “the righteous” mentioned at Acts 24:15. This understanding is in harmony with the statement made at Romans 6:7, which says: “The one who has died has been acquitted from his sin.” The sins committed by these righteous ones were canceled at death, but their record of faithfulness remains. (Heb. 6: 10) Of course, these righteous resurrected ones will need to remain faithful in order for their names to remain in the book of life.

<sup>16</sup> What about those who practiced vile things before they died? Although their sins were canceled at death, they have not established a record of faithfulness. They do **not** have their names written in the book of life. Hence, the resurrection of “those who practiced vile things” is the same as the resurrection of “the unrighteous” referred to at Acts 24:15. Theirs will be “a resurrection of judgment.”\* The unrighteous will be judged in the sense that they will be evaluated. (Luke 22:30) It will take time to determine whether they are judged worthy of having their names written in the book of life. Only if these unrighteous

---

\* Previously, we explained that the term “judgment” used here means a negative judgment, or a verdict of condemnation. Actually, the word “judgment” **may** have that meaning. But in this context, it seems that Jesus used the word “judgment” in a more general sense, referring to a process of evaluation and probation or, as one Greek lexicon says, a “scrutiny of conduct.”

16. What does “a resurrection of judgment” refer to?

ones reject their former wicked course of life and dedicate themselves to Jehovah can they have their names written in the book of life.

<sup>17</sup> Whether they were previously righteous or unrighteous, resurrected ones will need to obey the laws found in the new scrolls that will be opened during the 1,000 years. The apostle John describes what he saw in vision: “I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. But another scroll was opened; it is the scroll of life. The dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds.”—Rev. 20:12, 13.

<sup>18</sup> Based on what “deeds” will resurrected ones be judged? Will it be the deeds they practiced *before* they died? No! Remember, they were acquitted of their previous sins when they died. Here, then, “their deeds” cannot be deeds from their former life. Rather, these must refer to their deeds in response to their training in the new world. Even

---

17-18. What will all who are resurrected to life on earth need to do, and what are the “deeds” referred to at Revelation 20:12, 13?

such faithful men as Noah, Samuel, David, and Daniel will have to learn about Jesus Christ and exercise faith in his sacrifice. How much more so will the unrighteous!

<sup>19</sup> What will be the final outcome for those who reject this marvelous opportunity? Revelation 20:15 tells us: “Whoever was not found written in the book of life was hurled into the lake of fire.” Yes, they will be completely destroyed forever. How important it is, then, to make sure that our name is written in the book of life and that it remains there!

<sup>20</sup> What an exciting time the Thousand Year Reign will be! It will include the greatest educational program ever undertaken here on earth. But it will also be a time when the conduct of both the righteous and the unrighteous will be evaluated. (Isa. 26:9; Acts 17:31) How will this educational program be carried out? Our next article will help us to understand and appreciate this wonderful provision.

---

19. What will be the final outcome for those who reject this marvelous opportunity?

20. What exciting work will be done during the Thousand Year Reign? (See cover picture.)

---

## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

■ Whose names are written in “the book of life”?

■ What is the “resurrection of life”?

■ What is the “resurrection of judgment”?

**SONG 151**

He Will Call

**PREVIEW**

This article provides an adjustment in our understanding with regard to the great educational program described at Daniel 12:2, 3. We will examine when this will happen and who will be involved. We will also see how this educational program will prepare those on earth for the final test at the end of Christ's Thousand Year Reign.

## “Bringing the Many to Righteousness”

*“Those bringing the many to righteousness [will shine] like the stars, forever and ever.”* —DAN. 12:3.

WHAT a wonderful day it will be when the resurrection starts here on earth during Christ's Thousand Year Reign! All who have lost loved ones long to see them again. That is how Jehovah feels too. (Job 14:15) Imagine what joyous reunions will take place earth wide. As we learned in the preceding article, “the righteous,” whose names are written in the book of life, will return to “a resurrection of life.” (Acts 24:15; John 5:29) Perhaps many of our loved ones will be among those restored to life early on in the earthly resurrection.\* Additionally, “the unrighteous,” such as those who did not have sufficient opportunity to know Jehovah or to serve him faithfully before they died, will be raised to “a resurrection of judgment.”

<sup>2</sup> All these resurrected ones will need to be instructed. (Isa. 26:9; 61:11) So the greatest educational program in all human history will need to be implemented. **(Read Isaiah 11:9, 10.)** Why? For one thing, the unrighteous who are resurrected will need to learn about Je-

---

\* The resurrection may start with those who died faithful during the last days and then may proceed backward, generation by generation. If this proves to be the case, each generation will have an opportunity to welcome back those whom they had known personally. Whatever the case, the Scriptures speak of a “proper order” with regard to the heavenly resurrection, and we can assume that the earthly resurrection will also be carried out in an orderly manner. —1 Cor. 14:33; 15:23.

1. What exciting events await us during the Thousand Year Reign?

2-3. (a) As indicated at Isaiah 11:9, 10, what will be the greatest educational program in all human history? (b) What will we consider in this article?



sus Christ, the Kingdom arrangement, the ransom, and the universal issue involving Jehovah's name and sovereignty. Even the righteous will need to be brought up-to-date with what Jehovah has progressively revealed concerning his purpose for the earth. Some of these faithful ones died long before Jehovah's word was compiled into the Bible canon. Both the unrighteous and the righteous will have a lot to learn.

<sup>3</sup> In this article, we will consider the following questions: What will be involved in implementing this great educational program? What impact will that program have on whether names are written permanently in the book of life or not? The answers to these questions should matter to us today. As we will see, some fascinating prophecies recorded in the books of Daniel and Revelation will help clarify our understanding of what will happen when the dead are resurrected. First, let us consider the exciting events foretold in the prophecy of Daniel 12:1, 2.

#### **“THOSE ASLEEP IN THE DUST . . . WILL WAKE UP”**

<sup>4</sup> **Read Daniel 12:1.** The book of Daniel reveals the sequence of exciting events that will occur during the time of the end. For example, Daniel 12:1 reveals that Michael, who is Jesus Christ, is “standing in behalf of [God’s] people.” That part of the prophecy began to be fulfilled in 1914 when Jesus was appointed as King of God’s heavenly Kingdom.

---

4-5. What does Daniel 12:1 reveal about the time of the end?

<sup>5</sup> However, Daniel was also told that Jesus would “stand up” during “a time of distress such as has not occurred since there came to be a nation until that time.” This “time of distress” is the “great tribulation” mentioned at Matthew 24:21. Jesus stands up, or acts to defend God’s people, at the end of this time of distress, that is, at Armageddon. The book of Revelation refers to these ones as “a great crowd who come out of the great tribulation.”—Rev. 7:9, 14.

<sup>6</sup> **Read Daniel 12:2.** What happens after the great crowd survive this time of distress? This prophecy is not referring to a symbolic resurrection, a spiritual revival of God’s servants that occurs during the last days, as we previously understood.\* Rather, these words refer to the resurrection of the dead that takes place in the coming new world. Why can we draw that conclusion? The expression “the dust” is also used at Job 17:16 as a parallel of the expression “the Grave.” This fact indicates that Daniel 12:2 is referring to the literal resurrection that will occur after the last days have ended and after the battle of Armageddon.

<sup>7</sup> What does Daniel 12:2 mean, though,

---

\* This explanation is an adjustment to the understanding found in the book *Pay Attention to Daniel’s Prophecy!* chapter 17, and in *The Watchtower* of July 1, 1987, pp. 21-25.

6. What happens after the great crowd survive the great tribulation? Explain. (See also in this issue “Questions From Readers” regarding the resurrection to life on earth.)

7. (a) In what sense will some be resurrected to “everlasting life”? (b) How is this “a better resurrection”?

when it says that some will be resurrected to “everlasting life”? It means that those who are resurrected and come to know, *or continue to know*, and obey Jehovah and Jesus during the 1,000 years will ultimately receive everlasting life. (John 17:3) This will be “a better resurrection” than the one in the past that brought certain humans back to life. (Heb. 11:35) Why? Because those imperfect humans died again.

<sup>8</sup> But not all resurrected ones will accept Jehovah’s educational program. Daniel’s prophecy says that some will be resurrected “to reproach and to everlasting contempt.” Because they will show a rebellious spirit, their names will not be written in the book of life and they will not receive everlasting life. Instead, they will receive “everlasting contempt,” or destruction. So Daniel 12:2 is speaking of the ultimate outcome for all resurrected ones based on what they do *after* their resurrection.\* (Rev. 20:12) Some will gain everlasting life; others will not.

#### “BRINGING THE MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS”

<sup>9</sup> **Read Daniel 12:3.** What else will happen after the coming “time of distress”? In addition to Daniel 12:2,

---

\* In contrast, the terms “the righteous” and “the unrighteous” found at Acts 24:15 and the words “those who did good things” and “those who practiced vile things” found at John 5:29 focus on the conduct of the resurrected ones *before* they died.

8. How are others resurrected “to reproach and to everlasting contempt”?

9-10. What else will happen after the great tribulation, and who “will shine as brightly as the expanse of heaven”?

verse 3 refers to something that happens *after* the great tribulation.

<sup>10</sup> Who “will shine as brightly as the expanse of heaven”? We find a clue in Jesus’ words recorded at Matthew 13:43: “At that time the righteous ones will shine as brightly as the sun *in the Kingdom of their Father*.” In the context of these words, Jesus was speaking about “the sons of the Kingdom,” his anointed brothers, who will serve with him in the heavenly Kingdom. (Matt. 13:38) So Daniel 12:3 must be referring to the anointed and the work they will do during the Thousand Year Reign.

<sup>11</sup> How will the anointed bring “the many to righteousness”? The anointed will cooperate closely with Jesus Christ to direct the educational program that will be carried out here on earth during the 1,000 years. The 144,000 will not only rule as kings but also serve as priests. (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6) As such, they will assist with “the healing of the nations”—gradually bringing mankind back to perfection. (Rev. 22:1, 2; Ezek. 47:12) What a joy that will be for the anointed!

<sup>12</sup> Who will be among “the many” brought to righteousness? These will include those who are resurrected and also those who survive Armageddon together with any children who may be born in the new world. By the end of the 1,000 years, all living on earth will be perfect. So at what point will their names be written permanently in ink and not in pencil in the book of life?

---

11-12. What work will the 144,000 do during the 1,000 years?



The 144,000 will work closely with Jesus Christ to direct the educational work that will take place during the 1,000 years  
(See paragraph 11)

### THE FINAL TEST

<sup>13</sup> We must remember that being perfect does not in itself mean that a person will automatically gain everlasting life. Think of Adam and Eve. They were perfect, but they needed to demonstrate their obedience to Jehovah God before they would be granted everlasting life. And, sadly, they failed to obey him.—Rom. 5:12.

<sup>14</sup> What will be the situation of those on earth by the end of the 1,000 years? All will have gained perfection. Will all

those perfect people fully support Jehovah's rule forever? Or will some prove to be like Adam and Eve—who despite being perfect became unfaithful? These questions will need to be answered, but how?

<sup>15</sup> Satan will be confined for the 1,000 years. During that time, he will not be able to mislead anyone. However, at the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be released from his confinement. He will then try to mislead perfect humans. During that test, all perfect humans on

13-14. What will all perfect people on earth need to demonstrate before they receive everlasting life?

15-16. (a) When will all mankind receive an opportunity to show their loyalty to Jehovah? (b) What will be the final result of this test?





How thrilling it will be to see Daniel, our loved ones,  
and many more “stand up” for their lot in the new world!  
(See paragraph 20)

earth will have an opportunity to show clearly where they stand on the issue of God’s name and sovereignty. (Rev. 20:7-10) Their individual responses to Satan’s efforts will determine whether their names should be written permanently in the book of life.

<sup>16</sup> Some, an unspecified number, will prove to be like Adam and Eve, rejecting Jehovah’s rulership. What will happen to them? Revelation 20:15 tells us: “Whoever was not found written in the book of life was hurled into the lake of fire.” Yes, these rebellious ones will be completely destroyed forever. But the

majority of perfect mankind will pass this final test. Their names will then be written permanently in the book of life.

#### DURING “THE TIME OF THE END”

<sup>17</sup> How exciting it is to think about these future events! However, Daniel also received from an angel some important information concerning our time, “the time of the end.” **(Read Daniel 12: 4, 8-10; 2 Tim. 3:1-5)** The angel told Daniel: “True knowledge will become

17. What was Daniel told would happen in our time? (Daniel 12:4, 8-10)



abundant.” Yes, the prophetic words in his book would be understood more fully by God’s people. The angel added that during this time “the wicked ones [would] act wickedly, and none of the wicked [would] understand.”

<sup>18</sup> Today it may appear that the wicked are getting away with their wicked conduct. (Mal. 3:14, 15) But soon Jesus will judge the goatlike ones and separate them from the sheeplike ones. (Matt. 25:31-33) These wicked ones will not survive the great tribulation, nor will they be resurrected to live in the new world. Their names will not be in the “book of remembrance” mentioned at Malachi 3:16.

<sup>19</sup> Now is the time for us to prove that

---

18. What will soon happen to the wicked?

19. What is it now time for us to do, and why? (Malachi 3:16-18)

we are not among the wicked ones. **(Read Malachi 3:16-18.)** Jehovah is gathering those whom he views as “a special property,” or a treasured possession. We surely want to be among them.

<sup>20</sup> Truly, we are living in exciting times. But far more amazing things are about to happen. Soon we will see the destruction of all wickedness. Following that, we will see the fulfillment of Jehovah’s promise to Daniel: “You will stand up for your lot at the end of the days.” (Dan. 12:13) Do you long for the day when Daniel, along with your loved ones, will “stand up” again? If so, do your utmost now to be faithful, and you can be sure that your name will remain written in Jehovah’s book of life.

---

20. What final promise was made to Daniel, and why do you look forward to the fulfillment of that promise?

---

## HOW WOULD YOU EXPLAIN THESE VERSES?

■ Daniel 12:1

■ Daniel 12:2, 3

■ Daniel 12:4, 8-10

## Who will be resurrected on earth, and what type of resurrection will they experience?

■ Consider how the Bible answers these questions.

**Acts 24:15** tells us that there is going to be “a resurrection of both the **righteous** and the **unrighteous**.” The righteous are those who before dying obeyed God, so their names are written in the book of life. (Mal. 3:16) The unrighteous include those who died without having sufficient opportunity to learn about Jehovah, so their names are not written in the book of life.

**John 5:28, 29** refers to the same two groups mentioned at Acts 24:15. Jesus says that “those who **did good things**” will come out “to **a resurrection of life**, and those who **practiced vile things** to a **resurrection of judgment**.” The righteous did good things before they died. They will come out to a resurrection of life because their names are still written in the book of life. However, the unrighteous practiced vile things before they died. They will come out to a resurrection of judgment. Their names are not yet written in the book of life, and they will experience a period of judgment, or probation. During that time, they will have an opportunity to learn about Jehovah and have their names written in the book of life.

**Revelation 20:12, 13** explains that **all** resurrected ones will need to obey the “things written in the scrolls,” that is, the new laws that will be in effect in the new world. Those who do not obey will be removed.—Isa. 65:20.

**Daniel 12:2** foretells that some of those sleeping in death will wake up “to everlasting life and others to reproach and to everlasting contempt.” This verse speaks of the final outcome of their resurrection

—“**everlasting** life” or “**everlasting** contempt.” So at the end of the 1,000 years, some will receive everlasting life and others will be destroyed forever.—Rev. 20:15; 21:3, 4.

Consider an illustration. The situation of the two groups resurrected could be compared to that of foreigners who want to live in another country. The righteous are like those who receive a work visa or a resident visa that gives them a measure of recognition and freedom. In contrast, the unrighteous are like foreigners who may receive a temporary visa or a visitor’s visa. Such foreigners will have to prove themselves before being allowed to continue living in the new country. Similarly, the unrighteous resurrected ones will need to obey Jehovah’s laws and prove themselves righteous in order to remain in Paradise. And no matter what visa foreigners initially receive upon entry into another country, some may eventually receive citizenship while others may be deported. The outcome will be based on their attitude and conduct in the new country. So, too, the final outcome for all those resurrected will depend on their faithfulness and conduct in the new world.

Jehovah is not only the God of compassion but also the God of justice and fairness. (Deut. 32:4; Ps. 33:5) He will show his love by resurrecting both the righteous and the unrighteous. He will at the same time maintain his high standards of morality. Only those who come to love him and live up to his standards will be allowed to keep living in the new world.

---

## What did the apostle Paul mean when he referred to himself as “one born prematurely”? (1 Corinthians 15:8)

■ According to 1 Corinthians 15:8, Paul stated: “Last of all he appeared also to me as if to one born prematurely.” In the past, we have explained that Paul was apparently referring to his own experience when he had a vision of Jesus in heavenly glory. It was as if he had been granted the honor of being born, or resurrected, to spirit life ahead of time, centuries before that type of resurrection was to occur. However, further study of this verse points to a need to adjust the explanation of this verse.

It is true that Paul is here referring to what happened at his conversion. But what did he mean when he said that he was “born prematurely”? There are several possibilities.

**His conversion was abrupt and traumatic.** A premature birth often comes as a surprise. As Saul (who later became known as Paul) traveled to Damascus to persecute the Christians there, he was not expecting to see a vision of the resurrected Jesus. Paul’s conversion was a surprise not only to him but also to the Christians whom he was planning to terrorize in that city. Additionally, this experience was so traumatic that he temporarily lost his sight.—Acts 9:1-9, 17-19.

**He was converted at “the wrong time.”** The original Greek word translated “one born prematurely” can also be rendered “one born at the wrong time.” *The Jerusalem Bible* puts it this way: “It was as though I was born when no one expected it.” By the time of Paul’s conversion, Jesus had already returned to heaven. Unlike those whom Paul had referred to in the preceding verses, he



had not seen the resurrected Jesus prior to his ascension to heaven. (1 Cor. 15:4-8) Jesus’ unexpected appearance to Paul granted him that opportunity, even though it seemed to be at “the wrong time.”

**He was speaking of himself in a modest way.** According to some scholars, the expression Paul uses here can have a derogatory connotation. If Paul had that in mind, he was acknowledging that he did not deserve the privilege he was given. In fact, he went on to say: “I am the least of the apostles, and I am not worthy of being called an apostle, because I persecuted the congregation of God. But by God’s undeserved kindness I am what I am.”—1 Cor. 15:9, 10.

Consequently, it seems that Paul could have been referring to the unexpected and abrupt manner in which Jesus appeared to him, the untimeliness of his conversion, or the fact that he was spiritually unworthy to have such an amazing revelation. Whatever the case, Paul clearly treasured this experience. It proved to him beyond a doubt that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead. No wonder he often referred to this untimely experience when preaching to others about Jesus’ resurrection.—Acts 22:6-11; 26:13-18.



## I Have Enjoyed Learning and Teaching About Jehovah

AS TOLD BY LEON WEAVER, JR.

AS I grew up in Easton, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., I was focused on going to university, determined to make something of myself. I enjoyed learning and did well in mathematics and science classes. In 1956 a civil rights organization gave me 25 dollars for having the highest grades among the black students. Later, my goals changed. Why?

### HOW I LEARNED ABOUT JEHOVAH

In the early 1940's, my parents studied the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. That study did not continue, but my mother did continue to receive copies of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. In 1950 an international convention was held in New York City, and my family accepted the invitation to attend.

Soon after that, Brother Lawrence Jeffries started calling on us. He took an interest in

helping me. At first, I disagreed with him about the stand of Jehovah's Witnesses, their noninvolvement in politics and the military. I argued that if everyone in America refused to go to war, enemies could come and take over the whole country. Brother Jeffries patiently reasoned: "What do you think Jehovah God would do if all the people in America were serving him and enemies came to attack them?" His comment on that and other issues helped me to see that my objection was baseless. That aroused my interest.

I spent hours reading older issues of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* that my mother had put in the cellar. In time, I realized that I was learning the truth, so I accepted Brother Jeffries' offer of a Bible study. I also began attending meetings regularly. The truth filled my heart, and I became a publisher of the good news. My goals changed when I understood that "the great day of Jehovah [was] near." (Zeph. 1:14) Instead of setting my sights on university, I wanted to help others to learn Bible truth.

I graduated from high school on June 13, 1956, and three days later, I got baptized at a circuit assembly. Little did I realize that so

many blessings would come from devoting my life to learning and teaching about Jehovah.

### LEARNING AND TEACHING AS A PIONEER

Six months after my baptism, I became a regular pioneer. The December 1956 *Kingdom Ministry* included the article “Can You Serve Where the Need Is Great?” That invitation was for me too. I wanted to help where few were preaching the good news. —Matt. 24:14.

I moved to Edgefield, South Carolina. The congregation there consisted of only four publishers. I brought the number to five. We held meetings in the front room of a brother’s home. Each month, I spent 100 hours in the field ministry. I was busy taking the lead in field service and handling meeting parts. Interestingly, the more I did, the more I learned about Jehovah.

One woman with whom I studied the Bible owned a funeral parlor in Johnston, a town a few miles away. She kindly gave me some much-needed part-time work and let us use a small building as our Kingdom Hall.

Brother Jolly Jeffries, the son of the brother who had studied with me, moved in from Brooklyn, New York, and became my pioneer partner. We roomed in a small trailer that a brother lent us.

Wages were low in the South. We earned two or three dollars for a day’s work. One time, I had just used my last few coins to buy some food at the grocery store. When I came out, a man approached me and asked: “Do you want to work? I’ll pay you a dollar an hour.” He gave me three days of work cleaning up a construction site. It seemed clear that Jehovah was helping me to stay in Edgefield. I did, though, go to the 1958 international convention held in New York City.

On the second day of the convention, something special happened. I met Ruby Wadlington, who was serving as a regular pioneer in Gallatin, Tennessee. Having a mutual interest in missionary service, we attended the Gilead meeting at that convention. Later, we began to write to each other. Then I was invited to Gallatin to give a public talk. I took that opportunity to ask her to marry me. I moved to Ruby’s congregation, and we were married in 1959.

### LEARNING AND TEACHING IN THE CONGREGATION

When I was 23 years old, I was appointed as the congregation servant (now called coordinator of the body of elders) in Gallatin. We were the first congregation that Charles Thompson visited as a circuit overseer. He had much experience; yet, he



A



B

A. My baptism

B. On our wedding day



asked for my input about what the brothers needed and how other circuit overseers cared for such things. I learned from him that it is good to ask questions and get all the facts before handling a matter.

In May 1964, I was invited to attend the one-month Kingdom Ministry School held in South Lansing, New York. The brothers who conducted this school cultivated in me a strong desire to learn more and to grow as a spiritual person.

### LEARNING AND TEACHING IN CIRCUIT AND DISTRICT WORK

Ruby and I received an invitation to enter the circuit work in January 1965. We were assigned to a circuit that stretched over a wide area, from Knoxville, Tennessee, almost to Richmond, Virginia. It included congregations in North Carolina, Kentucky, and West Virginia. I served only the black congregations because at the time segregation prevailed in the southern United States, so blacks could not meet together with whites. The brothers had little materially, and we learned to share what we had with those in need. A longtime circuit overseer taught me a vital lesson: “Be a brother. Don’t go into a congregation like a boss. You can help them **if** they view you as their brother.”

While we were visiting one small congregation, Ruby started a study with a young woman who had a one-year-old daughter. When no one in the congregation was in a position to conduct the study, Ruby did so by mail. On our next visit, the woman came to every meeting. When two special pioneer sisters moved in, they continued the study, and soon she got baptized. Some 30 years later in 1995, at Patterson Bethel, a young sister introduced herself to Ruby. It was the daughter of the woman with whom Ruby had studied. The daughter and her husband were students in the 100th class of Gilead School.

Our second circuit covered central Florida. About this time we needed a car, so we bought one and at an excellent price. However, the first week, the water pump failed. We had no money left to repair it. I called a brother who I thought might be able to help us. He had one of his workers fix the car and would not take any money for the repair. He just said, “It’s taken care of.” He even gave us some money as a gift! That was a beautiful example of how Jehovah cares for his servants. It reminded us to be generous with others.

Whenever we visited a congregation, we stayed in the homes of the brothers. As a result, we made many lasting friends. One day, I left my partly completed report regarding the congregation in my typewriter. When I returned that evening, I learned that the three-year-old son of the family we were staying with had “helped” me finish the report. I teased him about it for many years.

In 1971, I received a letter assigning me to serve as district overseer in New York City. We were shocked! When we moved there, I was only 34 years old. The brothers gave me, their first black district overseer, a warm welcome.

As district overseer, I enjoyed teaching about Jehovah each weekend at a circuit assembly. Many of the circuit overseers had more experience than I did. One of them had given my baptism talk. Another brother, Theodore Jaracz, later became a member of the Governing Body. There were also many experienced brothers who were serving at Brooklyn Bethel. I was so grateful that the circuit overseers and the Bethelites made me feel comfortable. I saw firsthand that these were loving shepherds, who relied on God’s Word and loyally supported the organization. Their humility made it easy for me to serve as the district overseer.

## BACK TO THE CIRCUIT WORK

In 1974 the Governing Body assigned another group of circuit overseers to the district work, and I was to serve again as a circuit overseer—this time in South Carolina. Happily, by then the congregations and circuits could be integrated, which pleased the brothers.

In late 1976, I was assigned to a Georgia circuit between Atlanta and Columbus. I vividly remember giving the graveside service for five black children who died when arsonists firebombed their home. The mother was hospitalized because of her injuries. A constant stream of Jehovah's Witnesses, both black and white, came to the hospital to comfort the parents. I saw that the brothers' love was outstanding. Such compassion can help God's servants deal with the most difficult circumstances.

## LEARNING AND TEACHING AT BETHEL

In 1977 we were asked to come to Brooklyn Bethel for a few months to help with a project. When that was about finished, two members of the Governing Body met with me and asked if Ruby and I would be willing to serve permanently at Bethel. We accepted the invitation.

For 24 years, I worked in the Service Department, where brothers often deal with sensitive and complex questions. Over the years, the Governing Body has provided guidance in harmony with Bible principles. This is used as the basis for answering questions, but it is also the basis for training circuit overseers, elders, and pioneers. This training material has helped many to grow spiritually. That, in turn, has enriched Jehovah's organization.

From 1995 to 2018, I visited various branch offices as a headquarters representative, formerly called a zone overseer. I met with the Branch Committees, Bethel-



### On our 50th anniversary

---

ites, and missionaries to encourage them and to help them with any concerns. In turn, Ruby and I have always been upbuilt by the experiences shared with us. For example, we visited Rwanda in 2000. We were deeply moved to hear how the brothers and the Bethel family had lived through the genocide of 1994. Many had lost loved ones. Despite what they endured, those brothers displayed faith, hope, and joy.

We are now in our 80's. For the last 20 years, I have served with the United States Branch Committee. I never received a university education; yet, I have received the highest education from Jehovah and his organization. This has equipped me to teach others Bible truths that can benefit them eternally. (2 Cor. 3:5; 2 Tim. 2:2) I have seen how the Bible's message has helped people to improve their life and to develop a relationship with their Creator. (Jas. 4:8) Whenever we can, Ruby and I continue to encourage others to cherish the privilege of learning about Jehovah and teaching Bible truths to others—the greatest privilege a servant of Jehovah can enjoy!

## IN THIS ISSUE

---

Study Article 37: November 7-13 2  
**You Can Trust Your Brothers**

---

Study Article 38: November 14-20 8  
**Prove Yourself Trustworthy**

---

Study Article 39: November 21-27 14  
**Is Your Name in “the Book of Life”?**

---

Study Article 40: November 28–December 4 20  
**“Bringing the Many to Righteousness”**

---

QUESTIONS FROM READERS 26

---

LIFE STORY 28  
**I Have Enjoyed Learning  
and Teaching About Jehovah**

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. To make a donation, please visit [donate.jw.org](https://donate.jw.org).

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

*The Watchtower* (ISSN 0043-1087) September 2022 is published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; Harold L. Corkern, President; Mark L. Questell, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. © 2022 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

FEATURED CONTENT IN  
*JW LIBRARY* AND ON [JW.ORG](https://www.jw.org)

## HOW YOUR DONATIONS ARE USED

### **Global Relief for a Global Pandemic**

Our relief efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic have impressed both Witnesses and non-Witnesses.

## MORE TOPICS

### **Is a Fair Economic System Possible?**

Humans have not been able to establish an economic system that satisfies the needs of all people. The Bible describes what God will do to solve this problem.

## YOUNG PEOPLE ASK

### **How Can the Bible Help Me?—Part 1: Exploring Your Bible**

If you came across a huge ancient treasure chest, would you not be curious about what is inside? The Bible is just such a treasure chest. It contains many gems.

## COVER PICTURE:

A brother shares in the great educational program that will take place during the Millennium (See study article 39, paragraph 20)

Visit the [jw.org](https://www.jw.org) website, or scan code



w2209-E  
220503