

THE **WATCHTOWER**
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

MAY 1, 1992

**THE YEAR
THAT SHOCKED
THE WORLD**

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ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in God's now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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1914

THE YEAR THAT SHOCKED THE WORLD

"The Great War of 1914-18 lies like a band of scorched earth dividing that time from ours. In wiping out so many lives . . . , in destroying beliefs, changing ideas, and leaving incurable wounds of disillusion, it created a physical as well as psychological gulf between two epochs."

—From *The Proud Tower—A Portrait of the World Before the War 1890-1914*, by Barbara Tuchman.

"It is almost—but not quite yet—part of history, for many thousands of people who were young at the beginning of this momentous twentieth century are still alive."

—From the book *1914*, by Lyn MacDonald, published in 1987.

WHY be interested in the year 1914? 'It is the future that concerns me,' you may say, 'not the past.' With problems such as the global pollution, the breakdown of family life, the increase in crime, mental sickness, and unemployment, man's future may look bleak. Many who have examined the significance of 1914, however, found a basis for hope in a better future.

For decades *The Watchtower* has explained that in 1914 mankind experienced what is called "a beginning of pangs of distress." That expression forms part of Jesus Christ's great prophecy about events that would precede the end of man's wicked system.—Matthew 24:7, 8.

Today, a small percentage of mankind can still recall the dramatic events of 1914.

Will that elderly generation pass away before God saves the earth from ruin? Not according to Bible prophecy. "When you see all these things," Jesus promised, "know that he is near at the doors. Truly I say to you that *this* generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur." —Matthew 24:33, 34.

To appreciate why the year 1914 has such historical significance, consider the world situation up until the middle of 1914. Before that time, monarchs such as Czar Nicholas of Russia, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, and Emperor Franz Josef of Austria-Hungary wielded great power. Each of these men could mobilize over four million fighting men and send them off to battle. But their forefathers had signed what was called the Holy Alliance, proclaiming that God had

delegated them to govern different parts of one great "Christian nation."

According to *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, this document "powerfully affected the course of European diplomacy during the 19th century." It was used to oppose democratic movements and to favor the so-called divine right of kings. "We Christian Kings," Kaiser Wilhelm wrote to Czar Nicholas, "have one holy duty, imposed on us by Heaven, that is to uphold the principle of [the divine right of kings]." Did this mean that Europe's kings were somehow connected with the Kingdom of God? (Compare 1 Corinthians 4:8.) And what about the churches that supported those kings? Was their profession of Christianity genuine? The answer to these questions became clear in the years immediately following 1914.

Suddenly, in August

"The spring and summer of 1914 were marked in Europe by an exceptional tranquillity," wrote British statesman Winston Churchill. People were generally optimistic about the future. "The world of 1914 was full of hope and promise," said Louis Snyder in his book *World War I*.

True, for many years there had been intense rivalry between Germany and Britain. Nevertheless, as historian G. P. Gooch explains in his book *Under Six Reigns*: "A European conflict appeared less likely in 1914 than in 1911, 1912 or 1913 . . . The relations of the two governments were better than they had been for years." According to Winston Churchill, a member of Britain's 1914 cabinet: "Germany seemed with us, to be set on peace."

However, with the assassination at Sarajevo of the crown prince of the Empire of Austria-Hungary on June 28, 1914, a dark cloud appeared on the horizon. A month later, Emperor Franz Josef declared war on

Serbia and then ordered his troops to invade that kingdom. In the meantime, on the night of August 3, 1914, by order of Kaiser Wilhelm, a large German army suddenly invaded the kingdom of Belgium and fought its way toward France. The next day Britain declared war on Germany. As for Czar Nicholas, he had ordered the mobilization of the massive Russian army for war with Germany and Austria-Hungary. The Holy Alliance had failed to stop Europe's kings from plunging the continent into a bloodbath of mutual slaughter. But the big shocks were yet to come.

Over by Christmas?

The outbreak of war did not dampen people's optimism. Many believed that it would produce a better world, and huge crowds gathered throughout Europe to express their support for it. "No one in 1914," writes A. J. P. Taylor in his book *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe—1848–1918*, "took the dangers of war seriously except on a purely military plane. . . . None expected a social catastrophe." Instead, many prophesied that it would be over in a few months.

Nevertheless, long before Europeans could celebrate their 1914 Christmas, a bloody stalemate had developed along a line of trenches stretching over 450 miles from Switzerland in the south to the Belgian coast in the north. This was called the Western Front, and German author Herbert Sulzbach mentioned it in an entry in his diary made on the last day of 1914. The entry reads: "This terrible war goes on and on, and whereas you thought at the start that it would be over in a few weeks, there is now no end in sight." Meanwhile, in other parts of Europe, bloody battles raged between the troops of Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Serbia. The conflict soon spread beyond Europe, and battles

were fought on the oceans and in Africa, the Middle East, and the islands of the Pacific.

Four years later Europe was devastated. Germany, Russia, and Austria-Hungary each lost between one and two million soldiers. Russia had even lost its monarchy in the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. What a shock for Europe's kings and their clergy supporters! Modern historians still express surprise. In his book *Royal Sunset*, Gordon Brook-Shepherd asks: "How was it that rulers, mostly related by blood or marriage and all dedicated to the preservation of kingship, allowed themselves to slip into a fratricidal bloodbath which wiped several of them out of existence and left all the survivors weakened?"

The republic of France also lost over a million soldiers, and the British Empire, whose monarchy had already been weakened long before the war, lost over 900,000. In all, more than 9 million soldiers died, and a further 21 million were wounded. Concerning noncombatant losses, *The World Book Encyclopedia* states: "No one knows how many civilians died of disease, starvation, and other war-related causes. Some historians believe that as many civilians died as soldiers." The Spanish flu epidemic of 1918 reaped another 21,000,000 lives around the earth.

Radical Change

The world was never the same after the Great War, as it was then called. Since so many churches of Christendom had enthu-

siastically participated in it, many disillusioned survivors turned their back on religion in favor of atheism. Others turned to the pursuit of material riches and pleasures. According to Professor Modris Eksteins in his book *Rites of Spring*, the 1920's "witnessed a hedonism and narcissism of remarkable proportions."

"The war," explains Professor Eksteins, "assaulted moral standards." Men on both sides had been taught by religious, military, and political leaders to view mass killing as morally good. This, admits Eksteins, "was merely the crudest of assaults on a moral order that claimed to be rooted in a Judaeo-Christian ethic." "On the Western Front," he adds, "brothels were soon regular appurtenances of base camps

... On the home front morality loosened its corsets and belts too. Prostitution increased strikingly."

Indeed, 1914 changed much. It had not produced a better world, and the war did not turn out to be "the war to end all wars," as many people had hoped. Instead, as historian Barbara Tuchman observes: "Illusions and enthusiasms possible up to 1914 slowly sank beneath a sea of massive disillusionment."

However, some who witnessed the 1914 tragedy were not surprised by the events of that year. In fact, before the war broke out, they had been expecting "an awful time of trouble." Who were they? And what did they know that others did not know?

British Optimism in 1914

"For close on a century no enemy had appeared in the seas around our island. . . . There was difficulty even in envisaging the possibility of a threat to these peaceful shores. . . . Never had London appeared gayer and more prosperous. Never had there been so much that was worth doing, and seeing, and hearing. Neither the old nor the young had any suspicion that what they were witnessing, during that incomparable season of 1914, was, in fact, the end of an era."—*Before the Lamps Went Out*, by Geoffrey Marcus.

THE 1914 GENERATION Why Significant?

"Our readers know that for some years we have been expecting this Age to close with an awful time of trouble, and we expect it to break out with suddenness and force not long after October, 1914."

—From *The Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*, May 15, 1911.

SINCE 1879 the magazine then known as *The Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence* (now known as *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*) frequently pointed to 1914 as a marked year in Bible prophecy. As the year approached, readers were reminded that "an awful time of trouble" could be expected.

This information was published far and wide by Christians, who based it on their understanding of the "seven times" and "the times of the Gentiles" mentioned in the Bible.* They understood this period to be 2,520 years—starting with the overthrow of the ancient Davidic kingdom in Jerusalem and ending in October 1914.[#]—Daniel 4:16, 17; Luke 21:24, *King James Version*.

On October 2, 1914, Charles Taze Russell, then president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, boldly announced: "The Gentile Times have ended; their kings have had their day." How true his words proved to be! Unseen to human eyes, in October 1914 an event of world-shaking importance took place in heaven. Jesus Christ, the permanent Heir to "the throne of David," commenced

his rule as King over all mankind.—Luke 1:32, 33; Revelation 11:15.

'But,' you may ask, 'if Christ began ruling in 1914, why did conditions on earth get worse?' Because mankind's invisible enemy Satan was still in existence. Until 1914, Satan had access to heaven. That situation changed with the setting up of God's Kingdom in 1914. "War broke out in heaven." (Revelation 12:7) Satan and his demons were defeated and cast down to the earth, with catastrophic effects on mankind. The Bible foretold: "Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time."—Revelation 12:12.

In the first century C.E., Jesus said that his invisible presence as earth's new King would be marked by a visible sign. He was asked: "What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" His reply? "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another. All these things are a beginning of pangs of distress."—Matthew 24:3, 7, 8.

Accordingly, the war that broke out in 1914 was accompanied by terrible food shortages, since normal food production was dis-

* Title page of *Scenario of the Photo-Drama of Creation*, 1914.

[#] For further details, see chapter 16 of the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

rupted for over four years. What about “earthquakes in one place after another”? In the decade following 1914, no less than ten destructive earthquakes killed over 350,000 people. (See box.) Indeed, the 1914 generation experienced “a beginning of pangs of distress.” And ever since, pangs of distress have struck with regularity in the form of natural disasters, famines, and many, many wars.

Nevertheless, the news of the establishment of God’s Kingdom in 1914 is good news because that Kingdom will save this earth from ruin. How? It will remove all false, hypocritical religions, corrupt governments, and the wicked influence of Satan. (Daniel 2:44; Romans 16:20; Revelation 11:18; 18:4-8, 24) Moreover, it will usher in a new world in which “righteousness is to dwell.”—2 Peter 3:13.

Soon after World War I, sincere Bible Students, as Jehovah’s Witnesses were then known, began to discern their privilege respecting another aspect of the sign of Jesus’ presence as King. Jesus Christ foretold: “This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come.”—Matthew 24:14.

From small beginnings in 1919, Jehovah’s Witnesses have continued without let-up to spread “this good news.” As a result, millions from over 200 lands are now being gathered as subjects of God’s Kingdom. And what blessings await these subjects! The Kingdom will abolish war, famine,

EARTHQUAKES in the Decade Following 1914

Date:	Location:	Deaths:
January 13, 1915	Avezzano, Italy	32,600
January 21, 1917	Bali, Indonesia	15,000
February 13, 1918	Kwangtung Province, China	10,000
October 11, 1918	Puerto Rico (western)	116
January 3, 1920	Veracruz, Mexico	648
September 7, 1920	Reggio di Calabria, Italy	1,400
December 16, 1920	Ningsia Province, China	200,000
March 24, 1923	Szechwan Province, China	5,000
May 26, 1923	Iran (northeastern)	2,200
September 1, 1923	Tokyo-Yokohama, Japan	99,300

From table “Significant Earthquakes of the World” in the book *Terra Non Firma*, by James M. Gere and Hareesh C. Shah.

crime, and oppression. It will even overcome sickness and death!—Psalm 46:9; 72:7, 12-14, 16; Proverbs 2:21, 22; Revelation 21:3, 4.

Before the 1914 generation passes away, the Kingdom-preaching work will have accomplished its purpose. “Then,” foretold Jesus, “there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world’s beginning until now, no, nor will occur again. In fact, unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short.”—Matthew 24:21, 22.

Do not make the mistake that the pre-1914 generation made. Things will not always continue as they are now. Astounding changes lie ahead. But for those who act wisely, there are wonderful prospects.

Listen, then, to the words of the prophet of old: “Seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth . . . Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah’s anger.” (Zephaniah 2:3) How can we apply this counsel? The following articles will help to answer that question.

KEEP CLOSE IN MIND THE DAY OF JEHOVAH

"The day of Jehovah is near in the low plain of the decision."—JOEL 3:14.

PROCLAIM this, you people, among the nations, 'Sanctify war!' (Joel 3:9) Does this mean a *holy* war? Looking back on the Crusades, the religious wars, and the two world wars—in which Christendom played a leading part—we might shudder at the thought of a "holy" war. However, the holy war of Joel's prophecy is not a war among the nations. It is not a hate-filled struggle for territory or possessions, using religion as an excuse. It is a righteous war. It is God's war to rid the earth of greed, strife, corruption, and oppression. It will vindicate Jehovah's rightful sovereignty over the entire realm of his creation. That war will clear the way for Christ's Kingdom to usher mankind into the Millennium of universal peace, prosperity, and happiness foretold by God's prophets.—Psalm 37:9-11; Isaiah 65:17, 18; Revelation 20:6.

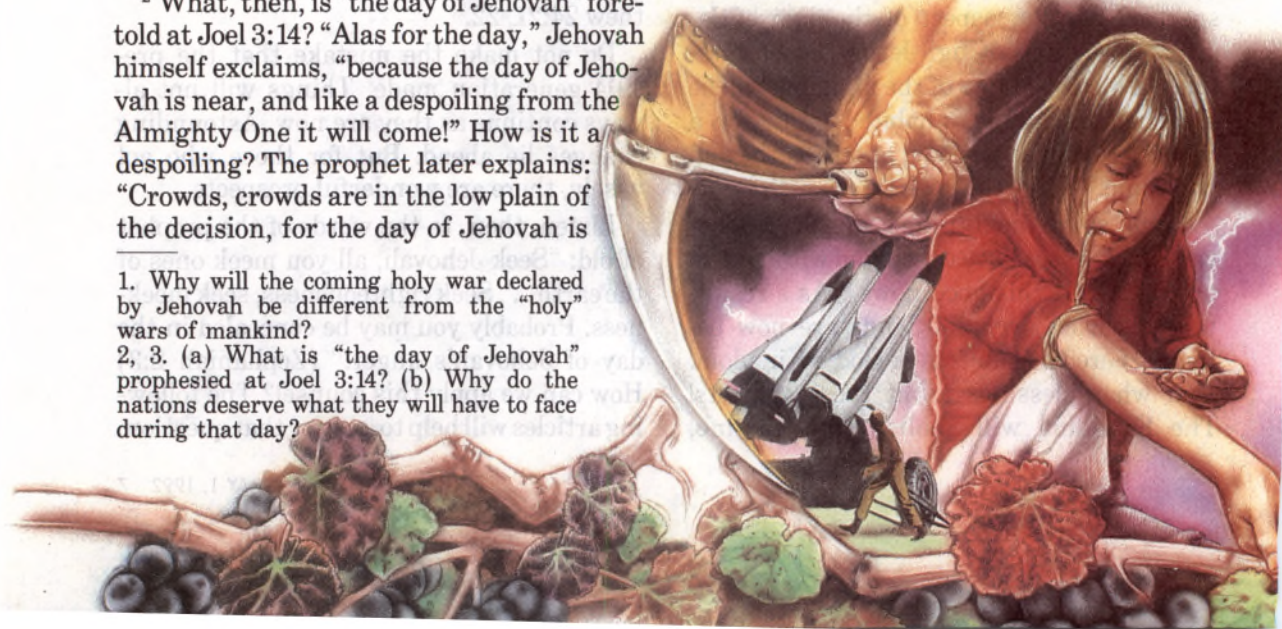
² What, then, is "the day of Jehovah" foretold at Joel 3:14? "Alas for the day," Jehovah himself exclaims, "because the day of Jehovah is near, and like a despoiling from the Almighty One it will come!" How is it a despoiling? The prophet later explains: "Crowds, crowds are in the low plain of the decision, for the day of Jehovah is

near in the low plain of the decision." (Joel 1:15; 3:14) This is the day on which Jehovah executes his judicial decision on the godless crowds of humanity that reject his rightful sovereignty over heaven and earth. It is Jehovah's decision to despoil the satanic system of things that has for so long embraced mankind in its tentacles.—Jeremiah 17:5-7; 25:31-33.

³ The corrupt system on earth must face up to that decision. But is the world system really that bad? One look at its record should suffice! Jesus stated a principle at Matthew 7:16: "By their fruits you will recognize them." Have not the world's great cities become cesspools of drugs, crime, terror, immorality, and pollution? In many lands newly found freedoms are being stifled by political confusion, food shortages, and poverty. More than a billion people live on starvation rations. Further, the AIDS epidemic,

1. Why will the coming holy war declared by Jehovah be different from the "holy" wars of mankind?

2, 3. (a) What is "the day of Jehovah" prophesied at Joel 3:14? (b) Why do the nations deserve what they will have to face during that day?



fueled by drugs and immoral life-styles, casts a dark cloud over a great part of the earth. Particularly since World War I exploded in 1914, there has been deterioration on a worldwide scale in every aspect of life.—Compare 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

⁴ However, Jehovah has been gathering out of all the nations a people who gladly receive instruction about his ways and walk in his paths. This globe-encircling people has beaten swords into plowshares, renouncing the violent ways of the world. (Isaiah 2:2-4) Yes, *swords into plowshares!* But is this not the reverse of the cry that Jehovah causes to be proclaimed at Joel 3: 9, 10? There we read: “Proclaim this, you people, among the nations, ‘Sanctify war! Arouse the powerful men! Let them draw near! Let them come up, all the men of war! Beat your *plowshares into swords* and your pruning shears into lances.’” Ah, here Jehovah is challenging the world’s rulers to bring their combined armed might against him at Armageddon. But they cannot succeed! They must go down in total defeat! —Revelation 16:16.

4. What challenge does Jehovah hurl at the nations?

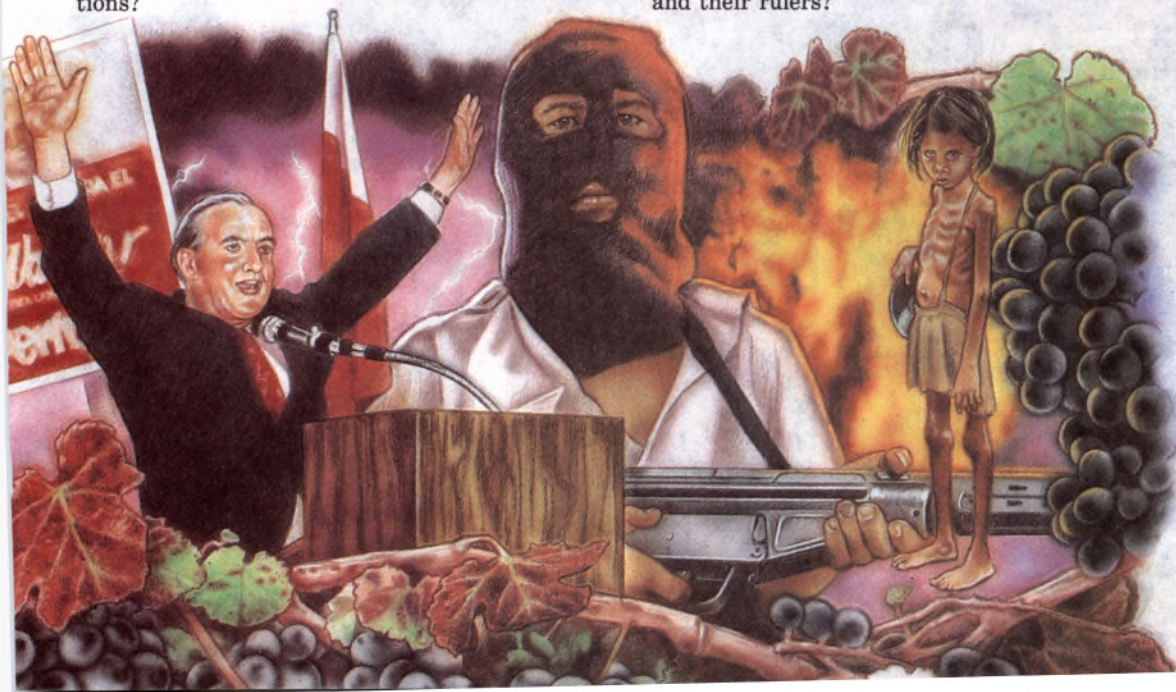
⁵ In defiance of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, powerful rulers have built arsenals of frightful weapons—but in vain! Jehovah gives the order at Joel 3:13: “Thrust in a sickle, for harvest has grown ripe. Come, descend, for the winepress has become full. The press vats actually overflow; for their badness has become abundant.” Those words parallel Revelation 14:18-20, where an angel bearing a sharp sickle is commanded to “gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, because its grapes have become ripe.” The angel thrusts in his sickle and hurls those defiant nations “into the great winepress of the anger of God.” Figuratively, blood comes out of the winepress as high up as the bridles of the horses, for a distance of 1,600 furlongs—about 180 miles! What a frightful prospect for nations that dishonor Jehovah!

Law-Abiding Citizens

⁶ Does this mean that Jehovah’s Witnesses are disrespectful of the nations and their

5. What will be the result when “the vine of the earth” is harvested?

6. How do Jehovah’s Witnesses view the nations and their rulers?



rulers? Far from it! They simply deplore the corruption that all can plainly see, and they warn of Jehovah's rapidly approaching day for executing his decision. At the same time, they humbly obey the apostle Paul's command at Romans 13:1: "Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities." To these human rulers, they give due honor but not worship. As law-abiding citizens, they follow Bible standards of honesty, truthfulness, and cleanliness and build good morals into their own families. They help others to learn how they too can do this. They live peaceably with all men, not getting involved in demonstrations or political revolutions. Jehovah's Witnesses seek to be exemplary in obeying the laws of the human superior authorities, while they wait upon the Supreme Authority, the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, to restore perfect peace and righteous government to this earth.

Executing His Decision

⁷ In vivid figurative language, Jehovah gives this further description of the execution of his decision: "Sun and moon themselves will certainly become dark, and the very stars will actually withdraw their brightness. And out of Zion Jehovah himself will roar, and out of Jerusalem he will give forth his voice. And heaven and earth certainly will rock; but Jehovah will be a refuge for his people, and a fortress for the sons of Israel." (Joel 3:15, 16) The apparently bright, prosperous condition of mankind will turn gloomy, foreboding, and this fragmenting world system will be rocked

out of existence, devastated as by a great earthquake!—Haggai 2:20-22.

7, 8. (a) In what way will the nations be rocked and darkness descend upon them? (b) Whom does Joel portray today, and in contrast with the world in general, how are these blessed?



⁸ Note the happy assurance that Jehovah will be a refuge and a fortress for his people! Why so? Because they are the one people—an international people—who have responded to Jehovah’s words: “You people will have to know that I am Jehovah your God.” (Joel 3:17) Since Joel’s name means “Jehovah Is God,” he fittingly portrays Jehovah’s anointed Witnesses of modern times, who serve boldly in proclaiming Jehovah’s sovereignty. (Compare Malachi 1:11.) Turning to the opening words of Joel’s prophecy, we will find how vividly he foretells the activity of God’s people today.

A Locust Band

⁹ Listen now to “the word of Jehovah that occurred to Joel”: “Hear this, you older men, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land. Has this occurred in your days, or even in the days of your forefathers? Concerning it give an account to your own sons, and your sons to their sons, and their sons to the

9, 10. (a) What plague is foretold by Joel? (b) How does Revelation echo Joel’s prophecy of a plague, and what effect does this plague have on Christendom?

following generation. What was left by the caterpillar, the locust has eaten; and what was left by the locust, the creeping, unwinged locust has eaten; and what the creeping, unwinged locust has left, the cockroach has eaten.”—Joel 1:1-4.

¹⁰ This is a campaign extraordinaire, one that will be memorialized for all time. Wave upon wave of insects, most prominently locusts, devastate the land. What does this mean? Revelation 9:1-12 also speaks of a plague of locusts, sent forth by Jehovah under “a king, the angel of the abyss,” who is none other than Christ Jesus. His names Abaddon (Hebrew) and Apollyon (Greek) mean “Destruction” and “Destroyer.” These locusts picture the anointed remnant of Christians who, now in the Lord’s day, go forth to devastate Christendom’s pastures by completely exposing false religion and proclaiming Jehovah’s vengeance upon it.

¹¹ As indicated by Revelation 9:13-21, the locust plague is succeeded by a huge plague of cavalry. How true this is today, as the few thousand remaining anointed Christians are reinforced by more than four million “other sheep” together making up an irresistible cavalry! (John 10:16) They unite in proclaiming Jehovah’s stinging judgments on Christendom’s idolaters and on those who ‘do not repent of their murders nor of their spiritistic practices nor of their fornication nor of their thefts.’ Clergy—both Catholic and Protestant—who have actively supported the murderous wars of this century, as well as pedophilic priests and perverted TV evangelists, are among those against whom these judgment messages are directed.

11. How are the modern-day locusts reinforced, and who particularly are the objects of their attacks?



¹² To such depraved “gentlemen” of the cloth, Jehovah’s summons rings out: “Wake up, you drunkards, and weep; and howl, all you wine drinkers, on account of sweet wine, for it has been cut off from your mouths.” (Joel 1:5) In this 20th century, Christendom’s religion has substituted the world’s permissiveness for the clean moral principles of God’s Word. It has seemed sweet to false religion and its parishioners to imbibe the ways of the world, but what a harvest of spiritual and physical disease they have reaped! Soon, as described at Revelation 17:16, 17, it will be God’s “thought” for the political powers to turn on the entire world empire of false religion, Babylon the Great, and devastate her. Only then, as she sees Jehovah’s decision being carried out against her, will she “wake up” from her drunken stupor.

“A People Numerous and Mighty”

¹³ Jehovah’s prophet goes on to describe the locust horde as “a people numerous and mighty,” and so it seems to Babylon the Great. (Joel 2:2) Its clergy, for instance, bewail the fact that Christendom’s religions have failed to make converts in Buddhist Japan. Yet, today, more than 160,000 Japanese Witnesses of Jehovah are swarming over that country and conducting personal Bible studies in more than 200,000 homes of the people. In Italy the 180,000 Witnesses of Jehovah are now recognized as second in number only to the Catholics. In vain did a Roman Catholic monsignor in Italy bewail

12. Why do the leaders of Christendom deserve to receive judgment messages, and what will soon happen to them, along with all members of Babylon the Great?

13. In what way does the locust horde seem “numerous and mighty” to Christendom?

the fact that Jehovah’s Witnesses are taking from the church ‘at least 10,000 faithful Catholics’ each year.* The Witnesses are glad to welcome such ones.—Isaiah 60:8, 22.

¹⁴ Describing the locust horde of anointed Witnesses, Joel 2:7-9 states: “Like powerful men they run. Like men of war they go up a wall. And they go each one in his own ways, and they do not alter their paths. And one another they do not shove. As an able-bodied man in his course, they keep going; and should some fall even among the missiles, the others do not break off course. Into the city they rush. On the wall they run. On the houses they go up. Through the windows they go in like the thief.”

¹⁵ A vivid portrayal, indeed, of the army of anointed “locusts,” now joined by more than four million companions, the other sheep! No “wall” of religious enmity can hold these back. Boldly, they “go on walking orderly in this same routine” of public witnessing and other Christian activities. (Compare Philippians 3:16.) Rather than compromise, they have been willing to face death, as did the thousands of Witnesses who ‘fell among the missiles’ because they refused to hail Catholic Hitler of Nazi Germany. The locust horde has given a thorough witness in “the city” of Christendom, climbing over all obstacles, penetrating, as it were, like a thief into the homes as they have distributed billions of Bible publications through their house-to-house activity. It is Jehovah’s will that this witness be given, and no power in heaven or on earth can stop it.—Isaiah 55:11.

* *La Repubblica*, Rome, Italy, November 12, 1985, and *La rivista del clero italiano*, May 1985.

14, 15. How does Joel describe the locust horde, and in what way has this been fulfilled today?

"Filled With Holy Spirit"

¹⁶ Jehovah tells his Witnesses: "You people will have to know that I am in the midst of [spiritual] Israel, and that I am Jehovah your God and there is no other." (Joel 2:27) His people came into this precious realization when Jehovah began to fulfill his words at Joel 2:28, 29: "It must occur that I shall pour out my spirit on every sort of flesh, and your sons and your daughters will certainly prophesy." This happened at Pentecost 33 C.E., when Jesus' assembled disciples were anointed "and they all became filled with holy spirit." In the power of holy spirit, they preached, and on the one day, "about three thousand souls were added."—Acts 2: 4, 16, 17, 41.

¹⁷ On that happy occasion, Peter also quoted Joel 2:30-32: "I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun itself will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah. And it must occur that everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will get away safe." Those words had a partial fulfillment when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 C.E.

¹⁸ There would, however, be a further application of Joel 2:28-32. Indeed, this prophecy has had remarkable fulfillment since September 1919. At that time a memorable convention of Jehovah's people was held in Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A. God's spirit was clearly manifest, and his anointed servants were stimulated to embark on the global witnessing campaign that extends into the

16, 17. (a) When did the words of Joel 2:28, 29 have an outstanding fulfillment? (b) What prophetic words of Joel were not completely fulfilled in the first century?

18. When did the greater fulfillment of Joel 2: 28, 29 begin to take place?

present day. What grand expansion has resulted! The over 7,000 in attendance at that Cedar Point convention have grown to a total of 10,650,158 attending the Memorial of Jesus' death on March 30, 1991. Of these, only 8,850 professed to be anointed Christians. How great the joy of all of these at seeing the global fruitage brought forth by Jehovah's dynamic spirit!—Isaiah 40: 29, 31.

¹⁹ Just ahead lies "the coming of the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah" that will devastate Satan's system of things. (Joel 2:31) Happily, "everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved." (Acts 2:21) How so? The apostle Peter tells us that "Jehovah's day will come as a thief" and adds: "Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion, awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah." Keeping in mind that Jehovah's day is at hand, we will rejoice also to see the fulfillment of Jehovah's promise of righteous "new heavens and a new earth."—2 Peter 3: 10-13.

19. In view of the nearness of Jehovah's day, what should be the attitude of each one of us?

Can You Explain?

- ☐ What is "the day of Jehovah"?
- ☐ How will 'the vine of the earth' be reaped, and why?
- ☐ In what way has a locust plague afflicted Christendom since 1919?
- ☐ How was Jehovah's spirit poured out on his people in 33 C.E., and again in 1919?

WHO WILL ESCAPE THE “TIME OF DISTRESS”?

“Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will get away safe.”—JOEL 2:32.

LOOKING forward to our day, the prophet Daniel wrote: “There will certainly occur a time of distress such as has not been made to occur since there came to be a nation until that time. And during that time your people will escape, every one who is found written down in the book.” (Daniel 12:1) Comforting words indeed! Jehovah’s approved people will be remembered by him, just as Malachi 3:16 also declares: “At that time those in fear of Jehovah spoke with one another, each one with his companion, and Jehovah kept paying attention and listening. And a book of remembrance began to be written up before him for those in fear of Jehovah and for those thinking upon his name.”

² Thinking upon Jehovah’s name leads to accurate knowledge concerning him, his Christ, and all his grand Kingdom purposes. Thus, his people learn to hold him in reverence, to enter into an intimate dedicated relationship with him, and to love him ‘with their whole heart and with their whole understanding and with their whole strength.’ (Mark 12:33; Revelation 4:11) Jehovah has made the gracious provision, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, for the meek ones of earth to find everlasting life. Hence, these may echo with confidence the words of the

heavenly army that praised God at the time of Jesus’ birth, saying: “Glory in the heights above to God, and upon earth peace among men of goodwill.”—Luke 2:14.

³ That peace is nearer than most people think. But first must come the execution of Jehovah’s judgment on a corrupt world. His prophet Zephaniah declares: “The great day of Jehovah is near. It is near, and there is a hurrying of it very much.” What kind of day is that? The prophecy continues: “The sound of the day of Jehovah is bitter. There a mighty man is letting out a cry. That day is a day of fury, a day of distress and of anguish, a day of storm and of desolation, a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick gloom, a day of horn and of alarm signal, against the fortified cities and against the high corner towers. And I will cause distress to mankind, and they will certainly walk like blind men; because it is against Jehovah that they have sinned.” —Zephaniah 1:14-17; see also Habakkuk 2:3; 3:1-6, 16-19.

⁴ Happily, millions today are answering the invitation to know and serve God. Of anointed Christians, who are taken into the new covenant, it was prophesied: “‘They will all of them know me, from the least one of them even to the greatest one of them,’ is the utterance of Jehovah.” (Jeremiah 31:34)

1. According to Daniel and Malachi, what characterizes those in line for salvation during the coming “time of distress”?

2. What results from thinking upon Jehovah’s name?

3. Before peace can come to this earth, what act of Jehovah must take place?

4. Who today are responding to the invitation to know and serve God?

These have spearheaded the modern-day witness work. And now as more and more of the anointed remnant finish their earthly course, the "great crowd" of "other sheep" have come forward to 'render God sacred service day and night' in his templelike arrangement. (Revelation 7:9, 15; John 10:16) Are you one who is enjoying this inestimable privilege?

How "the Desirable Things" Come In

⁵ Let us now turn to Haggai 2:7, where Jehovah prophesies concerning his spiritual house of worship. He says: "I will rock all the nations, and the desirable things of all the nations must come in; and I will fill this house with glory." Bible prophecies show that 'rocking of the nations' refers to Jehovah's execution of judgment upon the nations. (Nahum 1:5, 6; Revelation 6:12-17) Hence, the action of Jehovah prophesied at Haggai 2:7 will climax with the nations being rocked out of existence—annihilated. But what of "the desirable things of all the nations"? Do they have to wait for that final destructive rocking to bring them in? Hardly.

⁶ Joel 2:32 says that "*everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will get away safe; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will prove to be the escaped ones, just as Jehovah has said, and in among the survivors, whom Jehovah is calling.*" Jehovah draws them out, and they call on his name with faith in Jesus' sacrifice *before* the climactic shaking of the great tribulation. (Compare John 6:44; Acts 2:38, 39.) Happily, the precious great crowd, now numbering more than four million, 'comes into' Jehovah's house of worship in anticipation of his 'rocking all the nations' at Armageddon.—Revelation 7:9, 10, 14.

5, 6. Before all nations are rocked to destruction, what saving work takes place?

⁷ How do these survivors call on the name of Jehovah? James 4:8 gives us an indication, stating: "Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you indecisive ones." As with the anointed remnant who led the way, those who hope to be of the great crowd of Armageddon survivors must act decisively. If you hope to survive, you must drink deeply from Jehovah's purifying Word and apply his righteous standards in your life. You must be decisive in dedicating your life to Jehovah, symbolizing this by water baptism. Your calling on Jehovah in faith also includes witnessing for him. Thus, at Romans chapter 10, verses 9 and 10, Paul writes: "If you publicly declare that 'word in your own mouth,' that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation." Then, in verse 13, the apostle quotes Joel's prophecy, emphasizing that "everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved."

'Seek, Seek, Seek'

⁸ Turning to the Bible book of Zephaniah, chapter 2, verses 2 and 3, we read what Jehovah requires for salvation: "Before there comes upon you people the burning anger of Jehovah, before there comes upon you the day of Jehovah's anger, seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth, who have practiced His own judicial decision. Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger." Note the word "probably." It is not a

7. What is involved in 'calling on the name of Jehovah'?

8. (a) According to the prophet Zephaniah, what does Jehovah require for salvation? (b) What warning does the word "probably" at Zephaniah 2:3 convey to us?

case of once saved, always saved. Our concealment in that day depends on our *continuing* to do those three things. We must seek Jehovah, seek righteousness, and seek meekness.

⁹ Wonderful, indeed, is the reward for seeking meekness! At Psalm 37, verses 9 through 11, we read: "Those hoping in Jehovah are the ones that will possess the earth. And just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more . . . But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." And what about seeking righteousness? Verse 29 states: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." As for seeking Jehovah, verses 39 and 40 tell us: "The salvation of the righteous ones is from Jehovah; he is their fortress in the time of distress. And Jehovah will help them and provide them with escape. He will provide them with escape from wicked people and save them, because they have taken refuge in him."

¹⁰ Christendom's sects have failed to seek Jehovah. Their clergy even repudiate his precious name, presumptuously removing it from their Bible translations. They prefer to worship a nameless Lord or God and to revere a pagan Trinity. Moreover, Christendom does not seek righteousness. Many of her adherents adopt or sponsor permissive life-styles. Rather than seek meekness as Jesus did, they make a showy display, for example on television, of luxurious and often immoral living. Clerics fatten themselves at the expense of their flocks. In the words of James 5:5, they have "lived in luxury upon the earth and have gone in for sensual pleasure." As Jehovah's day draws

9. How are those who seek meekness rewarded?

10. Who have been noteworthy in their refusal to seek Jehovah and to seek meekness?

near, they will surely find that the inspired words apply to them: "Valuable things will be of no benefit on the day of fury."—Proverbs 11:4.

¹¹ In the first century C.E., as the apostle Paul relates in his second letter to the Thessalonians, some Christians became excited, thinking that the day of Jehovah was then upon them. But Paul warned that first the great apostasy had to come, and "the man of lawlessness" had to be revealed. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3) Now, in this 20th century, we can appreciate the vast extent of that apostasy and how lawless the clergy of Christendom are in God's sight. During these last days since 1914, the clergy have heaped up a tremendous bloodguilt by supporting the 'beating of plowshares into swords.' (Joel 3:10) They have also continued to teach false doctrines, such as inherent immortality of the human soul, purgatory, hellfire torment, infant baptism, the Trinity, and the like. Where will they stand when Jehovah executes his judicial decision? Proverbs 19:5 states: "He that launches forth lies will not escape."

¹² At 2 Peter 3:10, we read: "Jehovah's day will come as a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a hissing noise, but the elements being intensely hot will be dissolved, and earth and the works in it will be discovered." Corrupt rulerships that have tented like heavens over mankind, together with all elements that make up today's decadent human society, will be swept away from God's earth. Manufacturers and merchants of doomsday weapons, swindlers, hypocritical religionists and their clergy, promoters of depravity, violence, and crime

11. Who is the man of lawlessness, and how has he heaped up tremendous bloodguilt?

12. (a) What are the human "heavens" and "earth" that will soon be annihilated? (b) What do we learn from the coming destruction of this wicked world?

—all of these will disappear. They will be melted away by Jehovah's wrath. But in verses 11 and 12, Peter adds this caution for Christians: "Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion, awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah."

Michael Goes Into Action!

¹³ How will anyone escape during Jehovah's "time of distress"? God's Agent for providing escape is the archangel Michael, whose name means "Who Is Like God?" Fittingly, then, he is the One who vindicates Jehovah's rulership, upholding Jehovah as the only true God and rightful Sovereign Lord of all the universe.

¹⁴ What remarkable events Revelation chapter 12, verses 7 through 17, describes concerning "the Lord's day" since 1914! (Revelation 1:10) The archangel Michael hurls the renegade Satan from heaven down to the earth. Later, as described at Revelation chapter 19, verses 11 through 16, one called "Faithful and True" 'treads the winepress of the anger of the wrath of God the Almighty.' This mighty heavenly warrior is named "King of kings and Lord of lords." Finally, Revelation chapter 20, verses 1 and 2, tells of a great angel who hurls Satan into the abyss and confines him there for a thousand years. Obviously, all these scriptures point to the one Vindicator of Jehovah's sovereignty, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom Jehovah placed on his glorious heavenly throne in 1914.

¹⁵ Michael has been "standing," as stated at Daniel 12:1, in behalf of Jehovah's people

13, 14. Who is the great Vindicator of Jehovah's rulership, and how has he been active since 1914?
15. In what special way will Michael soon "stand up"?

ever since he was installed as King in 1914. But soon Michael is to "stand up" in a very special sense—as Jehovah's Agent in removing all wickedness from the earth and as the Deliverer of the global society of God's people. How great that "time of distress" will be is indicated by Jesus' words at Matthew 24:21, 22: "Then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again. In fact, unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short."

¹⁶ How happy we can be that some flesh will be saved at that time! No, not like the rebellious Jews trapped in Jerusalem in 70 C.E., some of whom were carried away as slaves to Rome. Rather, those who escape in "the time of the end" will be like the Christian congregation that had already fled Jerusalem when the final siege began. They will be God's own people, the millions of the great crowd together with any anointed ones who may still be remaining on earth. (Daniel 12:4) The great crowd "come out of the great tribulation." Why? Because "they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They exercise faith in the ransoming power of Jesus' shed blood and demonstrate that faith by loyally serving God. Even now, Jehovah, "the One seated on the throne," spreads his protective tent over them, while the Lamb, Christ Jesus, shepherds and guides them to fountains of waters of life.—Revelation 7: 14, 15.

¹⁷ In seeking Jehovah, righteousness, and meekness, the millions of the great crowd

16. What flesh will be saved during the great tribulation?

17. How is the great crowd in particular encouraged to act so as to be concealed during the coming day of distress?

must never let their first love of the truth grow cold! If you are one of these sheeplike persons, what must you do? As stated at Colossians chapter 3, verses 5 through 14, you must completely “strip off the old personality with its practices.” Seeking divine help, strive to ‘clothe yourself with the new personality, based on accurate knowledge.’ In meekness, build up and maintain zeal in praising Jehovah and in making his grand purposes known to others. Thus, you may be concealed in the “time of distress,” the day of “the burning anger of Jehovah.”

¹⁸ That day is near! It is hurrying toward us. The gathering of individuals of the great crowd has been proceeding now for some 57 years. A number of these have died and await their resurrection. But we are assured by the Revelation prophecy that *as a group* the great crowd will come out of the great tribulation as the nucleus of “a new earth” society. (Revelation 21:1) Will you be there? That is possible, for Jesus says at Matthew 24:13: “He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved.”

¹⁹ The stresses that Jehovah’s people experience in this old system may continue to

18, 19. In what way has endurance become vital for salvation?

mount. And when the distressful great tribulation strikes, you may suffer hardships. But keep close to Jehovah and his organization. Stay awake! “‘Keep yourselves in expectation of me,’ is the utterance of Jehovah, ‘till the day of my rising up to the booty, for my judicial decision is to gather nations, for me to collect together kingdoms, in order to pour out upon them my denunciation, all my burning anger; for by the fire of my zeal all the earth will be devoured.’”—Zephaniah 3:8.

Do You Remember?

- ☐ What act of Jehovah will precede the bringing of peace to the earth?
- ☐ According to Joel, what must one do in order to be saved?
- ☐ According to Zephaniah, how may meek ones find protection from Jehovah’s burning anger?
- ☐ Who is “the man of lawlessness,” and how has he heaped up blood-guilt?
- ☐ How important is endurance in the matter of salvation?



²⁰ For our protection and encouragement, Jehovah has graciously provided his people with "a pure language," which includes the grand message of his incoming Kingdom, "in

20. As the climactic "time of distress" draws ever closer, what must we do?

order for them all to call upon the name of Jehovah, in order to serve him shoulder to shoulder." (Zephaniah 3:9) As the climactic "time of distress" hastens ever closer, may we serve with zeal, helping other meek ones to 'call on the name of Jehovah' for salvation.

KEEP AWAKE IN "THE TIME OF THE END"

"Keep looking, keep awake, for you do not know when the appointed time is."—MARK 13:33.

AS EXCITING events unfold in this "time of the end," how should Christians react? (Daniel 12:4) They are not left in doubt. Jesus Christ uttered the prophecy containing the composite sign that has been undergoing fulfillment in this 20th century. He foretold the many features that have marked this period since 1914 as unique. Being acquainted with Daniel's prophecy concerning "the time of the end," Jesus followed up his own great prophecy by urging his disciples to "keep awake."—Luke 21:36.

² Why keep awake? Because this is the most perilous time in human history. For Christians to give in to spiritual drowsiness at this time would be disastrous. If we become complacent or allow our hearts to be weighed down with the anxieties of life, we will be in danger. At Luke 21:34, 35, Jesus Christ warned us: "Pay attention to

yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come in upon all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth."

³ It was with good reason that Jesus said that Jehovah's day will be 'instantly upon us as a snare.' A snare is often equipped with a noose, and it is used for capturing birds and mammals. The snare has a trigger, and anyone who walks into it trips the trigger. The snare then pulls shut, and the victim is caught. All of this happens very suddenly. In like manner, Jesus said, spiritually inactive ones will be surprised and will be overtaken in God's "day of fury."—Proverbs 11:4.

⁴ Is Jehovah God the one who sets the snare for people? No, he is not waiting to catch people off guard to destroy them. But

1. How should we react as exciting events unfold in this "time of the end"?

2. Why is there great need to keep awake spiritually?

3, 4. (a) What did Jesus mean by saying that God's day of fury would come instantly upon people "as a snare"? (b) Since God does not set the snare, why will that day unexpectedly overtake people in general?

that day will overtake people in general because they do not give prime consideration to the Kingdom of God. They go their own way in the pursuits of life, ignoring the meaning of the developments around them. This, however, does not alter God's schedule. He has his own fixed time for settling accounts. And, mercifully, he does not leave mankind ignorant of his coming judgment.—Mark 13:10.

⁵ This forewarning is a loving provision on the part of the great Creator, who is interested in the welfare of human creatures here on his symbolic footstool. (Isaiah 66:1) He cherishes the inhabitants of the place where his feet are spoken of as resting. So by means of his earthly ambassadors and envoys, he warns them of the events ahead of them. (2 Corinthians 5:20) Yet, despite all the warning given, those events will arrive upon the human family as unexpectedly as if they had stepped into a snare. Why? Because most people are sleeping spiritually. (1 Thessalonians 5:6) Only a comparatively small number heed the warning and will survive into God's new world.—Matthew 7:13, 14.

⁶ How, then, can we keep awake in this time of the end so as to be counted among those who will be saved? Jehovah provides the needed help. Let us note seven things that we can do.

Fight Distraction

⁷ First, we must *fight distraction*. At Matthew 24:42, 44, Jesus said: "Keep on the watch, therefore, because you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. On this

5, 6. (a) Because of the coming judgment, what loving provision has the Creator made for human creatures, but with what general result? (b) What will be considered to help us keep awake?

7. What warning regarding distraction did Jesus give?

account you too prove yourselves ready, because at an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming." The language Jesus here used indicates that at this critical time, there would be much distraction, and distraction could lead to destruction. In Noah's day many things preoccupied people. As a result, the distracted people took "no note" of what was going on, and the Flood swept them all away. Accordingly, Jesus warned: "So the presence of the Son of man will be."—Matthew 24:37-39.

⁸ Keep in mind, too, that in his warning at Luke 21:34, 35, Jesus was discussing the ordinary features of life, such as eating, drinking, and anxieties over making a living. They are things common to all men, including the disciples of the Lord Jesus. (Compare Mark 6:31.) These things may be harmless in themselves, but if allowed, they can distract us, preoccupy us, and thus induce dangerous spiritual drowsiness in us.

⁹ Therefore, let us not neglect the thing of highest importance—the gaining of divine approval. Rather than getting engrossed in the ordinary things of life, let us use them only to the limited degree needed to sustain us. (Philippians 3:8) They should not crowd out Kingdom interests. As Romans 14:17 says, "the kingdom of God does not mean eating and drinking, but means righteousness and peace and joy with holy spirit." Remember Jesus' words when he said: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33) Further, at Luke 9:62, Jesus declared: "No man that has put his hand to a plow and looks at the things behind is well fitted for the kingdom of God."

8, 9. (a) How can the ordinary pursuits of life dangerously distract us? (b) What warnings did Paul and Jesus give us?

¹⁰ Once we begin plowing, figuratively speaking, we must keep on in a straight line. A plowman who looks behind will not plow a straight furrow. He is distracted and can easily be sidetracked or halted by some obstruction. Let us not be like Lot's wife, who looked behind and never made it to safety. We need to keep our eyes looking straight ahead to the goal. To do that we must fight distraction.—Genesis 19:17, 26; Luke 17:32.

Pray in All Earnestness

¹¹ There is, however, more we can do to stay awake. An important second thing is: *Pray in all earnestness*. After warning us against being distracted by the ordinary pursuits of life, Jesus gave this counsel: "Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man."—Luke 21:36.

¹² Thus, we must make constant supplication regarding the danger of our situation and our need to be alert. So let us go to God prayerfully with earnest entreaties. Paul says at Romans 12:12: "Persevere in prayer." And at Ephesians 6:18, we read: "With every form of prayer and supplication . . . , carry on prayer on every occasion in spirit. And to that end keep awake with all constancy." This is not merely a case of offering prayer as though it were an incidental matter of no great consequence. Our very existence is in danger. We therefore need to appeal earnestly for divine help. (Compare Hebrews 5:7.) In that way we will maintain ourselves on Jehovah's side. Nothing will be

more beneficial in helping us to accomplish this than for us 'all the time to make supplication.' Jehovah will then keep us in a state of vigilant awareness. How important, then, to persist in prayer!

Stick Close to God's Organization and Its Work

¹³ We want to escape all these things that will come upon the world. We want to stand before the Son of man, having his approval. To this end there is a third thing we can do: *Stick unbreakably to Jehovah's theocratic organization*. We need to associate unreservedly with that organization and share in its activities. In this way we will unmistakably identify ourselves as Christians who are on the watch.

¹⁴ Closely connected is a fourth thing that can help us to keep awake. We must be *among those who are warning people of the coming end of this system of things*. The complete end of this old system of things will not take place until "this good news of the kingdom" has been preached to the extent that God Almighty has purposed. (Matthew 24:14) Jehovah's Witnesses are not the ones to determine when the preaching work has been accomplished. Jehovah reserves that right to himself. (Mark 13:32, 33) We, though, are determined to work as hard as possible and as long as necessary in preaching about the best government that mankind could ever have, the Kingdom of God. The outbreak of the "great tribulation" will come while we are still engaged in this work.

13. Association of what kind is needed to stay awake?

14, 15. (a) Being engaged in what work will help us keep awake? (b) Who determines when the preaching work is finished, and how should we feel about it? (c) After the great tribulation, what will we discern when we look back at the Kingdom preaching that was done?

10. What danger exists if we do not keep our eyes looking straight ahead to the goal?

11. What did Jesus stress after warning us of the danger of distraction?

12. What kind of prayer is needed, and with what result?

(Matthew 24:21) During all future time, saved ones will be able to look back and heartily confirm that Jesus Christ was not a false prophet. (Revelation 19:11) The preaching work will have been accomplished to a degree far greater than had been expected by the ones participating in it.

¹⁵ Accordingly, at the momentous time when this work will have been accomplished to God's own satisfaction, more will likely be participating in it than at any period previously. How grateful we will be to have had a share in this grand work! The apostle Peter assures us that Jehovah "does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9) Consequently, the active force of God Almighty is operating today more intensely than ever, and the Witnesses of Jehovah desire to continue in this spirit-impelled activity. So stick close to Jehovah's organization, and be busy in its public ministry. This will be an aid in your staying awake.

Make a Self-Examination

¹⁶ There is a fifth thing that we can do in order to stay awake. Individually, we should *make a self-examination of our present status*. This is appropriate now more than ever before. We need to prove on whose side we are resolutely standing. At Galatians 6:4, Paul said: "Let each one prove what his own work is." Make a self-examination in harmony with Paul's words at 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8: "Let us not sleep on as the rest do, but let us stay awake and keep our senses. For those who sleep are accustomed to sleep at night, and those who get drunk are usually drunk at night. But as for us who belong to the day, let us keep our senses and have on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet the hope of salvation."

16. Why should we make a self-examination of our present spiritual status?

¹⁷ What about us? When we examine ourselves in the light of the Scriptures, do we see that we are staying awake, having as a helmet the hope of salvation? Are we persons who have positively separated ourselves from the old system of things and no longer entertain its ideas? Do we truly have the spirit of God's new world? Are we fully alert as to where this system is headed? If so, Jehovah's day will not overtake us as if we were thieves.—1 Thessalonians 5:4.

¹⁸ What, though, if our self-examination reveals that we are striving to set up a nice, cozy, comfortable, relaxed way of life? What if we discover that our spiritual eyes have become heavy with drowsiness and sleep? Are we in a dreamlike state, chasing after some worldly fantasy? If so, then let us wake up!—1 Corinthians 15:34.

Meditate on Fulfilled Prophecies

¹⁹ We now come to a sixth thing that will help us keep awake: *Meditate on the many prophecies that have been fulfilled in this time of the end*. We have already passed the 77th year since the appointed times of the nations ended in 1914. As we look back over three quarters of a century, we can see how one prophecy after another has been fulfilled—the restoration of true worship; the deliverance of the anointed remnant, along with their companions, into a spiritual paradise; the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom on a global scale; the appearance of the great crowd. (Isaiah 2:2, 3; chapter 35; Zechariah 8:23; Matthew 24:14; Revelation 7:9) There has been a magnifying of Jehovah's great name and universal sovereignty, as well as an increasing of the little one

17. When making a self-examination, what questions should we ask ourselves?

18. What further questions may we need to ask ourselves, and with what result?

19. What are some of the prophecies we have seen fulfilled?

to become a thousand and the small one to become a mighty nation, with Jehovah speeding it up in its time. (Isaiah 60:22; Ezekiel 38:23) And the apostle John's visions in the Revelation account are now nearing their climax.

²⁰ Therefore, more than ever before, Jehovah's Witnesses are firmly convinced of the correctness of their understanding of the meaning of world affairs since 1914. Having such conviction, they have proved to be instruments in the hands of the Most High God. They are the ones who have been charged with delivering the divine message at this momentous time. (Romans 10:15, 18) Yes, Jehovah's words for the time of the end have come true. (Isaiah 55:11) This, in turn, should stimulate us to carry on until we see the final realization of all of God's promises by Jesus Christ.

Salvation Nearer Than When We Became Believers

²¹ Finally, the seventh help to our staying awake: *Keep ever in mind that our salvation is nearer than when we first became believers.* More important, the vindication of Jehovah's universal sovereignty and the sanctification of his name are much nearer. So the need to keep awake is more urgent than ever. The apostle Paul writes: "You people know the season, that it is already the hour for you to awake from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than at the time when we became believers. The night is well along; the day has drawn near."—Romans 13:11, 12.

²² With our salvation so much nearer, we

20. What conviction do Jehovah's Witnesses share, and what have they actually proved to be?

21. What seventh help to staying spiritually awake do we have?

22. How should the nearness of our salvation affect us?

must keep awake! We must not let any personal or worldly interests outweigh our appreciation for what Jehovah is doing for his people during this time of the end. (Daniel 12:3) We need to show more persistence than ever so that we are not turned aside from the way that the Word of God plainly prescribes for us. (Matthew 13:22) The evidence clearly shows that this world is in its last days. Soon it will be wiped out of existence forever to make room for a new world of righteousness.—2 Peter 3:13.

²³ Let us, then, by all means keep awake. As never before, be alert to where we are in the stream of time. Remember, Jehovah will never go to sleep in this matter. Rather, he will ever aid us in staying awake in this time of the end. The night is well along. The day is drawing near. So keep awake! Soon we will experience the most beautiful of all days, as the Messianic Kingdom fulfills Jehovah's purpose toward the earth!—Revelation 21:4, 5.

23. In what way will Jehovah help us, and with what blessed result?

What Are Your Answers?

- ☐ What did Jesus mean when he said that God's day of fury would come upon people "as a snare"?
- ☐ Why must we fight distraction, and how can we do so?
- ☐ What kind of prayer is needed so as to remain awake?
- ☐ What kind of association is vital?
- ☐ Why make a self-examination of our spiritual status?
- ☐ What part does prophecy play in our keeping awake?

Scenes From the Promised Land

He Provided for Israel in Sinai



Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

IMAGINE millions—men, women, and children—heading into a “great and fear-inspiring wilderness, with poisonous serpents and scorpions and with thirsty ground that has no water”!

Those words of God found at Deuteronomy 8:15 bring into focus what might have seemed to be an awesome journey looming before the Israelites as they exited Egypt and marched into the wilderness of the Sinai. One formidable problem: Who would provide enough food and water?

The Israelites had been in servitude back in the Nile delta, but they did not lack. Wall paintings in ancient tombs depict an assortment of grapes, melons, and other crops, as well as fish and poultry that would make for a varied diet. How accurate, then, the longing complaint in the wilderness: “Who will give us meat to eat? How we remember the fish that we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers and the watermelons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic!”—Numbers 11:4, 5; 20:5.



After the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, the reality of Sinai soon dawned on them. They did not take the well-traveled trade route to the north but turned toward the tip of the triangular peninsula. By the time they had moved about 50 miles through the wilderness, their need for water seemed critical. They could not drink what they found, for it was bitter and possibly bore diseases. “What are we to drink?” they cried. God intervened, turning the water sweet.—Exodus 15:22-25.

Note the view of the camel train above. You can appreciate the question of how Israel would be able to continue through the wilderness to—



Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.



Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

ward Mount Sinai. How would they continue to find enough water—and food—for themselves as well as the flocks and herds that they needed to keep alive?—Exodus 12:38.

They moved farther southward and soon found refreshing water and food at Elim. (Exodus 15:27) That, however, was not their destination. They were heading to “the mountain of the true God,” Mount Sinai. (Exodus 3:1; 18:5; 19:2; 24:12-18) That was 75 miles away—miles of rugged, arid land.

As the huge group progressed toward Mount Sinai, they came near—and likely stopped at—the major oasis known as Feiran. A small part

of it is visible in the photograph on the opposite page.* It runs through a pass in the wilderness, toward the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez). What refreshment they could find there!

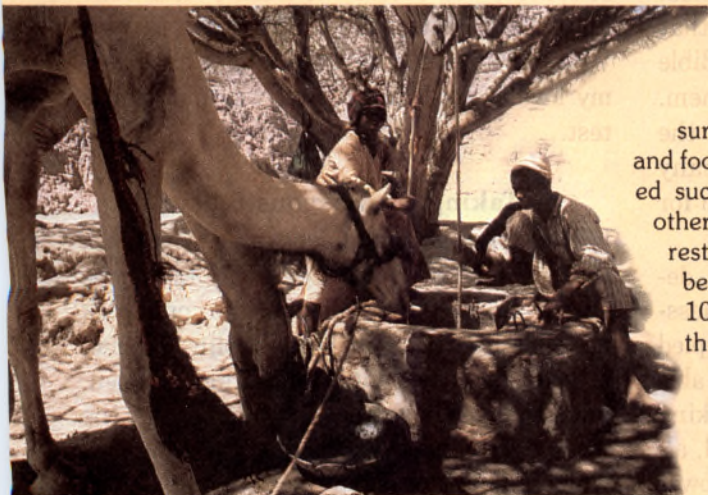
While the wilderness of Sinai might generally fit the description of a “great and fear-inspiring wilderness,” the Israelites could enjoy the shade of stately palms and other trees at the Feiran oasis. They would find ample sweet dates, providing food on the spot and a supply that they could carry with them.

All of this was possible because groundwater rose to the surface at Feiran. Imagine how you would feel if you were in the desert wilderness and suddenly found fresh water to drink! This illustrates that even in Sinai there are places where water is obtainable. Sometimes a well must be dug to quite a depth. It would then take work to draw up buckets or jars full of the vital fluid, especially if flocks and herds needed to be watered. To this day Bedouin of Sinai are attracted to wells where they can draw up water for themselves and their camels.—Com-

pare Genesis 24:11-20; 26:18-22.

Yes, despite occasions when they grumbled over what seemed like an insurmountable lack, the Israelites had water and food. Sometimes God miraculously provided such. (Exodus 16:11-18, 31; 17:2-6) At other times he evidently guided them to “a resting-place” where their real needs could be satisfied by natural supplies. (Numbers 10:33-36) All the while, he held before them the abundance that awaited the faithful in the Promised Land.—Deuteronomy 11:10-15.

* The photograph is available in larger size in the 1992 *Calendar of Jehovah's Witnesses*.



Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

Jehovah Cared for Us Under Ban

Part 2

DURING World War II, the belt buckle of my Nazi soldier's uniform had borne the inscription "God Is With Us." To me this had been just another example of the churches' involvement with war and bloodshed. It had disgusted me. So by the time two of Jehovah's Witnesses engaged me in conversation in Limbach-Oberfrohna, East Germany, I was sick of religion and had become an atheist and an evolutionist.

"Don't get the idea that I will become a Christian," I told the Witnesses who called. But their arguments convinced me that there is a God. Inquisitive, I bought a Bible and in time began to study it with them. That was in the spring of 1953, when the activities of the Witnesses in East Germany had already been under Communist ban for nearly three years.

The Watchtower of August 15, 1953, described the situation of Jehovah's Witnesses then, saying: "Although constantly spied upon and threatened, although not being able to call upon one another without first making certain that they are not being followed, although being discovered with Watchtower



literature in one's possession means two or three years in prison for 'distribution of instigation literature', and although hundreds of the more mature brothers, those who had been taking the lead, are in prison, yet Jehovah's servants in East Germany keep on preaching."

In 1955 my wife, Regina, and I attended the international convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in Nuremberg, West Germany, and the following year

we were both baptized in West Berlin. That, of course, was before the Berlin Wall went up in 1961, cutting East Germany off from West Berlin. But even before I got baptized, my loyalty to Jehovah God was put to the test.

Taking On Responsibility

The congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses that we had started to go to in Limbach-Oberfrohna needed someone who could pick up Bible literature in West Berlin. We had a small business and two young children, but serving Jehovah had already become the focus of our lives. We modified our old car, which made it possible to conceal 60 books.

Being a courier was risky business, but it taught me to rely on Jehovah.

Crossing by car from East Berlin to the Western sector was not easy, and I often wonder how we ever managed it. Once in the free sector, we collected the literature and hid the books in the car before crossing the border back to East Germany.

On one occasion, we had just finished concealing the books when a stranger came out of an apartment house. "You there," he yelled. My heart missed a beat. Had he been observing us? "Better go somewhere else next time. The East German police radio-car parks on the corner there, and they might catch you." I heaved a sigh of relief. The border crossing went well, and the four of us in the car sang all the way back home.

Preparation for Isolation

In the 1950's the brothers in East Germany relied on those in the West for literature and guidance. But in 1960 adjustments were made that helped each Witness in East Germany keep in closer touch with fellow Witnesses in the area in which he lived. Then in June 1961 the first class of the Kingdom Ministry School for elders was held in Berlin. I attended this first four-week course. Barely six weeks later, we were suddenly cut off from the West when the Berlin Wall was erected. Our work was now not only underground but also isolated.

Some feared that the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses in East Germany would come to a grinding halt. However, the organizational adjustments introduced less than a year earlier helped us maintain spiritual unity and strength. In addition, the training received by the elders who attended the first class of the Kingdom Ministry School equipped them to pass on this train-

ing to other elders. So Jehovah prepared us for our isolation, even as he had prepared us for the ban in 1950 with the 1949 district conventions.

Cut off from the West, it was clear that we had to take the initiative to keep the organization moving. We wrote to our Christian brothers in West Berlin and suggested a meeting with them on a highway in the East that was accessible to travelers from the West. We faked a breakdown at the appointed place. Minutes later the brothers drove up, bringing us Bible literature. Happily, they also brought my Kingdom Ministry School textbook, the notes I had taken, and the Bible that I had left behind in Berlin for security reasons. What a thrill to get them back! Little did I know how much I would need these things during the next few years.

An Underground School

A few days later, we were instructed to arrange for classes of the Kingdom Ministry School in all parts of East Germany. Four instructors were appointed, including me. But to me it seemed an impossible task to train all the elders while our work was under ban. To disguise what we were doing, I decided to arrange the classes as a camping holiday.

Each class was made up of four students and me as instructor, plus a sixth brother who served as cook. The wives and children were also present. So we generally had a group of from 15 to 20 persons. A normal camping site seemed out of the question, so my family and I set off in search of suitable locations.

On one occasion, while traveling through a village, we noticed a lane leading to a grove of trees way off the beaten track. It

seemed ideal, so I approached the mayor. "We are looking for a place to spend a couple of weeks camping with a few other families," I explained. "We want to be on our own so that the children can romp around. Could we use the woods over there?" He agreed, so we made arrangements.

At the site, we situated the tents and my trailer so as to create a central quadrangle that was hidden from the outside. The trailer served as our classroom. We met in it for intensive study 8 hours a day for 14 days. In the enclosed area were chairs and a table, set out just in case we had unexpected visitors. And we had them! At such times we really appreciated the loving support of our families.

While we were having classes, our families stood guard. On this particular occasion, the mayor, who was also the local secretary of the Communist Party, was spotted coming up the lane toward our grove. The guard pressed a switch that was connected by cable to an alarm in the trailer. Immediately we leaped out of the trailer and took up prearranged places around the table and started playing cards. There was even a bottle of schnapps to make the scene look realistic. The mayor paid us a friendly visit and

returned home without any suspicion of what was really going on.

Classes of the Kingdom Ministry School were held throughout the country from the spring of 1962 until late 1965. The intensive training received there, which included information on how to cope with our particular situation in East Germany, prepared the elders for the oversight of the preaching work. In order to attend the classes, the elders not only sacrificed their vacation but risked imprisonment as well.

Benefits of the School

The authorities were carefully observing our activities, and late in 1965, after most of the elders had been through the school, they attempted to deal a fatal blow to our organization. They arrested 15 Witnesses considered to be the ones taking the lead in the work. It was a well-prepared action, sweeping right across the land. Again, many thought that the Witnesses would cease to function. But with Jehovah's help we adjusted to the situation and carried on our work as before.

What particularly made this possible was the training that the elders had received in the Kingdom Ministry School and the bonds of trust that had been welded through the association they enjoyed during these classes. Thus, the organization showed its mettle. How important it was that we had obediently followed organization instructions closely!—Isaiah 48:17.

It became evident in the following months that the massive clampdown by government authorities had had little adverse effect on our activity. After a short while, we were able to resume classes of the Kingdom Ministry School. Once the authorities took note of our resilience, they were forced to change their tactics. What a triumph for Jehovah!

In Our Next Issue

Is the Bible Really a Gift From God?

True Happiness in Serving Jehovah

"Put On the Complete Suit of Armor From God"

Active in the Ministry

At that time our Congregation Book Study groups consisted of about five persons. Each of us received our Bible literature through this book-study arrangement, and the preaching work was coordinated from these small study groups. From the start Jehovah blessed Regina and me with many people who desired to study the Bible.

House-to-house service was adapted somewhat to protect us from being detected and arrested. We would call at one address, then skip a few homes before knocking on another door. At one house a lady invited Regina and me in. We were discussing a Scriptural theme with her when her son walked into the room. He was very direct.

"Have you ever seen your God?" he asked. "Just so that you know, I only believe what I see. Everything else is rubbish."

"I cannot believe that," I replied. "Have you ever seen your brain? Everything you do indicates that you have one."

Regina and I offered examples of other things we accept without seeing them, such as electricity. The young man listened attentively, and a home Bible study was started with him and his mother. Both of them became Witnesses. In fact, 14 persons with whom my wife and I studied became Witnesses. Half of that number we contacted during our house-to-house visitations, and the other half we first met during informal witnessing.

Once a home Bible study was being conducted regularly and we considered the person to be trustworthy, we invited that one to our meetings. The prime consideration, however, was whether the student might jeopardize the safety of God's people. Thus, it was sometimes a year or so before we would invite a Bible student to a meeting,

and on occasion it was much longer. I recall one man who enjoyed a degree of prominence; he was on first-name terms with top officials in the Communist Party. He had a Bible study for nine years before he was permitted to attend meetings! Today this man is our Christian brother.

Authorities Still on Our Tail

After 1965 we experienced no further mass arrests, but neither were we left in peace. The authorities still kept close tabs on us. About this time I became closely involved with the function of our organization, so I received special attention from the officials. Innumerable times they picked me up for questioning, driving me to the police station and interrogating me. "You can say good-bye to your freedom now," they would say. "Off you go to prison." But they always let me go eventually.

In 1972 two officials visited me and inadvertently paid our organization a fine compliment. They had been listening in on our congregation *Watchtower* Study. "We found the article very offensive," they remonstrated. They were obviously concerned about what others might think of Communist ideology if they read the article being considered. "After all," they said, "*The Watchtower* has a circulation of five or six million, and it is read in developing countries. It is not just a cheap tabloid." I thought to myself, 'How right you are!'

By 1972 we had been under ban for 22 years, and Jehovah had guided us lovingly and wisely. We had followed his instructions carefully, but it would be another 18 years before the Witnesses in East Germany would be granted legal recognition. How grateful we are for the wonderful freedoms that we now enjoy to worship our God, Jehovah!—As told by Helmut Martin.

KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

Bible Truth Frees a Nun in Bolivia

MANY honesthearted people are fleeing from false religion, learning Bible truth, and coming to worship Jehovah, the true God. Over 7,600 have done so in Bolivia, including a nun.

When only nine years old, M—— had her first contact with one of Jehovah's Witnesses. She answered the door when the Witness called at her home, and for the first time, she heard God's name, Jehovah, pronounced. It stayed in the back of her mind for years.

Since she was the only girl in the family, it was decided that she should become a nun. "How happy I felt that I was going to be in God's service—at least, that is what I thought," says M——. But her joy turned into disillusionment when she saw the injustice and partiality practiced in the convent. She says: "Perhaps I shall never forget those bouts of depression and those physical and spiritual beatings that were so agonizing, causing me to view God, not as the One of love, but as One who punishes without compassion."

She continues: "By the time I became a nun, I had been unsuccessful in finding the name Jehovah in the Bible. I only found 'Yahweh,' and that bewildered me. One day I even went out to look for those people who spoke of Jehovah, but I never found them.

"Time passed, and one day when I was on the way to my family's home, I saw a sign, 'Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.' I wanted to tell them that they were false prophets, but no one was in the hall. I returned on Sunday. A meeting was in progress, and a number seemed surprised to see a fully garbed nun in attendance. After the meeting, I tried to make a quick exit. Nevertheless, one of the Witnesses greeted me, so I asked her, 'Why do you blaspheme the Holy One by bearing that name?' My question led to a Bible discussion, and I made arrangements for her to visit me at my family's home. My parents threw her out. We met again, however, two months

later, and she invited me to her home for a Bible study. I was very impressed by the information she showed me, proving that Christians should use God's name. That evidence gave me the needed strength to renounce all the worthless things I had been taught as a nun.

"I remember many things about my life in the convent. For example, once I needed more food to eat. So I wrote and asked my parents to send me some, not realizing that letters were censored at the convent. At the next meal, a great amount of bread and jelly was placed before me, and I was forced to eat it all. Now I had too much food. I mentioned this to my friends, and one suggested that I crumble the bread that I could not eat and scatter it over the floor. When I did that, a nun immediately grabbed me and hurled me to the floor, with the stern order that I should lick the entire floor clean with my tongue. The room was large. While obeying the order, I heard much giggling and laughing—no mercy whatsoever was shown.

"I can now see how marvelous it is to be free from all of that. As could be expected, this liberation involved sacrifices. For one thing, my father threw me out of the house. Nevertheless, before leaving the convent, I had the privilege of helping other young nuns to learn the truth. I rejoice to say that some of us have dedicated our lives to Jehovah God!

"After I left the convent, it was difficult for my father to understand why I turned down well-paying but time-consuming jobs. However, I wanted more time for God's service. I now serve as a regular pioneer, with an uncomplicated and yet very rewarding life. And to my great joy, my mother and my brothers have joined me in Jehovah's service."

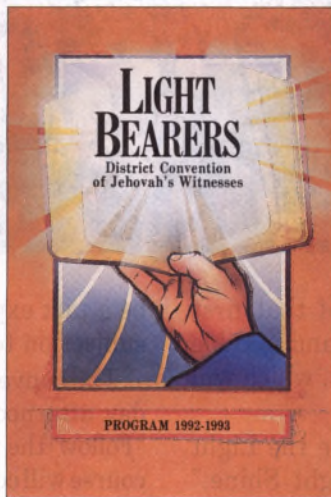
Truly, Bible truth does free one from this world's false religious system, and it brings lasting joy and happiness.—John 8:32.

Come to the “LIGHT BEARERS” District Convention

“**L**OOK! darkness itself will cover the earth, and thick gloom the national groups.” (Isaiah 60:2) How true today are those words! Without question, false religion is keeping people in the dark as to what kind of worship pleases God. Why? Because Satan, the god of this system of things, “has blinded the minds of the unbelievers.”—2 Corinthians 4:4.

In striking contrast to those blinded by Satan are Jehovah’s Witnesses. To them can be applied the words of the prophet Isaiah: “Upon you Jehovah will shine forth, and upon you his own glory will be seen.” (Isaiah 60:2) How thankful they are to have come out of darkness into God’s wonderful light! It is a spiritual light, the truth of God’s Word that enlightens the mind, so that even those who are literally blind can see the truth.

Of course, help is needed. It is unlikely that someone who simply reads the Bible without taking advantage of divinely provided aids could discern the light. That is why Jehovah God has provided “the faithful and discreet slave,” foretold at Matthew 24: 45-47. Today that “slave” is represented by the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses. It is under the direction of this body that



the “Light Bearers” District Convention has been arranged.

The purpose of this convention is to help all of Jehovah’s people to be better light bearers, in keeping with Paul’s words at Philippians 2:15. There, Christians are admonished to shine as “illuminators in the world.”—Matthew 5:14, 16.

In the United States, the series of “Light Bearers” District Conventions is scheduled

to begin on Friday, June 5. At 10:20 a.m., a musical program will help all to get in the right frame of heart and mind, ready for the spiritual program ahead. Each day has its own theme, and the theme for Friday is “Send Out Your Light and Your Truth.”—Psalm 43:3.

Friday morning’s program will feature the keynote address, “Light Bearers—For What Purpose?” Certainly, Christians are not light bearers with any personal, selfish motive. Rather, they serve for the same reasons that Jesus Christ, the Chief Light Bearer, came to earth, namely, to bear witness to the truth and to glorify the name of the Creator. Fittingly, Jesus said of himself: “As long as I am in the world, I am the world’s light.” (John 9:5) Thus, he left a model for us to follow his steps closely.



(1 Peter 2:21) The afternoon of that first day will highlight both a talk and a Bible drama dealing with King Josiah, which will be of special interest to youths.

Saturday's theme is "You Are the Light of the World . . . Let Your Light Shine." (Matthew 5:14, 16) The morning's program will feature a symposium entitled "Letting Your Light Shine." Opportunity will be provided for those who have made a dedication to Jehovah to get baptized. The afternoon's program will present an enlightening symposium entitled "Shedding Light on Christ's Presence and Revelation."

The theme chosen for Sunday, the third and last day of the convention, is "Go On Walking as Children of Light." (Ephesians 5:8) The morning's program will contain a symposium entitled "Caring for One Another in the Christian Household," which will deal with family obligations. There will also

be a talk explaining what it means to be in subjection to God and Christ.

The convention will reach its climax Sunday afternoon with the public talk entitled "Follow the Light of the World." This discourse will contain a discussion of John 1:1-16 and will show the need for Bible knowledge, stressing that Jesus Christ is *the light* of the world. The convention will close with earnest exhortation to "Go On Walking in the Light."

Show your appreciation for this spiritual feast that Jehovah is providing through his visible organization. Be present from the opening song on Friday morning until the concluding prayer on Sunday afternoon. Pay close attention to all that is said from the platform. Take notes to help you concentrate and for future reference. Finally, plan to have a share in some form of volunteer service. Thus, you will enjoy not only the blessing of receiving but the even greater blessing of giving.—Acts 20:35.