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THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

Do we need the Bible?

THE WATCHTOWER®

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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Do We Need the Bible?

OXANA, a young Russian woman, was delighted when she spotted a Bible offered by a pavement bookseller in Moscow. Her companion, John, who came from a country where Bibles were freely available, was impressed with Oxana's enthusiasm. "I—an atheist—wanted to buy it for her," he admits. Although Oxana initially objected, she eventually accepted John's gift.

Many, like Oxana, have an overwhelming desire to possess the Bible. This is especially true in countries where it has been suppressed for many years. The publishers of this magazine, for example, are working hard to keep pace with the demand for Bibles in the former Soviet republics, as well as in other parts of the world. For the first time, many people in these areas have an opportunity to make a proper examination of the Bible—and a great number are attracted by its powerful message.

Critics and Doubters

At the other end of the spectrum, notably in northern Europe, the Bible has been relegated to collecting dust on the bookshelf. "Dead history!" some say, adding, "It was written for another age. It has nothing to do with modern man." Even prominent clergymen have made public statements that discredit the Bible. Anglican archbishop Desmond Tutu is reported in *The Star,* a South African newspaper, as having said: "There are parts of the Bible which have no permanent worth." Statements such as these have caused many to wonder just how seriously they should take the Bible.

A Need for Guidance

Critics and believers alike must admit that, more than ever, the world needs solutions that work. "Unless man quickly learns to control the rate of change in his personal affairs as well as in society at large," wrote Alvin Toffler in his book *Future Shock,* "we are doomed to a massive . . . breakdown." That warning was issued more than 20 years ago. The breakdown Toffler spoke about appears to be happening right now.

As this century draws to a close, technological developments and human philosophies have failed to produce world stability. Recent hopes for a new world order have given way to disillusionment, and the lives of many have been reduced to a daily struggle for survival.

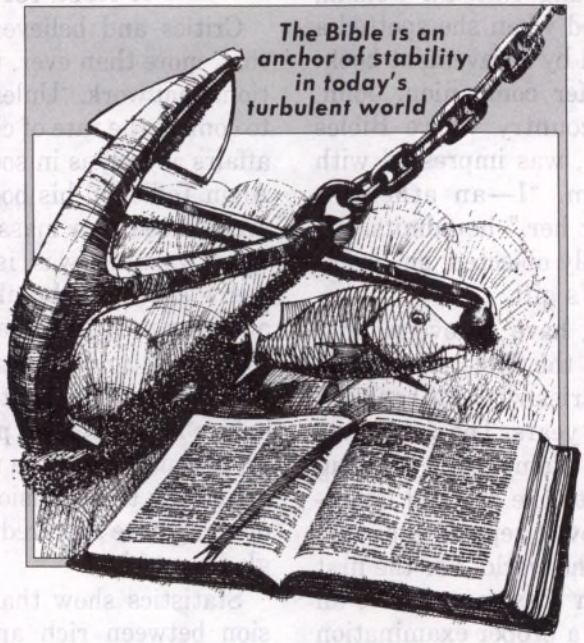
Statistics show that the economic division between rich and poor has become a chasm. A recent study indicates that 82.7 percent of the world's wealth is concentrated in the hands of only 20 percent of its population. Is it any wonder that war, famine, disease, riots, and anarchy are rife in many countries? The pressure to cope with the deteriorating quality of life is causing great stress on people's emotions. As a result, even the most basic unit of society, the family, is suffering decay.

Although many, like Toffler, suggest that it is man's responsibility to "search out totally new ways to anchor himself," the evidence proves that humans are incapable of providing their own solutions.

The Only Alternative

The Holy Bible, the writing of which started about 3,500 years ago, has not changed

over the centuries. Its principles remain constant. For example, the words of Jeremiah 10:23 have been shown to be true today more than ever before: "To earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." If humans are unable to plot their course, who can? The Bible points to the only true Source of direction: "I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk."—Isaiah 48:17.



Through the pages of the Bible, Jehovah God teaches us to help ourselves. They are filled with advice that shows us the way in which we should walk. Its counsel is as relevant today as the day it was penned. The following article will examine the practicality of the Bible for our modern age. In a variety of matters, ranging from health to wealth, family life, and personal behavior, you will be able to see that the Bible is indeed a rock of stability in the shifting sands of today's world.

THE BIBLE
A Practical Guide for Modern Man

"All scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used . . . for guiding people's lives."
—2 Timothy 3:16, "The Jerusalem Bible."

THIS scripture explains the very essence of why the Bible is practical for our day. It is inspired of God. Since God created us, no one knows more about our bodies, minds, feelings, and needs than he does. Israelite king David once said of Jehovah God: "Your eyes saw even the embryo of me, and in your book all its parts were down in writing." (Psalm 139:16) If our Creator knows so much about us, then logically his counsel and advice about how we can be happy and successful in life must surely be worth investigating.

Experience has shown that Bible principles are both practical and realistic for our day. They are also specific. Following are four examples that illustrate the everyday practicality of the Bible.

Human Relationships and Personal Behavior: The Bible promotes a good code of

personal ethics that can lead to healthy, successful relationships with others. For example, the nation of Israel was commanded: "You must not take vengeance nor have a grudge . . . and you must love your fellow as yourself." (Leviticus 19:18) Although we are not subject to Israelite law, following its Biblical principles can help us be at peace with our fellowman. Imagine, for example, how many problems could be solved if everyone tried to cultivate the spiritual qualities found at Galatians 5:22, 23: "The fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control. Against such things there is no law."—Compare Romans 8:5, 6.

Unfortunately, when the pressures of life mount, tension and friction often arise. In such situations, applying the cautionary words found at Proverbs 29:11 could save us much trouble. "All his spirit is what a stupid one lets out, but he that is wise keeps it calm to the last."—Compare Proverbs 15:1; Matthew 7:12; Colossians 3:12-14.

Good advice—but does it work in real life? Take the case of a man in France who had a serious problem with his temper. Countless times he would end up in trouble, even in prison, for becoming involved in brawls. His being an expert boxer did not help matters either. On one occasion a quarrel broke out between this man and his father. The next thing he knew, he had floored his father with one blow. A bitter rift in their relationship ensued.

In the meantime, this man came in contact with Jehovah's Witnesses and started learning Bible principles. This moved him to take a serious look at the way he was conducting himself toward others. With much effort his personal behavior began to change, and he became more peaceable. Then one day the man returned to his father to make peace. His father was so impressed by the changes his son had made that their relationship was restored.

This is one of many examples that bear testimony to the truth of the words of the apostle Paul: "For the word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword . . . and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart."—Hebrews 4:12.

Family Life: Is your family happy? Many families are not. "That family life as an institution is threatened is now certain," comments *The Natal Witness,* a South African newspaper, adding that "today's children are being born into a social revolution."

The Bible, however, is brimming with practical advice designed to help families succeed even when problems arise. Concerning the role of husbands, for example, the Bible says: "Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies." When the husband fulfills this requirement, it is a pleasure for his wife to reciprocate by having "deep respect for her husband." (Ephesians 5:25-29, 33) The relationship between parents and children is commented on in Ephesians 6:4: "And you, fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." This, in turn, creates a family atmosphere that makes it easier for children to follow the Bible's command and be obedient to their parents. —Ephesians 6:1.

The preceding is a mere sampling of the Bible's commentary on family life. By responding to God's guidance, many have found success and enjoy happiness in the home. Edward, a father of two, explains the benefits he enjoyed by applying Bible principles. "My marriage was breaking up," he

recalls. "I had no time to have a meaningful relationship with my children. The only thing that brought us together was our applying what the Bible has to say about family life."—Proverbs 13:24; 24:3; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

Mental, Physical, and Emotional Health: Research has shown that, to a degree, a person's physical health is connected with the state of his mental and emotional health. "Common signs of stress," says *The World Book Encyclopedia,* "include an increased heart rate, higher blood pressure, muscle tension, mental depression, and an inability to concentrate." Some believe, however, that simulating violent actions is a way to relieve stress. "Boxing can be a great stress-beater," claims a South African newspaper, *The Star.* It quotes the words of fitness consultant Jannie Claasens: "If a woman has had a highly frustrating day, she can take out her tension by beating up a bag."

Would it not be far better, though, to learn to manage the root cause of frustration? In the journal *Stress—The Modern Scourge,* Dr. Michael Slutzkin says that "recognition of stress . . . is important, because many of the causes are remediable." He adds that "stress management . . . may even foster the healing process in a variety of conditions."

The Bible explains a very effective way in which stress can be managed: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything . . . let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6, 7) Controlling stress in this way has many advantages—even physically. One Bible proverb puts it this way: "A calm heart is the life of the fleshly organism." (Proverbs 14:30) Another proverb states: "A heart that is joyful does good as a curer, but a spirit that is stricken makes the bones dry."—Proverbs 17:22.

In a bid to escape stress and pressure, many rely on tobacco, alcohol, drugs. The damage such addiction causes is well documented. Yet, the Bible has always advocated keeping clean from "every defilement of flesh." (2 Corinthians 7:1; compare Proverbs 23:29-35.) Surely, avoiding such hurtful practices is a practical safeguard in today's world.

Work, Money, and Honesty: Laziness never pays. "Because of winter the lazy one will not plow; he will be begging in reaping time, but there will be nothing," says Proverbs 20:4. Hard work, on the other hand, does pay off. "Let the stealer steal no more," states Ephesians 4:28. This scripture adds that it is far better for one to engage in "hard work, doing with his hands what is good work, that he may have something to distribute to someone in need."—Compare Proverbs 13:4.

Did you know that Bible principles can be applied even to relationships in the workplace? Workers, like the "slaves" of Bible times, do well to "be obedient in everything to those who are [their] masters in a fleshly sense." Bosses, or "masters," on the other hand, should "keep dealing out what is righteous and what is fair" to their employees. —Colossians 3:22-24; 4:1; compare 1 Peter 2:18-20.

Much is said in the Bible about honest business practices. Although sadly lacking today, honesty is often recognized and appreciated as a desirable quality. This is what the Bible emphasizes. Jesus once said: "The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and the person un-

The Bible is a practical guide for making family life happy

righteous in what is least is unrighteous also in much."—Luke 16:10; compare Proverbs 20:10; 22:22, 23; Luke 6:31.

In one African country, the diamond industry was the scene of much stealing and corruption. It was decided to put a different person in charge. The government ministers were asked to submit names of those who they thought would be suitable for the position. When the cabinet met to decide, the names were eliminated one by one, mainly for corruption. Finally, they came to the last name on the list—the president's candidate.

"But he is not a member of the party!" objected one minister.

The president replied that this was not a political position.

"He is one of Jehovah's Witnesses," stated another.

"And that is why he gets the job," said the president. He then added: "We know they are honest, and this is the kind of person we need. We know we can trust him."

Yes, those who apply Bible principles often find that this is to their advantage even in today's world.

Treasure Up Practical Wisdom

We have considered only a small sampling of what it means to "find the very knowledge of God." (Proverbs 2:1-9) A wealth of relevant, practical advice is found in the Bible. Principles related to cleanliness, industriousness, communication, sex, divorce, the paying of taxes, dealing with personality differences, and coping with poverty are just some of the aspects of life touched on by the Bible. Millions will testify that the difference between success and failure in their lives has depended on the degree to which they have applied Bible principles.

While the immediate practicality of the Bible is guaranteed, it also holds out many long-term benefits. For example, the Bible promises that the root causes of pain and suffering in today's world will soon be rectified by divine intervention.—Daniel 2:44; 2 Peter 3:11-13; Revelation 21:1-5.

Therefore, we encourage you to learn as much as you can about the Bible. If you do not have a copy, be sure to get one. The publishers of this magazine will gladly assist you. Just as many others have benefited by applying the practical suggestions from the Bible, you too can be helped to appreciate the value of God's Word, both now and in the future.

Scenes From the Promised Land

Sinai
Mount of Moses and Mercy

Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

WHEN you think of Mount Sinai, you probably have Moses in mind. Why? Because Moses received God's Law on a mountain on the Sinai Peninsula. Which mountain? Quite possibly the one shown above.*

In the southern part of the peninsula, about midway between the arms of the Red Sea, is a ridge with two peaks. The general location fits the Biblical accounts involving Moses. One peak is called Jebel Musa, meaning "Mountain of Moses."

Various Biblical accounts make that name quite appropriate. Do you recall that Moses was shepherding Jethro's flock when an angel appeared in a flaming bush? Where was that? The Bible says that it was at 'the mountain of the true God, Horeb,' which is also named Mount Sinai. (Exodus 3:1-10; 1 Kings 19:8) After Moses led God's people out of Egypt, he brought them here. Exodus 19:2, 3 says that "Israel went camping there in front of the mountain. And Moses went up to the true God, and Jehovah began to call to him out of the mountain."

That was Moses' first climb up Mount Sinai, and he did more than walk a short way up the slopes. We read: "Jehovah came down upon Mount Sinai to the top of the mountain. Then Jehovah called Moses to the top of the mountain."—Exodus 19:20.

Thousands of modern-day tourists have struggled up marked trails at night to reach the peak, lingered to watch the sunrise, and then made their way down by lunchtime. Not so with Moses. God told him: "Come up to me in the mountain and stay there, as I want to give you the stone tablets and the law." On that occasion "Moses continued in the mountain forty days and forty nights."—Exodus 24:12-18.

So it is understandable that Moses' name is linked with this mountain, but why with "mercy"? Well, as Moses was up there receiving the Law, the people on the plain below (perhaps on the Plain of er-Raha in the photograph) took a foolish course. They pressured Moses' brother into making a god. Aaron said: "Tear off the gold earrings . . . and bring them to me." Thus they made a golden calf for worship. This angered the true God and led to the death of thousands. (Exodus 32:

* For a larger view, see the *1993 Calendar of Jehovah's Witnesses.*

Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

1-35) But Aaron was shown mercy and was spared. Why?

God's comment at Exodus 32:10 suggests that he did not view Aaron as the prime mover in Israel's wrongdoing. And when the showdown came, "all the sons of Levi" chose God's side, which undoubtedly included Aaron. (Exodus 32:26) So despite Aaron's bearing some guilt, he received of God's mercy at the base of Mount Sinai.

Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

Later, Moses expressed a desire to know Jehovah better and to see His glory. (Exodus 33:13, 18) While it was impossible for Moses to see God's face, Jehovah did show him some of His glory, stressing that He "will show mercy to the one to whom [He] may show mercy." (Exodus 33:17–34:7) It was most fitting for God to emphasize his mercy, for the Bible uses "mercy" most frequently in connection with God's dealings with Israel, whom he brought into a covenant at Sinai.—Psalm 103:7-13, 18.

Visitors to Mount Sinai today find at its base a monastery, which would hardly remind one of the true worship that Moses learned about on the mountain above. Rather, the religion in the monastery focuses on icons. The one shown here is "The Ladder to Paradise." It is based on a book by Byzantine monk John Climacus. After spending about 40 years in a monastic cell, he became abbot of the monastery and wrote about a symbolic ladder to heaven. But notice that some clerics are depicted as being drawn by demons down to eternal torment in hellfire. Vivid, but unscriptural!—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Jeremiah 7:31.

In contrast with that false teaching, the truth is that the Almighty is "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth." (Exodus 34:6) Moses drew close to this merciful God on Mount Sinai.

SHEDDING LIGHT ON CHRIST'S PRESENCE

"When the Son of man arrives in his glory, . . . he will separate people one from another."—MATTHEW 25:31, 32.

THREE days before Jesus' death, four of his disciples approached him and earnestly asked: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming [Greek, *pa·rou·si'a*], and of the end of the world?" For centuries Christendom's clergy and writers have interpreted these words spoken to Jesus at Matthew 24:3 (*King James Version*) to mean that he would again be visible in the flesh to be viewed by all mankind. Hence, they have taught that Christ's return would be with great display and visible pomp. They refer to it as Christ's second coming. But are their assumptions correct?

1. What have Christendom's clergy interpreted the words at Matthew 24:3 to mean?

2 By 1889, Jehovah's anointed ones, as 19th-century light bearers, had already received correction on the matter of Christ's return. In Volume 2 of *Studies in the Scriptures,* pages 158 to 161, Charles T. Russell, the first president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, wrote: *"Parousia* . . . signifies *presence,* and should never be translated *coming,* as in the common English Bible . . . The *'Emphatic Diaglott,'* a very valuable translation of the New Testament, renders *parousia* properly, *presence* . . . , not that of *coming,* as being on the way, but

2, 3. (a) What distinction did Volume 2 of *Studies in the Scriptures* make between the words "coming" and "presence"? (b) What did Jehovah's people come to understand regarding the meaning of the *pa·rou·si'a* of Christ?

presence, as after arrival [Jesus] says, 'As the days of Noah, so shall also the *parousia* [presence] of the Son of man be.' Notice, that the comparison is not between the *coming* of Noah and the *coming* of our Lord . . . The contrast, then, is between the time of the presence of Noah among the people *'before* the flood,' and the time of the presence of Christ in the world, at his second advent, *'before* the fire'—the extreme trouble of the Day of the Lord [Jehovah] with which this age ends."—Matthew 24:37.

3 So Jehovah's people of the 19th century correctly understood that the *pa·rou·si'a* of Christ would be an invisible one. They had also come to an understanding that the end of the Gentile Times would occur in the autumn of 1914. As spiritual enlightenment progressed, they later understood that Jesus Christ was enthroned in heaven as King of the Kingdom in that same year, 1914. —Proverbs 4:18; Daniel 7:13, 14; Luke 21: 24; Revelation 11:15.

"The Presence of Our Lord"

4 In our day, then, what is meant by the Biblical expression "the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ"? (1 Thessalonians 5:23) One authority comments that the term "presence," *pa·rou·si'a,* "became the official term for a visit of a person of high rank, esp[ecially] of kings and emperors visiting a province." So this expression refers to the royal presence of the Lord Jesus Christ as King, from and after 1914, following his enthronement in heaven. He is present invisibly to 'go subduing in the midst of his enemies,' actively ruling as King to fulfill this prophetic command. (Psalm 110:2) For some 79 years, humans on earth have been experiencing the effects of Christ's invisible royal presence.

4. "The presence of our Lord Jesus Christ" refers to what?

5 In this series of three articles, we will review the striking evidence of Christ's Kingdom accomplishments during this period. First, we will present several Bible prophecies foretelling events that have already occurred or are even now taking place. Second, we will describe the great work being accomplished by the faithful and discreet slave class that Jesus is using during this entire period of his royal presence. (Matthew 24:45-47) The third article will describe for us the grand conclusion, the period of the "great tribulation." That is the time when Jesus comes as Jehovah's Executioner to destroy unrighteous humans and deliver the righteous. (Matthew 24:21, 29-31) That time of destruction is described by the apostle Paul as bringing "to you who suffer tribulation, relief along with us at the *revelation* of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels in a flaming fire, as he brings vengeance upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus."—2 Thessalonians 1: 7, 8.

The Sign

6 Nineteen hundred years ago, Jesus' light-bearing disciples asked him for a sign, or evidence, of his future presence in Kingdom power. His reply, recorded in the 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew, provided a composite sign, all the elements of which are now being fulfilled on an international scale. The fulfillment of that sign marks a time of distress and great testing. Jesus warned: "Look out that nobody misleads you; for many will come on the basis of my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will

5. What developments during the *pa·rou·si'a* will be discussed in the three study articles of this magazine?
6. What composite sign is described in Matthew chapters 24 and 25?

mislead many. You are going to hear of wars and reports of wars; see that you are not terrified. For these things must take place, but the end is not yet."—Matthew 24:4-6.

[7] Jesus further prophesied that there would be wars on an unprecedented scale. In the fulfillment, two of these have been classified as world wars, one from 1914 to 1918 and the second from 1939 to 1945. Further, he said that there would be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another. Genuine Christians would be severely persecuted. True to the prophecy, Jehovah's Witnesses, the modern light bearers, have suffered persecution for the past eight decades while preaching the good news of God's Kingdom "in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations." (Matthew 24:7-14) Each *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* adds to the evidence that these aspects of the sign are being fulfilled.

[8] Since Jesus' kingship embraces the whole earth, true worship is expanding on all continents. His regal presence (*pa·rou·si'a*) is a time of global inspection. (1 Peter 2:12) But is there a capital city, or center, where Jesus can be consulted? Jesus answered this by foretelling that in expectation of his presence, false Christs would arise. He warned: "If people say to you, 'Look! He [Christ] is in the wilderness,' do not go out; 'Look! He is in the inner chambers,' do not believe it. For just as the lightning comes out of eastern parts and shines over to western parts, so the presence [*parou·si'a*] of the Son of man will be."—Matthew 24:24, 26, 27.

[9] Better than anyone else on earth, Jesus, "the Son of man," knew where he would be located when his presence actually began. He would not locate himself either here or there or in any particular spot on the earth. He would not put in an appearance in some isolated place, "in the wilderness," so that those who would seek the Messiah could consult with him away from observation by the governmental authorities of the land, a location where followers could train under his leadership, preparing to strike a political blow and install him as the Messianic Ruler of the world. Further, he would not conceal himself in some "inner chambers," his location being known to only a select few, that there, unobserved and undetected, he might conspire and draw up secret plans with accomplices for overturning the governments of the world and having himself anointed as the promised Messiah. No!

[10] On the contrary, there would be nothing to hide about Jesus' having come as King, at the beginning of his royal presence. As Jesus foretold, in a global way, lightnings of Bible truth continue to flash over broad areas from eastern parts to western parts. Truly, as modern light bearers, Jehovah's Witnesses prove to be "a light of the nations, that [Jehovah's] salvation may come to be to the extremity of the earth." —Isaiah 49:6.

Angelic Activity

[11] Other texts relating to Jesus' presence describe him as being accompanied by, or 'sending forth,' angelic hosts. (Matthew 16:27; 24:31) In the illustration of the wheat and the weeds, Jesus stated that "the field

7. What features of the sign have we seen fulfilled since 1914?
8, 9. (a) What does Jesus' regal presence involve? (b) What does Jesus' prophecy concerning false Christs indicate as to the place and manner of his presence?

10. How have lightnings of Bible truth flashed out in a global way?
11. (a) In what way are angelic hosts used in shedding forth Kingdom light? (b) When and into what group have members of the wheat class been gathered?

is the world" and that "the harvest is a conclusion of a system of things, and the reapers are angels." This does not mean, however, that during his presence in Kingdom power and glory, he uses solely angelic messengers on earthly missions. Starting in 1919, angels under Jesus' direction separated the wheat class of spirit-begotten anointed ones on earth, who had been scattered by events of World War I, and these were prepared for further activity in the King's name. (Matthew 13:38-43) In the 1920's other thousands of humans took their stand for God's established Kingdom and were anointed with God's spirit. These anointed ones were effectively added to the ranks of the original remnant. Collectively, they make up the faithful and discreet slave class for our day.

[12] Another example of angelic participation during Jesus' presence following his enthronement in 1914 is recorded at Revelation 12:7-9: "Michael [Jesus Christ] and his angels battled with the dragon, and the dragon and its angels battled but it did not prevail, neither was a place found for them any longer in heaven. So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him." Thus, the heavens above have now been cleansed, leaving only the earthly realm of the Kingdom yet to be completely purified for the sanctification of Jehovah's name. In this year of 1993, the divine warning continues to apply: "Woe for the earth . . . because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time."—Revelation 12:12.

12. In what cleansing have the angels participated, and with what result to the earth?

Heavenly Resurrection

[13] Another amazing happening during Christ's presence is the start of the heavenly resurrection. The apostle Paul indicated that those anointed Christians long asleep in their graves would be the first to be made alive and live with Christ Jesus in the spirit realm. Evidence has been presented over the years to show that this appears to have happened from 1918 onward. Paul writes: "In the Christ all will be made alive. But each one in his own rank: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who belong to the Christ during his presence [*pa·rou·si'a*]." (1 Corinthians 15:22, 23) The resurrection of the anointed during Christ's presence is confirmed at 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17: "This is what we tell you by Jehovah's word, that we the living who survive to the presence [*pa·rou·si'a*] of the Lord shall in no way precede those who have fallen asleep in death . . . Those who are dead in union with Christ will rise first. Afterward we the living who are surviving will, together with them, be caught away in clouds to meet the Lord in the air." There are 144,000 who belong to Christ as anointed ones who eventually receive this marvelous reward.—Revelation 14:1.

[14] As Paul shows, those of the anointed remnant alive today do not get into the Kingdom ahead of those earlier faithful anointed Christian martyrs and disciples. The apostle John further describes those of the anointed who die today as follows: "Happy are the dead who die in union with the Lord from this time onward. Yes, says the spirit, let them rest from their labors, for the things they did go right with them," that is, in their resurrected existence. (Revelation 14:13) And Paul says: "Look! I tell

13, 14. (a) What do the Scriptures indicate has been proceeding from 1918 onward? (b) What do Paul and John reveal concerning the anointed remnant today?

you a sacred secret: We shall not all fall asleep in death, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, during the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised up incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:51, 52) What an amazing miracle!

15 Once when Jesus was preaching to a group of his followers about God's Kingdom, he used an illustration to help them correct their wrong ideas. The account reads: "They were imagining that the kingdom of God was going to display itself instantly. Therefore he said: 'A certain man of noble birth traveled to a distant land to secure kingly power for himself and to return. Calling ten slaves of his he gave them ten minas and told them, "Do business till I come." . . . Eventually when he got back after having secured the kingly power, he commanded to be called to him these slaves to whom he had given the silver money, in order to ascertain what they had gained by business activity.' "—Luke 19:11-15.

16 Jesus was that "man" who went to heaven, the "distant land" where he was to receive a kingdom. That Kingdom he obtained in 1914. Soon after, Christ as King held an accounting with his professed followers to see what they had done in caring for the Kingdom interests entrusted to them. A faithful few were chosen to receive the master's commendation: "Well done, good slave! Because in a very small matter you have proved yourself faithful, hold authority over ten cities." (Luke 19:17) This period of Christ's presence involved continued intense Kingdom-preaching activity, including the declaration of God's judgments against the wicked, and overseeing this work was included in the authority entrusted to the "good slave."

15, 16. (a) What illustration did Jesus give at Luke 19:11-15, and for what reason? (b) How has this prophecy been undergoing fulfillment?

Worldwide Preaching

17 What else would happen during this *pa·rou·si'a?* It would be a time of great joy in the preaching work and in helping new ones to prepare for survival through the coming great tribulation. These ones of the "great crowd," who assist the remnant, become "letters of recommendation." (Revelation 7:9; 2 Corinthians 3:1-3) Paul mentions the joy of this harvest work when he says: "What is our hope or joy or crown of exultation—why, is it not in fact you?—before our Lord Jesus at his presence [*pa·rou·si'a*]?"—1 Thessalonians 2:19.

Keep Clean and Blameless

18 Paul also prayed for the sanctification of those alive during this time of Christ's presence: "May the very God of peace sanctify you completely. And sound in every respect may the spirit and soul and body of you brothers be preserved in a blameless manner at the presence [*pa·rou·si'a*] of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:23) Yes, today, whether we are of the anointed remnant or of the great number of the other sheep, the spirit of cooperation binds us loyally together that we may continue to be clean and blameless at this unique time. Similarly, we need to exercise patience. James wrote: "Exercise patience, therefore, brothers, until the presence [*pa·rou·si'a*] of the Lord. . . . Make your hearts firm, because the presence [*pa·rou·si'a*] of the Lord has drawn close."—James 5:7, 8.

19 The apostle Peter also had something to

17. What joy marks the *pa·rou·si'a?*
18. (a) What prayer of Paul has reference to the *pa·rou·si'a?* (b) What spirit must all of us display during this time, and in what ways?
19. What warning did Peter sound concerning the *pa·rou·si'a,* and how should we respond?

say to us who are alive in this present period. He warned us against ridiculers, of whom there are many in all parts of the earth. Peter says: "You know this first, that in the last days there will come ridiculers with their ridicule, proceeding according to their own desires and saying: 'Where is this promised presence [*pa·rou·si'a*] of his? Why, from the day our forefathers fell asleep in death, all things are continuing exactly as from creation's beginning.'" (2 Peter 3:3, 4) Despite the prevalence of ridiculers during Christ's presence, Jehovah's people continue to shine as the light of the world, for the salvation of many.

Questions in Review

- ☐ How were Jehovah's people enlightened progressively regarding the *pa·rou·si'a*?
- ☐ How has Matthew 24:4-8 been undergoing fulfillment?
- ☐ How have the angels been cooperating with the enthroned Christ?
- ☐ What amazing miracle appears to accompany the *pa·rou·si'a*?
- ☐ What joy is experienced during this time, and who share in it?

EXPANDED ACTIVITIES DURING CHRIST'S PRESENCE

"Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world.'"—MATTHEW 25:34.

CHRIST'S presence—the long-awaited event! The time like "the days of Noah," which Jesus spoke of in connection with "the conclusion of the system of things," arrived in the year 1914. (Matthew 24:3, 37) But what would Christ's presence, or *pa·rou·si'a,* mean for the anointed remnant of "the faithful and discreet slave"? (Matthew 24:45) Why, that they would have to become increasingly more active as light bearers! Marvelous things were due to happen! An unprecedented gathering work was about to begin.

[2] First, though, these anointed Christians needed cleansing. As Malachi 3:1-5 had foretold, Jehovah God and his "messenger of the covenant," Jesus Christ, came to inspect the spiritual temple in the spring of 1918. Judgment was to begin with "the house of God." (1 Peter 4:17) Malachi 3:3 foretold: "He [Jehovah] must sit as a refiner and cleanser of silver and must cleanse the

1. In what way has Christ's *pa·rou·si'a* been just as "the days of Noah"?

2. What cleansing has taken place in fulfillment of Malachi 3:1-5?

The master entrusts all of his belongings to the faithful slave

sons of Levi; and he must clarify them like gold and like silver." It was a period of refining and cleansing.

[3] Passing through this judgment, which climaxed in 1918, the remnant of the slave class was cleansed from worldly and religious defilement. Why did Jehovah cleanse them? Because his spiritual temple was involved. This is the temple-like arrangement for worshiping Jehovah on the basis of the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Jehovah wanted his temple to be in a clean condition so that when large numbers of worshipers with earthly hopes were brought there, they would find a place where his universal sovereignty is respected, where his divine name is sanctified, and where his righteous laws are obeyed. Thus, they would appreciate Jehovah and join in making known his grand purposes.

Added Privileges

[4] In 1919 the cleansed slave class could look forward to ever-expanding activities. Back in 1914, Jesus Christ, their Master, had obtained a heavenly Kingdom. When he returned to his household staff to inspect all his "domestics," he was arrayed in royal dignity, which he had not possessed when he was down here on earth. What did he find? Was the slave class busy caring for the Master's interests? As recorded at Matthew 24:45-47, Jesus asked a question that challenged each anointed disciple to examine his personal devotion to Jehovah's Messiah: "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the

3. Why was it essential that spiritual cleansing take place?
4, 5. (a) How does a question by Jesus Christ challenge each of the slave class today? (b) In what ways are the expressions "faithful and discreet slave" and "his domestics" to be understood? (c) What commission did Jesus give to the slave?

proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings."

5 Obviously, Jesus' description of this faithful slave does not fit any individual human. No, but it does describe Christ's faithful anointed congregation as a whole, as a group. The domestics are Christ's anointed followers as individuals. Jesus knew that he was going to purchase these anointed ones with his own blood, so he fittingly referred to them collectively as his slave. First Corinthians 7:23 says of them: "YOU [speaking collectively] were bought with a price; stop becoming slaves of men." Jesus commissioned his slave class to let their light shine to attract and make other disciples and to feed his domestics progressively by giving them their spiritual food at the proper time.

6 From the time Christ's presence began and down to 1918, the slave class, despite unpopularity, persecution, and even some confusion, had been seeking to give timely food to the domestics. This is what the Master found when his inspection began. The Lord Jesus was pleased, and in 1919 he pronounced that faithful approved slave class happy. What was the slave's delightful reward for doing what his Master had appointed him to do? A promotion! Yes, larger responsibilities were given in advancing his Master's interests. Since the Master was now a heavenly King, why, then, his earthly belongings became even more precious.

7 So, what are "all his belongings"? These are all the spiritual assets on earth that have become Christ's property in connection with his authority as heavenly King. This definitely included the commission to make disciples of Christ, with the grand privilege of acting as representatives of God's established Kingdom to all the nations of the world.

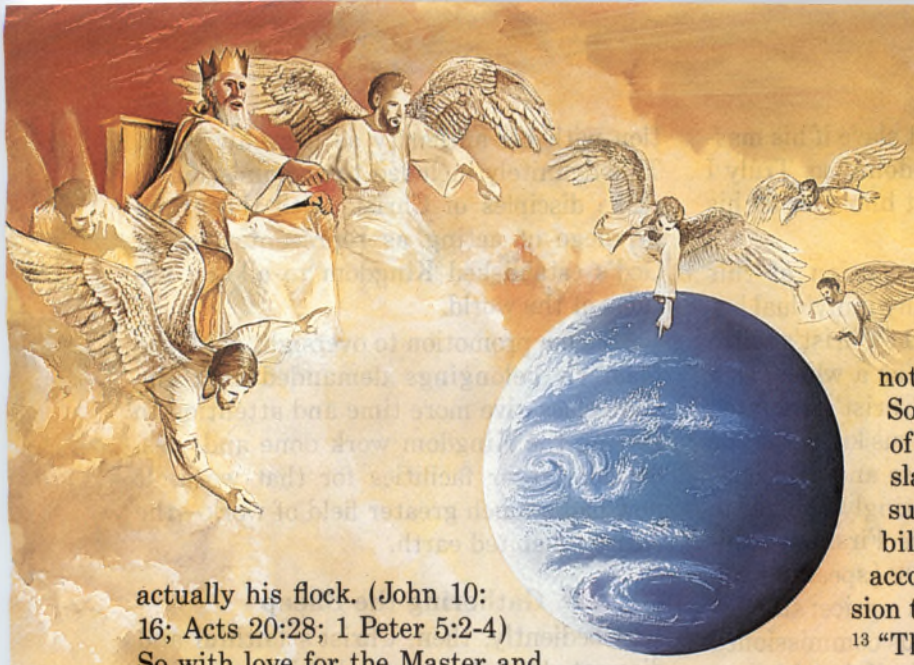
8 Such a promotion to oversight of all the Master's belongings demanded that the slave class give more time and attention to getting the Kingdom work done and, yes, develop larger facilities for that work. It now had a much greater field of work—the entire inhabited earth.

Gathering the Sheep

9 Obediently, then, Christ's faithful and discreet slave class expanded its activities. The result? The final ones of the anointed 144,000 were gathered in. Then John's vision as recorded at Revelation 7:9-17 became a thrilling, heartwarming reality. Particularly since 1935 has the slave class enjoyed witnessing the steady unfolding of this vision's fulfillment. From all over the earth, "a great crowd" of millions now throng the precincts of Jehovah's spiritual temple as his worshipers. Jehovah's angel told John that no man was able to number this great crowd. That means that there is no limit placed on the number of people whom the slave class is to bring to Jehovah's spiritual temple. As long as the way is open, the work of gathering them will continue.

10 The faithful slave class has a heavy responsibility in caring for the continually increasing number of "other sheep," knowing that these sheeplike ones out of all nations are very dear to the Master, Jesus. They are

6. How was the slave rewarded as a result of Jesus' inspection?
7, 8. (a) What are 'all the belongings' of the Master? (b) What is demanded of the slave in taking oversight of these belongings?
9. What has resulted from the expansion of the slave's activities?
10. In what loving activity is the slave involved today?



Jesus has taken his glorious throne to judge mankind

actually his flock. (John 10:16; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2-4) So with love for the Master and for the sheep, the slave class happily cares for the spiritual needs of the great crowd.

11 Yes, the greater part of the slave's light-bearing commission involves the gathering of these earthly subjects of God's Kingdom. Discussing the ever-growing activities of the faithful slave, F. W. Franz, then president of the Watch Tower Society, said just before his death in December 1992:

12 "Jesus Christ has used the organization more and more wonderfully all the time, according to my 99 years of life's experience. It is not a mere man that is directing the organization, but it must be the Lord Jesus Christ. For it has worked out far more grandly and wonderfully than we ever thought. Today we have an organization that has expanded worldwide. It is working in the Northern Hemisphere and in the Southern Hemisphere, in the East and in the West. Only one person could be responsible for this noteworthy expansion—the Son of God, who is in charge of the faithful and discreet slave class. He has been measuring up to his responsibilities, and that is what accounts for this grand expansion that we have witnessed.

13 "The matter does not rest with one man. We have an organization that is theocratic, and it operates in a theocratic manner, in a God-directed style. No man, not even the founder of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, can claim or be attributed with responsibility for what has been accomplished in a globe-embracing way. It is simply marvelous." Are not all of those who are of the great crowd in wholehearted agreement with those sentiments of the late Brother Franz? Yes, indeed, they are most grateful for the expanded activities of the faithful slave.

11-13. What appropriate comment did the then president of the Watch Tower Society make concerning the slave's activity?

Subjects of the Kingdom

[14] In Matthew chapter 25, Jesus' illustration of the sheep and the goats describes this great work of gathering the earthly subjects of God's Kingdom. In the parable that precedes it, that of the talents, Jesus *illustrates* that the anointed disciples who hope to reign with him in his heavenly Kingdom must work to increase his earthly belongings. Quite appropriately, then, in the following parable, Jesus depicts what is required of those who want to become subjects of his heavenly Kingdom.

[15] Notice his remarks at Matthew 25: 31-33: "When the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will put the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left."

[16] Jesus arrived in his glory in 1914. Going on the offensive, he, with all his angels, attacked and evicted his demonic enemies from heaven. What follows next in his parable helps us appreciate that Jesus' sitting down on a glorious throne represents a posture of judgment during his presence. The gathering of all the nations before him means that Jesus acts toward the nations as his prospective flock, figuratively speaking. It is a flock made up of sheep and goats. While it may take part of a day to separate the sheep from the goats in a literal flock, the earth-wide separating of people who are free moral agents takes much longer. This is because the separation is based on each individual's course of action.

[17] In the parable, the Shepherd-King puts the sheeplike ones on his right hand and the goatlike ones on his left. The right-hand side turns out to be a judgment with a favorable outcome—everlasting life. The left-hand side represents an unfavorable judgment—that of everlasting destruction. The King's determination of the matter has serious consequences.

[18] The invisibility of the reigning Son of man during his presence, or *pa·rou·si'a,* does not excuse anyone. More and more sheeplike ones today are joining the slave class in preaching the good news of God's Kingdom worldwide, letting their light shine. Truly, their witnessing has reached the far corners of the globe.—Matthew 24:14.

[19] Why does the Shepherd-King reward those of the sheep class with a blessed future? Because of their wholehearted support of the Kingdom-preaching work and the kindness they show toward his anointed brothers, which Jesus regards as done to himself. Therefore, the royal Son of man says to them: "Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world."—Matthew 25:34; 28:19, 20.

Helping the King

[20] Notice that when the King invites these sheep to inherit the earthly realm of God's Kingdom, they express surprise. They ask him: 'Lord, when did we do all these things

14, 15. (a) What did Jesus illustrate in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30)? (b) Appropriately, what follows in Matthew chapter 25?

16. How are the nations gathered and the people separated?

17. Why is the situation today serious for all people?

18. Why does the King's invisibility not excuse anyone?

19. What qualities of the sheep class are illustrated in the parable of the sheep and the goats?

20, 21. What evidence do the sheep give that they stand on the side of the Kingdom?

for you?' He replies: "Truly I say to you, To the extent that you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40) When Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene on his resurrection day, he spoke of his spiritual brothers when he said to her: "Be on your way to my brothers." (John 20:17) During the time of his invisible presence, Jesus has only a small remnant of his 144,000 spiritual brothers still in the flesh on the earth.

[21] Since Jesus is invisible in the heavens, it is only indirectly that sheeplike people do these loving things to him. They see him on his throne only with their eyes of faith. Jesus appreciates all the efforts they make to assist his spiritual brothers, who will become his heavenly joint heirs. What is done to his brothers he counts as being done to him personally. The sheeplike ones deliberately do good to Christ's brothers because they recognize them to be such. They appreciate that Jesus' spiritual brothers are the ambassadors of Jehovah's Kingdom, and they want to give concrete evidence that they are taking their stand with them on the side of that Kingdom.

[22] Jehovah foresaw that this sheeplike class would appear during this time of his Son's presence, and he has a wondrous reward in store for them! The great crowd will inherit the blessings of peace here on earth during the happy Millennial Reign by Jehovah's King, Jesus Christ.

[23] When we take into consideration Bible prophecies that apply at the time of Christ's presence, along with Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats, what do we see? This: It is not a case of unknowingly and by chance doing good to one of the King's spiritual brothers that makes a person a sheep with a righteous standing before God and his King. Those of the sheep class *know* what they are doing, even though they do not see the reigning King with their literal eyes. They endeavor to help the King's brothers not only in a material way but also in a spiritual way. How? By assisting them in the preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom and in conducting Bible studies in order to make disciples for Christ. Thus, today there are over four million light-bearing proclaimers of God's Kingdom.

22. How is the sheep class rewarded? (Compare Revelation 7:14-17.)
23. In what ways do the sheep knowingly help the King's brothers?

Expanded Activities

[24] Let us enumerate some of the many fine works of the faithful slave class. First, the slave class has been appointed over all the Master's belongings—his Kingdom interests on earth—and these belongings keep on increasing. Second, that class is feeding not only the anointed domestics but an ever-expanding great crowd of other sheep with spiritual food. Third, the slave class is taking the lead in spreading the

24. What loving labors have made the slave class the happiest people on earth today?

Can You Answer?

- ☐ What initial judging followed the King's enthronement?
- ☐ How has Matthew 24:45-47 had a modern-day fulfillment?
- ☐ As to expanded activities, for what are the slave class and the great crowd most grateful?
- ☐ How is Matthew 25:34-40 fulfilled during the *pa·rou·si´a*?

Kingdom light. Fourth, its greatest expansion of activities is in the gathering of the great crowd of other sheep, bringing them to Jehovah's spiritual temple. Fifth, the slave class, with the wholehearted support of sheeplike ones, is providing enlarged facilities for branch organizations around the globe, as well as at the headquarters in the United States. Such loving labors have made the slave class the happiest people on earth today, and they have made millions of other people happy too. All of these give thanks to Jehovah God and to Jesus Christ, who have directed the expanded activities of the discreet slave!

25 The slave class is now working harder than ever at its God-assigned duties. The time left before the outbreak of the "great tribulation" is almost gone! (Matthew 24: 21) How vital it is that these who are God's sheep stay on the right side of favor of his Shepherd-King! So, then, let all continue zealously to support the faithful and discreet slave. It is only by doing this that someday very soon all sheeplike ones will be able to hear those happy words: "Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world."

25. How may the sheep continue to support the slave class, with what prospect in view?

DELIVERANCE AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

"Go on rejoicing . . . that you may rejoice and be overjoyed also during the revelation of his glory."—1 PETER 4:13.

JEHOVAH has enriched his Witnesses with many gifts. As our Grand Instructor, he has enlightened us with a fullness of knowledge concerning his will and purpose. Through his holy spirit, he has cultivated in us the ability to shed forth light with boldness. The inspired apostle Paul tells us at 1 Corinthians 1:6, 7: "The witness about the Christ has been rendered firm among you, so that you do not fall short in any gift at all, while you are eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1. How has Jehovah enriched his servants?

2 "The revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ"—what does that mean? It refers to the time when Jesus is revealed as a glorious King, taking action to reward his faithful followers and to execute vengeance on the ungodly. As 1 Peter 4:13 indicates, it will be a time for integrity-keeping spirit-anointed Christians and their loyal companions of the

2. What joyful prospect does the "revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" hold forth?

great crowd to "rejoice and be overjoyed," for it signals the end of Satan's system of things.

[3] As that time draws close, Satan in his anger increases pressure on us. Like a roaring lion, he tries to devour us. We must stand firm! (1 Peter 5:8-10) Our brothers in ancient Thessalonica, when new in the truth, suffered tribulations similar to those experienced by many of Jehovah's Witnesses today. Hence, the apostle Paul's words to them are very meaningful for us. He wrote: "It is righteous on God's part to repay tribulation to those who make tribulation for you, but, to you who suffer tribulation, relief along with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels in a flaming fire, as he brings vengeance upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus." (2 Thessalonians 1: 6-8) Yes, relief will come!

[4] In Paul's time much of the tribulation was caused by the Jewish religious leaders. Similarly today, opposition to the peace-loving Witnesses of Jehovah has often been instigated by those who claim to represent God, in particular the clergy of Christendom. These pretend to know God, but they reject the "one Jehovah" of the Bible, replacing him with a mystic Trinity. (Mark 12:29) They do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus, looking to man-rule for relief and rejecting the good news of Christ's incoming Kingdom of righteousness. All these religious opposers must perish at the time of "the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven"!

3. How must we stand firm, as did our brothers in Thessalonica?
4. Why do the clergy merit the judgment that will be executed at Jesus' revelation?

The "Coming" of Jesus Christ

[5] That revelation is vividly portrayed by Jesus at Matthew 24:29, 30. In describing various features of the sign of his presence and of the conclusion of the system of things, he says: "The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken." At that time "the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven." The nations of the earth "will beat themselves in lamentation, and they will see the Son of man [God's Messianic King] coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." This "coming," *er·kho'me·non* in Greek, refers to Jesus' appearing as Jehovah's Vindicator.

[6] This "coming" is described also by the apostle John at Revelation 1:7, where he says: "Look! He is coming with the clouds." Oh, those enemies will not actually see Jesus with literal eyes, for "the clouds" signifies that he comes invisibly to execute judgment. If mere humans were to behold his heavenly glory with the naked eye, they would be blinded, just as Saul, on the road to Damascus, was struck blind when the glorified Jesus appeared to him in a great flashing light.—Acts 9:3-8; 22:6-11.

[7] The Revelation account states that "every eye will see him, and those who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in grief because of him." This means that opposers on earth will discern in the destruction that Jesus rains down on them that he has come with power and great glory as Jehovah's Executioner. Why are these enemies described as "those who pierced him"? It is because their

5. How is Jesus' revelation vividly portrayed at Matthew 24:29, 30?
6, 7. How is it that "every eye will see him," and who are included in this?

attitude of bitterness toward Jehovah's servants today is like that of Jesus' persecutors. They will, indeed, 'beat themselves bitterly in grief because of him.'

[8] How will that day of Jehovah's vengeance arrive? In the prophecy at Luke chapter 21, Jesus describes the catastrophic events that have served as the sign of his presence since 1914. Then, in verses 34 and 35, Jesus warns: "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." Yes, that day of Jehovah's vengeance comes suddenly, instantly! The apostle Paul confirms this at 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3, saying: "Jehovah's day is coming exactly as a thief in the night. Whenever it is that they are saying: 'Peace and security!' then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them." Even now the nations are talking about peace and security and proposing to strengthen the United Nations to police trouble spots by means of military power.

[9] In verses 4 and 5, the apostle goes on to tell us: "But you, brothers, you are not in darkness, so that that day should overtake you as it would thieves, for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We belong neither to night nor to darkness." We rejoice to be sons of light—light bearers to others who yearn for true peace and security in God's new world. At Psalm 97:10, 11, we read: "O you lovers of Jehovah, hate what is bad. He is guarding the souls of his loyal ones; out of the hand of the wicked ones he delivers them. Light itself has flashed up for the righteous one, and rejoicing even for the ones upright in heart."

8. What warning do both Jesus and Paul sound regarding sudden destruction?
9. For whom does 'light flash up,' and why?

The Order of Events

[10] What will be the order of events when the great tribulation strikes? Let us turn to Revelation chapter 16. Notice, as described in verses 13 through 16, that unclean, demonic spirits gather the nations of the entire earth to Har-Magedon, the war of the

10. What advance notice should we heed regarding God's day of reckoning? (Revelation 16:15)

great day of God the Almighty. Again, the thieflike approach of the day of reckoning is emphasized, and we are warned to stay awake—to keep on the spiritual garments that mark us for salvation. The time has arrived for judging the peoples of earth, the nations, and—someone else. Who is that?

[11] It is a figurative woman who has really tried to make herself "someone." She is described at Revelation 17:5 as "a mystery: 'Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and of the disgusting things of the earth.'" But she is no longer a mystery to Jehovah's Witnesses. She has clearly identified herself as the world empire of false religion, of which Christendom's sects make up the dominant part. Disgusting in Jehovah's eyes are her dabbling in political affairs, her becoming "drunk with the blood of the holy ones" by persecuting true Christians, and her being responsible for the blood "of all those who have been slaughtered on the earth," including more than a hundred million killed in the wars of this 20th century alone.—Revelation 17:2, 6; 18:24.

[12] Worst of all, Christendom's sects have brought reproach on the name of the God whom they hypocritically claim to represent. They have taught Babylonian and Grecian philosophies instead of the pure Word of God and have contributed to the moral delinquency of entire nations by approving permissive life-styles that flout Bible principles. Greedy wheeler-dealers among them stand condemned by the words of James 5:1, 5: "Come, now, you rich men, weep, howling over your miseries that are coming upon you. You have lived in luxury upon the earth and have gone in for sensual pleasure. You have fattened your hearts on the day of slaughter."

11. How has the woman of Revelation 17:5 identified herself?
12. Why do Christendom's sects stand condemned?

Down With Babylon the Great!

[13] The opening salvo of the great tribulation comes with the execution of Jehovah's judgment on Babylon the Great. Revelation 17:15-18 graphically describes God's "thought"—to maneuver "ten horns," powerful forces from within the multinational UN "wild beast," to dispose of her. "And the ten horns that you saw, and the wild beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her devastated and naked, and will eat up her fleshy parts and will completely burn her with fire. For God put it into their hearts to carry out his thought." No wonder a heavenly voice sounds an urgent warning at Revelation 18:4, 5: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues. For her sins have massed together clear up to heaven, and God has called her acts of injustice to mind." The call continues to go forth: Cut all ties with false religion, before it is too late!

[14] How will the world regard the devastating of Babylon the Great? From a distance, corrupt politicians—"kings of the earth"—grieve over her because they had for centuries found mutual pleasure in their spiritual fornication. Also weeping and mourning over her are greedy men of commerce, "traveling merchants . . . , who became rich from her." These also distance themselves from her, saying: "Too bad, too bad—the great city, clothed with fine linen and pur-

13. How does the opening salvo of the great tribulation come, and what urgency is emphasized at Revelation 18:4, 5?
14. Who will mourn over the devastating of Babylon the Great, and why?

Soon false religion, Satan's wicked system, and Satan himself will all go down

ple and scarlet, and richly adorned with gold ornament and precious stone and pearl, because in one hour such great riches have been devastated!" All the finery of ecclesiastical garments and the magnificence of the world's great cathedrals will be gone forever! (Revelation 18:9-17) But will everyone mourn over Babylon the Great?

[15] Revelation 18:20, 21 answers: "Be glad over her, O heaven, also you holy ones and you apostles and you prophets, because God has judicially exacted punishment for you from her!" Like a great millstone hurled into the sea, "with a swift pitch will Babylon the great city [have been] hurled down, and she will never be found again."

[16] What cause for rejoicing! Revelation 19:1-8 bears this out. Four times the call, "Praise Jah, you people!" rings forth from heaven. The first three of these Hallelujahs praise Jehovah because he has executed righteous judgment on the infamous harlot, Babylon the Great. The world empire of false religion is no more! A voice issues from God's throne, saying: "Be praising our God, all you his slaves, who fear him, the small ones and the great." How privileged we will be to share in that song!

15, 16. What cause for rejoicing will God's people have?

The Marriage of the Lamb

[17] The fourth Hallelujah introduces another theme: "Praise Jah, you people, because Jehovah our God, the Almighty, has begun to rule as king." But was not a similar refrain taken up at Revelation 11:17? There we read: "We thank you, Jehovah

17. Comparing Revelation 11:17 and 19:6, in what two contexts does Jehovah begin to rule as King?

God, the Almighty, . . . because you have taken your great power and begun ruling as king." Yes. However, the context of Revelation 11:17 refers to Jehovah's bringing forth the Messianic Kingdom in 1914 "to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod." (Revelation 12:5) Revelation 19:6 is in the context of the destruction of Babylon the Great. With the removal of harlotlike religion, Jehovah's Godship stands vindicated. Worship of him as Supreme Sovereign and King will prevail now for all eternity!

18 Hence, the exultant announcement may be made: "Let us rejoice and be overjoyed, and let us give [Jah] the glory, because the marriage of the Lamb has arrived and his wife has prepared herself. Yes, it has been granted to her to be arrayed in bright, clean, fine linen, for the fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the holy ones." (Revelation 19:7, 8) Just when the anointed yet remaining on earth will receive their heavenly resurrection is not stated. But we are assured in the context here that their sharing in the marriage of the Lamb, Christ Jesus, will be a happy time, and all the more so since they will have witnessed firsthand the humiliation of the infamous harlot, Babylon the Great.

Satan's World Destroyed

19 The white horse first mentioned at Revelation 6:2 comes to view again. We read at Revelation 19:11: "The one seated upon [the white horse] is called Faithful and True, and he judges and carries on war in righteousness." Thus the "King of kings and Lord of lords" rides forth to strike the nations and to tread "the winepress of the anger of the wrath of God the Almighty." In vain do "the kings of the earth and their armies" gather to wage the war of Har-Magedon. The Rider of the white horse completes his conquest. Nothing remains of Satan's earthly organization.—Revelation 19:12-21.

20 But what of the Devil himself? At Revelation 20:1-6, Christ Jesus is described as "an angel coming down out of heaven with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand." He seizes the dragon, the original Serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, binds him, hurls him into the abyss, and shuts and seals it over him. With Satan out of the way and unable to mislead the nations anymore, the glorious Millennial Reign of the Lamb and his bride gets under way. No more tears of sorrow! No more Adamic death! No mourning, no outcry, no pain! "The former things have passed away." —Revelation 21:4.

21 While we eagerly await the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us show zeal in telling others about God's loving Kingdom promises. Deliverance is at hand! May we walk forward, ever forward, as enlightened children of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah!

18. The removal of Babylon the Great opens the way for what exultant announcement?
19. What other development is described at Revelation 19:11-21?
20. What befalls the Devil himself?
21. As we eagerly await the revelation of Jesus Christ, what should be our determination?

In Review

- ☐ What indicates that the revelation of Jesus Christ is near at hand?
- ☐ How will the day of Jehovah's vengeance arrive?
- ☐ How should "lovers of Jehovah" view the present world situation?
- ☐ What will be the order of events when the great tribulation strikes?

KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

Honesty Recommends Our Ministry

HONESTY is a basic requirement for Christians. The apostle Paul wrote at Hebrews 13:18: "We trust we have an honest conscience, as we wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things." Our practicing honesty 'adorns the teaching of our Savior, God, in all things.' (Titus 2:10) The honesty, as well as the Kingdom preaching, of two Christians in the South Pacific kingdom of Tonga is giving a powerful witness. The Watch Tower Society's branch office in Western Samoa relates:

"For years a Witness couple spoke about God's Kingdom to the people in the four villages on their island but without visible results. Then, while her husband was ill, the wife had to care for their plantation and cut and dry the copra, their only source of income. When the time came for the copra to be checked by the buyers, someone else's bag had got mixed up with her five bags. The villagers urged her to keep the extra bag and to view it as a blessing from God. The sister, though, declined and, even when paid for six bags, would accept only the amount rightly due her. Her honesty was noticed.

"Later, when the husband was to make a trip to another island, the storekeeper asked him to buy some items for him. The Witness did as requested and returned the change to the man. The man was amazed. He said that it was the first time anyone had returned the change. Others he had asked to buy things always kept the change. Another time, when the Witness needed something from this man's store, the man gave him the key to the store, instructing him to take what he needed and leave payment in the store. Others present asked the storekeeper why he would give the store key to the Witness and not to them. The owner explained that the Witness was the only one in the village whom he could trust.

"The fine conduct of this couple is being discussed among the villagers. The Witnesses are known for their honesty, their neutral stand on politics, and their witnessing about God's Kingdom, which shows the difference between the beliefs of the villagers and the teachings of the Bible. Now when questions arise regarding the Bible, the people often approach the Witnesses for answers. The husband has even got out of bed at night, gone to a village meeting, and answered questions that had been raised on a Bible subject. When attending funerals in the village, he has often been requested to show what the Bible says about death, and his comments have been accepted."

So the honesty of this Witness couple and their Kingdom preaching are giving a good witness on this lovely South Pacific island. They hope that others will study the Bible and take their stand for the truth. If they do, Jehovah God will surely bless them.—John 8:32.

In Our Next Issue

How Reliable Are Bible Predictions?

Why Serve Jehovah?

"Call the Older Men"

"HERE I AM! SEND ME"

AS TOLD BY WILFRED JOHN

Armed Burmese military guards charged us from both sides of the river. With bayonets fixed and rifles leveled, they splashed waist deep through the water and surrounded us under the highway bridge.

MY PARTNER and I were terrified. What was it all about? Although we did not understand the language, we soon got the message—we were under arrest. With only towels wrapped around our waists, we were unceremoniously escorted to a nearby police station and interrogated by an English-speaking officer.

It was 1941, during the second world war, and we were suspected of being saboteurs. After we explained our Christian preaching work to the officer's satisfaction, he told us that we were fortunate to have come out of the confrontation alive. Most suspects, he said, were shot, no questions asked. We thanked Jehovah and took the officer's advice not to hang around bridges in the future.

How did I get into such a situation in Burma (now Myanmar)? Let me explain and provide some background about myself.

A Choice Made Early in Life

I was born in Wales in 1917 and at six years of age moved with my parents and younger brother to New Zealand, where I grew up on my father's dairy farm. One day he brought home a bundle of old books that he had bought in a secondhand shop. Included were two volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures,* published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. These became my mother's treasured possessions, and like Timothy's mother, Eunice, she inculcated in me a desire to spend my youth in serving Jehovah's Kingdom interests.—2 Timothy 1:5.

In 1937 two choices confronted me: to take over my father's dairy farm or to say to Jehovah as did God's prophet Isaiah, "Here I am! Send me." (Isaiah 6:8) I was young, healthy, and unencumbered. I had tasted farm life and enjoyed it. On the other hand, I had no experience as a full-time minister, or pioneer. What would it be—working on the farm or serving as a pioneer?

Speakers from the Australia branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses were a source of encouragement. They visited our area in New Zealand and urged me to use my precious prime of life in serving God. (Ecclesiastes 12:1) I discussed the matter with my parents, and they agreed with the wisdom of putting God's will foremost. I also pondered the words of Jesus Christ in his Sermon on the Mount: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and [God's] righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you."—Matthew 6:33.

My choice was made! Since there was then no branch of Jehovah's Witnesses in New Zealand, I was invited to serve at the Australia branch in Sydney. Thus, in 1937,

I boarded a ship for Australia to become a full-time minister of Jehovah God.

'What assignment will I receive?' I wondered. Yet, what did it matter anyway? I had said, in effect, to Jehovah, 'Here I am. Use me wherever you will.' For two years I assisted in making phonographs that were used in those days by Jehovah's Witnesses to play recorded Bible talks to householders. However, my principal training at the branch was for literature-depot work.

On to Singapore

In 1939, I received an assignment to the Far East—to serve at the Society's depot in Singapore. The depot served as a hub for receiving and shipping literature from Australia, Britain, and the United States to many countries in Asia.

Singapore was a multilingual city where Oriental and European cultures mingled. The Malay language was the common means of communication, and in order to preach from door to door, we foreigners had to learn it. In many languages, we had what were called testimony cards. These had a brief presentation of the Kingdom message printed on them.

To begin with I memorized the Malay testimony card and then gradually increased my vocabulary in that language. But we also carried Bible literature in many other languages. For the Indian population, for example, we had publications in Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, and Urdu. To meet people of so many language groups was a new experience for me.

Well do I remember the frightening announcement in September 1939, the declaration of war in Europe. We wondered, 'Will it escalate and involve the Far East?' It seemed to me to be the prelude to Armageddon—right on time I figured! I felt satisfied that I was making full and proper use of my youth.

Along with my work at the depot, I had a full share in congregation meetings and the field ministry. Bible studies were conducted, and some individuals responded and submitted to water baptism. They were taken to a nearby beach and immersed in the warm waters of Singapore harbor. We even decided to hold an assembly, quietly circulating invitations among interested ones. To our joy, about 25 came to what we then believed would be our last assembly before Armageddon.

Communication between the Society's branches was severely restricted by the war. Our Singapore depot, for example, received a brief notice that three German pioneers were due to reach Singapore sometime on an unnamed ship en route to an unidentified assignment. A few weeks later they arrived and spent an exciting ten hours with us. Although language was a problem, we were able to understand that their assigned destination was Shanghai.

My Assignment in Shanghai

A year later I also received an assignment to serve in Shanghai. I had no street address, only a post office box number. After being thoroughly cross-examined at the post office, I was able to establish my identity sufficiently to be given the Society's residential address. However, the Chinese occupant informed me that the branch had moved, and there was no forwarding address.

'What do I do now?' I wondered. I silently offered a prayer for guidance. Looking up, I caught sight of three men, slightly taller than the general flow of people and somewhat different in appearance. They

certainly looked like the three Germans who stopped in Singapore for those fleeting few hours. Quickly, I stepped out into their pathway.

"Excuse me, please," I stammered excitedly. They stopped and stared apprehensively at me with searching eyes. "Singapore. Jehovah's Witnesses. Remember me?" I asked.

After a few moments, they replied: *"Ja! Ja! Ja!"* Spontaneously we hugged, and tears of joy ran down my face. Out of millions of people, how was it that those three men should happen to pass that spot at that particular time? I simply said, "Thank you, Jehovah." Three Chinese families, the three Germans, and I were the only Witnesses then in Shanghai.

Hong Kong and Then Burma

After serving in Shanghai for a few months, I was assigned to Hong Kong. When my prospective pioneer partner from Australia failed to arrive, I found myself on my own, the only Witness in the colony. Again, I had to remind myself that I had said to Jehovah, "Here I am! Send me."

My activity was directed mainly to English-speaking Chinese people, yet I found difficulty in getting past the gates of the residences, since the servants stationed there spoke only Chinese. So I learned a little Chinese in two of the most used dialects. It worked! I would approach the servant guards, present my business card, speak my little Chinese piece, and then usually be ushered in.

Once when visiting a school, I followed this procedure in an effort to speak with the headmaster. A junior teacher met me in the foyer. I followed her through a couple of classrooms, acknowledged the children's respectful gestures, and prepared to be introduced to the headmaster. The teacher knocked, opened the door, stood back, and signaled me forward. To my indignant surprise, she had courteously taken me to the toilet! It seemed that my Chinese had been misunderstood and that, as the headmaster later told me, I had been mistaken for a plumbing and sewage inspector.

After four months of activity, I was informed by the Hong Kong police that a ban had been placed on our preaching work and that I would either have to quit or be deported. I chose deportation as the door to continued preaching was still open elsewhere. While in Hong Kong, I had placed 462 books and had helped two others to share in the ministry.

From Hong Kong, I was assigned to Burma. There I pioneered and assisted in depot work in Rangoon (now Yangon). One of the most interesting experiences was that of preaching in the towns and villages strung out along the main route from Rangoon to Mandalay and beyond to the Chinese border town of Lashio. My pioneer partner and I concentrated on the English-speaking community, obtaining several hundred subscriptions to *Consolation* (now the *Awake!* magazine). Incidentally, this main road from Rangoon to Mandalay was to become known as the Burma Road, the route along which the American war supplies were sent into China.

Trudging through ankle-deep dust often made us feel in need of a good wash. This led to the incident related at the outset, that of being arrested while bathing in a river under a bridge. Soon afterward military operations and illness forced us to return to Rangoon. I was able to remain in Burma until 1943, when the stepped-up operations of the war forced me to return to Australia.

Back in Australia

In the meantime, the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses had been banned in Australia. However, the ban was soon lifted, and in time I was again invited to work at the branch office. Later, in 1947, I married Betty Moss, who had been working at the Society's branch in Australia. Betty's father and mother were pioneers, and they encouraged both her and her brother Bill to make pioneering their careers. Betty started pioneering the day she left school, at age 14. I figured we should do well together, as she too, in effect, had said to Jehovah, "Here I am! Send me."

After we had been married for a year, I was invited into the circuit work, visiting congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. Working in Australia's outback was a real challenge. Flash floods frequently presented travel problems, particularly on slippery clay roads. Summer temperatures soared to 110 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade. Living in canvas tents, we found the scorching summers to be almost unbearably hot and the winters to be bitterly cold.

It was a joy to serve as district overseer when there were only two districts in Australia. Donald MacLean served one district, and I the other. Then we would swap districts. It is a thrill to read about the congregations that now exist where we once served. The seeds of Bible truth surely have sprouted and produced!

Back to Where It All Started

In 1961, I had the privilege of attending the first class of the Gilead missionary school after its move to Brooklyn, New York. I had received previous invitations to the school but could not accept for health reasons. At the conclusion of the ten-month course, I was invited to accept New Zealand as my assignment.

So since January 1962, Betty and I have been here in New Zealand, one of the lands down under. It is often referred to as one of the pearls of the Pacific. Theocratically, it has been a joy to serve both in the circuit and in the district work. For the past 14 years, since April 1979, we have been working at the New Zealand branch office.

Betty and I are now both in our mid-70's, and between us we have 116 years of nonstop full-time Kingdom service. Betty started pioneering in January 1933, and I in April 1937. Many have been our joys as we have watched our spiritual children and grandchildren do what we did when we were young, namely, heed the counsel of Ecclesiastes 12:1: "Remember, now, your Grand Creator in the days of your young manhood."

What a privilege it has been to spend virtually our entire lives preaching the good news of God's Kingdom and making disciples, as our Lord Jesus Christ commanded! (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) We are so happy that we responded to God's invitation as did the prophet Isaiah long ago, "Here I am! Send me."

How Much Would You Give for This?

DO YOU know of anything so valuable that you would willingly sacrifice everything you own in order to possess it? Jesus did, and he spoke of it to his followers.

He said: "The kingdom of the heavens is like a traveling merchant seeking fine pearls. Upon finding one pearl of high value, away he went and promptly sold all the things he had and bought it."—Matthew 13:45, 46.

That merchant was willing to give up everything in order to possess the "pearl," God's Kingdom. Why? Because there is nothing in this world to compare with it. God's Kingdom will solve the problems that man has been unable to solve, such as war, hunger, crime, and oppression. (Psalm 72:4-8, 13, 14) Under the Kingdom, even sin, disease, and death will be no more. (Revelation 21:4, 5) No wonder the second petition of the Lord's Prayer (the "Our Father") is, "Let your kingdom come"!—Matthew 6:9, 10.

What would you give to share in the Kingdom's blessings? In fact, the blessings are free. But in order to enjoy them, you have to know what the Kingdom is, believe that it is a reality, and give it first place in your life. Can you do that? There is information in the Bible that will help you.