

THE **WATCHTOWER**
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

APRIL 1, 1996

EASTER
What does
the Bible say?

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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EASTER or the MEMORIAL

Which Should You Observe?

AS DAWN spreads its glow over the horizon on April 7, millions will welcome their most holy day of the year—Easter. At one time the name applied to a 120-day period of feasts and fasts that began with a holiday called Septuagesima and ended on what is called Trinity Day. Today the name is applied to a single day commemorating Jesus' resurrection—Easter Sunday.

On an evening earlier in that same week, however, other millions will meet to celebrate the Memorial of Christ's death, also known as the Lord's Evening Meal. It is an observance that Jesus himself instituted on his last night on earth. He then told his disciples: "Keep doing this in remembrance of me."
—Luke 22:19.

Which should you observe?

The Origin of Easter

The name Easter, used in many lands, is not found in the Bible. The book



Medieval Holidays and Festivals tells us that "the holiday is named after the pagan Goddess of the Dawn and of Spring, Eostre." And who was this goddess? "Eostre it was who, according to the legend, opened the portals of Valhalla to receive Baldur, called the White God, because of his purity and also the Sun God, because his brow supplied light to mankind," answers *The American Book of Days*. It adds: "There is no doubt that the Church in its early days adopted the old pagan customs and gave a Christian meaning to them. As the festival of Eostre was in celebration of the renewal of life in the spring it was easy to make it a celebration of the resurrection from the dead of Jesus, whose gospel they preached."

This adoption explains how in certain lands the Easter customs, such as Easter eggs, the Easter rabbit, and hot cross buns, came about. Concerning the custom of making hot cross buns, "with their shiny brown tops marked by a . . . cross," the book *Easter and Its Customs* states: "The cross was a pagan symbol long before it acquired everlasting significance from the events of the first Good Friday, and bread and cakes were sometimes marked with it in pre-Christian times."

Nowhere in Scripture do we find mention of these things, nor is there any evidence that the early disciples of Jesus gave them any credence. In fact, the apostle Peter tells us to "form a longing for the *unadulterated* milk belonging to the word, that through it [we] may grow to salvation." (1 Peter 2:2) So why did the churches of Christendom adopt such obviously pagan symbols into their beliefs and practices?

The book *Curiosities of Popular Customs* answers: "It was the invariable policy of the early Church to give a Christian significance to such of the extant pagan ceremonies as could not be rooted out. In

the case of Easter the conversion was peculiarly easy. Joy at the rising of the natural sun, and at the awakening of nature from the death of winter, became joy at the rising of the Sun of righteousness, at the resurrection of Christ from the grave. Some of the pagan observances which took place about the 1st of May were also shifted to correspond with the celebration of Easter." Rather than steer clear of popular pagan customs and magical rites, the religious leaders condoned them and gave them "Christian significance."

"But is there any harm in that?" you may wonder. Some think not. "When a religion such as Christianity comes to a people from outside, it adopts and 'baptizes' some of the folk customs which derive from older religions," said Alan W. Watts, an Episcopal chaplain, in his book *Easter—Its Story and Meaning*. "It selects and weaves into the liturgy folk observances which seem to signify the same eternal principles taught by the Church." To many, the fact that their church sanctioned these observances and treated them as holy is reason enough to accept them. But important questions are being overlooked. How does God feel about these customs? Has he given us any guidelines to follow in the matter?

Getting God's Viewpoint

"Easter Day, the Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord, is the greatest of all the festivals of the Christian Church," said Christina Hole in her book *Easter and Its Customs*. Other writers concur. "No holy day or festival in the Christian year can compare in importance with Easter Sunday," notes Robert J. Myers in the book *Celebrations*. That, however, raises some questions. If celebrating Easter is so important, why is there no specific command in the Bible to do so? Is there any record

of Jesus' early disciples observing Easter Sunday?

It is not that the Bible fails to give guidelines as to what should or should not be celebrated. God was very specific in this to the ancient nation of Israel, and as noted earlier, explicit instructions were given for Christians to continue observing the Memorial of Christ's death. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Colossians 2:16, 17) An early edition of *The Encyclopædia Britannica* tells us: "There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the apostolic Fathers. The sanctity of special times was an idea absent from the minds of the first Christians. . . . Neither the Lord nor his apostles enjoined the keeping of this or any other festival."

Some feel that the joyousness of such festivals and the happiness they bring are sufficient justification for their observance. We can learn, however, from the occasion when the Israelites adopted an Egyptian religious practice and renamed it "a festival to Jehovah." They too "sat down to eat and drink" and "got up to have a good time." But their actions greatly angered Jehovah God, and he severely punished them.—Exodus 32:1-10, 25-28, 35.

God's Word is very clear. There can be no sharing between the "light" of true beliefs and the "darkness" of Satan's world; there can be no "harmony" between Christ and pagan worship. We are told: "'Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves,' says Jehovah, 'and quit touching the unclean thing'; 'and I will take you in.'"—2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

As only the Memorial celebration—not Easter—is commanded in the Bible for Christians, it should be observed. So how can we celebrate it worthily?



CELEBRATE THE MEMORIAL WORTHILY

IT WAS on the evening of Nisan 14, 33 C.E., that Jesus instituted the Memorial.* He had just finished observing the Passover celebration with his 12 apostles, so we can be certain of the date. After dismissing the traitor, Judas, Jesus "took a loaf, said a blessing, broke it and gave it to them, and said: 'Take it, this means my body.' And taking a cup, he offered thanks and gave it to them, and they all drank out of it. And he said to them: 'This means my "blood of the covenant," which is to be poured out in behalf of many.'"—Mark 14:22-24.

Jesus commanded his disciples to commemorate his death because of its importance. (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26) His was the only sacrifice that could redeem humankind from the curse of inherited sin and death. (Romans 5:12; 6:23) The bread and the wine that he used were symbols of his perfect body and his blood. Knowing the original date, we can celebrate the occasion on the corresponding day each year, just as was done with the Jewish Passover. But we must do so worthily. Why?

The apostle Paul said that those partaking of the emblems of bread and wine would "keep proclaiming *the death of the Lord*, until he arrives." (1 Corinthians 11:26) The focus of the celebration would thus

be on Jesus' death and its meaning for mankind. The occasion would be serious, a time for reflecting on God's goodness and on the appreciation we should have for Jehovah and his Son. (Romans 5:8; Titus 2:14; 1 John 4:9, 10) Therefore, Paul warned: "Consequently whoever eats the loaf or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will be guilty respecting the body and the blood of the Lord."—1 Corinthians 11:27.

Worthily—How?

Obviously, God would not be pleased if we desecrated the occasion by engaging in questionable practices or by adopting pagan customs. (James 1:27; 4:3, 4) This would preclude the popular events of Easter time. In following Jesus' instruction to "keep doing this in remembrance of [him]," we would want to observe the Memorial just as he instituted it. (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25) This would rule out the trappings that have been added to the celebration by Christendom's churches. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* admits that "the Mass of today differs greatly from the very simple ceremony followed by Christ and His Apostles." And by observing the Mass frequently, even daily, Christendom has veered from what Jesus intended and has made it a common event.

Paul wrote the Corinthian Christians about partaking unworthily because a problem had arisen in the congregation in regard to the Lord's Evening Meal. Some did not respect its sacredness. They brought their supper with them and ate it

* The Jewish day began in the evening. According to our calendar, that Nisan 14 ran from the beginning of Thursday evening, March 31, to sundown of Friday evening, April 1. The Memorial was instituted on Thursday evening, and Jesus' death occurred on Friday afternoon of the same Jewish day. He was resurrected on the third day, early Sunday morning.

before or during the meeting. Often they ate and drank to excess. This made them drowsy and dulled their senses. By not being mentally and spiritually alert, they could “not discern the body” and thus became “guilty respecting the body and the blood of the Lord.” Meanwhile, those who had no supper were hungry and also became distracted. Virtually none of them were in a condition to partake of the emblems with appreciation and full realization of the seriousness of the occasion—that the celebration was in memory of the Lord’s death. This resulted in judgment against them, for they were showing disrespect, even contempt, for it.—1 Corinthians 11:27-34.

Discernment Needed

Some have partaken of the Memorial emblems although, later, they realized that

they should not have done so. Those who rightfully partake of the Memorial emblems have been chosen by God and have the testimony of God’s spirit to that effect. (Romans 8:15-17; 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22) It is not their personal decision or determination that makes them worthy. God has limited the number of those who will rule with Christ in the heavens to 144,000, a relatively small number compared with all those benefiting from Christ’s ransom. (Revelation 14:1, 3) The selection began in Jesus’ day, so it follows that today there are only few partakers. And as death overtakes some of them, that number should decrease.

Why might one wrongly partake of the emblems? It may be due to previous religious views—that all the faithful go to heaven. Or it may be because of ambition or selfishness—a feeling that one is more



deserving than others—and a desire for prominence. Perhaps it is the result of strong emotions arising from severe problems or a tragedy that makes one lose interest in life on earth. It may also be because of a close friendship with someone who has the heavenly calling. All of us need to remember that the decision is solely God's, not ours. (Romans 9:16) So if a person, "after scrutiny," finds that he really should not have been partaking of the emblems, he should now refrain.—1 Corinthians 11:28.

The hope that God has put before most of mankind is that of eternal life on a paradise earth. That is a great blessing to anticipate, and one to which we can easily relate. (Genesis 1:28; Psalm 37:9, 11) It is on earth that faithful ones will be reunited with their resurrected loved ones and will meet the righteous ones of old, such as Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Rahab, David, and John the Baptist—all of whom died before Jesus opened the way to heavenly life.—Matthew 11:11; compare 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.

Those with earthly hopes celebrate the Lord's Evening Meal worthily by their attendance and respectful attention, even though they do not partake of the bread and the wine. They too benefit by Christ's sacrifice, which enables them to have a favorable standing before God. (Revelation 7:14, 15) As they listen to the discourse given, their appreciation for sacred things is strengthened, and their desire to remain in unity with God's people everywhere grows.

This year, after sundown on Tuesday, April 2, the Memorial will be observed in all of the more than 78,000 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses earth wide. Will you be in attendance?

**Jehovah's Witnesses
celebrate the
Memorial once
each year**



KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

Fine Works That Glorify Jehovah

IN HIS Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said to his disciples: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens." (Matthew 5:16) Likewise, true Christians today engage in "fine works" that glorify Jehovah.

What are these fine works? They include the preaching of the good news, but our exemplary conduct is also an important part. Often it is our good conduct that initially attracts people to the Christian congregation. The following experiences illustrate how Jehovah's Witnesses in Martinique are 'letting their light shine before men.'

□ While engaging in the house-to-house preaching work, one of Jehovah's Witnesses visited a Catholic woman. For 25 years this woman had been living with a man to whom she was not married. She was acquainted with the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses, since she, about seven years earlier, had received the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*.^{*} The woman told the Witness: "There are too many religions. I do not know whom to believe amid all this confusion." The Witness explained that the truth can be found only in the Bible and that in order to find it, she had to study the Scriptures carefully and pray to God for his spirit and direction.

For a period of time, although interested in studying the Bible, the woman rejected a number of invitations to attend Christian meetings at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. Why? She was extremely shy. However, af-

ter receiving an invitation to the Memorial of Christ's death, she overcame her shyness and attended.

What impressed her most about the meeting was the loving atmosphere in the Kingdom Hall. She had never experienced such genuine friendship in her church! After that meeting she began to attend all meetings conducted by the local Witnesses, and soon she married the man with whom she had been living. She is now a baptized member of the congregation.

□ The fine works of another Witness produced good results. She had a responsible position in an office. After a man from the island of Réunion was hired, some of the workers began to ridicule him because of his short stature. He became a laughingstock. In contrast, the Witness was always kind and respectful to the man. Soon he was asking why she was so different.

The Witness explained that her respectful conduct was a result of the Bible principles she had learned from Jehovah's Witnesses. She also showed him what the Scriptures say about God's purposes and the hope of a new world. The man accepted a Bible study, began attending Christian meetings, and married the woman with whom he had been living.

Eventually he returned to Réunion. In the past, he had experienced difficulties with his relatives, especially with his wife's family. But now they were very impressed by his fine Christian conduct. The man was baptized and presently is a ministerial servant. Several members of the family, including his wife and two daughters, also serve in the Christian congregation as publishers of the good news of God's Kingdom.

^{*} Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

PRAISE THE KING OF ETERNITY!

"Jehovah is King to time indefinite, even forever."—PSALM 10:16.

ETERNITY—what would you say it is? Do you think time could really go on forever? Well, there is no question that time stretches forever into the past. So why not forever into the future? Indeed, the *New World Translation* of the Bible refers to God as being praised "from time indefinite even to time indefinite." (Psalm 41:13) What does this expression mean? We may be helped to understand it if we refer to a related subject—space.

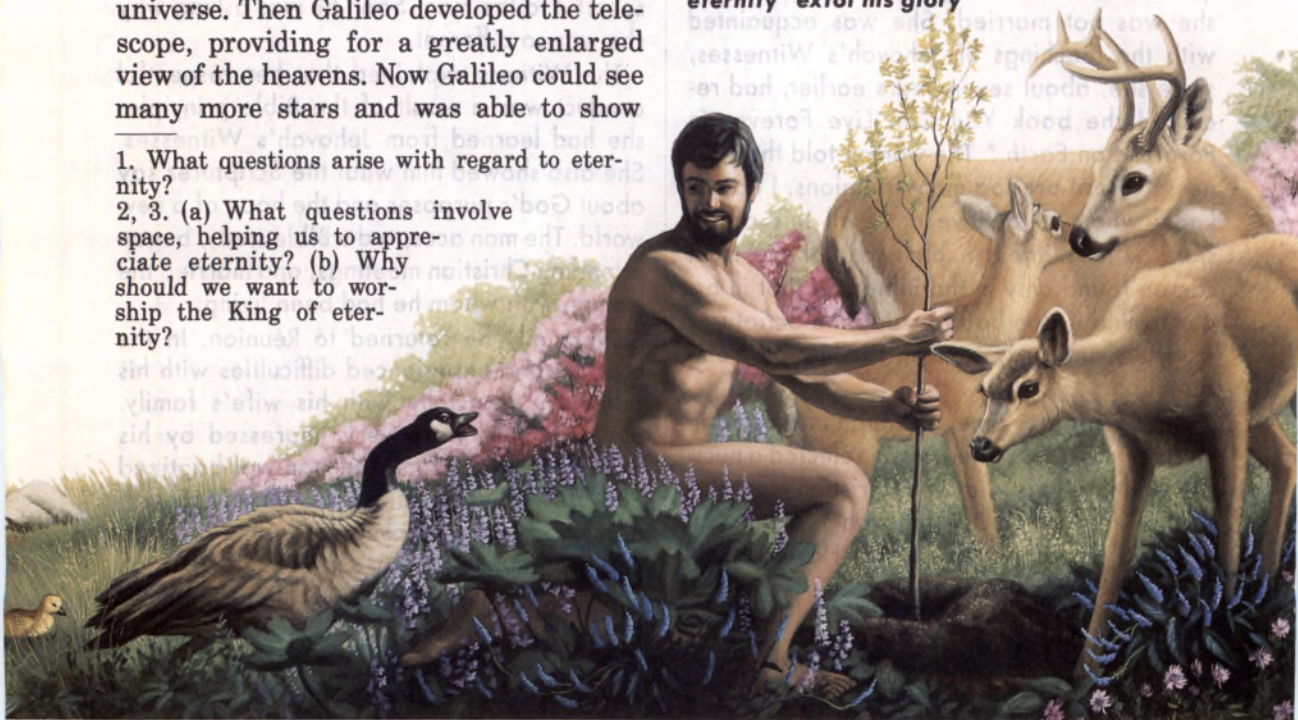
²How extensive is space? Is there any limit to it? Up until 400 years ago, our earth was thought to be the center of the universe. Then Galileo developed the telescope, providing for a greatly enlarged view of the heavens. Now Galileo could see many more stars and was able to show

that the earth and other planets revolve around the sun. The Milky Way no longer looked milky. It proved to be a galaxy of stars, about a hundred billion in number. We could never count that many actual stars, even in a lifetime. Later, astronomers went on to locate billions of galaxies. These stretch out endlessly into space, as far as the most powerful telescopes can probe. It seems that there are no limits to space. The same is true with eternity—it has no limits.

The diversified creations of "the King of eternity" extol his glory

1. What questions arise with regard to eternity?

2, 3. (a) What questions involve space, helping us to appreciate eternity? (b) Why should we want to worship the King of eternity?



³ The idea of eternity seems to be beyond the understanding of our limited human brains. However, there is Someone who fully understands it. He can count, yes, and even *name* the boundless quadrillions of stars in their billions of galaxies! This One says: "Raise your eyes high up and see. Who has created these things? It is the One who is bringing forth the army of them even by number, all of whom he calls even by name. Due to the abundance of dynamic energy, he also being vigorous in power, not one of them is missing. Have you not come to know or have you not heard? Jehovah, the Creator of the extremities of the earth, is a God to time indefinite. He does not tire out or grow weary. There is no searching out of his understanding." (Isaiah 40:26, 28) What a marvelous God! Surely, he is the God we should want to worship!

"King to Time Indefinite"

⁴ At Psalm 10:16, David says of the Creator, God: "Jehovah is King to time indefinite, even forever." And at Psalm 29:10, he repeats: "Jehovah sits as king to time indefinite." Yes, Jehovah is the King of eternity! Further, David testifies that this exalted King is Designer and Maker of all that we behold in space, saying at Psalm 19:1: "The heavens are declaring the glory of God; and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling." Some 2,700 years later, the famous scientist Sir Isaac Newton expressed agreement with David, writing: "This most elegant system of suns, planets and comets could only arise from the purpose and sovereignty of an enlightened and mighty being."

4. (a) How did David express appreciation for the King of eternity? (b) What did one of history's greatest scientists conclude as to the origin of the universe?

⁵ How it should humble us to know that the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, whom even the spacious "heavens, yes, the heaven of the heavens, . . . cannot contain," lives eternally! (1 Kings 8:27) Jehovah, described at Isaiah 45:18 as "the Creator of the heavens, . . . the Former of the earth and the Maker of it," is the Source of wisdom far more extensive than mortal human brains can fathom. Jehovah said, as highlighted at 1 Corinthians 1:19: "I will make the wisdom of the wise men perish, and the intelligence of the intellectual men I will shove aside." To this the apostle Paul added in verse 20: "Where is the wise man? Where the scribe? Where the debater of this system of things? Did not God make the wisdom of the world foolish?" Yes, as Paul went on to say, at chapter 3, verse 19, "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

⁶ The heavenly bodies are part of the creation that King Solomon referred to: "Everything [God] has made pretty in its time. Even time indefinite he has put in their heart, that mankind may never find out the work that the true God has made from the start to the finish." (Ecclesiastes 3:11) Truly, it is implanted in the heart of man to try to find out the meaning of "time indefinite," that is, eternity. But can he ever attain such knowledge?

A Marvelous Life Prospect

⁷ Jesus Christ said in prayer to Jehovah: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) How can we gain such

5. What did Isaiah and Paul write about the Source of wisdom?

6. What does Ecclesiastes 3:11 indicate as to "time indefinite"?

7, 8. (a) What marvelous life prospect lies ahead for mankind, and how may it be attained? (b) Why should we rejoice that divine education will continue for all eternity?

JEHOVAH'S EXCELLING WISDOM

The wisdom of the King of eternity is reflected in so many ways in his productions on earth. Note the words of Agur: "Every saying of God is refined. He is a shield to those taking refuge in him." (Proverbs 30:5) Then Agur refers to many of the living creations of God, the large and the small. For example, in verses 24 to 28, he describes "four things that are the smallest of the earth, but they are instinctively wise." These are the ant, the rock badger, the locust, and the gecko.

"Instinctively wise"—yes, the animals are made that way. They do not think things out as humans do but rely on implanted wisdom. Have you ever marveled at this? What an orderly creation they are! For instance, ants are organized into colonies, which include the queen, workers, and males. In some species, the worker ants even herd aphids into farm enclosures that they have built. There they milk the aphids while the soldier ants drive away any invading enemies. The admonition

is given at Proverbs 6:6: "Go to the ant, you lazy one; see its ways and become wise." Should not such examples prompt us humans to have "plenty to do in the work of the Lord"?—1 Corinthians 15:58.

Man has built huge airplanes. But how much more versatile are the birds, including the hummingbird, which weighs less than an ounce! A Boeing 747 must carry 47,000 gallons of fuel, be operated by a trained crew, and employ complex navigation systems to make a transoceanic crossing. Yet, a tiny hummingbird relies on one thirtieth of an ounce of fatty fuel to carry it all the way from North America, across the Gulf of Mexico, and into South America. No heavy load of fuel, no training in navigation, no complicated charts or computers! Did this ability result from a chance process of evolution? Hardly! This tiny bird is instinctively wise, being programmed thus by its Creator, Jehovah God.

knowledge? We need to study God's Word, the Holy Bible. Thereby we can gain accurate knowledge of God's grand purposes, including the provision made through his Son for everlasting life on a paradise earth. That will be "the real life" referred to at 1 Timothy 6:19. It will be in accord with what Ephesians 3:11 describes as "the eternal purpose that [God] formed in connection with the Christ, Jesus our Lord."

⁸ Yes, we sinful humans may attain to everlasting life through divine education and faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice. How long will this education continue? It will go on for all eternity as mankind is progressively instructed in the wisdom of our Creator. The wisdom of Jehovah has no limits. Recognizing this, the apostle Paul exclaimed: "O the depth of God's riches and

wisdom and knowledge! How unsearchable his judgments are and past tracing out his ways are!" (Romans 11:33) Appropriate it is, indeed, that 1 Timothy 1:17 calls Jehovah "the King of eternity"!

Jehovah's Creative Wisdom

⁹ Consider the splendid heritage the King of eternity has provided for us humans. Psalm 115:16 tells us: "As regards the heavens, to Jehovah the heavens belong, but the earth he has given to the sons of men." Do you not think that is a wonderful trust? Surely! And how we appreciate our Creator's outstanding foresight in preparing earth as our home!—Psalm 107:8.

9. 10. (a) What grand works did Jehovah accomplish in preparing the earth as his gift to mankind? (b) How is the excelling wisdom of Jehovah displayed in his creations? (See box.)

¹⁰ Wonderful developments took place on earth during the six creative “days” of Genesis chapter 1, each day covering thousands of years. These creations of God would ultimately cover the entire earth with a verdant grassy carpet, stately forests, and colorful flowers. It would be teeming with multitudes of exotic sea creatures, flocks of lovely winged birds, and a vast array of domestic and untamed animals, each reproducing “according to its kind.” Following the description of the creation of man and woman, Genesis 1:31 relates: “God saw everything he had made and, look! it was very good.” What a delightful environment surrounded those first humans! Do we not perceive in all of these creations the wisdom, foresight, and care of a loving Creator?—Isaiah 45:11, 12, 18.

¹¹ One who marveled at the wisdom of the King of eternity was Solomon. He repeatedly called attention to the Creator’s wisdom. (Proverbs 1:1, 2; 2:1, 6; 3:13-18) Solomon assures us that “the earth is standing even to time indefinite.” He appreciated the many wonders of creation, including the part that rain clouds play in refreshing our earth. Thus, he wrote: “All the winter torrents are going forth to the sea, yet the sea itself is not full. To the place where the winter torrents are going forth, there they are returning so as to go forth.” (Ecclesiastes 1:4, 7) So it is that after the rains and the rivers have refreshed the earth, their waters are recycled from the oceans back into the clouds. What would this earth be like, and where would we be without this purifying and recycling of water?

¹² Our appreciation for the balance in creation should be backed up by action, as King Solomon noted in the closing words of

11. How did Solomon magnify Jehovah’s creative wisdom?

12, 13. How may we show appreciation for God’s creation?

Ecclesiastes: “The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man. For the true God himself will bring every sort of work into the judgment in relation to every hidden thing, as to whether it is good or bad.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14) We should fear to do anything displeasing to God. Rather, we should seek to obey him with reverential awe.

¹³ Surely, we should want to praise the King of eternity for his glorious works of creation! Psalm 104:24 declares: “How many your works are, O Jehovah! All of them in wisdom you have made. The earth is full of your productions.” Joyfully, let us subscribe to the last verse of this psalm by saying to ourselves and to others: “Bless Jehovah, O my soul. Praise Jah, you people!”

The Crowning Earthly Creation

¹⁴ All of Jehovah’s creation is masterly. But the most remarkable earthly creation is us—humankind. Adam and then Eve were brought forth as the climax of Jehovah’s sixth creative day—a creation far superior to the fish, birds, and animals! Whereas many of these are instinctively wise, mankind is endowed with the power of reason, a conscience that can distinguish between right and wrong, the ability to plan for the future, and an innate desire to worship. How did all of this come about? Rather than evolving from brute beasts, man was created in God’s image. Accordingly, man alone can reflect the qualities of our Creator, who identified himself as “Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in

14. In what ways is God’s human creation far superior to the animals?

loving-kindness and truth.”—Exodus 34:6.

¹⁵ Let us praise and thank Jehovah for the extraordinary design of our bodies. Our bloodstream, essential to life, cycles through the body every 60 seconds. As Deuteronomy 12:23 states, “the blood is the soul”—our life—precious in God’s sight. Sturdy bones, flexible muscles, and a responsive nervous system are topped by a brain far superior to any animal brain and with capacities that a computer the size of a skyscraper could not begin to contain. Does this not make you feel humble? It should. (Proverbs 22:4) And consider this also: Our lungs, larynx, tongue, teeth, and mouth interact to provide human speech in any of thousands of languages. David made appropriate melody to Jehovah, saying: “I shall laud you because in a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, as my soul is very well aware.” (Psalm 139:14) Let us join David in thankfully praising Jehovah, our marvelous Designer and God!

¹⁶ The libretto of an 18th-century oratorio by Joseph Haydn states in praise of Je-

15. Why should we humbly laud Jehovah?

16. What melody did a famous musician make in praise to Jehovah, and to what compelling invitation may we respond?

Review Box

- ☐ Why is Jehovah rightly called “the King of eternity”?
- ☐ How is Jehovah’s wisdom displayed in his creations?
- ☐ In what ways is humankind a masterpiece of creation?
- ☐ What works call for ‘the song of Moses and of the Lamb’?

hovah: “Give Him thanks, all ye His works so wondrous! Sing His honor, sing His glory, bless and magnify His Name! Jehovah’s praise endures forevermore, Amen, Amen!” Even more beautiful are the oft repeated inspired expressions in the Psalms, such as the invitation extended four times in the 107th Psalm: “O let people give thanks to Jehovah for his loving-kindness and for his wonderful works to the sons of men.” Do you join in that praise? You should, for everything that is truly lovely has as its source Jehovah, the King of eternity.

Still Mightier Works

¹⁷ During the past six thousand years, the King of eternity has set in motion still mightier works. In the final book of the Bible, at Revelation 15:3, 4, we read of those in heaven who have triumphed over demonic enemies: “They are singing the song of Moses the slave of God and the song of the Lamb, saying: ‘Great and wonderful are your works, Jehovah God, the Almighty. Righteous and true are your ways, King of eternity. Who will not really fear you, Jehovah, and glorify your name, because you alone are loyal? For all the nations will come and worship before you, because your righteous decrees have been made manifest.’” Why is this called ‘the song of Moses and of the Lamb’? Let us see.

¹⁸ Some 3,500 years ago, when Pharaoh’s mighty army perished in the Red Sea, the Israelites thankfully praised Jehovah in song. We read at Exodus 15:1, 18: “At that time Moses and the sons of Israel proceeded to sing this song to Jehovah and to say the following: ‘Let me sing to Jehovah, for he has become highly exalted. The horse

17. How does ‘the song of Moses and of the Lamb’ extol Jehovah?

18. What mighty work is memorialized in song in Exodus chapter 15?

and its rider he has pitched into the sea. Jehovah will rule as king to time indefinite, even forever.” Righteous decrees of this King of eternity were manifest in his judging and executing of enemies that defied his sovereignty.

¹⁹ Why had this become necessary? It was in the garden of Eden that the wily Serpent led our first parents into sin. This resulted in sinful imperfection being passed on to all mankind. However, the King of eternity immediately took steps in harmony with his original purpose, which would lead to the ousting of all his enemies from earth’s domain and to the restoring of paradisaic conditions. The King of eternity formed the nation of Israel and provided his Law to foreshadow how he would accomplish this.—Galatians 3:24.

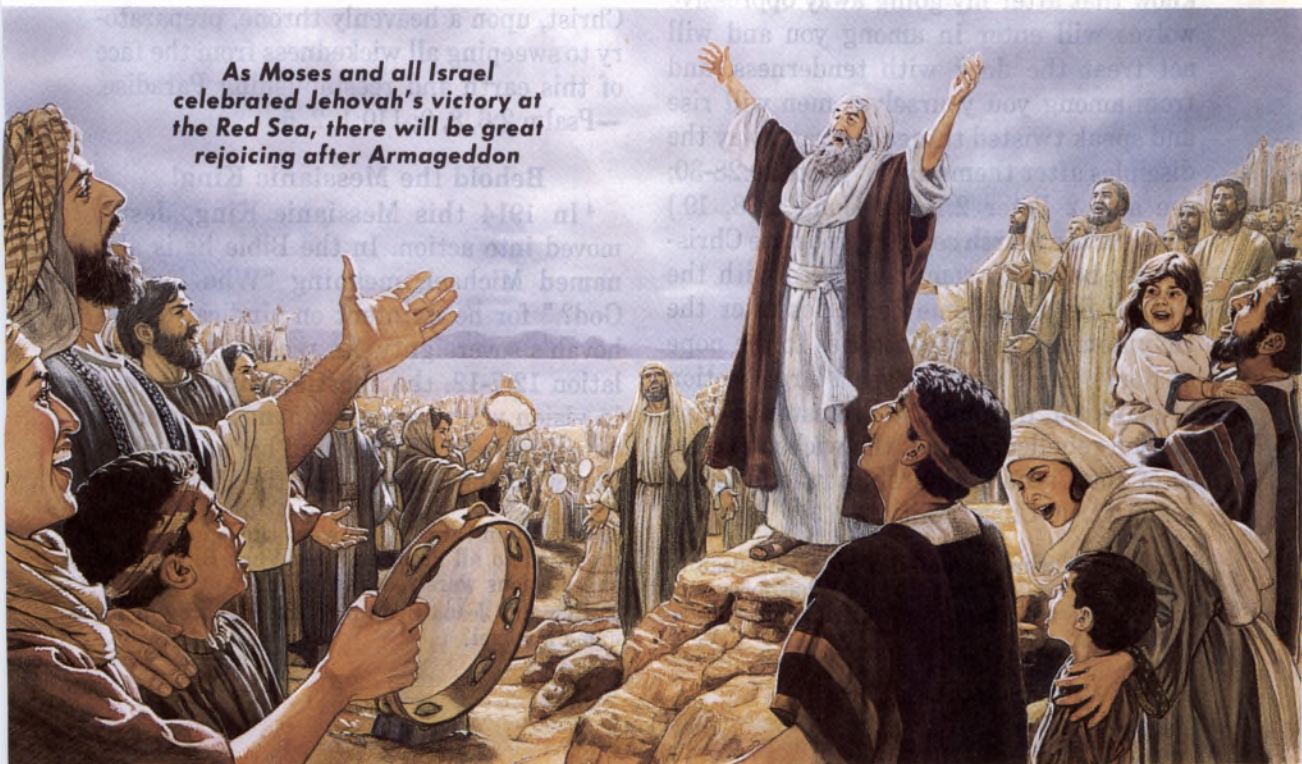
²⁰ In time, though, Israel itself sank into
19, 20. (a) Why did Jehovah form the nation of Israel? (b) How have the Lamb and others answered Satan’s challenge?

unfaithfulness, and this sad state climaxed when its leaders gave God’s only-begotten Son over to the Romans to be viciously tortured and killed. (Acts 10:39; Philippians 2:8) However, Jesus’ integrity to the death, as the sacrificial “Lamb of God,” refuted outstandingly the challenge made by God’s ancient Adversary, Satan—that no man on earth could keep faithful to God under a severe test. (John 1:29, 36; Job 1:9-12; 27:5) Though inheriting imperfection from Adam, millions of other God-fearing humans have followed in Jesus’ footsteps by keeping integrity in the face of satanic attacks.—1 Peter 1:18, 19; 2:19, 21.

²¹ Now the day has arrived for Jehovah to reward those faithful ones and to judge all enemies of truth and righteousness. (Acts 17:29-31) How will this come about? Our next article will tell.

21. In line with Acts 17:29-31, what will be discussed next?

**As Moses and all Israel
celebrated Jehovah’s victory at
the Red Sea, there will be great
rejoicing after Armageddon**



"PRAISE JAH, YOU PEOPLE!"

"Every breathing thing—let it praise Jah."—PSALM 150:6.

JESUS organized his disciples into the Christian congregation, which flourished in the first century. Despite bitter religious opposition, the "good news . . . was preached in all creation that is under heaven." (Colossians 1:23) But after the death of the apostles of Jesus Christ, Satan insidiously fomented apostasy.

² The apostles had given prior warning of this. For example, Paul told the elders from Ephesus: "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves." (Acts 20:28-30; see also 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 2:18, 19.) Thus, in the fourth century, apostate Christianity began to combine forces with the Roman Empire. Some centuries later the Holy Roman Empire, with ties to the pope of Rome, came to rule over a large section of mankind. In time, the Protestant Reformation rebelled against the wicked excesses of the Catholic Church, but it failed to restore true Christianity.

1, 2. (a) To what extent did true Christianity flourish in the first century? (b) What forewarning had the apostles given? (c) How did apostasy develop?

³ Nevertheless, as the end of the 19th century approached, a sincere group of Bible students was again busy preaching and extending to 'all creation under heaven the hope of the good news.' On the basis of their study of Bible prophecy, this group pointed forward more than 30 years to the year 1914 as marking the end of "the appointed times of the nations," a period of "seven times," or 2,520 years, that began with the desolating of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. (Luke 21:24; Daniel 4:16) True to expectations, 1914 proved to be a turning point in man's affairs on earth. Historic events took place in heaven as well. It was then that the King of eternity placed his associate King, Jesus Christ, upon a heavenly throne, preparatory to sweeping all wickedness from the face of this earth and reestablishing Paradise. —Psalm 2:6, 8, 9; 110:1, 2, 5.

Behold the Messianic King!

⁴ In 1914 this Messianic King, Jesus, moved into action. In the Bible he is also named Michael, meaning "Who Is Like God?," for he is intent on vindicating Jehovah's sovereignty. As recorded at Revelation 12:7-12, the apostle John described in vision what would happen: "War broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels battled with the dragon, and the dragon and

3. (a) When and how was the good news preached to all creation? (b) What Bible-based expectations were realized in 1914?

4. How did Jesus live up to the meaning of his name Michael?



Michael hurled Satan and his hordes down to earth after the Kingdom's establishment in 1914

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." A mighty fall indeed!

⁵ A stentorian voice in heaven then proclaimed: "Now have come to pass the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brothers has been hurled down, who accuses them day and night before our God! And they [faithful Christians] conquered him because of the blood of the Lamb [Christ Jesus] and because of the word of their witnessing, and they did not love their souls even in the face of death." This means deliverance for integrity keepers, who have exercised faith in Jesus' precious ransom sacrifice.—Proverbs 10:2; 2 Peter 2:9.

⁶ The loud voice in heaven went on to declare: "On this account be glad, you heavens and you who reside in them! 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." The "woe" thus prophesied

5, 6. (a) Following 1914, what thrilling proclamation was made from heaven? (b) How does Matthew 24:3-13 tie in with this?

for this earth has been manifest in the world wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and lawlessness that have plagued the earth in this century. As Matthew 24: 3-13 recounts, Jesus foretold that these would be part of 'the sign of the conclusion of the system of things.' True to prophecy, since 1914 mankind has experienced on earth woe unequalled in all previous human history.

⁷ In this age of satanic woe, can mankind find hope for the future? Why, yes, for Matthew 12:21 says of Jesus: "Indeed, in his name nations will hope"! The traumatic conditions among the nations mark not only 'the sign of the conclusion of the system of things' but also 'the sign of Jesus' presence' as heavenly King of the Messianic Kingdom. Concerning that Kingdom, Jesus further says: "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) What one people on earth today are preaching the grand hope of God's Kingdom rule? Jehovah's Witnesses! With urgency, they proclaim publicly and from house to house that God's Kingdom of righteousness and peace is about to take over earth's affairs. Are you sharing in this ministry? You could have no greater privilege!—2 Timothy 4:2, 5.

How Does "the End" Come?

⁸ Mankind has entered a period of judgment. We are informed at 1 Peter 4:17 that judgment started "with the house of God"—a judgment of professed Christian orga-

7. Why do Jehovah's Witnesses preach with urgency?

8, 9. (a) How did judgment start "with the house of God"? (b) How has Christendom violated God's Word?

nizations that has been apparent since "the last days" got under way with the slaughter of World War I during 1914-18. How has Christendom made out in this judgment? Well, consider the stand of the churches in supporting the wars since 1914. Are not the clergy stained with "the blood marks of the souls of the innocent poor ones" that they preached into the firing lines?—Jeremiah 2:34.

⁹ According to Matthew 26:52, Jesus stated: "All those who take the sword will perish by the sword." How true this has been in the wars of this century! The clergy have urged young men on to massacre other young men, even those of their own religion—Catholic killing Catholic and Protestant killing Protestant. Nationalism has been exalted above God and Christ. Recently, in some African nations, ethnic ties have been placed ahead of Bible principles. In Rwanda, where most of the population are Catholic, at least half a million were slaughtered in ethnic violence. The pope admitted in the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano*: "This is an out-and-out genocide, for which unfortunately even Catholics are responsible."—Compare Isaiah 59:2, 3; Micah 4:3, 5.

¹⁰ How does the King of eternity regard religions that encourage men to slaughter one another or that stand idly by while members of their flock kill other members? Regarding Babylon the Great, the worldwide system of false religion, Revelation 18:21, 24 tells us: "A strong angel lifted up a stone like a great millstone and hurled it into the sea, saying: 'Thus with a swift pitch will Babylon the great city be hurled down, and she will never be found again.'

10. What judgment will Jehovah execute on false religion?

THIS CATASTROPHIC AGE OF TURMOIL

That an age of turmoil dawned early in the 20th century has been acknowledged by many. For example, in the foreword of the book *Pandae-monium*, by U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, published in 1993, a comment on "the catastrophe of 1914" reads: "War came and the world changed—utterly. There are today just eight states on earth which both existed in 1914 and have not had their form of government changed by violence since then. . . . Of the remaining 170 or so contemporary states, some are too recently created to have known much recent turmoil." Truly, the era since 1914 has witnessed catastrophe upon catastrophe!

Also published in 1993 was the book *Out of Control—Global Turmoil on the Eve of the Twenty-First Century*. The author is Zbigniew Brze-

zinski, former head of the U.S. National Security Council. He writes: "The onset of the twentieth century was hailed in many commentaries as the real beginning of the Age of Reason. . . . Contrary to its promise, the twentieth century became mankind's most bloody and hateful century, a century of hallucinatory politics and of monstrous killings. Cruelty was institutionalized to an unprecedented degree, lethality was organized on a mass production basis. The contrast between the scientific potential for good and the political evil that was actually unleashed is shocking. Never before in history was killing so globally pervasive, never before did it consume so many lives, never before was human annihilation pursued with such concentration of sustained effort on behalf of such arrogantly irrational goals." How true that is!

Yes, in her was found the blood of prophets and of holy ones and of all those who have been slaughtered on the earth."

¹¹ In fulfillment of Bible prophecy, horrible things have been happening in Christendom. (Compare Jeremiah 5:30, 31; 23:14.) Largely because of the permissive attitude of the clergy, their flocks are riddled with immorality. In the United States, supposedly a Christian nation, about half of all marriages end up in divorce. Teenage pregnancies and homosexuality run riot among church members. Priests are sexually abusing young children—and not in just a few instances. It has been said that court settlements involving these cases could cost the Catholic Church in the United States a billion dollars within a decade. Christendom has disregarded the apostle Paul's warning found at 1 Corinthians 6:9,

11. What horrible things have been happening in Christendom?

10: "What! Do you not know that unrighteous persons will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom."

¹² Shortly, the King of eternity, Jehovah, acting through his heavenly Field Marshal, Christ Jesus, will let loose the great tribulation. First, Christendom and all other branches of Babylon the Great will suffer the execution of Jehovah's judgment. (Revelation 17:16, 17) They have shown themselves unworthy of the salvation that Jehovah has provided through Jesus' ransom sacrifice. They have despised God's

12. (a) How will the King of eternity take action against Babylon the Great? (b) In contrast with Christendom, for what reason will God's people sing "Hallelujah" choruses?

holy name. (Compare Ezekiel 39:7.) What a mockery it is that they sing "Hallelujah" choruses in their opulent religious edifices! They remove Jehovah's precious name from their Bible translations but seem oblivious to the fact that "Hallelujah" means "Praise Jah"—"Jah" being a shortened form of "Jehovah." Appropriately, Revelation 19:1-6 records the "Hallelujah" choruses soon to be sung in celebration of God's executing judgment on Babylon the Great.

¹³ Next in order is Jesus' 'arrival' to pronounce and execute judgment on nations and peoples. He himself prophesied: "When the Son of man [Christ Jesus] arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious [judgment] throne. And all the nations [on earth] 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. 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 25:31-34) Verse 46 goes on to relate that the goat class "will depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the righteous ones into everlasting life."

¹⁴ The Bible book of Revelation describes how the "King of kings and Lord of lords," our heavenly Lord, Jesus Christ, will at that time ride into battle at Armageddon, destroying the political and commercial elements of Satan's system. Thus Christ will have poured out "the anger of the wrath of God the Almighty" on Satan's entire earth-

ly domain. As these 'former things pass away,' God-fearing humans will be ushered into the glorious new world where God "will wipe out every tear from their eyes."—Revelation 19:11-16; 21:3-5.

A Time to Praise Jah

¹⁵ That day for executing judgment is at hand! We do well, therefore, to heed the prophetic word of the King of eternity. To those who are still enmeshed in the teachings and customs of false religion, a heavenly voice declares: "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." But where must escapees go? There can be only one truth, hence only one true religion. (Revelation 18:4; John 8:31, 32; 14:6; 17:3) Our gaining eternal life depends on finding that religion and obeying its God. The Bible directs us to him at Psalm 83:18, which reads: "Thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth."—*King James Version*.

¹⁶ However, we need to do more than merely know the name of the King of eternity. We need to study the Bible and learn about his grand qualities and purposes. Then we need to do his will for this present time, as indicated at Romans 10:9-13. The apostle Paul quoted the inspired prophets and concluded: "Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved." (Joel 2:32; Zephaniah 3:9) Saved? Yes, for multitudes today who exercise faith in Jehovah's ransom provision through Christ will be delivered out of the coming great tribulation, when judgment upon Satan's corrupt world is executed.—Revelation 7:9, 10, 14.

13, 14. (a) What momentous events occur next? (b) What is the happy outcome for God-fearing humans?

15, 16. (a) Why is it vital that we heed Jehovah's prophetic word? (b) What do the prophets and apostles indicate we must do for salvation, and what could this mean today for multitudes?

¹⁷ What is God's will for those who hope to survive? It is that we join even now in singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, praising the King of eternity in anticipation of his victory. We do this by telling others about his glorious purposes. As we progress in Bible understanding, we dedicate our lives to the King of eternity. That will lead to our living for all eternity under the arrangement that this mighty King describes, as found at Isaiah 65:17, 18: "Here I am creating new heavens [Jesus' Messianic Kingdom] and a new earth [a righteous new society of mankind]; and the former things will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart. But exult, you people, and be joyful forever in what I am creating."

¹⁸ The psalmist David described the King of eternity in these words: "Jehovah is great and very much to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable." (Psalm 145:3) His greatness is as unsearchable as the limits of space and eternity! (Romans 11:33) While we continue to take in knowledge of our Creator and of his ransom provision through his Son, Christ Jesus, we will want to praise our eternal King more and more. We will want to do as Psalm 145:11-13 outlines: "About the glory of your kingship they will talk, and about your mightiness they will speak, to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts and the glory of the splendor of his kingship. Your kingship is a kingship for all times indefinite, and your dominion is throughout all successive generations."

17. What grand hope should motivate us to join now in singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb?

18, 19. (a) What should David's words in Psalm 145 impel us to do? (b) What can we confidently expect at Jehovah's hand?

¹⁹ We can confidently expect that our God will be true to the declaration: "You are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing." The King of eternity will lead us tenderly through to the end of these last days, for David assured us: "Jehovah is guarding all those loving him, but all the wicked ones he will annihilate."—Psalm 145:16, 20.

²⁰ Each of the concluding five psalms in the Bible opens and closes with a "Hallelujah" invitation. Thus, Psalm 146 invites us: "Praise Jah, you people! Praise Jehovah, O my soul. I will praise Jehovah during my lifetime. I will make melody to my God as long as I am." Will you answer that call? Surely you should want to praise him! May you be among those described at Psalm 148:12, 13: "You young men and also you virgins, you old men together with boys. Let them praise the name of Jehovah, for his name alone is unreachably high. His dignity is above earth and heaven." May we respond wholeheartedly to the invitation: "Praise Jah, you people!" In unison, let us praise the King of eternity!

20. How do you respond to the invitation of the King of eternity, as sounded forth in the last five psalms?

What Is Your Comment?

- ☐ Of what did Jesus' apostles forewarn?
- ☐ Beginning in 1914, what decisive actions have taken place?
- ☐ What judgments is Jehovah about to execute?
- ☐ Why is this the time of all times to praise the King of eternity?

“WORK, NOT FOR THE FOOD THAT PERISHES”

AS TOLD BY DAVID LUNSTRUM

My brother Elwood and I were over 30 feet in the air, painting a new sign on the Watchtower factory building. More than 40 years later, it is still there, urging: “READ GOD’S WORD THE HOLY BIBLE DAILY.” Each week, thousands of people see this sign as they cross the famous Brooklyn Bridge.

MY EARLIEST recollections include the family wash day. By 5:00 a.m., Mother would be up, washing clothes for our large family, and Dad would be getting ready for work. They would have another of their heated discussions, Dad arguing that man somehow evolved over millions of years, and Mom quoting from the Bible to prove that humans were direct creations of God.

Even when I was only seven, I realized that Mother had the truth. As much as I loved Dad, I could see that his belief offered no hope for the future. How happy Mother would have been to know that many years later, two of her sons painted a sign that encouraged people to read the Bible, a book she loved so much!

But I am getting ahead of myself. How did I come to have such a privileged job? I need to go back to the year 1906, three years before I was born.

Mother’s Faithful Example

At that time Mom and Dad were new-lweds and living in a tent in Arizona. A Bible Student, as Jehovah’s Witnesses were then called, came by and offered Mom the series of books written by Charles Taze Rus-

sell, entitled *Studies in the Scriptures*. She stayed up all night reading them and soon realized that this was the truth she had been looking for. She could hardly wait for Dad to return from searching for work.

Dad too was dissatisfied with what the churches were teaching, so for a time he accepted these Bible truths. Later, however, he went his own way religiously and even made it difficult for Mother. Yet she never ceased caring for the physical as well as the spiritual needs of her children.

I will never forget Mother’s coming downstairs each night, after working hard all day, to read a portion of the Bible to us or to share with us some spiritual gem. Dad was a hard worker too, and as I grew older, he taught me the painting trade. Yes, Dad taught me to work, but Mom taught me what to work for, as Jesus instructed, ‘the food that does not perish.’—John 6:27.

Our family eventually settled in the small town of Ellensburg in the state of Washington, about 110 miles east of Seattle. When we children started attending the meetings of the Bible Students with Mother, we met in private homes. All the men left our study group when the need to share in the house-to-house ministry was stressed. But Mother

never wavered. This left the lasting impression on me always to trust in the direction of Jehovah's organization.

Eventually Father and Mother had nine children. I was born on October 1, 1909, their third child. Altogether, six of us imitated Mom's fine example and became zealous Witnesses of Jehovah.

Dedication and Baptism

When I was in my late teens, I made a dedication to Jehovah, and I symbolized this by water baptism in 1927. The baptism was held in Seattle in an old building that had formerly been a Baptist church. I am glad they had taken the old steeple off. We were escorted down to the pool in the basement where we were given long black robes to wear. It looked as if we were going to a funeral.

I was in Seattle again a few months later, and this time I received my first taste of door-to-door witnessing. The one who was taking the lead directed me, "You go this way around the block, and I'll go that way." Despite my nervousness, I placed two sets of booklets with a very nice woman. I continued the door-to-door ministry when I returned to Ellensburg, and now, nearly 70 years later, such service is still a great joy to me.

Service at World Headquarters

Not long afterward, a person who had served at Brooklyn Bethel, the world headquarters of the Watch Tower Society, encouraged me to volunteer to serve there. Shortly after our conversation, a notice appeared in the *Watchtower* magazine

that made known a need for help at Bethel. So I applied. I shall never forget my joy on receiving notice to report for Bethel service in Brooklyn, New York, on March 10, 1930. Thus began my full-time career of working for 'the food that does not perish.'

One might think that with my experience as a painter, I would have been assigned to paint something. Instead, my first job was working on the stitching machine in the factory. Although this was a very monotonous



Elwood painting the sign "READ GOD'S WORD THE HOLY BIBLE DAILY"

**With Grant Suiter and
John Kurzen, demonstrating the new
phonograph at the convention in 1940**

job, I enjoyed the work for over six years. The large rotary press that we affectionately called the old battleship churned out booklets that were sent down a conveyer belt to our floor below. We had fun seeing if we could stitch the booklets as fast as we received them from the battleship.

Afterward I worked in a number of departments, including the one where we made phonographs. We used these machines to play recorded Bible messages at the doorsteps of householders. A vertical phonograph was designed and produced by volunteers in our department. This phonograph not only played prerecorded messages but also had special compartments for carrying booklets and perhaps a sandwich. I had the privilege of demonstrating the use of this new equipment at a convention in Detroit, Michigan, in 1940.

However, we were making more than ingenious machines. We were also making important spiritual adjustments. For instance, Jehovah's Witnesses used to wear a pin with a cross and crown. But then we came to understand that Jesus was executed on an upright stake, not on a cross. (Acts 5:30) So wearing these pins was discontinued. It was my privilege to remove the clasps from the pins. Later the gold was melted down and sold.

Although we had a busy weekly five-and-a-half-day work schedule, we were involved in the Christian ministry on the weekends. One day, 16 of us were arrested and put in jail in Brooklyn. Why? Well, in those days we considered religion synonymous with false religion. So we carried signs that read on one side "Religion Is a Snare and a Racket" and on the other "Serve God and Christ the King." For carrying these signs, we were put



in jail, but Hayden Covington, the Watch Tower Society's lawyer, bailed us out. At that time many cases involving freedom of worship were being fought before the Supreme Court of the United States, and it was thrilling to be at Bethel and to hear firsthand the reports about our victories.

Eventually I was assigned to jobs that utilized my painting experience. On Staten Island, one of the five boroughs of New York City, we had our radio station WBBR. The station's radio towers were over 200 feet high, and they had three sets of guy wires. I sat on a three-foot-long by eight-inch-wide board while a coworker hoisted me up. Sitting high above the ground on that small seat, I painted the guy wires and the towers. Some have asked me if we did not do a lot of praying while doing that job!

A summer job I will never forget was washing the windows and painting the window sills of the factory building. We called it our summer vacation. We rigged up our wooden scaffolding and with a block and tackle, pulled ourselves up and down the eight-story building.

A Supportive Family

In 1932 my father died, and I wondered if I should go home and help care for Mom. So before lunch one day, I put a note at the head table where Brother Rutherford, the Soci-



In 1944 those of us who were in the truth were in the full-time ministry: David, Alice, Joel, Eva, Elwood, and Frances

Surviving siblings from left: Alice, Eva, Joel, David, and Frances



ety's president sat. In it I requested to speak with him. Upon learning of my concern and finding out that I had brothers and sisters still living at home, he asked, "Do you want to stay at Bethel and do the Lord's work?"

"Of course I do," I responded.

So he suggested that I write Mother to see if she agreed with my decision to stay. That is what I did, and she wrote back expressing total agreement with my decision. I really appreciated Brother Rutherford's kindness and advice.

During my many years at Bethel, I regularly wrote to my family and encouraged them to serve Jehovah, just as Mother had encouraged me. Mother died in July 1937. What an inspiration she had been to our family! Only my older brother and sister, Paul and Esther, and my younger sister Lois did not become Witnesses. Paul, however, was favorable to our work and provided lots on which we built our first Kingdom Hall.

In 1936 my sister Eva became a pioneer, or full-time preacher. That same year she married Ralph Thomas, and in 1939 they were assigned to the traveling work to serve congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. Later they moved to Mexico, where they spent 25 years helping with the Kingdom work.

In 1939 my sisters Alice and Frances also took up the pioneer service. What a joy it

was to see Alice behind a counter at the St. Louis convention in 1941 demonstrating the use of the phonograph equipment that I had helped to produce! Although Alice had to interrupt her pioneering at times because of family responsibilities, altogether she has spent over 40 years in the full-time ministry. Frances went on to attend the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead in 1944 and served for a time as a missionary in Puerto Rico.

Joel and Elwood, the two youngest in the family, became pioneers in Montana in the early 1940's. Joel has remained a faithful Witness and now serves as a ministerial servant. Elwood joined me at Bethel in 1944, bringing great joy to my heart. He was less than five years old when I left home. As noted earlier, we worked together painting that sign on the factory building, "Read God's Word the Holy Bible Daily." I have often wondered how many people who have seen that sign over the years have been encouraged to read their Bible.

Elwood served at Bethel until 1956 when he married Emma Flyte. For many years Elwood and Emma worked together in the full-time ministry, serving for a while in Kenya, Africa, as well as in Spain. Elwood was stricken with cancer and died in Spain in 1978. Emma has remained in Spain in the pioneer work to this day.

Marriage and a Family

In September 1953, I left Bethel to marry Alice Rivera, a pioneer in the Brooklyn Center Congregation that I was attending. I let Alice know that I had the heavenly hope, but she was still interested in marrying me.—Philippians 3:14.

After 23 years of living at Bethel, it was quite an adjustment to begin secular work as a painter to maintain Alice and myself in the pioneer work. Alice was always supportive, even when for health reasons she had to stop pioneering. In 1954 we were expecting our first child. The delivery did not go well, though our son, John, did fine. Alice lost so much blood during the cesarean section that the doctors did not think she would live. At one point they could not even detect a pulse. Yet she survived the night and in time recovered fully.

A few years later, when Alice's father died, we moved further out on Long Island to be with her mother. Since we did not have a car, I walked or used the bus and subway for transportation. I was thereby able to continue in the pioneer work and to support my family. The joys of the full-time ministry have far outweighed any sacrifices. Helping people—such as Joe Natale, who gave up a promising baseball career to become a Witness—has been just one of my many blessings.

In 1967, as conditions worsened in the New York area, I decided to take Alice and John back to my hometown of Ellensburg to live. Now I find it rewarding to see so many

grandchildren and great-grandchildren of my mother sharing in the full-time ministry. Some even serve at Bethel. John along with his wife and children are also faithfully serving Jehovah.

Sadly, I lost my dear wife, Alice, in death in 1989. Keeping busy in the full-time ministry has helped me endure the loss. My sister Alice and I now enjoy pioneering together. How fine it is to live again under the same roof and to find ourselves busy in this most important work!

In the spring of 1994, I visited Bethel for the first time in about 25 years. What a joy it was to see dozens of those with whom I worked more than 40 years ago! When I went to Bethel in 1930, only 250 were in the family, but today the Bethel family in Brooklyn numbers over 3,500!

Sustained by Spiritual Food

Early most mornings I take a walk along the Yakima River near our home. From there I can see majestic snow-covered Mount Rainier that towers over 14,000 feet in the air. Wildlife is abundant. Sometimes I see deer, and once I even saw an elk.

These quiet, solitary times allow me to meditate on Jehovah's marvelous provisions. I pray for strength to continue faithfully serving our God, Jehovah. I also like to sing as I walk along, especially the song "Making Jehovah's Heart Glad," the words of which say: "Great God, we've vowed to do your will; in wisdom your work we'll fulfill. For then we know we'll have a part in making glad your loving heart."

I am glad that I chose to do a work that makes Jehovah's heart glad. I pray that I may continue to do this work until I receive the heavenly reward that has been promised. My wish is that this account may move others also to use their lives in 'working for the food that does not perish.'—John 6:27.

ALWAYS THROW YOUR BURDEN ON JEHOVAH

MANY today feel crushed by burdens. Economic hardships, distressing family problems, health problems, pain and suffering due to oppression and tyranny, and a host of other afflictions hang like millstones around their necks. Besides these external pressures, some also feel weighed down by a sense of personal worthlessness and failure because of their own imperfections. Many are tempted to give up the fight altogether. How can you cope when burdens seem unbearable?

At one time King David of Israel felt that the pressure was almost unbearable. According to Psalm 55, he was driven to distraction by anxiety because of pressures and animosity from his enemies. He felt great heartache and fear. He could only groan in his grief. (Psalm 55:2, 5, 17) Despite all his distress, however, he found a way to cope. How? He looked to his God for support. His advice to others who might feel as he did was: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself."—Psalm 55:22.

What did he mean by "throw your burden upon Jehovah himself"? Is it simply a matter of going to Jehovah in prayer and expressing our anxiety? Or can we do something ourselves to help relieve the situation? What if we feel too unworthy to

approach Jehovah? We can find out what David meant by looking at some experiences he would have remembered vividly when he penned those words.

Do Things in Jehovah's Strength

Do you recall how Goliath struck fear into the hearts of the fighting men of Israel? This giant of a man, over nine feet tall, terrified them. (1 Samuel 17:4-11, 24) But David was not afraid. Why? Because he did not try to deal with Goliath in his own strength. From the time he was anointed as Israel's future king, he had allowed God's spirit to direct him and strengthen him in all he did. (1 Samuel 16:13) So he said to Goliath: "I am coming to you with the name of Jehovah of armies, the God of the battle lines of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day Jehovah will surrender you into my hand." (1 Samuel 17:45, 46) David was skilled as a slinger, but we can be sure that Jehovah's holy spirit guided and made more lethal the stone he slung at Goliath.—1 Samuel 17:48-51.

David coped with this immense challenge and came off victorious by having confidence that God would support and strengthen him. He had developed a good, trusting relationship with God. This was no doubt strengthened by the way Jehovah had delivered him earlier. (1 Samuel

17:34-37) Like David, you can maintain a **strong personal relationship with Jehovah** and have complete confidence in his ability and willingness to strengthen and sustain you in all circumstances.—Psalm 34:7, 8.

Do What You Can to Solve the Problem

This does not mean, however, that there will never be times of intense pain, anxiety, and even fear, as Psalm 55 clearly shows. Some years after this fearless display of confidence in Jehovah, for example, David experienced great fear in the face of his enemies. He lost favor with King Saul and had to flee for his life. Try to imagine the emotional turmoil this must have caused David, the questions it must have raised in his mind about the outworking of Jehovah's purpose. After all, he had been anointed as the future king in Israel, yet here he was having to survive as a fugitive in the wilderness, hunted like a wild animal. When he tried to find refuge in the city of Gath, the hometown of Goliath, he was recognized. With what result? The record says that "he became very much afraid."—1 Samuel 21:10-12.

But he did not allow his fear and deep

anxiety to stop him from looking to Jehovah for help. According to Psalm 34 (written as a consequence of this experience), David said: "I inquired of Jehovah, and he answered me, and out of all my frights he delivered me. This afflicted one called, and Jehovah himself heard. And out of all his distresses He saved him."—Psalm 34:4, 6.

Jehovah supported him, of course. Yet notice that David did not just sit back and wait for Jehovah to rescue him. He recognized the need for him to do all that he could under the circumstances to get out of the difficult situation. He acknowledged Jehovah's hand in his deliverance, but he himself took action, feigning insanity so that the king of Gath did not kill him. (1 Samuel 21:14-22:1) We too need to do all we can to cope with burdens, rather than just wait for Jehovah to rescue us.—James 1:5, 6; 2:26.

Do Not Add to Your Burdens

David learned another lesson, a painful one, later in his life. What was it? That sometimes we add to our own burdens. Following victory over the Philistines, things went wrong for David when he decided to move the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. The historical account tells us: "Then David and all the people that were with him rose up and went to Baale-judah to bring up from there the ark of the true God . . . However, they had the ark of the true God ride upon a new wagon, . . . and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new wagon."—2 Samuel 6:2, 3.

Using a wagon to transport the Ark violated all the instructions that Jehovah

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had given regarding it. It was clearly stated that the only authorized bearers, the Kohathite Levites, should carry the Ark on their shoulders, using poles placed through the rings specially built into the Ark. (Exodus 25:13, 14; Numbers 4:15, 19; 7:7-9) Ignoring these instructions brought calamity. When the cattle pulling the wagon nearly caused it to tip over, Uzzah, who was likely a Levite but certainly not a priest, reached out to steady the Ark and was struck down by Jehovah for his irreverence.—2 Samuel 6:6, 7.

David as king had to bear some responsibility for this. His reaction shows that even those who have a good relationship with Jehovah can occasionally react badly to trialsome situations. First David became angry. Then he grew afraid. (2 Samuel 6:8, 9) His trusting relationship with Jehovah was severely tested. Here was an occasion when seemingly he failed to throw his burden on Jehovah, when he did not follow his commands. Might that be the situation with us sometimes? Do we ever blame Jehovah for problems that result because we ignore his instructions? —Proverbs 19:3.

Coping With the Burden of Guilt

Later, David created a huge burden of guilt for himself by sinning grievously against Jehovah's moral standards. On this occasion David had abdicated his responsibility to lead his men in battle. He stayed in Jerusalem while they went out to fight. This led to serious trouble.—2 Samuel 11:1.

King David saw the beautiful Bath-sheba bathing. He got immorally involved with her, and she became pregnant. (2 Samuel

11:2-5) To try to cover up the misconduct, he arranged for her husband, Uriah, to return to Jerusalem from the field of battle. Uriah refused to have marital relations with his wife while Israel was involved in battle. (2 Samuel 11:6-11) David now resorted to wicked and devious means to cover up his sin. He arranged for Uriah's fellow soldiers to leave Uriah in a vulnerable position in the battle so that he would be killed. A heinous, grievous sin!—2 Samuel 11:12-17.

Eventually, of course, David's sin caught up with him, and he was exposed. (2 Samuel 12:7-12) Try to imagine the weight of grief and guilt that David must have felt when the enormity of what he had done as a result of his passion dawned on him. He could have been overwhelmed by his own sense of failure, especially because he was likely an emotional, sensitive man. He might well have felt completely worthless!

However, David quickly acknowledged his wrong, admitting to the prophet Nathan: "I have sinned against Jehovah." (2 Samuel 12:13) Psalm 51 tells us how he felt and how he supplicated Jehovah God to cleanse him and forgive him. He prayed: "Thoroughly wash me from my error, and cleanse me even from my sin. For my transgressions I myself know, and my sin is in front of me constantly." (Psalm 51:2, 3) Because he was truly repentant, he was able to rebuild his strong, close relationship with Jehovah. David did not dwell on feelings of remorse and worthlessness. He threw his burden on Jehovah by humbly acknowledging his guilt, demonstrating genuine repentance, and praying intensely for Jehovah's forgiveness. He regained God's favor.—Psalm 51:7-12, 15-19.

Coping With Betrayal

This brings us to the episode that prompted David to write Psalm 55. He was under great emotional strain. "My very heart is in severe pain within me," he wrote, "and the frights of death itself have fallen upon me." (Psalm 55:4) What caused this pain? Absalom, David's son, had schemed to steal the kingship from David. (2 Samuel 15:1-6) This betrayal by his own son was hard enough to bear, but what made it worse was that David's most trusted counselor, a man by the name of Ahithophel, joined the conspiracy against David. It is Ahithophel that David describes at Psalm 55:12-14. As a result of the conspiracy and betrayal, David had to flee Jerusalem. (2 Samuel 15:13, 14) What anguish this must have caused him!

Still, he did not allow his intense emotion and grief to weaken his trust and confidence in Jehovah. He prayed to Jehovah to frustrate the plans of the conspirators. (2 Samuel 15:30, 31) Again we see that David did not merely wait passively for Jehovah to do all the work. As soon as the opportunity presented itself, he did what he could to combat the conspiracy against him. He sent another of his counselors, Hushai, back into Jerusalem to pretend to join the conspiracy, though, in fact, he went to undermine it. (2 Samuel 15:32-34) With Jehovah's support, this plan worked. Hushai gained enough time for David to regroup and to get organized to defend himself.—2 Samuel 17:14.

How David all through his life must have appreciated Jehovah's protective care as well as his patience and willingness to forgive! (Psalm 34:18, 19; 51:17) It is with this background that David confidently encourages us in our times of dis-

tress to turn to Jehovah for help, to 'throw our burden on Jehovah.'—Compare 1 Peter 5:6, 7.

Build and Maintain a Strong, Trusting Relationship With Jehovah

How do we get the kind of relationship with Jehovah that David had, a relationship that sustained him in times of great trial and tribulation? We build such a relationship by being diligent students of God's Word, the Bible. We let him instruct us about his laws, principles, and personality. (Psalm 19:7-11) As we meditate on God's Word, we grow ever closer to him and learn to trust him implicitly. (Psalm 143:1-5) We deepen and strengthen that relationship as we associate with fellow worshipers to be further instructed by Jehovah. (Psalm 122:1-4) We intensify our relationship with Jehovah through heartfelt prayer.—Psalm 55:1.

True, David, like us, did have his low points when his relationship with Jehovah was not as strong as it should have been. Oppression can make us "act crazy." (Ecclesiastes 7:7) But Jehovah sees what is happening, and he knows what is in our heart. (Ecclesiastes 4:1; 5:8) We need to work hard to keep our relationship with Jehovah strong. Then, whatever burdens we have to carry, we can depend on Jehovah to relieve the pressure or to give us the strength to cope with our situation. (Philippians 4:6, 7, 13) It is a matter of our staying close to Jehovah. When David did this, he was absolutely secure.

Therefore, whatever your circumstances, says David, *always* throw your burden upon Jehovah. Then we will experience the truth of the promise: "He himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter."—Psalm 55:22.

FAITH MOVED HIM TO ACT

WHEN Jehovah commissioned Moses to lead the nation of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, Moses at first begged off, saying: "Excuse me, Jehovah, but I am not a fluent speaker, neither since yesterday nor since before that nor since your speaking to your servant, for I am slow of mouth and slow of tongue." (Exodus 4:10) Yes, Moses did not feel qualified for such a weighty assignment.

Similarly today, many of Jehovah's servants at times feel inadequate to fulfill the duties that they have been assigned. For example, one Christian overseer named Theodore relates: "Of all the things Jehovah asks me to do, the field ministry is the hardest. When I was young, I would quickly walk up to the door, pretend to ring the doorbell, and quietly walk away, hoping no one would hear or see me. As I got older, I stopped doing that, but the thought of going from door to door made me physically ill. Even to this day, I get sick before going out in the ministry, but I go anyway."

What is it that enabled Moses and modern-day Witnesses like Theodore to cope with such fears?

The Bible answers: "By faith he [Moses] left Egypt, . . . for he continued steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible." —Hebrews 11:27.

Indeed, by exercising faith in Jehovah, Moses was able to overcome his feelings of inadequacy and fulfill his assigned duties as judge, prophet, national leader, mediator of the Law covenant, commander, historian, and Bible writer.

In like manner, when we have faith like Moses, we will walk as if 'seeing the invisible One.' Such faith inspires courage, enabling us to shoulder our Christian responsibilities—even when we may feel inadequate.



"You Have Need of Endurance"

WE HAVE "need of endurance," if we are to receive "the fulfillment of the promise." (Hebrews 10:36) One Bible scholar explains that the Greek word for "endurance" that the apostle Paul used in this text sometimes served to describe "the ability of a plant to live under hard and unfavourable circumstances."

In the mountains of Europe, there grows just such a plant. Curiously enough, it is called live-forever. This alpine plant does not live forever, of course, but it does endure year after year, producing exquisite flowers every summer. *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* explains that the name live-forever was given to the plant because of its "hardiness and durability." (The scientific name for these plants of the genus *Sempervivum* also means "live-forever.")

What makes this durable plant remarkable is that it grows in the most inhospitable places. It can be found high up on windswept mountain slopes, where temperatures can plummet as much as 60° F in just 24 hours. It can take root in a rocky crevice with a smattering of soil. What are some of the secrets of its endurance in such harsh conditions?

The live-forever has succulent leaves, which carefully hoard water. This enables it to take full advantage of all the moisture available from rain or melting snow. Moreover, it grows in clusters that unite their strength to get a firm grip on their rocky support. By taking root in crevices, it



has some protection against the elements, even though there may be little soil. In other words, it thrives by making the most of difficult circumstances.

Spiritually speaking, we may find ourselves in circumstances that test the quality of our endurance. What will help us to endure under trial? Like the live-forever plant, we can store up the life-giving water of God's Word and associate closely with true Christians for support and protection. Above all, like the alpine flower, we must tenaciously cleave to our "rock," Jehovah, as well as to his Word and to his organization.—2 Samuel 22:3.

Truly, the live-forever plant is an attractive reminder that, even in a harsh environment, we can endure if we take advantage of the provisions available. Jehovah assures us that such endurance will lead to our 'inheriting the promises,' which will literally mean living forever.—Hebrews 6:12; Matthew 25:46.