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THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



POOR YET RICH
How Can It Be?

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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POOR YET RICH How can it be?

Centuries ago a wise man prayed that he might not become poor. Why such a request? Because he feared that poverty might prompt attitudes and actions that would threaten his relationship with God. This is evident from his words: "Let me devour the food prescribed for me . . . that I may not come to poverty and I actually steal and assail the name of my God."

—PROVERBS 30:8, 9.

DOES this mean that it is impossible for a poor person to serve God faithfully? Hardly! Throughout history countless servants of Jehovah God have maintained integrity to him despite the hardship that poverty brings. In turn, Jehovah loves those who trust in him and provides for them.

Faithful Ones of Old

The apostle Paul himself experienced times of need. (2 Corinthians 6:3, 4) He also described a 'great cloud' of faithful pre-Christian witnesses, some of whom "went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, while they were in want . . . They wandered about in deserts and mountains and caves and dens of the earth."—Hebrews 11:37, 38; 12:1.

One of these faithful ones was the prophet Elijah. During a three-and-a-half-year drought, Jehovah regularly provided food for him. First, God had ravens bring the prophet bread and meat. (1 Kings 17:2-6) Later, Jehovah miraculously sustained the supply of flour and oil from which a widow provided for Elijah. (1 Kings 17:8-16) The food was very basic, but it kept the prophet, the woman, and her son alive.

Jehovah likewise sustained the faithful prophet Jeremiah during hard economic times. Jeremiah survived the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem, when people had to "eat bread by weight and in anxious care." (Ezekiel 4:16) Eventually, the famine in the city became so severe that some women ate the flesh of their own children. (Lamentations

2:20) Even though Jeremiah was in custody because of his fearless preaching, Jehovah saw to it that “a round loaf of bread” was given to him daily “until all the bread was exhausted from the city.”—Jeremiah 37:21.

So Jeremiah, like Elijah, had little to eat. The Scriptures do not tell us what or how often Jeremiah ate after Jerusalem ran out of bread. Yet, we know that Jehovah sustained him and that he survived that terrible time of famine.

Today, poverty exists in every part of the world. According to the United Nations, the greatest concentration of poverty is found in Africa. Stated a UN press release in 1996: “Fully half of all Africans are impoverished.” Despite increasingly harsh economic circumstances, an ever-growing number of Africans are applying Bible principles in life and are faithfully serving God, confident that he will sustain them. Consider some examples from one part of our troubled world.

Maintaining Honesty

Michael,* who lives in Nigeria, is a farmer with six children to support. “It is hard to be honest when you don’t have money to care for your family,” he says. “When I am tempted to be dishonest, however, I remind myself of Ephesians 4:28, which says: ‘Let the stealer steal no more, but rather let him do hard work, doing with his hands what is good work.’ So if temptation comes my way, I ask myself, ‘Have I *worked* for this money?’”

“For example,” adds Michael, “as I was walking along one day, I saw a bag fall off the back of a motorcycle. I was not able to stop the cyclist, so I picked the bag up and found that it was full of money! Using the identification in the bag, I found the owner and returned the bag to him.”

* Substitute names are used in this article.

Combating Depression

A man in North Africa observed: “Poverty is [like] being stuck in a deep hole, being able to see the light and people freely walking around, but not having the voice to shout for help or a ladder to climb out.” Little wonder that poverty often brings feelings of depression and frustration! Even servants of God may see the riches of others and begin to think that a life of integrity is not worthwhile. (Compare Psalm 73:2-13.) How might such feelings be countered?

Peter, a West African, was retired after 19 years in government service. He now subsists chiefly on a small pension. “When I have periods of discouragement,” states Peter, “I remind myself of what I have read in the Bible and the Watch Tower Society’s publications. This old system is about to pass away, and we are awaiting a better system.

“Also, I think about 1 Peter 5:9, which says: ‘Take your stand against [Satan], solid in the faith, knowing that the same things in the way of sufferings are being accomplished in the entire association of your brothers in the world.’ So I am not the only one who is suffering difficulties. These reminders help me dismiss thoughts that are discouraging and depressing.”

“Besides,” Peter adds, “Jesus performed many miracles when on earth, though he did not make anyone materially rich. Why should I expect him to make me wealthy?”

The Power of Prayer

Drawing close to Jehovah God in prayer is another way to combat negative thinking. When Mary became one of Jehovah’s Witnesses in 1960, her family forsook her. Unmarried and now in her 50’s, she is frail and has very little in a material way. Nevertheless, she is zealous in the Christian ministry.

Mary says: “When I feel discouraged, I go to Jehovah in prayer. I know that no one can

help me more than he can. I have learned that when you trust in Jehovah, he helps you. I always call to mind these words of King David, found at Psalm 37:25: 'A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread.'

"I also draw encouragement from the experiences of older spiritual brothers and sisters that are related in *The Watchtower*. Jehovah God helped them, so I know he will continue to help me too. He blesses my little job of selling *fufu* [a cassava meal], and I manage to meet my daily needs. Sometimes when I have hardly any money and I wonder what to do, Jehovah sends someone who gives me a gift and says, 'Sister, please take this.' Jehovah has never disappointed me."

The Value of Bible Study

Jehovah's Witnesses value the study of God's Word, the Bible, and the poor among them are no exception. Sixty-year-old John serves as a pioneer (a full-time Kingdom preacher) and a ministerial servant in the congregation. He lives in a ramshackle two-story building shared by 13 families. His room is a section of the first-floor hallway, partitioned off by plywood. In it there are two old chairs and a table piled high with Bible-study aids. He sleeps on a straw mat.

John used to make about a dollar a day selling bread, but when wheat importation was banned, he lost this means of livelihood. He says: "I find things very difficult at times, but I continue pioneering. It is Jehovah who sustains me. I do any work I can find and do not rely on any human to support or feed me, though brothers in the congregation are very helpful. They help me look for work and sometimes give me gifts of money."

"I make time to read the Bible and the Watch Tower Society's publications. I study

in the early hours of the morning when the house is quiet and read later in the night whenever we have electricity. I know I have to keep up with my personal study."

Training Children for Life

Daniel is a widower who has six children. In 1985 he lost the job he had held for 25 years, but he found work as a storekeeper. "Life is hard for the family economically," he says. "Now we can eat only once a day. Once, we went without eating for three days. We were only able to drink water to keep going."

Daniel serves as an elder in the congregation. "I never miss Christian meetings, and I keep busy with theocratic assignments," he says. "Whenever there is any work to be done around the Kingdom Hall, I make sure that I am present. And when things are tough, I remind myself of Peter's words to Jesus, recorded at John 6:68: 'Lord, whom shall we go away to?' If I stop serving Jehovah, where do I go? Paul's words that we find at Romans 8:35-39 also fill me with determination because they show that nothing will separate us from the love of God and Christ. This is the attitude I inculcate in my children. I constantly tell them that we must never leave Jehovah." Daniel's zeal, combined with a regular family Bible study, has had a positive influence on his children.

A Spirit of Giving

One might think that those who live in extreme poverty would hardly be in a position to contribute financially to promote Kingdom interests. But that is not so. (Compare Luke 21:1-4.) Some Witnesses in Ghana whose main occupation is subsistence farming mark out part of their land to be used to promote the interests of God's Kingdom. When the produce of that portion of their land is sold, the money is used exclusively for that purpose, which includes making

contributions at the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Joan, who lives in Central Africa, is a pioneer. To take care of a paralyzed husband and four other dependents, she sells bread. When the congregation she attends needed benches for the Kingdom Hall, Joan's family decided to donate all the funds they had in the house. That left them with nothing. The next day, however, someone unexpectedly paid a long-standing debt, giving them money that they had given up hope of ever receiving!

Joan is cheerful and does not worry unduly about money. "I explain my situation to Jehovah in prayer, and then I go out in the field ministry. We know that there is little hope for better times in this system of things. Yet, we realize that Jehovah will provide for our needs."

Showing Industriousness

Jehovah's Witnesses are identified by their love for one another. (John 13:35) Those having money help their fellow Christians who are in need. Often this comes as a gift and sometimes as help with employment.

Mark, who lives in Congo, suffers from leprosy. It has deformed his toes and fingers. To walk, he therefore relies on crutches. When Mark decided to serve Jehovah, he began to make major changes in his life. Instead of begging for food as he formerly did, he began to grow his own. He also made adobe bricks, which he sold.

Despite his physical disability, Mark continued to work industriously. He eventually bought a piece of land and built a modest house on it. Today, Mark serves as a congregation elder and is well respected in the

Who Are "Doers of the Word"?

ACCORDING to a 1994 Gallup poll, 96 percent of Americans "believe in God or a universal spirit." There are also "more churches per capita in the United States than in any other nation on Earth," said U.S. News & World Report. Despite such pious appearances, veteran pollster George Gallup, Jr., says: "The stark fact is, most Americans don't know what they believe or why."

Statistics also indicate that there is a large gap between many people's reli-

gious convictions and their actions. For instance, "sociologists note that some of the highest-crime areas of the country also happen to be places where religious belief and practice are strongest," says writer Jeffery Sheler.

This should not be surprising. Why? Because as far back as the first century, the apostle Paul warned fellow Christians to beware of those who "publicly declare they know God, but [who] disown him by their

works." (Titus 1:16) Additionally, Paul told the young man Timothy that "the last days" would be marked by people "having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power."—2 Timothy 3:1, 5.

True Christians, however, do their utmost to follow Jesus Christ's command to "go . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations." (Matthew 28:19) In this way they "become doers of the word, and not hearers only."—James 1:22.



Bible study is valued by people around the world

town where he lives. Now he assists other needy ones.

Of course, in many places work is virtually impossible to find. A Christian elder who serves at one of the Watch Tower Society's branch offices in Central Africa wrote: "Many brothers here have no work. Some try to create their own jobs, but this is difficult. Many have reasoned that since they are going to suffer no matter what they do, they will make material sacrifices as pioneer ministers. In doing that, many find that they are blessed more abundantly than if they had a job with little or no pay."

Jehovah Sustains His People

Jesus Christ said of himself: "Foxes have dens and birds of heaven have roosts, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head." (Luke 9:58) Similarly, the apostle

Paul wrote: "Down to this very hour we continue to hunger and also to thirst and to be scantily clothed and to be knocked about and to be homeless."—1 Corinthians 4:11.

Both Jesus and Paul chose to live a life of limited economic means so that they could more fully pursue their ministry. Many present-day Christians are poor because they have no other choice. Nevertheless, they apply Bible principles in life and zealously seek to serve God. They know that they are dearly loved by Jehovah as they experience the truthfulness of Jesus' assurance: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other [material things] will be added to you." (Matthew 6:25-33) Moreover, these poor servants of God have evidence that "the blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich."—Proverbs 10:22.



LUSCIOUS fruits, delightful vegetables, and sheaves of healthy corn piled high present an appealing picture. At harvesttime such displays adorn the altars and pulpits of churches throughout England. In Europe, as elsewhere, numerous festivities mark both the beginning and the end of the harvest season.

Those whose livelihood is dependent on the soil are especially thankful for the land's produce. Indeed, God called on the ancient nation of Israel to celebrate three annual festivals that were closely associated with the harvest. In early spring, during the Festival of Unfermented Cakes, the Israelites presented to God a sheaf of the firstfruits of the barley harvest. At the Festival of Weeks (or, Pentecost) in late spring, they offered loaves made from the firstfruits of the wheat harvest. In the fall came the Festival of Ingathering, which marked the end of Israel's agricultural year. (Exodus 23:14-17) These festivals were "holy conventions" and times of rejoicing.—Leviticus 23:2; Deuteronomy 16:16.

What, then, of modern-day harvest celebrations? Do they please God?

Pagan Links

Disturbed by the secular nature of the traditional harvesttime banquet and the drunkenness associated with the celebration, an Anglican clergyman in Cornwall, England, decided in 1843 to revive a medieval harvest custom. He took some of the first grain harvested and from it made bread for the communion celebration in his church. Doing so, he perpetuated the festival of Lammas—a "Christian" celebration that some say had its origin with the ancient worship of the Celtic god Lugh.* Thus, the modern Anglican harvest festival has a pagan origin.

What about other celebrations that take place at the end of the harvest season? According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, many of the customs that mark these festivities trace their origin to "the animistic belief in the corn [grain] spirit or corn mother." In some regions the farmers believed that a spirit resided in the last sheaf of grain to be harvested. To chase out the spirit, they beat the grain to the ground.

* The word "Lammas" is derived from an Old English word meaning "loaf-mass."

Elsewhere they wove some blades of the cereal into a "corn dolly" that they kept safe for "luck" until seed-sowing the following year. Then they plowed the ears of grain back into the soil in hopes that this would bless the new crop.

Some legends associate harvesttime with the worship of the Babylonian god Tammuz, consort of the fertility goddess Ishtar. Cutting off the ripe head of grain paralleled Tammuz' untimely death. Other legends even connect harvesttime with human sacrifice—a practice that Jehovah God detests.—Leviticus 20:2; Jeremiah 7:30, 31.

What Is God's View?

God's dealings with ancient Israel clearly reveal that Jehovah, the Creator and Source of life, demanded the exclusive devotion of his worshipers. (Psalm 36:9; Nahum 1:2) In the prophet Ezekiel's day, the practice of weeping for the god Tammuz was a 'great detestable thing' in Jehovah's eyes. This, along with other false religious rites, caused God to shut his ears to the prayers of those false worshipers.—Ezekiel 8:6, 13, 14, 18.

Contrast this with what Jehovah God instructed Israel to observe in connection with the harvest. At the Festival of Ingathering, the Israelites held a solemn assembly during which young and old, rich and poor, lived in temporary dwellings decorated with the lush foliage of splendid trees. This was a time of great rejoicing for them, but it was also a time to reflect on the deliverance God had granted their forebears at the time of the Exodus from Egypt.—Leviticus 23:40-43.

During the Israelite festivals, offerings were presented to Jehovah, the only true God. (Deuteronomy 8:10-20) As for the aforementioned animistic beliefs, the Bible nowhere speaks of produce, such as sheaves

of wheat, as having a soul.* And the Scriptures clearly show that idols remain inanimate, unable to speak, see, hear, smell, feel, or offer their worshipers any help.—Psalm 115:5-8; Romans 1:23-25.

Christians today are not under the Law covenant that God concluded with the ancient nation of Israel. Indeed, God 'took it out of the way by nailing it to Jesus' torture stake.' (Colossians 2:13, 14) Jehovah's modern-day servants live by "the law of the Christ" and respond appreciatively to all that God provides.—Galatians 6:2.

The apostle Paul plainly stated that the Jewish festivals were "a shadow of the things to come," adding, "but the reality belongs to the Christ." (Colossians 2:16, 17) Consequently, true Christians accept the Scriptural reasoning: "The things which the nations sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not to God . . . You cannot be drinking the cup of Jehovah and the cup of demons." (1 Corinthians 10:20, 21) Moreover, Christians heed the directive to "quit touching the unclean thing." Do harvest festivals in your neighborhood have pagan or false religious overtones? If so, genuine Christians may avoid displeasing Jehovah by declining to have any involvement in such contaminated worship.—2 Corinthians 6:17.

When an appreciative child receives a present from his father, whom does he thank? A complete stranger or his parent? By heartfelt prayer God's worshipers daily thank Jehovah, their heavenly Father, for his bounteous generosity.—2 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18.

* *Insight on the Scriptures* states: "Ne'phesh (soul) is not used with reference to the creation of vegetable life on the third creative 'day' (Ge 1:11-13) or thereafter, since vegetation is bloodless."—Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.



WILL YOU BE FAITHFUL LIKE ELIJAH?

*"I am sending to you people Elijah the prophet
before the coming of the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah."*

—MALACHI 4:5.

"A LAND flowing with milk and honey." (Exodus 3:7, 8) That is what Jehovah God gave the Israelites after freeing them from Egyptian bondage in the 16th century B.C.E. But look! Five centuries have passed, and now the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel is in the grip of severe famine. It is hard to find any green grass. Animals are dying, and no

1. What crisis occurs after Israel has been in the Promised Land some 500 years?

rain has fallen for three and a half years. (1 Kings 18:5; Luke 4:25) What is responsible for this calamity?

² Apostasy has caused this crisis. Violating God's Law, King Ahab has married the Canaanite princess Jezebel and has allowed her to introduce Baal worship into Israel. Worse yet, he has built a temple to this false god in Samaria, the capital city. Why, the Israelites have been seduced into be-

2. What is the cause of Israel's national crisis?

lieving that Baal worship will bring them abundant crops! As Jehovah has warned, however, they are now in danger of 'perishing off their good land.'—Deuteronomy 7:3, 4; 11:16, 17; 1 Kings 16:30-33.

A Dramatic Test of Godship

³ When the famine begins, God's faithful prophet Elijah tells King Ahab: "As Jehovah the God of Israel before whom I do stand is living, there will occur during these years neither dew nor rain, except at the order of my word!" (1 Kings 17:1) After experiencing the terrible truth of this pronouncement, the king blames Elijah for bringing ostracism upon Israel. But Elijah replies that Ahab and his house are to blame because of their apostasy as Baal worshipers. To settle the issue, Jehovah's prophet urges King Ahab to gather all Israel to Mount Carmel along with the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the sacred pole. Ahab and his subjects assemble there, perhaps hoping that the occasion will bring an end to the drought. But Elijah focuses attention on the more serious issue. "How long," he asks, "will you be limping upon two different opinions? If Jehovah is the true God, go following him; but if Baal is, go following him." The Israelites do not know what to say.—1 Kings 18:18-21.

⁴ For years the Israelites have tried to mix the worship of Jehovah with Baalism. To settle the issue of Godship, Elijah now proposes a contest. He will prepare one young bull for sacrifice, and another will be prepared by the prophets of Baal. Elijah

then says: "You must call upon the name of your god, and I, for my part, shall call upon the name of Jehovah; and it must occur that the true God that answers by fire is the true God." (1 Kings 18:23, 24) Imagine fire issuing from heaven in answer to a prayer!

⁵ Elijah invites the Baal prophets to start. They prepare a bull for sacrifice and lay it upon the altar. Then they limp around the altar, praying: "O Baal, answer us!" This continues "from morning till noon." "Call at the top of your voice," Elijah taunts. Baal must be busy with an urgent matter, or "maybe he is asleep and ought to wake up!" Soon the prophets of Baal are in a frenzy. Look! They are gashing themselves with daggers, and blood is streaming from their wounds. And what a noise there is as all 450 cry out at the top of their voice! But there is no answer.—1 Kings 18:26-29.

⁶ Now comes Elijah's turn. He rebuilds the altar of Jehovah, makes a trench around it, and sets the sacrifice in order. Then he has water poured on the wood and the sacrifice. Twelve large jars of water are poured over the altar until the trench itself is filled. Imagine the suspense as Elijah prays: "O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that you are God in Israel and I am your servant and it is by your word that I have done all these things. Answer me, O Jehovah, answer me, that this people may know that you, Jehovah, are the true God and you yourself have turned their heart back."—1 Kings 18:30-37.

3. How does the prophet Elijah focus attention on Israel's real problem?

4. To settle the issue of Godship, what does Elijah propose?

5. How is the uselessness of Baal worship exposed?

6. What preparation does Elijah make for the test of Godship?

⁷ In answer to Elijah's prayer, 'the fire of Jehovah falls from heaven and eats up his offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and licks up the water in the trench.' The people fall upon their faces and say: "Jehovah is the true God! Jehovah is the true God!" (1 Kings 18:38, 39) Elijah now takes decisive action. He commands: "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let a single one of them escape!" After they are slaughtered in the valley of Kishon, dark clouds fill the sky. At last, a downpour brings an end to the drought!—1 Kings 18:40-45; compare Deuteronomy 13:1-5.

⁸ What a grand day! Jehovah is triumphant in this remarkable test of Godship. Moreover, these events turn the hearts of many Israelites back to God. In this and other ways, Elijah proves faithful as a prophet, and he personally plays a prophetic role.

"Elijah the Prophet" Yet to Come?

⁹ Later, through Malachi, God foretold: "Look! I am sending to you people Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah. And he must turn the heart of fathers back toward sons, and the heart of sons back toward fathers; in order that I may not come and actually strike the earth with a devoting of it to destruction." (Malachi 4:5, 6) Elijah lived some 500 years before those words were uttered. Since this was a prophecy, Jews of the first century C.E. were in expectation of Elijah's coming to fulfill it.—Matthew 17:10.

7, 8. (a) How does Jehovah answer Elijah's prayer? (b) What is accomplished by the events on Mount Carmel?

9. What was prophesied at Malachi 4:5, 6?

¹⁰ Who, then, was this coming Elijah? His identity was revealed when Jesus Christ said: "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of the heavens is the goal toward which men press, and those pressing forward are seizing it. For all, the Prophets and the Law, prophesied until John; and if you want to accept it, He himself is 'Elijah who is destined to come.'" Yes, John the Baptizer was the foretold counterpart of Elijah. (Matthew 11:12-14; Mark 9:11-13) An angel had told John's father, Zechariah, that John would have "Elijah's spirit and power" and would "get ready for Jehovah a prepared people." (Luke 1:17) The baptism John performed was a public symbol of an individual's repentance over his sins against the Law, which was to lead the Jews to Christ. (Luke 3:3-6; Galatians 3:24) John's work thus 'got a prepared people ready for Jehovah.'

¹¹ The work of John the Baptizer as "Elijah" showed that a "day of Jehovah" was near. The nearness of that day when God would act against his enemies and preserve his people was also indicated by the apostle Peter. He pointed out that the miraculous events that took place at Pentecost of 33 C.E. were a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy about the outpouring of God's spirit. Peter showed that this was to happen before "the great and illustrious day of Jehovah." (Acts 2:16-21; Joel 2:28-32) It was in 70 C.E. that Jehovah fulfilled his Word by causing the Roman armies to execute divine judgment upon the nation that rejected his Son.—Daniel 9:24-27; John 19:15.

10. Who was the foretold Elijah, and how do we know?

11. At Pentecost, what did Peter say about the "day of Jehovah," and when did it occur?

¹² However, there was more to come after 70 C.E. The apostle Paul associated a coming “day of Jehovah” with the presence of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the apostle Peter spoke of that day in connection with the yet future “new heavens and a new earth.” (2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2; 2 Peter 3:10-13) Bear in mind that John the Baptizer did an Elijahlike work before the “day of Jehovah” came in 70 C.E. All of this taken together indicated that something further would take place as represented by the work that Elijah had done. What is that?

They Have Elijah’s Spirit

¹³ Elijah’s work not only had a parallel in the activities of John the Baptizer but also has one in those of anointed Christians in this critical period leading up to the coming “day of Jehovah.” (2 Timothy 3:1-5) With Elijah’s spirit and power, they are staunch advocates of true worship. And how necessary this has been! After the death of Christ’s apostles, there was an apostasy from true Christianity, even as Baal worship flourished in Israel of Elijah’s day. (2 Peter 2:1) Professed Christians began to mix Christianity with false religious doctrines and practices. For example, they adopted the pagan and unscriptural teaching that man possesses an immortal soul. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Ezekiel 18:4) Christendom’s apostates have stopped using the name of the one true God, Jehovah. Instead, they are worshipping a Trinity. They have also adopted the Baallike practice of

12. (a) What did Paul and Peter say about a coming “day of Jehovah”? (b) Why was something certain to occur as represented by Elijah’s work?

13, 14. (a) What parallel is there between the activities of Elijah and those of present-day anointed Christians? (b) What have Christendom’s apostates done?

bowing down to images of Jesus and his mother, Mary. (Romans 1:23; 1 John 5:21) But that has not been all.

¹⁴ From the 19th century onward, leaders of Christendom’s churches began to voice doubt about many parts of the Bible. For instance, they rejected the Genesis account of creation and bowed down to the theory of evolution, labeling it “scientific.” This directly conflicted with the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles. (Matthew 19:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 15:47) Like Jesus and his early followers, however, spirit-anointed Christians today uphold the Bible account of creation.—Genesis 1:27.

¹⁵ As the world entered “the time of the end,” a spiritual famine gripped Christendom. (Daniel 12:4; Amos 8:11, 12) But the small group of anointed Christians enjoyed regular supplies of God-given spiritual food “at the proper time,” even as Jehovah saw to it that Elijah was fed during the famine of his day. (Matthew 24:45; 1 Kings 17:6, 13-16) Once known as International Bible Students, these faithful servants of God later received the Scriptural name Jehovah’s Witnesses.—Isaiah 43:10.

¹⁶ Elijah lived up to his name, which means “My God Is Jehovah.” As the official journal of Jehovah’s earthly servants, *The Watchtower* has consistently used God’s name. In fact, its second issue (August 1879) expressed confidence that the magazine had Jehovah as its backer. This journal and other publications of the Watch Tower Society expose the unscriptural teachings of Christendom and the rest of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, while upholding the truthfulness of God’s Word, the Bible.—2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Revelation 18:1-5.

15, 16. In contrast with Christendom, who have enjoyed regular supplies of spiritual food, and by what means?

Faithful Under Test

(1¹⁷) The clergy's reaction to exposure was similar to that of Jezebel upon learning that Elijah had killed the prophets of Baal. She sent Jehovah's faithful prophet a message, vowing to have him killed. This was no idle threat, for Jezebel had already murdered many of God's prophets. In fear, Elijah fled southwestward to Beer-sheba. Leaving his attendant there, he went still farther, into the wilderness, praying to die. But Jehovah had not abandoned his prophet. An angel appeared to Elijah to prepare him for the long journey to Mount Horeb. Thus he received sustenance for the 40-day journey of more than 190 miles. At Horeb, God spoke to him after an awesome display of power in a great wind, an earthquake, and a fire. Jehovah was not in these manifestations. They were expressions of his holy spirit, or active force. Then Jehovah spoke to his prophet. Imagine how this experience strengthened Elijah. (1 Kings 19:1-12) What if we, like Elijah, become somewhat fearful when threatened by enemies of true worship? His experience should help us to realize that Jehovah does not desert his people.—1 Samuel 12:22.

¹⁸ God made it clear that Elijah still had work to do as a prophet. Moreover, though Elijah thought that he was the sole worshiper of the true God in Israel, Jehovah showed him that 7,000 had not bowed to Baal. God then sent Elijah back to his assignment. (1 Kings 19:13-18) Like Elijah, we may be hounded by enemies of true worship. We may become objects of intense persecution, as Jesus foretold. (John 15:17-20) At times, we may become apprehensive. However, we can be like Elijah, who re-

17, 18. How did Jezebel react to the slaughter of the prophets of Baal, but how was Elijah helped?

ceived divine assurances and then faithfully persevered in Jehovah's service.

¹⁹ Because of intense persecution during World War I, some anointed Christians succumbed to fear and stopped preaching. They erred in thinking that their work on earth had ended. But God did not reject them. Rather, he mercifully sustained them, even as he provided food for Elijah. Like Elijah, faithful anointed ones accepted divine correction and recovered from inactivity. Their eyes were opened to the grand privilege of preaching the Kingdom message.

²⁰ In his prophecy about his presence, Jesus outlined the globe-encircling work that would be completed before the end of this wicked system of things. (Matthew 24:14) Today, this work is being carried on by anointed Christians and their millions of companions who look forward to life on a paradise earth. Performing the Kingdom-preaching work until it is finished is a privilege granted only to those who are faithful like Elijah.

Be Faithful Like Elijah

²¹ With zeal like that of Elijah, the small remnant of genuine anointed Christians have discharged their responsibility of caring for the earthly interests of the enthroned King, Jesus Christ. (Matthew 24:47) And for over 60 years now, God has been using these anointed ones to spearhead the work of making disciples of people to whom he has given the wonderful hope

19. What was experienced by anointed Christians during the World War I era?

20. Today, what privilege is granted to those who are faithful like Elijah?

21, 22. (a) What work are anointed Christians spearheading today? (b) The preaching work is being accomplished with what help, and why is it needed?

TO WHICH HEAVENS DID ELIJAH ASCEND?

"IT CAME about that as [Elijah and Elisha] were walking along, speaking as they walked, why, look! a fiery war chariot and fiery horses, and they proceeded to make a separation between them both; and Elijah went ascending in the windstorm to the heavens."—2 Kings 2:11.

What is meant by the word "heavens" in this case? The term sometimes applies to the spiritual dwelling place of God and his angelic sons. (Matthew 6:9; 18:10) "Heavens" may also denote the physical universe. (Deuteronomy 4:19) And the Bible uses this term to refer to earth's immediate atmosphere, where birds fly and winds blow.—Psalm 78:26; Matthew 6:26.

To which of these heavens did the prophet Elijah ascend? Evidently, he was transferred through earth's atmosphere and placed on a different part of the globe. Elijah was still on earth years later, for he wrote a letter to King Jehoram of Judah. (2 Chronicles 21:1, 12-15) That Elijah did not ascend to the spiritual abode of Jehovah God was later confirmed by Jesus Christ, who declared: "No man has ascended into heaven but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man," that is, Jesus himself. (John 3:13) The way to heavenly life was first opened up to imperfect humans after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.—John 14:2, 3; Hebrews 9:24; 10:19, 20.

of life eternal on a paradise earth. (Matthew 28:19, 20) How grateful these millions can be that the relatively few remaining anointed ones are zealously and faithfully caring for their responsibilities!

²² This Kingdom-preaching work has been accomplished by imperfect humans

and only in the strength that Jehovah gives those who prayerfully rely on him. "Elijah was a man with feelings like ours," said the disciple James when citing the prophet's example of praying in order to show the force of a righteous man's prayer. (James 5:16-18) Elijah was not always prophesying or performing miracles. He had the same human feelings and weaknesses that we do, but he served God faithfully. Since we too have God's help and he strengthens us, we can be faithful like Elijah.

²³ We have good reason for faithfulness and optimism. Remember that John the Baptizer did an Elijahlike work before the "day of Jehovah" struck in 70 C.E. With Elijah's spirit and power, anointed Christians have done a similar God-given work throughout the earth. This clearly proves that the great "day of Jehovah" is near.

23. Why do we have good reason for faithfulness and optimism?

How Would You Respond?

- ☐ How was Jehovah's Godship proved on Mount Carmel?
- ☐ Who was the 'Elijah to come,' and what did he do?
- ☐ How have present-day anointed Christians shown that they have Elijah's spirit?
- ☐ Why is it possible for us to be faithful like Elijah?

WHO WILL SURVIVE “THE DAY OF JEHOVAH”?

“What sort of persons ought you to be in holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion, awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah!”—2 PETER 3:11, 12.

JEHOVAH GOD has selected from among mankind individuals who will become joint heirs with his Son, Jesus Christ, in the heavenly Kingdom. (Romans 8:16, 17) While they are still on earth, anointed Christians have worked with Elijah’s spirit and power. (Luke 1:17) In the preceding article, we noted certain parallels between their activities and those of the prophet Elijah. But what about the work of Elijah’s successor, the prophet Elisha?—1 Kings 19:15, 16.

² The last miracle performed by Elijah was that of dividing the waters of the Jordan River by striking them with his official garment. This allowed Elijah and Elisha to cross on dry ground. As they walked on the eastern side of the river, a windstorm carried Elijah away

1. Who have worked with Elijah’s spirit and power?

2. (a) What was Elijah’s last miracle, and Elisha’s first? (b) What proof is there that Elijah did not go to heaven?



to another location on the earth. (See the box on page 15 entitled “To Which Heavens Did Elijah Ascend?”) Left behind was Elijah’s official garment. When Elisha used it to strike the Jordan, its waters were again divided, enabling him to return on dry ground. This miracle made it clear that Elisha had become Elijah’s successor in promoting true worship in Israel.—2 Kings 2:6-15.

Godly Qualities Essential

³ Centuries after the days of Elijah and Elisha, the apostles Paul and Peter associated a coming “day of Jehovah” with Jesus Christ’s presence and the then future “new heavens and a new earth.” (2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2; 2 Peter 3:10-13) To survive Jehovah’s great day—when God destroys his enemies and saves his people—we must seek Jehovah and display meekness and righteous—

3. What did Paul and Peter say about Jesus’ presence and “the day of Jehovah”?

ness. (Zephaniah 2:1-3) But some additional qualities come to the fore as we consider events involving the prophet Elisha.

⁴ Zeal for God's service is vital if we are to survive "the day of Jehovah." Elijah and Elisha were zealous in Jehovah's service. With similar zeal, the remnant of anointed Christians today render sacred service to Jehovah and take the lead in preaching the good news.* Since the mid-1930's, they have encouraged all those accepting the Kingdom message and hoping to live forever on earth to dedicate themselves to Jehovah and get baptized. (Mark 8:34; 1 Peter 3:21) Millions have responded favorably to this encouragement. Once they were in spiritual darkness and dead in sin, but now they have learned God's truth, have embraced the hope of eternal life in an earthly paradise, and are zealous in Jehovah's service. (Psalm 37:29; Revelation 21:3-5) By their zeal, cooperation, hospitality, and other good works, they bring great refreshment to Christ's spiritual brothers yet on earth.—Matthew 25:31-46.

⁵ Those who do good things for Jesus' "brothers" because these anointed ones are his followers have the hope of surviving "the day of Jehovah." A married couple in the village of Shunem were greatly blessed for being kind and hospitable to Elisha and his attendant. This couple had no son, and the husband was old. But Elisha promised the Shunammite woman that she would give birth to a son, and this did occur. When this only son died some years lat-

* See chapters 18 and 19 of the book *"Let Your Name Be Sanctified,"* published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

4. What role does zeal play in Jehovah's service?
5. Why is it so important to do good things for Jesus' "brothers," and what example do we have from Elisha's day?

er, Elisha went to Shunem and resurrected him. (2 Kings 4:8-17, 32-37) What rich rewards for showing hospitality to Elisha!

⁶ Humility is needed in order to accept Bible-based direction from Christ's "brothers" with the hope of surviving Jehovah's day. The leprous Syrian army chief Naaman had to show humility to follow the suggestion of a captive Israelite girl and seek a cure by going to Israel to find Elisha. Instead of coming out of his house to meet Naaman, Elisha sent him this message: "You must bathe seven times in the Jordan that your flesh may come back to you; and be clean." (2 Kings 5:10) Naaman's pride was hurt, and he became angry, but after he humbly went and plunged into the Jordan seven times, "his flesh came back like the flesh of a little boy and he became clean." (2 Kings 5:14) Before returning home, Naaman journeyed all the way back to Samaria to thank Jehovah's prophet. Determined not to profit materially from God-given powers, Elisha came out to meet Naaman but would not accept any gifts. Naaman humbly told Elisha: "Your servant will no more render up a burnt offering or a sacrifice to any other gods but to Jehovah."—2 Kings 5:17.

⁷ By humbly following the Scriptural counsel of anointed ones, millions are richly blessed today. Moreover, by exercising faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice, these honest-hearted ones have been spiritually cleansed. They now enjoy the privilege of being friends of Jehovah God and Jesus Christ. (Psalm 15:1, 2; Luke 16:9) And their devotion to God and his service will be rewarded in their being spared from the eternal destruction about to befall proud, unrepentant sinners in the rapidly approaching "day of Jehovah."—Luke 13:24; 1 John 1:7.

- 6, 7. What example did Naaman set, and what bearing does this have on surviving "the day of Jehovah"?

"Who Is With Me? Who?"

⁸ Those hoping to survive "the day of Jehovah" must also be decisive in doing the divine will. Elijah boldly foretold the destruction of King Ahab's murderous, Baal-worshipping family. (1 Kings 21:17-26) Before this execution was carried out, however, Elijah's successor Elisha had to complete some unfinished work. (1 Kings 19:15-17) When Jehovah's due time came, Elisha instructed an attendant to go and anoint the army chief Jehu as Israel's new king. After pouring oil on Jehu's head, the messenger told him: "This is what Jehovah the God of Israel has said, 'I do anoint you as king over Jehovah's people, that is, over Israel. And you must strike down the house of Ahab your lord, and I must avenge the blood of my servants the prophets and the blood of all the servants of Jehovah at the hand of Jezebel. And the whole house of Ahab must perish.'" Wicked Queen Jezebel would be thrown to the dogs and have no decent burial.—2 Kings 9:1-10.

⁹ Jehu's men recognized the validity of his anointing and proclaimed him the new king of Israel. Acting decisively, Jehu raced toward Jezreel to begin his work of executing the apostate ringleaders of Baal worship. First to feel Jehu's arrow of execution was Ahab's son, King Jehoram. He rode out of the city to ask if Jehu had come on a mission of peace. "What peace could there be as long as there are the fornications of Jezebel your mother and her many sorceries?" replied Jehu. With that, Jehu's arrow pierced Jehoram's heart.—2 Kings 9:22-24.

¹⁰ Godly women avoid being like Jezebel or any of her kind. (Revelation 2:18-23) By the

8. (a) Those who will survive "the day of Jehovah" have what attitude toward doing the divine will? (b) What commission was Jehu given? (c) What was to happen to Jezebel?

9, 10. How was Elijah's word fulfilled in the case of Jezebel?

time Jehu reached Jezreel, she had tried to make herself attractive. Looking down from a window, she greeted him with a veiled threat. He asked her attendants: "Who is with me? Who?" Immediately, two or three court officials looked down. Were they on Jehu's side? "Let her drop!" he urged. At that, they acted decisively, throwing evil Jezebel out of the window. She was trampled, presumably under the horses' hooves. When people came to bury her, 'they found nothing but her skull and feet and the palms of her hands.' What a dramatic fulfillment of Elijah's word: "The dogs will eat the flesh of Jezebel"!—2 Kings 9:30-37.

Heartfelt Support of True Worship

¹¹ Those hoping to survive "the day of Jehovah" and live forever on earth must wholeheartedly support true worship. They must be like Jehonadab, or Jonadab, a non-Israelite worshiper of Jehovah. As Jehu continued to fulfill his commission with zeal, Jehonadab wanted to show his approval and support. So he went out to meet Israel's new king, who was heading for Samaria to execute the remaining ones of Ahab's house. Seeing Jehonadab, Jehu asked: "Is your heart upright with me, just as my own heart is with your heart?" Jehonadab's positive reply moved Jehu to extend his hand and invite Jehonadab into his war chariot, saying: "Do go along with me and look upon my toleration of no rivalry toward Jehovah." Without delay, Jehonadab accepted the privilege of showing his support for Jehovah's anointed executioner.—2 Kings 10:15-17.

¹² Heartfelt support of true worship surely is fitting, for Jehovah is the Creator and Universal Sovereign, who rightly demands and deserves our exclusive devotion. He

11. Who was Jehonadab, and how did he show his support for true worship?

12. Why does Jehovah rightly demand exclusive devotion?

commanded the Israelites: "You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or that is on the earth underneath or that is in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them nor be induced to serve them, because I Jehovah your God am a God exacting exclusive devotion." (Exodus 20:4, 5) Those who hope to survive "the day of Jehovah" must worship him exclusively, doing so "with spirit and truth." (John 4:23, 24) They must be firm for true worship, like Elijah, Elisha, and Jehonadab.

¹³ After the execution of Ahab's house, King Jehu took other steps to identify Baal worshipers and eliminate this false religion in Israel. (2 Kings 10:18-28) Today, the heavenly King Jesus Christ has been appointed to execute Jehovah's enemies and vindicate His sovereignty. As Jehonadab's heart was with Jehu, the "great crowd" of Jesus' "other sheep" today wholeheartedly acknowledge Christ as the Messianic King and cooperate with his spiritual brothers on earth. (Revelation 7:9, 10; John 10:16) They give evidence of this by practicing true religion and having a zealous share in the Christian ministry, warning God's enemies of the fast-approaching "day of Jehovah."—Matthew 10:32, 33; Romans 10:9, 10.

Dramatic Events Lie Just Ahead!

¹⁴ Jehu took action to end Baal worship in Israel. In our day, through the Greater Jehu, Jesus Christ, God will bring about the destruction of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. We will soon see the fulfillment of the angel's words to the apostle John: "The ten horns that you saw, and the wild beast, these will hate the harlot [Babylon the Great] and will make her

13. As Jehonadab's heart was with Jehu, who acknowledge the Messianic King, and how do they show this?

14. What lies ahead for false religion?

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, even to carry out their one thought by giving their kingdom to the wild beast, until the words of God will have been accomplished." (Revelation 17:16, 17; 18:2-5) "The ten horns" depict the militarized political powers holding sway on earth. Though they now have a spiritually adulterous relationship with Babylon the Great, her time is short. This world's political element will destroy false religion, and "the wild beast"—the United Nations—will have a principal role with "the ten horns" in devastating her.* What an occasion for praising Jehovah!—Revelation 19:1-6.

¹⁵ After King Jehu's onslaught against Baal worship, his royal house turned attention to Israel's political enemies. The King Jesus Christ will take similar action. Political powers will remain after the destruction of Baallike false religion. Under the influence of Satan the Devil, these enemies of Jehovah's sovereignty will make an all-out attack in an attempt to destroy God's earthly organization. (Ezekiel 38:14-16) But Jehovah will have the King Jesus Christ strike them down by destroying them at Har-Magedon, "the war of the great day of God the Almighty," completing the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty.—Revelation 16:14, 16; 19:11-21; Ezekiel 38:18-23.

Serving With Elisha's Zeal

¹⁶ Until "the day of Jehovah" brings an end to Satan's entire wicked system of

* See pages 254-6 of *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At Hand!*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

15. What will happen when an attempt is made to destroy God's earthly organization?

16, 17. (a) How do we know that Elisha was zealous to the end of his life? (b) What should we do with the arrows of truth?

things, God's servants will be as courageous and zealous as Elisha. Besides his work as Elijah's attendant, Elisha served alone as Jehovah's prophet for over 50 years! And Elisha was zealous to the very end of his long life. Just before his death, he was visited by Jehu's grandson, King Jehoash. Elisha told him to shoot an arrow out the window. The arrow sped to its mark, and Elisha exclaimed: "Jehovah's arrow of salvation, even the arrow of salvation against Syria! And you will certainly strike down Syria at Aphek to the finishing point." At Elisha's request, Jehoash next struck the earth with his arrows. But he did this with a lack of zeal, striking only three times. Elisha then said that, as a result, Jehoash would be granted only three victories over Syria, and that is what happened. (2 Kings 13:14-19, 25) King Jehoash did not strike the Syrians down fully, "to the finishing point."

¹⁷ With zeal like that of Elisha, though, the anointed remnant keeps up the offensive against false worship. Their companions with earthly hopes are doing the same thing. Moreover, all hoping to survive "the day of Jehovah" do well to bear in mind zealous Elisha's words about smiting the earth. Let us take the arrows of truth and zealously strike with them—again and again—yes, until Jehovah says our work with them has been completed.

¹⁸ "The day of Jehovah" will soon bring an end to the present wicked system of things. Let us therefore allow ourselves to be spurred on by the apostle Peter's heartening words. "Since all these things are thus to be dissolved," Peter exclaimed, "what sort of persons ought you to be in holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion, awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah!" (2 Pe-

18. How should we respond to the words of 2 Peter 3:11, 12?

ter 3:11, 12) When every part of this system is dissolved by the fire of God's anger expressed through Jesus Christ, only those with a record of upright conduct and godly devotion will escape. Moral and spiritual purity is essential. So is love for fellow humans, shown by responding to their needs, especially in a spiritual way through our Christian ministry.

¹⁹ Do your words and deeds identify you as a faithful and zealous servant of God? If so, you can entertain the hope of surviving "the day of Jehovah" into God's promised new world. Yes, survival may be your experience if you do good to Christ's spiritual brothers because they are his followers, as the Shunammite couple were hospitable to Elisha. For survival you must also be like Naaman, who humbly accepted divine instruction and became a worshiper of Jehovah. If you yearn to live forever in an earthly paradise, you must demonstrate heartfelt support for true worship, as Jehonadab did. Then you may be among Jehovah's faithful servants, who will soon experience the fulfillment of Jesus' words: "Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world."—Matthew 25:34.

19. What must we do to survive "the day of Jehovah"?

How Would You Respond?

- ☐ What are some qualities needed in order to survive "the day of Jehovah"?
- ☐ What example was set by the Shunammite couple in Elisha's day?
- ☐ What lesson can be learned from Naaman?
- ☐ How can we follow Jehonadab's example?
- ☐ How should 2 Peter 3:11, 12 affect us?

HOW TO MAINTAIN JOY IN FULL-TIME SERVICE

FULFILLMENT of Bible prophecy shows clearly that we are living in the last days of this godless system. Being aware of this, servants of Jehovah God spend as much time as they reasonably can spreading the good news of his Kingdom. Over 600,000 Witnesses of Jehovah have arranged their lives so as to participate in full-time service. Some of them are full-time Kingdom proclaimers called pioneers. Others are Bethel volunteers at the headquarters of the Watch Tower Society or its branch offices. Still others are missionaries and traveling overseers.

The Bible indicates that in the last days, there would be "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) The Greek Bible text uses an expression that may be rendered "appointed times fierce." Hence, nobody should expect a trouble-free life in our day. For some Christian ministers, the problems seem so serious that they may ask themselves, 'Can I continue in full-time service, or must I stop?'

What situations may cause someone to reassess his situation as a pioneer, Bethel volunteer, traveling overseer or missionary? Maybe a serious health problem exists. Perhaps an aged or infirm relative needs constant care. It could be that a married couple is starting a family. Anyone who discontinues full-time service for such reasons and because of Scriptur-

al obligations need not feel ashamed of making such an adjustment.

However, what if someone is planning to discontinue full-time service for lack of joy? Perhaps a pioneer sees little response in his ministry and asks, 'Why continue with my self-sacrificing life-style when very few listen?' Maybe a Bethel volunteer is not so happy about his assignment. Or it could be that nagging ill health, while not ruling out pioneer service, finally erodes a person's happiness. How can such individuals maintain their joy? Let us consider what some experienced ministers say.

Coping With Disappointment

Anny, who comes from Switzerland, attended the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead in 1950. She looked forward to a missionary assignment overseas. When reassigned to Bethel work in Europe, Anny was disappointed. Nevertheless, she accepted her assignment in the Translation Department and is still doing that work. How did she overcome her disappointment? "There was and is much work to be done. My feelings and preferences are not as important as the work," explains Anny.

If we are disappointed with our assignment, perhaps we could develop Anny's attitude. Our personal preference is not of paramount importance. What matters most is that all the various responsibilities associated with



***"My feelings
and preferences
are not as
important as
the work"***

spreading the Kingdom message be well-handled. Proverbs 14:23 tells us that “by every kind of toil there comes to be an advantage.” Regardless of what assignment we have been given, carrying it out faithfully contributes to the accomplishment of Kingdom work. And there can be great satisfaction—yes, joy—in such God-given work.—Compare 1 Corinthians 12:18, 27, 28.

Getting Along With Others

Full-time service involves close contact with people of all kinds—in the field ministry, at Bethel, in a missionary home, or while visiting one congregation after another as a traveling overseer. Hence, joy depends to a large degree on getting along well with others. However, the ‘fierce times’ foretold for these last days put a great strain on human relationships. How can a minister avoid losing his joy, even if someone has upset him? Perhaps we can learn something from Wilhelm.

Wilhelm became a member of a Bethel family in Europe in 1947. Thereafter, he spent time in the pioneer work and in service as a traveling overseer. “If my wife and I see things that we think are not correct or that worry us personally, we tell Jehovah how we feel and then leave things up to him to resolve,” Wilhelm explains.—Psalm 37:5.

Perhaps you yourself have been troubled by the behavior of a fellow Christian who spoke to you disrespectfully or thoughtlessly. Remember that all of us stumble many times in our speech. (James 3:2) So why not use this situation to draw closer to the “Hearer of prayer”? (Psalm 65:2) Speak to Jehovah about the matter, and then leave it in his hands. If God wishes to make chang-

es, he will do so. Those living in a missionary home may need to keep this in mind if stress should develop along such lines, as this will help them to maintain their joy in Jehovah’s service.

When in Poor Health

Few people enjoy consistently good health. Even those in the so-called prime of life may be stricken with depression or disease. Ill health makes it necessary for some to discontinue full-time service, but they thereafter do excellent work as Kingdom publishers. Others, however, are able to carry on in full-time service despite poor health. For example, consider Hartmut and Gisind.



Hartmut and Gisind are a married couple who have spent 30 years as pioneers, missionaries, and in the traveling work. Both of them have suffered bouts of serious illness that have at times left them physically and emotionally drained. Nevertheless, they have done excellent work and have been able to encourage others experiencing similar trials. What advice do they offer? “Look to the future and not to the past. Make the best of every situation. Each day might bring just one opportunity to praise Jehovah. Use that opportunity, and enjoy it.”

Consider the case of Hannelore. She has been troubled by recurring illness during her 30 years as a pioneer, a missionary, in traveling work with her husband, and in Bethel service. Hannelore says: “I concentrate on the issue raised by Satan—that humans serve Jehovah only when doing so is easy for them. By enduring trials, I can have a part in proving Satan wrong.” This can be a strong motivation. Remember that

**“We tell Jehovah
how we feel and
then leave things
up to him”**



"Make the best of every situation. Each day might bring just one opportunity to praise Jehovah"

your personal loyalty to Jehovah when under test is important to him.—Job 1:8-12; Proverbs 27:11.

When trying to make a balanced decision with regard to your health, consider two features of Jesus Christ's prophecy about the conclusion of the system of things. Jesus foretold pestilences in one place after another. He also said: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth." (Matthew 24: 3, 14; Luke 21:11) Jesus knew that in the last days, his followers would struggle with sickness. But he realized that the preaching work would be carried out not only by people enjoying good health but also by individuals who experience serious illness. If we are able to continue in full-time service despite ill health, Jehovah will not forget the love we show for his name.—Hebrews 6:10.

Maintaining Joy Despite Public Apathy

Our attitude can be affected by how people react to the Kingdom-preaching work. "Even pioneers find it hard to get a conversation started with a householder," said one experienced minister. "All of us have to struggle to maintain our joy." Yes, public apathy can diminish our joy in the field

service. So how can a pioneer who regularly encounters indifference maintain his joy? Experienced ministers offer the following suggestions that have been tried and tested.

Apathy represents a challenge, but it need not mean a defeat. In itself, widespread indifference is not a reason to discontinue full-time service. We can maintain our joy in the face of apathy if we set aside adequate time for diligent study of the Scriptures. They 'equip us for every good work,' and that includes speaking to those who turn a deaf ear to the good news. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) Although people did not want to listen to the prophet Jeremiah, that did not

stop him. (Jeremiah 7:27) When studying the Bible with the help of Christian publications, we can benefit greatly if we take note of thoughts that strengthen our faith and help us to deal with apathy.

Granting that apathy is a challenge, let us examine our attitude toward those to whom we preach.

Why are they indifferent? One reason for the widespread apathy in parts of Europe, for instance, is the deplorable record of false religion. People no longer feel that religion has a place in

their lives, nor do they want anything to do with it. We need to be flexible, talking to people about matters that do affect them, such as unemployment, health, crime, intolerance, the environment, and the threat of war.

In our opening words to a household, we might mention an item of local interest. That is what Dietmar tried to do when he was preaching in a village where he was having little success. One resident mentioned that the village had experienced a tragedy the day before. At every



"By enduring trials, I can have a part in proving Satan wrong"



door thereafter, Dietmar expressed sincere regret over the tragedy. "Suddenly, the people started talking," he said. "The tragedy was on everyone's mind. I had many fine conversations that



"Some pioneers have a hard time. They need more encouragement from elders and other publishers"

day because I showed interest in their lives."

We need to give people a Kingdom witness wherever we find them. Informal witnessing may be fruitful, and we can train ourselves in this activity by using the suggestions offered in Bible-based publications. Joy can result from a few friendly words or from placing copies of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines with a householder. If we have made return visits and have begun to conduct a Bible study with an interested person, we might get a referral by asking: "Do you know anyone else who would like to study the Bible?" This could lead to establishing another home Bible study. In any case, let us be positive, prayerfully relying on Jehovah, not letting apathy discourage us.

Encouragement From Others

Jürgen and Christiane have been pioneering and engaging in the traveling work for over 30 years. They once had an assignment that involved preaching in an area where most people were apathetic and obstinate.

How Jürgen and his wife longed for some encouragement! For some reason, though, others in the congregation did not respond to their need.

So Jürgen knows from experience that "some pioneers have a hard time. They need more encouragement from elders and other publishers." God told Moses to encourage and strengthen Joshua. (Deuteronomy 3:26-28) And Christians should be sources of encouragement to one another. (Romans 1:11, 12) Kingdom publishers can encourage those in full-time service by upbuilding words and by accompanying them in the ministry from time to time.

The Joy of Jehovah —Our Stronghold

Christians who have spent most of their lives as pioneers or missionaries, serving at Bethel, or visiting congregations in the traveling work have discovered that most problems are of short duration, but some are long lasting. Even the few problems that never seem to go away should not rob us of our joy. Ramon, who has served in a foreign assignment for over 45 years, suggests that whenever problems sadden us, "we should think about the many blessings we have and about the thousands of others who suffer greater hardships." Indeed, sufferings are being experienced by our fellow believers worldwide, and Jehovah really cares for all of us.—1 Peter 5:6-9.



"We should think about the many blessings we have"

So, then, if our personal circumstances permit us to share in full-time service and remain in it, let us maintain our joy by relying on our heavenly Father. He strengthens his servants, and all of us should remember that 'the joy of Jehovah is our stronghold.'—Nehemiah 8:10.



HOW THE BIBLE CAME TO US



PART TWO

Flames shot skyward as more and more fuel was heaped on the roaring bonfire. But this was no ordinary fire. The intense conflagration was being fed with Bibles as priests and prelates looked on. But by buying the Bibles in order to destroy them, the bishop of London unknowingly helped the translator, William Tyndale, to finance further editions!

What led up to such determination on both sides of the battle? In a previous issue, we considered the history of Bible publication into the later Middle Ages. Now we come to the dawn of a new era when the message and authority of God's Word were about to have a profound impact on society.

A Pioneer Appears

John Wycliffe, a respected Oxford scholar, preached and wrote powerfully against the unbiblical practices of the Catholic Church, basing his authority on 'God's law,' meaning the Bible. He sent his students, the Lollards, out across England's countryside to preach the Bible's message in English to anyone who would listen. Before he died in 1384, he initiated the translation of the Bible from Latin into the English of his day.

The church found many reasons to despise Wycliffe. First, he condemned the clergy for their excesses and immoral conduct. Additionally, many of Wycliffe's admirers misused his teachings to justify their armed rebellions. The clergy blamed Wycliffe, even after his death, although he never advocated violent uprisings.

In a letter to Pope John XXIII in 1412, Archbishop Arundel referred to "that wretched and pestilent fellow John Wycliffe, of damnable memory, that son of the old serpent, the very herald and child of anti-christ." Climaxing his denunciation, Arundel wrote: "To fill up the measure of his malice, he devised the expedient of a new translation of the scriptures into the mother tongue." Indeed, what most enraged church leaders was that Wycliffe wanted to give people the Bible in their own language.

Nevertheless, a few prominent individuals had access to the Scriptures in vernacular languages. One was Anne of Bohemia, who married King Richard II of England in 1382. She possessed Wycliffe's English translations of the Gospels, which she studied constantly. When she became queen, her favorable attitude helped to advance the cause of the Bible—and not in England only. Anne encouraged students from Prague University in Bohemia to come to Oxford. There they enthusiastically studied the works of Wycliffe and took some of them back to Prague. The popularity of Wycliffe's teachings at

Prague University later served as support for Jan Hus, who studied and eventually taught there. Hus made a readable Czech version from the old Slavonic translation. His efforts promoted common use of the Bible in Bohemia and in neighboring lands.

The Church Strikes Back

The clergy were also furious with Wycliffe and Hus for teaching that the “bare text,” the original inspired Scriptures with nothing added, had greater authority than the “glosses,” the ponderous traditional explanations in the margins of church-approved Bibles. It was the undiluted message of God’s Word that these preachers wished to make available to the common man.

Falsely promised safe-conduct, Hus was tricked into coming before the Catholic Council of Constance, Germany, in 1414 to defend his views. The council was composed of 2,933 priests, bishops, and cardinals. Hus agreed to recant if his teachings could be proved wrong by the Scriptures. To the council, that was not the question. His challenge to their authority was cause enough



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Tyndale’s “New Testament” of 1526—one of only two known complete copies that escaped the flames

for them to burn him at the stake in 1415, as he prayed aloud.

The same council also made a final gesture of condemnation and insult to John Wycliffe by decreeing that his bones should be exhumed in England and burned. This directive was so repugnant that it was not carried out until 1428, upon demand by the pope. As always, though, such fierce opposition did not dampen the zeal of other lovers of truth. Rather, it increased their determination to publish God’s Word.

The Impact of Printing

By 1450, only 35 years after the death of Hus, Johannes Gutenberg began printing with movable type in Germany. His first great work was an edition of the Latin *Vulgate*, completed about 1455. By 1495 all or part of the Bible had been printed in German, Italian, French, Czech, Dutch, Hebrew, Catalan, Greek, Spanish, Slavonic, Portuguese, and Serbian—in that order.

Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus produced the first complete printed edition of the Greek text in 1516. Erasmus wished that



Wycliffe Bible begun
(b. 1384)

1400

WYCLIFFE

Hus executed 1415



HUS

Gutenberg
—first printed Bible
c. 1455

Early Printed Vernaculars

1500

the Scriptures “were translated into all languages of all people.” However, he hesitated to risk his great popularity by translating it himself. Nevertheless, others followed who would be more courageous. Outstanding among these individuals was William Tyndale.

William Tyndale and the English Bible

Tyndale was educated at Oxford and about 1521 came to the home of Sir John Walsh as a tutor for his children. Mealtimes around Walsh’s generous table often found the young Tyndale crossing verbal swords with the local clergy. Tyndale matter-of-factly challenged their opinions by opening the Bible and showing them scriptures. In time, the Walshes became convinced of what Tyndale was saying, and the clergymen were invited less often and were received with less enthusiasm. Naturally, this embittered the clerics further against Tyndale and his beliefs.

Once during a dispute, one of Tyndale’s religious opponents asserted: “Better be without God’s laws than the Pope’s.” Imagine Tyndale’s conviction as he replied: “I defy the Pope and all his laws. If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou doest.” Tyndale’s resolve had crystallized. He later wrote: “I had perceived by experience how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any

truth, except the scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue, that they might see the process, order, and meaning of the text.”

At the time, no Bible had as yet been printed in English. So in 1523, Tyndale went to London to solicit the support of Bishop Tunstall for a translation project. Rebuffed, he left England to pursue his purpose, never to return. In Cologne, Germany, his first printer was raided, and Tyndale barely escaped with some of the precious unbound pages. At Worms, Germany, however, at least 3,000 copies of his English “New Testament” were completed. These were sent to England and began to be distributed there early in 1526. Some of these were the Bibles that Bishop Tunstall bought and burned, unknowingly helping Tyndale to continue his work!

Research Brings Clearer Understanding

Tyndale obviously enjoyed his work. As *The Cambridge History of the Bible* puts it, “Scripture made him happy, and there is something swift and gay in his rhythm which conveys his happiness.” Tyndale’s goal was to let the Scriptures speak to the common man in terms as exact and simple as possible. His studies were showing him the meaning of Biblical words that had been shrouded in church doctrine for centuries. Intimidated neither by the threat of death

TRANSMISSION OF THE BIBLE

Erasmus’
Greek text 1516
Tyndale’s
“New Testament” 1526
Tyndale executed 1536
Henry VIII orders
Bibles put in churches
1538



TYNDALE



HENRY VIII

King James Version
1611

1600

COMMON ERA

nor by the vicious pen of his powerful enemy Sir Thomas More, Tyndale incorporated his findings in his translation.

Working from the original Greek of Erasmus' text rather than the Latin, Tyndale chose "love" over "charity" to express the meaning of the Greek term *agape* more fully. He also used "congregacion" in place of "church," "repent" instead of "have penance," and "elders" rather than "priestes." (1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Colossians 4:15, 16; Luke 13:3, 5; 1 Timothy 5:17, Tyndale) These adjustments were devastating to the authority of the church and to traditional religious practices, such as confession to priests.

Tyndale likewise held to the word "resurrection," rejecting purgatory and consciousness after death as unbiblical. Regarding the dead, he wrote to More: "In putting them in heaven, hell, and purgatory, [you] destroy the arguments wherewith Christ and Paul prove the resurrection." In this regard, Tyndale referred to Matthew 22:30-32 and 1 Corinthians 15:12-19. He correctly came to believe that the dead remain unconscious until a future resurrection. (Psalm 146:4; Ecclesiastes 9:5; John 11:11, 24, 25) This meant that the entire arrangement of prayer to Mary and the "saints" was pointless because they in their unconscious state could neither hear nor intercede.

Tyndale Translates the Hebrew Scriptures

In 1530, Tyndale produced an edition of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures. He thus became the first person to translate the Bible from Hebrew directly into English. Tyndale was also the first English translator to use the name Jehovah. London scholar David Daniell writes: "It would surely have struck Tyndale's readers forcibly that the name of God was newly revealed."

In his attempt to achieve clarity, Tyndale used various English words to translate a single Hebrew word. However, he followed the Hebrew structure closely. The result preserves the terse power of the Hebrew. He himself said: "The properties of the Hebrew tongue agreeth a thousand times more with the English than with the Latin. The manner of speaking is both one; so that in a thousand places thou needest not but to translate it into the English, word for word."

This basically literal approach flavored Tyndale's translation with Hebrew expressions. Some of them must have seemed quite strange at first reading. Yet, the Bible eventually became so familiar that many of these expressions are now part of the English language. Examples include "a man after his own heart" (as at 1 Samuel 13:14), "passover," and "scapegoat." More than that, readers of the English Bible thus got acquainted with Hebrew thought, giving them better insight into the inspired Scriptures.

The Bible and Tyndale Under Ban

The possibility of reading the Word of God in one's own language was thrilling. The English populace responded by buying all that could be smuggled into the country, camouflaged as bales of cloth or other goods. Meanwhile, the clergy contemplated the certain loss of their position if the Bible came to be regarded as the ultimate authority. Hence, the situation became ever more a matter of life and death for the translator and his supporters.

Constantly hounded by Church and State, Tyndale continued working in hiding in Antwerp, Belgium. Still, he devoted two days a week to what he called his pastime—ministering to other English refugees, the poor, and the sick. He spent most of his funds in this way. Before he could translate the latter half of the Hebrew Scriptures, Tyndale

was betrayed for money by an Englishman masquerading as a friend. Executed in Vilvoorde, Belgium, in 1536, his last fervent words were, "Lord! open the King of England's eyes."

By 1538, King Henry VIII for his own reasons had ordered that Bibles be placed in every church in England. Though Tyndale was not credited, the translation that was chosen was essentially his. In this way Tyndale's work became so well-known and loved that it "determined the fundamental character of most of the subsequent versions" in English. (*The Cambridge History of the Bible*) As much as 90 percent of Tyndale's translation was carried directly into the *King James Version* of 1611.

Free access to the Bible meant a great change for England. Discussions held around the Bibles set out in churches became so animated that they at times interfered with church services! "Old people learned to read so that they might come directly to God's Word, and children joined their elders to listen." (*A Concise History of the English Bible*) This period also saw a dramatic increase in the distribution of the Bible in other European lands and languages. But the Bible movement in England was to exert a *worldwide* influence. How did this come about? And how have further discovery and research affected the Bibles we use today? We will conclude our account with the next article in this series.



ARISTARCHUS

A Loyal Companion

AMONG the many trusted fellow workers of the apostle Paul was Aristarchus. What comes to your mind when you hear his name? Anything? Would you be able to say what part he played in the outworking of early Christian history? Though Aristarchus may not be one of the Bible characters we are most familiar with, he was nevertheless involved in a number of episodes narrated in the Christian Greek Scriptures.

So, then, who was Aristarchus? What relationship did he have with Paul? Why can it be said that Aristarchus was a loyal companion? And what lessons can we learn from examining his example?

Aristarchus' dramatic entrance into the account in the book of Acts comes amid the shouting and confusion of a hysterical mob in the city of Ephesus. (Acts 19:23-41) The making of silver shrines of the false deity Artemis was a profitable enterprise for Demetrius and other Ephesian silversmiths. Thus, when Paul's preaching campaign in the city caused a considerable number to forsake the unclean worship of this goddess, Demetrius stirred up other craftsmen. He told them that Paul's preaching not only posed a threat to their financial security but also raised the possibility that the worship of Artemis would come to nothing.

Unable to find Paul, the angry mob forcibly dragged his companions Aristarchus and Gaius into the theater. Since the two of them were in considerable danger, Paul's friends pleaded with him "not to risk himself in the theater."

Picture yourself in that situation. For about two hours, the hysterical mob kept shouting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" Finding themselves at the mercy of that fanatic throng without even being able to speak in their own defense must have been a truly frightening ordeal for Aristarchus and Gaius. They must have wondered if they were going to come out of it alive. Happily, they did. Indeed, the vividness of Luke's account has led some scholars to suggest that he drew on eyewitness testimonies, perhaps those of Aristarchus and Gaius themselves.

The city recorder finally quieted the uproar. It must have been a tremendous relief for Aristarchus and Gaius to hear him objectively acknowledge their innocence and then see the tumult around them dissolve.

How would you have felt after an experience like that? Would you have concluded that being a missionary companion of Paul was not for you, that it was too dangerous, and that you would be better off seeking a quieter life? Not Aristarchus! Being from Thessalonica, likely he was already well aware of the dangers of declaring the good news. When Paul preached in his city just a couple of years earlier, a riot broke out there too. (Acts 17:1-9; 20:4) Aristarchus loyally stuck by Paul.

From Greece to Jerusalem

Some months after the silversmiths' riot, Paul was in Greece and was about to set sail for Syria en route to Jerusalem when "a plot was hatched against him by the Jews."

(Acts 20:2, 3) Who do we find with Paul in these perilous circumstances? Aristarchus!

This new threat caused Paul, Aristarchus, and their companions to change plans, first traveling through Macedonia, then in stages along the coast of Asia Minor before finally embarking for Phoenicia at Patara. (Acts 20:4, 5, 13-15; 21:1-3) The purpose of this journey was evidently to deliver the contributions of the Christians in Macedonia and Achaia to their needy brothers in Jerusalem. (Acts 24:17; Romans 15:25, 26) A large number traveled together, perhaps because they had been entrusted with this responsibility by various congregations. No doubt, such a large party would also ensure greater safety.

Aristarchus had a great privilege in accompanying Paul from Greece to Jerusalem. However, their next journey was to take them from Judea all the way to Rome.

The Journey to Rome

This time the circumstances were quite different. Paul had been in detention in Caesarea for two years, had appealed to Caesar, and was to be sent to Rome in chains. (Acts 24:27; 25:11, 12) Try to imagine how Paul's companions felt. The journey from Caesarea to Rome would be long

In Our Next Issue

Know Jehovah—The Personal God

The Word of God Endures Forever

**Is the Spirit of
the World Poisoning You?**

and emotionally trying, with an unpredictable outcome. Who could go with him to offer support and assistance? Two men were chosen or made themselves available as volunteers. They were Aristarchus and Luke, the writer of Acts.—Acts 27:1, 2.

How were Luke and Aristarchus able to board the same ship on the first leg of the journey to Rome? Historian Giuseppe Ricciotti suggests: "These two embarked as private passengers . . . or, more likely, were admitted by the kindness of the centurion who pretended to consider them to be Paul's slaves, since the law permitted a Roman citizen to be assisted by a couple of slaves." How heartened Paul must have been by their presence and encouragement!

Luke and Aristarchus demonstrated their love for Paul at cost and risk to themselves. In fact, they experienced a life-threatening situation when, along with their captive companion, they were shipwrecked on the island of Malta.—Acts 27:13-28:1.

Paul's "Fellow Captive"

When Paul wrote his letters to the Colossians and to Philemon in 60-61 C.E., Aristarchus and Luke were still by his side in Rome. Aristarchus and Epaphras are referred to as Paul's 'fellow captives.' (Colossians 4:10, 14; Philemon 23, 24) For a time, therefore, Aristarchus apparently shared Paul's prison bonds.

Though Paul was a prisoner in Rome for at least two years, he was allowed to live under guard in his own hired house, where he could declare the good news to visitors. (Acts 28:16, 30) Aristarchus, Epaphras, Luke, and others then ministered



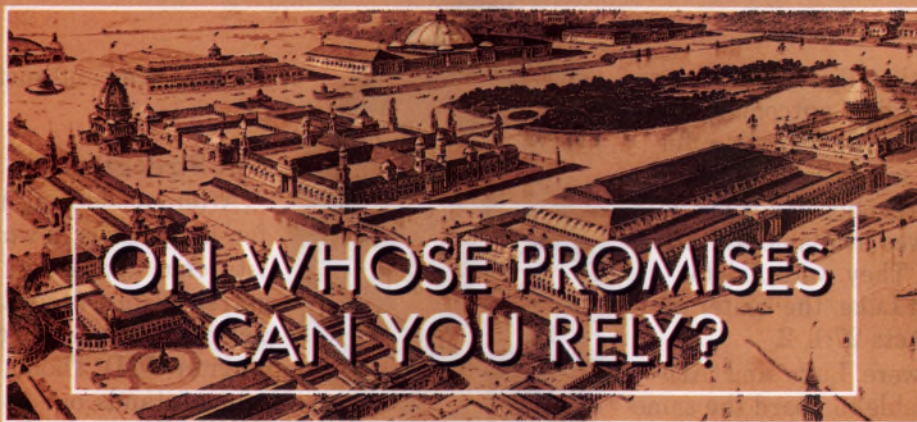
to Paul, helping and sustaining him.

"A Strengthening Aid"

After considering the different episodes in which Aristarchus appears in the inspired Bible record, what picture emerges? According to writer W. D. Thomas, Aristarchus "stands out as a man who could face opposition and come through it with faith intact and his resolve to serve undiminished. He stands out as a man who loved God not only in the good days, when the sun shone from a blue sky, but also through taunt and tempest."

Paul says that Aristarchus and others were "a strengthening aid" (Greek, *para-chori'a*) to him, that is, a source of solace. (Colossians 4:10, 11) So by comforting and heartening Paul, Aristarchus was a real companion in times of need. Having the apostle's company and friendship for a period of several years must have been a very satisfying and spiritually enriching experience.

We may not find ourselves in circumstances quite as dramatic as those experienced by Aristarchus. Nevertheless, similar loyalty to Christ's spiritual brothers and to Jehovah's organization is necessary for all those in the Christian congregation today. (Compare Matthew 25:34-40.) It is likely that fellow worshipers we know will sooner or later suffer adversity or distress, perhaps because of bereavement, illness, or other trials. By cleaving to them and providing help, consolation, and encouragement, we can find joy and can prove ourselves to be loyal companions.—Compare Proverbs 17:17; Acts 20:35.



Cleveland State University Archive

IN 1893 a group of 74 social commentators met at the Chicago World's Fair to discuss the future. (Its site is shown above.) Looking ahead 100 years to 1993, they made the following predictions among others: "Many people will live to be 150." "Prisons will decline and divorce will be considered unnecessary." "The government will have grown more simple, as true greatness tends always toward simplicity."

Similarly, in 1967 a book entitled *The Year 2000* predicted: "By the year 2000, computers are likely to match, simulate, or surpass some of man's most 'human-like' intellectual abilities, including perhaps some of his aesthetic and creative capacities." "The idea of moderately priced robots doing most of the housework . . . seems most reasonable by the year 2000."

Mankind's inability to foresee future events contrasts strikingly with God's ability. For example, compare the foregoing predictions with what the Bible foretold almost 20 centuries ago in regard to our day: "Men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slander-

ers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power."—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

This Bible prophecy concerning "the last days" is just one of many that have been fulfilled in our day. God's Word foretold that "the sign" of Jesus' presence would include world war, food shortages, pestilences, earthquakes, and the worldwide preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom.—Matthew 24:3-14; Luke 21:11.

The unerring accuracy of God's promises moved one Bible writer to declare centuries ago: "Not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed. They have all come true for you. Not one word of them has failed."—Joshua 23:14.

Yes, we can be assured that all of God's promises will soon come to pass. God's Kingdom will bring an end to sickness, crime, drug addiction, hunger, and war—the whole earth will be a paradise. (Psalm 37:10, 11, 29; Revelation 21:3, 4) You can count on this prophecy's fulfillment! It comes from our Creator, "who cannot lie."—Titus 1:2; compare Hebrews 6:13-19.