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Jehovah Values His Humble Servants

“Jehovah . . . takes note of the humble.”—PS. 138:6.

SONG 48

Daily Walking With Jehovah

PREVIEW

One of the most important qualities we need to develop is humility. What is humility? Why should we cultivate it? And how can changing circumstances test our humility? This article will discuss these important questions.

JEHOVAH loves humble people. Only those who are truly humble can have a warm, personal relationship with him. On the other hand, “the haughty he knows only from a distance.” (Ps. 138:6) All of us want to please Jehovah and experience his warm love, so we have good reasons to learn to cultivate humility.

² In this article, we will discuss the answers to three questions: (1) What is humility? (2) Why should we cultivate that quality? (3) What situations can test our humility? As we will see, when we cultivate humility, we bring joy to Jehovah’s heart and benefit ourselves.—Prov. 27:11; Isa. 48:17.

WHAT IS HUMILITY?

³ Humility is lowliness of mind and freedom from pride or arrogance. The Bible indicates that a humble person has a proper view of his relationship with Jehovah God and with his fellow man. The humble person acknowledges that everyone is superior to him in some way.—Phil. 2:3, 4.

⁴ Some people only appear to be humble. They

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1. How does Jehovah feel about humble people? Explain.
 2. What will we discuss in this article?
 3. What is humility?
 - 4-5. Why can we say that true humility is not something that we merely appear to have?

may have an unassuming personality. Or they may show deference or politeness because of their culture and upbringing. But deep down, they may actually be very prideful. Sooner or later, they will reveal what they truly are at heart.—Luke 6:45.

⁵ On the other hand, people who appear confident or forthright are not necessarily proud. (John 1:46, 47) Yet, those with outgoing personalities must be careful not to rely on their natural ability. Whether we are outgoing or not, all of us must work at developing a humble heart condition.

⁶ Consider the example of the apostle Paul. He was used mightily by Jehovah to establish new congregations in one city after another. He may even have accomplished more in the ministry than any other apostle of Jesus Christ. Yet, Paul did not elevate himself among his brothers. Humbly, he admitted: “I am the least of the apostles, and I am not worthy of being called an apostle, because I persecuted the congregation of God.” (1 Cor. 15:9) Then, Paul correctly attributed his fine standing with Jehovah, not to his own qualities or works, but to God’s undeserved kindness. (Read 1 Corinthians 15:10.) What a fine lesson in humility Paul gave in his letter

6. As shown at 1 Corinthians 15:10, what can we learn from the example of the apostle Paul?

to the Corinthians—especially when we recall that some men in the congregation were seeking to prove themselves to be superior to Paul!—2 Cor. 10:10.

⁷ Many of Jehovah’s people have been encouraged by the life story of Brother Karl F. Klein, who served as a member of the Governing Body. In his life story, Brother Klein humbly admitted to a number of the challenges that he had struggled with over the years. For example, back in the 1920’s, he found the house-to-house work to be so difficult that after his

7. How have some prominent brothers in modern times shown humility? Give an example.

The apostle Paul had a humble view of himself
(See paragraph 6)





Karl F. Klein, a humble brother who served on the Governing Body
(See paragraph 7)

first time out, for some two years he did not do it again. Later, while serving at Bethel, he harbored resentment for a time after he received counsel. Also, he suffered a nervous breakdown, from which he later recovered. Yet, he also enjoyed a number of outstanding privileges. Just think what humility it took for such a well-known brother to admit his weaknesses freely! Many brothers and sisters fondly remember Brother Klein and his frank, appealing life story.*

* See the article “Jehovah Has Dealt Rewardingly With Me” in the October 1, 1984, issue of *The Watchtower*.

WHY SHOULD WE CULTIVATE HUMILITY?

⁸ The most important reason for us to cultivate humility is that it pleases Jehovah. The apostle Peter made this clear. (Read 1 Peter 5:6.) Commenting on Peter’s words, the book *“Come Be My Follower”* says: “Haughtiness is like poison. The effects can be devastating. It is a quality that can render the most gifted human useless to God. Humility, on the other hand, can make even the least one very useful to Jehovah. . . . [He] will . . . delight in rewarding you for your humility.”* Really, could we hope for anything better than to bring joy to Jehovah’s heart?—Prov. 23:15.

⁹ Besides pleasing Jehovah, we receive many benefits when we cultivate humility. Humility draws other people to us. To understand why, put yourself in the shoes of others. (Matt. 7:12) Few of us enjoy dealing with people who always insist on their own way and who refuse to accept suggestions from others. By contrast, we find it refreshing to deal with our fellow believers when they show “fellow

* See chap. 3, par. 23.

8. How does 1 Peter 5:6 help us to see that humility pleases Jehovah?

9. How does humility draw other people to us?

feeling, brotherly affection, tender compassion, and humility.” (1 Pet. 3:8) If we are drawn to such people, they will likely be drawn to us—as long as we are humble.

¹⁰ Humility also makes our life easier. Realistically, we may observe things in life that do not seem to be right or fair. The wise man King Solomon acknowledged: “I have seen servants on horseback but princes walking on foot just like servants.” (Eccl. 10:7) Those who have great ability do not always receive recognition. And those with less ability sometimes receive more honor. Even so, Solomon acknowledged that it is wise for us to face reality rather than to be obsessed with negative circumstances. (Eccl. 6:9) If we are humble, we will find it easier to accept life as it is—not as we think it should be.

WHAT SITUATIONS CAN TEST OUR HUMILITY?

¹¹ Each day, we have countless opportunities to show humility. Consider a few situations. *When we receive counsel.* We do well to remember that if someone takes the time to offer us correction, we have likely strayed more than we realize. At such

10. How does humility make our life easier?

11. How should we react when we receive counsel?

times, we may find that our first inclination is to reject the counsel. We might criticize the person who gave it or the way he said it. But if we are humble, we will strive to regain our balance.

¹² A humble person appreciates counsel. To illustrate: Imagine that you are at a Christian meeting. After talking with several fellow believers, you are pulled aside by one of them who discreetly mentions that you have some food on your teeth. No doubt, you would feel embarrassed. But would you not also appreciate that he or she let you know? In fact, you

12. According to Proverbs 27:5, 6, why should we appreciate someone who offers us counsel? Illustrate.

How can situations such as this one test our humility?
(See paragraphs 11-12)





Why is humility needed when others receive privileges of service?
(See paragraphs 13-14)

might wish that someone else had told you sooner! Likewise, we should humbly appreciate a fellow believer who has the courage to offer us counsel when we need it. We view that person as our friend, not our enemy.—Read Proverbs 27:5, 6; Gal. 4:16.

¹³ *When others receive privileges of service.* “When I see others receive privileges, I sometimes wonder why I was not chosen,” admits an elder named Jason. Do you ever feel that way? It is not wrong to be “reaching out” for greater privileges of service.

13. How can we show humility when others receive privileges of service?

(1 Tim. 3:1) However, we must guard our thinking. If we are not careful, we could allow pride to grow in our heart. For example, a Christian man could begin to think that he is the one who is most qualified for a certain assignment. Or a Christian wife might think, ‘My husband is much more qualified than so-and-so!’ However, if we are truly humble, we will avoid such a prideful spirit.

¹⁴ We can learn from the way that Moses reacted when others received privileges. Moses appreciated his assignment of leading the nation of Israel. How did Moses react when Jehovah permitted others to serve alongside him? He was not jealous. (Num. 11:24-29) As to judging the people, he humbly allowed others to share some of his workload. (Ex. 18:13-24) This meant better service for the Israelites whom he was appointed to judge. In that sense, Moses did not put his privileges ahead of the welfare of others. What a good example for us! We remember that if we are to be truly useful to Jehovah, our humility should exceed our ability. Although “Jehovah is high, he takes note of the humble.”—Ps. 138:6.

¹⁵ *When we face new circumstances.* In recent years,

14. What can we learn from the way that Moses reacted when others received privileges?

15. What new circumstances have many faced?

many with decades of experience have received a change of assignment. For example, back in 2014, district overseers and their wives were invited to serve in another form of full-time service. Starting in that same year, circuit overseers will discontinue their assignment when they reach 70 years of age. And brothers 80 years of age or older no longer serve in the congregation as the coordinator of the body of elders. Moreover, in the past several years, many in the Bethel family have been reassigned to the field. Others have had to discontinue special full-time service because of health problems, family obligations, or other personal circumstances.

¹⁶ Such adjustments were not easy for these brothers and sisters to make. Obviously, they felt attached to their former assignment, in many cases one that they had cherished for years. Some went through a “grieving” process as they adjusted to their new circumstances. In time, though, they were able to adjust. Why? Above all, because of their love for Jehovah. They knew that they were dedicated to God—not to a work, a title, or an assignment. (Col. 3:23) They are glad to continue serving Jehovah humbly in any capacity. They “throw all [their] anxi-

16. How have our brothers and sisters shown humility in adjusting to their new circumstances?

ety on him,” knowing that he cares for them.—1 Pet. 5:6, 7.

¹⁷ Are we not grateful that God’s Word encourages us to cultivate humility? When we cultivate this endearing quality, we benefit both ourselves and others. We are better able to deal with life’s challenges. Above all, we draw closer to our heavenly Father. How glad we are to know that although he is “the High and Lofty One,” he loves and values his humble servants!—Isa. 57:15.

17. Why are we grateful that God’s Word encourages us to cultivate humility?

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 5: While at a brother’s home, the apostle Paul humbly enjoys fellowship with others, including young ones. **Page 9:** A brother accepts Bible-based counsel from a younger brother. **Page 10:** The older brother is not envious of the younger brother who enjoys a privilege in the congregation.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What is humility?
- Why should we cultivate humility?
- What situations can test our humility?

Armageddon Is Good News!

“They gathered them together to . . . Armageddon.”

—REV. 16:16.

SONG 150

Seek God for Your Deliverance

PREVIEW

Jehovah’s people have long awaited Armageddon. In this article, we discuss what Armageddon is, what events will lead up to it, and how we can remain faithful as the end draws near.

HAVE you heard people apply the word “Armageddon” to a nuclear war or an environmental disaster? In contrast, what the Bible says about Armageddon involves good news, a cause for happiness! (Rev. 1:3) The war of Armageddon will not destroy but save mankind! How so?

² The Bible shows that the war of Armageddon will save mankind by ending human rule. That war will save mankind by removing the wicked and preserving the righteous. And it will save mankind by protecting our planet from ruin. (Rev. 11:18) To help us understand these points more clearly, let us consider four questions: What is Armageddon? What events will lead up to it? How can we be among those who will be saved at Armageddon? How can we remain faithful as Armageddon draws near?

WHAT IS ARMAGEDDON?

³ Read Revelation 16:14, 16. The word “Armageddon” appears just once in the Scriptures, and it

1-2. (a) Why is Armageddon good news for mankind? (b) What questions will we consider in this article?

3. (a) What does the word “Armageddon” mean? (b) Based on Revelation 16:14, 16, why can we say that Armageddon is not a literal place?

comes from a Hebrew term that means “Mountain of Megiddo.” (Rev. 16:16; ftn.) Megiddo was a city in ancient Israel. (Josh. 17:11) But Armageddon does not refer to any literal place on earth. Strictly speaking, it refers to the situation to which “the kings of the entire inhabited earth” are gathered in opposition to Jehovah. (Rev. 16:14) However, in this article, we will also use the term “Armageddon” to refer to the war that immediately follows the gathering of the kings of the earth. How do we know that Armageddon refers to a symbolic place? First, there is no literal mountain of Megiddo. Second, the area around Megiddo is far too small to hold “the kings of the entire inhabited earth” and their armies and war machines. Third, as we will see later in this article, the war of Armageddon will begin when the world’s “kings” attack God’s people, who are scattered throughout the earth.

⁴ Why did Jehovah connect the final great war with Megiddo? Megiddo and the nearby Jezreel Valley were the sites of many battles. On occasion, Jehovah directly intervened in those battles. For example, “by the waters of Megiddo,” God helped Israelite Judge Barak defeat a Canaanite

4. Why did God connect his final great war with Megiddo?

army led by a chief named Sisera. Barak and the prophetess Deborah thanked Jehovah for their miraculous victory. They sang: “From heaven the stars fought . . . against Sisera. The torrent of Kishon washed them away.”—Judg. 5:19-21.

⁵ Barak and Deborah ended their song with the words: “So let all your enemies perish, O Jehovah, but let those who love you be like the sun rising in its glory.” (Judg. 5:31) At Armageddon, God’s enemies will likewise perish, while those who love God will be saved. But there is one important difference between the two conflicts. At Armageddon, God’s people will not fight. They will not even be armed! Their “strength will be in keeping calm and showing trust” in Jehovah and his heavenly armies.—Isa. 30:15; Rev. 19:11-15.

⁶ How will God defeat his enemies at Armageddon? He may use any number of ways. For example, he may use earthquakes, hail, and lightning. (Job 38:22, 23; Ezek. 38:19-22) He may turn his enemies against one another. (2 Chron. 20:17, 22, 23) And he may use his angels to slay the wicked. (Isa. 37:36) Whatever means God uses, his victory

5. In what important way will the war of Armageddon differ from the battle that Barak fought?

6. How may Jehovah defeat his enemies at Armageddon?

will be complete. All his enemies will be destroyed. And all the righteous will be saved.—Prov. 3:25, 26.

WHAT EVENTS WILL LEAD UP TO ARMAGEDDON?

⁷ *The proclamation of “peace and security” precedes “Jehovah’s day.”* (Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6.) At 1 Thessalonians 5:2, “Jehovah’s day” refers to “the great tribulation.” (Rev. 7:14) How will we know when that tribulation is about to begin? The Bible tells us about a most unusual proclamation. It will serve as a signal announcing the great tribulation.

⁸ That will be the foretold proclamation of “peace and security.” Why will world leaders say that? Will religious leaders participate? Possibly. Nevertheless, the proclamation will be just another demon-inspired lie. But this lie will be especially dangerous because it will give people a false sense of security just before the greatest tribulation in human history begins. Yes, “sudden destruction is to be instantly on them, just like birth pains on a pregnant woman.” What about Jeho-

7-8. (a) According to 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6, what unusual proclamation will world leaders make? (b) Why will this be a dangerous lie?

vah's loyal servants? They may be surprised by the sudden start of Jehovah's day, but they will not be caught off guard.

⁹ Jehovah will not wipe out Satan's entire world all at once, as he did in Noah's day. Rather, he will destroy it in two main stages. First, he will destroy Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. Then, at Armageddon, he will destroy the rest of Satan's world, including its political, military, and commercial systems. Let us take a closer look at those two major events.

¹⁰ *“The judgment on the great prostitute.”* (Read Revelation 17:1, 6; 18:24.) Babylon the Great has brought much reproach on God's name. She has taught lies about God. She has prostituted herself spiritually by forming alliances with earth's rulers. She has used her power and influence to exploit her flocks. And she has spilled much blood, including the blood of God's servants. (Rev. 19:2) How will Jehovah destroy Babylon the Great?

¹¹ Jehovah will destroy “the great prostitute” by

9. In what order will God destroy Satan's world?

10. According to Revelation 17:1, 6 and 18:24, why will Jehovah destroy Babylon the Great?

11. What is the “scarlet-colored wild beast,” and how is it involved in the outworking of God's will concerning Babylon the Great?

TO THE PROCLAMATION OF “PEACE AND SECURITY”

HOW THE WORLD
WILL RESPOND



HOW JEHOVAH'S
PEOPLE WILL
RESPOND



Prepare Now for Armageddon

The Bible helps us to foresee some coming developments. We can imagine how the world will respond. Have you meditated on how you will respond?

means of “the ten horns” of “a scarlet-colored wild beast.” That figurative wild beast represents the United Nations. The ten horns represent the current political powers supporting that organization. At God’s appointed time, those political powers will turn on symbolic Babylon. They “will make her devastated and naked” by plundering her wealth and

TO “THE JUDGMENT ON
THE GREAT PROSTITUTE”

TO THE ATTACK OF “GOG
OF THE LAND OF MAGOG”



exposing her wickedness. (Rev. 17:3, 16) That swift destruction—as if in one day—will come as a shock to those who supported her. After all, she has long boasted: “I sit as queen, and I am not a widow, and I will never see mourning.”—Rev. 18:7, 8.

¹² God will not allow the nations to destroy his people. They proudly bear his name, and they have obeyed his command to flee from Babylon the Great. (Acts 15:16, 17; Rev. 18:4) They have also worked hard to help others flee from her. So Jehovah’s servants will not “receive part of her plagues.” Still, their faith will be tested.

12. What will Jehovah not allow the nations to do, and why not?

13 *The attack of Gog.* (Read Ezekiel 38:2, 8, 9.) After the destruction of all false religious organizations, God’s people will stand out like a lone tree that survived a fierce storm. Satan, of course, will be enraged. He will vent that rage by using demonic propaganda—“unclean inspired expressions”—to cause a coalition of nations to turn on Jehovah’s servants. (Rev. 16:13, 14) That coalition is called “Gog of the land of Magog.” When the nations launch their attack, they will have arrived at the symbolic place called Armageddon.—Rev. 16:16.

14 Gog will trust in his “arm of flesh”—his military might. (2 Chron. 32:8) We will trust in Jehovah our God—a stand that will seem foolish to the nations. After all, the gods of the once powerful Babylon the Great did not save her from “the wild beast” and its “ten horns”! (Rev. 17:16) So Gog will expect an easy victory. “Like clouds covering the land,” he will attack Jehovah’s people. (Ezek. 38:16) But Gog will soon see that he has marched into a trap. Like Pharaoh at the Red Sea, Gog will learn that he is fighting against Jehovah.—Ex. 14:1-4; Ezek. 38:3, 4, 18, 21-23.

13. (a) Who is Gog? (b) According to Ezekiel 38:2, 8, 9, what will bring Gog to the symbolic place called Armageddon?

14. What will Gog come to learn?



Wherever they are on earth, God's people
will trust in him when the attack is launched
(See paragraph 13)

¹⁵ Christ and his heavenly armies will defend God's people and crush Gog's hordes. (Rev. 19:11, 14, 15) But what about Jehovah's chief enemy, Satan, whose lying propaganda led the nations to Armageddon? Jesus will hurl him and his demons into an abyss, where they will be locked away for a thousand years.—Rev. 20:1-3.

15. In what ways will Christ be completely victorious?

HOW CAN YOU BE SAVED AT ARMAGEDDON?

¹⁶ Whether we have been in the truth for many years or not, to be saved at Armageddon, we must show that we “know God” and that we “obey the good news about our Lord Jesus.” (2 Thess. 1:7-9) We “know God” when we know his likes, dislikes, and standards. We also show that we know him when we love and obey him and give him our exclusive devotion. (1 John 2:3-5; 5:3) When we show that we know God, we have the honor of being “known by him,” which will be lifesaving at Armageddon! (1 Cor. 8:3) How so? Because to be “known by him” can mean having God’s approval.

¹⁷ “The good news about our Lord Jesus” includes all the truths that Jesus taught, as found in God’s Word. We obey the good news when we apply it in our lives. That obedience includes keeping Kingdom interests in first place, living by God’s righteous standards, and announcing God’s Kingdom. (Matt. 6:33; 24:14) It also includes supporting Christ’s anointed brothers as they care for their weighty responsibilities.—Matt. 25:31-40.

16. (a) How do we show that we “know God”? (b) Why will our knowing Jehovah prove to be a blessing at Armageddon?

17. What does it mean to “obey the good news about our Lord Jesus”?

18 God’s anointed servants will soon be able to return the kindness shown them by those of the “other sheep.” (John 10:16) How so? Before the war of Armageddon begins, all of the 144,000 will have been raised to heaven as immortal spirits. They will then be part of the heavenly armies that will crush Gog and safeguard “a great crowd” of sheeplike ones. (Rev. 2:26, 27; 7:9, 10) Yes, what a privilege the great crowd will have had to support Jehovah’s anointed servants while these were still on earth!

HOW CAN WE REMAIN FAITHFUL AS THE END DRAWS NEAR?

19 During these difficult last days, many of Jehovah’s people are experiencing trials. Even so, we can endure with joy. (Jas. 1:2-4) A key is to persevere in heartfelt prayer. (Luke 21:36) We must also follow up our prayers by studying God’s Word daily and meditating on it, including its amazing prophecies concerning our times. (Ps. 77:12) These activities, along with a full share in the ministry, will keep our faith strong and our hope alive!

18. In what way will Christ’s anointed brothers be able to return the kindness shown them?

19-20. Despite our trials, how can we remain faithful as Armageddon draws near?

²⁰ Think how thrilled you will be when Babylon the Great is gone and when Armageddon is over! More important, imagine how profoundly happy you will be when God's name and sovereignty have been fully vindicated! (Ezek. 38:23) Yes, Armageddon is good news for those who know God, obey his Son, and endure to the end.—Matt. 24:13.

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Pages 20-21: Dramatic events occur around us. We will (1) share in the ministry as long as that is possible, (2) maintain our program of study, and (3) continue to trust in God's protection. **Page 23:** Policemen get ready to force their way into the home of a Christian family who trust that Jesus and his angels are aware of what is happening.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What are some of the main events that will lead up to Armageddon?
- Why will the proclamation of "peace and security" be a dangerous lie?
- How can we remain faithful to Jehovah as Armageddon draws near?

Readily Submit to Jehovah—Why and How?

*“Should we not more readily submit ourselves
to the Father?”—HEB. 12:9.*

SONG 9

Jehovah Is Our King!

PREVIEW

This article will discuss why we should submit to Jehovah. It will also consider what elders, fathers, and mothers—all of whom have some authority—can learn from the examples of Governor Nehemiah; King David; and Mary, the mother of Jesus.

WE SHOULD submit* to Jehovah because he is our Creator. As such, he has the right to set standards for his creation. (Rev. 4:11) But we have another compelling reason to obey him—his way of ruling is the best. Throughout history, many human rulers have had a measure of power and authority over others. In comparison to them, Jehovah is the wisest and the most loving, merciful, and compassionate Ruler of all.—Ex. 34:6; Rom. 16:27; 1 John 4:8.

² Jehovah wants us to obey him, not primarily because we fear him, but because we love him and we view him as our loving Father. In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul explains that we should “readily submit ourselves to the Father” because he trains us “for our benefit.” —Read Hebrews 12:9-11.

³ We submit to Jehovah by doing our best to obey him in all things and by resisting the urge to rely on our own understanding. (Prov. 3:5) We find it easier to submit to Jehovah as we come to know his beautiful qual-

*** EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED:** The words **submit** and **submission** have a negative meaning for those who are forced to obey someone. However, God’s people choose to obey him, so they do not view the concept of submission in a negative way.

- 1. Why should we submit to Jehovah?**
- 2. What reasons does Hebrews 12:9-11 give us for submitting to Jehovah?**
- 3. (a) How do we show that we submit to Jehovah? (b) What questions will we answer?**

ities. Why? Because these qualities are reflected in all that he does. (Ps. 145:9) The more we learn about Jehovah, the more we will love him. And when we love Jehovah, we do not need a long list of rules telling us what to do and what not to do. We work to bring our thinking and emotions into harmony with what is good and to avoid what is bad. (Ps. 97:10) At times, however, we may struggle to obey Jehovah. Why is that? And what can elders, fathers, and mothers learn from the examples set by Governor Nehemiah; King David; and Mary, the mother of Jesus? This article will provide answers to these questions.

WHY SUBMITTING TO JEHOVAH CAN BE A CHALLENGE

⁴ One reason why we might find it a challenge to submit to Jehovah is that we all inherited sin and are imperfect. So we have rebellious tendencies. After Adam and Eve rebelled against God and ate the forbidden fruit, they set their own standards. (Gen. 3:22) Today, most of mankind still prefer to ignore Jehovah and decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong.

⁵ Even those who know and love Jehovah may struggle to submit fully to him. The apostle Paul faced this challenge. (Read Romans 7:21-23.) Like Paul, we want

4-5. According to Romans 7:21-23, why can it be a challenge to submit to Jehovah?

to do what is right in Jehovah's eyes. But we must constantly fight the tendency to do wrong things.

⁶ Another reason why it can be a challenge to submit to Jehovah is that we are influenced by the culture in which we were raised. Many human ideas are in conflict with Jehovah's will, and it can be a constant struggle to free ourselves from common ways of thinking. Consider just one example.

⁷ It is common in some places to pressure young ones to devote their lives to earning a lot of money. A sister named Mary* faced that challenge. Before learning about Jehovah, she attended one of the most prestigious schools in her country. Mary felt pressure from her family to get a high-paying job in a respected profession. She too wanted that. However, after she learned about Jehovah and came to love him, she changed her goals. Even so, she says: "Sometimes I see attractive business opportunities that could allow me to earn a lot of money but would disrupt my spiritual routine. Because of the way I was raised, I still struggle to say no. I have to beg Jehovah to help me resist the temptation to accept work that could take me away from my service to him."—Matt. 6:24.

* Some names in this article have been changed.

6-7. What is a second reason why it can be a challenge to submit to Jehovah? Give an example.

⁸ We benefit ourselves by being submissive to Jehovah. But those who have a measure of authority, such as elders, fathers, and mothers, have an additional reason to follow God's direction; they have the opportunity to benefit other people. Let us consider some examples from the Bible that teach us how to handle authority in a way that pleases Jehovah.

WHAT ELDERS CAN LEARN FROM NEHEMIAH

⁹ Jehovah has entrusted elders with the important responsibility to shepherd his people. (1 Pet. 5:2) Elders can learn much from examining how Nehemiah dealt with Jehovah's people. As governor of Judah, Nehemiah had considerable authority. (Neh. 1:11; 2:7, 8; 5:14) Imagine some of the challenges that Nehemiah faced. He had learned that the people had defiled the temple and were not supporting the Levites financially as the Law directed. The Jews were violating the Sabbath law, and some of the men had married foreign women. Governor Nehemiah would have to handle this difficult situation.—Neh. 13:4-30.

¹⁰ Nehemiah did not abuse his authority by imposing his own standards on God's people. Instead, he sought Jehovah's guidance in earnest prayer, and he taught the

8. What will we now consider?

9. What challenges did Nehemiah face?

10. How did Nehemiah respond to the challenges he faced?



Elders share in work done at the Kingdom Hall, just as Nehemiah got personally involved in rebuilding Jerusalem
(See paragraphs 9-11)

people Jehovah's Law. (Neh. 1:4-10; 13:1-3) Nehemiah also humbly worked alongside his brothers, even helping them to rebuild Jerusalem's walls.—Neh. 4:15.

¹¹ Elders may not have to deal with the same problems that Nehemiah did, but they can imitate him in a number of ways. For example, they work hard for the benefit of their brothers and sisters. And they do not let their authority make them unduly proud. Instead, they treat the congregation tenderly. (Read 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8.) Their deep love and humble attitude affect how they speak to others. Andrew, an experienced

11. According to 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8, how should elders treat those in the congregation?

elder, says: “I have found that the brothers and sisters generally respond well to an elder’s kindness and genuine warmth. These qualities motivate the congregation to cooperate with the elders.” Another longtime elder, named Tony, comments: “I try to apply the counsel found at Philippians 2:3 and constantly work at viewing others as superior to me. This helps me to avoid acting like a dictator.”

¹² Elders must be humble, just as Jehovah is humble. Although Jehovah is the Sovereign of the universe, he “stoops down” to raise “the lowly from the dust.” (Ps. 18:35; 113:6, 7) In fact, Jehovah detests those who are proud and arrogant.—Prov. 16:5.

¹³ An elder who submits to Jehovah needs to “keep a tight rein on his tongue.” Otherwise, he may speak unkindly if someone is disrespectful to him. (Jas. 1:26; Gal. 5:14, 15) Andrew, quoted earlier, says: “At times, I have felt like responding unkindly to a brother or sister who seemed to be disrespectful. However, I have meditated on examples of faithful men in the Bible, and that has helped me learn the importance of being humble and meek.” Elders show their submission to Jehovah by being loving and gracious when talking with those in the congregation, including their fellow elders.—Col. 4:6.

12. Why is it important for elders to be humble?

13. Why does an elder need to “keep a tight rein on his tongue”?

WHAT FATHERS CAN LEARN FROM KING DAVID

¹⁴ Jehovah has assigned the father as head of the family, and God expects him to train and discipline his children. (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 6:4) But a father's authority is limited—he must answer to Jehovah, the one to whom every family owes its name. (Eph. 3:14, 15) Fathers show their submission to Jehovah by using their authority in a way that pleases God. They can learn much by studying the life of King David.

¹⁵ Jehovah appointed David as head not only of his family but also of the entire nation of Israel. As king, David had a lot of power. At times, he misused that power and made serious mistakes. (2 Sam. 11:14, 15) But he showed his submission to Jehovah by accept-

14. What role has Jehovah assigned to fathers, and what does he expect of them?

15. Why is King David a good example for fathers to consider?



A Christian father's prayers should give evidence of his humility
(See paragraphs 15-16)

ing discipline. He poured out his heart to Jehovah in prayer. And he tried his best to obey Jehovah's counsel. (Ps. 51:1-4) In addition, he was humble enough to accept good advice not only from men but also from women. (1 Sam. 19:11, 12; 25:32, 33) David learned from his mistakes and centered his life on serving Jehovah.

¹⁶ Consider just some of the lessons that fathers can learn from King David: Do not abuse the authority that Jehovah has given you. Admit your mistakes, and accept Bible-based counsel from others. If you do, your family will respect you for your humility. When praying with your family, pour your heart out to Jehovah—let them hear how much you depend on him. And above all, build your life around your service to Jehovah. (Deut. 6:6-9) Your good example is one of the most valuable gifts that you can give to your family.

WHAT MOTHERS CAN LEARN FROM MARY

¹⁷ Jehovah has assigned the mother an honorable role in the family, and he has given her a measure of authority over her children. (Prov. 6:20) In fact, a mother's influence on her children can be profound and lifelong. (Prov. 22:6) Note what mothers can learn from Mary, the mother of Jesus.

16. What lessons can fathers learn from David?

17. What role has Jehovah assigned to mothers?



If a mother is tired or exasperated, she may need to put forth greater effort to express love for family members
(See paragraph 19)

18 Mary knew the Scriptures very well. She had developed a deep respect for Jehovah and had formed a strong personal friendship with him. She was willing to submit to Jehovah’s direction, even though it involved changing her entire life course.—Luke 1:35-38, 46-55.

19 Mothers, you can imitate Mary in a number of ways. How? First, by maintaining your own friendship with Jehovah through personal Bible study and private prayers. Second, by being willing to make changes in your life to please Jehovah. For example, you may have been raised by parents who easily lost their temper and spoke harshly to their children. So you may have grown up thinking that this was a normal way to raise a family. Even after learning Jehovah’s standards, you might find it a challenge to remain calm and patient with your children, especially if they misbehave when you are

18-19. What can mothers learn from Mary’s example?

tired. (Eph. 4:31) At such times, you need more than ever to rely on Jehovah in prayer. A mother named Lydia says: “Sometimes, I have had to pray intensely so that I did not speak angrily when my son disobeyed me. I have even stopped myself mid-sentence and silently prayed for Jehovah’s help. Prayer keeps me calm.”—Ps. 37:5.

²⁰ Some mothers may face a related challenge—they find it difficult to express their love for their children. (Titus 2:3, 4) Some women have been raised in a household where their parents did not have a warm relationship with their children. If that is how you were raised, you do not have to repeat your parents’ mistakes. A mother who submits to Jehovah’s will may have to learn how to express love for her children. It may be difficult for her to change her way of thinking, feeling, and acting. But it can be done, and those changes will benefit both her and her family.

CONTINUE SUBMITTING TO JEHOVAH

²¹ King David knew the benefits of submitting to Jehovah. He wrote: “The orders from Jehovah are righteous, causing the heart to rejoice; the commandment of Jehovah is clean, making the eyes shine. By them

20. What challenge do some mothers face, and how can that challenge be overcome?

21-22. According to Isaiah 65:13, 14, what benefits do we receive from submitting to Jehovah?

your servant has been warned; in keeping them, there is a large reward.” (Ps. 19:8, 11) Today, we can see the contrast between those who submit to Jehovah and those who reject his loving counsel. Those who do submit to Jehovah “shout joyfully because of the good condition of the heart.”—Read Isaiah 65:13, 14.

²² When elders, fathers, and mothers readily submit to Jehovah, their lives improve, their families are happier, and the entire congregation is more united. Most important of all, they make Jehovah’s heart rejoice. (Prov. 27:11) What greater reward could there be?

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 32: An elder works along with his son in Kingdom Hall maintenance, just as Nehemiah personally assisted with rebuilding Jerusalem’s walls. **Page 34:** A father represents his family in earnest prayer to Jehovah. **Page 36:** A boy spent hours playing video games and has not completed his chores or schoolwork. His mother, tired from work, disciplines him without losing her temper or using harsh language.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| ■ Why might it be a challenge to submit to Jehovah? | ■ In what ways can elders, fathers, and mothers submit to Jehovah? | ■ What will be the result if we continue to submit to Jehovah? |
|---|--|--|

“Come to Me, . . . and I Will Refresh You”

*“Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down,
and I will refresh you.”—MATT. 11:28.*

SONG 17

“I Want To”

PREVIEW

Jesus invites us to come to him. What is involved in accepting his invitation? This article will answer that question, and it will remind us of how we can be refreshed by working along with Christ.

JESUS made a beautiful promise to a crowd that was listening to him. “Come to me,” he said, “and I will refresh you.” (Read Matthew 11:28-30.) This was not an empty promise. Think, for example, of what he did for a woman who was suffering from a terrible sickness.

² The woman desperately needed help. She had gone to many physicians, hoping to find relief. After 12 years of misery, she still had not been healed. According to the Law, she was unclean. (Lev. 15:25) Then she heard that Jesus could cure those who were suffering, so she went to find him. When she found him, she touched the fringe of his outer garment, and immediately she was cured! But Jesus did more than heal her body—he restored her dignity. For example, when talking with her, he used the warm yet respectful term “daughter.” How truly refreshed, or energized, that woman must have felt!—Luke 8:43-48.

³ Notice that the woman went to Jesus. She took the initiative. The same is true today—we must make the effort to “come to” Jesus. At present, Jesus will not miraculously cure the physical sicknesses of those who “come to” him. But he still extends the invitation: “Come to me, . . . and I will refresh you.” In this article, we will answer five questions: How can we “come

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1. As recorded at Matthew 11:28-30, what promise did Jesus make?
 2. What did Jesus do for a sick woman?
 3. What questions will we answer?

to” Jesus? What did Jesus mean when he said: “Take my yoke upon you”? What can we learn from Jesus? Why is the work that he has given us to do refreshing? And how can we continue to find refreshment under Jesus’ yoke?

“COME TO ME”

⁴ One way to “come to” Jesus is by learning as much as we can about the things he said and did. (Luke 1:1-4) Nobody else can do this for us—we must study these accounts for ourselves. We also “come to” Jesus by making the decision to get baptized and become a disciple of Christ.

⁵ Another way to “come to” Jesus is by going to the congregation elders if we need help. Jesus uses these “gifts in men” to care for his sheep. (Eph. 4:7, 8, 11; John 21:16; 1 Pet. 5:1-3) We must take the initiative to ask for their help. We cannot expect the elders to read our minds and know what we need. Consider what a brother named Julian says: “I had to leave my Bethel assignment for health reasons, and one of my friends recommended that I request a shepherding call. At first, I did not think I needed it. But later I asked for help, and that shepherding visit turned out to be one of the best gifts I have ever received.” Loyal elders,

4-5. What are some ways that we can “come to” Jesus?

such as the two who visited Julian, can help us to know “the mind of Christ,” that is, to understand and imitate his thinking and attitude. (1 Cor. 2:16; 1 Pet. 2:21) This really is one of the best gifts they can give us.

“TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU”

⁶ When Jesus said: “Take my yoke upon you,” he may have meant “Accept my authority.” He could also have meant “Get under the yoke with me, and together we will work for Jehovah.” Either way, the yoke entails work.

⁷ We accept Jesus’ invitation when we dedicate our lives to Jehovah and get baptized. That invitation is open to all—Jesus will never reject anyone who sincerely wants to serve God. (John 6:37, 38) All of Christ’s followers have been given the privilege of sharing in the work that Jehovah has asked Jesus to do. We can be certain that Jesus will always be there to help us do that work.—Read Matthew 28:18-20.

“LEARN FROM ME”

⁸ Humble people were drawn to Jesus. (Matt. 19:13,

6. What did Jesus mean when he said: “Take my yoke upon you”?

7. According to Matthew 28:18-20, what work have we been given to do, and of what can we be certain?

8-9. Why were humble people drawn to Jesus, and what questions should we ask ourselves?

14; Luke 7:37, 38) Why? Consider the contrast between Jesus and the Pharisees. Those religious leaders were cold and arrogant. (Matt. 12:9-14) Jesus was warm and humble. The Pharisees were ambitious and proud of their high position in society. Jesus discouraged undue ambition, and he taught his disciples to view themselves as lowly servants. (Matt. 23:2, 6-11) The Pharisees dominated others through fear and intimidation. (John 9:13, 22) Jesus refreshed others by loving acts and kind words.

⁹ Have you learned these lessons from Jesus? Ask yourself: ‘Do I have a reputation for being mild-tempered and humble? Do I willingly do menial jobs to serve others? Am I kind to others?’

¹⁰ Jesus created a peaceful, inviting environment for his fellow workers, and he enjoyed training them. (Luke 10:1, 19-21) He encouraged his disciples to ask questions, and he wanted to hear their opinions. (Matt. 16:13-16) Much like plants in a greenhouse, the disciples flourished. They absorbed the lessons that Jesus taught and produced fruit in the form of good works.

¹¹ Do you have a position of authority? If so, ask yourself: ‘What kind of environment do I create

10. What work environment did Jesus create?

11. What questions should we ask ourselves?

REFRESH OTHERS AS JESUS DID

(See paragraphs 8-11)



**BE APPROACHABLE
AND FRIENDLY**



**BE ACTIVE
AND ZEALOUS**



**BE HUMBLE
AND HARDWORKING**

at work or at home? Do I promote peace? Do I encourage others to ask questions? And am I willing to hear their opinions?’ Never would we want to be like the Pharisees, who resented those who questioned them and persecuted those who expressed an opinion contrary to their own.—Mark 3:1-6; John 9:29-34.

“YOU WILL FIND REFRESHMENT”

¹² Why is it refreshing for us to do the work Jesus has given us? There are many reasons, but consider just a few.

¹³ We have *the best overseers*. Jehovah, our Supreme Overseer, is not a thankless or harsh master. He appreciates the work we do. (Heb. 6:10) And he gives us the power that we need to carry our load of responsibility. (2 Cor. 4:7; Gal. 6:5, fn.) Jesus, our King, leads by example. (John 13:15) And the elders who shepherd us try to imitate Jesus, “the great shepherd.” (Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:2) They strive to be kind, encouraging, and courageous as they feed and protect us.

¹⁴ We have *the best companions*. No other people have a sense of purpose or a bond of love like ours. Just think: We have the privilege of working with people who have the highest moral standards but who are

12-14. Why is the work that Jesus has given us to do refreshing?

not self-righteous. They are talented but modest, and they consider others superior to them. They view us not only as fellow workers but also as friends. And that bond is so close that they are willing to give their lives for us!

¹⁵ We have *the best work*. We teach people the truth about Jehovah and expose the lies told by the Devil. (John 8:44) Satan loads people down with burdens they cannot carry. For example, he wants us to believe that Jehovah will not forgive us for our sins and that we are unlovable. What a crushing burden, and what a terrible lie! When we “come to” Christ, our sins are forgiven. And the truth is that Jehovah loves all of us deeply. (Rom. 8:32, 38, 39) How rewarding it is to help people learn to rely on Jehovah and to see them improve their lives!

CONTINUE TO FIND REFRESHMENT UNDER JESUS' YOKE

¹⁶ The load that Jesus asks us to carry is different from other loads that we must bear. For example, at the end of a day of secular work, many feel not only exhausted but also unfulfilled. By contrast, after spending time serving Jehovah and Christ, we feel a

15. How should we feel about the work that we are doing?

16. How is the load that Jesus asks us to carry different from other loads that we must bear?

deep sense of satisfaction. We may be exhausted at the end of a workday and have to push ourselves to attend a congregation meeting that night. But often we come home from that meeting refreshed and energized. The same is true when we make the effort to preach and to do our personal Bible study. The reward we receive is far greater than the energy we expend!

¹⁷ We must be realistic. Each of us has a certain amount of energy. So we must be careful about what we take on. For example, we could waste energy trying to gather material possessions. Note what Jesus said to a rich young man who asked him: “What must I do to inherit everlasting life?” The young man was already obeying the Law. He must have been a decent man because Mark’s Gospel account specifically states that Jesus “felt love for him.” Jesus presented the young ruler with an invitation. “Go, sell what things you have,” Jesus said, “and come be my follower.” The man was torn, but it appears that he could not let go of his “many possessions.” (Mark 10:17-22) As a result, he rejected the yoke that Jesus had offered him and continued to slave “for Riches.” (Matt. 6:24) What choice would you have made?

¹⁸ From time to time, it is good for us to reassess

17. Why must we be realistic and careful?

18. What should we do occasionally, and why?

our priorities in life. Why? So that we can make sure that we are using our energy wisely. Consider what a young man named Mark says: “For many years, I thought I was living a simple life. I was pioneering, but I was always thinking about money and about making my life more comfortable. I wondered why my life had become a burden. Then I realized that I was mostly seeking my own interests first and giving Jehovah the time and energy that was left over.” Mark adjusted his thinking and lifestyle and made himself available to do more in Jehovah’s service. “I feel anxious at times,” Mark says, “but with Jehovah’s help and Jesus’ backing, I have overcome my challenges.”

¹⁹ We will continue to find refreshment under Jesus’ yoke if we do three things. First, *keep the right perspective*. We are doing Jehovah’s work, so it must be done Jehovah’s way. We are the workers, and Jehovah is the Master. (Luke 17:10) If we try to do his work our way, we will find ourselves fighting against the yoke. Even a powerful bull is likely to injure and exhaust itself if it constantly tries to go in its own direction and fights against the yoke that its master controls. On the other hand, we can do extraordinary things and overcome any obstacle if we follow Jehovah’s guidance. Remember that nobody can stop his

19. Why is having the right perspective so important?

will from being accomplished!—Rom. 8:31; 1 John 4:4.

²⁰ Second, *act with the right motive*. Our goal is to bring glory to our loving Father, Jehovah. Those in the first century who were motivated by greed or self-interest soon became unhappy and abandoned Jesus' yoke. (John 6:25-27, 51, 60, 66; Phil. 3:18, 19) By contrast, those who were motivated by an unselfish love of God and love of neighbor happily carried that yoke throughout their life on earth, with the prospect of serving with Christ in heaven. Like them, we will remain happy by carrying Jesus' yoke with the right motive.

²¹ Third, *have the right expectations*. We have chosen a life of self-sacrifice and hard work. Jesus warned us that we would be persecuted. But we can expect that Jehovah will give us the strength to endure any challenge. The more we endure, the stronger we will become. (Jas. 1:2-4) We can also expect that Jehovah will provide for us, that Jesus will shepherd us, and that our brothers and sisters will encourage us. (Read Matthew 6:31-33; John 10:14; 1 Thess. 5:11) What more do we really need?

20. What should be our motive for coming under Jesus' yoke?

21. According to Matthew 6:31-33, what can we expect Jehovah to do?

²² The woman whom Jesus cured was refreshed on the very day that she was healed. But she would receive lasting refreshment only if she became a loyal disciple of Christ. What do you think she did? If she did choose to come under Jesus' yoke, imagine the reward—serving with Jesus in heaven! Any sacrifices she had made to follow Christ would pale in comparison with that blessing. No matter what our hope is—living forever in heaven or on earth—how thankful we can be that we have accepted Jesus' invitation: "Come to me!"

22. For what can we be thankful?

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 44: In a number of ways, Jesus refreshed others. Similarly, a brother proves to be refreshing to others in various ways.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- How do we "come to" Jesus?
- Why is the work that Jesus has given us to do refreshing?
- How can we continue to find refreshment under Jesus' yoke?

“Look! A Great Crowd”

“Look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, . . . standing before the throne and before the Lamb.”—REV. 7:9.

SONG 60

It Means Their Life

PREVIEW

This article will discuss John’s prophetic vision of the gathering of “a great crowd.” No doubt, it will strengthen the faith of all who are part of that blessed group.

AT THE end of the first century C.E., the apostle John was in a distressing situation. He was elderly, confined to the isle of Patmos, and likely the only apostle alive. (Rev. 1:9) He knew that opposers were misleading congregations and causing divisions. It may have seemed that the small flame of Christianity was about to be extinguished.—Jude 4; Rev. 2:15, 20; 3:1, 17.

² Amid these dire circumstances, John received an exciting prophetic vision. In it, angels are told to hold back the destructive winds of the great tribulation until the final sealing of a group of slaves. (Rev. 7:1-3) That group is made up of 144,000 who will rule with Jesus in heaven. (Luke 12:32; Rev. 7:4) Then John mentions another group, so vast that he exclaims: “Look!”—an expression that may indicate his surprise at seeing something unexpected. What does John see? “A great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.” (Read Revelation 7:9-14.) Imagine how happy John must have been to learn about myriads of people practicing true worship in the future!

1. What was the apostle John’s situation at the end of the first century C.E.?
2. According to Revelation 7:9-14, what exciting prophetic vision did John receive? (See cover picture.)

³ That vision no doubt strengthened John's faith. How much more should it strengthen our faith, since we live in the time of the fulfillment of the vision! We have seen the gathering of millions whose hope is to survive the great tribulation and live forever on earth. In this article, we will learn how Jehovah revealed the identity of that great crowd to his people more than eight decades ago. Then we will consider two features of that crowd: (1) its size and (2) its diversity. These points should strengthen the faith of all who hope to be part of that blessed group.

WHERE WILL THE GREAT CROWD LIVE?

⁴ Christendom generally does not teach the Scriptural truth that one day obedient humans will live forever on earth. (2 Cor. 4:3, 4) Today, most religions in Christendom teach that all good people go to heaven when they die. It was different, however, with the small group of Bible Students who were publishing the *Watch Tower* in the late 1800's. They understood that God would restore Paradise on earth and that millions of obedient humans would live *here on earth*—not in heaven. However, it took time for

3. (a) Why should John's vision strengthen our faith? (b) What will we learn in this article?

4. What Scriptural truth does Christendom not understand, and how did the Bible Students differ in this regard?

them to discern clearly who these obedient humans would be.—Matt. 6:10.

⁵ Of course, the Bible Students also discerned from the Scriptures that some would be “bought from the earth” to rule with Jesus in heaven. (Rev. 14:3) That group would be made up of 144,000 zealous and dedicated Christians who had served God faithfully while on earth. What about the great crowd?

⁶ In his vision, John saw that group “standing before the throne and before the Lamb.” (Rev. 7:9) Those words led the Bible Students to conclude that, like the 144,000, the great crowd would reside in heaven. If both the 144,000 and the great crowd were to live in heaven, how would one group differ from the other? The Bible Students thought that the great crowd must be made up of Christians who had not been fully obedient to God while on earth. Although leading reasonably clean lives, some of them may have remained in Christendom’s churches. The Bible Students concluded that such ones demonstrated a measure of zeal but not enough to rule with Jesus. Because their love for God had not been sufficiently fervent, the great crowd would qualify to

5. What did the Bible Students believe about the 144,000?

6. What did the Bible Students believe about the great crowd?

be in heaven *before* the throne but not to sit *on* thrones.

⁷ Who, then, would live on earth? The Bible Students believed that after the 144,000 and the great crowd were gathered to heaven, millions of others would be granted life on earth to experience the blessings of Christ’s Millennial Reign. The Bible Students did not expect those millions to serve Jehovah *before* the start of Christ’s Reign. Rather, it was thought that this group would be educated in Jehovah’s ways *during* the Millennium. Thereafter, those who conformed to Jehovah’s standards would be blessed with everlasting life on earth, whereas those who rebelled would be destroyed. The Bible Students also thought that perhaps some who would serve as earthly “princes” during that time—including the resurrected “ancient worthies” (faithful men who died before Christ)—would somehow be rewarded with heavenly life at the end of the Millennium.—Ps. 45:16.

⁸ Thus, the Bible Students felt that there were three groups: (1) the 144,000, who would rule with

7. Who, according to the Bible Students, would live on earth during the Millennium, and what did the Bible Students believe about the faithful men of old?

8. What three groups seemed to have a place in God’s purpose?

Jesus in heaven; (2) the great crowd of less zealous Christians, who would stand before the throne of Jesus in heaven; and (3) millions of people who would be educated in Jehovah's ways on earth during Christ's Thousand Year Reign.* In Jehovah's due time, however, the light of truth began to shine ever brighter on this topic.—Prov. 4:18.

THE LIGHT OF TRUTH SHINES BRIGHTER

⁹ In 1935 the identity of the great crowd in John's vision was clarified. Jehovah's Witnesses came to realize that the great crowd do not literally have to be in heaven to stand "before the throne and before the Lamb." Rather, their position is figurative. Even though they would live on earth, the great crowd could stand "before the throne" by recognizing Jehovah's authority and by submitting to his sovereignty. (Isa. 66:1) They could stand "before the Lamb" by exercising faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice. Similarly, at Matthew 25:31, 32, "all the nations"—including the wicked—are said to be "gathered before" Jesus on his glorious throne. Clearly, all these nations

* See *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*, pp. 159-163.

9. (a) In what way could the great crowd on earth stand "before the throne and before the Lamb"? (b) Why does this understanding of Revelation 7:9 make sense?



At the 1935 convention, a great many with the earthly hope got baptized
(See paragraph 9)

are, not in heaven, but on earth. This adjusted understanding makes sense. It explains why the Bible does not say that the great crowd is raised to heaven. Only one group is promised everlasting life in heaven—the 144,000, who will “rule as kings over the earth” with Jesus.—Rev. 5:10.

¹⁰ Since 1935, Jehovah’s Witnesses have thus understood that the great crowd of John’s vision is made up of a group of faithful Christians who have the prospect of living forever on earth. In order to survive the great tribulation, the great crowd would have to be educated in Jehovah’s ways before the Millennium begins. They would need to show strong faith in order to “succeed in escaping all these things that must occur” before Christ’s Thousand Year Reign.—Luke 21:34-36.

10. Why would it be necessary for the great crowd to be educated in Jehovah’s ways *before* the Millennium?

¹¹ What about the view that some exemplary ones on earth would be raised to heaven after the Millennium? That possibility was suggested years ago in the February 15, 1913, issue of *The Watch Tower*. One could have reasoned, ‘Why would faithful men of old receive a mere earthly inheritance but Christians who were somewhat negligent be rewarded with life in heaven?’ Of course, that thinking was influenced by two incorrect assumptions: (1) that the great crowd would reside in heaven and (2) that the great crowd would be made up of less zealous Christians.

¹² As we have seen, however, since 1935, Jehovah’s Witnesses have clearly understood that the survivors of Armageddon *are* the great crowd of John’s vision. They will “come out of the great tribulation” right here on earth, and they will “keep shouting with a loud voice, saying: ‘Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.’” (Rev. 7:10, 14) Furthermore, the Scriptures teach that those who are resurrected to heavenly life receive “something better” than do the faithful men of old. (Heb. 11:40) Our brothers accordingly began

11. Why might some Bible Students have thought that some would perhaps be raised to heaven after the Millennium?

12-13. What do both the anointed and the great crowd recognize about their reward?

enthusiastically inviting people to serve Jehovah with the hope of living forever on earth.

¹³ Those of the great crowd rejoice in their hope. They understand that Jehovah determines where his faithful worshippers will serve him, whether in heaven or on earth. Both the anointed and the great crowd recognize that their reward is possible only because of Jehovah's undeserved kindness as expressed through the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ.—Rom. 3:24.

GREAT IN SIZE

¹⁴ After the understanding of Jehovah's people was clarified in 1935, many still wondered just how those with an earthly hope could become a crowd great in size. For example, Ronald Parkin was 12 years old when the identity of the great crowd was made clear. "At that time," he recalls, "there were about 56,000 publishers worldwide and many, perhaps most of them, were anointed. So the great crowd did not seem very great."

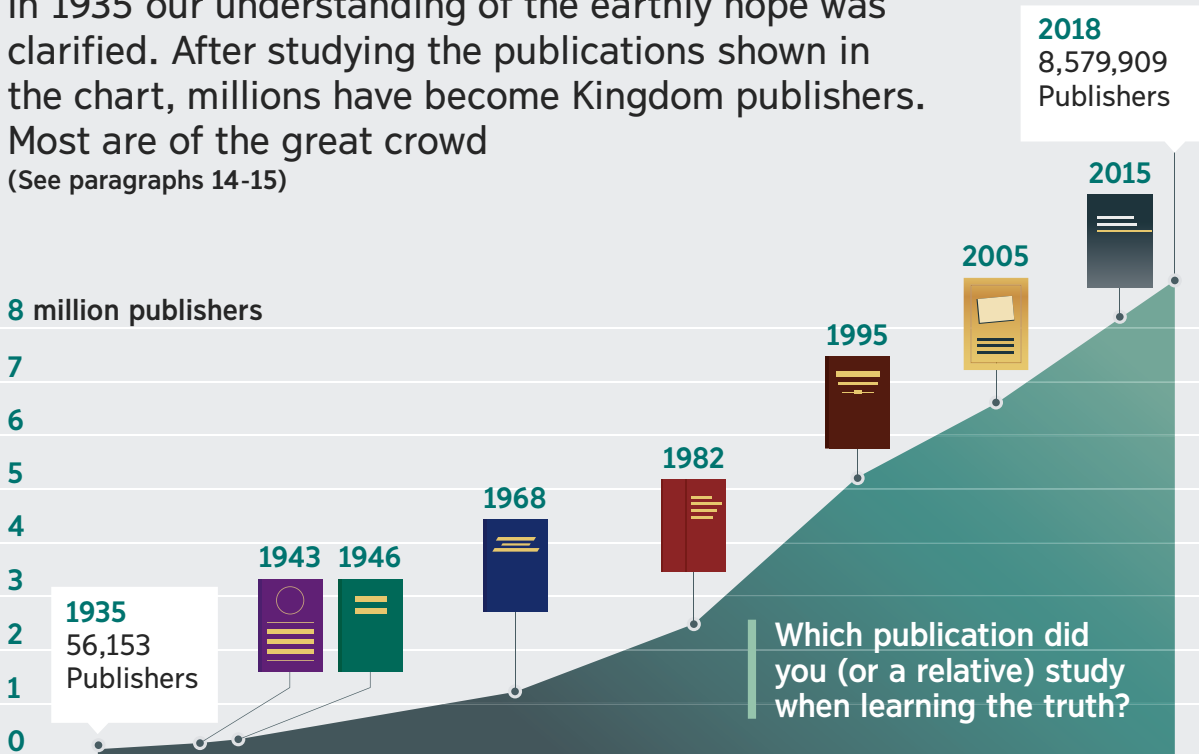
¹⁵ In the following decades, however, missionaries were sent to many lands, and the number of

14. After 1935, why did many wonder how the prophecy about a great crowd would be fulfilled?

15. How has the gathering of the great crowd continued to progress?

THE CROWD IS GREAT INDEED!

In 1935 our understanding of the earthly hope was clarified. After studying the publications shown in the chart, millions have become Kingdom publishers. Most are of the great crowd
(See paragraphs 14-15)



Publications: 1943 *“The Truth Shall Make You Free”*; 1946 *“Let God Be True”*; 1968 *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*; 1982 *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*; 1995 *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*; 2005 *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*; 2015 *What Can the Bible Teach Us?*

Jehovah’s Witnesses steadily increased. Then, in 1968, a Bible study program was started using the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. Its simple explanation of Bible truth attracted meek people as

never before. Within four years, more than half a million new disciples got baptized. As the Catholic Church began to lose its grip on Latin America and other countries and as restrictions on our work were lifted in Eastern Europe and parts of Africa, millions more got baptized. (Isa. 60:22) In more recent years, Jehovah's organization has produced a number of other effective tools to help people learn what the Bible teaches. There is no doubt that a great crowd—now numbering more than eight million—has been gathered.

A DIVERSE GREAT CROWD

¹⁶ In recording his vision, John noted that the great crowd would come from “all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.” The prophet Zechariah had earlier foretold something similar. He wrote: “In those days ten men out of all the languages of the nations will take hold, yes, they will take firm hold of the robe of a Jew, saying: ‘We want to go with you, for we have heard that God is with you people.’” —Zech. 8:23.

¹⁷ Jehovah's Witnesses realize that for people of all languages to be gathered, the good news must be preached in many languages. We have been

16. From where is the great crowd being gathered?

17. What is being done to help people of all nations and tongues?

translating Bible study material for over 130 years, but now we are carrying out the greatest translation effort in history in hundreds of languages. Clearly, Jehovah is performing a modern-day miracle—gathering a great crowd from all nations. Thanks to the availability of spiritual food in more and more languages, this diverse group is united in worship. And the Witnesses are well-known for their zealous preaching and their brotherly love. How faith-strengthening that is!—Matt. 24:14; John 13:35.

WHAT DOES THE VISION MEAN FOR US?

¹⁸ We have every reason to be excited about the prophecy of a great crowd! We are not surprised that Jehovah has fulfilled that prophecy in such a marvelous way. (Read Isaiah 46:10, 11.) Those of the great crowd are grateful for the hope Jehovah has given them. They do not feel left out because they are not anointed by God's spirit to serve with Jesus in heaven. Throughout the Scriptures, we read of men and women of faith who were deeply influenced by holy spirit; yet they are not part of the 144,000. John the Baptist is one example. (Matt. 11:11) David is another. (Acts 2:34) They and countless others will

18. (a) In line with Isaiah 46:10, 11, why are we not surprised that Jehovah has fulfilled the prophecy about the great crowd? (b) Why do those who hope to live on earth not feel left out?

be resurrected to life on a paradise earth. All of them—along with the great crowd—will have the opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to Jehovah and his sovereignty.

¹⁹ Never before in human history has God united millions of people from all nations. Whether our hope is to live in heaven or on earth, we need to help as many as possible to become part of the great crowd of “other sheep.” (John 10:16) Soon, Jehovah will bring the foretold great tribulation that will destroy the governments and religions that have afflicted mankind. What an outstanding privilege lies before all members of the great crowd—to serve Jehovah on earth forever!—Rev. 7:14.

19. How does the fulfillment of John’s vision of a great crowd emphasize the urgency of the times in which we live?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What misconceptions about the great crowd were corrected in 1935?
- How has the great crowd proved to be truly great in size?
- What evidence do we have that Jehovah is gathering a diversified great crowd?

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COVER PICTURE:

The apostle John saw “a great crowd” dressed in white robes and with palm branches in their hands (See study article 39, paragraph 2)

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