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# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
DECEMBER 2-29, 2019

# 1919

## ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

BY 1919 the Great War (later known as World War I), which dragged on for over four years, had ended. Late in the preceding year, the nations stopped fighting, and on January 18, 1919, the Paris Peace Conference began. One of the achievements of that conference was the Treaty of Versailles, which brought a formal end to the Allies' war with Germany. It was signed on June 28, 1919.

The treaty also established a new organization called the League of Nations. Its aim was "to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security." Many of Christendom's religions supported the League. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America hailed it as "the political expression of the Kingdom of God on earth." This council endorsed the League by sending delegates to the Paris Peace Conference. One of those delegates stated that the conference "ushered in a new era in the history of the world."

A new era was beginning, but it would not be ushered in by the men involved in that peace conference. In 1919 a new era

in the preaching work began when Jehovah energized his people to preach as never before. But first, the Bible Students needed a dramatic change in their situation.

### A DIFFICULT DECISION

The annual election of directors of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society was scheduled for Saturday, January 4, 1919. At the time, Joseph F. Rutherford, who was taking the lead among Jehovah's people, had been unjustly imprisoned in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A., along with seven others. The question was, Should the imprisoned brothers who were officers be reelected? Or should they be replaced?

In his prison cell, Brother Rutherford worried about the future of the organization. He knew that some brothers felt that it would be best to elect someone else to be president. Acknowledging this, he had written a letter to those assembled, recommending Evander J. Coward for president. Rutherford described Coward as "calm," "discreet," and "consecrated to the Lord." However, many brothers favored a different solution, that of postponing the election for six months. The legal team who had defended the imprisoned brothers agreed. Emotions ran high as the discussion progressed.

Then something happened that Richard H. Barber later described as ‘pouring oil on the troubled waters.’ One of the brothers in attendance spoke up and said: “I am not a lawyer, but when it comes to the legality of the situation, I know something about the law of the loyal. Loyalty is what God demands. I cannot imagine any greater confidence we could manifest than to have an election and reelect Brother Rutherford as president.”—Ps. 18:25.

Fellow prisoner A. H. Macmillan later recalled that the next day Brother Rutherford knocked on his cell wall and said, “Poke your hand out.” Brother Rutherford then handed him a telegram. Macmillan saw the terse message and knew immediately what it meant. The message read: “RUTHERFORD WISE VAN BARBER ANDERSON BULLY AND

SPILL DIRECTOR FIRST THREE OFFICERS LOVE TO ALL.” This meant that all the directors had been reelected and that Joseph Rutherford and William Van Amburgh had been retained as officers. Thus, Brother Rutherford would continue as president.

## RELEASED!

While the eight brothers were imprisoned, faithful Bible Students circulated a petition calling for their release. These brave brothers and sisters gathered more than 700,000 signatures. On Wednesday, March 26, 1919, before the petition was submitted, Brother Rutherford and the other responsible brothers were released.

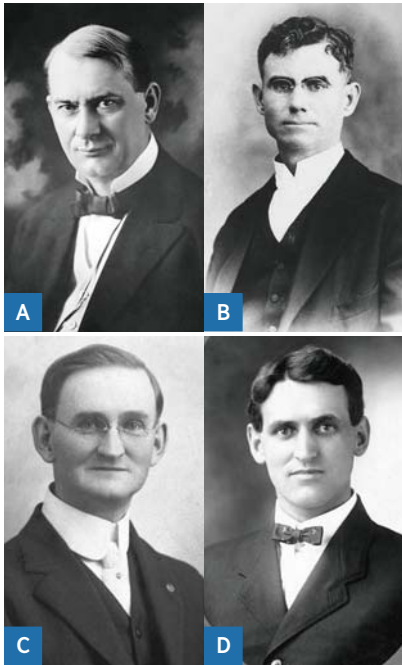
In a speech to those who welcomed him home, Brother Rutherford said: “I am convinced that this experience we have all gone through is merely to prepare us for more strenuous times. . . . Your fight has not been to get your brethren out of prison. That was merely a side issue. . . . The fight you have been making has been for the purpose of witnessing for the Truth, and those who have done it have received a wonderful blessing.”

The circumstances surrounding the trial of our brothers may give indication of Jehovah’s direction. On May 14, 1919, the appeals court ruled: “The defendants in this case did not have the . . . impartial trial to which they were entitled, and for that reason the judgment is reversed.” The brothers had been convicted of serious crimes, and these judgments would have remained on their records if they had only been pardoned or if their sentences had merely been commuted. No further charges were laid. As a result, Judge Rutherford retained his legal qualifications to defend Jehovah’s people before the Supreme Court of the United States, something he did many times after his release.



Brother Rutherford speaking at the Cedar Point, Ohio, convention, 1919





A. Joseph F. Rutherford  
B. Evander J. Coward  
C. Richard H. Barber  
D. Alexander H. Macmillan

E. Newspaper advertisement  
for Brother Rutherford's lecture  
"The Hope for Distressed Humanity"  
in Los Angeles, California, 1919

## DETERMINED TO PREACH

"We were not going to sit around idle and twiddle our thumbs waiting for the Lord to take us to heaven," recalled Brother Macmillan. "We realized we would have to do something to determine what the Lord's will really was."

But the brothers at headquarters could not just resume the work that they had been doing for years. Why not? Because during their imprisonment, all the printing plates that were used to print literature had been destroyed. This was discouraging, and some brothers wondered if the preaching work was finished.

Was anyone still interested in the Kingdom message preached by the Bible Students? To answer that question, Brother Rutherford decided to give a lecture. The public would be invited. "If nobody

came to that meeting," Brother Macmillan said, "we were done."

So it was that on Sunday, May 4, 1919, in spite of a serious illness, Brother Rutherford delivered the lecture "The Hope for Distressed Humanity" in Los Angeles, California. About 3,500 attended the lecture, and hundreds were turned away. The next day, another 1,500 attended. The brothers had their answer—people **were** interested!

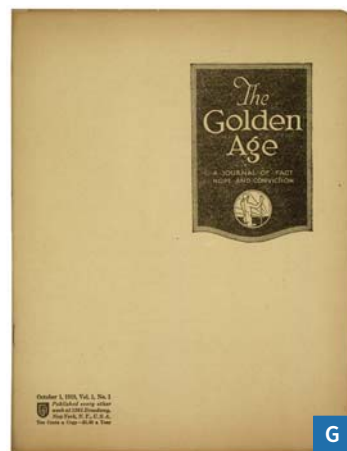
What the brothers did next set the course for the preaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses down to this day.

## POISED FOR FUTURE GROWTH

*The Watch Tower* of August 1, 1919, announced that in early September, a general convention would be held at Cedar Point, Ohio. "Everyone just felt they had to get there," recalled Clarence B. Beaty, a young Bible Student from Missouri. More than



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**F. Brothers in Brooklyn, New York, with a truckload of *The Golden Age***

**G. Cover of the first issue of *The Golden Age*, dated October 1, 1919**

6,000 brothers and sisters attended that gathering, far more than were anticipated. Adding to the excitement of the occasion, more than 200 got baptized in nearby Lake Erie.

On September 5, 1919, the fifth day of the convention, in his “Address to Co-laborers,” Brother Rutherford announced the publication of a new magazine, entitled *The Golden Age*.<sup>\*</sup> It would “carry the current news of importance, giving a Scriptural explanation as to why these great events [were] transpiring.”

All the Bible Students were encouraged to preach boldly with this new publication. A letter outlining how the work was to be organized stated: “Let each consecrated [baptized] one remember that it is a great

privilege to serve, and grasp the opportunity now and have a part in giving this great witness to the world.” The response was tremendous! By December, zealous Kingdom publishers had obtained more than 50,000 subscriptions to the new magazine.

By the end of 1919, Jehovah’s people were reorganized and energized. Additionally, several important prophecies involving the last days had been fulfilled. The testing and refinement of God’s people, foretold at Malachi 3:1-4, was complete. Jehovah’s people had been released from their symbolic captivity to “Babylon the Great,” and Jesus had appointed “the faithful and discreet slave.”<sup>\*</sup> (Rev. 18:2, 4; Matt. 24:45) Now the Bible Students were ready for the work that Jehovah had in store for them.

<sup>\*</sup> *The Golden Age* was renamed *Consolation* in 1937 and *Awake!* in 1946.

<sup>\*</sup> See *The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, pp. 10-12, 21-23; March 2016, pp. 29-31.

# GOD'S JUDGMENTS

## Does He Always Give Enough Warning?

THE weather forecaster examines a developing radar image. He sees a dangerous storm bearing down on an area with a large population. Because he is concerned for the people's safety, he tirelessly warns them before it is too late.

In a similar way, Jehovah is now alerting earth's inhabitants to a "storm" that is more ominous than anything they might hear about in a weather report. How is he doing so? And why can we be sure that he is giving people enough time to respond? For the answers, let us first consider some warnings that Jehovah issued in the past.

### WHEN GOD GAVE ADVANCE WARNINGS

In Bible times, Jehovah warned of various "storms," or acts of judgment, that he would bring against those who deliberately disobeyed his commands. (Prov. 10:25; Jer. 30:23) In each case, he informed the affected people well in advance and instructed them to make changes that were in harmony with his will. (2 Ki. 17:12-15; Neh. 9:29, 30) To encourage the right response, he often used his loyal servants on earth to announce his judgments and to convey a sense of urgency.—Amos 3:7.

Noah proved to be one such faithful servant. For many years, he fearlessly warned the immoral and violent people of his day about a coming global Flood. (Gen. 6:9-13, 17) He also told them what they needed to do to be spared—so much so that he was later called "a preacher of righteousness." —2 Pet. 2:5.

Despite Noah's efforts, the people of that pre-Flood world ignored his God-given mes-

sage. They showed a gross lack of faith. As a result, they died when the Deluge "came and swept them all away." (Matt. 24:39; Heb. 11:7) As their end approached, they could not properly claim that God had failed to warn them.

At other times, Jehovah warned individuals shortly before the "storm" of his judgment began. Even so, he made sure that those affected were given enough time to respond. For instance, he provided advance warnings during the Ten Plagues that beset ancient Egypt. As one example, Jehovah sent Moses and Aaron to warn Pharaoh and his servants about the seventh plague, a devastating hailstorm. Since the hail would start the next day, did God give them enough time to find shelter and escape the storm? The Bible reports: "Anyone among Pharaoh's servants who feared Jehovah's word quickly brought his own servants and his livestock into the houses, but whoever did not take Jehovah's word to heart left his servants and his livestock in the field." (Ex. 9:18-21) Clearly, Jehovah gave ample warning, so that those who quickly responded were spared the worst effects of that plague.

Pharaoh and his servants were likewise alerted prior to the tenth plague. However, they foolishly rejected the warning. (Ex. 4:22, 23) As a result, they saw their firstborn sons die. How tragic! (Ex. 11:4-10; 12:29) Could they have heeded the warning in time? Yes! Moses promptly alerted the Israelites to the impending tenth plague and instructed them on how to save their families. (Ex. 12:21-28) How many people responded to the warning? According to some esti-

mates, three million people, including Israelites and “a vast mixed company” of non-Israelites and Egyptians, were spared God’s judgment and left Egypt.—Ex. 12:38; ftn.

As these examples show, Jehovah always made certain that people had sufficient opportunity to heed his warnings. (Deut. 32:4) What was God’s motive for doing that? The apostle Peter explained that Jehovah “does not desire anyone to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3:9) Yes, God cared about the people. He wanted them to repent and to act on his counsel before his judgment arrived.—Isa. 48:17, 18; Rom. 2:4.

### RESPONDING TO GOD’S WARNING TODAY

Today, too, all people must respond to an urgent appeal that is now being announced earth wide. While he was on earth, Jesus warned that the present system of things would eventually be destroyed during a “great tribulation.” (Matt. 24:21) Regarding that future judgment, he provided a detailed prophecy in which he described what his followers could expect to see and experience as that time approached. Jesus thus

outlined major global events that we see happening today.—Matt. 24:3-12; Luke 21:10-13.

In harmony with that prophecy, Jehovah is now urging everyone to submit to His loving rulership. He desires that obedient people enjoy a better life now as well as the future blessings in his righteous new world. (2 Pet. 3:13) To encourage faith in his promises, Jehovah has provided a lifesaving message—the “good news of the Kingdom,” which Jesus foretold would be “preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations.” (Matt. 24:14) God has organized his true worshippers to give this “witness,” or preach this divine message, in some 240 lands. Jehovah wants as many people as possible to heed the warning and escape the coming “storm” of his righteous judgment.—Zeph. 1:14, 15; 2:2, 3.

The vital question, then, is not whether Jehovah gives people enough time to respond to his warnings. The evidence shows that he always does. Instead, the key question remains: Will people heed God’s warning while there is still time? May we as God’s messengers continue to help as many people as possible to survive the end of this system of things.



People need to  
hear the warning  
as God’s “storm”  
approaches!

## SONG 58

Searching for  
Friends of Peace

## PREVIEW

Soon we expect to hear the nations claim that they have achieved “peace and security!” That will be the signal that the great tribulation is about to begin. What does Jehovah expect us to do between now and then? This article will help us find the answer.

## Keep Busy During the Last of “the Last Days”

*“Be steadfast, immovable, always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord.”—1 COR. 15:58.*

WERE you born after the year 1914? If so, you have lived your entire life during “the last days” of the present system of things. (2 Tim. 3:1) All of us have heard about the events that Jesus foretold for this time. These include wars, food shortages, earthquakes, pestilences, an increasing of lawlessness, and the persecution of Jehovah’s people. (Matt. 24:3, 7-9, 12; Luke 21:10-12) We have also seen people behave in the way foretold by the apostle Paul. (See the box “The Way People Are Now.”) As worshippers of Jehovah, we are convinced that we are living during “the final part of the days.”—Mic. 4:1.

<sup>2</sup> Because so much time has passed since 1914, we must now be living in the *last* of “the last days.” Since the end is so near, we need to know the answers to some important questions: What events will occur at the end of “the last days”? And what does Jehovah expect us to do while we wait for those events?

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THE END OF “THE LAST DAYS”?

<sup>3</sup> **Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3.** Paul mentions “Jehovah’s day.” As used in this context, this refers to the time period that begins with the attack on “Babylon the

1. What convinces us that we are living in “the last days”?
2. What questions do we need answered?
3. According to the prophecy at 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3, what proclamation will the nations make?



Great,” the world empire of false religion, and ends with Armageddon. (Rev. 16:14, 16; 17:5) Just before that “day” begins, the nations will be proclaiming “Peace and security!” (Some translations say: “Peace and safety.”) World leaders sometimes use similar expressions when they talk about stabilizing relationships between nations.\* However, the announcement of “peace and security” that the Bible describes will be different. Why? When this happens, people may think that world leaders have succeeded in making the world a safer, more secure place. But in reality, “sudden destruction” will follow as the “great tribulation” unfolds.—Matt. 24:21.

<sup>4</sup> We know some things about the declaration of “peace and security.” However, other things we do not know. We do not know what will lead up to it or how the declaration will be made. And we do not know whether it will involve just one proclamation or a series of announcements. Whatever happens, we do know this: We should not be fooled into thinking that world leaders can actually achieve world peace. Rather, it is that declaration that we have been told to watch for. It is the signal that “Jehovah’s day” is about to begin!

<sup>5</sup> **Read 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6.** Paul’s exhortation tells us how we can make sure that we are ready for “Jehovah’s

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\* For example, on its website the United Nations claims to “maintain international peace and security.”

4. (a) What must we wait to see about the declaration of “peace and security”? (b) What do we already know about it?

5. How does 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6 help us to be ready for “Jehovah’s day”?

day.” We should “not sleep on as the rest do.” We must “stay awake” and remain alert. For example, we need to be alert to the danger of compromising our neutrality by getting drawn into the world’s political issues. If we were to get involved, we could become “part of the world.” (John 15:19) We know that God’s Kingdom is the only hope for world peace.

<sup>6</sup> Besides staying awake ourselves, we also want to help others wake up to what the Bible foretold would happen in the world. Let us remember that once the great tribulation begins, it will be too late for people to turn to Jehovah. That is why our preaching work is so urgent!\*

#### KEEP BUSY PREACHING

<sup>7</sup> In the short time remaining before his “day” begins, Jehovah expects us to

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\* See the article “God’s Judgments—Does He Always Give Enough Warning?” in this issue.

6. What do we want to help others do, and why?
7. What does Jehovah expect us to do now?

## The Way People Are Now

“Lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having an appearance of godliness but proving false to its power.”  
—2 Tim. 3:1-5.



Do not be fooled by the nations' false claim of "peace and security"

(See paragraphs 3-6)

keep busy in the preaching work. We need to make sure that we are "having plenty to do in the work of the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58) Jesus foretold what we would do. When he spoke about all the significant things that would happen during the last days, he added: "Also, in all the nations, the good news has to be preached first." (Mark 13:4, 8, 10; Matt. 24:14) Just think: Every time you go in the ministry, you are having a share in fulfilling that Bible prophecy!

<sup>8</sup> What can we say about the progress of the Kingdom-preaching work? Year by year, this work is moving ahead. For example, think about the increase in the number of Kingdom proclaimers worldwide during the last days. In 1914, there were 5,155 publishers in 43 lands. Today, there are some 8.5 million publishers in 240 lands! Even so, our work is not yet over. We must keep proclaiming God's Kingdom as the only solution to all mankind's problems.—Ps. 145:11-13.

8. How is the Kingdom-preaching work continuing to progress?

<sup>9</sup> Our Kingdom-preaching work will not be finished until Jehovah says it is over. How much time is left for people to come to know Jehovah God and Jesus Christ? (John 17:3) We cannot say. We do know that until the great tribulation begins, any who are "rightly disposed for everlasting life" can still respond to the good news. (Acts 13:48) How can we help these people before it is too late?

<sup>10</sup> Through his organization, Jehovah is giving us all that we need to teach people the truth. For example, we receive training each week at ***the midweek meeting***. This meeting helps us know what to say on initial calls and return visits. And it teaches us how to conduct Bible studies. Jehovah's organization has also provided the items in our ***Teaching Toolbox***. These items help us to . . .

9. Why must we keep preaching the Kingdom message?

10. What help is Jehovah giving us to teach people the truth?

- start conversations,
- stimulate interest,
- motivate people to want to learn more,
- teach the truth on Bible studies, and
- invite interested ones to visit our website and our Kingdom Halls.

Of course, it is not enough simply to have these tools. We must use them.\* For example, if after a refreshing conversation with an interested person, you leave him a tract or magazine, he will be able to do further reading until you are able to contact him again. It is our personal responsibility to keep busy every month in the Kingdom-preaching work.

<sup>11</sup> As another example of how Jehovah is helping people learn the truth, consider the **Online Bible Study Lessons** on jw.org®. (Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > ONLINE LESSONS.) Why were these lessons created? Each month, tens of thousands of people around the world search the Internet for Bible lessons. The lessons on our website can introduce these people to the truth of God’s Word. Some of the people you talk to may be hesitant to accept a personal Bible study. If so, show them this feature on our website or send them a link to the lessons.<sup>#</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Our Online Bible Study Lessons cover these subjects: “The Bible and Its Author,” “The Bible’s Main Characters,”

\* For details on how to use the items in the Teaching Toolbox, see the article “Teaching the Truth” in the October 2018 issue of *The Watchtower*.

<sup>#</sup> The lessons are currently available in English and Portuguese, with more languages to come.

11. Why were Online Bible Study Lessons created?
12. What can a person learn from the Online Bible Study Lessons?

and “The Bible’s Message of Hope.” Within those subjects, they teach:

- How the Bible can help a person
- Who Jehovah, Jesus, and the angels are
- Why God created humans
- Why suffering and evil exist

The lessons also discuss how Jehovah will . . .

- end suffering and death,
- bring the dead back to life, and
- replace failed human governments with God’s Kingdom.

<sup>13</sup> The online lessons do not replace the Bible study arrangement. Jesus has given us the privilege of making disciples. We hope that interested ones will go through the online lessons, appreciate what they learn, and want to learn more. If so, perhaps they will accept a Bible study. At the end of each lesson, the reader is invited to submit a request for a personal instructor to study the Bible with him. Through our website, on average worldwide, we are receiving over 230 Bible study requests each day! That personal one-on-one instruction is vital!

### KEEP TRYING TO MAKE DISCIPLES

<sup>14</sup> **Read Matthew 28:19, 20.** As we conduct Bible studies, we have to try our best to “**make disciples** . . . , teaching them to observe all the things [Jesus has] commanded.” We need to help people understand how important it is for them to take their stand for Jehovah

13. Do the online lessons replace the Bible study arrangement? Explain.

14. According to Jesus’ instructions recorded at Matthew 28:19, 20, what do we try our best to do, and why?



As we preach today, we show that only God's Kingdom can make the world truly safe and secure  
(See paragraphs 7-9)

and his Kingdom. This means trying to motivate people to make the truth their own by applying what they learn, dedicating their life to Jehovah, and getting baptized. Only then will they survive Jehovah's day.—1 Pet. 3:21.

<sup>15</sup> As mentioned earlier, there is very little time between now and the end of this system of things. For this reason, we cannot afford to keep studying the Bible with people who have no clear intention of becoming Christ's disciples. (1 Cor. 9:26) Our work is urgent! There are many people who have yet to hear the Kingdom message before it is too late.

### KEEP CLEAR OF ALL FALSE RELIGION

<sup>16</sup> **Read Revelation 18:2, 4, 5, 8.** These verses identify something else that Jeho-

15. What can we not afford to do, and why?

16. According to Revelation 18:2, 4, 5, 8, what must we all do? (See also footnote.)

vah expects of his worshippers. All true Christians must maintain a clear distinction between themselves and Babylon the Great. Before learning the truth, a Bible student may have been a member of a false religion. He may have attended its religious services and shared in its activities. Or he may have contributed money to such an organization. Before a Bible student can be approved as an unbaptized publisher, he must break all ties with false religion. He should submit a letter of resignation or otherwise completely sever his membership in his former church and in any other organization that has ties to Babylon the Great.\*

<sup>17</sup> A true Christian must make sure that his secular employment has nothing to do with Babylon the Great. (2 Cor. 6:14-17) For example, he would not be an employee of a church. Furthermore, a Christian who is employed by some other business would not want to do extensive work at a facility that promotes false worship. And if he owns a business, he would certainly not bid on a job or do contract work for any part of Babylon the Great. Why do we take such a firm stand? Because we do not want to share in the works and sins of religious organi-

\* We also need to avoid such organizations as youth camps or recreational facilities that have ties to false religion. For example, regarding membership in the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), see "Questions From Readers" in the January 1, 1979, issue of *The Watchtower*. The same stand must be taken toward the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association). Even though some local affiliates try to downplay the religious aspects of their activities, these are, in fact, organizations with religious roots and objectives.

17. What sort of secular employment must a Christian avoid, and why?



zations that are unclean in God's eyes. —Isa. 52:11.\*

<sup>18</sup> Years ago, a self-employed elder was asked by a contractor to accept a small carpentry job at a church in the town where the brother lived. The contractor knew that the brother had always said he would not work on churches. But this time the contractor was desperate to find someone for the job. Even so, the brother stuck to Bible principles and declined the work. The next week, the local newspaper showed a photograph of another carpenter attaching a cross to the church. If our brother had compromised his stand, it could have been his picture in the paper. Think of how damaging that would have been to his reputation among his fellow Christians! Think, too, of how Jehovah would have felt.

#### WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

<sup>19</sup> According to Bible prophecy, the

\* For a more thorough discussion of the Scriptural view of employment involving religious organizations, see "Questions From Readers" in the April 15, 1999, issue of *The Watchtower*.

18. How did one brother stick to Bible principles regarding his secular work?

19-20. (a) What have we learned so far? (b) What more do we need to learn?

next major event that will soon take place on the world scene is the nations' proclamation of "peace and security." Thanks to what Jehovah has taught us, we know that the nations will not achieve real and lasting peace. What should we do before that event occurs and sudden destruction follows? Jehovah expects us to keep busy preaching the Kingdom message and trying to make more disciples. At the same time, we need to keep separate from all false religion. That includes withdrawing from any memberships and avoiding employment associated with Babylon the Great.

<sup>20</sup> There are other events to follow during the last of "the last days." There are also other things that Jehovah expects us to do. What are these, and how can we prepare ourselves for everything that is coming in the near future? We will see in the next article.

**PICTURE DESCRIPTION** Page 10: Patrons at a coffee shop react to "Breaking News" on television about a proclamation of "peace and security." A Witness couple, taking a break from field service, are not fooled by this report.

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#### WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT . . .

- the proclamation of "peace and security"?
- the urgency of the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work?
- how to stay clear of false religious organizations?

## SONG 129

We Will Keep Enduring

## PREVIEW

We know that a “great tribulation” will soon come upon mankind. What will that mean for us? What will Jehovah expect us to do then? What qualities do we need to strengthen now in order to stay faithful? We will find out in this article.

## Stay Faithful Through the “Great Tribulation”

*“Love Jehovah, all you who are loyal to him! Jehovah protects the faithful.”—PS. 31:23.*

IMAGINE that the nations have just made their long-awaited proclamation of “peace and security.” They may boast that the world has never been so safe. The nations will want us to think that they have the world situation under control. But they have absolutely no control over what will follow! Why not? According to Bible prophecy, “sudden destruction is to be instantly on them, . . . and they will by no means escape.”—1 Thess. 5:3.

<sup>2</sup> There are important questions that need answers: What will happen during the “great tribulation”? What will Jehovah expect us to do during that time? And how can we prepare ourselves now to stay faithful through the great tribulation?—Matt. 24:21.

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE “GREAT TRIBULATION”?

<sup>3</sup> **Read Revelation 17:5, 15-18.** “Babylon the Great” will be destroyed! As mentioned earlier, the nations will have no control over what happens at this point. Why not? Because “God [will] put it into their hearts to carry out *his thought*.” What is that thought? To de-

1-2. (a) What will the nations proclaim one day soon? (b) What questions need to be answered?

3. According to Revelation 17:5, 15-18, how will God destroy “Babylon the Great”?

stroy the world empire of false religion, including Christendom.\* God will put his thought into the hearts of “the ten horns” of the “scarlet-colored wild beast.” The ten horns represent all the political powers that support “the wild beast”—the United Nations. (Rev. 17:3, 11-13; 18:8) When those political powers turn on false religion, that will mark the beginning of the great tribulation. It will be a truly catastrophic world event.

<sup>4</sup> We do not know what reasons the nations might give to justify their attack on Babylon the Great. They might say that the world’s religions are an obstacle to peace and that they constantly meddle in politics. Or they might say that those religious organizations have

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\* **EXPRESSION EXPLAINED:** **Christendom** is made up of religions that claim to be Christian but that do not teach people to worship Jehovah according to his standards.

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4. (a) What might the nations say to justify their attack on false religion? (b) What will the former members of those religions likely do?

accumulated too much wealth and property. (Rev. 18:3, 7) It seems reasonable that this attack will not mean that all the **members** of those religions will be destroyed. Rather, it seems that the nations will get rid of the religious **organizations**. Once those organizations are gone, the former members will realize that their religious leaders failed them and will likely try to distance themselves from those religions.

<sup>5</sup> The Bible does not indicate how long the destruction of Babylon the Great will take, but we do know that it will take place within a relatively brief time. (Rev. 18:10, 21) Jehovah has promised that he will “cut short the days” of the tribulation so that his “chosen ones” and true religion will survive. (Mark 13:19, 20) But what will Jehovah expect us to do between the start of the great tribulation and the war of Armageddon?

5. What has Jehovah promised about the great tribulation, and why?



May we never forsake our  
meeting together, even  
during difficult times  
(See paragraph 7)

## KEEP UPHOLDING JEHOVAH'S PURE WORSHIP

<sup>6</sup> As discussed in the preceding article, Jehovah expects his worshippers to separate themselves from Babylon the Great. However, this requires more than our cutting ties with false religion. We must be determined to uphold true religion—the pure worship of Jehovah. Consider two ways that we can do that.

<sup>7</sup> First, we must ***remain firm for Jehovah's righteous moral standards***. We cannot accept the world's values and standards. For example, we do not approve of sexual immorality of any kind, including marriage between people of the same sex and other homosexual lifestyles. (Matt. 19:4, 5; Rom. 1:26, 27) Second, we must ***continue worshipping with our fellow Christians***. We do this wherever we can, whether in our Kingdom Halls or, when necessary, in private homes or even in secret. No matter what happens, we cannot let up in our routine of meeting together for worship. In fact, we need to meet together “all the more so as [we] see the day drawing near.” —**Read Hebrews 10:24, 25.**

<sup>8</sup> During the great tribulation, the message that we proclaim will likely change. Currently, we are preaching the good news of the Kingdom and we are endeavoring to make disciples. But at that

time, we may well deliver a message as hard-hitting as hailstones. (Rev. 16:21) We may proclaim the impending doom of Satan's world. In time, we will find out exactly what our message will be and how we will deliver it. Will we use the same methods we have used for over a hundred years to accomplish our ministry? Or will we use some other methods? We will have to wait and see. In any case, it seems that we will have the privilege of boldly proclaiming Jehovah's judgment message!—Ezek. 2:3-5.

<sup>9</sup> Quite likely, our message will provoke the nations into trying to silence us once and for all. Just as we rely on Jehovah for support in our ministry now, we will need his support then. We can be sure that our God will fill us with power to accomplish his will.—Mic. 3:8.

## KEEP READY FOR THE ATTACK ON GOD'S PEOPLE

<sup>10</sup> **Read Luke 21:25-28.** During the great tribulation, people will be shocked as they see everything that they once thought to be so stable in the world begin to fail. They will be in “anguish,” fearing for their very lives as they enter the darkest period of human existence. (Zeph. 1:14, 15) At that time, life will likely get more difficult even for Jehovah's people. Because we remain no part of the world, we may suffer some hardships. We may have to go without certain necessities.

<sup>9</sup>. How may the nations react to our message, but of what can we be sure?

<sup>10</sup>. As foretold at Luke 21:25-28, how will most of mankind react to what happens during the great tribulation?

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6. Why is it not enough simply to cut ties with false religion?

7. (a) How can we remain firm for Jehovah's righteous moral standards? (b) How does Hebrews 10:24, 25 emphasize the importance of our meeting together, especially now?

8. How will our message likely change in the future?



<sup>11</sup> At some point, the people whose religions were destroyed may resent the fact that Jehovah's Witnesses keep practicing their religion. We can only imagine the uproar that this might create, including on social media. The nations and their ruler, Satan, will hate us for having the only surviving religion. They will not have attained their goal to eliminate all religion from the face of the earth. So we will become the center of their attention. At this point, the nations will take on the role of Gog of Magog.\* They will band together to make a vicious, all-out attack on Jehovah's people. (Ezek. 38:2, 14-16) It can be somewhat unsettling to think about those possibilities when we cannot be certain of the exact details. However, one thing is sure: We do not need to fear the great tribulation. Jehovah will give us lifesaving instructions. (Ps. 34:19) We will be able to "stand up straight and lift up [our] heads" because we will know that our "deliverance is getting near."<sup>#</sup>

<sup>12</sup> "The faithful and discreet slave" has been preparing us to stay faithful through the great tribulation. (Matt. 24:45) This has been done in many ways,

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\* **EXPRESSION EXPLAINED:** The term **Gog of Magog** (and its shortened form, Gog) refers to a coalition of nations that will fight against pure worship during the great tribulation.

<sup>#</sup> For a more extensive discussion of all the events leading up to the war of Armageddon, see chapter 21 of the book *God's Kingdom Rules!* For more details about the attack of Gog of Magog and how Jehovah will defend his people during Armageddon, see chapters 17 and 18 of the book *Pure Worship of Jehovah—Restored At Last!*

11. (a) Why will Jehovah's Witnesses become the center of attention? (b) Why do we not need to fear the great tribulation?

12. How has "the faithful and discreet slave" been preparing us for what is coming in the future?

but consider one example: our timely convention programs for the years 2016-2018. Through those programs, we have been encouraged to strengthen the qualities that we need as we near Jehovah's day. Let us briefly review those qualities.

### KEEP STRENGTHENING YOUR LOYALTY, ENDURANCE, AND COURAGE

<sup>13</sup> **Loyalty:** The theme of the 2016 convention program was "Remain Loyal to Jehovah!" This program taught us that if we have a strong personal relationship with Jehovah, we will be loyal to him. We were reminded that we can draw close to Jehovah through meaningful prayer and diligent study of his Word. Doing so gives us the strength to overcome even the most challenging obstacles. As Satan's system nears its end, we can expect to face ever more difficult tests of loyalty to God and his Kingdom. We will likely continue to be the target of ridicule. (2 Pet. 3:3, 4) This may especially happen as our neutrality is tested more and more. We must strengthen our loyalty now so that we will remain loyal during the great tribulation.

<sup>14</sup> During the great tribulation, a change will take place regarding the brothers who take the lead on earth. At some point, all anointed ones who are still on earth will be gathered to heaven to share in the war of Armageddon. (Matt. 24:31; Rev. 2:26, 27) This means that the Governing Body will no longer

13. How can we strengthen our loyalty to Jehovah, and why must we do so now?

14. (a) What change will take place regarding the brothers who take the lead on earth? (b) Why will we need to be loyal at that time?

Prepare now to survive the  
“great tribulation”  
(See paragraphs 13-16)



## The Way People Will Be Then

Lovers of others, lovers of spiritual treasures, modest, humble, praisers of God, obedient to parents, thankful, loyal, having great affection for their families, open to agreement, always speaking well of others, self-controlled, mild, lovers of goodness, trustworthy, yielding, lowly in mind, lovers of God rather than lovers of pleasures, motivated by genuine godliness.

be with us on earth. However, the great crowd will remain organized. Capable brothers from among the other sheep will take the lead. We will need to show our loyalty by supporting these brothers and by following their God-given direction. Our survival will depend on it!

<sup>15</sup> **Endurance:** The theme of the 2017 convention program was “Don’t Give Up!” This program helped us to strength-

15. How can we strengthen our endurance, and why is it important to do so now?

en our ability to withstand trials. We learned that our endurance does not depend on favorable circumstances. We can strengthen our endurance by relying on Jehovah. (Rom. 12:12) May we never forget what Jesus promised: “The one who **endures to the end** will be saved.” (Matt. 24:13, ftn.) This promise means that we must remain faithful despite any challenges we face. By enduring each trial now, we can become stronger before the outbreak of the great tribulation.

<sup>16</sup> **Courage:** The theme of the 2018 convention program was “Be Courageous!” This program reminded us that our personal abilities do not determine whether we are courageous. As with endurance, true courage comes from relying on Jehovah. How can we strengthen our reliance on him? By reading his Word every day and meditating on how Jehovah saved his people in the past. (Ps. 68:20; 2 Pet. 2:9) When the nations attack us during the great tribulation, we will need to be courageous and to trust in Jehovah as never before. (Ps. 112:7, 8; Heb. 13:6) If we rely on Jehovah now, we will have the courage we need to face Gog’s attack.\*

### LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR DELIVERANCE

<sup>17</sup> As mentioned in the preceding article, most of us have lived our entire life

\* The 2019 convention program with the theme “Love Never Fails!” convinces us that we can remain ever safe under Jehovah’s loving protection.—1 Cor. 13:8.

16. What determines whether we are courageous, and how can we strengthen our courage now?

17. Why do we not have to fear Armageddon? (See cover picture.)

during the last days. But we also have the prospect of living through the great tribulation. The war of Armageddon will be the grand finale to the conclusion of this system of things. However, we have nothing to fear. Why? Because this will be God's fight. (Prov. 1:33; Ezek. 38:18-20; Zech. 14:3) At Jehovah's signal, Jesus Christ will lead the charge. He will have alongside him the resurrected anointed ones and myriads of angels. Together, they will war against Satan, his demons, and their earthly forces.—Dan. 12:1; Rev. 6:2; 17:14.

<sup>18</sup> Jehovah has guaranteed: "No weapon formed against you will have any success." (Isa. 54:17) "A great crowd" of Jehovah's faithful worshippers will "come out of the great tribulation" alive! Then they will continue to render him sacred service. **(Read Revelation 7:9, 13-17.)** How the Bible fills us with confidence about the future! We know that "Jehovah protects the faithful." (Ps. 31:23) All who love and praise Jehovah will de-

18. (a) What has Jehovah guaranteed? (b) How does Revelation 7:9, 13-17 fill you with confidence about the future?

light to see him vindicate his holy name.—Ezek. 38:23.

<sup>19</sup> Think of how 2 Timothy 3:2-5 might be worded if it were describing people in the new world free of Satan's influence. (See the box "The Way People Will Be Then.") Brother George Gangas,\* who served as a member of the Governing Body, described it this way: "What kind of world will that be when everybody will be a brother or a sister! Soon you will have the privilege of living in the new system of things. You will live as long as Jehovah lives. We are going to live forever." What a wonderful prospect that is!

\* See the article "His Deeds Follow Him" in the December 1, 1994, issue of *The Watchtower*.

19. What wonderful prospect awaits us in the near future?

**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS** **Page 15:** During the great tribulation, a small group of Witnesses courageously meets in a forest to hold a congregation meeting. **Page 18:** A great crowd of Jehovah's faithful worshippers will come out of the great tribulation, alive and happy!

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## WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT . . .

■ the destruction of "Babylon the Great"?

■ the need to keep upholding true worship?

■ the need to strengthen our loyalty, endurance, and courage?

**SONG 104**

God's Gift of Holy Spirit

**PREVIEW**

Do you feel limited in your service to Jehovah? Do you wonder if you are still useful to him? Or do you fail to see the need to make yourself available to serve Jehovah however he wants? This article will consider various ways that Jehovah can give you the desire and the power to become whatever is necessary to fulfill his purpose.

## What Will Jehovah Cause You to Become?

*“God . . . energizes you, giving you both the desire and the power to act.”—PHIL. 2:13.*

JEHOVAH can become whatever is necessary in order to accomplish his purpose. For instance, Jehovah has become a Teacher, a Comforter, and an Evangelizer, just to name a few of his many roles. (Isa. 48:17; 2 Cor. 7:6; Gal. 3:8) Still, he often uses humans to carry out his purposes. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20; 2 Cor. 1:3, 4) Jehovah can also give any of us the wisdom and strength we need in order to become whatever is necessary to fulfill his will. This is all part of the meaning of Jehovah's name, as it is suggested by a number of scholars.

<sup>2</sup> All of us want to be useful to Jehovah, but some may doubt that Jehovah is using them. Why? Because they feel limited by their age, circumstances, or abilities. On the other hand, others may be quite satisfied with what they are already doing and fail to see the need to make further progress. In this article, we will discuss how Jehovah can equip any one of us to fulfill his purpose. Then, we will examine Bible accounts of how Jehovah gave his servants—both men and women—the desire and the power to act. Finally, we will consider how we can allow Jehovah to use us.

1. What can Jehovah do in order to accomplish his purpose?
2. (a) Why may we at times doubt that Jehovah is using us? (b) What will we consider in this article?



## HOW JEHOVAH EQUIPS US

<sup>3</sup> **Read Philippians 2:13.\*** Jehovah can give us the *desire* to act. How may he do this? Perhaps we learn of a particular need in the congregation. Or the elders read a letter from the branch office telling us of a need outside our congregation territory. In response, we might ask ourselves, ‘How can I help to fill this need?’ Or maybe we have been invited to accept a challenging assignment, but we wonder if we can do it justice. Or after reading a portion of God’s Word, we may wonder, ‘How can I apply this Bible passage to help others?’ Jehovah will not force us to do anything. But when he sees that we are willing to examine ourselves, Jehovah can give us the desire to follow through and act.

<sup>4</sup> Jehovah can also give us the *power* to act. (Isa. 40:29) He can enhance our natural abilities with his holy spirit. (Ex. 35:30-35) Through his organization, Jehovah may teach us how to perform certain tasks. If you are ever unsure about how to carry out an assignment, ask for help. Also, feel free to ask our generous heavenly Father for “power beyond what is normal.” (2 Cor. 4:7; Luke 11:13) The Bible contains many examples of how Jehovah equipped men and women by giving them the desire and the power to act. As we consider some of these accounts,

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\* Although Paul wrote his letter to Christians living in the first century, in principle, his words apply to all servants of Jehovah.

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3. In view of what is stated at Philippians 2:13, how may Jehovah give us the *desire* to act?

4. How may Jehovah give us the *power* to act?

try to think of ways that Jehovah can use you in a similar manner.

## WHAT MEN BECAME

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah caused Moses to become a deliverer of the Israelites. But when did Jehovah use him? Was it when Moses felt qualified after being “instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians”? (Acts 7:22-25) No, Jehovah used Moses only after He had shaped him into a humble, mild-tempered man. (Acts 7:30, 34-36) Jehovah gave Moses the courage to stand before the most powerful ruler in Egypt. (Ex. 9:13-19) What do we learn from how and when Jehovah used Moses? Jehovah uses those who display godly qualities and who rely on him for strength.—Phil. 4:13.

<sup>6</sup> Centuries later, Jehovah used Barzillai to provide for King David. David and the people were “hungry and tired and thirsty” while fleeing from David’s son, Absalom. Along with others, Barzillai, an old man at this point, risked his life to provide for David and those with him. Barzillai did not conclude that because of his advanced age, he was no longer useful to Jehovah. Rather, he generously used what he had to help God’s servants in need. (2 Sam. 17:27-29) What is the lesson for us? Regardless of our age, Jehovah can use us to fill the needs of fellow believers, either locally or in another land, who lack basic provisions. (Prov. 3:27, 28; 19:17) Even if we cannot care for them directly, we may be able to

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5. What do we learn from how and when Jehovah used Moses to deliver His people?

6. What do we learn from the way Jehovah used Barzillai to help King David?

contribute to the worldwide work so that funds are available to offer relief when and where it is needed.—2 Cor. 8:14, 15; 9:11.

<sup>7</sup> Jehovah promised Simeon, a loyal older man in Jerusalem, that he would not see death before he laid eyes on the Messiah. That promise must have encouraged Simeon greatly, since he had been waiting many years for the Messiah. His faith and endurance were rewarded. One day, “under the power of the spirit,” he came into the temple. There he saw the infant Jesus, and Jehovah used Simeon to deliver a prophecy about this child who would become the Christ. (Luke 2: 25-35) Although Simeon likely did not live long enough to see Jesus carry out his earthly ministry, Simeon was grateful for the privilege he had, and the best is yet to come for him! In the new world, that faithful man will see how Jesus’ rulership will be a blessing to all the families of the earth. (Gen. 22:18) We too can be grateful for any privilege Jehovah gives us in his service.

<sup>8</sup> In the first century C.E., a generous man named Joseph made himself available to be used by Jehovah. (Acts 4: 36, 37) Likely because Joseph excelled at comforting others, the apostles called him Barnabas, meaning “Son of Comfort.” For example, after Saul became a believer, many of the brothers were afraid to approach him because of his reputation as a persecutor of the congregations. However, warmhearted Barnabas came to Saul’s aid, and Saul must

have greatly appreciated his kindness. (Acts 9:21, 26-28) Later, the elders in Jerusalem saw the need to provide encouragement to the brothers as far as Antioch of Syria. Whom did they send? Barnabas! They chose well. We are told that Barnabas “began to encourage them all to continue in the Lord with heartfelt resolve.” (Acts 11:22-24) Likewise today, Jehovah can help us to become a “son of comfort” to fellow Christians. For example, he might use us to comfort those who have lost loved ones in death. Or he may move us to visit or make a phone call to someone who is sick or depressed to share a few kind words. Will you allow Jehovah to use you as he did Barnabas? —1 Thess. 5:14.

<sup>9</sup> Jehovah helped a brother named Vasily to become a capable spiritual shepherd. When Vasily was appointed to serve as an elder at age 26, he was afraid that he was not qualified to help the congregation spiritually, especially those who were going through hard times. However, he received valuable training from experienced elders and by attending the Kingdom Ministry School. Vasily worked hard to improve. For instance, he made a list of small goals. As he reached each one, he gradually overcame his fears. He now says: “What scared me back then now brings me much joy. When Jehovah helps me to find the right scripture to comfort a brother or a sister in the congregation, it brings me great satisfaction.” Brothers, if like Vasily you make yourself available to be used by

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7. How did Jehovah use Simeon, and how might knowing that encourage us?

8. How may Jehovah use us as he did Barnabas?

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9. What do we learn from the way Jehovah helped a brother named Vasily to become a capable spiritual shepherd?

Jehovah, he can give you the ability to care for greater responsibility in the congregation.

### WHAT WOMEN BECAME

<sup>10</sup> David and those loyal to him were being chased by King Saul, and they needed help. David's men asked a wealthy Israelite named Nabal for a little food, whatever the man had on hand. They felt free to ask because they had been protecting Nabal's flocks in the wilderness. But selfish Nabal refused to give them anything. David became furious and intended to wipe out Nabal and every male of his household. (1 Sam. 25:3-13, 22) However, Nabal's wife, Abigail, was as discerning as she was beautiful. Showing great courage, she fell at David's feet and urged him not to incur blood-guilt by taking revenge. She tactfully advised him to leave matters in Jehovah's hands. Abigail's humble words and discreet actions touched David's heart. He rightly concluded that Jehovah had sent her. (1 Sam. 25:23-28, 32-34) Abigail had cultivated qualities that made her useful to Jehovah. Similarly, Christian sisters who develop tact and discernment can be used by Jehovah to build up their families and others in the congregation.—Prov. 24:3; Titus 2:3-5.

<sup>11</sup> Many centuries later, the daughters of Shallum were among those whom Jehovah used to share in repairing the walls of Jerusalem. (Neh. 2:20; 3:12) Although their father was a prince, Shallum's daughters were willing to do that

difficult and dangerous work. (Neh. 4:15-18) What a contrast to the prominent men of the Tekoites, who “would not lower themselves to share” in the work! (Neh. 3:5) Just imagine the joy that Shallum's daughters felt when the project was completed in just 52 days! (Neh. 6:15) In our day, willing sisters are happy to help perform a special form of sacred service—the construction and maintenance of buildings that are dedicated to Jehovah. Their skill, enthusiasm, and loyalty are vital to the success of this work.

<sup>12</sup> Jehovah motivated Tabitha to abound in “good deeds and gifts of mercy,” particularly in behalf of widows. (Acts 9:36) Because of her outstanding generosity and kindness, many mourned when she died. But they were overjoyed when the apostle Peter resurrected her. (Acts 9:39-41) What do we learn from Tabitha? Whether young or old, male or female, we can all do practical things to help our brothers and sisters.—Heb. 13:16.

<sup>13</sup> A shy sister named Ruth wanted to become a missionary. As a young girl, she rushed from house to house, distributing printed tracts. “I really enjoyed this work,” she stated. Yet, talking at the doors and personally telling others about God's Kingdom was a challenge for her. Despite being shy, Ruth became a regular pioneer at age 18. In 1946, she attended the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead and later served in Hawaii and

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10. What did Abigail do, and what lesson do you learn from her example?

11. What did the daughters of Shallum do, and who today are imitating them?

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12. How might Jehovah use us as he did Tabitha?

13. How was a shy sister named Ruth used by Jehovah, and what did she conclude?

# JEHOVAH WILL GIVE YOU “THE DESIRE AND THE POWER TO ACT”

PHILIPPIANS 2:13

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If you make yourself available, Jehovah can cause you to become a zealous evangelizer, an effective teacher, a capable comforter, a skilled worker, a supportive friend, or whatever else he needs to accomplish his will

(See paragraphs 14-16)





Japan. Jehovah used her in a powerful way to spread the good news in those lands. After nearly 80 years of sharing in the ministry, Ruth concluded: “Jehovah has been a strengthening aid to me. He has helped me to overcome my shyness. I firmly believe that Jehovah can use anyone who puts trust in him.”

### ALLOW JEHOVAH TO USE YOU

<sup>14</sup> Throughout history, Jehovah has caused his servants to fulfill many different roles. What will he cause you to become? Much depends on how willing you are to exert yourself. **(Read Colossians 1:29.)** If you make yourself available, Jehovah can cause you to become a zealous evangelizer, an effective teacher, a capable comforter, a skilled worker, a supportive friend, or whatever else he needs to accomplish his will.

<sup>15</sup> What about you young brothers who are approaching adulthood? There is a great need for energetic men to take on

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14. According to Colossians 1:29, what must we do if we are to be used by Jehovah?

15. Just as instructed at 1 Timothy 4:12, 15, what should young brothers today beg Jehovah to help them to do?

added responsibility as ministerial servants. In many congregations the elders outnumber the ministerial servants. Could some of you young brothers cultivate the desire to shoulder additional responsibilities in the congregation? At times some brothers say, “I am happy just to serve as a regular publisher.” If that is the way you feel, beg Jehovah to help you to cultivate the desire to qualify as a ministerial servant and to give you the power to do all you can in loving service to him. (Eccl. 12:1) We need your help!—**Read 1 Timothy 4:12, 15.**

<sup>16</sup> Jehovah can cause you to become whatever he needs to accomplish his will. So ask him for the *desire* to do his work, and then ask him to give you the *power* you need. Whether young or old, use your time, energy, and assets to honor Jehovah now. (Eccl. 9:10) Never allow fear or feelings of inadequacy to make you pass up precious opportunities to do all you can in Jehovah’s service. What a privilege we all have in playing even a small part in bringing our loving Father the honor he deserves!

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16. What should we ask Jehovah for, and why?

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### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| ■ How does Jehovah equip us to serve him? | ■ Which person’s example described in this article especially appeals to you, and why? | ■ What desire are young brothers encouraged to develop? |
|---|--|---|

## SONG 51

To God We Are  
Dedicated!

## PREVIEW

We are devoted to serving Jehovah. But are we exclusively devoted to him? The answer is revealed by the decisions we make. Let us consider two specific areas of our life that can help us measure the extent of our devotion to Jehovah.

## Give Jehovah Exclusive Devotion

*“Jehovah is a God who requires exclusive devotion.”*—NAH. 1:2.

JEHOVAH deserves our exclusive devotion because he is our Creator and Life-Giver. (Rev. 4:11) However, we face a challenge. Even though we love and respect Jehovah, we might be lured away from giving him the exclusive devotion he deserves. We need to understand how that can happen. First, though, let us consider some aspects of what exclusive devotion involves.

<sup>2</sup> In the Bible, being devoted to God implies having a deep love for him. When we are **exclusively** devoted to Jehovah, we will worship only him. We will not allow anyone or anything to take his place in our heart.—**Read Exodus 34:14.**

<sup>3</sup> Our devotion to Jehovah is not blind. Why not? Because it is based on the facts we have learned about him. We have come to admire his beautiful qualities. We know and agree with his likes and dislikes. We understand and support his purpose for us. We feel honored that he allows us the opportunity to be his friend. (Ps. 25:14) Every detail we learn about our Creator draws us closer to him.—Jas. 4:8.

1. Why does Jehovah deserve our exclusive devotion?
2. According to Exodus 34:14, what will we do if we are exclusively devoted to Jehovah?
3. Why is our devotion to Jehovah not blind?

<sup>4</sup> The Devil controls this system of things, and he uses it to appeal to our natural human desires and fleshly weaknesses. (Eph. 2:1-3; 1 John 5:19) His goal is to divide our affections so that we are not exclusively devoted to Jehovah. Let us consider two ways in which he might have a measure of success. First, he tempts us to pursue riches, and second, he tries to influence us to make poor choices of entertainment.

### GUARD AGAINST LOVING MONEY

<sup>5</sup> We naturally want to have enough to eat, suitable clothes to wear, and a decent place to live. However, we must

4. (a) What does the Devil use to weaken our devotion to Jehovah? (b) What will we consider in this article?

5. Why must we guard against developing a love of money?

guard against developing a love of money. Many who are part of Satan's world are "lovers of money" and of the things that money can buy. (2 Tim. 3:2) Jesus knew that his followers might be tempted to develop this love. "No one can slave for two masters," Jesus said, "for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other. You cannot slave for God and for Riches." (Matt. 6:24) A person who worships Jehovah while also spending excessive time and effort trying to gain this world's riches would, in a sense, be trying to serve two masters. He would not be giving Jehovah exclusive devotion.

<sup>6</sup> Near the end of the first century C.E., members of the congregation in the city

6. What lesson can we learn from Jesus' words to the congregation in Laodicea?



HOW SOME LAODICEANS  
SAW THEMSELVES . . .

. . . AND HOW JEHOVAH AND  
JESUS SAW THEM

(See paragraph 6)





of Laodicea boasted: “I am rich and have acquired riches and do not need anything at all.” But in the eyes of Jehovah and Jesus, they were “miserable and pitiful and poor and blind and naked.” Jesus counseled them, not because they were wealthy, but because their love of riches was damaging their relationship with Jehovah. (Rev. 3:14-17) If we detect that a desire to pursue riches is growing in our heart, we must act quickly to correct our thinking. (1 Tim. 6:7, 8) If we do not, our heart will be divided and Jehovah will not accept our worship. He “requires exclusive devotion.” (Deut. 4:24) How might we lose our balance regarding our view of money?

<sup>7</sup> Consider the example of David, a

7-9. What do you learn from the experience of an elder named David?

hardworking elder who lives in the United States. He describes himself as having been a dedicated employee. He was promoted within the company he worked for and even received national recognition in his field of work. “At the time, I thought that these rewards were evidence of Jehovah’s blessing,” David said. But were they?

<sup>8</sup> David began to see warning signs that his work was having a negative effect on his friendship with Jehovah. “At congregation meetings and even in the ministry, I found myself thinking about problems at work,” he says. “I was making a lot of money, but I became increasingly stressed, and my marriage was suffering.”

<sup>9</sup> David realized that he needed to review his priorities. “I made a firm deci-





sion to correct my situation,” he says. David wanted to reorganize his work schedule, and he presented his plan to his employer. The result? David lost his job! How did he respond? “The very next day, I applied to serve as a continuous auxiliary pioneer,” he said. To support themselves, David and his wife started doing janitorial work. After a while, he began regular pioneering, and his wife eventually joined him in the pioneer work. This couple chose to do secular work that is looked down on by many, but the type of work they are doing is not the most important thing for them. Even though their income has dropped to a tenth of what they were earning before, each month they have just what they need to cover their expenses. They want to give Jehovah priority, and they

## Who is preparing your entertainment?

(See paragraphs 11-14)

have learned firsthand that he cares for those who put Kingdom interests first. —Matt. 6:31-33.

<sup>10</sup> Whether we have little or much materially, we need to guard our heart. How? Do not develop a love for riches. And do not allow your secular work to take priority over your service to Jehovah. How can you know if that is happening to you? Some questions you could ask yourself are: ‘Do I often think about my secular work when I am at meetings or in the ministry? Do I constantly worry about being financially secure in the future? Are money and material possessions causing problems for me and my mate? Would I be willing to do secular work that others look down on if it allowed me to spend more time serving Jehovah?’ (1 Tim. 6:9-12) When considering those questions, let us remember that Jehovah loves us and makes this promise to those who are devoted to him: “I will never leave you, and I will never abandon you.” That is why the apostle Paul wrote: “Let your way of life be free of the love of money.”—Heb. 13:5, 6.

## CHOOSE YOUR ENTERTAINMENT CAREFULLY

<sup>11</sup> Jehovah wants us to enjoy life, and entertainment can help us to do that. In fact, God’s Word says that “there is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and find enjoyment in his

10. How can we guard our heart?

11. What can entertainment do to a person?

hard work.” (Eccl. 2:24) However, much of the entertainment in the world can have a bad effect on us. It degrades people’s moral standards, encouraging them to tolerate—or even to love—things that God’s Word condemns.

<sup>12</sup> We want to give Jehovah exclusive devotion, so we cannot eat from “the table of Jehovah” and “the table of demons.” (**Read 1 Corinthians 10:21, 22.**) Eating a meal with someone is often a sign of friendship. If we choose entertainment that promotes violence, spiritism, immorality, or other fleshly desires and attitudes, we are, in effect, sharing a meal prepared by enemies of God. As a result, we not only harm ourselves but also damage our friendship with Jehovah.

<sup>13</sup> Consider some specific ways in which entertainment is like literal food. When we eat, we can control what we put in our mouth. But once we swallow the food, automatic processes take over and the nutrients in the food eventually become part of our bodies. A good diet can make us healthier; a poor diet will make us unhealthy. The results may not become evident overnight, but they will become evident in time.

<sup>14</sup> Similarly, when we choose our entertainment, we have control over what we put into our mind. After that, automatic processes take over and our mind and heart are affected. Good entertainment can refresh us; unwholesome entertainment will harm us. (**Read James**

**1:14, 15.**) The effects of bad entertainment may not be immediately evident, but they will eventually become obvious. That is why the Bible warns us: “Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a person is sowing, this he will also reap; because the one sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh.” (Gal. 6:7, 8) How important it is for us to reject all entertainment that promotes things that Jehovah hates!—Ps. 97:10.

<sup>15</sup> Many of Jehovah’s people enjoy watching JW Broadcasting®, our wholesome Internet television station. A sister named Marilyn said: “JW Broadcasting has helped me to be more positive, and I don’t have to filter the content. When I get lonely or discouraged, I find an encouraging talk or Morning Worship program to watch. That makes me feel closer to Jehovah and to his organization. The provision of JW Broadcasting has completely changed my life.” Are you benefiting from Jehovah’s gift? In addition to a new program each month, JW Broadcasting features numerous audio and video programs as well as uplifting songs that are available on demand.

<sup>16</sup> We must carefully control not only the **type** of entertainment we enjoy but also the **amount** of time we spend enjoying it. If we do not, we may spend more time on entertaining ourselves than we do on serving Jehovah. Many find it a challenge to control the amount of

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12. According to 1 Corinthians 10:21, 22, why should we choose our entertainment carefully?

13-14. Based on James 1:14, 15, why must we be concerned about feeding wrong desires? Illustrate.

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15. What gift has Jehovah provided for us to enjoy?

16-17. Why must we carefully control the amount of time we spend on entertainment, and how can we do so?

time they spend on entertainment. An 18-year-old sister named Abigail says: “Watching TV helps me to unwind at the end of a busy day. But if I’m not careful, I can spend hours in front of the screen.” A young brother named Samuel says: “I have found myself watching an endless amount of short videos on the Internet. I start out watching just one, and before I know it, three or four hours have gone by.”

<sup>17</sup> How can you control the amount of time you spend on entertainment? The first step is to find out how much time you are actually spending on it. Why not keep a record for one week? Write on a calendar how many hours you spend watching television, surfing the Internet, and playing games on your mobile device. If you feel that you are spending an excessive amount of time, try making a schedule. Assign time to the more important things first, and then allot time for entertainment. Next, ask Jehovah to help you stick to your schedule. That way you will have the time and energy you need for personal Bible study, family worship, congregation meetings, and serving Jehovah in the preaching and teaching work. You may also be less like-

ly to feel guilty about the time you spend on entertainment.

### REMAIN EXCLUSIVELY DEVOTED TO JEHOVAH

<sup>18</sup> After writing about the end of Satan’s world and the new world to come, the apostle Peter stated: “Beloved ones, since you are awaiting these things, do your utmost to be found finally by him spotless and unblemished and in peace.” (2 Pet. 3:14) When we obey that counsel and do our best to remain morally and spiritually clean, we prove that we are exclusively devoted to Jehovah.

<sup>19</sup> Satan and his system will continue to tempt us to change our priorities. (Luke 4:13) But despite any challenges we face, we will not allow anyone or anything to take Jehovah’s place in our heart. We are determined to give Jehovah what he alone deserves—our exclusive devotion!

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18-19. How can we prove that we are exclusively devoted to Jehovah?

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Pages 28-29:** We would not want to eat food contaminated in an unsanitary kitchen. Why would we want to watch entertainment contaminated with violence, spiritism, or immorality?

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## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| ■ What does it mean to give Jehovah exclusive devotion? | ■ How is our devotion to God affected by our attitude toward riches? | ■ How is our devotion to God affected by our choice of entertainment? |
|---|--|---|

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