

MAY 2018

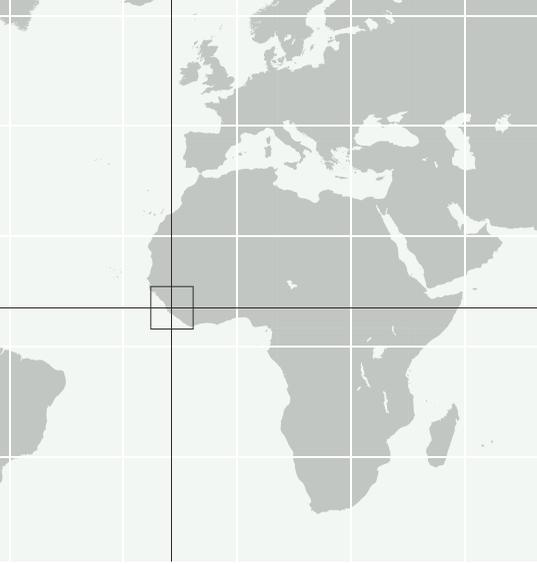
THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
JULY 9–AUGUST 5, 2018

LARGE
PRINT
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:

SIERRA LEONE

Two pioneers offer a tract to a passerby in the capital, Freetown, during the country's long rainy season

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PUBLISHERS

2,171

BIBLE STUDIES

5,291

MEMORIAL
ATTENDANCE (2017)

8,831

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) Issue 7 May 2018 is published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; L. Weaver, Jr., President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. © 2018 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

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It is provided as part of a worldwide
Bible educational work supported
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Unless otherwise indicated,
Scripture quotations are
from the modern-language
New World Translation
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Young Ones—Stand Firm Against the Devil

Satan is our enemy. What is the extent of his influence? What are the limits of his power? And how can all of us, including young Christians, resist him? These two articles will answer those questions and will help us strengthen our resolve to stand firm against the Devil.

50 LIFE STORY

A Poor Start—A Rich Ending



SONGS:
68, 72

CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

Why may we feel discouraged when preaching in less responsive territories?

Why can all of us have a fruitful ministry?

What will help us to keep bearing fruit with endurance?

Jehovah Loves Those Who “Bear Fruit With Endurance”

“As for that on the fine soil, these are the ones who . . . bear fruit with endurance.”—LUKE 8:15.

SERGIO AND OLINDA are a pioneer couple in their 80’s who live in the United States. Lately, their sore legs make moving about more

1, 2. (a) Why are we encouraged by those who faithfully preach in unresponsive territories? (See opening picture.) (b) What did Jesus say about preaching in his “home territory”? (See footnote.)

difficult. Still, as they have done for decades, in the morning they walk to a square in a busy section of town, arriving there at seven o'clock. They take their place near a bus stop and offer our Bible literature to passersby. Most people ignore them, but the couple remain in their spot, smiling at those who look at them. At noon, they slowly walk home. The next morning, at seven o'clock, they are back in the square. In fact, this faithful couple are busy preaching the Kingdom message there six mornings a week, year-round.

² Like Sergio and Olinda, many faithful brothers and sisters around the world have been preaching for decades in unresponsive home territories. If that challenge describes your situation, we warmly commend you for your endurance.* Your steadfastness in serving Jehovah is a source of encouragement for many—even for experienced fellow believers. Note these expressions made by circuit overseers: “When I work with such faithful brothers and sisters in the ministry, I feel energized by their example.” “Their faithfulness encourages me to persevere and to be courageous in my own ministry.” “Their example warms my heart.”

* Even Jesus recognized that preaching in his “home territory” was a challenge—a fact recorded by all four Gospel writers.—Matt. 13:57; Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24; John 4:44.

³ To strengthen our resolve to complete the preaching work that Jesus assigned us, let us consider the answers to three questions: Why may we at times feel discouraged? How can we bear fruit? What will help us to keep bearing fruit with endurance?

WHY MAY WE FEEL DISCOURAGED?

⁴ If you have ever felt discouraged when preaching in less responsive territories, you will relate to the apostle Paul. During his approximately 30-year-long ministry, he helped numerous individuals to become disciples of Christ. (Acts 14:21; 2 Cor. 3:2, 3) Still, he did not succeed in moving many Jews to become true worshippers. On the contrary, most rebuffed Paul, and some even persecuted him. (Acts 14:19; 17:1, 4, 5, 13) How did that adverse reaction from the Jews affect Paul? He freely admitted: “I am telling the truth in Christ . . . I have great grief and unceasing pain in my heart.” (Rom. 9:1-3) Why did Paul experience such feelings? His heart was in the preaching work. He preached to the Jews out of deep concern for them. So it pained Paul to see them reject God’s mercy.

3. What three questions will we consider, and why?

4. (a) How did the negative reaction from most Jews affect Paul?
(b) Why did Paul experience such feelings?

⁵ Like Paul, we preach to people out of heartfelt concern. (Matt. 22:39; 1 Cor. 11:1) Why? We know from our own experience how many blessings await those who decide to serve Jehovah. When we think about the individuals in our territory, we tell ourselves, ‘If only we could help them to see what they are missing out on!’ Therefore, we keep encouraging them to learn the truth about Jehovah and his purpose for mankind. In effect, we say to those to whom we preach: ‘We brought a beautiful gift for you. Please accept it.’ So when people refuse to accept that gift, it is no wonder that we may have “pain in [our] heart.” Such feelings indicate, not that we lack faith, but that our heart is in the preaching work. So despite moments of discouragement, we endure. Elena, a pioneer for over 25 years, speaks for many of us when she says: “I find the preaching work difficult. Still, there is no other work I would rather do.”

HOW CAN WE BEAR FRUIT?

⁶ Why can we be sure that regardless of where we preach, we can have a fruitful ministry? To answer that important question, let us examine two of Jesus’

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5. (a) What moves us to preach to our neighbors? (b) Why is it no wonder that we at times feel discouraged?
 6. What question will we consider, and how will we do so?

illustrations in which he considers the need to “bear fruit.” (Matt. 13:23) The first one is about a vine.

⁷ Read John 15:1-5, 8. Note that Jesus told his apostles: “My Father is glorified in this, that you keep bearing much fruit and prove yourselves my disciples.” Jesus described Jehovah as “the cultivator,” himself as “the true vine,” and his disciples as “the branches.”* What, then, is the fruitage that Christ’s followers need to bear? In this illustration, Jesus did not directly say what that fruitage is, but he did mention a significant detail that helps us to determine the answer.

⁸ Speaking about his Father, Jesus stated: “He takes away *every* branch in me *not* bearing fruit.” In other words, Jehovah views us as his servants *only if we bear fruit*. (Matt. 13:23; 21:43) Hence, in this illustration, the fruitage that each Christian *must* bear cannot refer to new disciples whom we may be privileged to make. (Matt. 28:19) Otherwise, faithful Witnesses who do not succeed in making disciples

* Although the branches in this illustration refer to those who are in line to receive heavenly life, the illustration contains lessons that benefit all of God’s servants.

7. (a) Who are represented by “the cultivator,” “the vine,” and “the branches”? (b) We want to find the answer to what question?

8. (a) In this illustration, why can the fruitage not refer to new disciples? (b) What is a mark of Jehovah’s requirements?

because of preaching in an unresponsive territory would be like the barren branches in Jesus' illustration. However, such a conclusion is unthinkable! Why? Because we cannot force people to become disciples. It would go against Jehovah's loving ways to disqualify his servants for failing to do something that is beyond their reach. Whatever Jehovah asks of us is always reachable.—Deut. 30:11-14.

⁹ What, then, is the fruit we must bear? Clearly, the fruit must refer to an activity that each of us is able to carry out. What activity makes up the essence of "bearing fruit"? The preaching of the good news of God's Kingdom.* (Matt. 24:14) Jesus' illustration of a sower confirms this conclusion. Let us consider this second illustration.

¹⁰ **Read Luke 8:5-8, 11-15.** In the illustration of the sower, the seed is "the word of God," or the Kingdom message. The soil represents man's figurative heart. The seed that fell on the fine soil took root, sprouted, and grew into, let us say, a wheat stalk. Then, it

* While "bearing fruit" also applies to producing "the fruitage of the spirit," in this article and the next, we focus on producing "the fruit of our lips," or Kingdom preaching.—Gal. 5:22, 23; Heb. 13:15.

9. (a) We bear fruit by sharing in what activity? (b) What illustration will we consider, and why?

10. (a) In this illustration, what is represented by the seed and the soil? (b) What is produced by a wheat stalk?

“produced 100 times more fruit.” But what kind of fruit is produced by a wheat stalk? Does it bear little wheat stalks? No, it produces new *seed*, which may eventually grow into stalks. In this illustration, one grain of seed yielded a hundred grains. How does that aspect of the illustration apply to our ministry?

¹¹ For the sake of comparison, let us say that years ago some Witnesses or our Christian parents shared the Kingdom news with us. To their joy, they noticed that our heart was receptive to the seedlike Kingdom message. Just as the fine soil in Jesus’ illustration retained the seed, we accepted the message and held on to it. As a result, the seedlike Kingdom message took root and grew, as it were, into a wheat stalk that, in time, was ready to bear fruit. And just as a wheat stalk produces as fruit, not new stalks, but new seed, we are producing as fruit, not new disciples, but new Kingdom seed.* How do we produce new Kingdom seed? Each time we in one way or another proclaim the Kingdom message, we duplicate and scatter, so to speak, the seed that was planted in our heart. (Luke 6:45; 8:1) Hence, this illustration teaches us that as

* On other occasions, Jesus used the examples of sowing and reaping to illustrate the disciple-making work.—Matt. 9:37; John 4:35-38.

11. (a) How does the illustration of the sower apply to our ministry? (b) How do we produce new Kingdom seed?



How do we “bear fruit with endurance”?
(See paragraph 11)

long as we keep on proclaiming the Kingdom message, we “bear fruit with endurance.”

¹² What lesson can we draw from Jesus’ illustrations of the vine and of the sower? They help us to understand that our ability to bear fruit does not depend on the response of the people in our territory. Instead, it depends on our own faithfulness. Paul mentioned that same truth when he said: “Each person will receive his own reward according to his own *work*.” (1 Cor. 3:8) The reward is according to the

12. (a) What lesson can we draw from Jesus’ illustrations of the vine and of the sower? (b) How does that lesson affect you?

work, *not* according to the *results* of that work. Says Matilda, a pioneer for 20 years: “It gives me joy to know that Jehovah rewards our efforts.”

HOW CAN WE ENDURE IN BEARING FRUIT?

¹³ What will help us to keep bearing fruit with endurance? As considered, Paul felt discouraged by the Jews’ negative reaction to the Kingdom message. Even so, he did not give up on them. Note what he further said in his letter to the Christians in Rome about his feelings toward those Jews: “The goodwill of my heart and my supplication to God for them are indeed for their salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to accurate knowledge.” (Rom. 10:1, 2) What reasons for continuing his ministry did Paul highlight?

¹⁴ First, Paul stated why he kept on preaching to the Jews. He was moved by “*the goodwill of [his] heart.*” It was his heart’s desire that some Jews would find salvation. (Rom. 11:13, 14) Second, Paul mentioned his “*supplication to God for them.*” He implored God in prayer to help individual Jews to accept the Kingdom message. Third, Paul added: “*They have a zeal for God.*” He saw a potential for good in people. Zeal, if prop-

13, 14. According to Romans 10:1, 2, for what reasons did Paul not give up on those who reacted negatively to the Kingdom message?

erly directed, can transform sincere individuals into zealous disciples of Christ, as Paul well knew.

¹⁵ How can we imitate Paul? First, we strive to maintain a heartfelt desire to find any who might be “rightly disposed for everlasting life.” Second, we supplicate Jehovah in prayer to open the heart of sincere ones. (Acts 13:48; 16:14) Silvana, a pioneer for nearly 30 years, says, “Before I go to a house in my territory, I pray to Jehovah, asking him to give me a positive attitude.” We also pray to God that angels may direct us to find honesthearted ones. (Matt. 10:11-13; Rev. 14:6) Notes Robert, a pioneer for over 30 years, “To work along with angels who know what is going on in the householders’ lives is exciting.” Third, we try to see a potential for good in people. Says Carl, an elder who was baptized over 50 years ago, “I look for any small sign that may reveal a person’s sincerity, perhaps a smile, a kind look, or an honest question.” Yes, like Paul, we can endure in bearing fruit.

“DO NOT LET YOUR HAND REST”

¹⁶ Even if it appears that the Kingdom message

15. How can we imitate Paul? Give examples.

16, 17. (a) What lesson can we learn from the instruction found at Ecclesiastes 11:6? (b) Illustrate how our sowing may affect those who observe us.

we preach is not reaching the hearts of people, we should not underestimate the impact of our sowing work. (Read Ecclesiastes 11:6.) Granted, many people do not listen to us, but they do observe us. They notice our neat attire, polite behavior, and warm smile. In time, our conduct may help some to see that their negative views about us may not be correct after all. Sergio and Olinda, mentioned before, noticed such a change.

¹⁷ Sergio relates: “Because of illness, we did not go to the square for a while. When we returned, passers-by asked, ‘What happened? We missed you.’” Adds Olinda with a smile: “The bus drivers waved to us and some shouted from their driver’s seat, ‘Good job!’ They even asked for our magazines.” And to the couple’s surprise, a man stopped by their witnessing cart, gave them a bouquet of flowers, and thanked them for the work they do.

¹⁸ Indeed, as long as we “do not let [our] hand rest” from sowing Kingdom seed, we have a valuable share in giving “a witness to all the nations.” (Matt. 24:14) Above all, we have the deep joy that comes from knowing that we have Jehovah’s approval, for he loves all those who “bear fruit with endurance”!

18. Why are you determined to “bear fruit with endurance”?



Why We “Keep Bearing Much Fruit”

“My Father is glorified in this, that you keep bearing much fruit and prove yourselves my disciples.”

—JOHN 15:8.

ON THE last evening before his death, Jesus had a long talk with his apostles during which he assured them of his deep love for

1, 2. (a) Shortly before his death, what information did Jesus share with his disciples? (See opening picture.) (b) Why is it important for us to keep in mind why we preach? (c) What will we consider?

SONGS:
53, 60

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What Scriptural reasons do we have to keep on preaching?

Why is it important to keep clearly in mind why we preach?

How are we helped to endure in our preaching work?

them. Also, he related to them an illustration about a vine, as we considered in the preceding article. By means of that illustration, Jesus encouraged his disciples to “keep bearing much fruit”—to endure in preaching the Kingdom message.—John 15:8.

² However, Jesus told his disciples not only *what* they needed to do but also *why* they should do so. He gave them reasons for carrying out the preaching work. Why is it important for us to consider those reasons? When we keep in mind why we need to continue to preach, we are motivated to endure in giving “a witness to all the nations.” (Matt. 24:13, 14) So, then, let us consider four Scriptural reasons for preaching. In addition, we will examine four gifts from Jehovah that help us to endure in bearing fruit.

WE GLORIFY JEHOVAH

³ The foremost reason why we share in the preaching work is *to glorify Jehovah and sanctify his name* before mankind. (Read John 15:1, 8.) Note that Jesus compared his Father, Jehovah, to a cultivator, or gardener, who grows grapes. Jesus likened himself to a vine, or stem, and his followers to branches. (John 15:5) Thus, the grapes fittingly illustrate the King-

3. (a) What reason for preaching is found at John 15:8? (b) What do the grapes in Jesus’ illustration represent, and why is it a fitting comparison?

dom fruitage that is produced by Christ's followers. Jesus told his apostles: "My Father is glorified in this, that you keep bearing much fruit." Just as vines that produce good grapes bring honor to a cultivator, so we bring honor, or glory, to Jehovah when we proclaim the Kingdom message to the best of our abilities.—Matt. 25:20-23.

⁴ In what way does our preaching work sanctify God's name? We cannot make God's name more sacred. It is already sacred, or holy, in the absolute sense. But note what the prophet Isaiah stated: "Jehovah of armies—he is the One you should *regard* as holy." (Isa. 8:13) We sanctify God's name, among other ways, by regarding it as separate from all other names and by helping others to regard it as holy. (Matt. 6:9, ftn.) For instance, by proclaiming the truth about Jehovah's wonderful qualities and his unchangeable purpose for mankind, we defend God's name against Satan's lies and slander. (Gen. 3:1-5) Also, when we strive to help people in our territory to see that Jehovah is worthy "to receive the glory and the honor and the power," we sanctify God's name. (Rev. 4:11) Says Rune, a pioneer for 16 years: "Knowing that I have been given the opportunity

4. (a) In what ways do we sanctify God's name? (b) How do you feel about having the privilege to sanctify God's name?

to be a witness for the Creator of the universe makes me grateful. It gives me the desire to keep on preaching.”

WE LOVE JEHOVAH AND HIS SON

⁵ Read John 15:9, 10. *Our heartfelt love for Jehovah and for Jesus* is an important reason why we preach the Kingdom message. (Mark 12:30; John 14:15) Jesus told his disciples not only to *be* in his love but to “*remain* in [his] love.” Why? Because living as a true disciple of Christ year after year calls for endurance. Jesus stressed the need for endurance by using forms of the word “remain” over and over in the brief passage recorded at John 15:4-10.

⁶ How do we show that we want to remain in Christ’s love and keep his approval? By observing Jesus’ commandments. Simply put, Jesus tells us, ‘Be obedient to me.’ Yet, Jesus only asked us to do what he himself did, for he added: “Just as I have observed the commandments of the Father and remain in his love.” Jesus sets the example.—John 13:15.

⁷ As to the connection between obedience and

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5. (a) What reason for preaching is mentioned at John 15:9, 10?
 - (b) How did Jesus emphasize the need for endurance?
 6. How do we show that we want to remain in Christ’s love?
 7. How are obedience and love connected?



Love for Jehovah, Jesus, and our neighbor moves us to preach
(See paragraphs 5, 10)

love, Jesus earlier said to his apostles: “Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me.” (John 14:21) Moreover, by carrying out Jesus’ command to go and preach, we too show our love for God because Jesus’ commandments reflect his Father’s thinking. (Matt. 17:5; John 8:28) In response to our expression of love, Jehovah and Jesus keep us in their love.

WE WARN PEOPLE

⁸ We have a further reason to continue our preaching work. *We preach to give a warning.* In the Bible,

8, 9. (a) What further reason for preaching do we have? (b) Why do Jehovah’s words found at Ezekiel 3:18, 19 and 18:23 motivate us to keep on preaching?

Noah is described as “a preacher.” (Read 2 Peter 2:5.) His preaching work prior to the Flood evidently included a warning of coming destruction. Why can we draw that conclusion? Note what Jesus stated: “For as they were in those days before the Flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and *they took no note* until the Flood came and swept them all away, so the presence of the Son of man will be.” (Matt. 24:38, 39) Despite the people’s indifference, Noah faithfully proclaimed the warning message that he had been given.

⁹ Today, we preach the Kingdom message to give people an opportunity to learn about God’s will for mankind. Like Jehovah, we dearly wish that people would respond to the message and “keep living.” (Ezek. 18:23) At the same time, when we preach from house to house and in public areas, we warn as many people as possible that God’s Kingdom will come and bring an end to this ungodly world.—Ezek. 3:18, 19; Dan. 2:44; Rev. 14:6, 7.

WE LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR

¹⁰ Here is another important reason for continuing

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10. (a) What reason for preaching is mentioned at Matthew 22:39?
(b) Relate how Paul and Silas helped a jailer in Philippi.

with our preaching work: *We preach because we love our neighbor.* (Matt. 22:39) We are moved by such love to endure in this work, recognizing that people may have a change of heart when their circumstances change. Consider what the apostle Paul and his companion, Silas, experienced. In the city of Philippi, opposers threw them into prison. Then, in the middle of the night, suddenly an earthquake shook the prison and opened its doors. The jailer feared that the prisoners had fled and was about to kill himself. But Paul called out: “Do not hurt yourself!” The distressed jailer asked: “What must I do to get saved?” They told him: “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will get saved.”—Acts 16:25-34.

¹¹ How does the account of the jailer relate to our preaching work? Note this: The jailer had a change of heart and asked for help only *after* the earthquake struck. Similarly, some individuals today who have not responded to the Bible’s message before may have a change of heart and look for help when their world is suddenly shaken by a seismic event. For instance, some in our territory may have lost their longtime job unexpectedly and are left in shock. Others may be devastated by the recent breakup of their

11, 12. (a) How does the account about the jailer relate to our ministry? (b) We want to be available to do what?

marriage. Still others may be at a loss after being diagnosed with a serious illness, or they may be heart-broken after losing a loved one in death. When such events take place, some distressed individuals may ask questions about the meaning of life that at one time they ignored. Perhaps they even wonder, ‘What must I do to get saved?’ When we meet them, they may want to listen to our message of hope for the first time in their life.

¹² Therefore, by faithfully continuing in our preaching work, we make sure that we will be available to give comfort to people at a time when they may be ready to accept it. (Isa. 61:1) Says Charlotte, who has been in the full-time service for 38 years: “People today are lost. They need a chance to hear the good news.” Notes Ejvor, a pioneer for 34 years: “Today, more than ever, many people feel emotionally low. I really want to help them. That motivates me to preach.” Neighborly love—what a worthy reason, indeed, to continue in our ministry!

GIFTS THAT HELP US TO ENDURE

¹³ During that last evening before his death, Jesus also mentioned to his apostles several gifts that

13, 14. (a) What gift is mentioned at John 15:11? (b) How will Jesus’ joy become ours? (c) How does joy affect our ministry?

would help them to endure in bearing fruit. What are these gifts, and how do we benefit from them?

¹⁴ *The gift of joy.* Will obeying Jesus' command to preach become burdensome? On the contrary. After relating his illustration of the vine, Jesus said that as Kingdom preachers, we will experience joy. (Read John 15:11.) In fact, he assured us that his joy will become ours. How? As mentioned earlier, Jesus compared himself to a vine and his disciples to branches. A vine supports the branches. As long as the branches are attached to it, they receive water and nourishment that flows from the vine. Similarly, as long as we remain in union with Christ by closely following in his steps, we experience the same joy that he has in doing his Father's will. (John 4:34; 17:13; 1 Pet. 2:21) Notes Hanne, a pioneer for over 40 years, "The joy I always feel after I have been in the ministry stimulates me to continue in Jehovah's service." Indeed, deep-seated joy gives us the strength to keep on preaching even in challenging territories. —Matt. 5:10-12.

¹⁵ *The gift of peace.* (Read John 14:27.) Earlier on that last evening before his death, Jesus told his apostles: "I give you *my* peace." How does that gift

15. (a) What gift is mentioned at John 14:27? (b) Why does peace help us to keep bearing fruit?

—his peace—help us to bear fruit? As we endure, we experience in our heart a lasting feeling of peace that results from knowing that we have Jehovah’s and Jesus’ approval. (Ps. 149:4; Rom. 5:3, 4; Col. 3:15) Says Ulf, who has been in the full-time service for 45 years, “The preaching work makes me tired, but it brings true satisfaction and real meaning to my life.” How thankful we are to be blessed with lasting inner peace!

¹⁶ *The gift of friendship.* After Jesus stated his desire that the joy experienced by the apostles might “be made full,” he explained to them the importance of showing self-sacrificing love. (John 15:11-13) Next, he said: “I have called you friends.” What a precious gift to receive—friendship with Jesus! What did the apostles have to do to remain his friends? They had to “*go and keep bearing fruit.*” (Read John 15:14-16.) Some two years earlier, Jesus had instructed his apostles: “As you *go*, preach, saying: ‘The Kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.’” (Matt. 10:7) So on that last evening, he encouraged them to *endure* in the work they had started. (Matt. 24:13; Mark 3:14) Carrying out Jesus’ command was challenging, but they could succeed

16. (a) What gift is mentioned at John 15:15? (b) How could the apostles remain Jesus’ friends?



We can be sure that Jehovah answers our prayers for help
(See paragraph 18)

—and thus remain his friends. How? With the help of yet another gift.

¹⁷ *The gift of answered prayers.* Jesus stated: “No matter what you ask the Father in my name, he [will] give it to you.” (John 15:16) How strengthening this promise must have been for the apostles!* Though they did not clearly grasp it, their Leader’s life on earth would soon end, but they would not be left without support. Jehovah was ready to answer

* During his talk with his apostles, Jesus repeatedly assured them that their prayers would be answered.—John 14:13; 15:7, 16; 16:23.

17, 18. (a) What gift is mentioned at John 15:16? (b) How would that gift help Jesus’ disciples? (c) What gifts strengthen us today?

their prayers for any help they needed to carry out the command to preach the Kingdom message. And indeed, shortly thereafter, they experienced how Jehovah answered their prayers for help.—Acts 4: 29, 31.

¹⁸ The same is true today. As we endure in bearing fruit, we enjoy Jesus' friendship. Furthermore, we can be sure that Jehovah is ready to answer our prayers for help in overcoming obstacles that we may encounter as we preach the Kingdom good news. (Phil. 4:13) How grateful we are to be blessed with answered prayers and friendship with Jesus! These gifts from Jehovah strengthen us to keep on bearing fruit.—Jas. 1:17.

¹⁹ As considered in this article, we keep sharing in the preaching work to glorify Jehovah and sanctify his name, to show our love for Jehovah and for Jesus, to give ample warning, and to show love for neighbor. In addition, the gifts of joy, peace, friendship, and answered prayers strengthen us to finish God's work. How pleased Jehovah will be as he observes our whole-souled efforts to “keep bearing much fruit”!

19. (a) Why do we keep sharing in the preaching work? (b) What helps us to finish God's work?



Know Your Enemy

“We are not ignorant of [Satan’s] schemes.”—2 COR. 2:11, fn.

ADAM no doubt knew that serpents cannot talk. So he may have surmised that a spirit creature had spoken with Eve through the serpent. (Gen. 3: 1-6) Adam and Eve knew virtually nothing about this spirit. Even so, Adam made a conscious choice to turn his back on his

1. In Eden, what did Jehovah reveal about our enemy?

SONGS:
150, 32

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What is the extent of Satan’s influence?

How does Satan try to influence individuals?

What did you learn about our enemy?

loving heavenly Father and join this stranger in resisting God's will. (1 Tim. 2:14) Immediately, Jehovah began to reveal information about this enemy who had corrupted Adam and Eve, promising that this wicked one would eventually be destroyed. But Jehovah also warned that for a time, the spirit creature who spoke through the serpent would have the power to oppose those who love God. —Gen. 3:15.

² In his wisdom, Jehovah has never told us the personal name of the angelic son who rebelled against him.* And God chose not to reveal even the descriptive name of that enemy until some 2,500 years after the initial rebellion. (Job 1:6) In fact, only three books of the Hebrew Scriptures, 1 Chronicles, Job, and Zechariah, mention Satan, which means “Resister.” Why was little said about our enemy prior to the arrival of the Messiah?

³ Apparently, Jehovah did not want to give Satan

* The Bible reveals that at least some angels have personal names. (Judg. 13:18; Dan. 8:16; Luke 1:19; Rev. 12:7) Since Jehovah has named each of the stars (Ps. 147:4), it is reasonable to assume that all of his angelic sons, including the one who became Satan, also have personal names.

2, 3. Why, apparently, was little said about Satan before the Messiah arrived?

undue prominence by devoting large portions of the Hebrew Scriptures to discussing him and his activity. Jehovah's primary purpose for inspiring that section of the Scriptures was to identify the Messiah and lead God's people to him. (Luke 24:44; Gal. 3:24) When that was accomplished and the Messiah arrived, Jehovah used him and his disciples to reveal much of what we know about Satan and the angels who joined him.* That is fitting, since it is Jesus and his anointed co-rulers whom Jehovah will use to crush Satan and his followers.—Rom. 16:20; Rev. 17:14; 20:10.

⁴ The apostle Peter describes Satan the Devil as “a roaring lion,” and John calls him a “serpent” and a “dragon.” (1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:9) But there is no need to be overly anxious about the Devil—his power is limited. (Read James 4:7.) We are backed by Jehovah, Jesus, and the faithful angels. With their help, we can resist our enemy. Still, we need to know the answers to three key questions: What is the extent of Satan's influence? How does he try to exert that influence on individuals? And what

* Satan is mentioned by that name only 18 times in the Hebrew Scriptures but more than 30 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures.

4. Why should we not be overly anxious about the Devil?

are the limits of his power? As we discuss these questions, we will also consider the lessons we can learn.

WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF SATAN'S INFLUENCE?

⁵ A significant number of angels joined Satan's rebellion. Prior to the Flood, Satan lured at least some of them into having immoral relations with the daughters of men. The Bible reveals this truth by symbolically portraying the dragon as dragging a third of the stars of heaven with him in his fall. (Gen. 6:1-4; Jude 6; Rev. 12:3, 4) When those angels abandoned God's family, they put themselves under Satan's control. These rebels, however, are not just a mob of troublemakers. Satan has set up an imitation of God's Kingdom, with himself as king. In the invisible realm, Satan has organized the demons into governments, given them authority, and made them world rulers.—Eph. 6:12.

⁶ By means of his spirit organization, Satan exerts authority over all human governments. That fact was made plain when Satan showed Jesus “all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth” and said: “I

5, 6. Why can human governments not bring about the changes mankind needs most?

will give you all this authority and their glory, because it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.” (Luke 4:5, 6) Despite Satan’s evil influence, many governments do a measure of good for their citizens. And individual rulers may have noble intentions. But no human government or individual ruler is capable of bringing about the changes mankind needs most.—Ps. 146:3, 4; Rev. 12:12.

⁷ Satan and the demons use not only governments but also false religion and the commercial system to mislead “the *entire* inhabited earth.” (Rev. 12:9) Through false religion, Satan promotes lies about Jehovah. In addition, the Devil seems determined to make as many people as possible forget God’s name. (Jer. 23:26, 27) As a result, sincere individuals who think that they are worshipping God are deceived into worshipping demons. (1 Cor. 10:20; 2 Cor. 11:13-15) Satan also promotes lies through the commercial system. For example, this system often teaches people that the best way to be happy is to pursue money and gather many possessions. (Prov. 18:11) Those who believe this lie spend their lives serving “Riches”

7. How does Satan use not only governments but also false religion and the commercial system? (See opening picture.)

rather than God. (Matt. 6:24) Eventually, their love of material things can choke any love they had for God.—Matt. 13:22; 1 John 2:15, 16.

⁸ The examples of Adam, Eve, and the rebellious angels teach us at least two important lessons. First, there are only two sides, and we must choose one. Either we remain loyal to Jehovah or we place ourselves in Satan's camp. (Matt. 7:13) Second, those who join Satan receive only limited benefits. Adam and Eve got the opportunity to set their own standards of good and bad, and the demons attained a measure of influence over human governments. (Gen. 3:22) However, the costs *always* outweigh any seeming benefits that Satan may offer.—Job 21:7-17; Gal. 6:7, 8.

⁹ What advantage do we gain from knowing the extent of Satan's influence? It helps us keep a balanced view of secular authorities and motivates us in our witnessing work. We understand that Jehovah wants us to respect governmental authorities. (1 Pet. 2:17) And he expects us to obey the laws of human governments as long as those laws do not conflict with his standards. (Rom. 13:1-4) But we

8, 9. (a) What two lessons may we learn from the accounts about Adam, Eve, and the rebellious angels? (b) What advantage do we gain from knowing the extent of Satan's influence?

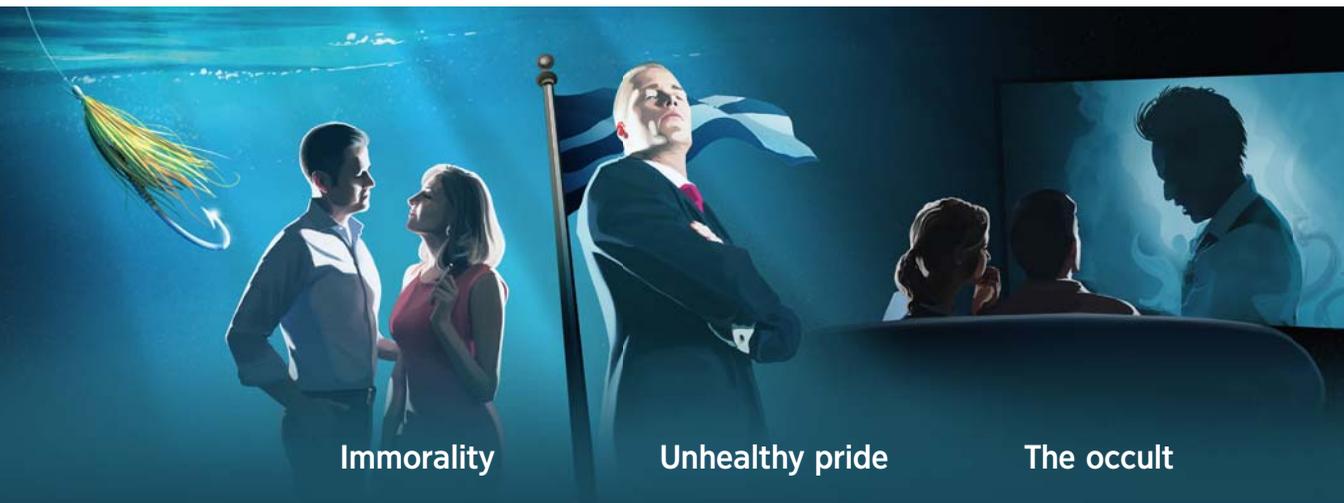
realize that we must remain neutral, never favoring one political party or human leader over another. (John 17:15, 16; 18:36) Because we see what Satan is trying to do to Jehovah's name and reputation, we feel more compelled to teach others the truth about our God. We proudly bear and use his name, knowing that loving him is far more rewarding than loving money or things.—Isa. 43:10; 1 Tim. 6:6-10.

HOW DOES SATAN TRY TO INFLUENCE INDIVIDUALS?

¹⁰ Satan uses effective methods to influence individuals. For example, he uses bait to lure them into doing things his way. Also, he attempts to bully them into submission.

¹¹ Consider how effective Satan was in using bait to trap a large number of his angelic brothers. He must have studied them for a considerable time before luring them into taking sides with him. When at least some of these angels took the bait and had immoral relations with women, they produced a hybrid race that dominated mankind. (Gen. 6:1-4) Perhaps Satan tempted the disloyal angels not only

10-12. (a) How may Satan have used bait to trap his angelic brothers? (b) What lessons do we learn from the fall of many angels?



Immorality

Unhealthy pride

The occult

SATAN TRIES TO LURE US

(See paragraphs 12, 13)

with the opportunity for immoral sex but also with the promise of seizing power over mankind. His purpose may have been to disrupt the arrival of the promised ‘offspring of the woman.’ (Gen. 3:15) In any case, Jehovah ended all such plots by bringing the Flood—a move that thwarted the efforts of Satan and the rebellious angels at that time.

¹² What lessons can we learn from this incident? Never underestimate the lure of immorality or the danger of egotism. For aeons, the angels who joined Satan served in the very presence of God. Yet, even in such a good environment, many allowed bad desires to take root and grow. Similarly,



Governmental
bans

Pressure from
schoolmates

Opposition from
family

SATAN TRIES TO BULLY US
(See paragraph 14)

we may have served for decades in the earthly part of God’s organization. Yet, even in this spiritually clean environment, unclean desires can take root. (1 Cor. 10:12) How important it is that we constantly search our heart, reject immoral thoughts, and suppress unhealthy pride!—Gal. 5:26; read **Colossians 3:5**.

¹³ Another effective bait that Satan uses is curiosity about the occult. Today, he promotes interest in the demons not only through false religion

13. What is another effective bait that Satan uses, and how can we avoid it?

but also through the entertainment industry. Movies, electronic games, and other media make spiritism seem exciting. How can we avoid being caught in this trap? We should not expect God's organization to supply a list of acceptable and unacceptable entertainment. Each of us needs to train his own conscience to be in harmony with God's standards. (Heb. 5:14) However, we will make wise choices if we apply the apostle Paul's inspired counsel to let our love for God "be without hypocrisy." (Rom. 12:9) We could ask ourselves: 'Will my choice of entertainment make me seem hypocritical? If my Bible students or return visits saw the entertainment I choose, would they think that I practice what I preach?' The more our speech and actions harmonize, the less likely we are to be caught in Satan's snares.—1 John 3:18.

¹⁴ In addition to offering bait, Satan tries to bully us into compromising our loyalty to Jehovah. For example, he can maneuver governments into banning our preaching work. Or he can prompt our associates at work or in school to mock us because of our desire to live by the Bible's moral standards. (1 Pet. 4:4) He might also influence

14. How might Satan try to bully us, and how can we cope?

well-meaning family members to discourage us from attending meetings. (Matt. 10:36) How can we cope? First, we must expect this kind of direct assault—Satan is at war with us. (Rev. 2:10; 12:17) Then, we need to see the bigger issue behind such incidents—Satan claims that we serve Jehovah only when it is convenient. He says that if we are pressured, we will turn our back on God. (Job 1:9-11; 2:4, 5) Finally, we have to rely on Jehovah for strength to face the issue. Remember, he will never abandon us.—Heb. 13:5.

WHAT ARE THE LIMITS OF SATAN'S POWER?

¹⁵ Satan cannot force people to act against their own will. (Jas. 1:14) Out of ignorance, many work in harmony with Satan's purpose. But after they learn the truth, each one makes a choice as to whom he or she will serve. (Acts 3:17; 17:30) If we are resolved to do God's will, there is nothing Satan can do to break our integrity.—Job 2:3; 27:5.

¹⁶ Satan and the demons have other limitations. For example, nowhere do the Scriptures indicate that they can read the mind or heart of an

15. Can Satan force us to act against our own will? Explain.

16, 17. (a) What other limitations do Satan and the demons have?
(b) Why should we not fear to pray out loud to Jehovah?

individual. Only Jehovah and Jesus are spoken of as having that ability. (1 Sam. 16:7; Mark 2:8) What, though, about speaking or praying out loud? Should we fear that the Devil or the demons might hear our prayers and interfere? The answer is no. Why not? We are not afraid to do good works in Jehovah's service just because the Devil might see us. Likewise, we should not be afraid to pray out loud just because the Devil might hear us. In fact, the Bible contains many examples of God's servants who prayed out loud, and there is no hint that these ones feared that the Devil would hear them. (1 Ki. 8:22, 23; John 11:41, 42; Acts 4:23, 24) If we do our best to speak and act in harmony with God's will, we can be confident that Jehovah will not allow the Devil to do us any lasting harm. —Read Psalm 34:7.

¹⁷ We need to know our enemy, but we do not need to be terrified by him. With Jehovah's backing, even imperfect humans can conquer Satan. (1 John 2:14) If we oppose him, he will flee from us. (Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9) Young ones seem to be a special target for Satan. What, specifically, can they do to stand firm against the Devil? The next article considers that question.



Young Ones Stand Firm Against the Devil

“Put on the complete suit of armor from God so that you may be able to stand firm against the crafty acts of the Devil.”—EPH. 6:11.

THE apostle Paul likened our life as Christians to that of soldiers engaged in hand-to-hand combat. Of course, the war we fight is spiritual, not literal. Even so, our

1, 2. (a) Why are young Christians winning the fight against wicked spirit forces? (See opening picture.) (b) What will we examine?

SONGS:
79, 140

**HOW WOULD YOU
ANSWER?**

What are the pieces of the spiritual armor?

Why is it vital that we wear each piece?

What do you think of the example that our young ones set?

enemies are real. Satan and the demons are skilled warriors with vast experience. At first glance, our prospects may seem bleak. Young Christians in particular may appear to be vulnerable. How can they hope to win against superhuman, wicked spirit forces? The fact is, young ones can win, and they are winning! Why? Because they “go on acquiring power in the Lord.” But they do more than draw on God’s power. They are dressed for battle. Like well-trained soldiers, they have “put on the complete suit of armor from God.”—Read Ephesians 6:10-12.

² When developing his illustration, Paul perhaps had in mind the armor worn by Roman legionnaires. (Acts 28:16) Let us examine why that illustration is appropriate. As we do, take note of what some young ones have to say about the challenges and the benefits of wearing each piece of spiritual armor.

“THE BELT OF TRUTH”

³ Read Ephesians 6:14. A Roman military belt had metal plates that protected a soldier’s waist. It was designed to help relieve the weight of his upper-body armor. Some belts also had strong clips that served to carry a sword and a dagger. With his belt fastened tightly, a soldier could confidently stand firm in battle.

3, 4. How is the truth found in the Bible like a Roman military belt?

⁴ Similarly, the truths we learn from God’s Word protect us from the spiritual harm that false teachings cause. (John 8:31, 32; 1 John 4:1) And the more we love divine truths, the easier it is to carry our “breastplate,” that is, to live by God’s righteous standards. (Ps. 111:7, 8; 1 John 5:3) In addition, when we have a clear understanding of the truths from God’s Word, we can confidently stand our ground and defend them against opposers.—1 Pet. 3:15.

⁵ When Bible truth is wrapped around us tightly, as it were, we will be moved to live in harmony with it and to speak the truth at all times. Why will we avoid telling lies? Because lies have been one of Satan’s most effective weapons. Lies damage both the one telling them and the one believing them. (John 8:44) So to the best of our imperfect ability, we avoid telling lies. (Eph. 4:25) But it can be a challenge. Eighteen-year-old Abigail says: “Speaking the truth may not always seem worth it, especially when telling a lie can get you out of a difficult situation.” Why, then, does she always try to tell the truth? “When I’m truthful,” she says, “I have a clean conscience before Jehovah. And my parents and my friends know that they can trust me.” Victoria, 23, says: “When you tell the truth and stand up for your beliefs, you might get

5. Why should we speak the truth?

bullied. But you always get outstanding benefits: You gain confidence, you feel closer to Jehovah, and you earn the respect of those who love you.” Certainly, it is worth keeping “the belt of truth fastened around your waist” at all times.

“THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS”

⁶ One type of breastplate worn by a Roman soldier in the first century consisted of overlapping horizontal strips of iron. These strips were bent to fit his torso and were fastened to straps of leather by means of metal hooks and buckles. The rest of the soldier’s upper body was covered in more strips of iron fastened to leather. This type of garment restricted a soldier’s movement to some degree, and it required that he regularly check that the plates were firmly fixed in place. But his armor hindered the edge of a sword or the point of an arrow from piercing his heart or other vital organs.

⁷ What an appropriate symbol of how Jehovah’s righteous standards can protect our figurative heart! (Prov. 4:23) Just as a soldier would not swap a breastplate of iron for one made of an inferior metal, we would never want to exchange Jehovah’s standards of what is right for our own. Our judgment is

6, 7. Why is righteousness likened to a breastplate?

IS YOUR SUIT OF ARMOR COMPLETE?



The breastplate of righteousness
(See paragraphs 6-8)



The helmet of salvation
(See paragraphs 15-18)



The sword of the spirit
(See paragraphs 19-20)



The belt of truth
(See paragraphs 3-5)



Feet shod in readiness
(See paragraphs 9-11)



The large shield of faith
(See paragraphs 12-14)



just too flawed to offer us the protection that we need. (Prov. 3:5, 6) Instead, we regularly check that the ‘iron plates’ Jehovah has given us are firmly fixed over our heart.

⁸ Do you sometimes feel that Jehovah’s righteous standards weigh you down or restrict your freedom?

8. Why is it worth sticking to Jehovah’s standards?

Daniel, aged 21, says: “Teachers and fellow students made fun of me because I live by Bible standards. For a while, I lost my confidence and felt depressed.” How did he recover? “Eventually,” he says, “I saw the benefits of living by Jehovah’s standards. Some of my ‘friends’ began taking drugs; others dropped out of school. It was sad to see how their lives turned out. Jehovah really protects us.” Madison, 15, says: “It’s a struggle for me to stick to Jehovah’s standards and not go along with what my peers think is cool or fun.” How does she cope? “I remind myself that I bear Jehovah’s name and that temptation is just Satan’s way of shooting at me. When I win a struggle, I feel better about myself.”

“FEET SHOD IN READINESS TO DECLARE THE GOOD NEWS OF PEACE”

9 Read Ephesians 6:15. A Roman soldier who was not wearing his boots was not ready to march into battle. His sandallike boots were made of three layers of leather fastened together that gave him an excellent foothold. The design made the footwear both durable and comfortable.

9-11. (a) What symbolic footwear do Christians put on? (b) What can help us be more comfortable when declaring the good news?

¹⁰ While the literal boots worn by Roman soldiers carried them into war, the symbolic footwear worn by Christians helps them deliver a message of peace. (Isa. 52:7; Rom. 10:15) Even so, it takes courage to speak up when the opportunity arises. “I was afraid to witness to my classmates,” says 20-year-old Bo. “I think I was embarrassed. Looking back, I don’t know why I should have been. Now I’m happy to witness to my peers.”

¹¹ Many young ones have found that if they are well-prepared to declare the good news, they feel more comfortable doing it. What can you do to be ready? “I keep literature in my schoolbag,” says Julia, 16, “and I listen to the opinions and beliefs expressed by my classmates. Then I’m able to think of what will help them. When I am prepared, I can talk to them about what will specifically benefit them.” Makenzie, 23, says: “If you are kind and are a good listener, you’ll get an idea of what your peers are dealing with. I make sure that I’ve read all the material published for young people. That way I can direct my peers to something in the Bible or on jw.org that will help them.” As those comments indicate, the more prepared you are to preach, the more securely your “boots” will be bound to your feet.

“THE LARGE SHIELD OF FAITH”

12 Read **Ephesians 6:16**. “The large shield” carried by a Roman legionnaire was rectangular and covered him from his shoulders to his knees. It served to protect him from the blows of weapons and the hails of arrows.

13 Some of the “burning arrows” that Satan might fire at you are lies about Jehovah—that He does not care about you and that you are unlovable. Nineteen-year-old Ida struggles with feelings of unworthiness. She says, “I have often felt that Jehovah isn’t close to me and that he doesn’t want to be my Friend.” How does she deal with this attack? “The meetings are a giant boost to my faith,” says Ida. “I used to sit there and never comment, thinking that nobody would want to hear what I had to say. Now, though, I prepare for the meetings and try to answer two or three times. It’s difficult, but I feel much better when I do. And the brothers and sisters are so encouraging. I always come away from the meetings knowing that Jehovah loves me.”

14 Ida’s experience highlights an important truth: The literal shield given to a soldier had fixed dimensions, but the size of our shield of faith can either

12, 13. What are some of Satan’s “burning arrows”?

14. What truth does Ida’s experience highlight?

shrink or grow. It is up to us. (Matt. 14:31; 2 Thess. 1:3) How important it is that we build up our faith!

“THE HELMET OF SALVATION”

15 Read Ephesians 6:17. The helmet worn by the Roman infantry was designed to ward off blows directed at the head, neck, and face. Some helmets had a handle so that a soldier could carry it in his hand.

16 Just as a helmet protects a soldier’s brain, our “hope of salvation” protects our mind, our thinking ability. (1 Thess. 5:8; Prov. 3:21) Hope keeps us focused on God’s promises and helps us see problems in the right perspective. (Ps. 27:1, 14; Acts 24:15) But if we want our “helmet” to be effective, we must wear it on our head, not carry it in our hand.

17 How could Satan induce us to remove our helmet? Consider the way he dealt with Jesus. Satan surely knew that Jesus had the hope of eventually ruling mankind. But Jesus would have to wait until Jehovah’s appointed time. And before then, he would have to suffer and die. So Satan offered Jesus the chance to fulfill his hope sooner. Satan suggested

15, 16. How is hope like a helmet?

17, 18. (a) How could Satan induce us to remove our helmet?
(b) How can we show that we have not been fooled by Satan’s deception?

that if Jesus would do one act of worship, he could have it all and have it right then. (Luke 4:5-7) Similarly, Satan knows that Jehovah offers us material benefits in the new system. But we have to wait, and we might have to suffer hardships in the meantime. So Satan offers us tempting opportunities to enjoy such a life now. He wants us to seek material benefits first—to have it all and have it now. Satan urges us to seek the Kingdom second.—Matt. 6:31-33.

¹⁸ Like many young Christians, 20-year-old Kiana has not been fooled by this deception. “I know that the only hope for solving all our problems is God’s Kingdom,” she says. How does this solid hope affect her thinking and actions now? “The hope of Paradise helps me put secular goals in perspective,” she adds. “I don’t try to cash in on my talents or attempt to climb the corporate ladder. Instead, I’m investing time and energy in spiritual goals.”

“THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT,” GOD’S WORD

¹⁹ The sword used by Roman infantrymen at the time Paul wrote his letter was about 20 inches (50 cm) long and was designed for hand-to-hand combat. One reason that Roman soldiers were so effective is that they practiced with their weapons every day.

19, 20. How can we improve our skills in using God’s Word?

²⁰ Paul likens God’s Word to a sword that Jehovah has given us. But we must learn to use it skillfully when defending our beliefs—or when adjusting our own thinking. (2 Cor. 10:4, 5; 2 Tim. 2:15) How can you improve your skills? Sebastian, aged 21, says: “I’ve been writing down one verse from every chapter in my Bible reading. I’m compiling a list of my favorite verses. That way, I feel more in tune with Jehovah’s thinking.” Daniel, quoted earlier, says: “As I do my Bible reading, I pick verses that I think will help people I meet in the ministry. I’ve found that people respond well when they see that you are passionate about the Bible and are doing your best to help them.”

²¹ As the young ones quoted in this article have shown, there is no need to feel intimidated by Satan and the demons. They are formidable but not unbeatable. And they are mortal. Soon, during the Thousand Year Reign of Christ, they will be confined to a state of complete inactivity, after which they will be destroyed. (Rev. 20:1-3, 7-10) We know our enemy, his tactics, and his intentions. With Jehovah’s help, we can stand firm against him!

21. Why is there no need to feel intimidated by Satan and the demons?

A Poor Start—A Rich Ending

AS TOLD BY SAMUEL F. HERD

I was born in a one-room log cabin in a very small town called Liberty, Indiana, U.S.A. My parents already had three children when I came along—my older brother and two sisters. Later, my mother gave birth to my two younger brothers and my younger sister.

DURING my school years, not much changed. In my school, the people you were with in first grade were the same ones you finished school with; in fact, you knew the names of most people in town, and they knew yours.

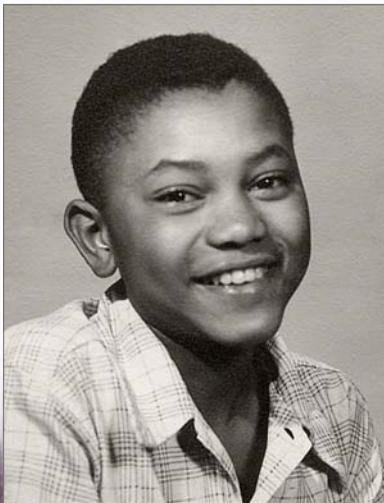
The town of Liberty was surrounded by small farms, and the basic crop was corn. When I was born, my father was working for one of the local farmers. As a teenager, I learned to drive a tractor and became familiar with other basic farming skills.

I never knew a young father. My father was 56 years old when I was born; my mother was 35. Nevertheless, my father was a lean, healthy, strong man who loved hard work and taught all of us kids to value it as well. He never made much money, but he kept a roof over our

heads, clothes on our backs, and food in our stomachs—and he was always there for us. He was 93 years old when he died. My mother died at the age of 86. Neither of them served Jehovah. Of my siblings, I have one brother who has served faithfully as an elder since that arrangement began back in the early 1970's.

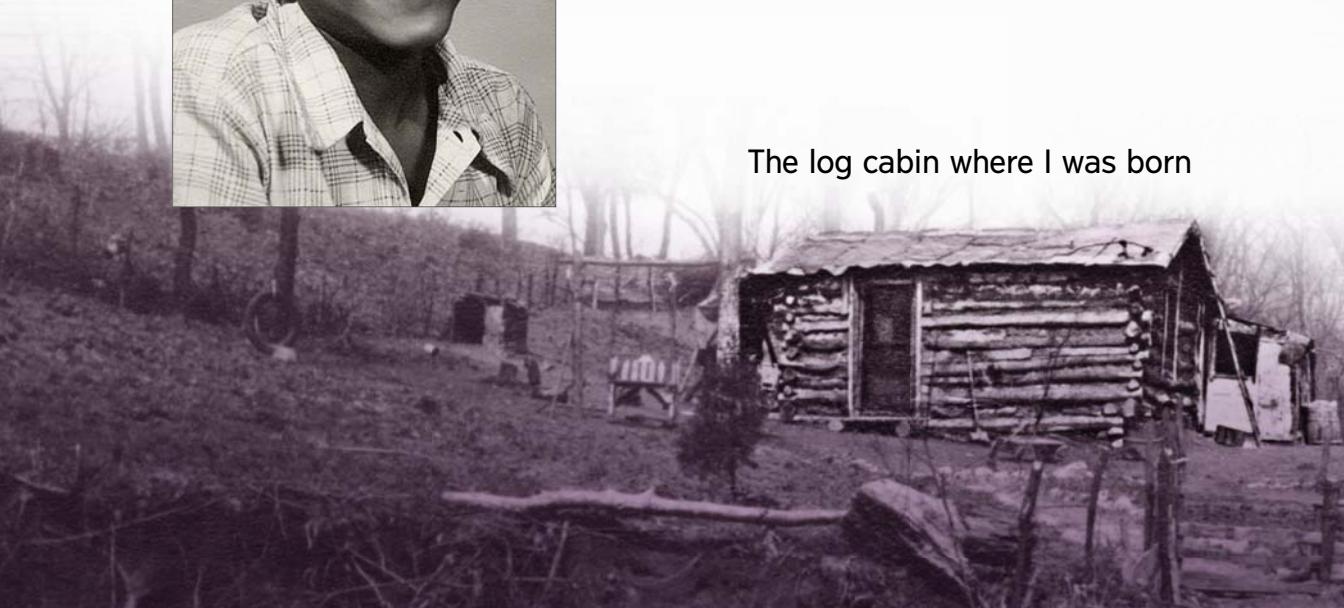
MY EARLY YEARS

My mother was very religious. She took us to the Baptist church every Sunday. When I was 12, I first heard about the Trinity. Curious, I asked my mom: “How can Jesus be both the Son and the Father at the same time?”



I was one of seven children,
and I learned a lot about farming
as a youth

The log cabin where I was born

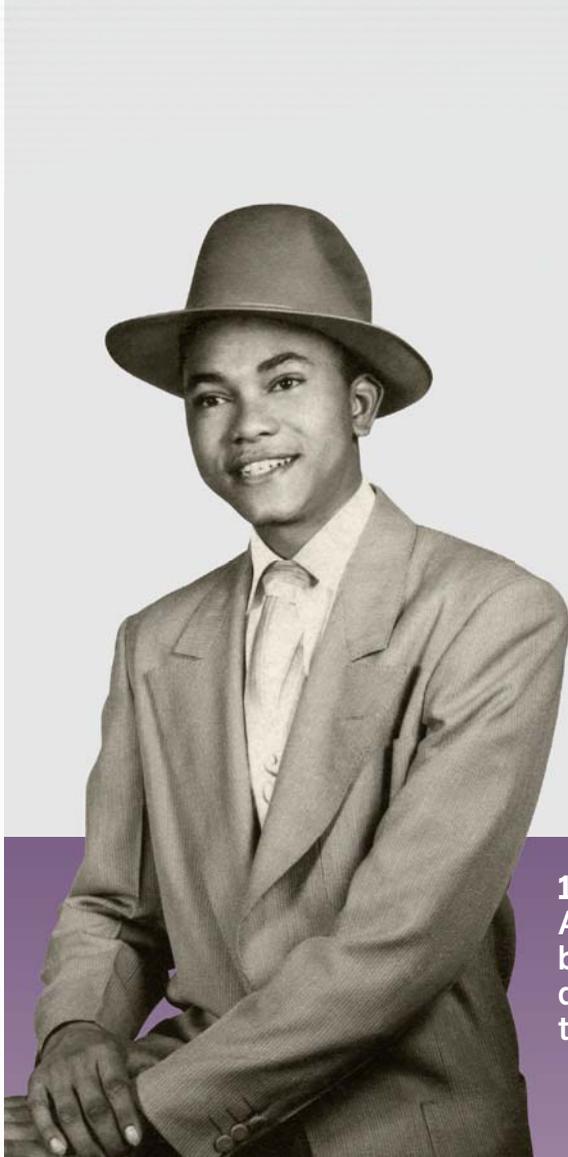


I remember her answer: “Son, it’s a mystery. We’re not meant to understand it.” It certainly was a mystery to me. Still, when I was about 14, I got baptized in a local creek—dipped three times for the Trinity!

While I was in high school, I had a friend who was a prizefighter, and he convinced me to try boxing. So I started training, and I enrolled in the Golden Gloves, a boxing organization. I wasn’t very good, so after a few bouts, I gave it up. Later, I was drafted into the U.S. Army and sent to Germany. While I was serving there, my superiors sent me to a Noncommissioned Officers Academy, thinking that I had natural leadership abilities. They wanted me to make the military my career. I had no desire to stay in the military service, so after finishing my service time of two years, I was honorably discharged in 1956. Before too long, though, I enrolled in a very different army.

A NEW LIFE BEGINS

Up to this point in my life, I had learned to be somewhat macho. The idea of what a man should be like, as presented in the movies and the social environment, influenced me a great deal. To my way of thinking, preachers were not manly enough. But I began to learn some things that turned my life around. One day, while I was driving my red convertible through town, two young women waved me over. I knew them—they were the younger sisters of the man who had married my older



1954-1956
I spent two years
in the U.S. Army

1952
At age 17,
before I was
drafted into
the army

sister. Anyway, these two girls were Jehovah's Witnesses. I had accepted the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines from them before, but I generally felt that *The Watchtower* was a bit too deep for my taste. This time, however, they invited me to come to a Congregation Book Study, a small meeting for Bible study and discussion

that was held in their home. I told them I would think about it. “Do you promise?” the smiling girls asked me. “I promise,” I said.

I had some regrets about making that promise, but I felt that I could not back out. So that night I went. The children impressed me the most. I couldn’t believe how much they knew about the Bible! After all those Sundays of churchgoing with my mother, I still had very little Bible knowledge. Now I was determined to learn more. I agreed to a Bible study. I learned early on that the personal name of God Almighty is Jehovah. Years before, when I asked my mother about Jehovah’s Witnesses, she simply said, “Oh, they worship some old man named Jehovah.” But I now felt that my eyes were being opened!

I made rapid progress, for I knew that I had found the truth. Within nine months of that first meeting, I got baptized—in March of 1957. My outlook on life changed. When I think about my old macho attitude, I am glad that I learned what the Bible teaches about real manliness. Jesus was a perfect man. He had strength and physical power that would make any ‘macho man’ pale in comparison. Yet, he did not get involved in fights, but “he let himself be afflicted,” just as was foretold. (Isa. 53:2, 7) I learned that a true follower of Jesus “needs to be gentle toward all.”—2 Tim. 2:24.

I started pioneering the next year, in 1958. Soon, though, I had to stop for a short time. Why? I had decided to take a bride—Gloria, one of those two young ladies

who had invited me to the book study! I have never regretted that decision. Gloria was a jewel then, and she is a jewel today. To me, she is like the Hope Diamond—but I don't have to hope in this case. I married her! Let her tell you a bit about herself:

“I was one of 17 children. My mom was a faithful Witness. She died when I was 14. That was when my dad began studying. With Mom gone, Dad made an arrangement with the school principal. My older sister was then a senior in high school, and Dad asked if she and I could go to school on alternate days. We would take turns so that one of us could be at home to take care of the younger children and have dinner ready for the family by the time Dad came home from work. The school principal approved, and that arrangement lasted until my sister graduated. Two Witness families studied with us, and 11 of us children grew up to be Jehovah's Witnesses. I enjoyed field service, even though I have always struggled with shyness. Sam has helped me with that over the years.”

Gloria and I got married in February of 1959. We enjoyed pioneering together. In July of that year, we applied for Bethel service, for we longed to serve at world headquarters. A dear brother, Simon Kraker, interviewed us. He told us that Bethel was not accepting married couples at that time. We never lost that desire to serve at Bethel—but it proved to be a long time in coming!

We wrote to world headquarters, asking to be sent to serve where the need was greater. In response, we were given just one choice: Pine Bluff, Arkansas. In those days, there were two congregations in Pine Bluff—one white and one “colored,” or black. We were sent to the “colored” congregation, which had only about 14 publishers.

COPING WITH SEGREGATION AND RACISM

You may be wondering why segregation would be practiced in congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses. And the answer, put simply, is that there was little choice back in those days. There were laws in place to make it illegal for the races to mix, and there was also the very real threat of violence. In many places, the brothers had good reason to fear that if the two races met together for worship, their Kingdom Hall would be destroyed. Such things did happen. If black Witnesses preached from door to door in a white neighborhood, they would be arrested—and likely beaten up. So in order to get the preaching work done, we obeyed the laws, hoping that things would change for the better.

Our ministry had its challenges. While we were working a black territory, we sometimes inadvertently knocked at a door of a white family. We had to determine quickly if we should try to give a short Scriptural presentation or just acknowledge our mistake and move on. In some places, that was how things were in those days.

Of course, we had to work hard secularly to support our pioneering. Most of our jobs paid three dollars a day. Gloria had a few housekeeping jobs. I was permitted to help her at one place so that she could get done in half the time. We were given lunch—a frozen prepackaged meal called a TV dinner that Gloria and I shared before leaving. Each week, Gloria did ironing for one family. I did yard work, washed windows, and cared for other odd jobs. In the home of one white family, we washed the windows—Gloria did it from the inside, and I did it from the outside. It took all day, so we were given lunch. Gloria ate inside the house but separate from the family, while I ate outside in the garage. I didn't mind. It was a very good meal. The family was nice; they were just locked into that system, that way of thinking. I remember one time when we stopped at a gas station. After filling up the tank of our car, I asked the attendant if Gloria could use the restroom. He just glared at me and said, "It's locked."

MEMORABLE ACTS OF KINDNESS

On the other hand, we had wonderful times with the brothers, and we loved our ministry! When we first arrived in Pine Bluff, we moved in with the brother who was the congregation servant at the time. His wife was then an unbeliever, and Gloria started a Bible study with her. Meanwhile, I started a study with the couple's

daughter and her husband. Mother and daughter both decided to serve Jehovah and got baptized.

We had dear friends in the white congregation. They would have us over for dinner, but they had to do so under the cover of darkness. The Ku Klux Klan (KKK), an organization that promotes racism and violence, was very active then. I remember seeing a man sitting on his front porch one Halloween night proudly wearing a white sheet and hood, as those in the KKK did. That kind of thing, though, did not stop the brothers from showing kindness. One summer, we needed funds in order to travel to the convention, and a brother agreed to buy our 1950 Ford in order to make it possible. One day, a month later, we were tired after walking from door to door in the summer heat and conducting Bible studies. Then we came home to a surprise. There was our car, parked in front of the house! A note on the windshield read: "You can have your car back as a gift from me. Your brother."

Another act of kindness made a lasting impression on me. In 1962, I was invited to attend the Kingdom Ministry School at South Lansing, New York. It was a full month of training for those with oversight of the congregations, circuits, and districts. When I got the invitation, though, I was unemployed and struggling financially. However, a telephone company in Pine Bluff had interviewed me for a job. If they hired me, I would be the first black man to work for that company. They final-

ly told me that they were going to hire me. What would I do? I had no money to travel to New York. I seriously thought about taking the job and turning down the invitation to the school. In fact, I was getting ready to write a letter declining the invitation when something happened that I will never forget.

A sister in our congregation, whose husband was an unbeliever, knocked on our door early one morning and handed me an envelope. It was full of money. She and several of her young children had been getting up very early in the morning to go out in the fields and chop cotton—removing the weeds growing between the rows—in order to earn enough money so that I could take the trip to New York. She said, “Go to school and learn as much as you can, and come back and teach us!” Later, I asked the telephone company if I could start working there five weeks later than planned. The answer was an emphatic, “No!” But it didn’t matter. I had made my decision. I am so glad that I did not take that job!

Here is how Gloria remembers our time in Pine Bluff: “I fell in love with the territory! I had 15 to 20 Bible studies. So we would go in the house-to-house work in the morning and then conduct Bible studies the rest of the day, sometimes until 11 o’clock at night. Service was so much fun! I would happily have stayed in that work. I have to admit that I did not really want to change my assignment and enter the circuit work, but Jehovah had something else in mind.” He certainly did.

LIFE IN THE TRAVELING WORK

While we were pioneering in Pine Bluff, we applied to become special pioneers. We had high hopes because our district overseer wanted us to help a congregation down in Texas, and he wanted us to go there as specials. The thought of such a change appealed to us. So we waited and waited, hoping for an answer from the Society, but we kept finding the mailbox empty. Finally, a letter came one day—we were assigned to the traveling work! That was January 1965. Brother Leon Weaver, now the coordinator of the United States Branch Committee, was appointed to serve as a circuit overseer at the same time.

I was nervous about becoming a circuit overseer. A year or so earlier, the district overseer, James A. Thompson, Jr., examined my qualifications. He kindly showed me a few areas in which I could improve, mentioning skills that a good circuit overseer needs. I had been in the circuit work for only a short time when I realized that his counsel was surely needed. After I was appointed, Brother Thompson was the first district overseer I served with. I learned a lot from that faithful spiritual brother.

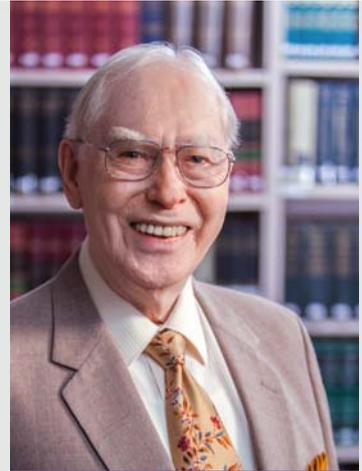
In those days, a circuit overseer received little training. I spent a week observing a circuit overseer as he visited one congregation. Then he spent the following week observing me as I visited another congregation. He offered suggestions and guidance. But after that we were



James A.
Thompson, Jr.



J.R.
Brown



Fred
Rusk

I cherish the help I received
from faithful spiritual brothers

on our own. I remember saying to Gloria, “Does he really have to leave now?” In time, though, I realized something important. There will always be good brothers who can help you—if you *let* them help you. I still cherish the help I received from such experienced brothers as J. R. Brown, then a traveling overseer, and Fred Rusk of the Bethel family.

Racism ran high in those days. One time, the KKK held a march in a town we were visiting in Tennessee. I remember another time when the service group stopped for a break at a fast-food restaurant. I went to use the men’s restroom, and I noticed that a very rough-looking character, tattooed like a white supremacist, got up and

followed me. But a white brother, far larger than either me or the rough-looking customer, came in after us. “Is everything all right, Brother Herd?” he asked me. The other customer left quickly without using the facilities. Over the years, I have seen that prejudice is not really about a person’s *skin*; it is about *sin*—the Adamic sin that infects us all. And I have learned that a brother is a brother regardless of skin color, and he will die for you if need be.

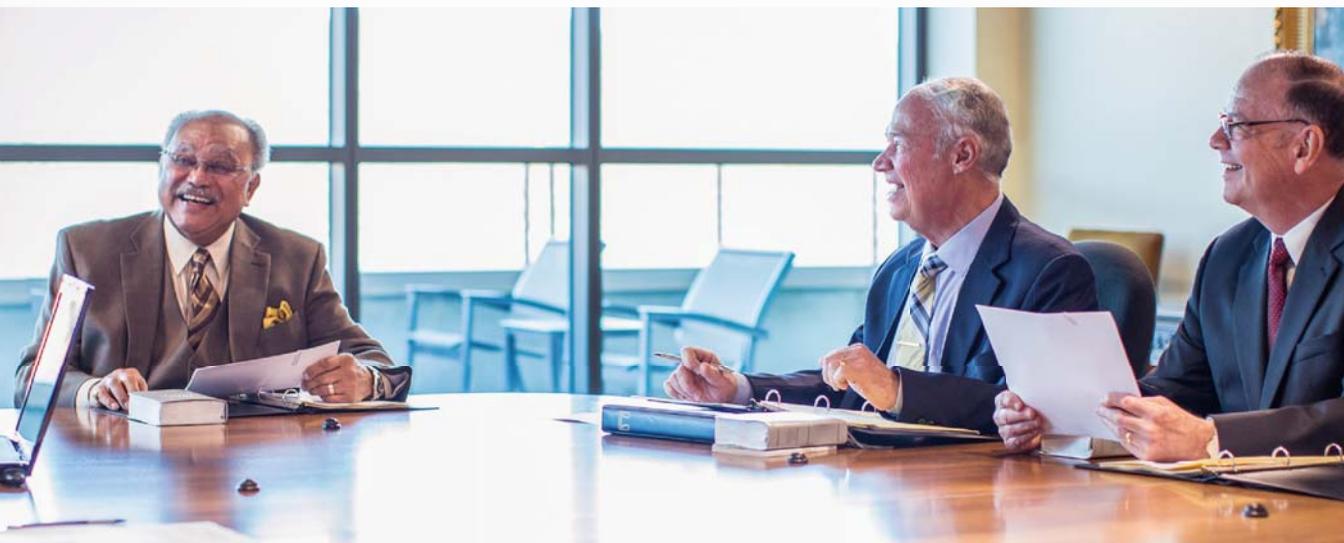
A RICH ENDING

We spent 33 years in the traveling work, the last 21 of those in the district work. They were rich, rewarding years, full of encouraging experiences. Another reward was on the way, though. In August 1997 our long-standing dream was realized. We were invited to serve at the United States Bethel—some 38 years after the first time we applied. The following month, we began our Bethel service. I assumed that the responsible brothers at Bethel only wanted me to help out temporarily, but that is not how things turned out.

I was first assigned to work in the Service Department. That was a learning experience. The brothers there have to deal with many sensitive and complex questions from elder bodies and circuit overseers around the country. I appreciated how patient and helpful the brothers were in training me. Nonetheless, I feel that if I were assigned to work there again, I would still be a novice.

Gloria and I love Bethel life. We have always been early risers, and that habit certainly helps at Bethel. After a year or so, I began serving as a helper to the Service Committee of the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Then in 1999, I was appointed to be a member of the Governing Body. I have learned many things in this assignment, but the foremost lesson has been how obvious it is that Jesus Christ—not any man—is the head of the Christian congregation.

Looking back on my life, I sometimes feel a bit like the prophet Amos. Jehovah took note of that humble shepherd who engaged in menial seasonal work as a nipper of sycamore figs—food considered fit only for the poor. God appointed Amos to be a prophet, certainly a



Since 1999, I have been privileged to serve on the Governing Body



Gloria was a jewel when I married her,
and she still is

spiritually rich assignment. (Amos 7:14, 15, ftn.) Similarly, Jehovah took note of me, the son of a poor farmer in Liberty, Indiana, and poured out rich blessings on me—too many even to mention! (Prov. 10:22) I certainly feel that my life may have had a poor start materially, but the ending is spiritually rich, far richer than I could ever have imagined!



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