

- Song 126 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Remain Spiritually Awake During the Last Days”:** (10 min.)
 Mt 24:12—Increased lawlessness will cause people’s love to grow cold (*it-2* 279 ¶6)
 Mt 24:39—Normal pursuits of life will become the chief concern of some and cause them to be distracted (*w99* 11/15 19 ¶5)
 Mt 24:44—The Master will come at an unexpected time (*gy* 259 ¶5)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Mt 24:8—What may Jesus’ wording suggest? (*nwtsty* study note)

Mt 24:20—Why did Jesus say this? (*nwtsty* study note)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Mt 24:1-22

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. The person raises an objection that is common in your territory.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. The person you spoke with before is not at home, but a relative comes to the door.
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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 57
- **“Close to the End of This System of Things”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video (video category FROM OUR STUDIO).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *gy* chap. 13
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
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MATTHEW 24 | Remain Spiritually Awake During the Last Days



24:39

Most people today have allowed the normal pursuits of life to crowd out spiritual pursuits. How do spiritually awake Christians differ from the world in the way they view . . .



- secular education?



- recreation?



- employment?



- material things?

126 *Stay Awake, Stand Firm, Grow Mighty*

(1 Corinthians 16:13)

1. Stay awake, stand firm, grow mighty,
Be determined to endure.
Carry on with manly courage,
For the victory is sure.
We obey Christ Jesus' clear command;
Under him we firmly take our stand.

(CHORUS)

*Stay awake, stand firm, and grow mighty!
Carry on right to the end!*

2. Stay awake, and keep your senses,
Always ready to obey.
Stay alert to Christ's direction
Through his faithful slave today.
Heed the counsel of the older men,
Who protect his sheep and truth defend.

(Chorus)

3. Stay awake, remain united
As the good news we defend.
Though our enemies will fight it,
We will preach until the end.
Join the shout of praise throughout the land.
Look! Jehovah's day is soon at hand!

(Chorus)

37 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the killer of the prophets and stoner of those sent to her^a—how often I wanted to gather your children together the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings! But you did not want it.^b **38** Look! Your house is abandoned to you.^{*c} **39** For I say to you, you will by no means see me from now until you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in Jehovah’s* name!’”^d

24 Now as Jesus was departing from the temple, his disciples approached to show him the buildings of the temple. **2** In response he said to them: “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, by no means will a stone be left here upon a stone and not be thrown down.”^e

3 While he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him privately, saying: “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence^{*f} and of the conclusion of the system of things?”^{#g}

4 In answer Jesus said to them: “Look out that nobody misleads you,^h **5** for many will come on the basis of my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.ⁱ **6** You are going to hear of wars and reports of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for these things must take place, but the end is not yet.^j

7 “For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom,^k and there will be food shortages^l and earthquakes in one place after another.^m **8** All these things are a beginning of pangs of distress.

9 “Then people will hand you over to tribulationⁿ and will kill

23:38 *Or possibly, “is left to you desolate.” **23:39** *See App. A5. **24:3** #Or “the age.” See Glossary.

you,^a and you will be hated by all the nations on account of my name.^b **10** Then, too, many will be stumbled and will betray one another and will hate one another. **11** Many false prophets will arise and mislead many;^c **12** and because of the increasing of lawlessness, the love of the greater number will grow cold. **13** But the one who has endured* to the end will be saved.^d **14** And this good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations,^e and then the end will come.

15 "Therefore, when you catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation, as spoken about by Daniel the prophet, standing in a holy place^f (let the reader use discernment), **16** then let those in Ju·de'a begin fleeing to the mountains.^g **17** Let the man on the housetop not come down to take the goods out of his house, **18** and let the man in the field not return to pick up his outer garment. **19** Woe to the pregnant women and those nursing a baby in those days! **20** Keep praying that your flight may not occur in wintertime nor on the Sabbath day; **21** for then there will be great tribulation^h such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again.ⁱ **22** In fact, unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short.^j

23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look! Here is the Christ,'^k or, 'There!' do not believe it.^l **24** For false Christs and false prophets^m will arise and will perform great signs and wonders so as to mislead,ⁿ if possible, even the chosen ones.

24:13 *Or "who endures."

MATTHEW 24:10-38

25 Look! I have forewarned you. **26** Therefore, if people say to you, 'Look! He is in the wilderness,' do not go out; 'Look! He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it.^a **27** For just as the lightning comes out of the east and shines over to the west, so the presence* of the Son of man will be.^b **28** Wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.^c

29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened,^d and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.^e **30** Then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in grief,^f and they will see the Son of man^g coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.^h **31** And he will send out his angels with a great trumpet sound, and they will gather his chosen ones together from the four winds, from one extremity of the heavens to their other extremity.ⁱ

32 "Now learn this illustration from the fig tree: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and sprouts its leaves, you know that summer is near.^j

33 Likewise also you, when you see all these things, know that he is near at the doors.^k

34 Truly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things happen. **35** Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.^l

36 "Concerning that day and hour nobody knows,^m neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.ⁿ

37 For just as the days of Noah were,^o so the presence* of the Son of man will be.^p **38** For as

24:27, 37 *See Glossary.

MATTHEW 24:39–25:16

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,^a **39** and they took no note until the Flood came and swept them all away,^b so the presence of the Son of man will be. **40** Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken along and the other abandoned. **41** Two women will be grinding at the hand mill; one will be taken along and the other abandoned.^c **42** Keep on the watch, therefore, because you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.^d

43 “But know one thing: If the householder had known in what watch* the thief was coming,^e he would have kept awake and not allowed his house to be broken into.^f **44** On this account, you too prove yourselves ready,^g because the Son of man is coming at an hour that you do not think to be it.

45 “Who really is the faithful and discreet* slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time?^h **46** Happy is that slave if his master on coming finds him doing so!ⁱ **47** Truly I say to you, he will appoint him over all his belongings.

48 “But if ever that evil slave says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying,’^j **49** and he starts to beat his fellow slaves and to eat and drink with the confirmed drunkards, **50** the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect and in an hour that he does not know,^k **51** and he will punish him with the greatest severity and will assign him his place with the hypocrites. There is where his weep-

24:43 *Or “at what time of night.”
24:45; 25:2 *Or “wise.”

ing and the gnashing of his teeth will be.^a

25 “Then the Kingdom of the heavens may be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps^b and went out to meet the bridegroom.^c **2** Five of them were foolish, and five were discreet.^{*d} **3** For the foolish took their lamps but took no oil with them, **4** whereas the discreet took oil in their flasks along with their lamps. **5** While the bridegroom was delaying, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. **6** Right in the middle of the night there was a shout: ‘Here is the bridegroom! Go out to meet him.’ **7** Then all those virgins got up and put their lamps in order.^e **8** The foolish said to the discreet, ‘Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are about to go out.’ **9** The discreet answered, saying: ‘Perhaps there may not be enough for both us and you. Go instead to those who sell it, and buy some for yourselves.’ **10** While they were going off to buy it, the bridegroom came. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast,^f and the door was shut. **11** Afterward, the rest of the virgins also came, saying, ‘Sir, Sir, open to us!’^g **12** In answer he said, ‘I tell you the truth, I do not know you.’

13 “Keep on the watch,^h therefore, because you know neither the day nor the hour.ⁱ

14 “For it is just like a man about to travel abroad who summoned his slaves and entrusted his belongings to them.^j **15** He gave five talents* to one, two to another, and one to still another, to each according to his own ability, and he went abroad. **16** Immediately the one who re-

25:15 *A Greek talent equaled 20.4 kg (654 oz t). See App. B14.

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March 19-25

Treasures From God's Word

Matthew 24:12—Increased lawlessness will cause people's love to grow cold (*it-2* 279 paragraph 6)

One's Love Can Cool Off. Jesus Christ, in telling his disciples of the things ahead, indicated that the love (aga'pe) of many who professed belief in God would cool off. (Matthew 24:3, 12) The apostle Paul said that, as a feature of the critical times to come, men would become "lovers of money." (2 Timothy 3:1, 2) It is evident, therefore, that a person can lose sight of right principles and that the proper love he once had can fade away. This emphasizes the importance of constant exercise and development of love by meditation on God's Word and by molding one's life according to His principles.—Ephesians 4:15, 22-24.

Matthew 24:39—Normal pursuits of life will become the chief concern of some and cause them to be distracted (*w99* 11/15 19 paragraph 5)

Jesus Christ said of our critical times: "Just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be. 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." (Matthew 24:37-39) In moderation, there is nothing wrong with eating and drinking, and marriage is an arrangement originated by God himself. (Genesis 2:20-24) Yet, if we realize that the normal pursuits of life have become our chief concern, why not make this a matter of prayer? Jehovah can help us to keep Kingdom interests first, do what is right, and fulfill our obligation to him.—Matthew 6:33; Romans 12:12; 2 Corinthians 13:7.

Matthew 24:44—The Master will come at an unexpected time (*gy* 259 paragraph 5)

He says that his disciples will need to keep alert, to be on the watch, and to be ready. Jesus underscores this warning with another illustration: “Know one thing: If the householder had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have kept awake and not allowed his house to be broken into. On this account, you too prove yourselves ready, because the Son of man is coming at an hour that you do not think to be it.”—Matthew 24:43, 44.

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 minutes)

Matthew 24:8—What may Jesus’ wording suggest? (*nwtsty* study note)

pangs of distress: The Greek word literally refers to the intense pain experienced during childbirth. While it is used here to refer to distress, pain, and suffering in a general sense, it may suggest that like birth pains the foretold troubles and suffering will increase in frequency, intensity, and duration in the time period before the great tribulation mentioned at Matthew 24:21.

Matthew 24:20—Why did Jesus say this? (*nwtsty* study note)

in wintertime: Heavy rains, flooding, and cold weather during this season would make it difficult to travel and difficult to find food and shelter.—Ezra 10:9, 13.

on the Sabbath day: In territories like Judea, restrictions associated with Sabbath law would make it difficult for a person to journey great distances and to carry loads; also, city gates remained closed during the Sabbath day.—See Acts 1:12 and Appendix B12.

MATTHEW

Study Notes—Chapter 24

24:2

Truly: See study note on Mt 5:18.

by no means will a stone be left here upon a stone: Jesus' prophecy was remarkably fulfilled in 70 C.E. when the Romans demolished Jerusalem and, apart from a few sections of the wall, completely leveled it.

24:3

Mount of Olives: Located E of Jerusalem and separated from the city by the Kidron Valley. From this vantage point, Jesus and his disciples "Peter, James, John, and Andrew" (Mr 13:3, 4) could view the city and its temple.

presence: The Greek word *pa·rou·si'a* (in many translations rendered "coming") literally means "being alongside." It refers to a presence covering a period of time rather than simply a coming or an arrival. This meaning of *pa·rou·si'a* is indicated at Mt 24:37-39, where "the days of Noah . . . before the Flood" are compared to "the presence of the Son of man." At Php 2:12, Paul used this Greek word to describe his "presence" in contrast to his "absence."

conclusion: Rendered from the Greek word *syn·te'lei-a*, meaning "joint end; combination end; ending together." (Mt 13:39, 40, 49; 28:20; Heb 9:26) This refers to a time period during which a combination of events would lead to the complete "end" mentioned at Mt 24:6, 14, where a different Greek word, *te'los*, is used.—See study notes on Mt 24:6, 14 and Glossary, "Conclusion of the system of things."

the system of things: Or "the age." Here the Greek word *ai-on'* refers to the current state of affairs or features that distinguish a

certain period of time, epoch, or age.—See Glossary, “System(s) of things.”

24:5

the Christ: Greek, *ho Khri-stos*'. The title “the Christ” is equivalent to “the Messiah” (from Hebrew *Ma-shi'ach*), both meaning “Anointed One.” Jewish historian Josephus indicates that in the first century C.E., some who claimed to be prophets or liberators arose, promising relief from Roman oppression. These may have been viewed by their followers as political Messiahs.

24:6

end: Or “complete end.” The Greek word used here (*te'los*) is different from the Greek word rendered “conclusion” (*syn-te'lei-a*) at Mt 24:3.—See study note on Mt 24:3 and Glossary, “Conclusion of the system of things.”

24:7

nation: The Greek word *e'thnos* has a broad meaning and can refer to people living within certain political or geographical boundaries, such as a country, but can also refer to an ethnic group.—See study note on Mt 24:14.

rise: Or “be stirred up; be roused up.” Here the Greek word conveys the idea “to move against in hostility” and could also be rendered “rise up in arms” or “go to war.”

24:8

pangs of distress: The Greek word literally refers to the intense pain experienced during childbirth. While it is used here to refer to distress, pain, and suffering in a general sense, it may suggest that like birth pains the foretold troubles and suffering will increase in frequency, intensity, and duration in the time period before the great tribulation mentioned at Mt 24:21.

24:12

lawlessness: The Greek word rendered “lawlessness” includes the idea of violation of and contempt for laws, people acting as if there were no laws. As used in the Bible, it suggests disregard for God’s laws.—Mt 7:23; 2Co 6:14; 2Th 2:3-7; 1Jo 3:4.

the greater number: Referring not just to “many” in a general sense as some Bibles render this but to “the majority” of those who have been influenced by “false prophets” and “lawlessness,” as mentioned at Mt 24:11, 12.

24:13

has endured: Or “endures.” The Greek verb rendered “to endure” (*hy-po-me'no*) literally means “to remain (stay) under.” It is often used in the sense of “remaining instead of fleeing; standing one’s ground; persevering; remaining steadfast.” (Mt 10:22; Ro 12:12; Heb 10:32; Jas 5:11) In this context, it refers to maintaining a course of action as Christ’s disciples despite opposition and trials.—Mt 24:9-12.

end: See study notes on Mt 24:6, 14.

24:14

this good news: The Greek word *eu-ag-ge'li-on* is derived from the words *eu*, meaning “good; well” and *ag-gel'los*, “one who brings news; one who proclaims (announces).” (See Glossary.) It is rendered “gospel” in some English Bibles. The related expression rendered “evangelizer” (Greek, *eu-ag-ge-li-stes*) means “a proclaimer of good news.”—Ac 21:8; Eph 4:11, ftn.; 2Ti 4:5, ftn.

the Kingdom: That is, God’s Kingdom. Throughout the Christian Greek Scriptures, the “good news” (see preceding study note on **this good news** in this verse) is closely linked with God’s Kingdom, the theme of Jesus’ preaching and teaching work.—See study notes on Mt 3:2; 4:23; Lu 4:43.

preached: Or “publicly proclaimed.”—See study note on Mt 3:1.

all the inhabited earth . . . all the nations: Both expressions emphasize the scope of the preaching work. In a broad sense, the Greek word for “inhabited earth” (*oi-kou-me'ne*) refers to the earth as the dwelling place of mankind. (Lu 4:5; Ac 17:31; Ro 10:18; Re 12:9; 16:14) In the first century, this term was also used in reference to the vast Roman Empire where the Jews had been dispersed. (Lu 2:1; Ac 24:5) In its general sense, the Greek word for “nation” (*e'thnos*) refers to a group of people who are more or less related to one another by blood and who have a common language. Such a national or ethnic group often occupies a defined geographic territory.

end: Or “complete end; final end.”—See study notes on Mt 24:3, 6.

24:15

holy place: Referring in the initial fulfillment of this prophecy to Jerusalem with its temple.—See study note on Mt 4:5.

24:16

Judea: That is, the Roman province of Judea.

to the mountains: According to fourth-century historian Eusebius, Christians in Judea and Jerusalem fled across the Jordan River to Pella, a city in a mountainous region of the Decapolis.

24:17

on the housetop: The roofs of Israelite houses were flat and were used for many purposes, including storage (Jos 2:6), rest (2Sa 11:2), sleep (1Sa 9:26), and festivals for worship (Ne 8:16-18). That is why a parapet was required. (De 22:8) Generally, an external stairway or ladder allowed a householder to leave the

rooftop without having to enter the house, which helps us understand the urgency of Jesus' warning to flee.

24:20

in wintertime: Heavy rains, flooding, and cold weather during this season would make it difficult to travel and difficult to find food and shelter.—Ezr 10:9, 13.

on the Sabbath day: In territories like Judea, restrictions associated with Sabbath law would make it difficult for a person to journey great distances and to carry loads; also, city gates remained closed during the Sabbath day.—See Ac 1:12 and App. B12.

24:24

false Christs: Or “false Messiahs.” The Greek word *pseu·do'khri·stos* occurs only here and in the parallel account at Mr 13:22. It refers to anyone who wrongly assumes the role of the Christ, or the Messiah (lit., “Anointed One”).—See study note on Mt 24:5.

24:25

Look!: See study note on Mt 1:20.

24:27

presence: See study note on Mt 24:3.

Son of man: See study note on Mt 8:20.

24:30

beat themselves in grief: Or “mourn.” A person repeatedly beat his hands against his chest to express extreme grief or feelings of guilt and remorse.—Isa 32:12; Na 2:7; Lu 23:48.

see: The Greek verb rendered “see” can literally mean to “see an object; look at; behold,” but it can also be used metaphorically, of mental sight, meaning “to discern; perceive.”—Eph 1:18.

the clouds of heaven: Clouds tend to obstruct vision rather than facilitate it, but observers can “see” with eyes of understanding.—Ac 1:9.

24:31

the four winds: An idiom referring to the four directions of the compass—E, W, N, and S—thus indicating “all directions; everywhere.”—Jer 49:36; Eze 37:9; Da 8:8.

24:32

illustration: Or “parable; lesson.”—See study note on Mt 13:3.

24:35

Heaven and earth will pass away: Other scriptures show that heaven and earth will endure forever. (Ge 9:16; Ps 104:5; Ec 1:4) So Jesus’ words here could be understood as hyperbole, meaning that even if the impossible happened and heaven and earth *did* pass away, Jesus’ words would still be fulfilled. (Compare Mt 5:18.) However, the heaven and earth here may well refer to the figurative heavens and earth that are called “the former heaven and the former earth” at Re 21:1.

my words will by no means pass away: Or “my words will certainly not pass away.” The use of two Greek negatives with the verb emphatically expresses rejection of an idea, vividly emphasizing the permanence of Jesus’ words.

24:37

presence: See study note on Mt 24:3.

24:38

Flood: Or “deluge; cataclysm.” The Greek word *ka·ta·kly·smos*’ denotes a large flood with destructive force, and the Bible uses the word with reference to the Deluge of Noah’s day.—Mt 24:39; Lu 17:27; 2Pe 2:5.

ark: The Greek term can also be rendered “chest; box,” perhaps to denote that it was a large boxlike structure. In the *Vulgate*, this Greek word is rendered *arca*, meaning “box; chest,” from which the English term “ark” is derived.

24:42

Keep on the watch: The Greek term has the basic meaning “stay (keep) awake,” but in many contexts it means “be on guard; be watchful.” Matthew uses this term at Mt 24:43; 25:13; 26:38, 40, 41. At Mt 24:44, he connects it with the need to be “ready.”—See study note on Mt 26:38.

24:45

discreet: The Greek word used here conveys the idea of understanding associated with insight, forethought, discernment, prudence, and wisdom in a practical sense. The same Greek word is used at Mt 7:24 and 25:2, 4, 8, 9. The *Septuagint* uses this word at Ge 41:33, 39 regarding Joseph.

his domestics: Or “his household servants.” The term applies to all individuals who work in the master’s household.

24:51

punish him with the greatest severity: Lit., “cut him in two.” This graphic expression is evidently not to be understood literally; rather, it conveys the idea of severe punishment.

hypocrites: See study note on Mt 6:2.

gnashing of his teeth: See study note on Mt 8:12.

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57 *Preaching to All Sorts of People*

(1 Timothy 2:4)

1. We really want to imitate our God,
To be impartial, as we know he is.
To save all sorts of people is his will;
He welcomes all to come and to be his.

(CHORUS)

It's the person, not the place;

It's the heart and not the face.

God's message to all people we extend.

So because we really care,

We keep preaching ev'rywhere:

"All sorts of people can become God's friend."

2. It doesn't matter where they may be found
Or what at first they might appear to be.
What really counts is what they are at heart—
The inner self, the one Jehovah sees.

(Chorus)

3. Jehovah welcomes all who make the choice
To leave the world and all its ways behind.
This we have learned, and this we want to share,
And so we preach to people of all kinds.

(Chorus)

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- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Mt 24:1-22

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. The person raises an objection that is common in your territory.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. The person you spoke with before is not at home, but a relative comes to the door.
- **Second Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 57
- **“Close to the End of This System of Things”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video (video category FROM OUR STUDIO).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *gy* chap. 13
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 97 and Prayer

MATTHEW 24 | Remain Spiritually Awake During the Last Days

24:39

Most people today have allowed the normal pursuits of life to crowd out spiritual pursuits. How do spiritually awake Christians differ from the world in the way they view . . .



- secular education?



- recreation?



- employment?



- material things?



Close to the End of This System of Things

Watch the video *Close to the End of This System of Things*, and then answer the following questions regarding Matthew 24:34.



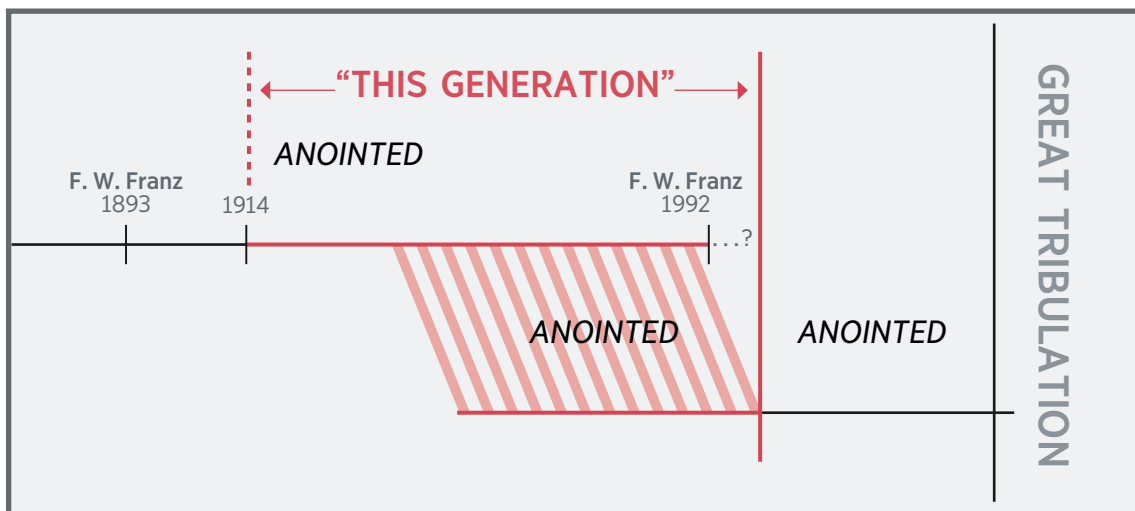
- What are “all these things”?

- How does Exodus 1:6 help us to understand the meaning of “generation”?

- To what particular generation was Jesus referring?

- What two groups make up “this generation”?

- How do Jesus’ words indicate that we are living deep in the time of the end?



13

LEARN FROM THE WAY JESUS FACED TEMPTATIONS

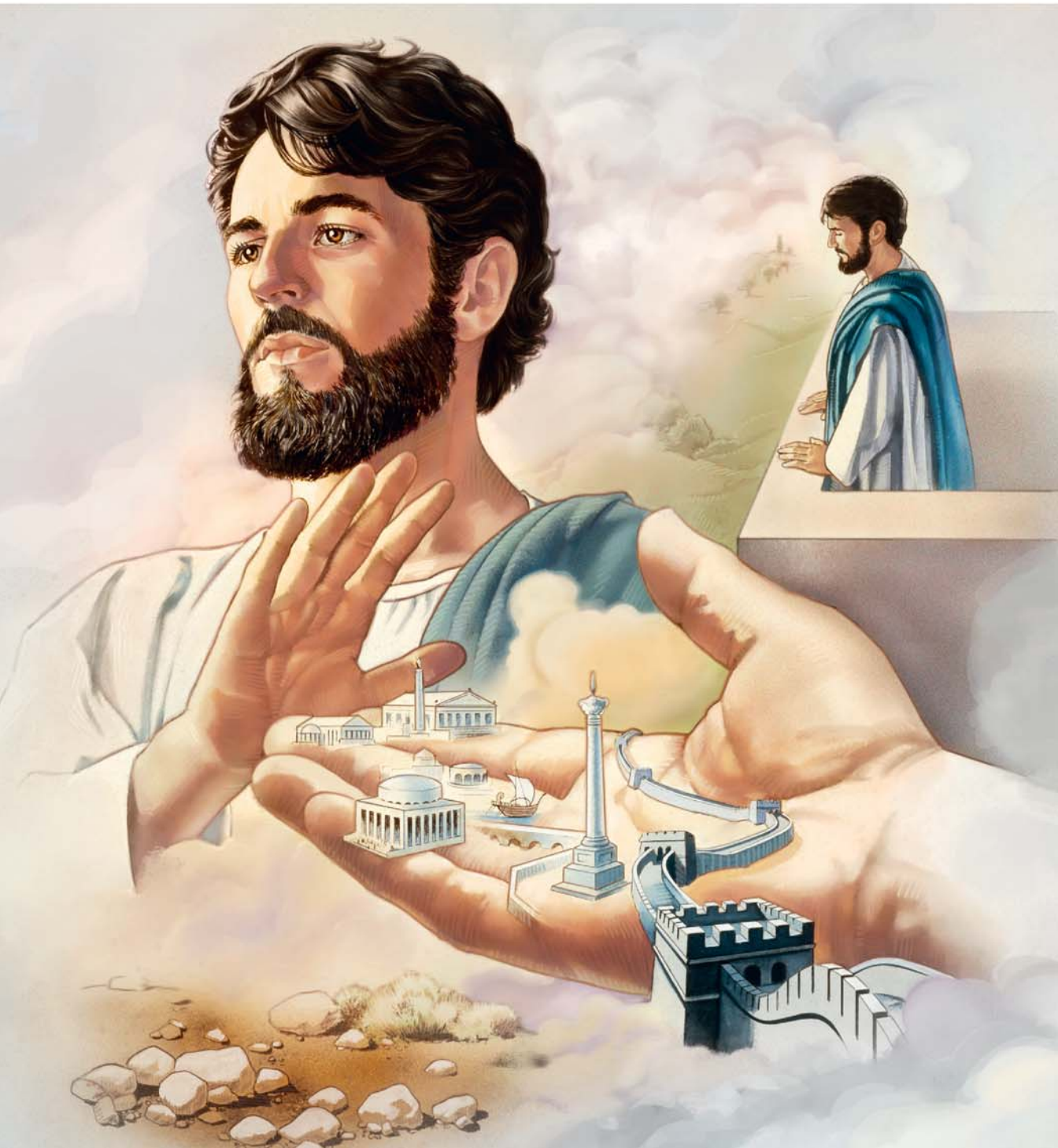
MATTHEW 4:1-11 MARK 1:12, 13 LUKE 4:1-13

- SATAN TEMPTS JESUS

Right after Jesus is baptized by John, God’s spirit leads Jesus into the Judean wilderness. He has a lot to think about. At Jesus’ baptism, “the heavens were opened up.” (Matthew 3:16) He thus can recall things he learned and did in heaven. Indeed, there is much for him to meditate on!

Jesus spends 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness. During that time, he eats nothing. Then, when Jesus is very hungry, Satan the Devil approaches to tempt him, saying: “If you are a son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.” (Matthew 4:3) Knowing that it is wrong to use his miraculous powers to satisfy his personal desires, Jesus rejects that temptation.

The Devil does not stop there. He tries another approach. He challenges Jesus to throw himself off



the temple battlement. But Jesus is not tempted to make such a spectacular display. Quoting from the Scriptures, Jesus shows that it is wrong to put God to the test in such a way.

Then, in a third temptation, the Devil in some way shows Jesus “all the kingdoms of the world and their glory” and says: “All these things I will give you if you fall down and do an act of worship to me.” Again Jesus flatly refuses, saying: “Go away, Satan!” (Matthew 4:8-10) He does not yield to temptation to do wrong, knowing that sacred service must be rendered only to Jehovah. Yes, he chooses to remain faithful to God.

We can learn from these temptations and from Jesus’ response to them. The temptations were real, which shows that the Devil is not a mere quality of evil as some people claim. He is a real, invisible person. This account also shows that the world’s governments actually are the Devil’s property; he controls them. How else could his offering them to Christ have been a real temptation?

Furthermore, the Devil said that he was willing to reward Jesus for one act of worship, to the extent

of giving Jesus *all the kingdoms of the world*. The Devil may well try to tempt us in a similar way, perhaps placing before us tantalizing opportunities to obtain worldly wealth, power, or position. How wise we prove to be when we follow Jesus' example by remaining faithful to God whatever the temptation is! But recall that the Devil left Jesus only "until another convenient time." (Luke 4:13) It may be similar with us, so we must not let our guard down.

- ◇ What things might Jesus meditate on during his 40 days in the wilderness?
- ◇ In what ways does the Devil try to tempt Jesus?
- ◇ What can we learn from the temptations and from Jesus' response to them?

97 *Life Depends on God's Word*

(Matthew 4:4)

1. Life depends on Jehovah's Word,
All the things he has said.
We must live not on bread alone;
Live by his Word instead.
Even now we have peace and joy,
Future blessings assured.

(CHORUS)

*Man must live not on bread alone;
Life depends on God's Word.
There we find what we daily need;
Life depends on God's Word.*

2. True accounts in God's written Word
Tell about those of old.
Men and women who walked in faith—
They were loyal and bold.
We're encouraged each time we read
All they did and endured.

(Chorus)

3. Day by day as we read God's Word,
He gives comfort and hope.
When the trials of life arise,
He gives wisdom to cope.
May we treasure within our heart
All we've read and we've heard.

(Chorus)

JANUARY 2018

THE  **WATCHTOWER**
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
FEBRUARY 26–APRIL 1, 2018

**LARGE
PRINT
EDITION**



COVER IMAGE:

BOLIVIA

At Riberalta, Beni, two pioneer couples load literature onto an airplane. They are going to a remote area of the country to preach

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4 WEEK OF FEBRUARY 26–MARCH 4

“He Gives Power to the Tired One”

When we feel overwhelmed by the pressures of life, what can we do? This article discusses our yeartext for 2018 and shows why we need to give Jehovah the opportunity to strengthen us and how he will do so.

16 WEEK OF MARCH 5-11

Pleasant Unity and the Memorial

The annual observance of the Memorial of Christ’s death will be held on Saturday, March 31, 2018. How can we prepare now for this occasion, how will we benefit from attending it, and how does that annual event contribute to the unity of God’s people everywhere? Find the answers in this article.

PUBLISHERS

26,081

BIBLE STUDIES

42,568

MEMORIAL

ATTENDANCE (2016)

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Unless otherwise indicated,
Scripture quotations are
from the modern-language
New World Translation
of the Holy Scriptures.

28 WEEK OF MARCH 12-18

Why Give to the One Who Has Everything?

All that we have comes from Jehovah. He still expects us, however, to use our finances to support the work of his organization today. This article will consider why and how we benefit from honoring Jehovah with our valuable things.

40 WEEK OF MARCH 19-25

What Kind of Love Brings True Happiness?

52 WEEK OF MARCH 26-APRIL 1

See the Difference in People

The first of these articles discusses how true happiness comes from loving God and not from the counterfeit types of love so evident in “the last days.” (2 Tim. 3:1) The second article describes how traits that characterize people of the last days stand in sharp contrast with the qualities found among God’s people.

Our Reasons for Joy

(Matthew 5:12)

1. Our reasons for joy are abundant,
Like riches increasing in worth.
Those precious to God from all nations
Are joining us in all the earth.
The joy in our heart is well-founded,
With roots reaching deep in God's Word.
We daily partake of its teachings;
Faith follows the things we have heard.
Our causes for joy are deep-seated,
Like embers that burn in our hearts.
Though troubles and trials beset us,
Endurance Jehovah imparts.

(CHORUS)

*Jehovah our God is our joy,
The work of his hands our delight.
How deep are his thoughts, how great are his works,
Abounding in goodness and might!*

2. We gladly behold his productions,
The heavens, the sea, and the land.
We gaze at the book of creation,
Applauding the work of his hands.
Triumphantly we now bear witness,
Proclaiming the Kingdom of God.
The news of its birth and its blessings,
We joyously spread all abroad.
Eternal rejoicing approaches,
Like daylight that follows the night.
The promised new earth and new heavens
Will bring everlasting delight.

(Chorus)



SONGS:
111, 109

**HOW WOULD YOU
ANSWER?**

How can we avoid loving ourselves excessively?

Why are lovers of money not truly happy?

How might we evaluate our pursuit of pleasure?

What Kind of Love Brings True Happiness?

“Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!”—PS. 144:15.

WE LIVE in a time of human history that is truly unique. As the Bible foretold, Jehovah is gathering “a great crowd . . . out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.” Those gathered constitute “a mighty nation” of

1. Why is the time that we live in unique?

more than eight million happy people who “are rendering [God] sacred service day and night.” (Rev. 7:9, 15; Isa. 60:22) Never before have there been so many who have come to love both God and their fellow man.

² Yet, the inspired Scriptures also foretold that in our day, a misdirected kind of love characterized by selfishness would be shown by people who are alienated from God. The apostle Paul wrote: “In the last days . . . , men will be *lovers of themselves, lovers of money, . . . lovers of pleasures* rather than lovers of God.” (2 Tim. 3:1-4) This self-centered kind of love is inconsistent with Christian love; it stands in contrast with it. Pursuing selfish goals does not bring people the happiness that they expect. Indeed, such love fosters a selfish world that is “hard to deal with.”

³ Paul recognized that widespread, selfish love would pose dangers for Christians. Hence, he gave the warning to “turn away” from those whose love is misdirected. (2 Tim. 3:5) However, we cannot avoid all contact with such people. So how can we turn away from the worldly attitudes that surround

2. What misdirected kind of love characterizes people who are alienated from God? (See opening picture.)

3. What will we analyze in this article, and why?

us and strive to please Jehovah, the God of love? Let us contrast godly love with the love described at 2 Timothy 3:2-4. Doing so will help us evaluate and refine the love that we should show, the kind of love that brings true satisfaction and happiness.

LOVE OF GOD OR LOVE OF SELF?

⁴ “*Men will be lovers of themselves,*” wrote the inspired apostle. Is it wrong for us to love ourselves? No, it is normal, even necessary, to have a healthy love of self. Jehovah designed us that way. Jesus said: “You must love your neighbor *as yourself.*” (Mark 12:31) If we do not love ourselves, we cannot love our neighbor. We also read in the Scriptures: “Husbands should love their wives *as their own bodies.* A man who loves his wife loves *himself,* for no man ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cherishes it.” (Eph. 5:28, 29) So a proper love of self is desirable.

⁵ The love of self mentioned at 2 Timothy 3:2 is not a normal, healthy love. It is a distorted, selfish love. People who love themselves excessively think more of themselves than it is necessary for them

4. Why is it not wrong to have a balanced love of self?

5. How would you describe those who have an excessive love of self?

to think. (Read Romans 12:3.) Their main interest in life is themselves. They care little about others. When things go wrong, they tend to blame others rather than accept responsibility. One Bible commentary likens those who are lovers of themselves to “the hedgehog which . . . rolls itself up in a ball, keeping the soft, warm wool for itself . . . and . . . presents the sharp spines to those without.” Such self-centered people are not truly happy.

⁶ Bible scholars suggest that love of self is put at the top of the apostle Paul’s list of negative qualities that would be prevalent during the last days because the other qualities result from it. In contrast, people who love God produce a much different kind of fruitage. The Bible associates godly love with joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, and self-control. (Gal. 5:22, 23) “Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!” wrote the psalmist. (Ps. 144:15) Jehovah is a happy God, and his people reflect that quality. Furthermore, unlike those who are lovers of themselves and who are interested only in receiving, Jehovah’s servants find delight in giving of themselves for the welfare of others.—Acts 20:35.

6. What results come from a love of God?

⁷ How can we determine if our love of God is being eclipsed by love of self? Consider the admonition found at Philippians 2:3, 4: “Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with humility consider others superior to you, as you look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others.” We might ask ourselves: ‘Do I apply that counsel in my life? Am I genuinely seeking to do God’s will? Do I reach out to help others, both in the congregation and in the field ministry?’ Giving of ourselves is not always easy. It requires effort and self-sacrifice. But what could make us happier than knowing that we have the approval of the Sovereign of the universe?

⁸ Love of God has moved some to give up potentially lucrative careers to serve Jehovah more fully. Ericka, who lives in the United States, is a physician. But instead of pursuing a prestigious position in medicine, she became a regular pioneer and has served in several countries with her husband. Thinking back, she says: “The many experiences we have had in helping out in a foreign-language field, along with the friendships we have made, have truly enriched our lives. I still practice

7. What questions will help us to analyze our love of God?

8. What has the love of God moved some to do?

medicine, but being able to focus most of my time and energy on helping to heal people spiritually and on caring for the needs of the congregation brings me heartfelt joy and inner satisfaction.”

RICHES IN HEAVEN OR RICHES ON EARTH?

⁹ Paul wrote that people would be “*lovers of money*.” Some years ago, a pioneer in Ireland spoke to a man about God. The man took out his wallet, removed some paper money, held it up, and proudly said, “This is my god!” Though not many would be so open about the matter, the world is full of people who love money and the things it can buy. Yet, the Bible cautions: “A lover of silver will never be satisfied with silver, nor a lover of wealth with income.” (Eccl. 5:10) Such people will always want more money, and striving to amass it, they will bring on themselves “many pains.”—1 Tim. 6:9, 10.

¹⁰ We all need money, of course. It provides a measure of protection. (Eccl. 7:12) But can a person be truly happy if he has only enough for his basic needs? Absolutely! (Read Ecclesiastes 5:12.) Agur son of Jakeh wrote: “Give me neither poverty

9. Why does a love of money not bring happiness?

10. What does the Bible say about riches and poverty?

nor riches. Just let me consume my portion of food.” We can readily understand his reason for not wanting to be extremely poor. As he went on to explain, he did not want to be tempted to steal because theft would dishonor God. But why did he pray not to have riches? He wrote: “So that I do not become satisfied and deny you and say, ‘Who is Jehovah?’” (Prov. 30:8, 9) Likely you can think of people who trust in their wealth rather than in God.

¹¹ Those who love money cannot please God. Jesus said: “No one can slave for two masters; 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.” He prefaced that by saying: “Stop storing up for yourselves treasures on the earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal. Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal.”—Matt. 6:19, 20, 24.

¹² Many have found that living a simple life not only makes them happier but also gives them more

11. What counsel did Jesus give about money?

12. How may a simple life make it easier to serve God? Give an example.



How can we avoid becoming lovers of ourselves,
of money, or of pleasures?

(See paragraphs 7, 13, 18)

time to serve Jehovah. Jack, who lives in the United States, sold his large home and business because he knew that doing so would make it possible for him to pioneer with his wife. He reflects: “It was hard to give up our beautiful home and property in the country. Yet, for years, I would come home frustrated because of problems at work. My wife, a regular pioneer, was always so happy. She would say, ‘I have the greatest boss ever!’ Now that I too am pioneering, we both work for the same Person, Jehovah.”

¹³ To analyze our view of money, we might

13. How might we analyze our view of money?

honestly consider how we would answer these questions: ‘Do I really believe and live in harmony with what the Bible says about money? Does making money come first in my life? Do I value material things more than my relationship with Jehovah and with people? Do I really trust in Jehovah to care for my needs?’ We can be sure that he will never disappoint those hoping in him.—Matt. 6:33.

SEEKING JEHOVAH OR SEEKING PLEASURES?

¹⁴ As foretold, many people today are “*lovers of pleasures.*” Just as there is nothing wrong with a healthy, reasonable view of self and money, there is nothing wrong with a balanced view of pleasures. Jehovah does not want us to practice severe self-denial or to abstain from wholesome activities that bring enjoyment. The Bible encourages faithful ones: “Go, eat your food with rejoicing, and drink your wine with a cheerful heart.”—Eccl. 9:7.

¹⁵ Second Timothy 3:4 refers to a pursuit of pleasures that excludes God. Notice that the verse does not say that people would love pleasures *more*

14. What is a reasonable view of pleasures?

15. What type of pleasures is referred to at 2 Timothy 3:4?

than God, implying that they would have some love for him. It says ‘*rather* than God.’ One scholar wrote: “This [verse] definitely does not mean that they also love God to some extent. It means that they do not love God at all.” What a sobering warning to those who are nurturing an inordinate love of pleasures! The phrase “lovers of pleasures” aptly describes those who are “carried away by . . . pleasures of this life.”—Luke 8:14.

¹⁶ Jesus displayed a perfectly balanced view of pleasures. He attended “a marriage feast” and “a big reception feast.” (John 2:1-10; Luke 5:29) At the wedding, he miraculously changed water into wine, adding to the supply, which had run short. And on another occasion, he rejected the self-righteous views of those who criticized him for eating and drinking.—Luke 7:33-36.

¹⁷ Yet, Jesus did not immerse himself in a life of pleasure. He put Jehovah first and expended himself tirelessly in behalf of others. So that many might live, he willingly endured a painful death on a stake. Addressing those who would follow in his footsteps, Jesus said: “Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say

16, 17. What example did Jesus set in the matter of pleasures?

every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and be overjoyed, since your reward is great in the heavens, for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you.”—Matt. 5:11, 12.

¹⁸ How might we analyze how much we love pleasures? We do well to ask ourselves: ‘Do meetings and field service take second place to entertainment? Am I willing to practice self-denial because I want to serve God? In seeking pleasurable activities, do I consider how Jehovah will view my choices?’ If we truly love God, we will be careful to avoid not only the things we know will displease him but also the things we merely suspect may displease him.—Read Matthew 22:37, 38.

THE WAY OF HAPPINESS

¹⁹ After some 6,000 years of human misery, Satan’s world is coming to its end. The earth is filled with those who have an inordinate love of self, money, and pleasures. They are people who are eager for what they can get, people who place their own wishes at the center of their life. Such people

18. What questions will help us to analyze how much we love pleasures?

19. Who can never be truly happy?

can never be truly happy. Instead, it is as the psalmist wrote: “Happy is the one who has the God of Jacob as his helper, whose hope is in Jehovah his God.”—Ps. 146:5.

²⁰ The love of God flourishes among Jehovah’s people, and our ranks are growing every year. This is evidence that God’s Kingdom reigns and will soon bring to earth unimaginable blessings. True and lasting joy comes from doing God’s will, from knowing that we are pleasing the Supreme One. And those who love Jehovah will be joyful forever! In the next article, we will consider some of the qualities that result from selfish love and see how these contrast with the qualities found in Jehovah’s servants.

20. How has the love of God brought you happiness?

109 *Love Intensely From the Heart*

(1 Peter 1:22)

1. When our love is pure and intense,

 We make Jehovah's heart rejoice.

Love is his greatest quality,

 Something that we hold dear.

Warm affection glows in our hearts,

 Making a loyal friendship grow.

Love always acts unselfishly,

 Proving our love sincere.

When we see a friend in need,

 We'll be there to lend a helping hand.

Truly we can be a friend,

 Someone who can understand.

Jesus showed what love really means,

 Helping us see Jehovah's love,

Touching our hearts and moving us.

 Tender feelings are a start.

Love intensely from the heart.

