

word of God deserves our closer, *heart-concentrated* attention. For do we not observe, just as God declared in his prophetic word, the difficulties now being experienced by the world? And do we not see the expansion of the good news throughout the earth, with millions gathering together to make up that "great crowd" of survivors of the "great tribulation"?

BE CAREFUL TO KEEP A BALANCED VIEW

¹⁰ Jehovah's word or message is *true* when it speaks about our entering into God's rest now and remaining in it through the "great tribulation," after which Christ's thousand-year reign will transform the earth into a paradise garden. God's word is indeed 'sharp like a two-edged sword.' It will show what we really are, revealing what our thoughts and the intentions of our heart are. Are we serving Jehovah God because we love him, trust him and have full confidence in what he says? Or are we 'becoming weary in well-doing,' looking for a certain date primarily as bringing a relief to *ourselves*, with little concern for the lives of other people? (Gal. 6:9) Are we appreciative of all the good things we have had from Jehovah and from association with his people? Have not the things we have learned helped us in our family lives? Do we not love the many genuine friends we have now gained as a result of knowing the truth?—Mark 10:29, 30.

¹¹ It may be that some who have been serving God have planned their lives according to a mistaken view of just what was to happen on a certain date or in a certain year. They may have, for this reason, put off or neglected things that they otherwise would have cared for. But they have missed the point of the Bible's warnings concerning the end of this system of

10. (a) What does God's word reveal about us? (b) What questions can we ask ourselves in this connection?
11. What mistake may some persons have made as to their Christian course?

things, thinking that Bible chronology reveals the specific date.

¹² What do Jesus' own words show concerning the proper attitude as to the end—to look for a date, or what? He said: "Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come in upon all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth. Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man."—Luke 21:34-36.

¹³ Did Jesus mean that we should adjust our financial and secular affairs so that our resources would just carry us to a certain date that we might think marks the end? If our house is suffering serious deterioration, should we let it go, on the assumption that we would need it only a few months longer? Or, if someone in the family possibly needs special medical care, should we say, 'Well, we'll put it off because the time is so near for this system of things to go'? This is not the kind of thinking that Jesus advised.

¹⁴ Then what did Jesus and the apostles mean when they spoke of being alert as to the signs of the end, or as to "awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah"? They meant for us to be absolutely confident that the day will not come one moment later than Jehovah purposes. Peter said that this should prompt us to "holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion," being watchful that we are living by Bible principles and that we are busy proclaiming the

12, 13. What did Jesus not mean by his words at Luke 21:34-36?

14. (a) When Jesus and the apostles spoke concerning the time of the end, what attitude were they recommending for us? (b) Does the fact that the end is near mean that Christians must make big changes in their way of life, or what?

Kingdom m
of the urgen
3:11, 12) 4
ments in ot
a closer re
we have up
we can, and
we went al
is very nes
should mak
living and
so. However
ments that
Also, if th
which we
pursuits in
In this way
perience th
service over
to see wha

¹⁵ But it
our sights
everyday th
for as Chr
and our fa
forgetting
will not ch
tians must
their respo
disappointe
line of thou
on adjustin
was not th
deceived hi
but that hi
on wrong

¹⁶ Howev
counted he
ably, set y
the urgen
the people
porarily, f
you really

15. If a perso
the end woul
now do?

16. If you ha
sincerity, wh

THE WATCHT

le chronology re-

words show con-
side as to the end
what? He said:
selves that your
ighed down with
rinking and anx-
only that day be
snare. For it will
welling upon the
leep awake, then,
lication that you
all these things
ur, and in stand-
nan."—Luke 21:

t we should ad-
ecular affairs so
just carry us to
ight think marks
suffering serious
let it go, on the
ld need it only a
f someone in the
cial medical care,
'll put it off be-
for this system
not the kind of
sed.

s and the apos-
ke of being alert
or as to "await-
ind the presence
They meant for
ent that the day
it later than Je-
said that this
acts of conduct
n," being watch-
Bible principles
proclaiming the

by his words at Luke
ties spoke concerning
de were they recom-
t that the end is near
big changes in their

VER — JULY 15, 1976

Kingdom message and convincing people of the urgency of turning to God. (2 Pet. 3:11, 12) All of us can make improvements in our worship of God, cementing a closer relationship with him. Perhaps we have up to this time done the best we can, and have made improvements as we went along. Does the fact that the end is very near, then, mean to us that we should make big changes in our way of living and serving God? Not necessarily so. However, there may be major improvements that we Scripturally need to make. Also, if there are areas in our life in which we can 'buy out' time from vain pursuits in this system we should do it. In this way, many have continued to experience the joy of full-time "pioneer" service over the years. All of us can check to see what we can do.—Eph. 5:15, 16.

¹⁵ But it is not advisable for us to set our sights on a certain date, neglecting everyday things we would ordinarily care for as Christians, such as things that we and our families really need. We may be forgetting that, when the "day" comes, it will not change the principle that Christians must at all times take care of all their responsibilities. If anyone has been disappointed through not following this line of thought, he should now concentrate on adjusting his viewpoint, seeing that it was not the word of God that failed or deceived him and brought disappointment, but that his own understanding was based on wrong premises.

¹⁶ However, say that you are one who counted heavily on a date, and, commendably, set your attention more strictly on the urgency of the times and the need of the people to hear. And say you now, temporarily, feel somewhat disappointed; are you really the loser? Are you really hurt?

15. If a person has regulated his life with the view that the end would come on a certain date, what should he now do?

16. If you have counted heavily on a certain date in all sincerity, what comfort can you find in the situation?

THE WATCHTOWER — JULY 15, 1976

We believe you can say that you have gained and profited by taking this conscientious course. Also, you have been enabled to get a really mature, more reasonable viewpoint.—Eph. 5:1-17.

¹⁷ The Scriptures repeatedly tell us that the end will come as a complete surprise upon the world. The apostle spoke of this, saying: "You yourselves know quite well that Jehovah's day [for judgment] is coming exactly as a *thief in the night.*" (1 Thess. 5:2) So that true Christians would not be 'overtaken as thieves,' Jesus said even to his disciples back there, and to us today: "Keep on the watch, therefore, because *you do not know* on what day your Lord is coming." Thereafter he said: "Prove yourselves ready, because *at an hour that you do not think to be it*, the Son of man is coming." (Matt. 24:42-44) These clear statements of Jesus indicate that God's servants will never be given the date of Christ's "coming" for judgment until it actually takes place. In fact, it will come at what appears to them an 'unlikely' time.—Luke 12:39, 40.

DO NOT BE DECEIVED BY THE NATIONS' 'SURVIVAL' THROUGH CRISES

¹⁸ Note, though, what Jesus actually warned about. His words do not indicate that, as the "great tribulation" draws close, the world situation will get to be such that everybody, everywhere, will be in a state of near starvation. Otherwise, how could there be any danger of Jesus' disciples becoming "weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking" at that time? Remember, too, that Jesus used as examples the conditions in Noah's day before the flood and in Lot's day before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. He showed that at that time there was an

17. How do we know that we will not be given, in advance, the precise date of Christ's "coming" for judgment?

18. Why should we not think that all the nations, everywhere, will get to an almost starved state before the "great tribulation" breaks?

441