

## Home Page

### Generation of 1914

#### **The Watchtower, September 1, 1952, p. 543**

“Some persons living A.D. 1914 when the series of foretold events began will also be living when the series ends with Armageddon.”

#### **Awake!, October 8, 1968, p. 5**

##### THE TRAIN ILLUSTRATION

#### **Awake!, October 8, 1968, p. 13**

“The fact that fifty-four years of the period called the ‘last days’ have already gone by is highly significant. It means that only a few years, at most, remain before the corrupt system of things dominating the earth is destroyed by God...Jesus was obviously speaking about those who were old enough to witness *with understanding* what took place when the ‘last days’ began. Jesus was saying that some of those persons who were alive at the appearance of the ‘sign of the last days’ would still be alive when God brought this system to its end.”

(continued)

**The Truth That Leads To Eternal Life, 1968  
ed., p. 95**

“But there are people still living who were alive in 1914 and saw what was happening then and who were old enough that they still remember those events. This generation is getting up in years now. A great number of them have already passed away in death. Yet Jesus very pointedly said: ‘This generation will *by no means* pass away until all these things occur.’ Some of them will still be alive to see the end of this wicked system. This means that only a short time is left before the end comes!”

**The Watchtower, February 15, 1969, p. 101**

“However, there are people still living who were alive in 1914 and saw what was happening then and who were old enough that they still remember those events. This generation is getting up in years now. A great number of them have already passed away in death. Yet Jesus very pointedly said: ‘This generation will *by no means* pass away until all these things occur.’ Some of them will still be alive to see the end of this wicked system. This means that only a short time is left before the end comes!”

(continued)

**The Watchtower, February 1, 1971, p. 69**

“Men of this world offer you nothing stable, nothing sure. Their promises and predictions of better things have failed time and again. Why let yourself be carried along with them in a steadily downward course to ultimate disaster due to rejecting God’s will? God’s prophetic Word has not failed. Time has confirmed its truthfulness, its unerring accuracy. The generation that saw the start of the time of distress that began in 1914 is now dwindling in numbers. Before it passes off the scene the prophesied ‘great tribulation’ will come. You can be among the joyful survivors, experience deliverance from a world system that has proved oppressive, unworkable and death dealing.”

**The Watchtower, May 1, 1982, p. 15**

“And the remaining ones of that generation of 1914 are still talking about it. *Some* of them will be talking about it right down to the time when the ‘great tribulation’ wipes Satan’s wicked system of things off the face of our globe. For Jesus Christ himself assures us: ‘Truly I say to you that this generation [the generation that saw the ‘beginning of pangs of distress’ in 1914] will by no means pass away [completely] until all these things occur. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.’--Matthew 24:3,8,34,35.”

(continued)

**You Can Live Forever In Paradise On Earth,  
1982 ed. p. 154**

“After drawing attention to the many things that have marked the period from 1914 onward, Jesus said: ‘This generation will by no means pass away until all these things [including the end of this system] occur.’ (Matthew 24:34,14) Which generation did Jesus mean? He meant the generation of people who were living in 1914. Those persons yet remaining of that generation are now very old. However, some of them will still be alive to see the end of this wicked system. So of this we can be certain: Shortly now there will be a sudden end to all wickedness and wicked people at Armageddon. Some of the generation living in 1914 will see the end of the system of things and survive it.”

**The Watchtower, May 15, 1984, title page**

ILLUSTRATION: “1914 The Generation That Will Not Pass Away”

**The Watchtower, May 15, 1984, p. 5**

“If Jesus used ‘generation’ in that sense and we apply it to 1914, then the babies of that generation are now 70 years old or older. And others alive in 1914 are in their 80’s or 90’s, a few even having reached a hundred. There are still many millions of that generation alive. Some of them ‘will by no means pass away until all things occur.’ --Luke 21:32”

(continued)

**The Watchtower, May 15, 1984, pp. 6-7**

“From a purely human viewpoint, it could appear that these developments could hardly take place before the generation of 1914 disappears from the scene. But fulfillment of all the foretold events affecting the generation of 1914 does not depend on comparatively slow human action. Jehovah’s prophetic word through Christ Jesus is: ‘This generation [of 1914] will by no means pass away until all things occur.’ (Luke 21:32) And Jehovah, who is the source of inspired and unfailing prophecy, will bring about the fulfillment of his Son’s words in a relatively short time.--Isaiah 46:9,10; 55:10,11.”

**The Watchtower, May 1, 1992, p. 3**

“Today, a small percentage of mankind can still recall the dramatic events of 1914. Will that elderly generation pass away before God saves the earth from ruin? Not according to Bible prophecy. ‘When you see all these things,’ Jesus promised, ‘know that he is near at the doors. Truly I say to you that *this* generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur.’--Matthew 24:33,34”

**Awake!, October 22, 1995, p. 4**

“Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator’s promise of a peaceful and secure new world before the generation that saw the events of 1914 passes away.”

(continued)

**The Watchtower, November 1, 1995, p. 17**

“Eager to see the end of this evil system, Jehovah’s people have at times speculated about the time when the ‘great tribulation’ would break out, even tying this to calculations of what is the lifetime of a generation since 1914. However, we ‘bring a heart of wisdom in,’ not by speculating about how many years or days make up a generation, but by thinking about how we ‘count our days’ in bringing joyful praise to Jehovah. (Psalm 90:12) Rather than provide a rule for measuring time, the term ‘generation’ as used by Jesus refers principally to contemporary people of a certain historical period, with their identifying characteristics.”

**The Watchtower, November 1, 1995, pp. 19-20**

“Therefore, in the final fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy today, ‘this generation’ apparently refers to the peoples of earth who see the sign of Christ’s presence but fail to mend their ways...Does our more precise viewpoint on ‘this generation’ mean that Armageddon is further away than we had thought? Not at all! Though we at no time have known the ‘day and hour,’ Jehovah God has always known it, and he does not change.”

**Awake!, November 8, 1995, p. 4**

“Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator’s promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.”

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being threescore and ten or fourscore years; but it assigns no specific number of years to a generation.—Ps. 90:10.

Even if it did, we could not calculate from such a figure the date of Armageddon, for the texts here under discussion do not say God's battle comes right at the end of this generation, but before its end. To try to say how many years before its end would be speculative. The texts merely set a limit that is sufficiently definite for all present practical purposes. Some persons living A.D. 1914 when the series of foretold events began will also be living when the series ends with Armageddon. All the events will come within the span of a generation. There are hundreds of millions of persons living now that were living in 1914, and many millions of these persons could yet live a score or more years. Just when the lives of the majority of them will be cut short by Armageddon we cannot say.

Deuteronomy 21:10-13 shows that Israelite men could marry foreign captive women, yet other texts forbid intermarriage with foreigners. Is this not contradictory?—M. H., Pennsylvania.

Jehovah gives the reason for the general prohibition concerning foreign wives, as follows: "They would turn your sons from following me to serving alien gods." Also divine warning was sounded against "marrying your sons to their daughters, who will desert to their gods and make your sons desert also". (Ex. 34:16, *Mo*; Deut. 7:4, *AT*) The prohibition was based on no racial prejudice nor any nationalistic grounds, but it was solely for the purpose of protecting the Israelites from religious contamination. It was to avoid contacts that might jeopardize the purity of worship rendered to Jehovah.

But notice how the special circumstances involved in the case discussed at Deuteronomy 21:10-13 eliminate this danger of contamination: "When thou shalt go forth to war against thine enemies, and Yahweh thy God shall deliver them into thy hand and thou shalt take

them captive; and shalt see among the captives a woman of beautiful figure, and shalt have a desire unto her, and wouldest take her to thee to wife, then shalt thou bring her into the midst of thy house, and she shall shave her head and pare her nails; and put away the raiment of her captivity from off her and shall remain in thy house, and bewail her father and her mother for the space of a month, and after that mayest thou go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife."—*Ro*.

She cut off her hair, which was the usual sign of mourning. (Job 1:20; Isa. 15:2; Jer. 7:29; Amos 8:10; Mic. 1:16) She either cut her nails close, which would remove this means of adornment, since they were stained to be attractive; or she let them grow to become unkept, without their usual manicured attractiveness. (Deut. 21:12, *Knox; Le*) She put off the raiment in which she was taken captive, since the women of defeated forces put on their finest dresses and ornaments in the hope of finding favor in the eyes of their captors. For a month she was in mourning, bewailing the loss of her loved ones, thus possibly indicating the thoroughness of the war's destructiveness at the time of her capture. The captive women were possibly the only survivors, and the heathen gods were doubtless destroyed by the Israelite warriors. So no ties were left with the pagan nation, either socially or religiously. There were no heathen in-laws for the Israelite man to mix in with.

Hence to marry a foreign woman so completely severed from connection with false gods and false worshipers was permissible. It was quite different from marrying a foreign woman not a captive whose relatives were living, whose religious gods were still worshiped by her family, who would from time to time have some contact with her heathen relatives and their gods, and who might bring her Israelite husband into contact with them also, thereby exposing his pure worship to contamination. So it was the special circumstances of Deuteronomy 21:10-13 that allowed for an exception to the general prohibition of intermarriage with foreign women.

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*Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt,  
so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one.*

—Col. 4:6, NW.

# THE YEAR 1914 A TURNING POINT

1914  
"LAST DAYS" BEGIN

THE year 1914 was not an ordinary year. According to God's timetable, that year really ushered in what the Bible calls the "last days" for this system of things.—2 Tim. 3:1. Notice just a few of the many statements of historians, statesmen and editorialists showing the significance of 1914 as an outstanding time marker, a turning point for mankind.

THIS SYSTEM OF THINGS

ARMAGEDDON

Normal times ended.

"The last completely 'normal' year in history was 1913, the year before World War I began."—Washington, D.C., *Times-Herald*, March 13, 1949.

However, is this not just an "American" view? No, it is the view of authorities all over the world.

"Security and quiet have disappeared from the lives of men since 1914. And peace? Since 1914, the Germans have not known real peace nor has much of mankind."—Konrad Adenauer, chancellor, West Germany, January 20, 1964.

"In the year 1914 the world, as it was known and accepted then, came to an end. Far more than any year before or since was this the punctuation-mark of the twentieth century."—British author James Cameron in the book entitled "1914."

"If . . . the human race survives, some historian in the next century may well conclude that the day the world went mad was August 4, 1914."—*London Star*, August 4, 1960.

August 4, 1914, World War I began developing. But did not World War II mark an even greater turning point? No!

"The first [world] war marked a far greater change in history. It closed a long era of general peace and began a new age of violence in which the second [world] war is simply an episode. Since 1914 the world has had a new character: a character of international anarchy. . . . Thus the first World War marks a turning point in modern history."—H. R. Trevor-Roper, British historian, August 1, 1954.

"It is indeed the year 1914 rather than that of Hiroshima which marks the turning point in our time, . . . it was the first world war that ushered in the era of confused transition in the midst of which we are floundering."—*Scientific Monthly*, July 1951.

Carnegie said war with Germany had never 'even been imagined.'"

Thus, right up to the very brink of World War I, prominent world leaders were forecasting an age of social unity and enlightenment. If the conditions that have come since 1914 were easily predictable, then why did not such men foresee them and sound the warning?

Still, some object and say: 'Oh, it's only the population increase and better reporting methods that make things seem so much worse today.' An answer to this comes from the following news report:

"Washington, May 31 (AP)—FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover assailed today those who attempt to minimize the nation's crime problem by blaming it on the large increase in the youthful population and fuller tabulations by police. . . . He said those who try to 'explain away the shocking truth behind crime statistics' are doomed to failure."

So do not misread the evidence. It is all there, and it is positively overwhelming, particularly so because *the evidence has continued in force for more than half a century now!* And if all this is not the fulfillment of Bible prophecy concerning the "last days," then what does it require? What more could be expected in the way of fulfillment?

For your own welfare, you should face the fact that all the many lines of the "fingerprint" for the "last days" stand out sharply, crystal clear. They allow for only one meaning: that we have been in the "last days" since 1914!

Crucial questions now arise: *Is there any indication in God's timetable as to how much time there is left before this system of things comes to its end? Can we know how many more years remain for this violent system of things?*

## What will the 1970's Bring?

THE fact that fifty-four years of the period called the "last days" have already gone by is highly significant. It means that only a few years, at most, remain before the corrupt system of things dominating the earth is destroyed by God. How can we be so certain of this?

One way is by noting what Jesus said when he gave his great prophecy about the "last days." After he listed the many events that would mark this period, he also stated: "Truly I say to you that this

generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur."—Matt. 24:34.

Jesus was obviously speaking about those who were old enough to witness with understanding what took place when the "last days" began. Jesus was saying that some of those persons who were alive at the appearance of the 'sign of the last days' would still be alive when God brought this system to its end.

Even if we presume that youngsters 15 years of age would be perceptive enough

# The Last Days of This Wicked System of Things

## CHAPTER 11

THE Bible speaks of the time in which we are living as the "last days" or the "time of the end." (2 Timothy 3:1; Daniel 11:40) The facts show that this is a limited period that has a definite beginning and a definite end. It began in 1914 when Jesus Christ was enthroned as king in the heavens. It will end when God destroys this present wicked system of things. What a relief it will be when the organizations and persons that cheat and oppress, and all who endanger the security of their fellowmen, are gone!

<sup>2</sup> How soon will that be? God's own Son, Jesus Christ, gives the answer. After drawing attention to the many things that mark the period from 1914 onward as the "time of the end," Jesus said: "This generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur." (Matthew 24:34) Which generation did he mean?

<sup>3</sup> Jesus had just referred to persons who would "see all these things." "These things" are the events that have taken place since 1914 and those

1. When did the "last days" begin, and with what event will they end?
2. What did Jesus say at Matthew 24:34 as to when the "time of the end" would run out?
3. (a) Which generation did Jesus say would not pass away before the end comes? (b) So how can we tell we are very near the end of this wicked system?

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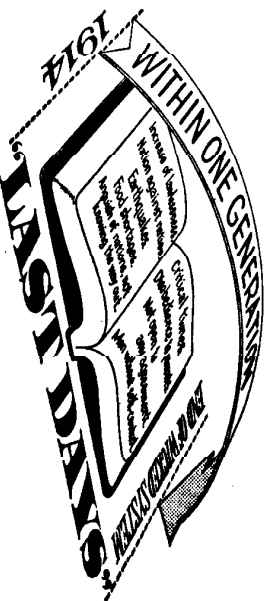
## THE LAST DAYS OF THIS WICKED SYSTEM OF THINGS 95

yet to occur down to the end of this wicked system. (Matthew 24:33) Persons born even as much as fifty years ago could not see "all these things." They came on the scene after the foretold events were already under way. But there are people still living who were alive in 1914 and saw what was happening then and who were old enough that they still remember those events. This generation is getting up in years now. A great number of them have already passed away in death. Yet Jesus very pointedly said: "This generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur." Some of them will still be alive to see the end of this wicked system. This means that only a short time is left before the end comes! (Psalm 90:10 [89:10, *Dy*]) So now is the time to take urgent action if you do not want to be swept away with this wicked system.

### WHY A "TIME OF THE END"

\* Although the Kingdom came to power in 1914, Jehovah did not immediately destroy those who were not serving him. How glad we can be of that! For God's long-suffering has afforded us the

4. (a) Why can we be glad that God did not immediately destroy those who were not serving him when his Kingdom came to power in 1914? (b) How does the Bible, at 2 Peter 3:9, help us to view this matter properly?



**T**HE Bible speaks of the time in which we are living as the "last days" or the "time of the end." (2 Tim. 3:1; Dan. 11:40) The facts show that this is a limited period that has a definite beginning and a definite end. It began in 1914 when Jesus Christ was enthroned as king in the heavens. It will end when God destroys this present wicked system of things. What a relief it will be when the organizations and persons that cheat and oppress, and all who endanger the security of their fellowmen, are gone!

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However, there are people still living who were alive in 1914 and saw what was happening then and who were old enough

## The Last Days

that they still remember those events. This generation is getting up in years now. A great number of them have already passed away in death. Yet Jesus very pointedly said: "This generation will by no means pass away

until all these things occur." Some of them will still be alive to see the end of this wicked system. This means that only a short time is left before the end comes! (Ps. 90:10) So now is the time to take urgent action if you do not want to be swept away with this wicked system.

### WHY A "TIME OF THE END"

Although the Kingdom came to power in 1914, Jehovah did not immediately destroy those who were not serving him. How glad we can be of that! For God's long-suffering has afforded us the opportunity to take a firm stand for his kingdom, and so escape destruction. The Bible helps us to view this matter in the proper light, saying: "Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise, as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance."—2 Pet. 3:9; see also Matthew 24:21, 22 and Romans 2:4.

To this end, Jehovah God has allowed time for a separating work during these "last days." In his description of the "conclusion of the system of things,"



called the "appointed times of the nations" would end. (Luke 21:24) That would mean this world's systems would then enter their "last days" leading up to a "great tribulation" that would see those systems forever end, replaced by a new system of God's making. (2 Tim. 3:1; Matt. 24:21, 22) Every year that has passed since 1914 has served to strengthen our conviction that this has been the case.

As British historian H. R. Trevor-Roper said in 1954: "Since 1914 the world has had a new character: a character of international anarchy." Ten years later, Konrad Adenauer, then chancellor of Germany, stated: "Security and quiet have disappeared from the lives of men since 1914."

This magazine has also repeatedly shown from the Scriptures that the distressing conditions that have developed and intensified since 1914 are solid proof that we live in the generation that will see God's will take place on earth. Yes, that we can now do as Christ Jesus said: "Raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near. . . . When you see these things occurring,

know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I say to you, This generation will by no means pass away until all things occur."—Luke 21:28-32.

Men of this world offer you nothing stable, nothing sure. Their promises and predictions of better things have failed time and again. Why let yourself be carried along with them in a steadily downward course to ultimate disaster due to rejecting God's will? God's prophetic Word has not failed. Time has confirmed its truthfulness, its unerring accuracy. The generation that saw the start of the time of distress that began in 1914 is now dwindling in numbers. Before it passes off the scene the prophesied "great tribulation" will come. You can be among the joyful survivors, experience deliverance from a world system that has proved oppressive, unworkable and death dealing. Why not investigate God's prophet-

ic Word and seek knowledge and understanding that will give you the faith you need to endure now and to win the privilege of life in God's righteous new order? Jehovah's witnesses offer to help you in gaining such strengthening, life-giving knowledge. Why not write us for such help, free of charge?

**"WHEN YOU SEE THESE THINGS OCCURRING, KNOW THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NEAR."**

- "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom."<sup>\*</sup> Since 1914 two world wars have killed more than 69,000,000.
- "There will be food shortages . . . in one place after another." Half the world called undernourished, with 3,500,000 dying every year from malnutrition.
- "In one place after another pestilences." From 1918 to 1919 some 500,000,000 persons stricken with Spanish flu; 21,000,000 died. Other diseases take their toll.
- "There will be . . . earthquakes in one place after another." Since 1914 there have been recorded nearly twice as many major quakes as during the previous 200 years.
- "Increasing of lawlessness." A plague of violence and lawlessness is now sweeping the earth.
- "Men become faint out of fear." Fear is said to be "the biggest single emotion" that dominates people's lives today.
- "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth . . . and then the end will come." Jehovah's witnesses preach the good news of the kingdom in 206 lands, their literature appearing in 165 languages.

<sup>\*</sup> These prophecies given by Jesus Christ are in Matthew chapter 24 and Luke 21.



Ending of Jehovah's  
Sovereignty as Gentile  
Ruler, 607 B.C.E.

**"APPOINTED TIMES  
OF THE NATIONS"  
(Daniel 4:14-25;  
Luke 21:24-26)**

"SEVEN TIMES" =  $7 \times 360 = 2,520$  years  
(See Revelation 12:6, 14; Ezekiel 4:6b)  
607 - 1 B.C.E. = 606 years  
1 B.C.E. - 1 C.E. = 1 year  
1 C.E. - 1914 C.E. = 1,913 years  
607 B.C.E. - 1914 C.E. = 2,520 years

# 1914

Jehovah's Sovereignty  
restored in Messianic  
Kingdom, 1914 C.E.

truly "cut off, with nothing for him-  
self." would appear again. But this time  
Christ comes invisibly, in heavenly glo-  
ry, and all the holy angels with him,  
"sit down on his glorious throne."  
—Daniel 9:26; Matthew 25:31.

**The "Generation" of 1914**

At that time of the start of Christ's  
presence, or *parousia*, he was unseen by  
human eyes. But that generation of 1914  
certainly *did see* what happened here on  
earth as a "sign" of his presence and as  
the beginning of sorrows" for mankind!  
(Matthew 24:8, *Authorized Version*) And  
remaining ones of that generation of  
1914 are still talking about it. Some of  
them will be talking about it right down  
to the time when the "great tribulation"  
ends Satan's wicked system of things  
off the face of our globe. For Jesus Christ  
himself assures us: "Truly I say to you  
that this generation [the generation that  
saw the 'beginning of pangs of distress'  
in 1914] will by no means pass away  
[completely] until all these things occur.  
Heaven and earth will pass away, but  
my words will by no means pass away."  
—Matthew 24:3, 8, 34, 35.

<sup>12</sup>The "sorrows" foretold to begin in  
1914 burst upon the world scene with  
startling suddenness. And they contin-  
ue to afflict mankind! They provide the  
convincing "sign" that 1914 marked the  
beginning of "the conclusion of the sys-  
tem of things." However, our faith is not  
based simply on a date, such as 1914.  
Our faith is firmly anchored in the en-  
tire word of God, in the "good news"  
that was preached first by Jesus and his  
disciples, in the marvelous fulfillments of  
so many of the Bible prophecies in this,  
our day, and especially as these apply  
to and identify the "faithful and discreet  
slave" and his companion workers. It is  
"this good news of the kingdom," the  
entire message of the Bible, that is the  
foundation of our faith. All of this focus-  
es on Jesus Christ, God's Son, whom he  
sent to earth to redeem mankind, and  
who now reigns gloriously in the estab-  
lished kingdom of the heavens. (Mat-  
thew 24:3, 14, 45-47; 25:31-33; Revelation  
19:10) Having faith, we can appreciate  
also *how* the Kingdom will "come" for  
the salvation of all who love and prac-  
tice righteousness. How will that be?

11. (a) Which "generation" will not pass away be-  
fore the things foretold by Jesus occur? (b) What  
may remaining ones of this "generation" expect  
to see?

12. (a) What happenings beginning in 1914 should  
convince us of the accuracy of prophecy? (b) How-  
ever, in what is our faith anchored? (c) On what  
does the "good news" focus?

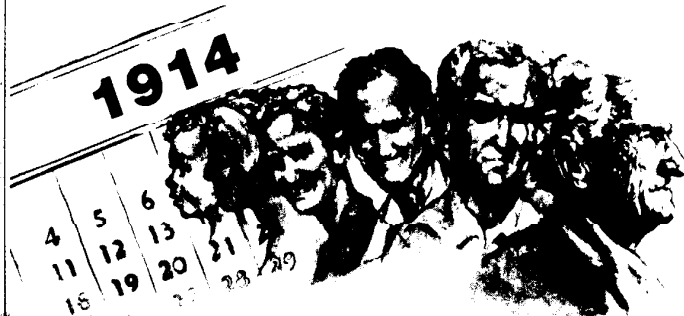
<sup>6</sup> After considering the foregoing, is it not clear that “the sign” Christ gave and the evidences foretold by his disciples are now being fulfilled? Although there are many other proofs, those listed here should be enough to show that we really are living in the time the Bible foretold as the “last days.”

<sup>7</sup> Yet some persons may say: ‘Such things as wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes have occurred often throughout history. So it would not be hard to foretell that they would occur again.’ But think: The Bible not only foretold these things, but indicated that they would occur on a *worldwide scale*. Also, the Bible said that *all these things* would happen upon the generation that was alive in 1914. Yet what were prominent world leaders foretelling just before 1914? They were saying that conditions promising world peace were never more favorable. Yet the terrible troubles the Bible foretold began right on time, in 1914! In fact, world leaders now say that 1914 was a turning point in history.

<sup>8</sup> After drawing attention to the many things that have marked the period from 1914 onward, Jesus said: “This generation will by no means pass away until all these things [including the end of this system] occur.” (Matthew 24:34, 14) Which generation did Jesus mean? He meant the generation of people who were living in 1914. Those persons yet remaining of that generation are now very old. However, some of them will still be alive to see the end of this wicked system. So of this we can be certain: Shortly now there will be a sudden end to all wickedness and wicked people at Armageddon.

7. (a) What makes the Bible prophecies regarding Christ’s presence and the “last days” so remarkable? (b) In contrast with what the Bible foretold, what were world leaders forecasting just prior to 1914?

8. (a) Which generation did Jesus indicate would see the end of this system of things? (b) So of what can we be certain?



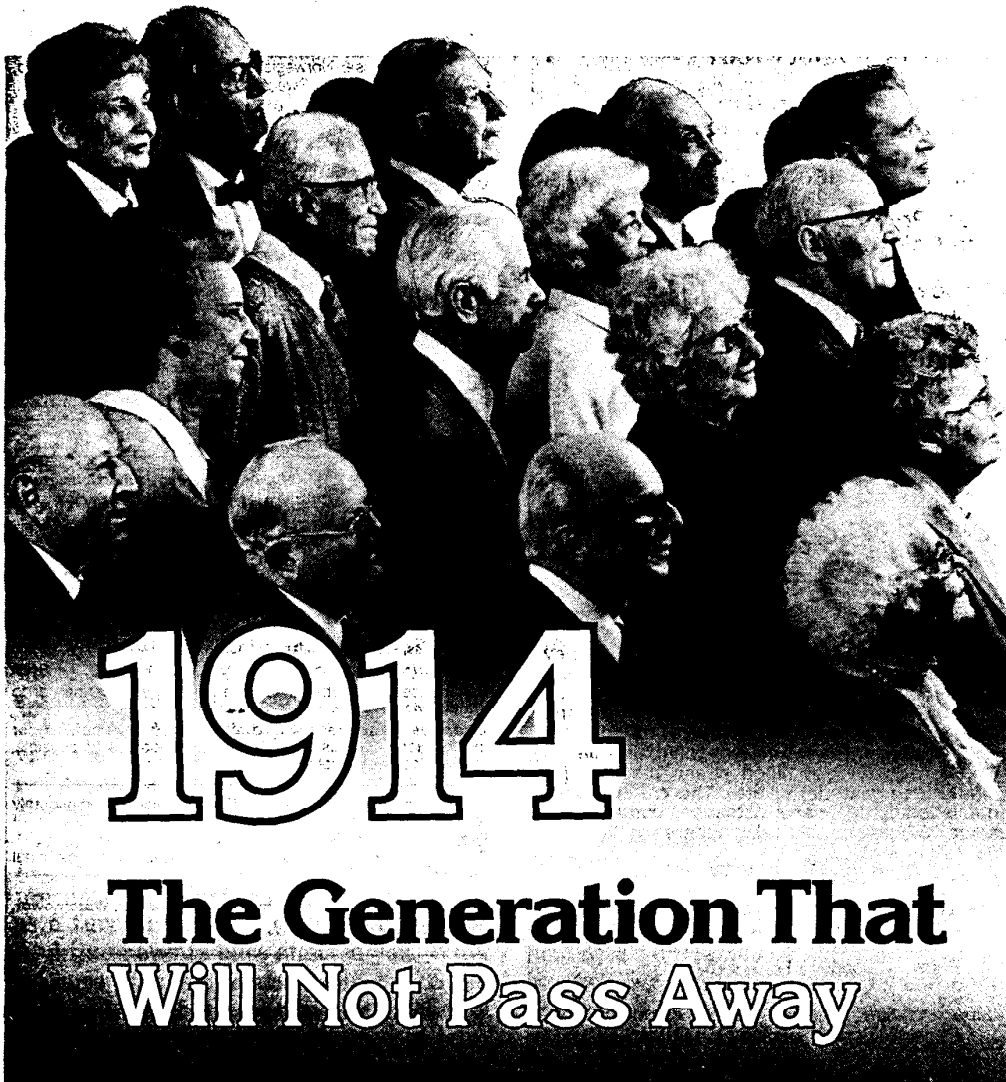
## ARMAGEDDON

Some of the generation living in 1914 will see the end of the system of things and survive it

May 15, 1984

# The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



From that point of view, the Great War of 1914-18 and its aftermath certainly formed a "frame of reference" to mark a generation. As professor Wohl comments: World War I created "an overwhelming sense of rupture with the past. Those who lived through the war could never rid themselves of the belief that one world had ended and another begun in August 1914."

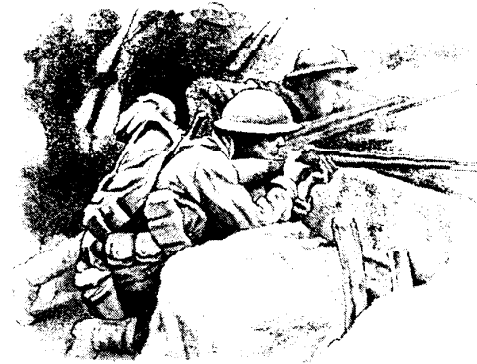
‡ Jesus used the word "generation" many times in different settings and with various meanings. But what did he mean when he spoke of a 'generation that would not pass away'? Some have interpreted "generation" to mean a period of 30, 40, 70 or even 120 years. However, a generation is really related to people and events, rather than to a fixed number of years.

(The Greek word rendered "generation" in the Bible has been defined as, "Those born at the same time . . . Associated with this is the meaning: the body of one's contemporaries, an age." (*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*) "The sum total of those born at the same time, expanded to include all those living at a given time *generation, contemporaries.*" (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* from Walter Bauer's Fifth Edition, 1958) These definitions embrace both those born around the time of a historic event and all those alive at that time.

∴ If Jesus used "generation" in that sense and we apply it to 1914, then the babies of that generation are now 70 years old or older. And others alive in 1914 are in their 80's or 90's, a few even having reached a hundred. There are still many millions of that generation alive. Some of them "will by no means pass away until all things occur."—Luke 21:32.

‡ Since 1914 we have already lived through two world wars and many other major conflicts, along with famines, earth-

**"One world had ended and another begun in August 1914"**



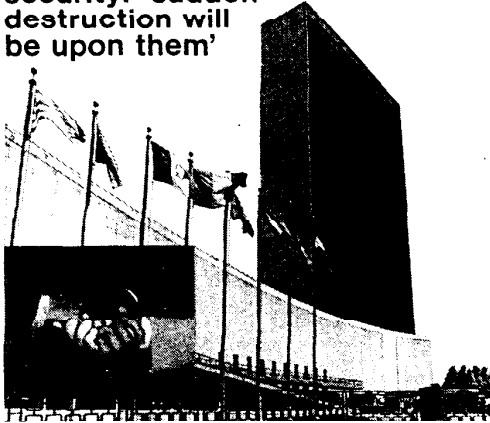
quakes, pestilences and the like. (Luke 21:10, 11) Yet Jesus said: "This generation will by no means pass away until *all these things occur.*" (Matthew 24:34) Therefore, you might ask: What other major events remain to be seen by the generation of 1914? And can these actually take place in the time period that remains for that generation?

#### What Happens Next?

Especially since 1919 have Jehovah's Witnesses been fulfilling on a remarkable scale and against earth-wide opposition Jesus' prophecy: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14) Yes, this is the work that has to be completed to Jehovah's satisfaction before the end comes.

What other events must take place in the period left for the generation of 1914? The Bible clearly points to certain major developments that will lead into and form a part of the "great tribulation" that culminates in Armageddon, "the war of

**'When they say "Peace and security!" sudden destruction will be upon them'**



the great day of God the Almighty." (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 16:14, 16) It is urgent that you know what these developments are and that you take necessary protective action before it is too late.—Zephaniah 2:3.

One of these developments was prophesied by the apostle Paul when he stated: "You yourselves know quite well that Jehovah's day is coming exactly as a thief in the night. Whenever it is that they are saying: 'Peace and security!' then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them." This prophecy makes it clear that, just prior to the end of this system of things, "peace and security" will be declared in some exceptional way, whether by the United Nations or independently by political and religious leaders. What will follow that declaration? Paul said: "Then sudden destruction is to be *instantly* upon them." —1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3.

#### **Does Your Religion Matter?**

Could that destruction affect you? Well, do you belong to one of the world's many religions? Do you know how God views those religions? What is their future?

Under the symbol of a "great harlot" named "Babylon the Great," the inspired apostle John described a system that has benefited for centuries from intimate association with "the kings of the earth" who wield political power. This "harlot" has also benefited from dealings with "the traveling merchants," that is, the world's commercial element. What system is this that has also lorded it over the "peoples and crowds and nations and tongues"? It is false religion! Yes, all religions that are false from Jehovah God's standpoint constitute this "great harlot," who is actually a world empire. But what does the immediate future hold for her?—Revelation 17:1-8, 15; 18:15-17.

Revelation 17:16 indicates that radical political elements within the United Nations (the "scarlet-colored wild beast") will hate the religious harlot and devastate her. Already, powerful atheistic and antireligious elements in the UN have taken steps to stamp out religion within their domain. But more drastic action is expected in the near future when these political elements devastate not only Christendom but also the other great religious systems. Logically, the anti-God forces will also attack Jehovah's Witnesses who faithfully proclaim God's Kingdom. This will be tantamount to attacking God himself and will provoke retaliation—God's war of Armageddon!—Revelation 17:3, 12-16; 16:14-16; Ezekiel 38:10-12, 18-23; Zechariah 2:8.

#### **Is There Enough Time?**

From a purely human viewpoint, it could appear that these developments could hardly take place before the generation of 1914 disappears from the scene. But fulfillment of all the foretold events affecting the generation of 1914 does not depend on comparatively slow human action. Jehovah's prophetic word through

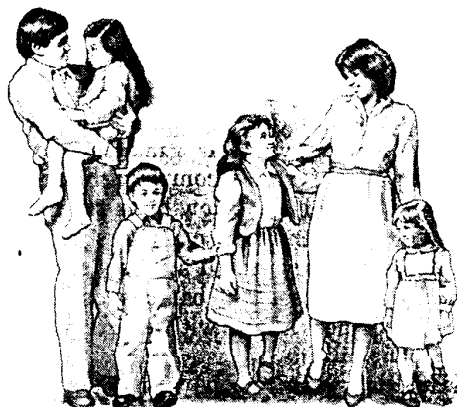
Christ Jesus is: "This generation [of 1914] will by no means pass away until all things occur." (Luke 21:32) And Jehovah, who is the source of inspired and unfulfilling prophecy, will bring about the fulfillment of his Son's words in a relatively short time.—Isaiah 46:9, 10; 55:10, 11.

Are there any past examples of Bible prophecies' being fulfilled in the face of human disbelief and skepticism? Yes, and we can briefly examine one of these. In the year 33 C.E., Jesus foretold regarding Jerusalem and its temple: "As for these things that you are beholding, the days will come in which not a stone upon a stone will be left here and not be thrown down. Furthermore, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near."—Luke 21:6, 20.

Thirty-three years later, the Roman army, under Cestius Gallus, attacked Jerusalem and was at the point of victory. Inexplicably, however, General Gallus ordered his troops to retreat. As a consequence, some of the Jews must have thought that their sacred city would not suffer destruction. But such a thought was short-lived. Four years later, the Roman armies under Titus came back and destroyed Jerusalem and its temple.

Thus Jesus' prophecy came true right down to fine detail. As G. A. Williamson said in his introduction to Josephus' *The Jewish War*: "Had we no other sources of information than the gospels we should be tempted to suspect that the warnings of Jesus were couched in hyperbolic [exaggerated] language . . . Was it possible that of that mighty Temple not one stone should be left upon another, that should not be cast down? It was indeed possible; it is historical fact. The destruction was utter and complete . . . The whole tragic story had been foretold with startling accuracy."

**You, along with survivors of the generation of 1914, may live to see a New Order**



Just as Jesus' prophecies regarding Jerusalem were fulfilled within the life span of the generation of the year 33 C.E., so his prophecies regarding "the time of the end" will be fulfilled within the life span of the generation of 1914. (Daniel 12:4) This means that marvelous prospects lie before not only that generation but all those living today. Why? Because Jesus also said regarding the significant events affecting that generation: "When you see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near."—Luke 21:28, 31.

The nearness of God's Kingdom today spells the end of the present divisive political, religious and commercial systems. It means the ushering in of a righteous new government for all obedient mankind. You can choose everlasting life under this arrangement of "new heavens and a new earth." (2 Peter 3:13; John 17:3) Yes, you may live to see this promised New Order, along with survivors of the generation of 1914—the generation that will not pass away.

# 1914

## THE YEAR THAT SHOCKED THE WORLD

**"The Great War of 1914-18 lies like a band of scorched earth dividing that time from ours. In wiping out so many lives . . . , in destroying beliefs, changing ideas, and leaving incurable wounds of disillusion, it created a physical as well as psychological gulf between two epochs."**

—From *The Proud Tower—A Portrait of the World Before the War 1890-1914*, by Barbara Tuchman.

**"It is almost—but not quite yet—part of history, for many thousands of people who were young at the beginning of this momentous twentieth century are still alive."**

—From the book *1914*, by Lyn MacDonald, published in 1987.

**W**HY be interested in the year 1914? 'It is the future that concerns me,' you may say, 'not the past.' With problems such as the global pollution, the breakdown of family life, the increase in crime, mental sickness, and unemployment, man's future may look bleak. Many who have examined the significance of 1914, however, found a basis for hope in a better future.

For decades *The Watchtower* has explained that in 1914 mankind experienced what is called "a beginning of pangs of distress." That expression forms part of Jesus Christ's great prophecy about events that would precede the end of man's wicked system.—Matthew 24:7, 8.

Today, a small percentage of mankind can still recall the dramatic events of 1914.

Will that elderly generation pass away before God saves the earth from ruin? Not according to Bible prophecy. "When you see all these things," Jesus promised, "know that he is near at the doors. Truly I say to you that *this* generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur."  
—Matthew 24:33, 34.

To appreciate why the year 1914 has such historical significance, consider the world situation up until the middle of 1914. Before that time, monarchs such as Czar Nicholas of Russia, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, and Emperor Franz Josef of Austria-Hungary wielded great power. Each of these men could mobilize over four million fighting men and send them off to battle. But their forefathers had signed what was called the Holy Alliance, proclaiming that God had

age of 85, people die from multiple-organ failure. They stop breathing. Basically, they die of old age. And there's no cure for that." He added: "Barring a reversal of human aging on a molecular level, the rapid increases in life expectancy are over."

*Science* magazine noted that perhaps "the upper limit to longevity has already been approached and that further significant de-

clines in mortality are unlikely." It is said that if all causes of death reported on death certificates could be eliminated, life expectancy would be increased less than 20 years.

Thus, many scientists view the length of man's life span as neither strange nor subject to change. Yet why is it reasonable to believe that humans will eventually live much longer?

## Designed to Live Forever

**T**HE human body is marvelously designed. Its development and growth are simply a miracle. An ancient writer exclaimed: "In a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made." (Psalm 139:14) Fully aware of the marvels of the human body, some modern scientists find aging and death a puzzle. Do you?

"Aging," wrote Harvard University biologist Steven Austad, "so constantly confronts us that I'm surprised more people don't perceive it as a central biological mystery." The fact that everyone grows old, Austad noted, "makes [aging] appear less puzzling." Still, when you really think about it, do aging and death make sense?

Last year, in his book *How and Why We Age*, Dr. Leonard Hayflick acknowledged the

marvels of human life and growth and wrote: "After performing the miracles that take us from conception to birth and then to sexual maturation and adulthood, nature chose not to devise what would seem to be a more elementary mechanism to simply maintain those miracles forever. This insight has puzzled biogerontologists [those who study the biological aspects of aging] for decades."

Are you also puzzled by aging and death? What purpose do they serve? Hayflick observed: "Virtually all biological events from conception to maturity seem to have a purpose, but aging does not. It is not obvious why aging should occur. Although we have learned much about the biology of aging . . . , we are still left with the inevitable outcome of purposeless aging followed by death."

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**Would you welcome more information? Write Watch Tower at the appropriate address on page 5. Publication of *Awake!* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.**

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a time of "great tribulation," Jesus added: "Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father." (Matthew 24:3-36; Mark 13:3-32) We do not need to know the exact timing of events. Rather, our focus must be on being watchful, cultivating strong faith, and keeping busy in Jehovah's service—not on calculating a date. Jesus concluded his great prophecy by saying: "Keep looking, keep awake, for you do not know when the appointed time is. . . . Keep on the watch . . . What I say to you I say to all, Keep on the watch." (Mark 13:33-37) Danger lurks in the shadows of today's world. We must keep awake! —Romans 13:11-13.

<sup>6</sup> Not only must we pay attention to the inspired prophecies concerning these final days of a wicked system but we must anchor our faith primarily on the precious sacrifice of Christ Jesus and God's marvelous promises based thereon. (Hebrews 6:17-19; 9:14; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; 2 Peter 1:16-19) Eager to see the end of this evil system, Jehovah's people have at times speculated about the time when the "great tribulation" would break out, even tying this to calculations of what is the lifetime of a generation since 1914. However, we "bring a heart of wisdom in," not by speculating about how many years or days make

6. (a) On what should our faith be anchored? (b) How may we "count our days"? (c) What does Jesus basically mean by "generation"?

up a generation, but by thinking about how we "count our days" in bringing joyful praise to Jehovah. (Psalm 90:12) Rather than provide a rule for measuring time, the term "generation" as used by Jesus refers principally to contemporary people of a certain historical period, with their identifying characteristics.\*

\* See Volume 1, page 918, of *Insight on the Scriptures*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.



Alexandra Boulat/Sipa Press



**Suffering humanity will find relief when this violent, wicked generation passes away**

Left and below: Luc Delahaye/Sipa Press



<sup>8</sup> Yes, the complete triumph of the Messianic Kingdom is at hand! Is anything to be gained, then, by looking for dates or by speculating about the literal lifetime of a "generation"? Far from it! Habakkuk 2:3 clearly states: "The vision is yet for the appointed time, and it keeps panting on to the end, and it will not tell a lie. Even if it should delay, keep in expectation of it; for it will without fail come true. It will not be late." Jehovah's day of accounting hastens ever closer.—Jeremiah 25:31-33; Malachi 4:1.

<sup>9</sup> When Christ's Kingdom rule began in 1914, Satan was hurled down to earth. This has meant "woe for the earth . . . because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a *short* period of time." (Revelation 12:12) That time is short, indeed, compared with the thousands of years of Satan's rulership. The Kingdom is at hand, and so is Jehovah's day and hour for executing judgment on this wicked generation!—Proverbs 3:25; 10:24, 25.

#### The "Generation" That Passes Away

<sup>10</sup> Let us examine more closely Jesus' statement at Matthew 24:34, 35: "Truly I say to you that *this generation* will by no means pass away until all these things occur. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away." Jesus' words that follow show that 'nobody knows that day and hour.' Far more important, he shows that we must avoid the snares surrounding us in *this generation*. Thus Jesus adds: "For 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 24:36-39) Jesus here compared the generation of his day to that of Noah's day.—Genesis 6:5, 9; footnote.

<sup>11</sup> This was not the first time that the apostles heard Jesus make this comparison of 'generations,' for some days earlier he had stated concerning himself: "The Son of man . . . must undergo many sufferings and be *rejected by this generation*. Moreover, *just as it occurred in the days of Noah*, so it will be also in the days of the Son of man." (Luke 17:24-26) Thus, Matthew chapter 24 and Luke chapter 17 make the same comparison. In Noah's day "all flesh [that] had ruined its way on the earth" and that was destroyed at the Flood was "*this generation*." In Jesus' day the apostate Jewish people that were rejecting Jesus was "*this generation*."—Genesis 6:11, 12; 7:1.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, in the final fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy today, "this generation" apparently refers to the peoples of earth who see the sign of Christ's presence but fail to mend their ways. In contrast, we as Jesus' disciples refuse to be molded by the life-style of "this generation." Though in the world, we must be no part of it, "for the appointed time is near." (Revelation 1:3; John 17:16) The apostle Paul admonishes

8. How do Jehovah's prophets stress the need to keep awake?

9. What developments since 1914 show that the time is short?

10. How is "this generation" like that of Noah's day?

11. What comparison of 'generations' did Jesus make, as reported by Matthew and Luke?

12, 13. (a) What today is "this generation" that must pass away? (b) How are Jehovah's people now coping with this "crooked and twisted generation"?

us: "Keep doing all things free from murmurings and arguments, that you may come to be blameless and innocent, children of God without a blemish in among a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you are shining as illuminators in the world."—Philippians 2:14, 15; Colossians 3:5-10; 1 John 2:15-17.

<sup>13</sup> Our "shining as illuminators" includes not only displaying a clean Christian personality but, above all, fulfilling Jesus' prophetic commission: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14) No human can say when that end will be, but we know that the end of "this generation" of wicked people will come once the witness has been given to God's satisfaction "to the most distant part of the earth."—Acts 1:8.

#### "That Day and Hour"

<sup>14</sup> When the global witness has been accomplished to the extent Jehovah purposes, it will be his "day and hour" to dispose of this world's system. We do not need to know the date in advance. Thus, following Jesus' example, the apostle Paul admonished: "Now as for the times and the seasons, brothers, you need nothing to be written to you. For you yourselves know quite well that Jehovah's day is coming exactly as a thief in the night. Whenever it is that they are saying: 'Peace and security!' then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them just as the pang of distress upon a pregnant woman; and they will by no means escape." Note Paul's focus: '*It is when they are saying.*' Yes, when

14. What admonition did both Jesus and Paul give us to "the times and the seasons," and how should we react?

there is talk of "peace and security," when it is least expected, God's judgment will suddenly be executed. How appropriate is Paul's advice: "So, then, let us not sleep on as the rest do, but let us stay awake and keep our senses!"—1 Thessalonians 5:1-3, 6; see also verses 7-11; Acts 1:7.

<sup>15</sup> Does our more precise viewpoint on "this generation" mean that Armageddon is further away than we had thought? Not at all! Though we at no time have known the "day and hour," Jehovah God has always known it, and he does not change. (Malachi 3:6) Obviously, the world is sinking further and further toward terminal ruination. The need to keep awake is more critical than it has ever been. Jehovah has revealed to us "the things that must shortly take place," and we should respond with an absorbing sense of urgency.—Revelation 1:1; 11:18; 16:14, 16.

<sup>16</sup> As the time approaches, keep awake, for Jehovah is about to bring calamity on all of Satan's system! (Jeremiah 25:29-31) Jehovah says: "I shall certainly magnify myself and sanctify myself and make myself known before the eyes of many nations; and they will have to know that I am Jehovah." (Ezekiel 38:23) That decisive "day of Jehovah" draws near!—Joel 1:15; 2:1, 2; Amos 5:18-20; Zephaniah 2:2, 3.

#### Righteous "New Heavens and a New Earth"

<sup>17</sup> Concerning 'all these things that must occur' Jesus said: "Heaven and earth will

15, 16. (a) Why should we not think that Armageddon is further away than we may have believed? (b) How must Jehovah's sovereignty be magnified in the near future?

17, 18. (a) According to Jesus and Peter, how does "this generation" pass away? (b) Why should we keep on the watch as to conduct and deeds of godly devotion?

and creative imagination esp[ecially] in the production of aesthetic objects." On this basis we can say that an artist needs to have both skill and creative imagination. When he puts these two aptitudes to work, he can produce something that others will find pleasing or attractive.

Are expressions of skill and imagination limited to human works of art? Or are they also manifest in the natural world around us?

The lofty California redwoods, the extensive coral reefs of the Pacific, the mighty waterfalls of the rain forest, and the magnificent herds of the African savanna are, in different ways, more valuable to mankind than the "Mona Lisa." For that reason, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) has designated Redwood National Park, U.S.A.; Iguazú Falls, Argentina/Brazil; the Great Barrier Reef, Australia; and Serengeti National Park, Tanzania, as part of mankind's "World Heritage."

These natural treasures are included alongside man-made monuments. Why? The aim is to preserve whatever has "exceptional universal value." UNESCO argues that whether the beauty be that of the Taj Mahal, India, or the Grand Canyon, U.S.A., it deserves protection for the sake of future generations.

But you need not travel to a national park in order to observe creative skill. A

supreme example is your own body. The sculptors of ancient Greece viewed the human form as the epitome of artistic excellence, and they strove to represent it as perfectly as possible. With our present knowledge of the workings of the body, we can appreciate even more the consummate ability required for its creation and design.

What about creative imagination? Look at the exquisite patterns on the quivering train of the peacock, the delicate bloom of a rose, or the high-speed ballet of a glittering hummingbird. Surely, such artistry was art, even before it was captured on canvas or on film. A *National Geographic* writer, intrigued by the lavender filaments of the taccalily, asked a young scientist what their purpose was. His simple answer: "They reveal the imagination of God."

Not only do skill and creative imagination abound in the natural world but they have been a constant source of inspiration to human artists. Auguste Rodin, the famous French sculptor, said: "The artist is the *confidant* of nature. Flowers carry on dialogues with him through the graceful bending of their stems and the harmoniously tinted nuances of their blossoms."

Some artists openly recognized their limitations when trying to emulate natural beauty. "The true work of art is but a shadow of the divine perfection," confessed Michelangelo, considered one of the greatest artists of all time.

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