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# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



## HOW DOES GOD VIEW WAR?

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# How Does God View War?

How would you answer that question? Many think that God approves of war. They reason that he commanded some of his worshippers in the past to engage in warfare; the Bible record confirms as much. Others, however, note that God's Son, Jesus, taught his followers to love their enemies. (Matthew 5:43, 44) So they reason that at some point God's view of war changed and that today he disapproves of war.

What do you think? Does God approve of warfare? If so, whose side does he take in today's conflicts? Finding the answers to these questions can affect your own view of war. For example, if you knew that God not only approves of war but also supports the side that you favor in a particular war, likely you would feel good about your stand on the issue, confident that your side would come off vic-

torious. On the other hand, how would you feel if you learned that God supports the opposing side of a conflict? Likely you would reconsider your position on the matter.

Something more important is at stake. Knowing how God views war may affect how you view God. If you are among the millions who have been deeply hurt by human warfare, you no doubt need to know the answer to the question, Is God, as some believe, a warmonger who allows or even encourages the suffering associated with war, or might he be passive and unconcerned about the welfare of the oppressed?

You may be surprised to learn that the Bible's answer differs greatly from either of those opinions. Furthermore, from the past down to today, God's view of war has remained the same. Let us consider what the Bible says about how God viewed war in the ancient past and in the first century, when Jesus walked the earth. That will help us to see how God views war today and whether war will be a part of mankind's future.

# God's View of War

## IN THE ANCIENT PAST

The people were being oppressed. They repeatedly prayed to God for relief, but none came—at least not right away. The people were the Israelites, God's people in ancient times. The oppressor was the mighty nation of Egypt. (Exodus 1:13, 14) For years, the Israelites waited for God to bring an end to the Egyptian tyranny. Eventually, God's due time for action arrived. (Exodus 3:7-10) The Bible reports that God personally waged war against the Egyptians. He beset Egypt with a series of devastating plagues, and then he destroyed Egypt's king and his army in the Red Sea. (Psalm 136:15) Jehovah God proved to be “a powerful warrior” in behalf of his people.—Exodus 15:3, 4.



The fact that God himself waged war against the Egyptians shows that he is not against all warfare. On other occasions, he authorized his people Israel to wage war. For example, he commanded them to wage war against the Canaanites, who were exceedingly wicked. (Deuteronomy 9:5; 20:17, 18) He directed Israel's King David to war against the oppressive Philistines. God even provided David with a battle strategy that ensured victory.—2 Samuel 5:17-25.

Those Bible accounts reveal that when certain forms of wickedness and oppression threatened the Israelites, God authorized warfare for the protection of his people and the preservation of true worship. But note the following three key points about such God-ordained warfare.

**1. GOD ALONE DETERMINED WHO WOULD ENGAGE IN WARFARE.** On one occasion, God told the Israelites: “You will not need to fight this battle.” The reason? God himself would wage war in their behalf. (2 Chronicles 20:17; 32:7, 8) He did so many times, such as on the occasion mentioned at the outset of this article. At other times, God commanded his people in ancient Israel to fight in wars that he approved, namely, those that involved securing and defending their Promised Land.—Deuteronomy 7:1, 2; Joshua 10:40.

**2. GOD ALONE DETERMINED WHEN SUCH WARFARE WOULD TAKE PLACE.** God's servants were to wait patiently for God's appointed time to war against the oppression and wickedness that sur-



rounded them. Until then, they were not to take it upon themselves to engage in war. When they did, they lost divine approval. In fact, the Bible shows that when the Israelites presumed to engage in warfare that God had not authorized, the results were often disastrous.\*

### 3. GOD TAKES NO PLEASURE IN THE DEATH OF HUMANS, INCLUDING THE WICKED.

Jehovah God is the Source of life and the Creator of human-kind. (Psalm 36:9) Therefore, he does not desire to see people die. Sadly, though, there are people who wickedly scheme to oppress and even kill others. (Psalm 37:12, 14) To halt such evil, God has at times authorized warfare against the wicked. And yet, throughout the years that he had the Israelites engage in such wars, he was still “merciful” and “slow to anger” toward Israel’s oppressors. (Psalm 86:15) For example, he decreed that before the Israelites warred against a city, they were to “announce to it terms of peace,” in order to give the inhabitants an opportunity to change their ways and avoid war. (Deuteronomy 20:10-13) In this way, God showed that he takes “no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that someone wicked changes his way and keeps living.”—Ezekiel 33:11, 14-16.#

From the foregoing we see that in the ancient past, God viewed warfare as a legitimate means of bringing an end to various forms of oppression and wickedness. But it was God—not humans—who rightfully determined *when* such war-

fare was to take place and *who* was to be involved. And did God wage war eagerly, in a bloodthirsty way? Quite the contrary. He actually hates violence. (Psalm 11:5) Did God’s view of war change when his Son, Jesus Christ, began his ministry in the first century?

Though God waged war against the Canaanites, he spared some, such as Rahab and her family



\* For example, on one occasion, the Israelites suffered defeat when they engaged in war with the Amalekites and Canaanites after God had ordered them not to do so. (Numbers 14:41-45) Many years later, faithful King Josiah engaged in a battle without divine approval, and this rash action cost him his life.—2 Chronicles 35:20-24.

# The Israelites did not announce terms of peace before warring against the Canaanites. Why not? Because the Canaanites had been given 400 years to correct their wicked ways. By the time the Israelites came to war against them, the Canaanites, as a group, were incorrigibly wicked. (Genesis 15:13-16) Thus, they were to be completely annihilated. However, individual Canaanites who changed their ways were spared.—Joshua 6:25; 9:3-27.

# God's View of War

## IN THE FIRST CENTURY

The people were being oppressed. Like their ancestors, first-century Jews no doubt prayed repeatedly to God for relief, this time from the oppressive yoke of the Roman Empire. Then they heard of Jesus. Would he prove to be the foretold Messiah? Not surprisingly, many “were hoping that this man was the one who was going to deliver Israel” from their Roman oppressors. (Luke 24:21) But no relief came. Instead, in 70 C.E., Roman armies came and destroyed Jerusalem and its temple.

What happened? Why did God not fight for the Jews, as he had in the past? Or why did he not authorize them to engage in warfare to free themselves from oppression? Had God's view of war changed? No. But something had drastically changed regarding the Jews. They had rejected God's Son, Jesus, as the Messiah. (Acts 2:36) Therefore, as a nation, they lost their special relationship with God.—Matthew 23:37, 38.

The Jewish nation and its Promised Land no longer enjoyed divine protection, nor could the Jews ever again rightly claim to engage in warfare that had God's approval or backing. As Jesus foretold, the blessings associated with having God's favor had been transferred from the fleshly nation of Israel to a new nation, a spiritual nation, later referred to in the Bible as “the Israel of God.” (Galatians 6:16; Matthew 21:43) The congregation of spirit-anointed Christians proved to be the spiritual Israel of God. Pointedly, in the first century, they were told: “Now *you* are God's people.”—1 Peter 2:9, 10.

Since first-century Christians were now “God's people,” did God fight in their behalf, so as to free them from Roman oppression? Or did he authorize them to wage war against their oppressors? No, he did not. Why not? When it comes

to God-ordained warfare, God alone determines *when* such warfare is to take place, as the preceding article showed. God did not fight battles for first-century Christians, nor did he authorize them to engage in secular warfare. Clearly, the first century was not God's time to war against wickedness and oppression.

Thus, like God's servants of the ancient past, those first-century Christians were to wait until God's time to bring an end to wickedness and oppression. In the meantime, they were not authorized by God to take it upon themselves to engage in warfare against their enemies. Jesus Christ made this clear in his teachings. For example, he did not direct his followers to engage in warfare, but instead he told them: “Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those who persecute you.” (Matthew 5:44) Foretelling the time when first-century Jerusalem would be attacked by Roman armies, Jesus instructed his disciples, not to stay and fight, but to flee—which they did.—Luke 21:20, 21.

Additionally, under inspiration the apostle Paul wrote: “Do not avenge yourselves, . . . for it is written: ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay,’ says Jehovah.” (Romans 12:19) Paul was quoting what God had stated centuries earlier as recorded at Leviti-

cus 19:18 and Deuteronomy 32:35. As seen in the preceding article, one way God avenged his people in ancient times was by aiding them in waging war against their enemies. Thus Paul's words show that God's view of warfare had not changed. In the first century, God still viewed war as a legitimate way to avenge his servants and bring an end to various forms of oppression and wickedness. However, as was true in the past, God alone deter-

mined *when* such warfare was to take place and *who* was to be involved.

Clearly, God did not authorize Christians in the first century to fight in wars. But what about today? Has God authorized any group of people today to engage in warfare? Or is now the time for God to step in and wage war in behalf of his servants? Just how does God view war today? The final article in this series will answer those questions.

## God's View of War TODAY

Today people are being oppressed. Many repeatedly cry out to God for relief and wonder if relief will ever come. Does God hear their cries for help? And what about those who resort to warfare to bring an end to their oppression? Does God support their efforts, viewing their warfare as justifiable?

First, take comfort in this truth: God sees the suffering in the world today, and he intends to do something about it. (Psalm 72:13, 14) In his Word, the Bible, God promises that those "who suffer tribulation will be given relief." When? "At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels . . . as he brings vengeance on those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus." (2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8) This revelation of Jesus will take place in the future in what the Bible calls "the war of the great day of God the Almighty," also known as Armageddon.—Revelation 16:14, 16.

In that future war, God will use, not humans, but his Son, Jesus Christ, along with other powerful spirit creatures to wage war against the wicked. The heavenly forces will bring an end to all oppression.—Isaiah 11:4; Revelation 19:11-16.

To this day, God's view of war has not changed. He still views war as a legitimate means of bringing an end to oppression and wickedness. But as has been true throughout history, it is God alone who rightly determines *when* such warfare is to take place and *who* is to be involved. As we have seen, God has already determined that the war to end wickedness and to avenge the oppressed is a



Armageddon will be the war to end all wars

future war and that it will be fought by his Son, Jesus Christ. This means that the wars being fought in the earth today do not have God's approval, no matter how noble the cause may appear to be.

To illustrate: Imagine two siblings who begin fighting while their father is away. They temporarily stop fighting and call their father on the telephone. One sibling claims that the other started the fight, while the other claims that he was being mistreated. Both appeal to their father, each hoping for his support in the dispute. However, after hearing both sides, the father tells them to stop fighting and to wait for him to settle the matter when he gets home. For a while the two siblings wait. Soon, though, they are fighting again. When the father gets home, he is not pleased with either child and punishes them both for not obeying him.

Today, warring nations often appeal to God for support. But God does not take sides in today's wars. Instead, in his Word, the Bible, he clearly states: "Return evil for evil to no one," and, "Do not avenge yourselves." (Romans 12:17, 19) Moreover, he has made known that mankind should "wait patiently for him" to take action, which he will do at Armageddon. (Psalm 37:7, footnote) When the nations fail to wait for God to act and instead resort to warfare, he views such wars as

presumptuous acts of aggression that bring his displeasure. Thus, at Armageddon, God will express his indignation and settle the nations' disputes once and for all by "bringing an end to wars throughout the earth." (Psalm 46:9; Isaiah 34:2) Indeed, Armageddon will be the war to end all wars.

The end of warfare is one of the many blessings of God's Kingdom. Jesus spoke of that government in this well-known prayer: "Let your Kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also on earth." (Matthew 6:10) Not only will God's Kingdom eliminate all war but it will eliminate the root cause of war, wickedness.\* (Psalm 37:9, 10, 14, 15) Little wonder that Jesus' followers eagerly look forward to the blessings of God's Kingdom. —2 Peter 3:13.

How long, though, must we wait for God's Kingdom to bring an end to all suffering, oppression, and wickedness? The fulfillment of Bible prophecies indicates that we are living in "the last days" of this system of things. (2 Timothy 3:1-5)<sup>#</sup> Soon, God's Kingdom will bring an end to these last days with the war of Armageddon.

As noted earlier, those who perish in this final war will be those who refuse to "obey the good news about our Lord Jesus." (2 Thessalonians 1:8) But recall, God takes no pleasure in the death of anyone, including the wicked. (Ezekiel 33:11) Because "he does not desire anyone to be destroyed" in this final war, he is now seeing to it that the good news about our Lord Jesus is being "preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations" before the end comes. (2 Peter 3:8, 9; Matthew 24:14; 1 Timothy 2:3, 4) Yes, by means of the global preaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses, people today have an opportunity to get to know God, to obey the good news about Jesus, and to live to see the day when war will be no more. ■

\* God's Kingdom will also eliminate mankind's enemy death. As noted in the article on page 16, God will resurrect countless people, including many throughout history who have been victims of war.

<sup>#</sup> For more information on the last days, see chapter 9 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses.







AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN WALL PAINTING  
SHOWING A BARBER AT WORK

© James Morris/Art Resource, NY

## Why did Joseph shave before seeing Pharaoh?

According to the Genesis account, Pharaoh ordered that the Hebrew prisoner Joseph be quickly brought before him to interpret his troubling dreams. By this time, Joseph had been imprisoned for a number of years. Despite the urgency of Pharaoh's summons, Joseph took the time to shave. (Genesis 39:20-23; 41:1, 14) That the writer mentions this seemingly insignificant detail at all shows that he was familiar with Egyptian customs.

Letting one's beard grow was the norm among many ancient nations, including the Hebrews. In contrast, "the ancient Egyptians were the only Oriental nation who objected to wearing the beard," says McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*.

Was shaving limited to the beard? The magazine *Biblical Archaeology Review* suggests that some Egyptian ceremonial customs required a man to prepare to appear before Pharaoh as he would to enter a temple. In such a case, Joseph would have had to shave all the hair of his head and body. ■

## The Acts account says that Timothy's father was a Greek. Does this mean that he came from Greece?

Not necessarily. In his inspired writings, the apostle Paul sometimes contrasted Jews with Greeks, or Hellenes, as if using the Greeks to represent all non-Jewish peoples. (Romans 1:16; 10:12) One of the reasons for this was doubtless the extensive use of the Greek language and Greek culture through the areas in which Paul preached.

Whom did the ancients consider to be Greek? In the fourth century B.C.E., the Athenian orator Isocrates, for one, spoke proudly of the way Greek culture was spreading in the world. He noted that as a result, "those are called Greeks that have had the advantage of our education, rather than the natives of Greece." It is thus possible, although by no means certain, that Timothy's non-Jewish father and others whom Paul referred to as Greeks were Greek by culture and not by birth.—Acts 16:1. ■





AS TOLD BY PAWEŁ PYZARA

YEAR BORN

1982

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

POLAND

HISTORY

PURSUED VIOLENCE, DRUGS,  
AND A PRESTIGIOUS CAREER



# I thought that I was living my life to the full

**MY PAST:** I was born in a small town in Poland, not far from the German border. Surrounded by farms and forests, I had a peaceful life. My loving parents encouraged me to live a good life, do well in school, and pursue a prestigious career.

My troubles began when I went to study law at a university in the city of Wrocław. Away from my parents, I chose harmful associates. I had always liked soccer, but under the influence of my new associates, I became a true fanatic. My favorite team came from Warsaw, and on weekends I followed them no matter where they were playing. Those trips featured heavy drinking, drug abuse, and occasional violent fights with supporters of the opposing team. I viewed this as an escape from the stress of daily life, though I knew that getting arrested by the police could ruin my law career.

My friends and I liked to visit clubs and discos. Once there, we often became involved in street fights. I was arrested by the police several times, but I always managed to avoid serious trouble with the law—sometimes by means of a bribe. I really thought I was living life to the full. Even so, deep down I knew that what I was doing was wrong. I went to church every Sunday in an attempt to ease my conscience.

**HOW THE BIBLE CHANGED MY LIFE:** In 2004, two of Jehovah’s Witnesses knocked on my door, and I agreed to discuss the Bible with them. As I learned more about what it means to be a true Christian, my conscience really began to bother me. I knew that I should stop drinking heavily, taking drugs, and associating with people who did not live by Bible standards. I also saw that I needed to transform my aggressive, violent personality. Although I realized that I needed to change, I found myself continuing down the wrong path.

A turning point came one night when I started a fight with eight men. I remember lying on the street, being punched and kicked in the head. Feeling that I was close to death, I prayed: “I’m sorry, Jehovah, for not taking your Word seriously. If I survive, I promise to study the Bible with the Witnesses and sort

out my life.” To my surprise, I did survive. I kept my promise to study the Bible.

In 2006, I moved to England. My goal was to earn enough money to return to Poland and gain a higher law degree. As I continued studying the Bible, one scripture made a huge impression on me. The apostle Paul wrote: “I do indeed also consider all things to be loss on account of the excellent value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have taken the loss of all things and I consider them as a lot of refuse, that I may gain Christ.” (Philippians 3:8) Like me, the apostle Paul had received a law education—and he too had been a very violent man. (Acts 8:3) Yet he came to see that there was a better way to live: serving God and doing his best to imitate Jesus. When I meditated on Paul’s example, I realized that a lucrative career and violent conduct were not keys to happiness. I became convinced that if Paul could change, so could I. So I decided to stay in England and forget about pursuing a further law degree.

The more I learned about Jehovah, the more I felt drawn to him. I was touched by his promise to forgive those who sincerely want to make changes. (Acts 2:38) And when I meditated on 1 John

**I wanted to be part of the happy brotherhood that the Witnesses enjoy**



Esther and I find real joy in teaching Polish-speaking people about the Bible

4:16, which says that “God is love,” I began to discern why God hates violence.

I was also impressed by the conduct of the Witnesses. It was obvious to me that they try to live by the Bible’s high moral standards. I wanted to be part of the happy brotherhood that they enjoy. After some struggles and adjustments in my life, I was baptized as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses in 2008.

**HOW I HAVE BENEFITED:** The Bible has transformed me from an ambitious, violent, drug-abusing, heavy-drinking soccer fanatic into a servant of God who enjoys teaching others about the Bible. I still like to watch soccer, but I am determined to keep such entertainment in its proper place.

I am now happily married to Esther, a beautiful fellow worshipper of Jehovah. We find real joy in teaching the Bible to Polish-speaking people here in northwest England. For the first time in my life, I feel true satisfaction. I have a clean conscience and a full, meaningful life. ■



## “My Beloved and Faithful Child in the Lord”

**T**IMOTHY strode steadily along the road leading away from home, his eyes eagerly focused on what lay ahead. His companions led the way as they traversed the fields Timothy knew so well. Slowly receding behind them was the city of Lystra, which sat atop a low hill on the valley floor. Timothy smiled as he thought of his mother and grandmother, beaming with pride and hiding their tears as they watched him go. Should he turn and wave—one last time?

Now and again, the apostle Paul would turn to Timothy and smile encouragingly. He knew that Timothy still had a measure of shyness to overcome, but he was pleased to see the young man’s enthusiasm. Timothy was quite young, perhaps still in his late teens or early twenties, and he had tremendous respect and affection for Paul. Now Timothy was following this dynamic and faithful man on a journey that would take him hundreds of miles from home. They would travel on foot and by ship, facing countless dangers on the way. Timothy could not really know whether he would ever see his home again.

What led the young man to pursue such a course of life? What rewards could make such sacrifices worthwhile? And how can Timothy’s faith influence our own?

### “FROM INFANCY”

Let us go back in time two or three years, and let us assume—as seems probable—that Lystra was Timothy’s hometown. It was a small, rustic town

in a secluded, well-watered valley. The people may have understood the Greek language, but they still spoke the local tongue, Lycaonian. One day, the quiet town was in an uproar. Two Christian missionaries, the apostle Paul and his traveling companion, Barnabas, arrived from Iconium, a larger city nearby. As they preached in public, Paul caught sight of a crippled man who showed evidence of real faith. So Paul performed a miracle and healed the man!—Acts 14:5-10.

Many of the people of Lystra evidently believed in local legends about gods disguised as humans coming to the region in times past. So the people mistook Paul for Hermes and Barnabas for Zeus! The two humble Christians could barely restrain the people from sacrificing to them.—Acts 14:11-18.

To a few in Lystra, though, that occasion was no visit from mythical pagan gods; it was something real and wonderful. For instance, Eunice, a Jewish woman married to an unbelieving Greek man,\* along with her mother, Lois, surely listened to Paul and Barnabas with great eagerness and joy. Here at last was the news that every faithful Jew longed to hear—the Messiah had come and had fulfilled many prophecies written about him in the Scriptures!

Imagine how Timothy was affected by Paul’s visit. Timothy had been trained “from infancy” to love the holy writings of the Hebrew Scriptures.

\* See “Did You Know?” in this issue.





(2 Timothy 3:15) Like his mother and grandmother, he could see that Paul and Barnabas spoke the truth about the Messiah. And think of the crippled man that Paul healed. Why, from boyhood Timothy had probably seen that man countless times on the streets of Lystra. Now Timothy could see the man walking for the first time! No wonder that Eunice and Lois became Christians, as did Timothy. To this day, grandparents and parents can learn much from Lois and Eunice. Can you be an influence for good on the young?

### **“THROUGH MANY TRIBULATIONS”**

Those who became Christian disciples in Lystra must have been thrilled to learn of the hope that was held out to Christ’s followers. But they learned, too, that discipleship would exact a price. Fanatic Jewish opposers from Iconium and Antioch came into town, and they stirred up those volatile people, turning them against Paul and Barnabas. Before long, violent crowds came after Paul, hurling stones at him. Struck repeatedly, he fell to the ground. The mob dragged him outside the city and left him for dead.—Acts 14:19.

However, the disciples in Lystra went out to Paul, surrounding him. How relieved they must

have been when he stirred, got up, and then courageously went right back into Lystra! The next day, he and Barnabas left for the town of Derbe to continue their preaching. After making new disciples there as well, they again braved danger and *returned* to Lystra. To what end? “They strengthened the disciples,” the account tells us, “encouraging them to remain in the faith.” Imagine young Timothy listening, wide-eyed, as Paul and Barnabas taught those Christians that their glorious hope for the future was well worth the present cost. They said: “We must enter into the Kingdom of God through many tribulations.”—Acts 14:20-22.

Timothy had seen Paul live up to those words, facing tribulation bravely in order to share the good news with others. So Timothy knew that if he followed Paul’s example, the people of Lystra would oppose him, and his own father might oppose him as well. But Timothy was not going to allow such pressures to influence his decision about how to serve God. Today, there are many young people like Timothy. Wisely, they seek out friends with strong faith, who will encourage and strengthen them. And they do not let opposition turn them away from serving the true God!

Timothy opened his heart to the teachings of the apostle Paul



## **“HE WAS WELL-REPORTED-ON BY THE BROTHERS”**

As mentioned earlier, Paul’s next visit probably came two or three years later. Picture the excitement in Timothy’s household when Paul arrived, this time accompanied by Silas. It was surely a joyful time for Paul too. He could see for himself what had come from the seeds of truth that he had sown in Lystra. There were Lois and Eunice, her daughter, now loyal Christian women, full of that “unhypocritical faith” that Paul so admired. (2 Timothy 1:5) And what of young Timothy?

Paul learned that the young man had matured admirably since the previous visit. Timothy was “well-reported-on by the brothers,” not only in Lystra but also in Iconium, about 20 miles (32 km) to the northeast. (Acts 16:2) How had he built up such a reputation?

“The holy writings” that Timothy had been taught “from infancy” by his mother and grandmother included sound, practical counsel for young people. (2 Timothy 3:15) Here is one example: “Remember, then, your Grand Creator in the days of your youth.” (Ecclesiastes 12:1) Those words took on a deeper meaning after Timothy embraced Christianity. He saw that the best way for him to remember his Grand Creator included sharing the good news about God’s Son, the Christ. Timothy gradually learned to overcome any natural shyness that held him back and to be bold in telling others the good news about Jesus Christ.

The men taking the lead in the congregations noticed Timothy’s progress. No doubt they were touched to see how the youth built up and encouraged everyone around him. More important, though, is that Jehovah noticed Timothy. God inspired some prophecies to be made about him—perhaps relating to the kind of service he would one day render to many congregations. When Paul visited, he saw that Timothy could be a helpful traveling companion on missionary journeys. The brothers in Lystra agreed. They laid their hands on the young man, a gesture that signified that he was

appointed to a special post of service to Jehovah God.—1 Timothy 1:18; 4:14.

Timothy, we may well imagine, was awed and humbled by this great trust and responsibility. He was prepared to go.\* How, though, did Timothy’s unbelieving father react to his son’s new calling to be a traveling Christian minister? He probably had very different things in mind for his son’s future. What about Timothy’s mother and grandmother? Did they glow with pride while trying to hide their concerns for the young man’s safety? That would only be natural.

What is certain is that Timothy went. On the morning described at the outset of this article, he took up a life of traveling with the apostle Paul. As he left Lystra behind, every crunch of the pebbles under his sandals, every rustle of the grass he trampled, meant another step toward the unknown and away from his home. After a long day of walking, the three men reached Iconium. Timothy then began to observe how Paul and Silas passed on the latest directions from the governing body in Jerusalem and worked to build up the faith of the believers in Iconium. (Acts 16:4, 5) But that was only the beginning.

After visiting the congregations in Galatia, the missionaries left the broad, paved Roman roads and walked hundreds of miles across the vast tablelands of Phrygia, heading north and then west. Ever following the direction of God’s holy spirit, they made their way to Troas, boarded a ship, and sailed to Macedonia. (Acts 16:6-12) By then, Paul saw just how useful Timothy was. Paul was able to leave Timothy in Beroea with Silas. (Acts 17:14) He even sent the young man alone to Thessalonica. There Timothy imitated the examples he had observed so keenly, and he built up the faithful Christians there.—1 Thessalonians 3:1-3.

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\* Timothy was even willing to submit to circumcision at Paul’s request—not because that was a requirement for Christians but because Paul did not want to give the Jews to whom they would preach any reasons to object to the presence of this young man whose father was a Gentile.—Acts 16:3.

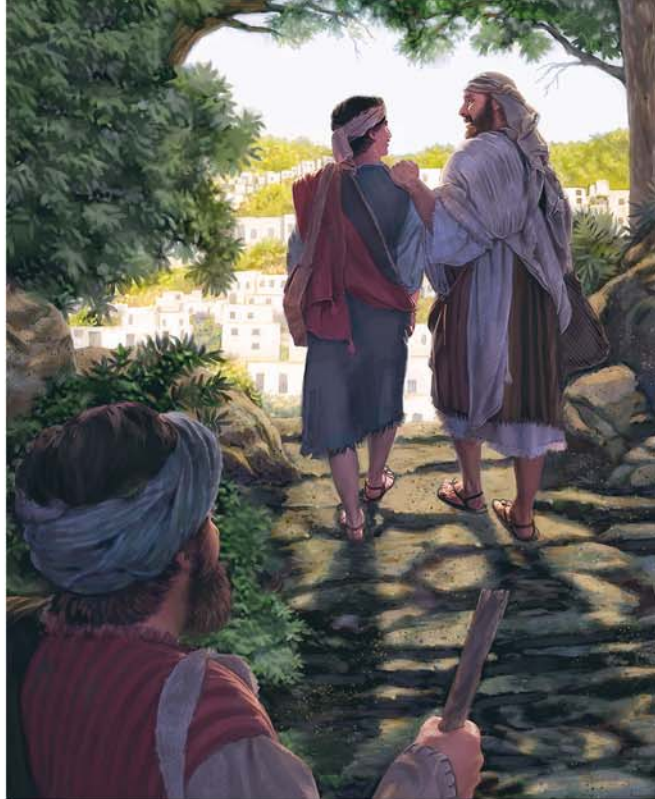
Paul later wrote about Timothy: “I have no one else of a disposition like his who will genuinely care for your concerns.” (Philippians 2:20) That reputation did not come about by accident. Timothy earned it through hard work, humble service, and faithful endurance under difficult challenges. What a remarkable example for young people today! Never forget that your reputation is largely in your own hands. If you are young, you have a marvelous opportunity to make a name for yourself by putting Jehovah God first in your life and treating others with kindness and respect.

### **“DO YOUR UTMOST TO COME TO ME”**

Over a period of about 14 years, Timothy spent a great deal of time working with the apostle Paul, his friend. He shared many of the dangers of Paul’s work and many of the joys as well. (2 Corinthians 11:24-27) At some point, Timothy was even imprisoned for his faith. (Hebrews 13:23) He also shared Paul’s deep and heartfelt love and concern for his Christian brothers and sisters. Paul thus wrote to him: “I remember your tears.” (2 Timothy 1:4) Like Paul, it seems that Timothy learned to “weep with those who weep,” empathizing with them so that he could better encourage and comfort them. (Romans 12:15) May each of us learn to do the same!

Not surprisingly, Timothy in time became an outstanding Christian overseer. Paul entrusted him with the responsibility not only to visit congregations to strengthen and encourage them but also to appoint men who qualified to serve as congregation elders and ministerial servants.—1 Timothy 5:22.

Paul was very fond of Timothy, giving much helpful counsel and fatherly advice to the younger man. He urged Timothy to nurture his spiritual gifts and to keep growing, making advancement. (1 Timothy 4:15, 16) He encouraged Timothy never to let his youth—and perhaps some natural diffidence—hold him back when it was time to take a firm stand for what is right. (1 Timothy 1:3; 4:6, 7, 11, 12) Paul even offered him advice on how to



At a young age, Timothy began a life devoted to the Christian ministry

deal with the frequent cases of sickness that beset the young man, possibly a recurring stomach ailment.—1 Timothy 5:23.

The time came when Paul knew that the end of his life was near; evidently a death by execution lay just ahead of him. He sent one final inspired letter to Timothy. It included the touching words: “Do your utmost to come to me shortly.” (2 Timothy 4:9) Paul dearly loved Timothy; he called him “my beloved and faithful child in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 4:17) No wonder that he wanted his friend by his side as the end approached! Each of us may well ask, ‘Do people seek me out as a source of comfort when they face trouble?’

Was Timothy able to reach Paul in time? We do not know. We do know that he always did his utmost to give Paul and many others comfort and encouragement. He lived up to the meaning of the name Timothy, “One Who Honors God.” And he left an outstanding example of faith for all of us, young and old, to imitate. ■



SURELY THE CREATOR OF LIFE CAN RESTORE LIFE

## Will the dead live again?

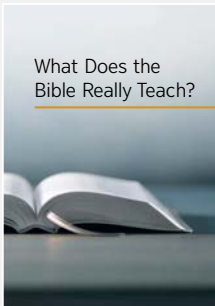
Jehovah God is the Source of life. (Psalm 36:9) Does it not seem reasonable, then, that the same God could restore life to those who have died? The Bible assures us that he will do just that in the future. **(Read Acts 24:15)** But why will he do so?

Our Creator originally intended for man to live forever on earth. (Genesis 1:31; 2:15-17) This is still what he wants for mankind. It pains him to see what we deal with now—lives that are full of trouble and that end all too quickly.—**Read Job 14:1, 14, 15.**

## Where will the resurrected live?

Did God create man to live in heaven? No. God created angels to live in heaven. He made humans to live on the earth. (Genesis 1:28; Job 38:4, 7) With that in mind, consider the resurrections Jesus performed. He restored people to life right here on earth. Likewise, most of those resurrected in the future will return to life *on the earth*.—**Read John 5:28, 29; 11:44.**

However, God has chosen a few people to be resurrected to life in heaven, where they will have spirit bodies. (Luke 12:32; 1 Corinthians 15:49, 50) Those resurrected to heaven will rule as kings with Christ over the earth.—**Read Revelation 5:9, 10.**



For more information, see chapter 7 of this book, published by Jehovah's Witnesses

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