

DECEMBER 15, 2007

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



Will You Act With
Compassion?

THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellow men and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in God's now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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Compassion in a Cruel World

A MAN in Burundi falls seriously ill with malaria. He urgently needs to be transferred to a hospital. But how? No car is available to take him. Two of his close friends come to his aid. They put him on a bicycle and push him for five grueling hours over mountainous terrain. They get him to a bus that takes him to the nearest hospital. A few days later, he is significantly better.

On the other side of the globe, in the af-

termath of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated the Gulf area of the United States in August 2005, a group of volunteers chance upon a house crushed under fallen trees. The volunteers, complete strangers to the owner of the house, spend the whole day removing fallen trees and debris with chain saws. "I can't thank these [people] enough," says the owner.

Sensational media reports tend to emphasize atrocities and acts of brutality. Daily acts of compassion and kindness are often eclipsed by these accounts. This, however, does not change the fact that people everywhere are desperate for love, affection, and sympathy. We hunger for compassion! Such sentiments may be more common during the Christmas season, when many speak or sing about 'peace and good will toward men.'—Luke 2:14, King James Version.

- Is it a weakness to show compassion?
- Does compassion have power?
- In what practical ways can you show sympathy?

Showing compassion may not be easy in a world that seems predominantly cold and inhospitable. The prevalent attitude is that ruthlessness and insensitivity pave the way for success and triumph. Many appear to live by the creed ascribed to Niccolò Machiavelli—it is more prudent to be cruel than compassionate. Greed and egotism easily cut off the flow of compassion.

As a result, many put themselves first,

even at the cost of other people's feelings or interests. Male sports and entertainment heroes are often presented as "real men" (*machos*) who do not show gentle affection. Some political rulers behave similarly.

Therefore, we do well to ask: Why should we be sympathetic? Is compassion a power for good? And what can help us to show compassion? The following article will discuss these questions.

Become “Tenderly Compassionate”

NEVER before have so many of our fellow humans been in such dire need of compassionate help as they face famine, sickness, poverty, crime, civil strife, and natural disasters. Compassion denotes a sympathetic awareness of another's suffering or adversity combined with a desire to alleviate it. Like the warm rays of the bright sun, compassion can soothe a distressed soul, lessen pain, and lift the spirits of an afflicted person.

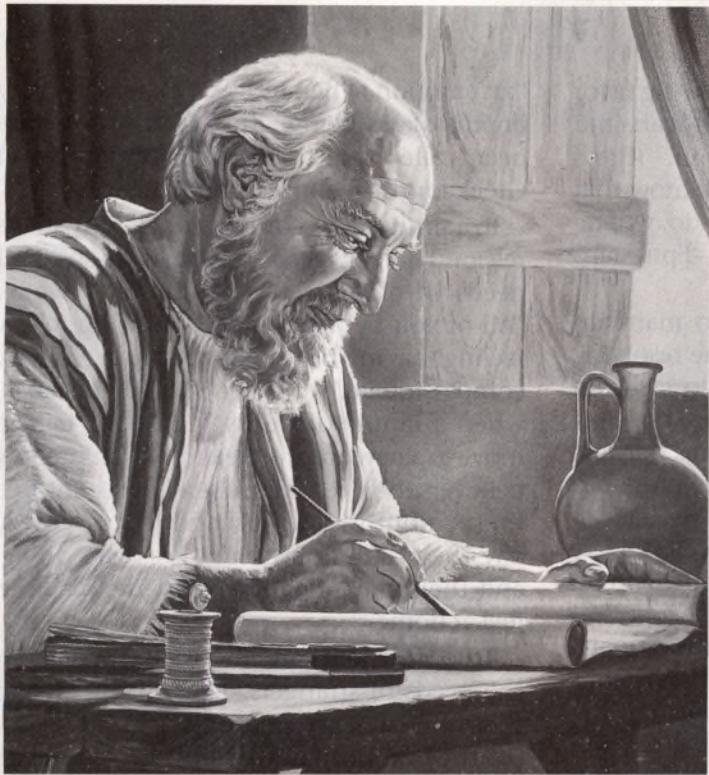
We can show compassion by our actions and our words—caring for others and being there when they need us. It is good not to limit compassion to family, friends, and acquaintances. We can widen out to include people whom we do not even know. "If you love those loving you, what reward do you have?" asked Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. This compassionate man also said: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them."—Matthew 5:46, 47; 7:12.

You can read these words—known as the Golden Rule—in the Holy Scriptures.

Many agree that the Bible is the ultimate guide to showing compassion. The Scriptures repeatedly express our obligation to help those who, for whatever reason, cannot help themselves. The Bible presents its Author and our Creator, Jehovah God, as the one who is preeminently compassionate.

For example, we read: "[God] defends the rights of orphans and widows. He cares for foreigners and gives them food and clothing." (Deuteronomy 10:18, *Contemporary English Version*) Jehovah God is described as "executing judgment for the defrauded ones, the One giving bread to the hungry ones." (Psalm 146:7) Regarding disadvantaged immigrants, Jehovah decreed: "The alien resident . . . should become to you like a native of yours; and you must love him as yourself."—Leviticus 19:34.

Displaying compassion, however, does not always come naturally. The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians at Colossae: "Strip off the old personality with its practices, and clothe yourselves with the new personality, which through accurate knowledge is being



Paul urged Christians at Colossae to clothe themselves with the tender affections of compassion

made new according to the image of the One who created it . . . As God's chosen ones, holy and loved, clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion."—Colossians 3:9, 10, 12.

Thus, cultivating a compassionate attitude takes effort. That attitude is a part of "the new personality" that Christians are expected to put on. Paul lived in the brutal world of ancient Rome. He encouraged his fellow believers to make drastic changes in their personality in order for them to become more sympathetic, more compassionate.

The Power of Compassion

Some people view those who show compassion as weak and vulnerable. Is such a perception correct?

Not at all! The real force behind genuine compassion is deep love, which originates with God, the personification of that quality. "God is love." (1 John 4:16) Jehovah is rightly called "the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort." (2 Corinthians 1:3) The expression rendered "tender mercies" basically means "pity, compassion for the ills of others." Why, Jehovah "is kind toward the unthankful and wicked!"—Luke 6:35.

Our Creator requires that we too show kindly qualities, such as compassion. We read at Micah 6:8: "He has told you, O earthling man, what is good. And what is Jehovah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness?" At Proverbs 19:22, we read: "The desirable thing in earthling man is his loving-kindness." God's Son, Jesus Christ, who perfectly reflected the personality of his Father, similarly admonished his followers: "Continue becoming merciful, just as your Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36) *The Jerusalem Bible* renders this exhortation: "Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate."

There is a good reason to be like that, since compassion has the power to bestow rich rewards. We often see the truth of what is written at Proverbs 11:17: "A man of loving-kindness is dealing rewardingly with his own soul." When we show compassion to someone in need, God considers this a favor done to Him. He assumes the responsibility to repay kindness for any compassion his worshippers show. King Solomon stated

under inspiration: "He that is showing favor to the lowly one is lending to Jehovah, and his treatment He will repay to him." (Proverbs 19:17) And Paul wrote: "You know that each one, whatever good he may do, will receive this back from Jehovah."—Ephesians 6:8.

Compassion has the power to maintain harmony and to contribute to the resolving of conflict or friction. It helps to clear up misunderstandings, and it paves the way for forgiveness. Misunderstandings may occur because we do not always express our thoughts or feelings as we wish we had, or our actions might be misinterpreted. Here compassion comes to the rescue and helps to preserve peace. It is easy to forgive a person who is known for being compassionate. Compassion helps us to measure up to Paul's counsel for Christians: "Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another."—Colossians 3:13.

Compassion—Sympathy in Action

Moreover, compassion has the power to relieve affliction. As we have noted, it reflects a spirit of sympathy toward those in distress and causes us to suffer with those who suffer. Compassion involves tender regard for people in misery and positive action to help such ones.

By being sympathetic, Christians imitate Jesus. He was never too busy to help others in both material and spiritual ways. When he discerned that others were in need, he compassionately found a way to help.

Consider how Jesus reacted when he saw crowds of spiritually destitute people: "On seeing the crowds he felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9:36) Regarding the word here rendered "felt pity," one Bible scholar says that it denotes

"an emotion which moves a man to the very depths of his being." In fact, this word has been called one of the strongest words in Greek for the feeling of compassion.

In a similar way, compassionate Christians respond quickly to the material and spiritual needs of others. The apostle Peter wrote: "All of you be like-minded, showing fellow feeling, having brotherly affection, tenderly compassionate." (1 Peter 3:8) For instance, when a family of needy Christians had to move to a new area for health reasons, fellow believers there let them use a house rent-free for six months. The husband relates: "Every day they came to see how we were doing, and their encouraging comments made us feel at home."

True Christians are also concerned about the needs of strangers. They gladly give of their time, energy, and means to serve people they do not know. Jehovah's Witnesses made up the volunteers described in the preceding article who helped total strangers.

The Christian congregation is thus infused with an atmosphere of compassion and loving-kindness. Motivated by love, members of the congregation are energized to find ways to serve. Because of various personal problems, orphans and widows in the congregation may need your concern and empathy. Could you help such ones to cope with poverty, limited medical care, lack of adequate housing, or other personal difficulties?

Consider a couple in Greece. The husband suffered a stroke. He and his wife were taken to a hospital hundreds of miles away. Their meager income, however, depended on their orange grove being harvested. Who would do that while they were away at the hospital? The local congregation took action. They harvested and sold the oranges, providing a source of income for the



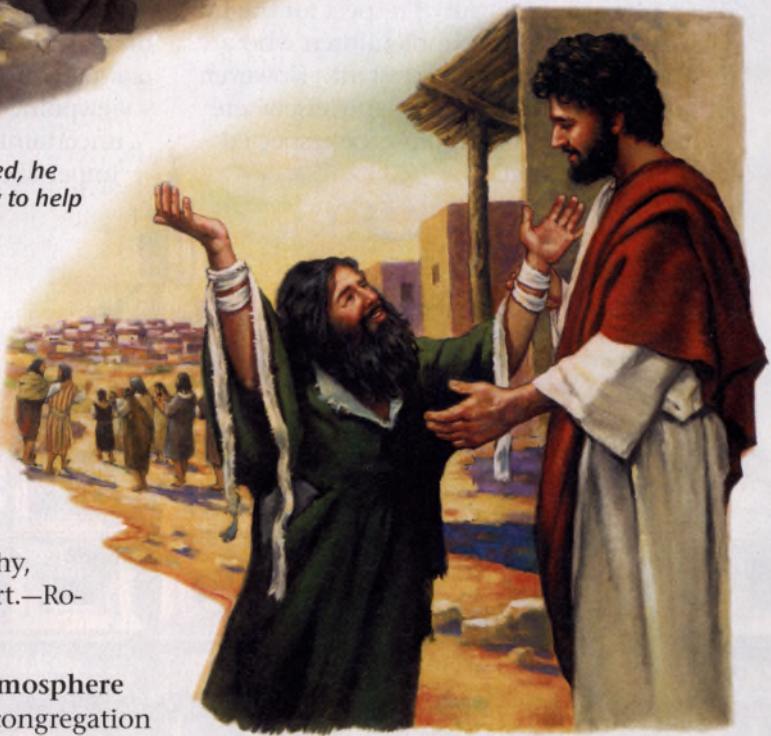
When Jesus discerned a need, he compassionately found a way to help

needy couple, as well as giving them peace of mind.

Compassion can be shown in many ways. For instance, compassionate Christians realize that at times the main thing some afflicted ones need is kindly visits from people who will listen with a sympathetic ear, show empathy, and provide Scriptural comfort.—Romans 12:15.

Enjoy a Compassionate Atmosphere

The worldwide Christian congregation has proved to be a haven of peace and comfort where compassion and kindness are shown. True Christians realize that compassion attracts, while ruthlessness repels. Thus, as they try to imitate their heavenly Father, they strive to be “tenderly compassionate” in practical ways.



Jehovah's Witnesses warmly invite you to experience the compassionate, loving, caring atmosphere that permeates their Christian community. They are certain that you will find that environment welcoming and appealing.—Romans 15:7.

CAN A PAGAN HOLIDAY BE MADE Christian?

DURING the winter of 2004, the Christmas season in Italy was marked by a lively debate. Some educators and teachers supported the idea of reducing to a minimum or even completely eliminating any reference to religious Christmas traditions. They advocated this out of respect for the increasing number of schoolchildren who are neither Catholic nor Protestant. However, others in scholastic circles and elsewhere demanded that the traditions be respected and fully preserved.

Aside from this controversy, though, just what are the origins of many of the Christmas traditions? As the debate was reaching a climax, the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* made some interesting observations.

Regarding the date when Christmas is celebrated, the Catholic newspaper said: "The real date of Jesus' birth, from the historical viewpoint, lies concealed beneath a veil of uncertainty as regards Roman history, the imperial census of that time and research



in the subsequent centuries. . . . The date of 25 December, as is well known, was chosen by the Church of Rome in the fourth century. This date in pagan Rome was dedicated to the Sun god . . . Although Christianity had already been affirmed in Rome by an Edict of Constantine, the myth of . . . the Sun god was still widespread, especially among soldiers. The above-mentioned festivities, centred on 25 December, were deeply rooted in popular tradition. This gave the Church of Rome the idea of impressing a Christian religious significance on the day by replacing the Sun god with the true Sun of Justice, Jesus Christ, choosing it as the day on which to celebrate his birth."

What about the Christmas tree, which is now part of the Catholic tradition?

The article in the Catholic newspaper pointed out that back in ancient times, many evergreens, such as "holly, butcher's broom, laurel and branches of pine or fir



The sun god

were considered to have magical or medicinal powers that would ward off illness." It went on to say: "On Christmas Eve, 24 December, Adam and Eve would be commemorated with the highly popular episode of the Tree of the earthly Paradise . . . The tree ought to have been an apple tree, but since an apple tree would have been inappropriate in winter, a fir tree was set on the stage and some apples put on its branches or, to symbolize the future coming of Redemption, wafers prepared with crushed biscuits in special

moulds that were symbols of the Eucharistic presence of Jesus, as well as sweets and gifts for children." What about after that time?

Mentioning that the tradition of using a Christmas tree first started in Germany in the 16th century, *L'Osservatore Romano* noted: "Italy was one of the last countries to accept the Christmas tree, partly because of a rather widespread rumour that the use of Christmas trees was a Protestant practice and should thus be replaced by the crib [the Nativity scene]." Pope Paul VI "began the tradition of setting up [in St. Peter's Square, Rome] a massive Christmas tree" near the Nativity scene.

Do you find it acceptable that a religious leader would give a seemingly Christian meaning to events and symbols whose roots go back to ancient paganism? As to the proper course, the Scriptures admonish true Christians: "What fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness?"—2 Corinthians 6:14-17.

*Christmas tree (opposite page) and
Nativity scene at the Vatican*



DO YOU HAVE A SPIRITUAL MENTOR?



AT THE tender age of 16, Uzziah became king of the southern kingdom of Judah. He reigned for over 50 years, from the late ninth to the early eighth century B.C.E. From a young age, Uzziah "kept doing what was right in Jehovah's eyes." What influenced him to take an upright course? The historical record states: "[Uzziah] continually tended to search for God in the days of Zechariah, the instructor in the fear of the true God; and, in the days of his searching for Jehovah, the true God made him prosperous."—2 Chronicles 26:1, 4, 5.

Not much is known about Zechariah, the adviser to the king, apart from this account in the Bible. Yet, as "the instructor in the fear of the true God," Zechariah exercised a fine influence on the young ruler to do what was right. *The Expositor's Bible* observes that Zechariah was obviously "a man versed in sacred learning, rich in spiritual experience, and able to communicate his knowledge." One Bible scholar concluded about Zechariah: "He was well versed in prophecy and . . . was an intelligent, devout, good man; and, it seems, had great influence with Uzziah."

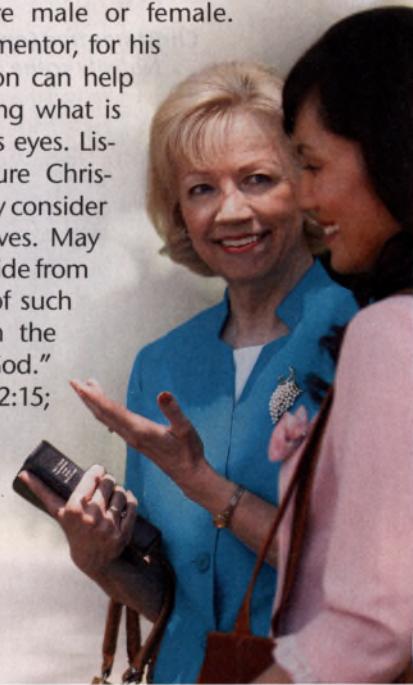
Uzziah's faithful course brought him many blessings, and he "displayed strength to an extraordinary degree" because "the true God continued to help him." Yes, success in his secular efforts followed his spiritual success "in the

days of Zechariah." (2 Chronicles 26:6-8) After Uzziah became successful, he left the teachings of Zechariah, his mentor. Uzziah's "heart became haughty even to the point of causing ruin, so that he acted unfaithfully against Jehovah." As a result of a particularly irreverent act, he was struck with a loathsome skin disease, which incapacitated him, so that he could no longer serve as king in the fullest sense.—2 Chronicles 26:16-21.

Do you have someone who might be called an instructor, a mentor, who influences you "to search for God"? This can be so whether you are young or past the days of your youth, whether you are male or female.

Treasure such a mentor, for his or her admonition can help you to keep doing what is right in Jehovah's eyes. Listen to this mature Christian, and seriously consider the advice he gives. May you never turn aside from the wise words of such an "instructor in the fear of the true God."

—Proverbs 1:5; 12:15; 19:20.



ARE YOU READY FOR JEHOVAH'S DAY?

"The great day of Jehovah is near. It is near, and there is a hurrying of it very much."

—ZEPHANIAH 1:14.

JEHOVAH'S great day is not 24 hours long. It is an extended period during which divine judgment is executed upon the wicked. The ungodly have reason to dread that day of darkness, fury, burning anger, distress, and desolation. (Isaiah 13:9; Amos 5:18-20; Zephaniah 1:15) "Alas for the day," says Joel's prophecy, "because the day of Jehovah is near, and like a despoiling from the Almighty One it will come!" (Joel 1:15) On that great day, however, God will be the Savior of those "upright in heart."—Psalm 7:10.

² The expression "day of Jehovah" applies to the execution of divine judgment at various times. For instance, a "day of Jehovah" came upon Jerusalem's residents at Babylonian hands in 607 B.C.E. (Zephaniah 1:4-7) A comparable execution of God's judgment occurred in 70 C.E. when God used the Romans to execute his judgment upon the Jewish nation that rejected his Son. (Daniel 9:24-27; John 19:15) The Bible also foretells a "day of Jehovah" when he will 'war against all the nations.' (Zechariah 14:1-3) Under inspiration, the apostle Paul associated that day with Christ's presence, which began with Jesus' enthronement as heavenly King in 1914. (2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2) With the day of Jehovah looming on the horizon, the yeartext of Jehovah's Witnesses for 2007 has been especially appropriate. Taken from Zephaniah 1:14, it reads: "The great day of Jehovah is near."

1-3. (a) What does the Bible say about Jehovah's day? (b) We face which "day of Jehovah"?

³ Since God's great day is near, now is the time to prove yourself ready. How can you prepare for that day? Do you need to take additional steps to get ready for Jehovah's day?

Prove Yourself Ready

⁴ In his prophecy regarding the conclusion of the system of things, Jesus Christ said to his disciples: "Prove yourselves ready." (Matthew 24:44) When Jesus made that statement, he himself was ready for a great test—his death as a ransom sacrifice. (Matthew 20:28) What can we learn from the way Jesus had prepared himself?

⁵ Jesus had wholehearted love for Jehovah and for His righteous standards. Concerning Jesus, Hebrews 1:9 states: "You loved righteousness, and you hated lawlessness. That is why God, your God, anointed you with the oil of exultation more than your partners." Because he loved his heavenly Father, Jesus maintained integrity to him. If we have similar love for God and live up to his requirements, he will safeguard us. (Psalm 31:23) Such love and obedience will help us to be ready for the great day of Jehovah.

⁶ Love for people was a notable feature of Jesus' personality. Indeed, "he felt pity for them, because they were skinned and

4. For what great test did Jesus prepare himself?

5, 6. (a) How does love for God and for people play a part in our being prepared for Jehovah's day? (b) Regarding love of neighbor, what example did Jesus set?

thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9:36) Consequently, Jesus preached the good news to the people, just as love motivates us to proclaim the Kingdom message to our neighbors. Love for God and for our neighbor keeps us active as Christian ministers and thus helps to prepare us for the great day of Jehovah.—Matthew 22:37-39.

⁷ Jesus delighted to do Jehovah's will. (Psalm 40:8) If we have the same attitude, we will find joy in rendering sacred service to God. Like Jesus, we will be unselfish givers, and this will make us truly happy. (Acts 20:35) Yes, "the joy of Jehovah is [our] stronghold." With it, we will be better prepared for God's great day.—Nehemiah 8:10.

⁸ Fervent prayer to God helped to prepare Jesus for tests of faith. He was praying when John baptized him. Jesus prayed for an entire night when he chose his apostles. (Luke 6:12-16) And what Bible reader is not impressed with Jesus' heartfelt prayers on the last night of his earthly life? (Mark 14:32-42; John 17:1-26) Are you a person of prayer, as Jesus was? Approach Jehovah often, linger in prayer, seek the direction of holy spirit, and be quick to accept that direction when it becomes evident. A strong relationship with our heavenly Father is vital at this critical time when God's great day is approaching rapidly. By all means, then, draw ever closer to Jehovah in prayer.—James 4:8.

⁹ Concern about the sanctification of Jehovah's holy name also helped Jesus to be prepared for the trials he faced. In fact, he taught his followers that their prayers to God should include the request: "Let your

name be sanctified." (Matthew 6:9) If we deeply desire that Jehovah's name be sanctified, or held sacred, we will strive to avoid doing anything that would bring reproach upon it. As a result, we will be better prepared for the great day of Jehovah.

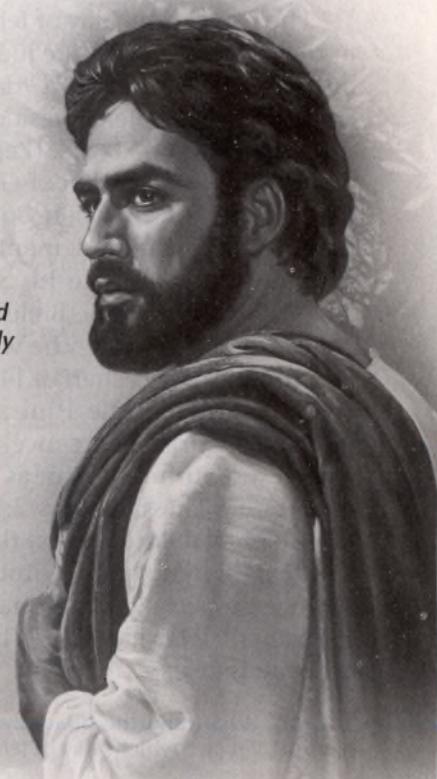
Should You Make Some Changes?

¹⁰ If Jehovah's day comes tomorrow, will you really be ready for it? Each of us would do well to examine his or her life to see if any actions or attitudes need to be adjusted. In view of the brevity and uncertainty of present human life, every one of us needs to be spiritually alert each day. (Ecclesiastes 9:11, 12; James 4:13-15) So let us consider some factors that may require attention in our lives.

10. Why is it appropriate to examine our life?

*Jesus proved
himself ready
for trials*

7. As we wait for Jehovah's day, why can we have joy?
8. Why should we draw closer to Jehovah in prayer?
9. How important is concern about the sanctification of Jehovah's name?



¹¹ One key factor is the admonition of ‘the faithful slave’ to read the Bible daily. (Matthew 24:45) You might make it your goal to read the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation meditatively once every year. By reading about four chapters a day, you can read the Bible’s 1,189 chapters in one year. Each king of Israel was to read Jehovah’s Law “all the days of his life.” Evidently, Joshua did something similar. (Deuteronomy 17:14-20; Joshua 1:7, 8) How important it is that spiritual shepherds read God’s Word daily, for this helps them to impart “healthful teaching”!—Titus 2:1.

¹² The nearness of Jehovah’s day should move you to attend Christian meetings regularly and participate in them as fully as possible. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) Doing so will help you to hone your skills as a Kingdom proclaimer who seeks to find and help those rightly disposed for everlasting life. (Acts 13: 48) Perhaps you could be more active in the congregation in other ways too, such as by helping the elderly and encouraging the young. How satisfying these efforts can be!

Your Relationship With Others

¹³ Since Jehovah’s day is imminent, do you need to make a greater effort to “put on the new personality which was created according to God’s will in true righteousness and loyalty”? (Ephesians 4:20-24) As you cultivate godly qualities, others are likely to see that you are ‘walking by God’s spirit’ and displaying its fruitage. (Galatians 5:16, 22-25) Can you point to specific actions showing that you and your family have put on the new personality? (Colossians 3:9, 10) For instance, are you known for deeds of kindness

11. What is your Bible-reading goal?
12. The nearness of Jehovah’s day should move you to do what?
13. What questions might we ask ourselves about putting on the new personality?

to fellow believers and others? (Galatians 6: 10) A regular study of the Scriptures will assist you in developing godly qualities that will prepare you for Jehovah’s day.

¹⁴ What if you have a quick temper and realize that you need more self-control? That quality is part of the fruitage that God’s holy spirit can produce within you. Therefore, pray for holy spirit, in line with Jesus’ words: “Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you. . . . If you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!”—Luke 11:9-13.

¹⁵ Suppose that strained relations exist between you and a certain fellow believer. In that case, make every effort to repair the breach, thus promoting the peace and unity of the congregation. (Psalm 133:1-3) Apply the counsel of Jesus as recorded at Matthew 5:23, 24 or Matthew 18:15-17. If you have been letting the sun set while you are still in a provoked state, be quick to correct matters. Often all that is needed is a willingness to forgive. Paul wrote: “Become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you.”—Ephesians 4:25, 26, 32.

¹⁶ The marital relationship calls for tender compassion and, at times, forgiveness. If you need to be more loving and compassionate toward your marriage mate, work to attain this objective with the help of God and his Word. Is something needed on your part to comply with 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 so as to lessen stress and avoid unfaithfulness? Surely

14. Why should a person pray for holy spirit as he works on cultivating self-control?
15. What should be done if there are strained relations between you and a fellow believer?
16. In what ways is compassion required in marriage?

this is an area of life that calls upon a husband or a wife to be "tenderly compassionate."

¹⁷ What if you have sinned seriously in some way? Take remedial steps as soon as possible. By all means, seek the assistance of Christian elders. Their prayers and counsel will help restore you to spiritual health. (James 5:13-16) Pray to Jehovah with a repentant attitude. Failure to do so would leave you with a sense of guilt and a troubled conscience. David had that experience, but how good it was to get the relief that came with confession to Jehovah! David wrote: "Happy is the one whose revolt is pardoned, whose sin is covered. Happy is the man to whose account Jehovah does not put error, and in whose spirit there is no deceit." (Psalm 32:1-5) Jehovah forgives those who sin but are genuinely repentant.—Psalm 103:8-14; Proverbs 28:13.

Remain No Part of the World

¹⁸ You undoubtedly look forward to the wonderful new world promised by our heavenly Father. How, then, do you view the world of unrighteous human society alienated from God? Satan, "the ruler of the world," had no hold on Jesus Christ. (John

17. What steps should be taken if one has sinned seriously?

18. How should you view the world?

How Would You Respond?

- What is "the day of Jehovah"?
- How can you prove yourself ready for Jehovah's day?
- With God's great day so near, what changes might we need to make?
- What do you look forward to when Jehovah's day is over?

12:31; 14:30) You surely do not want the Devil and his world to have a hold on you, so take to heart the apostle John's words: "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world." That is the wise course, for "the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:15-17.

¹⁹ Are you helping your children to 'keep themselves without spot from the world'? (James 1:27) Satan would like to reel in your children as a man reels in fish. Various clubs and other organizations are designed to make young people fit in with Satan's world. But Jehovah's servants already belong to the only organization that will survive the end of this wicked system of things. So Christian youths should be encouraged to have "plenty to do in the work of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58) Godly parents need to assist their children to set goals that will give them a happy and rewarding life that honors God and helps them to be ready for Jehovah's day.

Look Beyond Jehovah's Great Day

²⁰ You will be able to await Jehovah's day with a calm heart if you keep everlasting life in view. (Jude 20, 21) You look forward to eternal life in Paradise, and thus you have the hope of renewed youthful vitality and unlimited time to pursue wholesome goals and learn more about Jehovah. You can actually go on learning about God forever because humans now know only "the fringes of his ways." (Job 26:14) What exciting prospects!

²¹ In Paradise, resurrected ones will be able to fill in some gaps in our knowledge of

19. Christian youths are urged to have what kind of goals?

20. Why should we keep everlasting life in view?

21, 22. What interchange may there be between you and resurrected ones?



What a privilege it will be to help resurrected ones gain knowledge of Jehovah!

the past. Enoch will be there to explain how he had the courage needed to declare Jehovah's message to ungodly people. (Jude 14, 15) Noah will certainly relate what it was like to build the ark. Abraham and Sarah will be able to reveal how they felt about leaving the comforts of Ur and living in tents. Think of Esther supplying details about how she stood up for her people and foiled Haman's plot against them. (Esther 7:1-6) Imagine Jonah telling about his three days in the belly of the big fish or John the Baptizer describing his feelings when he baptized Jesus. (Luke 3:21, 22; 7:28) What intriguing things to learn!

²² During Christ's Thousand Year Reign, you may be privileged to help resurrected

ones to gain "the very knowledge of God." (Proverbs 2:1-6) Today, what a pleasure it is to see people take in knowledge of Jehovah God and act upon it! But think of your joy at that future time when Jehovah blesses your efforts to instruct people from bygone eras and they respond with appreciative hearts!

²³ The benefits we now enjoy as Jehovah's people are beyond our imperfect efforts to number or evaluate. (Psalm 40:5) Especially are we grateful for God's spiritual provisions. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) Regardless of our circumstances, let us wholeheartedly render sacred service as we await the great day of Jehovah.

23. What should we be determined to do?

"STAND FIRM AND SEE THE SALVATION OF JEHOVAH"

"Jehovah is on my side; I shall not fear. What can earthling man do to me?"

—PSALM 118:6.

TODAY, mankind faces events of a magnitude never previously experienced. Foretelling this about our day, Jesus warned his followers: "There will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again. In fact, unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short."—Matthew 24:21, 22.

² Unseen to human eyes, heavenly forces are now holding back that great tribulation. The apostle John was privileged to see the reason for this restraint in a revelation given to him by Jesus. Here is how the aged apostle described it: "I saw four angels standing upon the four corners of the earth, holding tight the four winds of the earth . . . And I saw another angel ascending from the sunrise, having a seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels . . . 'Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until after we have sealed the slaves of our God in their foreheads.'"—Revelation 7:1-3.

³ The final sealing of the anointed "slaves of our God" is approaching completion. The four angels are ready to release those destructive winds. When they do, what will happen first? An angel answers that question: "With a swift pitch will Babylon the great city be

1. What future crucial events does mankind face?
2. What is holding back the start of the great tribulation?
3. What will be the first aspect of the great tribulation?

hurled down, and she will never be found again." (Revelation 18:21) What heavenly rejoicing there will be when this happens, when the world empire of false religion is destroyed!—Revelation 19:1, 2.

⁴ All the nations of the earth will have aligned themselves against Jehovah's people. Will the nations succeed in wiping out those faithful Christians? It may seem as if they could. But look! Heavenly armies following Christ Jesus will see to it that these human forces are destroyed. (Revelation 19:19-21) Finally, the Devil and his angels will be cast into an abyss of inactivity. They will no longer be able to mislead man because they will be bound for a thousand years. Oh, what a relief that will be to the great multitude of survivors!—Revelation 7:9, 10, 14; 20:1-3.

⁵ We are about to experience these wonderful and awe-inspiring events. They all have to do with vindicating Jehovah's right to rule, his universal sovereignty. And think of this: If we remain loyal to Jehovah and if we stand firm for his sovereignty, we shall have the opportunity of sharing in the sanctification of Jehovah's name and the fulfillment of his purpose. What an inestimable joy that will be!

- 6 Are we prepared for those momentous
4. What developments are yet ahead?
5. What joy awaits those remaining loyal to Jehovah?
6. In view of impending events, what will we consider?

events? Do we have faith in Jehovah's saving power? Are we confident that he will come to our aid at the right time and in the best way? In answering such personal questions, we can keep in mind what the apostle Paul told his fellow Christians in Rome: "All the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope." (Romans 15:4) Among the things written for our instruction, giving us comfort and hope, is the record of the occasion when Jehovah delivered the Israelites from the iron grip of their Egyptian oppressors. A close examination of those exciting events when Jehovah maneuvered the salvation of the sons of Israel should be of great encouragement to us as we look forward to the fast-approaching great tribulation.

Jehovah Rescues His People

⁷ The year is 1513 B.C.E. Jehovah has already brought nine blows against the Egyp-

7. In 1513 B.C.E., what tense situation develops in Egypt?

tians. After the last of those, Pharaoh summarily dismisses Moses with the words: "Get out from me! Watch yourself! Do not try to see my face again, because on the day of your seeing my face you will die." Moses replies: "That is the way you have spoken. I shall not try to see your face anymore."—Exodus 10:28, 29.

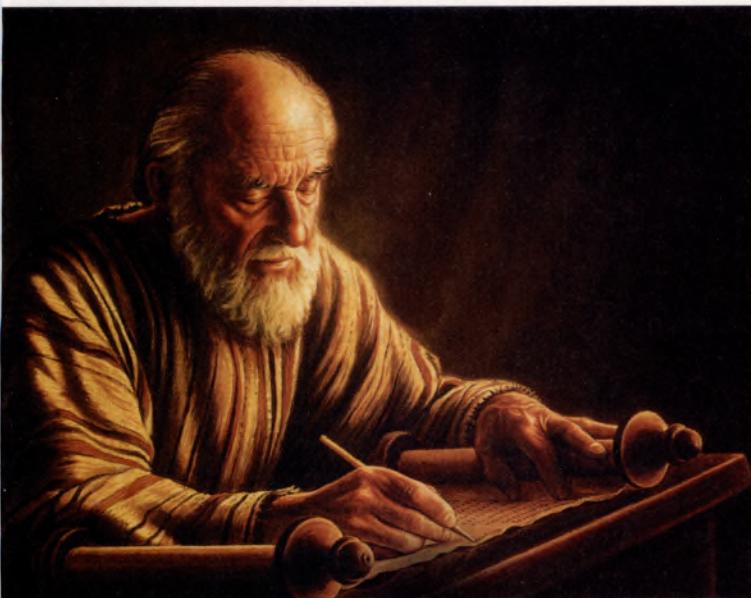
⁸ Jehovah now reveals to Moses that there will be one more blow against Pharaoh and all the Egyptians, a final one. On the 14th of Abib (Nisan), the firstborn of every Egyptian man and of every animal is going to die. But Israelite households can be spared by carefully following God's instructions given to Moses. They are to splash some of the blood of a male lamb upon the two doorposts and the upper part of the doorway of their houses and to stay indoors. What happens that night? Let Moses himself tell us: "It came about that at midnight Jehovah struck every firstborn in the land of Egypt." Pharaoh's reaction is immediate. Calling Moses and Aaron to him, he tells them: "Get up, get out from the midst of my people, . . . and go, serve Jehovah, just as you have stated." And go the Israelites do, possibly more than three million of them along with an unnumbered "vast mixed company" of non-Israelites.—Exodus 12:1-7, 29, 31, 37, 38.

⁹ The nearest route for the Israelites to take is by the Mediterranean Sea and through the

8. What instructions for survival are given to the Israelites, and with what result?

9. By what route does God lead Israel out of Egypt, and why?

"All the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction"



land of the Philistines. But that is enemy territory. Hence, likely to save his people from having to engage in warfare, Jehovah leads them by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. Although there are millions of people on the march, this is no disorderly crowd. The Bible record says: "It was in battle formation that the sons of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt."—Exodus 13:17, 18.

"See the Salvation of Jehovah"

¹⁰ Next, there is an amazing turn of events. Jehovah tells Moses: "Speak to the sons of Israel, that they should turn back and encamp before Pihahiroth between Migdol and the sea in view of Baal-zephon." As they follow these instructions, this great multitude find themselves hemmed in between the mountains and an arm of the Red Sea. There seems to be no way out. However, Jehovah knows what he is doing. He tells Moses: "I shall indeed let Pharaoh's heart become obstinate, and he will certainly chase after them and I shall get glory for myself by means of Pharaoh and all his military forces; and the Egyptians will certainly know that I am Jehovah."—Exodus 14:1-4.

¹¹ Pharaoh, feeling that he has made a mistake in allowing the Israelites to leave Egypt, sets off in hot pursuit with 600 chosen war chariots. As the Egyptian army comes into sight, the Israelites become terrified and cry out to Moses: "Is it because there are no burial places at all in Egypt that you have taken us here to die in the wilderness?" Confident in Jehovah's salvation, Moses replies: "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he

10. Why does God tell Israel to encamp before Pihahiroth?

11. (a) What move does Pharaoh make, and how do the Israelites react? (b) How does Moses respond to Israel's complaints?

Pharaoh's obstinacy brought disaster upon Egypt

will perform for you today. . . . Jehovah will himself fight for you, and you yourselves will be silent."—Exodus 14:5-14.

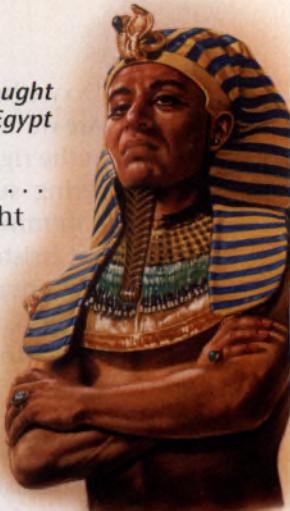
¹² True to Moses' words that Jehovah himself would fight for the Israelites, superhuman forces now take over. Jehovah's angel miraculously moves to their rear the pillar of cloud that has been leading the camp of Israel. While it becomes a source of darkness to the Egyptians, that same pillar gives light to the Israelites. (Exodus 13:21, 22; 14:19, 20) In obedience to God's command, Moses now stretches his hand out. The account continues: "Jehovah began making the sea go back by a strong east wind all night long . . . At length the sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on dry land, while the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left." The Egyptians take up the pursuit, but Jehovah is on the side of his people. He throws the camp of the Egyptians into confusion, and then he tells Moses: "Stretch your hand out over the sea, that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, their war chariots and their cavalrymen." So complete is the destruction of Pharaoh's armies that not a single soldier is left alive!—Exodus 14:21-28; Psalm 136:15.

Learn From Israel's Salvation

¹³ What effect did this miraculous deliverance have on the survivors? Why, Moses

12. How does Jehovah come to the rescue of his people?

13. How did the sons of Israel react to their deliverance?



and the sons of Israel spontaneously burst into song, praising Jehovah! They sang: "Let me sing to Jehovah, for he has become highly exalted. . . . Jehovah will rule as king to time indefinite, even forever." (Exodus 15:1, 18) Yes, their first thought was to exalt God. In that situation, Jehovah's sovereignty had been demonstrated.

¹⁴ What instruction, comfort, and hope do we gain from these thrilling events? Surely we can see that Jehovah is ready for any trial that his people have to go through. He is equal to any situation that may confront them. The Red Sea was no barrier to Israel when Jehovah caused that strong east wind to blow. And he was able to cause that same Red Sea to become a watery grave for Pharaoh's armies. Contemplating this, we can echo the words of the psalmist who said: "Jehovah is on my side; I shall not fear. What can earthling man do to me?" (Psalm 118:6) We can also find comfort in Paul's words recorded at Romans 8:31: "If God is for us, who will be against us?" What confidence these inspired sayings give us! They quiet any fears and doubts that we may have

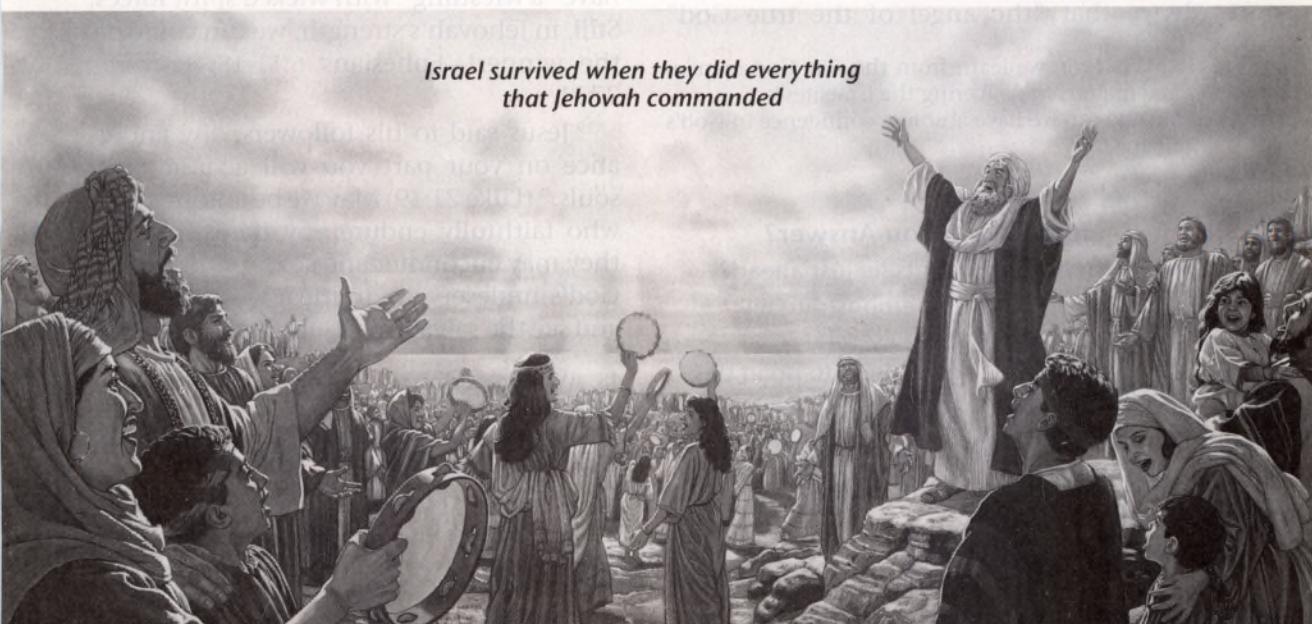
14. (a) What can we learn about Jehovah from the experience of Israel? (b) What is the yeartext for 2008?

and fill us with hope. How appropriate, then, is our yeartext for 2008: "Stand firm and see the salvation of Jehovah"!—Exodus 14:13.

¹⁵ What else can we learn from Israel's Exodus from Egypt? That we must obey Jehovah no matter what he asks us to do. The Israelites were obedient in carrying out the detailed preparations for the Passover. They obediently stayed indoors during the night of Nisan 14. When they finally left Egypt, they had to go "in battle formation." (Exodus 13:18) Today, it is so important that we follow the guidance that comes to us through "the faithful and discreet slave"! (Matthew 24:45) We have to listen very carefully to God's word behind us, saying: "'This is the way. Walk in it, you people,' in case you people should go to the right or in case you should go to the left." (Isaiah 30:21) As we get nearer to the outbreak of the great tribulation, we may well receive some detailed instructions. Our safe journey through those troublesome days will depend on our keeping in step with other loyal servants of Jehovah.

15. How important was obedience in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and how important is it today?

*Israel survived when they did everything
that Jehovah commanded*



¹⁶ Remember, too, that Jehovah diverted the Israelites into a position where they appeared to be trapped between the mountains on the one side and the Red Sea on the other. It just did not seem to be the right move. But Jehovah had everything in hand, and all worked out to his praise and to the salvation of his people. Today, we may not clearly see why some organizational matters are handled in a certain way, but we have every reason to trust in Jehovah's guidance through his faithful channel of communication. At times, our enemies may seem to be getting the upper hand. From our limited perspective, we may not be able to see the whole picture. Still, Jehovah is capable of maneuvering matters at the right moment, just as he did back there for the sons of Israel. —Proverbs 3:5.

Have Confidence in Jehovah

¹⁷ Can you imagine the feeling of confidence that the Israelites must have had as they thought back on that pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night? It was evidence that "the angel of the true God"

16. What can we learn from the way God maneuvered matters in delivering the Israelites?
17. Why can we have absolute confidence in God's guidance?

How Would You Answer?

- What thrilling events lie just ahead?
- How did Jehovah demonstrate his saving power in 1513 B.C.E.?
- What are you determined to do in the future?

was guiding their journey. (Exodus 13:21, 22; 14:19) Today, we can have confidence that Jehovah is with his people to guide, protect, and deliver them. We can

take to heart the promise: "[Jehovah] will not leave his loyal ones. To time indefinite they will certainly be guarded." (Psalm 37:28) Never let us forget those mighty angelic forces that are backing God's servants today. With their sup-

port, we can "stand firm and see the salvation of Jehovah."—Exodus 14:13.

¹⁸ What will enable all of us to "stand firm" in the way of the truth? Wearing the spiritual armor described by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians. Notice that the apostle admonishes us to "put on the *complete* suit of armor from God." Are we wearing all the parts of this spiritual armor? In the coming calendar year, it would be well for each one to take stock of himself to make sure that every part of that armor is in place and fits well. Our enemy, Satan the Devil, knows our weaknesses, and he tries to catch us off guard or to attack a vulnerable spot. We have "a wrestling" with wicked spirit forces. Still, in Jehovah's strength, we can come off the winner!—Ephesians 6:11-18; Proverbs 27:11.

¹⁹ Jesus said to his followers: "By endurance on your part you will acquire your souls." (Luke 21:19) May we be among those who faithfully endure any hardships that they may encounter and so be privileged by God's undeserved kindness to "stand firm and see the salvation of Jehovah."

18. Why do we need to "put on the *complete* suit of armor from God"?
19. If we endure, what may we be privileged to do?

NO WEAPON FORMED AGAINST YOU WILL SUCCEED

"Any weapon . . . formed against you will have no success."—ISAIAH 54:17.

DECades ago, in a small mountainous country in southeastern Europe, there was a fearless band of Christians. An atheistic Communist government did its best to crush them. Yet, torture, labor camps, and media attacks could not stamp them out. Who were they? Jehovah's Witnesses in Albania. Though meeting together and preaching were extremely difficult, their persistence over decades has exalted and honored Christianity and brought praise to Jehovah's name. Last year at the dedication of their new branch facilities, a longtime faithful Witness said: "No matter how hard Satan tries, he keeps losing and Jehovah keeps winning!"

² All of this is living proof of the truthfulness of God's promise toward his people as recorded at Isaiah 54:17: "Any weapon whatever that will be formed against you will have no success, and any tongue at all that will rise up against you in the judgment you will condemn." History confirms that nothing that

1, 2. How do the experiences of Jehovah's Witnesses in Albania illustrate the truthfulness of Isaiah 54:17?

Satan's world can do will ever put a stop to the worship of Jehovah God by his dedicated servants.

Satan's Unsuccessful Efforts

³ Weapons used against true worshippers have included bans, mob violence, prisons, and the 'framing of trouble by law.' (Psalm 94:20) Actually, in some lands, even as Witnesses of Jehovah are studying this article, these true Christians are being "put to the test" regarding their integrity to God.—Revelation 2:10.

⁴ For example, one branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses reported that during just one year, there were 32 cases in which God's

- 3, 4. (a) What are included in Satan's weapons? (b) In what way have the Devil's weapons proved to be unsuccessful?

Jehovah's people in Albania remained faithful despite Satan's attacks



servants were physically attacked while they engaged in the ministry. In addition, there were 59 incidents of police detention of Witnesses—young and old, male and female—who were preaching publicly. Some were fingerprinted, photographed, and placed behind bars as criminals. Others have been threatened with physical harm. In another land, there are now over 1,100 documented cases of Jehovah's Witnesses being arrested, fined, or beaten. More than 200 of these cases occurred on the day when they gathered to commemorate Jesus' death! Nonetheless, Jehovah's spirit has enabled his people to survive despite overwhelming odds, both in these lands and in other countries. (Zechariah 4:6) The heat of enemy wrath will not still the lips of those praising Jehovah. Yes, we are confident that no weapon can defeat God's purpose.

False Tongues Condemned

⁵ Isaiah prophesied that God's people would condemn any tongue that rose up against them. In the first century, Christians were often the object of misrepresentation, being depicted as evildoers. The words found at Acts 16:20, 21 are typical of such accusations: "These men are disturbing our city very much, . . . and they are publishing customs that it is not lawful for us to take up or practice, seeing we are Romans." On another occasion, religious opposers tried to incite the city rulers to act against Christ's followers, asserting: "These men that have overturned the inhabited earth are present here also, [and they] act in opposition to the decrees of Caesar." (Acts 17:6, 7) The apostle Paul was labeled "a pestilent fellow" and the leader of a sect that was stirring up seditions "throughout the inhabited earth." —Acts 24:2-5.

5. What false tongues rose up against Jehovah's servants in the first century?

⁶ Accordingly, it does not surprise us that true Christians today have faced gross misrepresentations, malicious slander, and smear campaigns. How is it that we condemn such verbal attacks?—Isaiah 54:17.

⁷ Such accusations and propaganda are often refuted by the fine conduct of Jehovah's Witnesses. (1 Peter 2:12) When Christians prove themselves to be law-abiding citizens and moral people who show genuine concern for the welfare of their fellow humans, the accusations hurled against them are shown up as false. Our good conduct speaks for itself. As observers note our perseverance in fine works, they are often moved to glorify our heavenly Father and to acknowledge the superior way of life of his servants.—Isaiah 60:14; Matthew 5:14-16.

⁸ In addition to our godly conduct, it may at times be necessary to defend with boldness our Scriptural position. One way is by appealing to governments and courts for protection. (Esther 8:3; Acts 22:25-29; 25:10-12) When Jesus was on earth, on occasion he openly contended with his critics, refuting their false accusations. (Matthew 12:34-37; 15:1-11) In imitation of Jesus, we welcome the opportunity to give others a clear explanation of our heartfelt convictions. (1 Peter 3:15) May we never allow ridicule at school, at work, or from unbelieving relatives to stop us from making known the truth of God's Word.—2 Peter 3:3, 4.

Jerusalem—"A Burdensome Stone"

⁹ Zechariah's prophecy sheds light on the reason why the nations take their stand

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- 6, 7. What is one way that true Christians condemn verbal attacks against them?
 8. (a) What may at times be necessary in order to defend our Scriptural position? (b) In imitation of Christ, how do we condemn opposing tongues?
 9. Which Jerusalem is symbolized by the "burdensome stone" mentioned at Zechariah 12:3, and who represent it on earth?



Jesus refuted false accusations

against true Christians. Note what Zechariah 12:3 says: "It must occur in that day that I shall make Jerusalem a burdensome stone to all the peoples." To which Jerusalem does this prophecy point? Zechariah's prophecy concerning Jerusalem applies to "heavenly Jerusalem," the heavenly Kingdom to which anointed Christians have been called. (Hebrews 12:22) A small remnant of these heirs of the Messianic Kingdom are still on earth. Along with their companions, the "other sheep," they urge people to turn to God's Kingdom while there is yet time. (John 10:16; Revelation 11:15) How have the nations reacted to this invitation? And what kind of support does Jehovah give to true worshippers today? Let us find out as we further examine the meaning of Zechariah chapter 12. Doing so, we can gain the assurance that 'no weapon will succeed' against God's anointed ones and their dedicated associates.

¹⁰ Zechariah 12:3 indicates that the nations receive "severe scratches." How does this happen? God has decreed that

10. (a) Why are God's people being attacked? (b) How have those fared who try to lift the "burdensome stone" out of the way?

the good news of the Kingdom must be preached. Jehovah's Witnesses take seriously the obligation to preach. However, the heralding of the Kingdom as mankind's only hope has become "a burdensome stone" to the nations. They try to lift it out of the way by interfering with the Kingdom preachers. In so doing, the meddling nations have received "severe scratches for themselves," getting all cut up. Even their reputations have

been hurt as they meet with humiliating failure. They cannot silence true worshippers, who cherish the privilege of proclaiming the "everlasting good news" of God's Messianic Kingdom before the end of this system of things. (Revelation 14:6) When seeing the violence done to Jehovah's servants, a prison guard in one African land said, in effect: 'You are wasting your efforts in persecuting these people. They will never compromise. They just increase.'

¹¹ Read Zechariah 12:4. Jehovah makes the promise that he will figuratively blind and throw into "bewilderment" those who fight against his courageous Kingdom messengers. He has kept his word. For example, in one land where true worship was under ban, opposers were unable to keep spiritual food out of the hands of God's people. A newspaper even claimed that Jehovah's Witnesses were using balloons to get Bible literature into the country! God's promise to his loyal servants proved true: "I shall open my eyes, and every horse of the peoples I shall strike with loss of sight." Blind with fury, enemies

11. How has God kept his promise recorded at Zechariah 12:4?

of the Kingdom do not know which direction to take. Yet, we are convinced that Jehovah will preserve his people as a group and look out for their welfare.—2 Kings 6: 15-19.

¹² Read Zechariah 12:5, 6. “The sheiks of Judah” refer to those having oversight among God’s people. Jehovah fills these with a fiery zeal in behalf of the earthly interests of his Kingdom. On one occasion, Jesus told his disciples: “I came to start a fire on the earth.” (Luke 12:49) Truly, he did ignite a

12. (a) In what sense did Jesus start a fire when he was on earth? (b) How have the anointed remnant set things aflame in a spiritual way, and with what results?

fire. By his zealous preaching activity, Jesus made God’s Kingdom the paramount issue before the people. This sparked heated controversy throughout that Jewish nation. (Matthew 4:17, 25; 10:5-7, 17-20) Similarly, “like a firepot among trees and like a fiery torch in a row of newly cut grain,” footstep followers of Christ in our day set things aflame in a spiritual way. The 1917 book *The Finished Mystery** roundly exposed the hypocrisy of Christendom. That brought forth a bitter reaction from the clergy. In more recent times, *Kingdom News* No. 37, “The End of False Religion Is Near!” has

* Published by Jehovah’s Witnesses but now out of print.

No weapon formed against those proclaiming the good news will succeed



moved many people to take their stand either for or against God's Kingdom.

"The Tents of Judah" Saved

¹³ Read Zechariah 12:7, 8. In ancient Israel, tents were a distinctive feature in the land, at times being used by shepherds and agricultural workers. Such people would be the first affected and would be in need of protection if an enemy nation came to attack the city of Jerusalem. The expression "the tents of Judah" indicates that the anointed remnant in our time are out in the open field, so to speak, not in fortified cities. There they fearlessly defend the interests of the Messianic Kingdom. Jehovah of armies will save "the tents of Judah first" because these are in the direct line of Satan's attack.

¹⁴ Indeed, the historical record proves that Jehovah is defending these anointed ambassadors of the Kingdom in their "tents" out in the field.* He keeps them from "stumbling" in that he makes them strong and courageous like David, the warrior king.

¹⁵ Read Zechariah 12:9. Why does Jehovah "seek to annihilate all the nations"? Because they persistently oppose the Messianic Kingdom. For harassing and persecuting God's people, they stand condemned. Soon Satan's earthly agents will undertake a final attack on God's true worshippers, which will lead to the world situation described in the Bible as Har-Magedon. (Revelation 16:13-16) Responding to that assault, the Supreme Judge will defend his servants and sanctify his

* For more details, see the book *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*, pages 675-6, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

13. What is indicated by the expression "the tents of Judah," and why does Jehovah save those affected?

14. How does Jehovah defend those in "the tents of Judah" and keep them from stumbling?

15. Why does Jehovah "seek to annihilate all the nations," and at what point will he do this?

name among the nations.—Ezekiel 38:14-18, 22, 23.

¹⁶ Satan has no weapon that can weaken the faith or quench the zeal of God's people worldwide. Our spiritual peace, which results from Jehovah's saving power, is "the hereditary possession of the servants of Jehovah." (Isaiah 54:17) No one can forcibly deprive us of our peace and spiritual prosperity. (Psalm 118:6) Satan will continue to fan the flames of opposition and try to stir up tribulation. Our loyal endurance in the face of reproach is proof that God's spirit is resting upon us. (1 Peter 4:14) The good news of Jehovah's established Kingdom is being proclaimed worldwide. Like stunning deterrents, many symbolic "slingstones" of opposition have been hurled against God's people. Yet, in Jehovah's strength his servants overcome such stones, nullifying their effect. (Zechariah 9:15) The anointed remnant and their loyal companions will not be put out of action!

¹⁷ We look forward to complete deliverance from the Devil's attacks. What comfort we have in the guarantee that 'any weapon formed against us will not succeed, and any tongue at all that will rise up against us in the judgment we will condemn'!

16, 17. (a) What is "the hereditary possession of the servants of Jehovah"? (b) Our endurance of Satan's attacks is proof of what?

How Would You Answer?

- What shows that Satan's weapons have proved unsuccessful?
- How does heavenly Jerusalem become "a burdensome stone"?
- How does Jehovah save "the tents of Judah"?
- As we approach Armageddon, of what are you confident?

Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Book of Malachi

THE rebuilt temple in Jerusalem has been standing completed for over 70 years. With the passing of time, though, the spirituality of the Jews has come to be at a very low ebb. Even the priests have become corrupt. Who will make them aware of their true condition and try to revive them spiritually? Jehovah gives the task to the prophet Malachi.

Written in a forceful style by Malachi, the last book of the Hebrew Scriptures contains divinely inspired prophecy. Paying attention to the prophetic word of Malachi can help us to prepare for "the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah," when the present wicked system of things comes to an end.

—Malachi 4:5.

PRIESTS "HAVE CAUSED MANY TO STUMBLE"

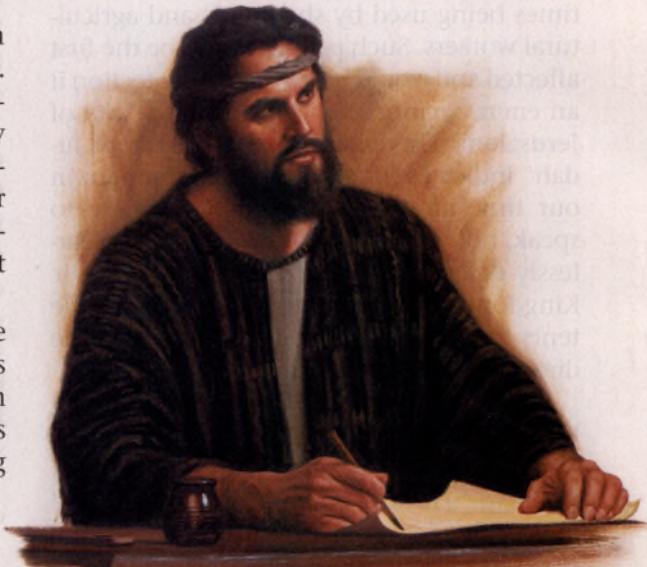
(Malachi 1:1–2:17)

Jehovah expresses his feelings toward Israel, saying: "I have loved you people." But the priests have despised God's name. How? "By presenting upon [his] altar polluted bread" and by offering "a lame animal or a sick one" for sacrificing.—Malachi 1:2, 6-8.

The priests "have caused many to stumble in the law." The people "deal treacherously with one another." Some have taken foreign wives. Others have dealt treacherously with "the wife of [their] youth."—Malachi 2:8, 10, 11, 14-16.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

2:2—In what way did Jehovah "curse [the] blessings" of the wayward priests? God did this in the sense that the blessing



*The prophet Malachi,
a zealous and devoted servant of God*

called for by such priests would turn out to be a curse.

2:3—What did it mean to "scatter dung" on the faces of the priests? According to the Law, the dung of the sacrificial animal was to be taken outside the camp and burned. (Leviticus 16:27) To scatter dung on the priests' faces meant that Jehovah rejected the sacrifices and that those who offered them were contemptible to him.

2:13—With whose tears had the altar of Jehovah become covered? These were the tears of the wives who came to the temple sanctuary and poured out their hearts before Jehovah. What had caused them such grief? Their Jewish husbands had obtained a divorce on illegitimate grounds and had left

them, likely in order to marry younger foreign women.

Lessons for Us:

1:10. Jehovah took no pleasure in the offerings of the greedy priests, who would charge a fee even for such simple services as shutting doors or lighting altar fires. How important it is that our acts of worship, including what we do in the Christian ministry, be motivated by unselfish love for God and neighbor, never for monetary gain!—Matthew 22:37-39; 2 Corinthians 11:7.

1:14; 2:17. Jehovah does not tolerate hypocrisy.

2:7-9. Those who are given the privilege of teaching in the congregation should make sure that what they teach is in harmony with God's Word, the Holy Scriptures, and with Bible-based publications of "the faithful steward."—Luke 12:42; James 3:11.

2:10, 11. Jehovah expects his worshippers to take seriously the counsel to marry "only in the Lord."—1 Corinthians 7:39.

2:15, 16. True worshippers are to honor the marriage covenant with the wife of their youth.

'THE TRUE LORD WILL COME

TO HIS TEMPLE'

(Malachi 3:1-4:6)

"Suddenly there will come to His temple the true Lord [Jehovah God]" with "the messenger of the covenant [Jesus Christ]." God "will come near to [his] people for the judgment" and become a speedy witness against all sorts of wrongdoers. Moreover, "a book of remembrance" is to be written up for those in fear of Jehovah.—Malachi 3:1, 3, 5, 16.

The day that "is burning like the furnace" will come and will devour all the wicked. Before the coming of that day, a prophet will be sent to "turn the heart of fathers back toward sons, and the heart of sons back toward fathers."—Malachi 4:1, 5, 6.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

3:1-3—When did "the true Lord" and "the messenger of the covenant" come to



the temple, and who was sent ahead of them? Jehovah representatively came to his temple and cleansed it on Nisan 10, 33 C.E. That was the occasion when Jesus entered the temple and threw out those buying and selling. (Mark 11:15) This was three and a half years after Jesus had been anointed as King-Designate. Correspondingly, it appears that three and a half years after his enthronement as King in heaven, Jesus accompanied Jehovah to the spiritual temple and found God's people in need of cleansing. In the first century, John the Baptizer was sent forth to prepare the Jews for the coming of Jesus Christ. In modern times, a messenger was sent in advance to prepare the way for Jehovah's coming to his spiritual temple. As early as the 1880's, a group of Bible students began to engage in a Bible education work to restore many basic Bible truths to the hearts of sincere individuals.

3:10—Does the bringing in of “all the tenth parts,” or tithing, represent giving our all to Jehovah? The Mosaic Law was abolished on the basis of Jesus' death, so monetary tithing is not a requirement. Yet, tithing has a symbolic meaning. (Ephesians 2:15) It does not represent the giving of our all. While the tenth part was brought year after year, we bring our all to Jehovah only once—when we dedicate ourselves to him

and symbolize our dedication by undergoing water baptism. From that time on, everything we have belongs to Jehovah. Still, he allows us to choose a portion of what we have—a symbolic tithe—to use in his service. It is whatever our circumstances allow and our heart impels us to use. The offerings we bring to Jehovah include the time, energy, and resources used in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work. Also included are attending Christian meetings, visiting sick and elderly fellow believers, and rendering financial support to true worship.

4:3—In what way will Jehovah's worshippers “tread down the wicked”? God's people on earth will not literally “tread down the wicked,” that is, share in executing his judgment upon them. Rather, this suggests that Jehovah's earthly servants will do so figuratively by wholeheartedly participating in the victory celebration that will follow the end of Satan's world.—Psalm 145:20; Revelation 20:1-3.

4:4—Why should we “remember . . . the law of Moses”? That Law is not binding upon Christians, yet it served as “a shadow of the good things to come.” (Hebrews 10:1) Hence, paying attention to the Mosaic Law can help us to see how the things written in it are fulfilled. (Luke 24:44, 45) Moreover, the Law contains “typical representations of the things in the heavens.” Studying it is essential if we are to gain an understanding of Christian teachings and conduct.—Hebrews 9:23.

4:5, 6—Whom does “Elijah the prophet” represent? It is foretold that “Elijah” would do a restoration work, that of preparing the hearts of people. In the first century C.E., Jesus Christ identified John the Baptizer as “Elijah.” (Matthew 11:12-14; Mark 9:11-13) His modern-day counterpart is sent “before the coming of the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah.” Elijah today is none other

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

What Is God's Kingdom?

Build Up Your Family With
“Delightful Words”

Is Evolution Compatible
With the Bible?



***What we teach should be in harmony
with the Bible***

than "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45) This class of anointed Christians has diligently been doing the work of spiritual restoration.

Lessons for Us:

3:10. To fail to give Jehovah our best is to deprive ourselves of his blessing.

3:14, 15. Because of the bad example of the priests, the Jews began to view service to God as of little value. Those in a position of responsibility in the Christian congregation should be exemplary.—1 Peter 5:1-3.

3:16. Jehovah keeps a record of those who fear him and are faithful to him. He remembers them and will preserve them when bringing an end to Satan's wicked world. Therefore, let us never weaken in our determination to maintain our integrity to God.
—Job 27:5.

4:1. In the day of rendering an account to Jehovah, both "bough" and

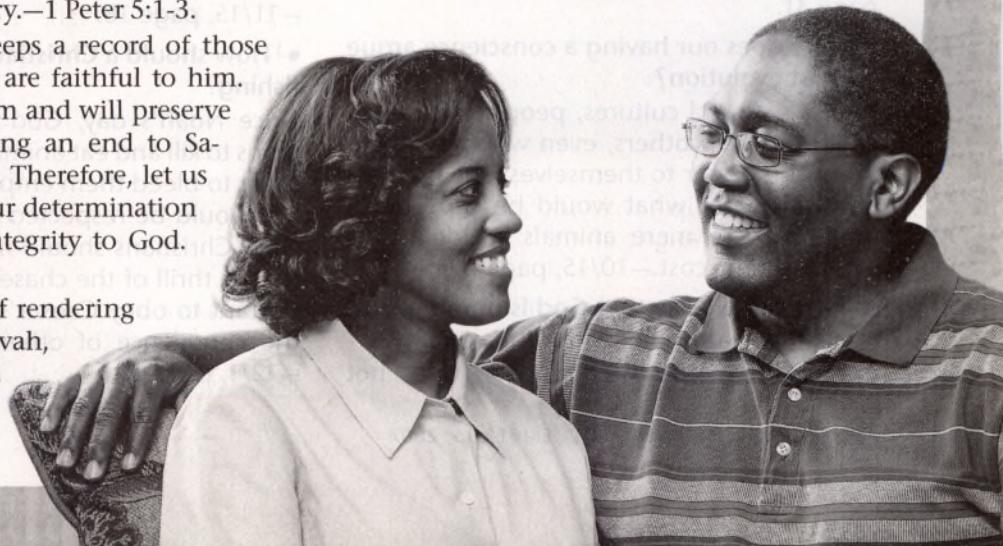
"root" meet the same end—young children receive the same judgment as their parents. What a responsibility parents have toward their minor children! Christian fathers and mothers must work hard to seek God's approval and to maintain a good standing with him.—1 Corinthians 7:14.

"Fear the True God"

Who will be saved in "the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah"? (Malachi 4:5) "To you who are in fear of my name," says Jehovah, "the sun of righteousness will certainly shine forth, with healing in its wings; and you will actually go forth and paw the ground like fattened calves."—Malachi 4:2.

"The sun of righteousness," Jesus Christ, shines forth upon those reverentially fearing God's name, and they enjoy Jehovah's favor. (John 8:12) For them, there is also a "healing in its wings"—spiritual healing now and complete physical, mental, and emotional healing in God's new world. (Revelation 22:1, 2) Excited and delighted, they behave "like fattened calves." With such blessings in view, let us take to heart King Solomon's admonition: "Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man."—Ecclesiastes 12:13.

***Jehovah's servants honor their
marriage covenant***



Do You Remember?

Have you appreciated reading the recent issues of *The Watchtower*?

Well, see if you can answer the following questions:

- **Why is the "Old Testament" of lasting value?**

Its Author is, not some cruel deity, but the loving God, Jehovah. Jesus and his early followers continued to refer to the Hebrew Scriptures. They contain practical advice for daily life and offer a wonderful hope for the future.—9/1, pages 4-7.

- **What has been accomplished by allowing time to pass since Adam and Eve sinned?**

Over these thousands of years, Satan has been proved a liar—Adam and Eve and millions of their offspring have died. Time has shown that humans are not better off independent of God and that they have neither the right nor the ability to direct their steps.—9/15, pages 6-7.

- **Why was Jacob not criticized for representing himself as Esau?**

Jacob was entitled to his father's blessing, having purchased the birthright from Esau. When he realized that he had blessed Jacob, Isaac did not seek to change that. And God, who could have intervened, clearly wanted the blessing to go to Jacob.—10/1, page 31.

- **How does our having a conscience argue against evolution?**

In all races and cultures, people have been willing to help others, even when doing so involved danger to themselves. Such selfless altruism is not what would be expected if humans were mere animals struggling to survive at any cost.—10/15, page 20.

- **Why can we say that God is humble, and in what way does he display this quality?**

As Sovereign and Creator, God does not

have limitations as we do. Yet, in line with 2 Samuel 22:36, God is humble in the sense that he shows concern for lowly humans who try to please him, extending mercy to them. He reaches down, as it were, to deal kindly with God-fearing ones.—11/1, pages 4-5.

- **How do ancient potsherds confirm the Biblical record?**

Archaeologists have found fragments of pottery in Samaria that contain seven clan names recorded at Joshua 17:1-6. Fragments from Arad confirm information about priestly families and include God's name. Potsherds from Lachish illuminate the political situation and turmoil that existed in Judah before the Babylonians attacked.—11/15, pages 12-14.

- **What leads to the conclusion that Luke wrote the book of Acts?**

Luke's Gospel and Acts of Apostles are addressed to Theophilus, indicating that Luke compiled both. The use of the pronouns "we," "our," and "us" shows that Luke shared in some of the events. (Acts 16:8-15) —11/15, page 18.

- **How should a Christian view hunting and fishing?**

Since Noah's day, God has permitted humans to kill and eat animals. Yet, the requirement to bleed them emphasizes that animal life should be respected as originating with God. Christians should not kill for sport nor for the thrill of the chase or the kill. It is important to obey Caesar's laws and consider the conscience of others. (Romans 14:13) —12/1, page 31.

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"YOUR VERY PRECIOUS GIFT"

THAT is how a former prime minister of Belgium described the book *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*.* A neighbor made a friendly visit on him, and the career statesman accepted a copy of the book. Later, he wrote a letter of appreciation: "Your friendly visit really touched me, and I was even more impressed with your very precious gift: the book devoted to 'The Greatest Man.'"

The former prime minister had analyzed the book and concluded: "If people would be more interested in the message of the Gospel and would put into practice the principles of Jesus Christ, the world today would look completely different. Then we would not need a Security Council; nor would there be terrorist attacks, and violence would be banned from the world." Although admitting that this seems to be wishful thinking, he expressed respect for his neighbor's positive action.

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

The letter continued: "You belong to a great group of people of goodwill who are neither optimists nor pessimists but meliorists, that is, people who believe in the betterment of both humans and things."

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that divine action, not human efforts, will eventually bring about a better world. They try to imitate the greatest man, Jesus Christ. Have Jehovah's Witnesses called on you lately? You would likely enjoy a conversation with them about the greatest man who ever lived. And they would be happy to share with you the book that so impressed the former prime minister.

