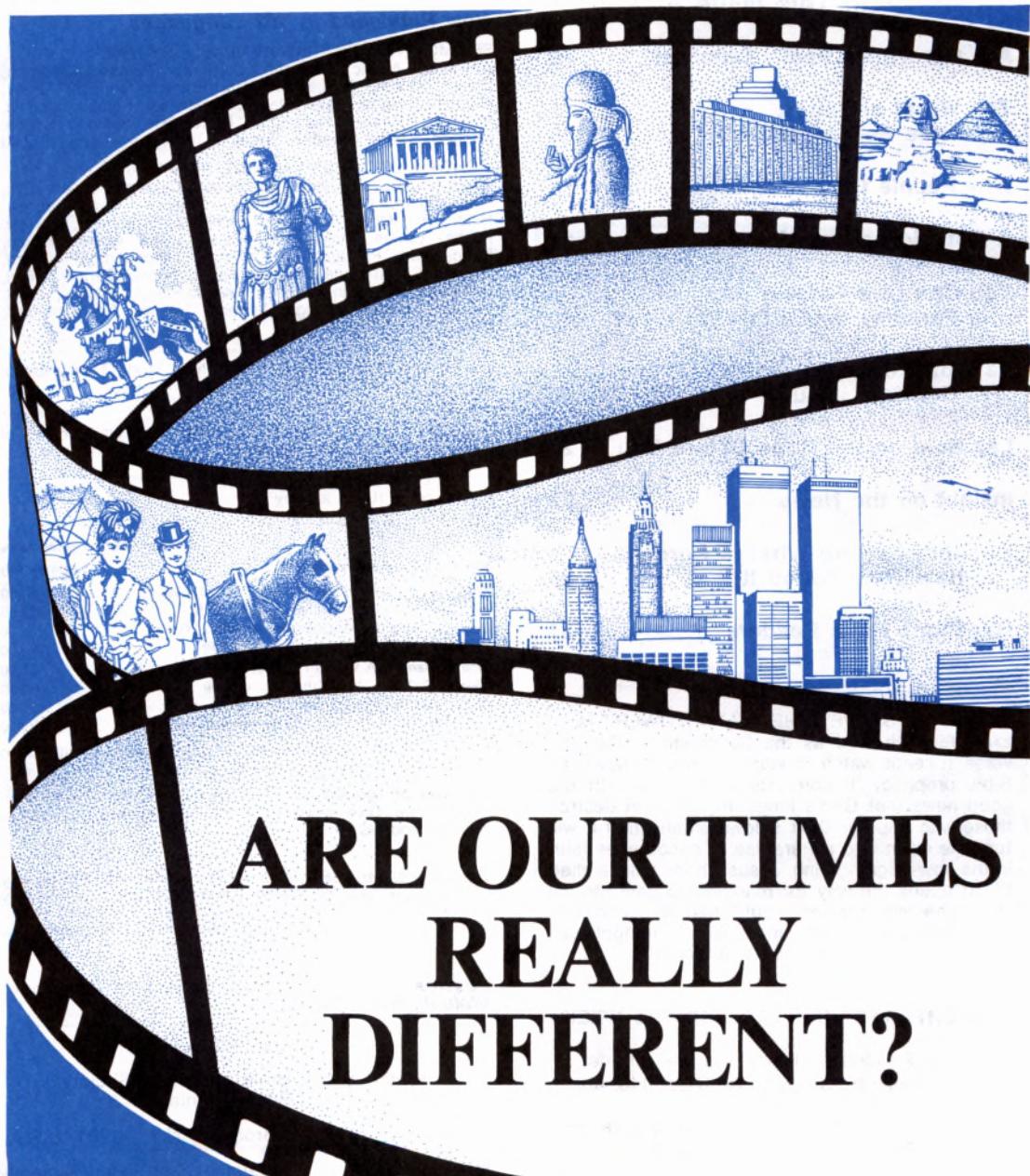


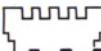
February 15, 1983

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



**ARE OUR TIMES
REALLY
DIFFERENT?**



The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

February 15, 1983
Vol. 104, No. 4

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THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER" is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a Paradise. It encourages faith in the 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.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

March 20: As World Calamity Nears—"Consider Jesus." Page 16. Songs to Be Used: 118, 46.

March 27: Lay Hold on the Hope Before You. Page 21. Songs to Be Used: 78, 34.

Average Printing Each Issue: 10,050,000

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The Bible translation used is the "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated.

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Fifteen cents (U.S.) a copy

Yearly subscription rates

| Watch Tower Society offices | Semimonthly |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| America , U.S., Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589 | \$3.50 |
| Australia , Box 280, Ingleburn, N.W. 2565 | \$3.50 |
| Canada , Box 4100, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 4Y4 | \$4.00 |
| England , The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN | £4.00 |
| New Zealand , 6-A Western Springs Rd., Auckland 3 | \$5.00 |
| Nigeria , P.O. Box 194, Yaba, Lagos State | ₦2.50 |
| Philippines , P.O. Box 2044, Manila 2800 | ₱25.00 |
| South Africa , Private Bag 2, Elandsfontein, 1406 | R4.00 |

Remittances should be sent to the office in your country or to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589, U.S.A.

Changes of address should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly for \$3.50 per year by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589.

Published by

Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
of Pennsylvania

25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.

Frederick W. Franz, President Grant Suiter, Secretary

Are Our Times Really Different?

DESCRIBING the present world situation, American economist Peter F. Drucker stated: "No one needs to be told that our age is an age of infinite peril. No one needs to be told that the central question we face with respect to man's future is not what it shall be, but whether it shall be."

What are some of the problems that cause many people to wonder if mankind has any future? What dangers distinguish our times from preceding generations?

Pollution

The air in many large cities has become a health hazard. Seas, lakes and rivers are polluted by industrial waste, contaminating the fish we eat. The protective ozone layer is threatened by waste gases. With good reason pollution is a cause for international concern. An OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) meeting was reported on in

the French daily *Le Monde*: "From 1965 to 1975 the environment suffered severe damage. Even if we count on economic recession greatly slowing down [industrial] growth, the natural environment will continue to deteriorate in the years to come if protection is not reinforced."

Some claim that pollution is nothing new. If that were true, why is it that monuments that have stood for millenniums are suddenly imperiled? "Day by day the polluted atmosphere of Athens is succeeding in destroying what Turkish troops failed to destroy during their 400-year occupation of Greece. Little by little the marble is being eaten away." —Paris *Le Figaro*.

Overpopulation

Other factors further complicate the situation on a worldwide scale. France's scientific monthly *Science et Vie* (Science and Life) had this to say on the subject



Pollution

Overpopulation

Weapons

of population growth and the expansion of deserts: "The world population will increase from four to six billion by the year 2000, whereas arable ground will possibly be reduced by 30 percent over the same period, due to overcropping . . . and urbanization. The simultaneous character of these two tendencies is preparing the way for an explosive situation."

True, population growth has declined in certain Western and Third World countries. Yet, according to experts, overpopulation will persist until at least the middle of the next century, for in many lands the growth rate is increasing and will continue to increase. The vast majority of developing countries are among the world's most highly populated lands. Overpopulation marks our times as really different from the past.

Weapons

You may be well aware that many are alarmed over the arms race. Millions of Europeans are uneasy about living within reach of missiles based in Eastern-bloc countries or about having U.S. missiles on their soil. But no matter where you live on earth there is reason for concern over laser- or particle-beam weapons, biological weapons or dangers launched from satellites or orbiting space platforms. Furthermore, some experts regard some of these weapons as a new stage in the balance of terror. The feeling of vulnerability they produce may lead a nation to consider it advantageous to attack first.

Ask yourself: Did preceding generations have such power to destroy most of earth's inhabitants in just a few minutes? Or is this an element peculiar to our day?

Dangers such as we have mentioned produce various reactions, especially in industrialized countries. Some citizens form committees to fight pollution; oth-

ers seek security at all costs by arming themselves, building shelters or even taking refuge in isolated areas. Commenting on this latter category, the *International Herald Tribune* stated: "Small but growing bands of Americans are arming themselves and learning how to kill because they are convinced that the social order is crumbling and that they will have to fend for themselves to survive." Private individuals in other lands, too, are training with weapons—women as well as men.

But there may be another sort of danger that is even harder to escape or deal with—economic collapse. There are millions of unemployed in the Western world, while Eastern-bloc nations have other economic problems. Do you not see the effects of economic turmoil where you live? In late 1980 ex-prime minister of France Raymond Barre said about the world's economy: "This is . . . a world crisis. It is neither short-lived nor superficial, but lasting and deep-seated." Economist Samuel Pisar stated: "Everything goes to bear out and testify to the fact that we are on the brink of a new collapse. Our problems have nothing in common with those of 40 years ago, and this only increases our apprehension." So where can you turn in these times that are so different?

Long ago Jesus Christ spoke of a time that would be characterized among other things by "anguish of nations, not knowing the way out." (Luke 21:25) Confronted with these different events, we have to admit that his words fit our times, times that are so different from any before. However, if Jesus was really referring to *our* day, what does it mean for us? Do all these things truly indicate that a radical change is near? The following article will help you answer these questions.

The Worst of Times, Yet the Best of Times

CHARLES DICKENS opened his historical novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, about the French Revolution, with the description: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." He thus tried to express the unrest of the period, as well as the optimism that momentous changes in history were occurring.

But in the light of what we noted in the previous article, our times can, in many respects, far more appropriately be called "the worst of times." However, could a period of grave difficulties at the same time be a cause for joy? Could it truly be "the best of times"? Yes, if we have guaranteed assurance that better days are right ahead.

As we have seen, in many ways the world is now going through harrowing times. But there is every reason to believe that deliverance is near for humanity—deliverance from crime, war, famine, sickness. The Bible holds out such a hope. To make this hope our own, though, we need to identify the time period in which we are living and learn from the Holy Scriptures what course we should follow.

Our Time—A Marked Generation

In the first century, Jesus' apostles at first expected him to seize power in Israel as the promised Messiah. When they saw that Jesus' departure was imminent, and yet their expectations were unfulfilled, they questioned him about his return: "What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of

things?" (Matthew 24:3) The prophecy that Jesus gave in reply was not completely fulfilled in the first century. And later inspired writings pointed to a larger fulfillment in later history. (Revelation 6:2-8) Could it be in our time?

Jesus showed that it would take some discernment to recognize the foretold period, for he warned his disciples that the vast majority would not grasp the sense of the momentous events occurring. Using the global Deluge of Noah's day as a parallel, Jesus stated: "For just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be. . . . They took no note until the flood came and swept them all away."—Matthew 24:37, 39.

By what means would men perceive his "presence" and thus take steps to avoid being swept away to destruction like the majority in Noah's day? Jesus gave a multiaspect prophetic "sign" that is recorded in the Gospels. Let us see if this "sign" is visible today, and if so, what it forecasts.

INTERNATIONAL WAR—INCREASE OF LAWLESSNESS: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." (Luke 21:10) "The increasing of lawlessness."—Matthew 24:12.

Many wars have taken place since 1914, including two on a worldwide scale. Even at present about a million soldiers and guerrillas are active, and over 100 young men are killed daily, according to the *New Zealand Herald*. Crime too is flourishing, as you may be sadly aware. Journalist Anthony Lewis recently ob-

served: "From countries as disparate as Britain . . . and the Soviet Union there are reports of increasing criminal violence and of official inability to cope with it."

EARTHQUAKES: "Earthquakes in one place after another."—Matthew 24:7.

While there have been major earthquakes on occasion over the centuries, our day is particularly marked in this respect. Earthquakes have been very numerous in the past few decades. From 1970 to 1979, an average of 80,000 people each year lost their lives in earthquakes. This figure does not even include the 1976 disaster in China, where, according to certain estimates, 800,000 people lost their lives!

FAMINES—DISEASES: "In one place after another pestilences and food shortages."—Luke 21:11.

According to UNICEF, 12 million children died of hunger throughout the world during 1979. In Africa about one child in three starves to death. Sickness, too, continues to wreak havoc worldwide. Five hundred thousand children die of measles annually, and one billion people are afflicted with tropical diseases. Nor can those in industrialized countries feel secure, for there cancer, heart ailments and venereal disease strike millions.

A WORLDWIDE WITNESS: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth."—Matthew 24:14.

In the 12-month period from September 1981 through August 1982, Jehovah's Witnesses spent well over 384 million hours spreading the good news and teaching people Bible truths. Over two million ministers preached in 205 countries and islands of the sea.

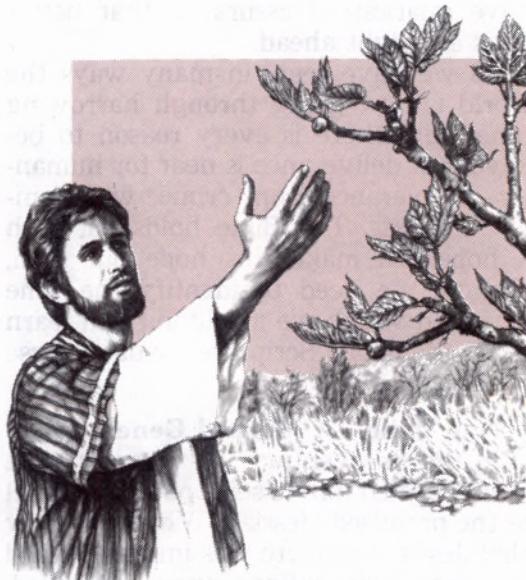
The Meaning of It All

After foretelling these different events, Christ revealed their meaning:

"Note the fig tree and all the other trees: When they are already in the bud, by observing it you know for yourselves that now the summer is near. In this way you also, when you see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I say to you, This generation will by no means pass away until all things occur."—Luke 21:29-32.

The fulfillment of all that Jesus had described would make up a composite "sign," indicating the nearness of the Kingdom of God as infallibly as trees "already in the bud" herald the arrival of summer. But when did these things start to occur?

Commenting on an event that changed the face of the world, French economist Alfred Fabre-Luce stated: "The 1914 war was the initial quake that gave birth to tremors still rocking us today." Many



As to our times, Jesus said that we can learn from the fig tree

other historians and statesmen have acknowledged that a dramatically different era began in 1914 when World War I commenced. Interestingly, Pius XI, pope from 1922 to 1939, recognized that events occurring since 1914 were "the signs of the last days, such as were announced by Our Lord." As we have seen, the different events foretold in this prophecy continue today. We thus have good reason to believe that the generation that witnessed the initial shock in 1914 and is still represented by people alive today must be the one that will witness the final fulfillment of this prophecy.

What, then, should be our attitude as this "generation" advances? We should not give way to discouragement or indifference. Rather, we need to heed the counsel Jesus gave after having listed the various elements of the "sign." He said: "As these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near." (Luke 21:28) We can adopt such an attitude when we know what the near future holds for us under God's Kingdom rule.

God's Promises

Many feel that their present worries would be lessened if they could work in more pleasant surroundings and with security. The Scriptures do not brush aside such an idea. Prophets such as Isaiah foretold better conditions that will enable man to enjoy life: "They will certainly build houses and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not toil for nothing, nor will they bring to birth for disturbance."—Isaiah 65:21, 23.

However, the Scriptures particularly draw attention to the fact that blessings from Jehovah will also include those of a *spiritual nature*. Humans need more than just material well-being. We need

to respect the principles of love and justice and live alongside others who respect those principles. God's Kingdom will bring about such a favorable environment on earth, enabling honest-hearted ones to blossom out to the full. The aforementioned prophet adds: "When there are judgments from you for the earth, righteousness is what the inhabitants of the productive land will certainly learn."

—Isaiah 26:7-9.

God's Kingdom will accomplish something no other government can, namely, delivering mankind from sin and its consequences: woes, sickness and death. When God accomplishes this through Jesus Christ, all those who love and practice righteousness will obtain eternal life.

—John 3:16.

Benefits Even Now

We should not overlook the fact that a large measure of happiness is available right now by our living in harmony with God's purposes. The bad things happening on earth are obvious to all and bring no joy in themselves. Still, if we discern their meaning and thus recognize the "sign," we can understand why our times are in a sense a foretaste of the *best of times*, for we will witness God's intervention, bringing a permanent solution to man's problems.

Although living in the midst of this troubled world, Jehovah's Witnesses are able to reap benefits that are available to you also. Their knowledge of God's laws offers moral protection and enables them to live balanced lives. They have available the peace of mind that comes from a hope based on divine promises, along with godly conduct. (Psalm 119:165; 1 Timothy 4:8) In addition, there will be a deliverance when Christ destroys God's enemies in the near future and opens the opportunity to receive God's permanent blessings.—Zephaniah 2:2, 3; Psalm 29:11.

Why People Do Bad Things

THE man up front, fighting in the battle near the wall, is Uriah. King David of Israel had written Joab, the general of his army: "Put Uriah in front of the heaviest battle charges,

and you men must retreat from behind him, and he must be struck down and die."—2 Samuel 11:15.

Uriah was a good, loyal man. Why, then, would David, who also was a servant of Jehovah, deliberately have Uriah killed?

What can help us to understand this is to read the following Bible verses: "With evil things God cannot be tried nor does he himself try anyone. But each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire. Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin; in turn, sin, when it has been accomplished, brings forth death."

—James 1:13-15.

But how, you may ask, does this information help us to understand why David had Uriah killed? To get the answer we need to ex-



God's Word Is Alive

amine the circumstances that caused David to want Uriah dead.

One day, while Uriah was away, David happened to be looking from his rooftop and saw Uriah's beautiful wife Bath-sheba bathing herself. What did David do? He kept looking. By doing so he allowed a desire to have sexual relations with Bath-sheba grow in his heart. It was not God who was trying or tempting David. No, *David was drawn out and enticed by his own desire.*

Finally, the wrong desire within David became so strong that he had Bath-sheba brought to his palace. There he had sexual relations with



her. Later, because Bath-sheba had become pregnant and David was unable to have their adultery covered up, he arranged to have Uriah killed in battle.

True, David's sin did not lead to his losing God's favor forever and receiving His sentence of death. This is because David was sincerely repentant, and Jehovah showed him mercy. (Psalm 51:1-14) Nevertheless, this experience helps us to understand that people often do bad things because they entertain wrong desires in their heart. So we should learn from David's experience to avoid situations, as well as activities and entertainment, that work up "sexual appetite."—Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5.

A Notable Annual Meeting

AS THE global economic situation worsens, the annual meetings of many business corporations are anything but happy. Regarding the meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank held in Toronto, *Maclean's* magazine said: "Hope was the rarest commodity of all at the annual meetings."

Yet, a different sort of annual meeting recently took place. All its sessions reflected the Christian hope, brought true joy to those attending and built up brotherly love. The fruits of God's spirit were easily seen at this gathering.—Galatians 5:22, 23; 1 Corinthians 13:13.

On Saturday, October 2, 1982, for the first time in its 98-year history, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania held its annual corporate meeting outside the United States of America. On that milestone date 119 members of the corporation (the legal agency used by Jehovah's Witnesses) and more than 2,000 other people met at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses near Toronto, Canada.

It was also noteworthy that most of the members of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses were able to attend. Their presence added to the specialness of the occasion for it opened up a unique opportunity for them and others. In what way?

Well, at the suggestion of the Canada branch, local elders in congregations across the country indicated to the branch those who had been in the field of Kingdom preaching for many years. These were the logical ones to be invited by the Society to attend, as an expression of love toward them as well as some recognition for their years of faithfulness.

Thus, about 1,800 old-timers (many with 40 and more years of service) from every province of Canada were on hand and could get acquainted with one another. Though they had been "God's fellow workers" together in the field for decades, most had never met one another before.—1 Corinthians 3:9.

Friday's Sessions

The greater number of the old-timers had not seen the new branch facilities in Canada, so Friday morning and early afternoon of October 1 were set aside for self-conducted tours. The visitors also enjoyed a noon meal in the dining room. Later, buses took them to the

Assembly Hall for their evening meal and the Friday night program. This included a separate annual meeting, that of the International Bible Students Association of Canada, the Canadian corporation used by Jehovah's Witnesses. After that brief business meeting of the 20 corporation members, the general audience listened to three talks.

The first gave the history of the Canadian IBSA from its incorporation in 1925 and showed that the Kingdom preaching was the purpose for which it was formed. Then, L. K. Greenlees of the Governing Body spoke on Christians' being no part of the world, which involves our view of how we use the world, its educational system, its wealth and luxuries. Finally, F. W. Franz, as president of the Canadian corporation, presented an encouraging talk on the Greater Cyrus, Jesus Christ, as the Shepherd-Liberator of God's people. Basing his remarks on Isaiah 44 and 45, Brother Franz encouraged all to keep together as one flock under the one Shepherd over all the world.

Saturday's Sessions

Saturday's program began with prayer and timely instruction on a Bible text, followed by some experiences.

Next, the business meeting of the Watch Tower Society got under way. The secretary reported that there are now 464 voting members of the corporation and that 455 members were present in person or by proxy, enough to proceed with voting for the next term of office of two of the Society's directors. Grant Suiter and J. E. Barr were unanimously reelected.

The secretary also announced that the Canadian Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs had, on July 22, 1982, approved a new Canadian corporation for Jehovah's Witnesses called the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada. This will end some of the confusion created when the IBSA name is used in dealings with the public. The new corporation will have a membership of up to 100, with 7 directors on its board.

Brother Franz then made some appropriate remarks on "organization." He showed that our being a comparatively small group does not mean that Jehovah would not use such as his organization. One should not 'despise the day

of small things.' (Zechariah 4:10) Natural Israel started out small, as did spiritual Israel, the latter with only about 120 at first.—Deuteronomy 7:7; Acts 1:15; 2:1-4.

In the afternoon, with Lloyd Barry acting as chairman, a program of four talks was presented. Karl Klein explained that sowing bountifully so as to reap bountifully applies to all intelligent beings, including Jehovah, and it proves true in all aspects of a Christian's life. (2 Corinthians 9:6) A. D. Schroeder showed how Jehovah's organization has been advancing in Bible education while the world suffers fear and hopelessness. L. A. Swingle reviewed the worldwide expansion of Jehovah's Witnesses, from 3,868 publishers in 1918 to the more than 2,300,000 today. He explained that the potential for growth can be seen in reports, such as that of Ecuador's 14-percent increase last year and Mexico's attendance of over 536,000 at the celebration of the Lord's Evening Meal. Theodore Jaracz urged his listeners to "concentrate on speeding up the Kingdom work."—2 Thessalonians 3:1.

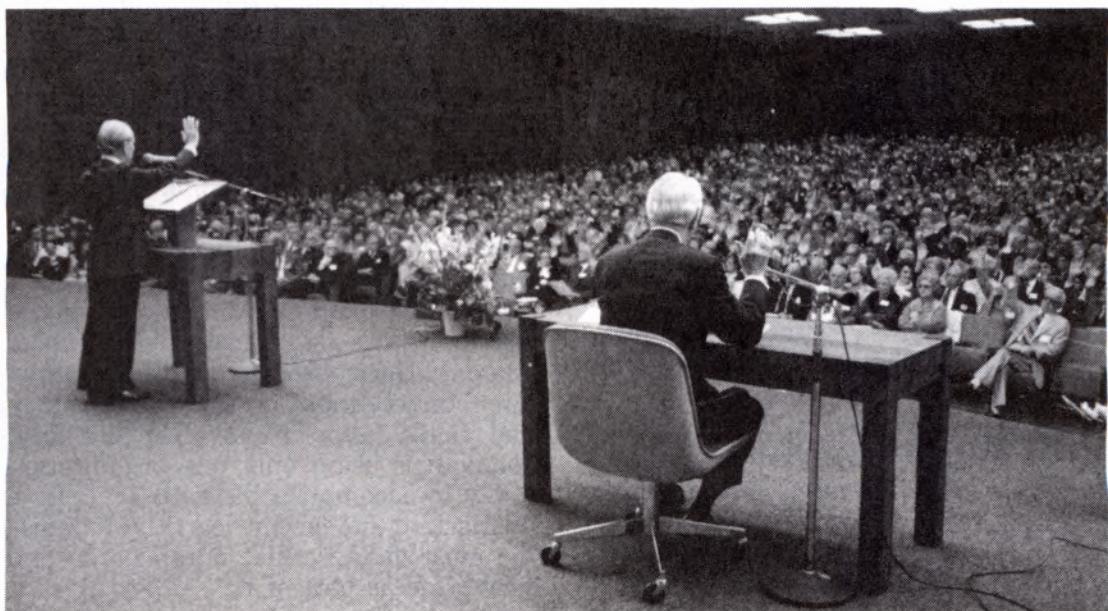
Near the close of the meeting Brother F. W. Franz announced that next year's annual meeting will be held in England. The applause that followed indicated hearty approval by the

attenders of the idea that this annual occasion of joy and Christian fellowship could be shared with brothers in other lands.

Thus ended two glorious days of faith-strengthening fellowship. "To be present when members of the Governing Body speak to us is indeed memorable and spiritually beneficial," said one longtime Kingdom publisher. Adding to the happy event were the 128 brothers who came from Brooklyn Bethel and the 28 from Watchtower Farms. Twelve North American locations were tied in by wire, one as far away as California. This brought the total attendance to 4,059 people, including 70 French-speaking brothers at the Assembly Hall who enjoyed simultaneous translation of the program.

All attending had to agree with Brother Franz when he said at the close of the first day: "What a refreshing day this has been for all of us—to have this association!" No less could be said about the second day. Much planning and work had gone into the preparations, but Jehovah had blessed these endeavors.

Those privileged to attend went home greatly encouraged and refreshed by the association they had enjoyed with friends old and new. For many it was their first, but for all it was a most notable annual meeting.



The Watch Tower Society's president and secretary share in the voting along with other members

You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth —But How?

LIVING forever on earth is just an impossible dream. There is no way anybody can do it.

You may have heard people say that. Yet you may know that in the beginning it was God's purpose for obedient humans to live forever in an earthly Paradise. And God never fails to accomplish what he purposed! (Genesis 1:28; Isaiah 55:11) His Word plainly promises: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."—Psalm 37:29.

That is the thrilling message that Jehovah's Witnesses bring to people when they call at their homes. The Kingdom, with Jesus Christ as Ruler, will see to it that God's original purpose is accomplished. Under the Kingdom's righteous administration this earth will be cultivated to become a beautiful Paradise. However, not everyone will be permitted to live in the Paradise earth. Requirements must be met. That is reasonable.—Matthew 6:10.

Consider: If you were the owner of a beautiful home surrounded by well-kept gardens, would you allow just anyone to live there? No, he would have to meet with your approval, meeting your requirements. What does God require of those who will reside forever upon his Paradise earth? Let us examine four basic requirements.

Four Requirements

Jesus Christ identified a first requirement when he said in prayer to his Father: "This means everlasting life, their *taking in knowledge* of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) Knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ includes knowledge of God's purposes regarding the earth and of Christ's role as earth's new King. Will you take in such knowledge by studying the Bible?

Many have found the second requirement more difficult. It is to *obey God's laws*, yes, to conform one's life to the moral requirements set out in the Bible. This includes refraining from a debauched, immoral way of life.—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; 1 Peter 4:3, 4.

A third requirement is that we *be associated with God's channel*, his organization. God has always used an organization. For example, only those in the ark in Noah's day survived the Flood, and only those associated with the Christian congregation in the first century had God's favor. (Acts 4:12) Similarly, Jehovah is using only one organization today to accomplish his will. To receive everlasting life in the earthly Paradise we must identify that organization and serve God as part of it.

The fourth requirement is connected with loyalty. God requires that prospective subjects of his Kingdom support his

government by *loyally advocating his Kingdom rule to others*. Jesus Christ explained: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth." (Matthew 24:14) Will you meet this requirement by telling others about God's Kingdom?

Perhaps you are well acquainted with these requirements. Yet many persons are ignorant of God's purposes and of what he requires. Now we have a marvelous instrument to help such ones. It is the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*. Have you used it to help others learn what God requires of them?

An Effective Teaching Aid

The new *Live Forever* book contains knowledge that leads to everlasting life. It discusses important Bible truths that people need to understand in order to dedicate their lives to Jehovah God and to serve him acceptably. In expressing appreciation for this new Bible study aid, a Witness from Ohio, U.S.A., wrote:

"In June I had no Bible studies. As of this day, I have three Bible studies and a fourth one ready to start. All three studies are in this new publication. All three are regular and exciting. The book answers the student's questions in a precise and understandable way. . . . I cannot say 'Thank you' enough for making Bible studies easy to conduct, as well as covering every essential aspect needed by the student for gaining a lasting and heartfelt appreciation for Jehovah and his organization."

Also pointing to the book's effectiveness is the following letter: "I have been able to start three Bible studies in this book and what I have found is that the book is very good for any age group. I have a study with a woman who is 83 years old, also with two girls who are 11 years old and another one with a wom-

an who is 50. It is a great privilege to be associated with an organization that knows exactly what is needed to help the most people learn of Jehovah and his purposes for the earth and all of mankind."

Motivates to Obey the Truth

Besides taking in life-giving knowledge, a person must conform his life to God's moral requirements if he is to live forever in Paradise on earth. The *Live Forever* book is helping people do this. Not only is direct counsel provided regarding wrongs to avoid and how to avoid them but encouragement is also given to do what is right. In a fine way this book exposes the subtle designs of Satan. It also spells out clearly the fight that the Christian must put up to do what is right.

For example, a missionary of Jehovah's Witnesses in Panama writes about a young man who had been studying the Bible: "By the last week of July he got the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*. His mother had obtained it for him at the 'Kingdom Truth' District Convention in Hawaii. At the Service Meeting on Thursday, July 29, he told me that he had quit smoking because of what he saw in the book.

"On Friday at his home Bible study I asked him to show me what impressed him so much. The picture on page 131, which shows the activities condemned by God that must be avoided by subjects of God's government, was pointed out. 'Look,' he said, 'two whole frames to a cigarette!' Then the picture on page 227 and the material on page 226 about praying for help when tempted to smoke was called to my attention. 'That did it! I told Sunshine [his little girl] to get rid of the cigarettes right then and there!' Thus ended 17 years of smoking! Needless to say, that night we started studying the

book with him. Any book that powerful should not go to waste sitting around on the shelf."

In another letter of appreciation one person wrote: "I just wanted to thank you for the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*. Reading that publication prevented me from making a big mistake.

"One of my workmates approached me and asked me to come over to socialize. I knew exactly what the person had in mind but between being partly shocked and feeling tempted, I didn't answer. So the person left it up to me and said, 'Meet me here at 4 p.m. if you want to go.'

"By 3 p.m. I still did not know what I was going to do. I knew what this would do to my relationship with Jehovah, but something kept telling me that nothing would happen. I knew that by thinking about it instead of dismissing it

from my mind I had weakened myself to the point of wanting to give in—but not totally.

"Just the night before, I was reading the *Live Forever* book and was very much impressed with the chapter 'The Fight to Do What Is Right' and the chapter on 'Prayer.' Well, in the book it said that the time to pray to Jehovah for strength is not after you have done something wrong, but at the exact moment you feel tempted. Knowing that I had absolutely no strength to resist meeting this person at 4 p.m., I appealed to Jehovah for strength to resist. I told him exactly how I felt. My *earnest* prayer in itself gave me strength. . . . When I eventually met this workmate again I was strong enough to take a proper Christian stand and even give a witness. Thanks again for that very clear-cut counsel."



The book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* is truly excellent for conducting new Bible studies

Directs New Ones to Organization

Yet another vital area covered by the book is the need to identify and associate with God's visible organization. A traveling minister of Jehovah's Witnesses commented on this, saying: "For more than 25 years we've been instructed to teach our Bible students about the organization, taking time each study to acquaint them with some feature of it. I'm so glad we have such a feature incorporated right into the study aid; publishers and students alike can't miss it now!"

Yes, chapter 23, "God's Visible Organization," has a fine presentation showing how Jehovah down through the ages has always dealt through an organization. And the *Live Forever* book describes the function of God's modern-day visible organization, directing new ones to that place of safety. Not only are each of the five weekly meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses briefly discussed but Bible students are made acquainted with the organization's arrangements for circuit assemblies and large conventions.

Emphasizes Kingdom Preaching

A person can know the truth that leads to an earthly Paradise; he can be living a morally upright life; he can be associating with God's organization; yet he may not be in line to receive life as a citizen of God's righteous new system. What is missing? *The person must also be an advocate of the truth. He must be a Kingdom preacher!* The *Live Forever* book works this fact in along the way in a very logical, helpful way. For example, as early as the 15th chapter, under the subheading "Loyalty to God's Government," it says:

"That Jehovah God would require his subjects loyally to support his Kingdom government should not be surprising. Governments of men require the same thing from their citizens. But in what

special way does God expect loyal support to be given? By his subjects taking up weapons to fight for his Kingdom? No. Rather, like Jesus Christ and his early followers, they must be loyal *spokesmen or proclaimers* of God's kingdom. (Matthew 4:17; 10:5-7; 24:14) It is Jehovah's will that everyone may know what his kingdom is and how it will solve mankind's problems. Have you shared things that you have learned from God's Word with relatives, friends and others? It is God's will that you do."

Use It to Help Others

Like other Watch Tower publications that have preceded it, this book provides Bible truths that lead to an earthly Paradise. You are encouraged to read and study it carefully. Then use it to help others to meet the requirements to live forever in Paradise on earth.

Why not offer the book to those you meet in your daily activity, such as tradesmen or neighbors that call at your home? At the conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses this past summer, maids in motel rooms, as well as other people, saw the book and asked Witnesses how they could obtain a copy. Yes, people see the quality binding and the clear title *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* and they want the book. So keep a supply at hand to place with persons as opportunity affords. Do not forget your relatives. Why not see to it that they all receive a copy?

During January and February Jehovah's Witnesses are offering the *Live Forever* book in their field ministry. As part of their weekly Service Meetings at their Kingdom Halls during these months, they are discussing ways in which they can use this instrument to help people on the way to life in the Paradise earth. You are invited to attend and learn how you can share in this activity.



As World Calamity Nears —‘Consider Jesus’

“Holy brothers, . . . consider the apostle and high priest whom we confess—Jesus.”—HEBREWS 3:1.

YOU can find in Rome graphic testimony to a calamity—a calamity that should have a major impact on your life. In the ancient Roman Forum stands the Arch of Titus, commemorating General Titus' capture and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. A relief on the arch shows manacled Jews, and Roman soldiers carrying spoils from the city.

² We as Christians can benefit from that calamity by examining timely Bible counsel that evidently was written nine years or so before that destruction. It is in the book of Hebrews, which the apostle Paul wrote to Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem and Judea.

³ Our brothers back then were in a very difficult situation. Though Judea seemed to be firmly under the control of Rome, many of the Jews were rebellious. (Acts 5:36, 37) Imagine the fierce pressure such Jews would have put on Jesus' followers who, being “no part of

the world,” would not side with the Jews against Rome. (John 17:16) Another cause of persecution against Hebrew Christians was the Jews' feeling of superiority because they had been chosen by God, taken into the Law covenant and given a way of worship involving Levitical priests and sacrifices.

⁴ However, the Jewish epoch—with its systems of temple sacrifices, priests, festivals and Sabbaths—ended first after the Messiah's sacrificial death. (Galatians 3: 24, 25; Colossians 2:13-17) Paul could thus write that God's Son was manifested as a man “once for all time at the conclusion of the systems of things.” (Hebrews 9:26; 1:2) That conclusion was soon to become undeniably clear, with the destruction of the temple. When Jesus foretold that destruction, his disciples asked, “When will these things be?” (Matthew 23:37-24:3) Jesus replied that there would be wars, food shortages, earthquakes,

1. 2. How can we benefit from an ancient calamity commemorated in Rome?
3. What made the situation of Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem difficult?

4. (a) Why could it be said that Jesus had appeared at “the conclusion of the systems of things”? (b) What did Jesus foretell regarding that conclusion?

pestilences and an extensive Kingdom preaching work before the end would come. (Matthew 24:4-14; Luke 21:10, 11) Those words came true in the generation between Jesus' giving the prophecy and Paul's writing Hebrews. Christ also foretold for Jerusalem a 'great tribulation such as had not occurred since the world's beginning.' (Matthew 24:21) The destructive tribulation that came on Jerusalem in 70 C.E. was unparalleled and unrepeatable for that city. Yet it was only a miniature fulfillment. Why? Because a "great tribulation" for all the world of mankind was to take place in the distant future.

⁵ The facts prove that the prophetic words of Jesus have a larger, a major, fulfillment at the time of his "presence and of the conclusion of the system of things." (Matthew 24:3) Revelation chapter 6, written decades after Jerusalem's tribulation, also foretold war, famine and sickness. This would involve far more than Judea, for Revelation said that the war would "take peace away from the earth." (Revelation 6:4) Global developments since World War I in 1914 to 1918 show that we are living in the conclusion of the present wicked system of things, which will climax in a "great tribulation." This tribulation will eliminate wickedness from the earth, making way for a Paradise under the rule of God's Kingdom.

⁶ The book of Hebrews points down to our time. In it Paul wrote that Christ was then in heaven "awaiting until his enemies should be placed as a stool for his feet." (Hebrews 10:13) The book also speaks of the time "when [God] again brings his Firstborn into the inhabi-

5. How is it that there will yet be on a larger scale a "great tribulation"?
6. What indicates that the book of Hebrews was written with our time in mind?

ed earth."* (Hebrews 1:6) That is now! The evidence shows that Christ has received kingship and acted against God's enemies in heaven. (Revelation 12:7-12) Christ has turned his attention to the inhabited earth, being invisibly present. So, as Jesus foretold, we will soon face the climactic removal of God's enemies from our globe. What counsel, then, does Hebrews have for us?

'Consider Jesus'

⁷ Paul particularly focused attention on Jesus. He wrote: "Now as to the things being discussed this is the main point: We have such a high priest as this, and he has sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." (Hebrews 8:1) Why was that especially appropriate counsel for Christians living at the conclusion of a system of things?

⁸ Distorted views of Jesus have long existed. First-century Jews were proud that they descended from Abraham, practiced a religion given through Moses and had priests of Aaron's lineage. So they might have thought: 'This Jesus of Nazareth is merely a Galilean carpenter's son.' They even accused the Son of God of being a demonized Samaritan. (John 7:52; 8:39-41, 48; 9:24, 28, 29) Hence, God wisely encouraged Hebrew Christians to 'consider Jesus,' because a *proper, balanced* view of and relationship with the Son of God would help those Christians to be faithful.

⁹ The divine counsel in Hebrews is also helpful to us because false or distorted views of Christ still abound. Many people today, rather than downgrading Jesus as did Jewish opposers, exaggerate his role. Their churches assert that Jesus is

* See "Questions From Readers," page 31.

7, 8. Why did Hebrews fittingly focus on Jesus?
9. What makes the counsel to 'consider Jesus' appropriate today, but against what danger do we need to guard?

OBEISANCE or WORSHIP

In Hebrews 1:6 the Greek word *proskynéo* may mean:

1. Rendering respectful obeisance, as 'bowing down,' to Jesus as the one whom Jehovah God has honored and glorified
2. Worshiping Jehovah God through or by means of his chief representative, his Son Jesus

part of a triune deity and that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are equal. Yet, who gets most of their attention? Jesus. He is pushed into the foreground, and the Father is squeezed into the shadows. This poses a challenge for true Christians. At John 14:28 Jesus said that his Father was greater, and Psalm 83:18 states that "you, whose name is Jehovah, you *alone* are the Most High over all the earth." But we must not overreact to the distorted views about Jesus and unconsciously minimize his true position. As with the Hebrew Christians, a balanced and accurate estimation of Jesus will be of immense value as we face the future.

¹⁰ The book of Hebrews begins by focusing attention on Christ's superior position. He is now a glorified spirit, "the exact representation of [God's] very being." This does not imply that the Father and the Son are one person or one god, for Hebrews 1:3 adds that Jesus has "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty ['of God,' *Today's English Version*] in lofty places." Texts such as Hebrews 2:10 and 5:5, 8 also indicate that Jehovah is superior to the Son. Still, Christ

10. What does Hebrews indicate about Jesus' position?

now has "a name [position or reputation] more excellent than [the angels']." —Hebrews 1:4.

¹¹ As the faithful angels do, we also need to recognize Christ's exalted position. Quoting from Psalm 97:7 (Greek *Septuagint Version*), Hebrews 1:6 says: "Let all God's angels do obeisance to him." As other versions render this, the angels "fall before," "bow down before" or "pay homage" to the Son.* The context suggests that this means that even the angels render homage to Jesus as God's chief representative and exalted Son. They appreciate that he has been "crowned with glory and honor" and given authority over the inhabited earth to come.—Hebrews 2:5, 9.

¹² How should this affect us? After showing Jesus' superiority over the angels, Paul says: "That is why it is necessary for us to pay more than the usual attention to the things heard by us, that we may never drift away." (Hebrews 2:1) As the Hebrew Christians knew, the Jews long paid attention to God's Word, or Law, given through Moses. It is much more vital for us to pay attention to divine guidance provided through Jesus.

¹³ Bearing this out, recall what Jesus Christ had said about fleeing when Je-

* Paul employed the Greek word *proskynéo*, which *The Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich) says was "used to designate the custom of prostrating oneself before a person and kissing the feet, the hem of the garment, the ground." (1 Samuel 24:8; 2 Kings 2:15) It may also signify "worship" which is how some Bibles read at Hebrews 1:6. If that is the correct sense here, it evidently means a relative worship, a worship of Jehovah God directed through his glorified Son.—Compare Revelation 14:7; *The Watchtower* of November 15, 1970, pages 702-704.

11. (a) How do God's angels treat Jesus Christ?
(b) How is Hebrews 1:6 to be understood?
12. Why is it important for us to pay attention to Jesus' words?
13. How might Christians benefit from attention to Jesus? Illustrate.

rusalem was surrounded by encamped armies. (Luke 19:43, 44; 21:20-24) The Romans surrounded rebellious Jerusalem in 66 C.E. but then mysteriously withdrew, whereupon Christians fled the city. Their paying attention to Jesus saved their lives when the Romans returned, bringing calamity in 70 C.E. Let us learn a lesson from this: With a world calamity just ahead, ask: 'Am I giving keen attention to Jesus' words? For example, does the amount of time I spend in recreation, my attitude toward my job or business, or my view of secular education indicate that I have given attention to Jesus' words at Luke 12:16-31?'

¹⁴ Hebrews 2:10 calls Jesus the 'Chief Agent of salvation.' That is first the case as to anointed Christians who are his "brothers." (Hebrews 2:11-17) But all who hope for life on a Paradise earth also depend on him for salvation. Paul wrote: "Although he was a Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered; and after he had been made perfect he became responsible for everlasting salvation to all those obeying him, because he has been specifically called by God a high priest." (Hebrews 5:8-10) Of course, Jesus had been a perfect spirit, and on earth he was physically perfect. Still, in view of his role as our priest, Jesus had to be perfected in another sense. On earth he received training—education, disciplining and testing of his obedience even to death—to perfect him as a merciful and sympathetic high priest.

14. (a) In what way is Jesus the 'Chief Agent of salvation'? (b) Jesus was "made perfect" in what sense?



Jesus offered a sacrifice of more lasting value than those that priests offered at the temple

Confidence in Our High Priest

¹⁵ In reading Hebrews you can see that it has much to say about priests. This is to build our understanding of and appreciation for the "high priest whom we confess—Jesus." (Hebrews 3:1) Paul explains that "every high priest taken from among men is appointed in behalf of men over the things pertaining to God, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins." (Hebrews 5:1; 8:3) Much of the Law covenant centered on the fact that humans are sinners. That is why sacrifices were offered in their behalf by priests, who also made offerings to cover their own sins. Yet, the animal sacrifices that were repeated time after time did not overcome sin or make any of the people

15. Why do we find so much said about priests in the book of Hebrews?

perfect. (Hebrews 7:11, 19, 27; 10:1-4, 11) This proves that a new covenant was needed, along with a new sacrifice and a new high priest.—Jeremiah 31:31-34.

¹⁶ We have such in Christ. Foreshadowed by Melchizedek, whose lineage is not given in the Bible, Jesus did not become a priest through natural descent from Levi or Aaron. God appointed him directly. (Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17; 5:5, 6) If God thus approves of Jesus as high priest, can we not have full confidence in him? Furthermore, he will not soon die and need replacement, as was the case with priests under the Law. He was able to offer a final sacrifice, his own body; it was perfect, and the sacrifice would never have to be repeated. Christ our high priest took the value of his life blood to heaven and presented it before God. He is still there, serving as a priest for us. —Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:12-18.

¹⁷ We can have confidence in our high priest as we face the coming world calamity. Unlike the sacrifices under the Law, Christ's perfect sacrifice can fully cover our sins. Beyond that, it can "cleanse our consciences from dead works [both past wicked pursuits and any personal efforts of self-justification before God] that we may render sacred service to the living God." (Hebrews 9:14; 10:1-4) We must agree that, when in a difficult situation and under pressure, a clear conscience before God is of immeasurable value. (Hebrews 10:19-22) In other ways, too, we can delight in having Jesus as a permanent high priest in heaven.

¹⁸ The book of Hebrews assures us that Christ is a *sympathetic* priest. You can imagine the decisions and problems that

16. How does Jesus as a priest excel over Israelite priests?

17. In what ways are we helped by having Jesus as high priest?

18. Why was it, and is it, good to know that our high priest is sympathetic?

Can You Explain?

- How does our situation parallel that of the Christians to whom Hebrews was written?
- Why do we need to have a balanced view of Jesus and pay attention to his words?
- Why does Hebrews have much to say about sacrifices and priests?
- How do you feel about Jesus as High Priest and Perfecter of faith?

the Hebrew Christians faced in the patriotic environment of Jerusalem as they prepared to flee, leaving their homes, relatives and employment. Yet they were not entirely on their own. Paul wrote: "We have as high priest, not one who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in all respects like ourselves, but without sin."¹⁹ How comforting that must have been to them, and it should be the same to us in the closing days of this system of things! With such a sympathetic high priest "we may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time." (Hebrews 4:15, 16) No matter what trial arises, "he is able to come to the aid of those who are being put to the test." —Hebrews 2:17, 18.

The Perfecter of Our Faith

¹⁹ Our faith is specifically involved as we 'consider Jesus.' After mentioning "the sin that easily entangles us"—lack of faith—Paul speaks of our 'looking intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus.' (Hebrews 12:1, 2) Why is that vital during the conclusion of the present system of things?

²⁰ From its first prophecy in Genesis 3:

19, 20. How is Jesus the "Perfecter of our faith"?

15 the Bible points to the Christ. He is the focal point of much that is foretold and typified in the Bible. Many of the features of the Mosaic Law mentioned in the book of Hebrews were "a shadow of the good things to come." (Hebrews 9:23; 10:1) But "the reality belongs to the Christ." (Colossians 2:17) Yes, Jesus' birth, earthly ministry, sacrificial death, resurrection and priestly service in heaven bring to completion, or perfection, all the prophecies, types and patterns concerning these things.

²¹ While Paul could recognize Christ

21. In what additional sense is Jesus the "Perfecter of our faith" today?

as the "Perfecter of our faith," we have added reason to do so today. We see the major fulfillment of Jesus' words about the 'sign of his presence and the conclusion of the system of things.' (Matthew 24:3) So our faith has a more solid basis. Salvation into "the inhabited earth to come" is also so much closer than it was in Paul's day. Let us, then, continue to consider Jesus, the Perfecter of our faith, confident that God "becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him" in faith. (Hebrews 2:5; 11:6) As the following article will show, the book of Hebrews can help us to have the needed faith and Christian outlook to be in position to receive the marvelous reward.

Lay Hold on the Hope Before You

THE apostle Paul wrote that "we actually become partakers of the Christ only if we make fast our hold on the confidence we had at the beginning firm to the end." (Hebrews 3:14) He also spoke of our need "to lay hold on the hope set before us."—Hebrews 6:18.

² You may have become one of Jehovah's Witnesses recently and are zealously sure of your convictions. Or you may have been a Christian witness for decades and feel solid in the way of the truth. In either case, likely each of us can call to mind some people we know who have ceased walking in the way of the

truth, even as occurred in the first century. (Philippians 3:18; Acts 20:30) Some may gradually have lost their faith, become preoccupied with material interests or given in to temptation and sinned.

³ How can we prevent that from happening to us? Let us reflect on counsel in the book of Hebrews. We will see how appropriate this is for our time, by the faithful endurance of many modern-day witnesses of Jehovah who have been strengthened by such counsel.

⁴ Hebrews was written to Christians who were "partakers of the heavenly

1, 2. Why should you seriously consider the matter of laying hold on your hope?

3-5. How can the book of Hebrews be of help with regard to our hope?

Many Witnesses in whose home copies of *The Watchtower* were found have been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment

calling." They were anointed with God's spirit and had the solid hope of following Christ the forerunner into heaven. As you can imagine, "this hope was an anchor for the soul, both sure and firm." Still, Paul called attention to the need "to lay hold on the hope set before us." (Hebrews 3:1; 6:18-20) If they had such a need, how much more now do the anointed remnant and the "great crowd" who expect to survive the coming "great tribulation."—Revelation 7:9, 15.

⁵ In Hebrews Jehovah alerts us to dangers such as 'drifting away,' 'falling away,' 'becoming sluggish,' 'shrinking back to destruction' or 'begging off.' (Hebrews 2:1; 6:6, 12; 10:39; 12:25) The book offers fine counsel to help us to show "industriousness so as to have the full assurance of the hope down to the end" and to be "the sort that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul."—Hebrews 6:11; 10:39.

"Not the Sort That Shrink Back"

⁶ Evidently many of the Hebrew Christians had experienced persecution. They "endured a great contest under sufferings," such as being exposed in a Roman theater or jeopardizing themselves by coming to the aid of those in prison. (Hebrews 10:32-34) Nonetheless, they had to work at not being "the sort that shrink back to destruction, but [being] the sort that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul."—Hebrews 10:39.

6. What had Hebrew Christians faced, yet what need did they have?

⁷ So there is the danger that a Christian might develop a fear of opposition, causing him to "shrink back" or compromise. How about us? We may have had a limited amount of opposition, such as from schoolmates or fellow workers. Even physical abuse, as from an unbelieving mate or parent, has come to some. Yet in many lands it is rather unusual for a Witness to be severely persecuted because of his faith. This can make him less prepared for intense persecution and more liable to "shrink back" when it comes. Let us ask, 'Might I, after having lived a comfortable life, be tempted to shrink back if I were seriously threatened, such as with the loss of my home, employment or access to my family, or with imprisonment and physical abuse?'

⁸ When commenting on showing faith under adversity, Paul urged us to consider how Jesus endured. (Hebrews 12:2, 3) Then Paul reminded us that if severe persecution comes, we should view it as a form of profitable discipline. Of course, God is not causing the persecution; he is merely permitting it. Still, persecution can train us or help us to improve in needed Christian qualities, such as endurance, patience, loyalty and trust in Jehovah.—Hebrews 12:4-11; James 1:2-4.

⁹ Lest we feel that only a perfect man could endure, as did Jesus, Hebrews high-

7. (a) How might the prospect of persecution affect a Christian? (b) What should you ask yourself?
8. What advice about coping with persecution does Hebrews offer us?

9. (a) How do we know that imperfect humans can endure persecution? (b) What occurred with some sisters in a communist land during the 1960's?

The Witnesses were the worst off in the camp. When more than three of them met, they were ordered to disperse

lights imperfect men and women like us who endured through faith. (Hebrews 11:35-40; 12:1) The "cloud of witnesses" who have endured by faith have been added to in modern times. In August 1982 a Swiss journal printed an article relating one woman's experiences with Jehovah's Witnesses imprisoned at a women's labor camp in a communist land a couple of decades before. Here is the gist of some of her comments:

Only the larger churches have partial freedom because they preach what the State permits. It is not so with the smaller faiths meeting in homes. The most persecuted are Jehovah's Witnesses. Many Witnesses in whose homes copies of *The Watchtower* were found have been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. It can be understood, then, why the camp authorities were exasperated when the Witnesses somehow kept getting literature in quantity. Every prisoner had been stripped naked and searched, and their clothing was searched to the last thread. Also, any prisoner working in the fields was watched by armed guards and searched upon coming back through the gate. Still the literature appeared. It was as if angels at night flew over and dropped it. Most of the Witnesses were younger women. The first imprisonment would be for 5 to 7 years, the second conviction for not less than 10 years. The Witnesses were the worst off in the camp. When more than three of them met, they were ordered to disperse.

¹⁰ Concerning the ancient examples of faith under persecution, Hebrews says that "the world was not worthy of them," but that Jehovah will see that they are

10. Hebrews helps us reach what determination regarding persecution?

"made perfect" in the earthly Paradise. Who could ask for more? So let us take to heart both ancient and modern examples of faith. Rather than 'shrinking back to destruction,' we must be determined to "have faith to the preserving alive of the soul."—Hebrews 11:38, 40; 10:39.

Let Us Not "Drift Away"

¹¹ As Hebrews shows, another danger is 'drifting away.' (Hebrews 2:1) Consider how that might occur. A person—it could be any of us—became a Christian and was admirably filled with enthusiasm. He readily shared in the field ministry even when he had only limited Biblical knowledge. (Acts 3:1-9; 8:39; 13:48, 49) After some years his excitement should have matured into ardent zeal and deep devotion. Has it? Does he view the Christian ministry as a means to display his love for God and to aid others, as he himself was aided? Or has it become a routine, a chore? If he has children, does he regularly and enthusiastically urge them to be full-time ministers? Or does he mention it only casually and with less conviction than what he says about their getting advanced schooling, having a high-paying job or acquiring an elegant home?—Revelation 2:4.

¹² A step to avoid 'drifting away' is our 'paying more than the usual attention to the things heard.' (Hebrews 2:1) Some of

11. How could 'drifting away' be a danger for someone who has been a Christian for quite a while?

12. (a) Hebrews offers us what recommendation so we can avoid 'drifting away'? (b) What questions might we consider as to paying attention to the Word?

the Hebrew Christians failed in this. After learning the "primary doctrine about the Christ," they did not "press on to maturity." When they 'ought to have been teachers,' they were still on elementary things. (Hebrews 5:12-6:2) What about us? Are we merely "coasting" or are we progressing through attention to personal study? Do we try to read part of the Bible daily? Do we study Christian publications with genuine interest, even conversing with others about new things we learn? Are we helping our children to progress beyond the 'milk of the Word'? Can they explain *from the Bible* the truth about the soul, resurrection, Trinity, Paradise earth, and so forth? Are they doing that in the field service, not remaining at last year's level?—1 Peter 3:15.

¹³ Concerning imprisoned Witnesses, the article related:

In their little free time they applied themselves to memorizing Bible passages. Also, they worked at learning foreign languages, particularly English, French and German. The literature they acquired was sometimes in these languages, and those who learned them could thus translate the material for other sisters.

Though few of us are forced as they were to work long hours on a restricted food supply, are we as industriously using our free time to give "more than the usual attention to the things heard"?

Do Not 'Fall Away'

¹⁴ After urging us to continue progressing, Hebrews warns that those "who have once for all been enlightened" can 'fall away,' perhaps to the point of being beyond repentance. (Hebrews 6:4-8) Yes, Christians who have long served God, even anointed ones who have "become

13. Our imprisoned sisters set what pattern as to study, suggesting what for us?

14. What can befall even persons who have long been Christians?

partakers of holy spirit," might be drawn toward something tempting in the present system.

¹⁵ A number have fallen away through the desire of the flesh or the desire for wealth. (1 John 2:16) Of course, sexual desire is involved when youths give in to premarital sex. But consider another aspect. Some married persons have grown tired of their mate and met up with another person who seems more attractive, makes more interesting conversation or is more successful in this world. Sadly, this has led to divorces and immoral remarriages. Others have "fallen away" to material pursuits, being drawn into business practices that are clearly dishonest or that ignore the government's licensing and tax requirements. (Matthew 22:21) Or they have promoted pyramid-type monetary ventures or get-rich-quick schemes that tempt people to take greedy advantage of their brothers. (Compare Acts 20:33; 2 Thessalonians 3:10, 11.) These endeavors, aside from their often eclipsing Kingdom interests, have sometimes resulted in hard feelings and disputes, if not charges of fraud. The Bible has been proved true: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare."—1 Timothy 6:9.

¹⁶ If we humbly recognize that we are not so strong that we could not fall, then we should be determined not to give in to the beginnings of temptation and sin. (Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 10:12) The sisters in the labor camp provide us with a good example:

Some of them were taken, one by one, to a large city where there were stores, movie theaters and other entertainment. For example, two of the secret police led a sister into a store with plenty of food on display. They

15. How have some fallen away in connection with sex and with business activities?

16. The imprisoned sisters set what good example in resisting temptations?



The Israelites heard Joshua and Caleb's report but showed lack of faith. So they could not enter into God's rest in the Promised Land

told her, 'Choose what you want.' She said that she didn't need anything. It was awful to show shelves of fresh bread and pastries to a worn-out person who had had little to eat for years. Similar temptations were tried at the department stores and theaters. Though they kept her there for a few weeks and promised freedom if she would abandon the faith, nothing availed. They were able to break down only one sister. Months later she came back to the camp, having put on weight and now dressed in fancy clothing. She gave a two-hour lecture to her former sisters, who did not even greet her. Apparently the secret police thought that this was a very ingenious effort and that the sisters would line up and renounce their faith. They got the opposite result.

¹⁷ Do you feel that you could have been resolute in the face of those temptations? But what about the temptations you *do* face? Paul wrote: "Beware, brothers, for fear there should ever develop in any one of you a wicked heart lacking faith

17. How should we feel about temptations that we face?

by *drawing away* from the living God; but keep on exhorting one another each day, as long as it may be called 'Today,' for fear any one of you should become hardened by the *deceptive power* of sin." (Hebrews 3:12, 13) To avoid falling away or drawing away, we need to concentrate on "today."

Manifesting Faith "Today"

¹⁸ Paul based his comment about "today" on a quotation from Psalm 95:7-11. (Hebrews 3:7-11) As that passage mentions, the Israelites had hardened their hearts during the days of Moses. The Israelites, after hearing the report of Joshua and Caleb about the Promised Land, manifested lack of faith. (Numbers 13:17-14:38) Even though they there could enjoy peace and blessings during God's ongoing rest day, the Israelites, with hardened hearts and unbelief, refused to

18. Why did the Israelites fail to enter into God's rest?

move into the land and live there. So God had them wander in the wilderness for 40 years.—Hebrews 3:17-19.

¹⁹ God's great Sabbath Day, or rest day, continues. (Genesis 1:31-2:3) Paul wrote that "a promise is left of entering into his rest." (Hebrews 4:1, 9) Hence, we Christians can now enter or remain in that "rest." How? By exercising faith, not in the Joshua of ancient times, but in the Greater Joshua, our leader Jesus. We also need to cease from works of unbelief, such as those manifested by people who do not truly believe that a New Order will ever come. Their lives center on recreation or pleasures. They may want to "be somebody," such as by acquiring a position or a title. Or they may pursue a philosophy of being a "nice" person.

²⁰ If we do have faith in Jesus and what lies ahead for God's people, we should show that by our activities. Paul wrote: "The man that has entered into God's rest has also himself rested from his own works." (Hebrews 4:10) Hence, instead of works of unbelief or those in which a person tries to justify himself, we must have works reflecting our faith.

²¹ A prime Christian work is speaking about Jehovah God and his Son. Concerning Jesus, Paul urged: "Let us hold onto our confessing of him." (Hebrews 4:14) Naturally, we can and should do that in Christian meetings as we make public declaration there of our hope. (Hebrews 10:23-25) But that "public declaration" should include confessing to outsiders our beliefs and hopes. Really, we should feel compelled to make "a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to [God's] name." (Hebrews 13:15; 1 Corinthians 9:16) The author of

19. When and how can we enter into Jehovah's rest?

20, 21. (a) What works do we need to avoid? (b) What good work should we share in, as exemplified by the imprisoned sisters?

the article mentioned earlier tells of a conversation with one sister:

I said the authorities are putting all of you in prisons, not because of your beliefs, but because you preach to others. If you would sit alone at home and quietly pray, no one would know. She replied, 'That is true, but our obligation is to speak to others and to gain new brothers and sisters. We cannot be self-centered and prepare just for our own life on earth during the millennium. All people have to know about what life then will be like.'

²² You can see that a key point in Hebrews is that we must "do our utmost to enter into [God's] rest, for fear anyone should fall in . . . disobedience." (Hebrews 4:11) We can have the deep satisfaction of being in that rest right now, as well as the assured hope of continuing in it when all alive on earth worship God. There is no question about Jehovah's willingness to bless and preserve those who, through faith and obedience, enter into his rest now. He is "the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Hebrews 11:6) If there is any question, it is about us. Yet even we need not be in question. By our faith and endurance, and with God's help, we can "lay hold on the hope set before us."—Hebrews 6:18.

22. What conviction based on Hebrews do you have?

Have You Benefited?

- What particular counsel or lesson did you draw from Hebrews?
- How can you benefit from the example of some imprisoned sisters?
- What does Hebrews 2:1 urge you to do to avoid drifting away?
- How can you enter into God's rest?

Insight on the News

Will All Be Fed?

Can the earth produce sufficient food to feed its present population? Yes, and it can feed many more millions, answers a feature article by Jack Cahill in the *Toronto Star*. He writes: "According to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) there is already enough grain grown globally to feed everyone on earth with 3,000 calories per day, which is more than the average consumption in North America and about 50 per cent above the minimum acceptable level." As for the future, Cahill explains that there can even be enough food to satisfy the needs of double the present world population.

This may sound strange to those who are aware of the planet's starving millions. Yet the article points out that "the problem is hunger, not scarcity, and the reasons are poverty, politics, economics and inequitable distribution." Agencies realize that merely giving away food is not the lasting answer. Aid is needed "so that the people can learn to help feed themselves."

What agency can supersede politics, oversee food distribution and educate the masses? Only God's Kingdom. Among the benefits that rule by God will bring are those stated at Psalm 146:7, when it describes man's Creator as "the One executing judgment for the defrauded ones, the One giving bread to the hungry ones."

Value of Discipline

Some people have felt that disfellowshipping, or the excommunication of wrongdoers, as practiced by Jehovah's Witnesses, is too drastic a measure. After printing an article on the subject, the *Times* of St. Petersburg, Florida, published a reader's response addressed to those who "think the actions of the witnesses might be a little harsh." The reader admits: "I was disfellowshiped this year [April 1981]. . . I engaged in activities I knew the Bible condemned, including breaking the law. I lied about some of these things and did not display a repentant spirit."

The reader pointed out with regard to Jehovah's Witnesses: "People are disfellowshiped because of not meeting God's high standards clearly stated in his 'Word.' The defect is their own." This he admits was true in his own case. "If other organizations were as 'tight' as they are there would be a lot less selfish law-breakers, and therefore a lot less pain and problems in this world."

Yet few religious organizations have the courage to act toward unrepentant wrongdoers as Scripturally commanded: "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves." (1 Corinthians 5:13) This action clears God's name of reproach, protects the good association of congregational members and hopefully will cause the wrongdoer to amend his ways. And far from "Christ's love" sentimentally indulging such a person, as

some contend, Jesus himself directed that an unrepentant person should be 'excommunicated.' —Matthew 18:15-17, *The Living Bible*.

On the other hand, the benefit of such a firm measure was illustrated in the case above. This person repented and has been reinstated as one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

"Brain Beatings"

The recent deaths of professional boxers as a result of legalized beatings in the ring raise serious questions about this sport in many minds (1982 saw five ring deaths in the United States). In an editorial entitled "Brain Beating Is No Sport," *The New York Times* states: "Some people watch boxing to see skill, others just for the blood. Far worse than the blood is the unseen damage. Retinas are dislodged, kidneys bruised and, after repeated pounding, the cerebral cortex accumulates damage to the higher functions of the brain, leading to loss of memory, shambling walk: the traits of the punch-drunk boxer. Can a civilized society plausibly justify the pleasure it may gain from such a sport?"

More importantly, can a "sport in which the explicit goal is to injure the opponent," as the editorial states, be compatible with Christian principles? The Bible admonishes: "You must love your neighbor as yourself. Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour."—Romans 13:9, 10, *The Jerusalem Bible*.

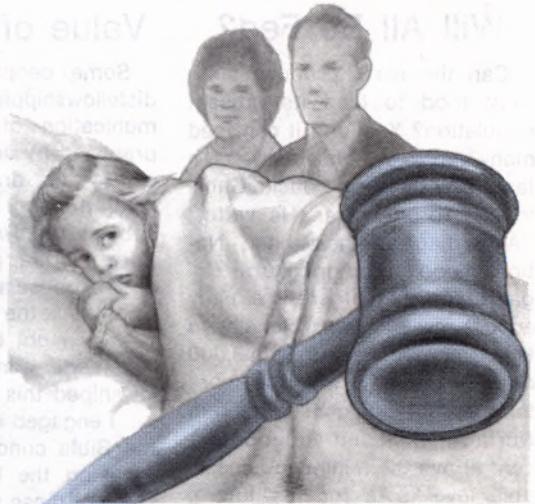
Strength Beyond What Is Normal —How They Found It

DEATH in a family is a painful experience. When the death is that of a child, it is even more so. But what if after suffering the untimely loss of your child you were accused of criminal negligence? What if people called you a murderer, your employer decided to dismiss you, your neighbors turned against you? How would you feel? What would you do? Surely, it would be a time when strength beyond what is normal would be needed.

A Sudden Crisis

This was the experience of Dennis and Bernadette Cyrenne in a small mining town in northern Ontario, Canada. It started when their 12-year-old daughter, Sara, suddenly got sick with a rare blood disease. At the local hospital the doctor recommended blood transfusions. Because of their respect for God's law regarding life and blood, and on account of medical information they have acquired over the years, they decided against the treatment.—Genesis 9:4; Acts 15:28, 29.

Hoping to find some alternative, they rushed Sara 250 miles (400 km) to Thunder Bay, only to find the same response from the doctors there. Continuing their search, they took Sara out of the hospi-



tal. Eight hours later Sara's struggle for life came to an end. For her parents this was only the beginning.

Mounting Pressures

Immediately they were charged with reckless conduct for abducting their daughter from the hospital and with criminal negligence in connection with her death. They were to return home and wait until the time of the trial.

Back home, news of Sara's death and the charges got around the small community quickly. Pictures and reports appeared in the papers, and the 'terrible things' they did became the talk of the town. Life became very difficult for the Cyrennes.

Within two weeks some women of the town got together a petition, demanding that Bernadette's employer fire her, or else they would boycott the store. So she lost her job. Everywhere they went

they met people who spoke badly of them, called them murderers, told them that they were unwelcome and should be driven out of town.

How would you feel in their position? When everyone seems to be against you, who can you turn to for help? "It wasn't always easy to be walking down the streets with your heads up," said Bernadette. "But we did it, because we knew what we had done was the right thing and that we had Jehovah God on our side." Why did she say that? What made them feel that way?

Sources of Strength

Right from the start, things that they had learned from the Bible kept coming back to their minds and helped them in making their decisions. Dennis later related that, while at the hospital, the scripture of James 2:24 kept coming into his mind. It says: "You see that a man is to be declared righteous by works, and not by faith alone." This helped him to realize that even though he knew what the Bible says about a certain matter, it is the carrying out of it that counts. So there was never any doubt in his mind as to what he should do.

Apparently his wife, Bernadette, felt the same way, because when he told her his decision, she responded without hesitation: "Go right ahead, I'll be right behind you." That, for a fact, was most encouraging and reassuring to him.

Meanwhile, the love, prayers and support of Christians in Thunder Bay made them feel that they "were never alone" though they were far from home. "The brothers were so loving toward us," said Dennis. "They offered to help financially and spiritually, and we could feel the effect of their prayers behind us."

Among those who helped was Peter Cramb, an elder of the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. He was on the

scene the moment the Cyrennes arrived at the hospital and remained with them all through the ordeal. Even though he knew full well that this might mean getting himself involved in a lawsuit, he stood by them. As it turned out, criminal charges were also brought against him.

With the court appearance looming ahead, Peter and the Cyrennes were under a great deal of pressure and anxiety. Although they knew Jesus had promised his disciples that they will be given what to say, and so need not be anxious, the Cyrennes realized that this did not mean that they had nothing to do but wait. (Mark 13:11) To the contrary, for more than a year they studied and restudied everything having to do with their decision. The comfort from the Scriptures, particularly texts such as Hebrews 13:6 and Psalm 84:11, was faith strengthening to them during this period of time.

Rewarding Experiences

Though many of the people in the community reacted negatively, some seemingly bad experiences turned out to be most encouraging and rewarding. Bernadette related one about a woman who worked in a local restaurant. "She made it her business to be very loud in the shop, calling me a murderer, saying that I was no good and nobody liked me," recalled Bernadette. "There was nothing that she didn't say." At about this time the woman's 18-year-old son was arrested, tried and jailed for blowing up a policeman's car.

One day Bernadette and the traveling overseer's wife, Helen, came upon the woman's house in their door-to-door ministry. "If I can face this woman," thought Bernadette, "I'll be all right." So they knocked on the door.

"No, I'm not interested," the woman responded in a condescending tone of

voice as soon as she saw who her visitors were. She was ready to shut the door.

Determined not to let the matter end there, however, Bernadette tactfully replied, "Mrs. M——, I've really been thinking about you and I am so sorry about the troubles you've had."

"Yeah?" the woman responded, taken by surprise. "Oh, please come in."

For the next 20 minutes she poured out her heart and could not stop talking about her son. Sensing the situation, Helen interrupted and said calmly, "Mrs. M——, you have your son, but she doesn't have her daughter."

With that, the conversation turned to a discussion of what the Bible says about death and the resurrection, and how it helped Bernadette to endure all the pressures and hardship. This, along with the unselfish love shown to the woman, in spite of what she had done, completely softened her attitude.

Later, at the time of the Cyrenne trial, the woman came to the courthouse. It was the same courthouse where her son was convicted. At their son's trial only she and her husband were present. But this time the room was jammed with over 260 people, all very concerned about the Cyrennes. That was a real witness to her. In fact, she was so moved that she embraced Bernadette.

Dennis related how Jehovah provided encouragement in unexpected ways. During the months before the trial, he often thought about what would happen to his job and his house, which he bought through the mining company, if he had to go to jail. When he brought this up to his manager, the manager simply said: "Don't worry, Dennis. Don't even mention such a thing. People like you don't go to jail."

One of his young co-workers remarked that it must have been very trialsome when people were so unfriendly. "Some even said they would shoot you if they had the chance," he added. After explaining briefly, Dennis suggested that the co-worker read Isaiah 50:7 and 9 when he got home. As a result, this young man and his family accepted a regular Bible study and started to attend Christian meetings at the local Kingdom Hall.

Though having been a Witness for some 25 years, Peter Cramb felt the experience taught him what it means to rely on Jehovah. It gave real meaning to the psalmist's words: "To Jehovah I called in the distress of mine, and he proceeded to answer me. O Jehovah, do deliver my soul from false lips, from the tricky tongue."—Psalm 120:1, 2.

The Verdict

Three months after the trial, the case was decided by the district court in Thunder Bay. All three defendants were acquitted of the criminal charges. Although the judge did not agree with their Bible-based view regarding blood, he acknowledged that their decision "was not capricious or dogmatic but was based on a genuine belief."

Also, the judge found the contemptuous attitude of some of the townspeople unjustified. He stated in his opinion: "Bernadette Cyrenne . . . appeared to me to be a sincere, loving and compassionate

In Our Next Issue

- **What Is the Secret of Happiness?**
- **Modesty—A Fine Ornament for Young and Old**
- **What Is Our Position Toward Opposers of the Truth?**

mother living a sound and civilized family life. Indeed, the family life aspect of the Cyrenne household was one that any Christian family could well emulate."

To the Cyrennes and to Peter the experience has reinforced their conviction that "Jehovah himself will not hold back anything good from those walking in

faultlessness." (Psalm 84:11) They have seen firsthand God's love, power and wisdom in action through the hope and comfort from his Word, the Bible, and the tireless support of fellow Christians. This, more than all else, was the source of their strength beyond what is normal.
—2 Corinthians 4:7.

Questions From Readers

■ Does Hebrews 1:6 refer to the second coming of Jesus?

Though some Bible translations render this verse in a way that obscures the fact, there is good reason to understand this verse as referring to Christ's second coming.

In Hebrews chapter 1 the apostle Paul drew attention to Jesus' superiority over the angels. In this regard verses 5 and 6 contain three quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures, which Paul applies to Jesus. As you read Hebrews 1:5, 6, note in particular the two occurrences of the word "again":

"For example, to which one of the angels did he [Jehovah God] ever say: 'You are my son; I, today, I have become your father'? And again: 'I myself shall become his father, and he himself will become my son'? But when he again brings his Firstborn into the inhabited earth, he says: 'And let all God's angels do obeisance to [or, worship] him.' "—Hebrews 1:5, 6.

In verse 5 Paul first quoted what God said in Psalm 2:7. Then Paul wrote "and again" before giving a second quotation (2 Samuel 7:14) and applying it to the Messiah,

Jesus. But now consider verse 6, where the word "again" (Greek, *palin*) occurs also.

Was "again" used in verse 6 just to introduce a third quotation in a series? For instance, a person might write, 'John contacted her by letter. *Again*, by telephone. *And again*, by telegraph.' Is that all that Paul was doing in verse 6 when he used "again" and quoted Psalm 97:7 from the Greek *Sepuagint Version*?

Some Bible translators have rendered Hebrews 1:6 this way. For example, *The Jerusalem Bible* reads: "Again, when he brings the First-born into the world." Other translations render it similarly, even though doing so means taking "again" out of its natural order, for the Greek literally reads: "Whenever but again he should lead in the Firstborn (one)."

Appreciating the grammatical aspect, Dr. C. B. Moll comments: "The usage of our Epistle does not allow us to transpose *palin* ['again'] and make it the introduction of a citation . . . The language refers to the second in-

roduction—yet in the future—of the First-born into the world." Similarly, in his work *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Dr. B. F. Westcott observes that "again" is more naturally understood to connect with what follows it. He also mentions that Paul had already (verse 2) spoken about Jesus' first coming, as a man. So Dr. Westcott says "that there was good reason why [in verse 6] the writer should point forward specially to the Return in which Messiah's work was to be consummated."

Hence, Hebrews 1:6 is to be understood as pointing forward to the time when the glorified Jesus would again come or give special attention to the world of mankind. This is how the verse is rendered in the *New World Translation* and the *American Standard Version*, as well as the translations by R. Young and J. B. Rotherham. Dr. Edgar J. Goodspeed's translation is even more explicit in showing that this text applies to Christ's second coming. It renders Hebrews 1:6: "But of the time when he is to bring his firstborn Son back to the world he says, 'And let all God's angels bow before him.' "

