

May 15, 1987

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



**WHAT HAS GOD
DONE FOR YOU?**

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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.

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Frederick W. Franz, President

What Has God Done for You?

NOTHING!" some might reply. 'I have to work hard and look after myself.' If that is how you feel, just reflect for a moment. How did you come to be?

Some nine months before you were born, two minute organisms met inside your mother. Together they formed a new, unique organism.

The larger of the two organisms was an ovum, or egg, supplied by your mother. The smaller organism was a sperm from your father—so minute that, according to Sheila Kitzinger's book *The Experience of Childbirth*, if all the sperm that produced all the people in the world were laid side by side, they would "cover little more than one inch [2.5 cm]." But once your father's sperm penetrated your mother's ovum, your genetic code was established and you were conceived!

Highly complex processes of development then began. They were "so intricate that, after more than a century of study, scientists aren't even close to deciphering them," wrote Andrea Dorfman in *Science Digest*.

As an example of growth processes that puzzle scientists, the same writer comments: "Growth control is an equally complex issue. Left and right arms, for example, develop completely independently from millimeter-long buds of tissue, yet they end up equal lengths. How do the cells know when to stop multiplying? . . . Each organ seems to have an internal means of growth control." Are we not happy that this is so?

What causes and controls growth in all living organisms? A mindless force called nature? A hit-and-miss process called evolution? Is it not obvious that the astoundingly complex, tremendously varied, and superbly beautiful forms of life on this enchanting planet can only be the work of an almighty Creator? That being so, should we not feel deeply grateful for what he has done for us?



Infinite Evidence of Creative Marvels

Every day—even hourly—we benefit from creative marvels. For example, what happens when we sleep? Mental and muscular activities slow down automatically. This is not by our own volition, for we often fall asleep without realizing it. And how refreshing a good sleep is! Some can go for weeks with no food, but those who go for more than three days without sleeping have great difficulty thinking, seeing, and hearing.

After you awake in the morning, maybe someone brings you sweetened coffee. Sugar, once rare and expensive, is now so abundant that we seldom give it a thought. But how is it made? It is formed in plants by the process of photosynthesis—the reaction of sunlight with water and carbon dioxide. At the same time oxygen, vital to all living creatures on earth, is

released. Photosynthesis is a highly complex process that is still not fully understood by scientists. "How . . . is photosynthesis itself achieved?" asks the book *The Plants*. (Life Nature Library) "This is like asking how life begins—we just do not know."

Perhaps as you drink your coffee, you recall a television program of the previous evening. In your mind's eye you can see those interesting scenes again. How were they transmitted to your brain, stored there like a roll of film, then played back so that you can describe them to others? Marvelous, is it not? How did man get the intelligence to do the amazing things he accomplishes? Certainly not from animals. Is not the human brain awesome?

The day has hardly begun. Yet what a lot we already have to thank the Creator for! But there is so much more.

What Other Benefits Flow From God?

DO YOU enjoy beautiful flowers, the perfume of roses, the song of birds? Were you thrilled by your baby's first smile? Do you not appreciate appetizing aromas? And who does not admire a rainbow, a glorious sunset, or the stars on a clear night? God's marvelous provisions are endless, are they not?

Yet there is so much misery. In spite of earth's ability to produce plenty for all, millions are underfed. Millions more are poisoned by pollution. And billions today are affected by crime, greed, selfishness, and fear of what the future will bring.

Since the Creator has been so bountiful, why is there so much unhappiness? This

planet is a marvelous place, made for us to enjoy. But the world—mankind—is in a pitiful state. For the majority of earth's inhabitants, the outlook is dark, frightening. Why? What went wrong? Did God make man and then abandon him? Is there any light on this puzzling situation? Do we have any hope for the future?

A Source of Light and Hope

Nearly 2,000 years ago a unique baby boy was born—unique because his mother, Mary, was human, and his father was God himself! 'Impossible!' do some say? No, not for the Originator of conception, the Maker of all the complex forms of life. That

little boy grew up to be the perfect "man, Christ Jesus."—1 Timothy 2:5; Matthew 1:18-25.

It was an epoch-making birth. In fact, most nations acknowledge this by dating historical events before his day as B.C.—before Christ. And yet his early years were spent quietly as an assistant carpenter at his adoptive father's home in Nazareth. Thirty years passed. Then, at the Jordan River, Jesus presented himself to do God's will and was baptized, and Jehovah God's holy spirit descended upon him. (Matthew 3:13-17) Jesus then began a dynamic campaign of preaching and teaching. As prophesied by Isaiah, "the people sitting in darkness saw a great light."—Matthew 4:14-17; Isaiah 9:2.

Jesus became the most famous and widely respected Teacher of all time. No other human teacher has exerted such a powerful influence on mankind or provided so much spiritual light and hope. What was his textbook? The Bible, as it was then—the Hebrew Scriptures, or "Old Testament." Jesus made them come alive. Many ancient prophecies were fulfilled in him. (Compare Micah 5:2 with Matthew 2:3-6.) He confirmed the account of Genesis regarding man's origin. (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3-6) Jesus took up, amplified, and broadcast far and wide the main theme of the Bible—the vindication of Jehovah by means of the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 4:23; 6:10) Moreover, accounts of Jesus Christ's life and works are prominent portions of the Christian Greek Scriptures, or "New Testament." Yes, the Bible is a marvelous gift from God, a gleaming light in a dim, sad world.

—Psalm 119:105.

Why Is Mankind in a Mess?

Does the Bible answer that question? Yes. It shows that it was not a case of God's abandoning man but, rather, of

JESUS CHRIST—

- ♦ Fulfilled many ancient prophecies, for instance, Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:3-6
- ♦ Confirmed the Genesis account of man's origin—Matthew 19:3-6
- ♦ Amplified and broadcast the Bible's main theme, Jehovah's vindication by means of the Kingdom—Matthew 4:23; 6:9, 10; Luke 8:1
- ♦ Paid back what Adam lost, a perfect human life, thereby enabling those exercising faith in Him to gain everlasting life—John 3:16

man's abandoning God. Too, the basic principle of freedom of choice was involved. Humans were not created as robots, programmed to obey. We can choose to obey or to disobey.

When God created the first human pair in the beautiful Paradise of Eden, how happy and carefree they must have been! No sickness, no fear, no worries. Delightful birds and animals were present, and there was delicious food in abundance. (Genesis 1:26; 2:7-9) In time, however, an invisible enemy came on the scene. A powerful spirit creature became ambitious, coveting control of the future human family. By telling the first lie, he seduced Eve, and Adam was persuaded to disobey God's command not to partake of the forbidden fruit. (Genesis 3:1-7) Like so many today, the first humans thought they would 'do their own thing.' But thereby they actually put themselves under the control of Satan, the god of the present evil system of things.—2 Corinthians 4:4.

This raised a tremendous and vital issue: Could man successfully rule himself without God? It would require much time to resolve this question satisfactorily. Meanwhile, Adam and Eve had to pay the penalty God had prescribed—death. And

since they had become decadent sinners, neither they nor their offspring had any prospect of everlasting life independent of God.—Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22.

A Glorious Future

Since Adam's day many generations have come and gone. And in the ever-changing scene of men's affairs, many types of human governments have been tried—autocracy, democracy, socialism, communism, and others. But all have failed. Political, social, and international problems proliferate; so do ghastly weapons of mass destruction that threaten world suicide. During World War II, Western politicians promised that victory would bring freedom from want and fear, but both are increasing.

What is the solution? A massive problem needs a colossal remedy—nothing less than a global cleanup and the bringing in of a new world. Who can accomplish that? Certainly not the United Nations or any other combination of political powers that often break peace agreements almost before the signatures have dried! They are mere helpless pawns in the grip of Satanic power. (1 John 5:19) Only Jehovah, the Almighty, can get rid of Satan and his demons, put an end to the present corrupt world, and bring about a glorious new one under the heavenly Kingdom with his Son, Jesus Christ, as the King of kings. —Matthew 6:9, 10; Daniel 2:44; Revelation 20:1-3.

What will this Kingdom accomplish? Who will survive the devastating global cleanup, or Armageddon? A very interesting fact that more and more people are coming to realize is that this heavenly government is already operating and preparing people to survive Armageddon! (Revelation 16:14-16) What kind of people must they be? Jesus Christ said: “Happy

are the mild-tempered ones [the meek], since they will inherit the earth.” (Matthew 5:5) He thereby confirmed this ancient prophecy: “Before there comes upon you the day of Jehovah’s anger, seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth, who have practiced His own judicial decision. Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah’s anger.”—Zephaniah 2:2, 3.

Meek ones not only will survive Armageddon but, by remaining faithful to God, will also inherit everlasting life. How? As already mentioned, Adam’s vast family of descendants lost the prospect of everlasting life through his sinful disobedience. Death came upon the whole human race through Adam. Since he was a perfect man, another perfect man was needed to ransom, or buy back, what Adam lost. Jesus Christ filled that need and gave his life “in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.”—John 3:16.

This ransom provision is God’s greatest gift to man. It will apply not only to those who survive to enter the new world but also to those who come back from the dead. Does that sound too marvelous? Said Jesus: “Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment.” What a thrill! How joyful for Armageddon survivors, who will be able to welcome their loved ones back from the dead! —John 5:28, 29.

What a glorious prospect and hope! And all of this is provided by a loving Creator, Jehovah, through his beloved Son, Jesus. Although today the outlook is so dark and alarming, the future is full of light and hope for those who study the Bible and act on its heartening message. We live in



'What will you repay Jehovah for all his benefits?'

thrilling times. The Kingdom of God is at hand. (Matthew 24:33, 34) Praise Jehovah, the Giver of "every good gift and every perfect present!"—James 1:17.

As you meditate on the many ways in which we benefit from God's provisions and purposes, you may feel a deep sense of gratitude and a desire to express it in some way. But if you are just beginning to understand and accept the real hope for the future, you may feel the need to delve a bit deeper. We encourage you to do just that. Continue studying God's Word along with publications like this one that can

help you to increase your knowledge and appreciation for God's glorious purposes.

Those already having a clear conviction that God's Kingdom is the only solution to mankind's woes may feel like the inspired psalmist who said: "What shall I repay to Jehovah for all his benefits to me?" (Psalm 116:12) Such individuals will find that telling others about what God has done for us and the glorious future he holds out to those who love and serve him brings deep satisfaction and real joy. Why? Because, as Jesus said: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.

An Unlikely Disciple

WHAT a frightening sight as Jesus steps ashore! Two unusually fierce men come out from the nearby cemetery and run toward him. They are demon possessed. Since one of them is possibly more violent than the other and has suffered much longer under demon control, he becomes the focus of attention.

For a long time this pitiful man has been living naked among the tombs. Continually, day and night, he cries out and slashes himself with stones. He is so violent that nobody has the courage to pass that way on the road. Attempts have been made to bind him, but he tears the chains apart and breaks the irons off his feet. Nobody has the strength to subdue him.

As the man approaches Jesus and falls at his feet, the demons controlling him make him scream: "What have I to

do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I put you under oath by God not to torment me."

"Come out of the man, you unclean spirit," Jesus keeps saying. But then Jesus asks: "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion, because there are many of us," is the reply. The demons revel in seeing the sufferings of those they are able to possess, apparently taking delight in ganging up on them in a cowardly mob spirit. But confronted with Jesus, they beg not to be sent into the abyss. We again see the great power Jesus had to conquer even vicious demons. This also reveals that the demons are aware that an abyssing along with their leader, Satan the Devil, is God's eventual judgment for them.

A herd of about 2,000 swine are grazing nearby on the mountain. So the demons say: "Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them." Evidently the demons get some sort of unnatural, sadistic pleasure from invading the bodies



Jesus' Life and Ministry

of fleshly creatures. When Jesus permits them to enter the swine, all 2,000 of them stampede over the cliff and drown in the sea.

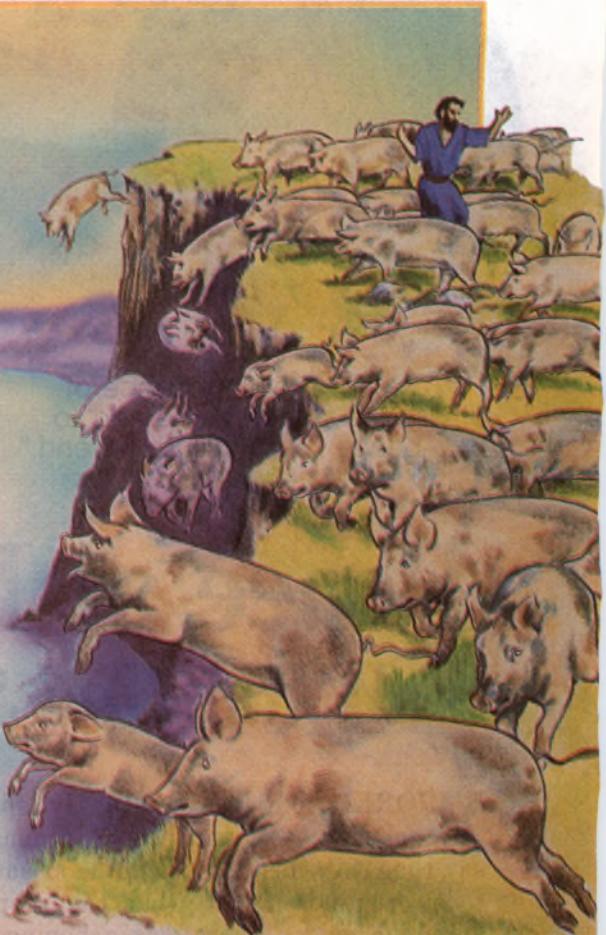
When those taking care of the swine see this, they rush to report the news in the city and the countryside. At that, the people come out to see what has happened. When they arrive, why, there is the man from whom the demons came out, clothed and in his sound mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus!

Eyewitnesses report to the people how the man had been made well. They also tell about the bizarre death of the swine. When hearing this, great fear grips the people, and they earnestly urge Jesus to leave their territory. So he complies and boards the boat. The former demoniac begs Jesus to allow him to come along. But Jesus tells him: "Go home to your relatives, and report to them all the things Jehovah has done for you and the mercy he had on you."

Jesus usually instructs those whom he heals not to tell anyone, since he does not want to have people reach conclusions on the basis of sensational reports. But this exception is appropriate because the former demoniac will be witnessing among people that Jesus now will probably not have opportunity to reach. Moreover, the man's presence will provide testimony about Jesus' power to work good, counteracting any unfavorable report that might be circulated over the loss of the swine.

In keeping with Jesus' instruction, the former demoniac goes away. He starts proclaiming throughout the Decapolis all the things Jesus did for him, and the people are simply amazed. **Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39; Revelation 20:1-3.**

- ♦ Why, perhaps, is attention focused on one demoniac when two were present?
- ♦ What shows that the demons know about a future abyssing?
- ♦ Why, apparently, do demons like to possess humans and animals?
- ♦ Why does Jesus make an exception with the former demoniac, instructing him to tell others about what He did for him?





"To the abundance of
the princely rule and to
peace there will be no end."
—ISAIAH 9:7.



Peace at Last! —*When God Speaks*

WORLD leaders constantly speak about peace, and people in general say that they desire it. Yet, the situation today reminds us of what the prophet Jeremiah said: "There was a hoping for peace, but no good came; for a time of healing, but, look! terror!" (Jeremiah 8:15) Actually, ever since Cain killed Abel, the world has not had real peace but has been plagued by violence. And our 20th century has been the most violent age of all, with wars accounting for about a hundred million deaths. In our time, 97 percent of the world's population has been involved in at least one war. So while world leaders speak about peace, they have led their

1. While world leaders constantly speak about peace, what has happened throughout human history?

people into one catastrophe after another.

² To all that violence must be added the daily toll of violent crime. For example, in the United States, every year about 20,000 people are murdered. Over 80,000 women are raped, with many more rapes not reported. Nearly two million women are severely battered by the man with whom they live. And about one fourth of all households are victimized by some type of crime. A report concludes: "We have become a terribly violent society." The situation is similar in most other lands.

³ However, all of that is as nothing compared with the violence that could be done

2. What toll of additional violence is noted in all nations?
3. What even greater violence could be done to the human family now?

by today's nuclear weapons. There are enough of them to kill every inhabitant on earth 12 times over! A doctor said: "Modern medicine will have nothing to offer the victims of a nuclear conflict." Why not? Another answered: "Most doctors, nurses and technicians would be killed . . . Hospitals would be destroyed. So there would be few left with enough knowledge and equipment to save anybody."

⁴ Regarding the lack of peace in our time, the main article of a recent *Encyclopædia Britannica* yearbook was entitled: "Our Disintegrating World—The Menace of Global Anarchy." It stated: "After 1945 the ideas that 'progress' was somehow inevitable and that the future of the modern world would be one basically of cohesion and coherence were assumed." But those assumptions, it said, "have proved to be totally misguided," adding: "What has happened instead . . . is that the world is quietly but relentlessly being rent by a slow-motion disintegration. Many countries whose structural and spiritual cohesion was taken for granted have been breaking apart . . . [into] tribes, clans, religious [sects], . . . city gangs, death squads, terrorist movements, guerrilla movements, and narrow and rabid self-interest groups."

⁵ Similarly, a former high government official in the United States said: "The factors that make for international instability are gaining the historical upper hand over the forces that work for more organized cooperation. The unavoidable conclusion of any detached analysis of global trends is that social turmoil, political unrest, economic crisis, and international friction are likely to become more widespread during the remainder of this

4, 5. (a) What comment did one publication make about the lack of peace in our time? (b) How did a former government official similarly comment?

century." He concluded: "The menace confronting humanity, in brief, is . . . global anarchy."

'Visitors From Space'

⁶ In view of all of this, an editor wrote in a Cleveland newspaper: "If visitors arrived next week from some distant galaxy, could we tell them we had to kill ourselves in order to establish the superiority of communism or capitalism? Could we explain that we were a species that divided itself into nations, and that those nations were sworn to murder each other in periodic orgies of blood lust? How would we explain that we let some of our species starve and others wallow in degradation and ignorance because the invention of mass death had a greater priority for us? The visitors from that distant galaxy would certainly describe us back home as barbarians. . . . We might protest that we also made great art and believed in justice. They would smile sadly and leave before the explosions."

⁷ 'Of course,' some may say, 'there are no "visitors from space" making any such inspection.' No, not from physical space. But for some years now, very powerful, highly intelligent visitors have been making a thorough inspection of what mankind has been doing to itself and to the earth. In addition, they are seeing to it that a clear message is being delivered "before the explosions."

⁸ Who are those powerful visitors who have been making an inspection of mankind? God's Word tells us that they are God's representatives in the spirit realm, faithful angels, whom he has dispatched to

6. How did a newspaper editor describe observations that visitors from space might make about the world today?

7, 8. (a) What powerful visitors are now making an inspection of mankind? (b) Why are they here?

earth to inspect it. Of these spirit creatures, Psalm 103:20 says: "Bless Jehovah, O you angels of his, mighty in power, carrying out his word, by listening to the voice of his word." These powerful angels are often mentioned in the Bible. For example, at Matthew chapter 25 the prophecy about our time says in verses 31 and 32: "When the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."

⁹ This "Son of man" is God's chief representative, Jesus Christ. After his resurrection to heaven, he waited for Jehovah to give him this special assignment. As Psalm 110:1 described it, Jehovah said to him: "Sit at my right hand until I place your enemies as a stool for your feet." The fulfillment of Bible prophecy shows that the time for God to send this powerful spirit creature into action came in the year 1914.

¹⁰ But he would not come alone, for Matthew 25:31 said that "all the angels" would be with him. How many might that be? Revelation 5:11 says: "I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels around the throne [of God] . . . and the number of them was myriads of myriads." A myriad is 10,000. One myriad times one myriad is 10,000 times 10,000, a total of 100 million angels! Yet, Revelation speaks in the plural, of "myriads of myriads" of angels serving God. That is hundreds of millions, perhaps billions or more. Under Christ's direction, these spirit creatures are assisting God's representatives on earth in separating mankind into two groups, one for

9. What part does Christ Jesus play during this inspection of mankind?
10. How many angels could be with Christ as they assist in the separating work?

"everlasting cutting-off," the other for "everlasting life."—Matthew 25:46; see also Matthew 13:41, 42.

"Everlasting Good News"

¹¹ What is the central message that these angelic visitors are supporting on earth at this time? Revelation 14:6 informs us: "I saw another angel flying in midheaven, and he had everlasting good news to declare as glad tidings to those who dwell on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people." What is this "everlasting good news"? It has to do with what Jesus said would be one of the many evidences that we are living in the last days. At Matthew 24:14 he declared: "And this *good news of the kingdom* will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come."

¹² God's Kingdom is the heavenly government that will rule over the earth after present human rule is eliminated. (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 6:9, 10) Its King is Christ Jesus, and he has associate rulers with him. (Revelation 14:1-4; 20:4) That Kingdom is the one spoken of at Daniel 7:14 in these terms: "To him there were given rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him. His rulership is an indefinitely lasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be brought to ruin."

¹³ Why is the message about Kingdom rule such good news, the very best of news? Because it will bring in a new world, a new framework of human society. Under God's Kingdom mankind will receive blessings so marvelous that Psalm 37:11 says of those who will live then:

11. What is the "everlasting good news" that angelic forces are supporting at this time?
- 12, 13. (a) What is Kingdom rule? (b) Why is the Kingdom message the very best of news?

"The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." Yes, "Jehovah himself will bless his people with peace." (Psalm 29:11) Today, before the Kingdom takes full control of all earth's affairs, the good news of its permanent, peaceful rule in the hands of the "Prince of Peace" is being preached in all nations. This is being done by God's earthly servants under the guidance of Christ and the angels.—Isaiah 9:6, 7.

¹⁴ Who are these earthly servants of God? Well, who are the only ones that regularly call on people with the Kingdom good news? Even opposers recognize them as Jehovah's Witnesses. Now more than three million strong, the ranks of these Kingdom proclaimers are rapidly increasing. Last year, 225,868 new ministers of the good news were ordained. And in that one year, 2,461 new congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses were established earth wide, an average of over 6 each day, making a total of 52,177 congregations in 208 lands. Truly, the prophecy of Isaiah 60:22 is having its fulfillment: Jehovah is speeding up his preaching and ingathering work "in its own time." And now is that time!

¹⁵ How people react to the news of Kingdom rule is the basis for determining

14. (a) What is one way in which we can positively identify God's earthly servants? (b) How has God's evident blessing been upon them?

15. What is the basis for judging people today?



*The work of Jehovah's Witnesses
is backed by angelic forces*

whether they will be separated for "everlasting cutting-off" or for "everlasting life" in the new world. Many react as did those described at 2 Chronicles 36:15, 16: "Jehovah . . . kept sending against them by means of his messengers, sending again and again, because he felt compassion . . . But they were continually making jest at the messengers of the true God and despising his words and mocking at his prophets, until the rage of Jehovah came up." But others react favorably and come under Jehovah's protection. "As for the one listening to me [true wisdom], he will reside in security and be undisturbed from dread of calamity."—Proverbs 1:20, 33; Matthew 25:34-46.

Heavenly Armies Into Action

¹⁶ Before long, the preaching work of Jehovah's servants will be completed to the extent that he has determined. God's patience with disobedient mankind will come to its end. The peaceful message that he has been speaking to mankind in this generation will change. Instead, "at that time he will speak to them in his anger and in his hot displeasure he will disturb them." (Psalm 2:5) As Jehovah himself declares: "In my ardor, in the fire of my fury, I shall have to speak." (Ezekiel 38:19) Then he will give Jesus Christ the signal to move his heavenly armies into action against this rebellious and lawless world.

¹⁷ What those armies will accomplish can be seen by what happened to Assyria when God's time came to act against it. Second Kings 19:35 says: "It came about on that night that the angel of Jehovah proceeded to go out and strike down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. . . . All of them were dead carcasses." That is what *just one angel* did! What myriads of myriads of

16. How will God soon speak to disobedient mankind?

17. How was the power of just one angel demonstrated?

What Are Your Answers?

- How has the lack of peace been evident, especially in our time?
- How are angelic forces involved in separating mankind today?
- Why is the Kingdom message "everlasting good news"?
- On what basis will people be judged for life or for death?

them will accomplish shortly will be awesome.

¹⁸ Jeremiah 25:31-33 describes what will happen in these words: "There is a controversy that Jehovah has with the nations. He must personally put himself in judgment with all flesh. As regards the wicked ones, he must give them to the sword,' is the utterance of Jehovah. This is what Jehovah of armies has said, 'Look! A calamity is going forth from nation to nation, and a great tempest itself will be roused up from the remotest parts of the earth. And those slain by Jehovah will certainly come to be in that day from one end of the earth clear to the other end of the earth. They will not be bewailed, neither will they be gathered up or be buried. As manure on the surface of the ground they will become.'

¹⁹ Revelation chapter 19 describes how Jehovah will accomplish all of this. It is by having his King Jesus Christ go into action with, as verse 14 says, "the armies that were in heaven" following him. Then verses 17 and 18 say: "I saw also an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice and said to all the birds that fly in midheaven: 'Come here, be gathered together to the great evening meal of God, that you may eat the fleshy parts of kings and the fleshy parts of military commanders and the fleshy parts of strong men and the fleshy parts of horses and of those seated upon them, and the fleshy parts of all, of freemen as well as of slaves and of small ones and great.' And verses 19 to 21 describe the destruction of all human institutions because they refused to listen when God spoke through his earthly messengers.

18. How thorough will the destruction be at this system's end?

19. What further details does Revelation chapter 19 add?

²⁰ Thus, the time is soon coming for God to bring an end to this violent, disintegrating world system. But that end will not be self-destruction through nuclear warfare among nations. If that happened, the righteous would be annihilated along with the wicked. However, God's "explosions" against this world will not be like that but will be selective. There will be survivors into the new world. As Proverbs 2:21, 22 says: "The upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very

20. Why could this world not end in a nuclear catastrophe?

earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it."

²¹ Why has this world come to the state where such an earth-wide destruction is imminent? Is it not possible that the current peace efforts of world leaders will bear fruit, so that this system can be saved? And if we want to be included among "the upright" and "the blameless" who will survive into the new world and keep living, how should we conduct ourselves at this most important time in all human history? Our next article will consider these questions.

21. What further questions will be considered in our next article?

Listening to Jehovah as the End Draws Near

"Happy is the man that is listening to me . . . For the one finding me will certainly find life."—PROVERBS 8:34, 35.

DESPITE the lack of peace throughout history, especially in this 20th century, some say that the nations are taking steps to resolve their difficulties. They point to the fact that world leaders hold summit meetings to talk about peace and sign various agreements. Why, the United Nations even declared last year to be the "International Year of Peace"! It was hoped that this would see the beginning of an extra effort by the nations to promote peace, with possible success in the near future.

1, 2. (a) Despite the lack of peace throughout man's history, what do some now say? (b) Why is true peace through human efforts impossible?

² However, in all history, have similar efforts ever brought permanent peace? If that were humanly possible, there should have been peace long ago—long before there were five billion people split into more than 160 nations, with countless varieties of political, economic, and religious philosophies. But there has never been peace; nor will peace ever result from the efforts of this world's leaders. Why not? For one reason, because mankind's problems are now so serious that they are unsolvable by human efforts alone. As Jeremiah 10:23 so correctly says: "It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step."

Why Human Efforts Cannot Succeed

³ There is another reason why the efforts of men and nations can never bring true peace. The Bible refers to it at 1 John 5:19, saying: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." Revelation 12:9 indicates that "the wicked one" is "the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth." Second Corinthians 4:4 calls him "the god of this system of things." Thus, the entire present system of political, economic, and religious rule that has produced so much violence is the product of Satan's rule, not of God's rule. That is why, when speaking of the wisdom that comes from God, 1 Corinthians 2:8 says: "This wisdom not one of the rulers of this system of things came to know."—Luke 4:5, 6.

⁴ When Satan rebelled against God, he induced our first parents to listen to him instead of listening to God. As a result, they deviated from obedience to God and brought upon the human family some 6,000 years of agony. The Bible clearly tells us that Satan induced humans to believe that they would do better by not listening to their Creator. (Genesis 3:1-5) In his wisdom, Jehovah has let the world of mankind in general proceed on its own, without his guidance, up to the present time. And surely, in all these centuries, it has been amply demonstrated that human rule has been a failure.—Deuteronomy 32:5; Ecclesiastes 8:9.

⁵ Moreover, when Adam and Eve stopped listening to Jehovah, the Source of perfect life, they became imperfect and eventually died. Thus, all their descendants were born imperfect. Sickness, old

3. For what other reason will men and nations never bring true peace?
4. What resulted after our first parents stopped listening to Jehovah?
5. Even if peace could be brought about by human efforts, what would still be with us?

age, and death became mankind's lot. (Romans 5:12) Therefore, even if humans could succeed in bringing peace, they still could not cure inherited imperfection. We would still get sick, grow old, and die. Since Satan was responsible for this, Jesus said of him: "That one was a manslayer [a murderer] when he began, and he did not stand fast in the truth." (John 8:44) Really, when you think about the billions who have lived and died in the past, it is as if Satan murdered all of them.

⁶ Satan also induced other spirit creatures to join him in rebellion, and all these wicked ones refused to listen when Jehovah spoke. So it is Satan, his demons, and rebellious humans who have brought this world to its present condition. They must all be put out of the way, ending this disastrous 6,000-year experiment in independence from God. "The God who gives peace," assures Romans 16:20, "will crush Satan . . . shortly," as well as his demons and all humans who refuse to listen when God speaks.—Matthew 25:41.

Greater Need to Listen Now

⁷ We are now very deep into the final part of these "last days." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) As a result, there is an ever-greater need to listen to what Jehovah is saying to us. There is a corresponding need to intensify our willingness to make sacrifices to serve him. Why intensify our efforts? Because Satan knows that he has only "a short period of time" left. (Revelation 12:12) So he will surely intensify his efforts to corrupt and destroy.

⁸ Satan would especially like to stop Jehovah

6. Who are the peace wreckers, and what must happen to them?
7. Why should we intensify our efforts to serve Jehovah now?
8. (a) Why can the preaching work not be stopped by its enemies? (b) What must we do to keep divine backing?

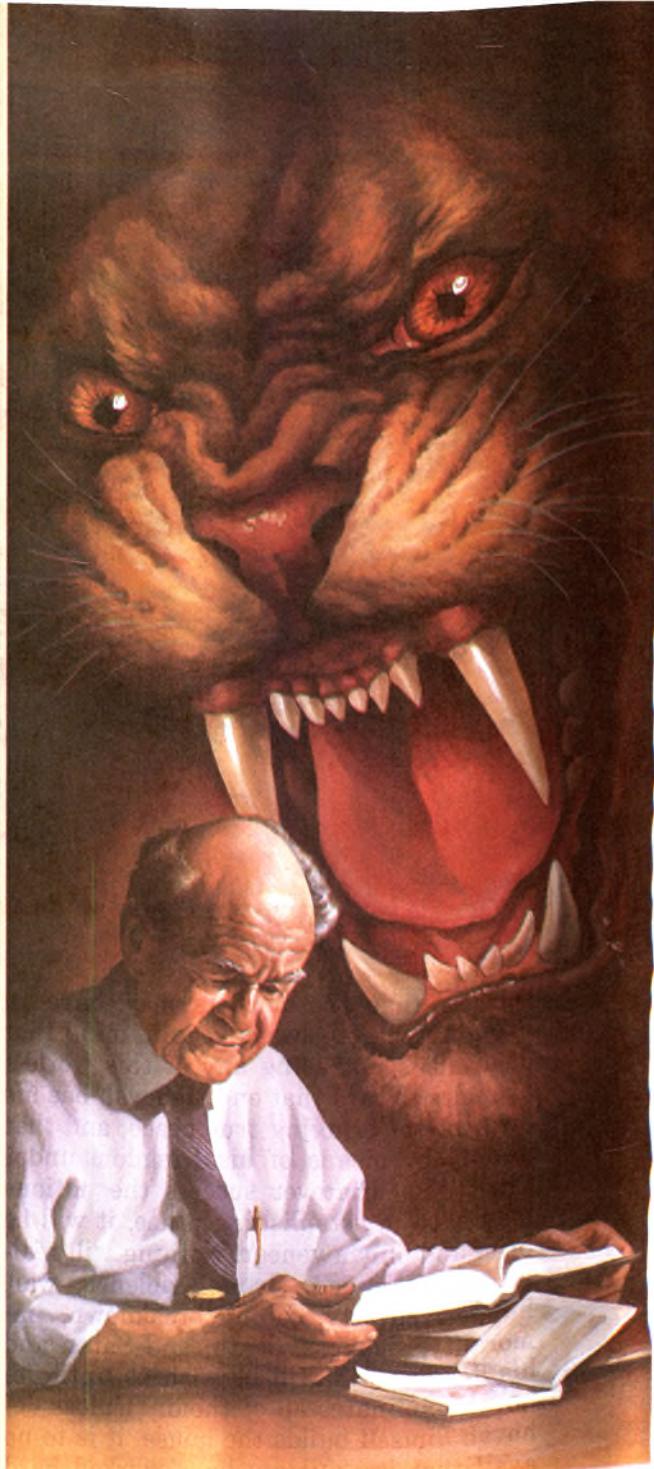
vah's Witnesses from preaching the Kingdom good news. But he cannot, for Jehovah has promised them: "Any weapon whatever that will be formed against you will have no success." (Isaiah 54:17) Those who oppose his servants will "be found fighters actually against God." (Acts 5:38, 39) So, with the powerful backing of Jehovah's spirit, Christ Jesus, and multitudes of angelic forces, the work of Kingdom proclamation grows in intensity each year. To keep that divine backing, Jehovah's servants are careful to obey the counsel at James 4:7, 8: "Subject yourselves, therefore, to God; but oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you. Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you."

⁹ Do not underestimate Satan's capacity for deception and harm. God's Word warns: "Keep your senses, be watchful. Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone. But take your stand against him, solid in the faith." (1 Peter 5:8, 9) If you knew that a crazed lion was on the loose in your neighborhood, you would take precautions to protect yourself and your family. Where Satan is concerned, we must be even more alert, as he can do us everlasting harm. Sadly, most people are defenseless because they do not even know that Satan exists. Why so? Because they choose not to listen to Jehovah's Word. And what will result from that bad choice? "Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap."—Galatians 6:7.

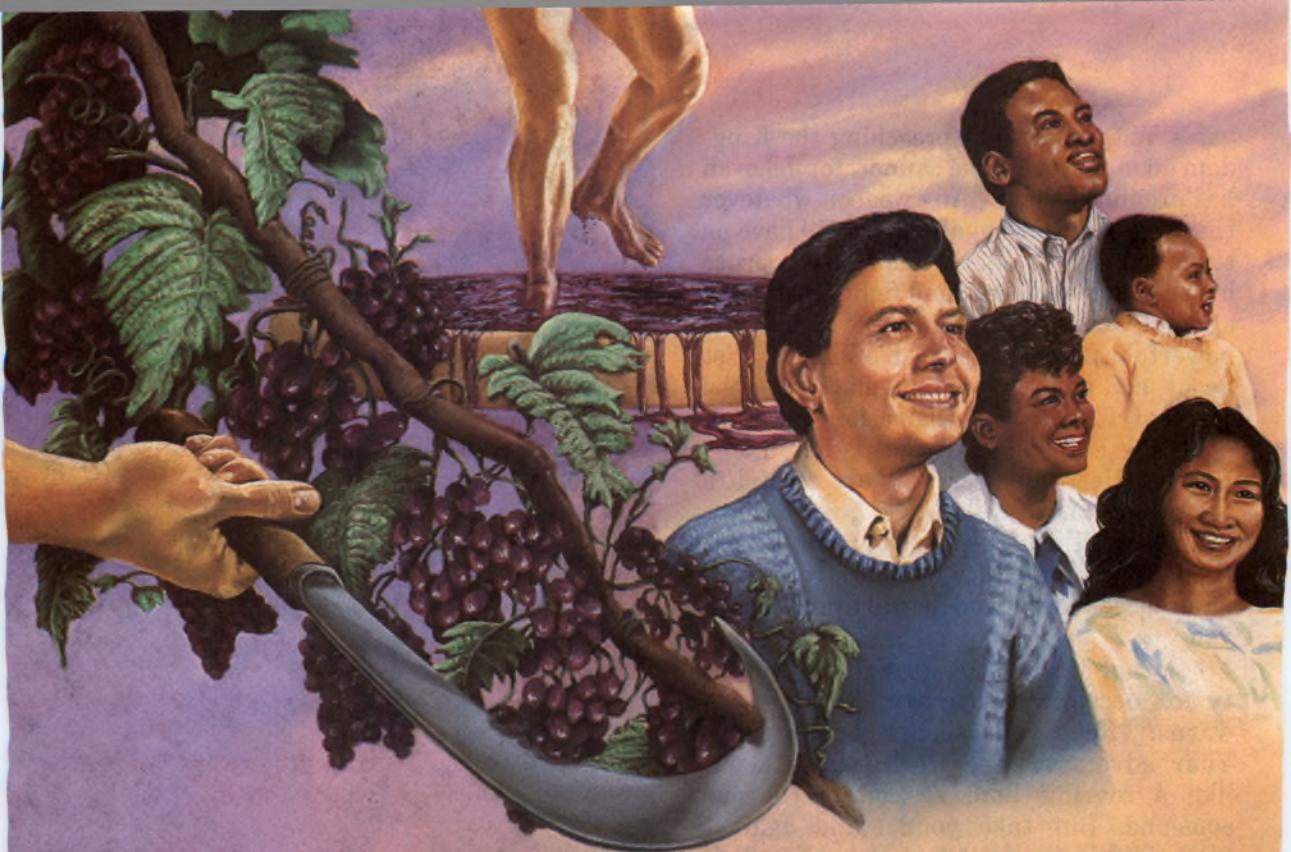
When They Cry "Peace and Security!"

¹⁰ Do not be caught off guard by any

9. Why should we not underestimate Satan?
- 10, 11. (a) What should we bear in mind regarding any success the nations may have in bringing peace? (b) What Bible prophecy bears on the search for peace by the nations in our time? (c) How lasting will any such peace be?



Like a roaring lion, Satan is intensifying his efforts to corrupt and destroy



*When this system is crushed
like grapes in a winepress, "Jehovah will be a refuge for his people"*

success that the nations may have in bringing peace. Always keep in mind that Jehovah is not using any of this world's agencies toward that end. Jehovah has his own way of bringing true peace, and that is only by means of his Kingdom under Christ. So whatever success the nations may have in establishing peace, it will be brief and only a veneer. Nothing will really have changed. Crime, violence, war, hunger, poverty, family breakdown, immorality, sickness, death, and Satan and his demons will still be with us until Jehovah eliminates all of them. "Unless Jehovah himself builds the house, it is to no avail that its builders have worked hard on it."—Psalm 127:1.

¹¹ Bible prophecy does show that the

nations would make a concerted effort toward peace in our time. It states: "You yourselves know quite well that Jehovah's day is coming exactly as a thief in the night. Whenever it is that they are saying: 'Peace and security!' then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them just as the pang of distress upon a pregnant woman; and they will by no means escape." (1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3) That cry of "Peace and security!" will not mean that the decay of this world has been reversed. Second Timothy 3:13 says that "wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse." The reality will still be as the head of an environmental organization said: "The central problem facing society is that it has become ungovernable."

¹² Many in the world will be deluded by vain hopes during the coming cry of "Peace and security!" But Jehovah's servants will not be, for they listen when God speaks. Thus they know from his Word that such a declaration will not bring true peace and security. Instead, it will in reality be the final signal that "sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them." It will herald the imminent beginning of the "great tribulation" that Jesus foretold for our time. He said: "For then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again."—Matthew 24:21.

¹³ During the "great tribulation," human rule will be brought to an end. Psalm 2:2-6 says: "The kings of earth take their stand and high officials themselves have massed together as one against Jehovah and against his anointed one, saying: 'Let us tear their bands apart and cast their cords away from us!' The very One sitting in the heavens will laugh; Jehovah himself will hold them in derision. At that time he will speak to them in his anger and in his hot displeasure he will disturb them, saying: 'I, even I, have installed my king upon [heavenly] Zion, my holy mountain.'" Psalm 110:5, 6 adds: "Jehovah himself . . . will certainly break kings to pieces on the day of his anger. He will execute judgment among the nations." All political schemes will end, for Isaiah 8:9, 10 declares: "Gird yourselves, and be shattered to pieces! Gird yourselves, and be shattered to pieces! Plan out a scheme, and it will be broken up! Speak any word, and it will not stand, for God is with us!"

Confident of Survival

¹⁴ We are confident that Jehovah will

12. What do Jehovah's servants know about the real significance of the coming 'peace and security' cry?
13. How does the Bible describe the end of human rulerships?
14. Why are we confident that there will be survivors of this world's end?

keep his people well informed so that they can take proper steps for surviving the coming "great tribulation." How can we be so certain? Because the prophecy at Revelation 7:9, 14 shows that "a great crowd" does indeed survive. Why? Because of listening when Jehovah speaks and being properly instructed. In this way those of the "great crowd" are able to do what Revelation 7:15 says: "They are rendering him sacred service day and night." Thus they do God's will, meet his approval, and are protected to survive this world's end.—1 John 2:15-17.

¹⁵ Joel 3:13-16 also refers to the survival of God's servants when this system is crushed like grapes in a wine press. It states: "Thrust in a sickle, for harvest has grown ripe. . . . The press vats actually overflow; for their badness has become abundant. Crowds, crowds are in the low plain of the decision, for the day of Jehovah is near in the low plain of the decision. Sun and moon themselves will certainly become dark, and the very stars will actually withdraw their brightness. And out of [heavenly] Zion Jehovah himself will roar . . . Heaven and earth certainly will rock; but Jehovah will be a refuge for his people."

¹⁶ Similarly, at Isaiah 26:20, 21, Jehovah says of that coming time: "Go, my people, enter into your interior rooms, and shut your doors behind you. Hide yourself for but a moment until the denunciation passes over. For, look! Jehovah is coming forth from his place to call to account the error of the inhabitant of the land against him." Therefore, Zephaniah 2:2, 3 urges: "Before there comes upon you the day of

15. How does Joel describe the crushing of this system, and what will be the result for God's servants?
16. What other prophecies show that Jehovah will preserve his people through world destruction?

Jehovah's anger, seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth, who have practiced His own judicial decision. Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger."

'Running' to Jehovah

¹⁷ Proverbs 18:10 states: "The name of Jehovah is a strong tower. Into it the righteous runs and is given protection." Are you 'running' to Jehovah? Remember what Jesus said about people in Noah's day. They were "eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and *they took no note* until the flood came and swept them all away." (Matthew 24:38, 39) What was wrong was their preoccupation with everything else to the exclusion of listening to God when he spoke through his servant Noah, "a preacher of righteousness." (2 Peter 2:5) Because they did not listen, when the Flood came it "swept them all away" into destruction.

¹⁸ Many of those who died in the Flood no doubt considered themselves "nice" people, not being involved in the violence that filled society in those days. But just being "nice" did not save them. By their apathy they condoned the evil of their day. The crucial thing was that they did not 'run' to Jehovah; they did not listen when God's servant spoke. So they did not take the proper steps for survival. On the other hand, those who did listen survived.

¹⁹ Today God is speaking peace to those who listen to him. With what result to

17. (a) What must be done to get Jehovah's protection? (b) What did people in the pre-Flood world do wrong?

18. Why did their just being "nice" people not save those who were destroyed in the Flood?

19. What marvelous benefit do Jehovah's servants reap even now, and why?

them? Isaiah 54:13 states: "All your sons will be persons taught by Jehovah, and the peace of your sons will be abundant." Yes, "Jehovah himself will bless his people with peace." (Psalm 29:11) Thus, in the midst of this violent world, Jehovah's Witnesses have true, unbreakable peace among themselves. They have a loving international brotherhood that world leaders, their nations, and their religions cannot duplicate. Why not? Because these do not really listen when God speaks. So they do not act on what he says. But Jehovah's Witnesses do listen to God. They take seriously the words at Ecclesiastes 12:13: "Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man."

²⁰ That is what every person—yes, all who want to live in God's new world—must do. They must 'run' to Jehovah without delay. Indeed, they must be guided by God-given wisdom that is represented as saying: "Listen to me; yes, happy are the ones that keep my very ways. Listen to discipline and become wise, and do not show any neglect. Happy is the man that is listening to me . . . For the one finding me will certainly find life."—Proverbs 8:32-35.

20. What must every person do to survive into God's new world?

How Would You Respond?

- Why will human efforts never succeed in bringing peace?
- Why is there now a greater need to listen to Jehovah?
- What will the coming cry of "Peace and security!" really mean?
- What must we do if we want to survive into God's new system?

Help in Making Wise Decisions

ALICE made an unwise decision that turned out disastrously. "I disassociated myself from Jehovah and from his organization," she admits. Although she finally returned, it took her over 13 years to do so—"miserable years" she calls them.

A Christian should not underestimate the danger of making unwise decisions in connection with his service to God. It is not that wrong decisions are deliberately made after a consideration of relevant facts. Sometimes they are made simply on the basis of instinctive reactions. Once emotions succeed in beclouding the issue and an imperfect heart exerts undue influence on thinking ability, all manner of harm and grief can result.

Indeed, "the heart is more treacherous than anything else." (Jeremiah 17:9) The Bible, however, tells us how to protect ourselves. "When wisdom enters into your heart," it says, "discernment itself will safeguard you." (Proverbs 2:10, 11) But how do we get wisdom to enter into our heart?

Learn From the Past

Try this. Put yourself in the position of earlier servants of God who faced trialsome situations similar to yours. Suppose, for example, that a situation inside the local Christian congregation is causing you concern. Try to think of a parallel situation mentioned in the Bible.

What about the first-century Christian congregation at Corinth? Imagine that you are a member of the Corinth congregation. You have been a Christian for two or three years. What a joy it was to come to a knowledge of the truth during Paul's 18-month stay there! But now, things are looking bad.

A tendency to form cliques and factions is causing dissension in the congregation, threatening its unity. (1 Corinthians 1:10, 11) A toleration of immoral conduct is endangering its spirit. (1 Corinthians 5:1-5) A public airing of differences between the congregation's members before worldly courts of law is damaging its fine reputation.—1 Corinthians 6:1-8.

Still imagining yourself in ancient Corinth, you are concerned that some members of the congregation are always wrangling over matters that are really of only minor importance. (Compare 1 Corinthians 8:1-13.) You are saddened by the strife, jealousy, anger, and disorder you see. (2 Corinthians 12:20) Indeed, you are disturbed by an arrogant few who are making Christian living unduly difficult. (1 Corinthians 4:6-8) You are pained to hear that some are even questioning the apostle Paul's position and authority, making unjust accusations, and deriding him for his lack of eloquence as a speaker. (2 Corinthians 10:10; 12:16) You are worried lest those who openly promote personal opinions should undermine the congregation's faith in basic doctrine.—1 Corinthians 15:12.

Faced With a Decision

'This just should not be,' you sigh. 'Why do the elders not correct matters? Something is terribly wrong.'

Will you leave the congregation in Corinth, concluding that you will be better off serving God elsewhere? Or will you possibly even decide that it is best to stop associating with fellow Christians altogether? Will you allow these problems to dampen your joy and your confidence that

Jehovah God and Jesus Christ are in charge of things? Are you going to develop a critical, complaining spirit, causing you to question the motives of fellow Christians? Will you slow down in the preaching work, reasoning that there is little point in directing interested ones to such a congregation?

Viewing the situation dispassionately from today's vantage point, you may find it easy to say that your decision would have been loyally to stay close to God's congregation, despite its imperfections. But if faced with a similar situation today, would you be able to maintain a clear mind and a calm heart? Would you decide *today* as you think you would have decided if you had lived *then*?

Benefiting From Wise Counsel

The Corinthian Christians who made a wise decision were those who stayed close to the congregation. They felt as Peter had years earlier. When some of the disciples left off associating with Jesus, Peter said: "Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life; and we have believed and come to know that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:68, 69) Obviously, only by staying close to God's organization can we benefit from its counsel.

In new congregations, like the one back in Corinth, it is not unusual for human

imperfection to cause a problem that may require the giving of strong counsel. But in giving counsel to the Corinthian Christians, Paul remembered that by far the majority of them were still "beloved ones." (1 Corinthians 10:14; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 12:19) He did not forget that Jehovah extends undeserved kindness and forgiveness to those responding to His direction.

—Psalm 130:3, 4.

Of course, since the Christian congregation attracts all kinds of people, some take longer to respond to this direction than do others. This is true for a variety of reasons. Some changes are more difficult to make than are others. Also, every individual differs in physical and mental make-up, environment, background, and circumstances. So how wise it is to avoid becoming overly critical and to remember that "love covers a multitude of sins"! (1 Peter 4:8) After all, if Jehovah and his Son are willing to put up with human imperfection and immaturity in *their* congregation, should we not manifest the same spirit?—1 Corinthians 13:4-8; Ephesians 4:1, 2.

If you had been in the congregation in ancient Corinth, listening to Paul's loving but firm counsel would have reminded you that Christ, as head of the Christian congregation, is keenly interested in its welfare. (Matthew 28:20) It would have built up your confidence in Jesus' promise to keep his followers unified as they responded to help provided through "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45-47; Ephesians 4:11-16) Yes, and Paul's words would have helped you to maintain joy and stability even under trying circumstances. You would have been confident that God would give you strength to cope with any difficulty he might temporarily allow to exist.

This is not to say that a Christian should do nothing if a bad condition devel-

In Our Next Issue

■ Who Will Care for the Elderly?

■ 'My Cup Has Been Full'

■ A New School to Open!

ops in a congregation. Back in Corinth, mature men like Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus, and some from the household of Chloe, acted. They evidently advised Paul of the situation. (1 Corinthians 1:11; 5:1; 16:17) But once they had done so, they confidently left matters in his hands. Zeal for righteousness did not cause them to lose confidence in Christ's headship or to become "enraged against Jehovah." —Proverbs 19:3.

Our zeal for righteousness today will prevent us from even considering the option of slowing down in our God-given assignment to preach the good news. To do so would manifest a lack of concern for the welfare of others and would be a failure to do what Christ wants us to do. "Consequently, my beloved brothers," Paul counseled, "become steadfast, unmovable, always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord." —1 Corinthians 15:58.

Do Not Be Ignorant of Satan's Designs

Congregation difficulties like those that existed in Corinth can sometimes be more difficult to handle than outright persecu-

tion. Satan exploits such situations in an attempt to cause us to make wrong decisions that will draw us away from Jehovah. But 'we are not ignorant of Satan's designs.' —2 Corinthians 2:11.

Paul told the Corinthian Christians that they could benefit from examining the record of earlier servants of God. "Now these things went on befalling them as examples," he said of the Israelites, "and they were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived." (1 Corinthians 10:11) Likewise, we today can benefit from carefully examining the early Christian record. For example, we can consider what took place in Corinth. Meditating about how we would have made right decisions *then* will help us avoid making wrong decisions *now*.

After 13 "miserable years" of absence, Alice says of her first meeting in the Kingdom Hall: "I was afraid to talk lest I should cry. I was home—really home. I couldn't believe it." So be determined, despite problems that may arise, to hold to your wise decision never to leave Jehovah's organization! Your blessings in association with God's people will be many. And they will be without end.—Proverbs 2:10-15, 20, 21.

"Praise the Name of Jehovah"

On September 2, 1986, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) released a series of stamps depicting historical German coins. The first in the series is shown below. The coin depicted is dated 1633. However, of particular interest are the four radiant Hebrew characters shown imprinted on the coin. What do they mean? Briefmarkenwelt, a German magazine on philately, gives this explanation: "Two angels, suspended over the town profile, are carrying between them the name Jehovah."

During the 16th and 17th centuries, it was very common to mint such coins in Europe. A German encyclopedia dated 1838 remarks: "The term Jehovah-coins includes all coins and medals that depict the

word יְהוָה, Jehovah, as radiating, either alone or together with the word Jesus, . . . often with the motto in reference thereto; since this is primarily found on many Talers [silver coins issued by various German states between the 15th and 19th centuries], they have been classed together under the name Jehovah-talers."



Likely, most people using the stamps do not know that the Hebrew letters represent the name of God. But Jehovah's Witnesses are happy to point out this feature on the stamp and to explain the meaning and importance of Jehovah's name. Thus, from an unexpected quarter they are helped to "praise the name of Jehovah." —Psalm 135:1.

"Treasures of the Holy Land"



Shrine of the Book,
Israel Museum, Jerusalem

The Habakkuk Commentary



Israel Museum, Jerusalem

"House of God" ostracon



Israel Museum, Jerusalem

Pontius Pilate inscription

BUSTLING Manhattan is an unusual setting for a collection of art that corroborates Bible history. Yet, in New York City's Central Park sits The Metropolitan Museum of Art, which recently hosted "Treasures of the Holy Land: Ancient Art From the Israel Museum." This exhibition consisted of almost 200 objects on loan from the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

The ancient dwellers of the land of the Bible tell their story through these works of art. Come, let us look, listen, and learn. First, though, you must climb the 28 steps leading to the Metropolitan Museum's columned entrance. Once inside, you are ready to begin your walking tour among several thousand years of Bible history. The following is what you will see:

The Habakkuk Commentary—an almost five-foot-long (1.5 m) parchment scroll, in which the divine name appears several times. This scroll is one of the first discovered and the best preserved of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which have been called "the greatest archaeological discovery of this century." (The scrolls contain parts of every book of the Hebrew Scriptures except Esther and date back into the second century B.C.E. Thus, except for manuscript fragments, they predate by a millennium the oldest-known Biblical copies.) The Habakkuk Commentary contains nearly two thirds of the book of Habakkuk (1:4-2:20), was copied in Aramaic block script at the end of the first century B.C.E., and was interwoven with commentary. "But the four-letter name of Jehovah, tetragrammaton, is everywhere written in archaic Hebrew script," states the museum's information card. Yes, you could plainly see the Tetragrammaton!

"House of God" Ostracon—a pottery fragment on which the divine name appears twice in Tetragrammaton form. This potsherd found in southern Israel was a letter addressed to a man named Eliashib and dates back to the second half of the seventh century B.C.E. "To my lord Eliashib: May Jehovah ask for your peace," the letter begins. It ends: "He dwells in the house of Jehovah."—See page 12 of the brochure *The Divine Name That Will Endure Forever*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

Pontius Pilate Inscription—a unique historical document from the first century, discovered in Caesarea. Prior to 1961 the only mention of Pontius Pilate was in the pages of the Bible and the first-century writings of Roman and Jewish historians. Now, though, you can see written in fragmentary Latin on a limestone block the words "Pontius Pilate Prefect of Judea." This corroborates the existence of the man who authorized the execution of Jesus Christ.

"Place of Trumpeting" Inscription—once part of the



Israel Museum, Jerusalem
"Place of Trumpeting"
inscription



Israel Museum, Jerusalem
Funerary inscription of Uzziah



Israel Museum, Jerusalem
Cult stand with musicians

southwest parapet of the temple enclosure in Jerusalem. When the temple was destroyed in 70 C.E., this piece of stone fell to the street below. The words "to the place of trumpeting" are inscribed in Hebrew on this roughly rectangular, three-foot-long (1 m) stone and refer to the place where a trumpeter stood, perhaps when marking the start and the close of the Sabbath with his trumpet blasts. Of the buildings that were situated on the temple grounds, this inscription is the only significant item remaining, thus confirming the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy at Matthew 24:1, 2.

Funerary Inscription of Uzziah, King of Judah—a one-foot-square (0.3 m) stone tablet bearing the Aramaic inscription: "Hither were brought the bones of Uzziah King of Judah. Do not open." The warning may allude to his leprosy, or it may refer to a general prohibition against opening tombs. (2 Chronicles 26:16-23) This tablet, dating from around the first century B.C.E., was found near Jerusalem and marked the reinterment of the king's bones centuries after his death, since he was not originally interred in the royal burial field of that city.

Cult Stand With Musicians—an unusual pottery stand about one foot (0.3 m) tall vividly illustrating Philistine cultic ceremonies. The pedestal has five musicians, each playing a musical instrument—cymbals, double pipes, a stringed instrument, and a tambourine. This stand was found in Ashdod and dates from late 11th to early 10th century B.C.E.

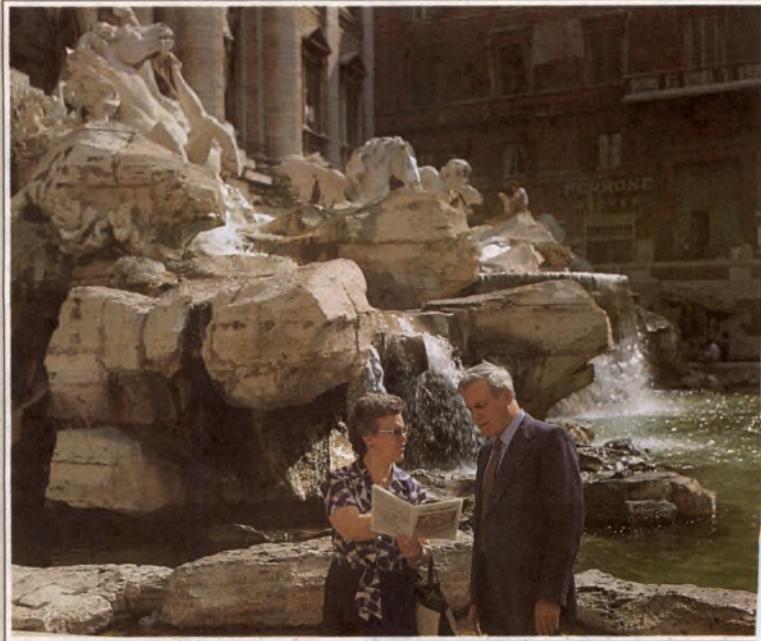
Canaanite Cult Stand—a hollow, square stand of clay decorated with human and animal figures. It includes the major Canaanite deities Asherah, personified in the form of a sacred tree or pole, and Baal, in calf form surmounted by a winged sun disk. (Exodus 34:12-14; 2 Kings 23:4, 5) The nearly two-foot-tall (0.6 m) stand, probably intended for offerings or libations, was found near Megiddo and dates from the late 10th century B.C.E.—Compare 2 Chronicles 34:4.

Ivories From Samaria—carvings from Samaria dating from the 9th to the 8th century B.C.E. They remind one of "the house of ivory" Ahab built at Samaria or of the trimmings of the "couches of ivory" characteristic of the spoiled life-style spoken against by the prophet Amos. (1 Kings 22:39; Amos 3:15; 6:4) Since Phoenician artisans specialized in ivory, some of these art miniatures echo the pagan cult of Baal, perhaps introduced by Ahab's Phoenician wife, Jezebel.

Many of the exhibited objects are beautiful in form and color. But some of them, such as the fertility-goddess statues, illustrate the debased religious practices of the land. Others illuminate how foreign influences shaped its character. The exhibition "Treasures of the Holy Land" and others like it add to one's understanding of the people, politics, religion, and art of the land of the Bible.

'Buying Out Time'

in Italy



BUY out the opportune time,' the apostle Paul twice urged fellow Christians while he was in Rome, Italy. (Ephesians 5:15, 16; Colossians 4:5) His readers in the first century responded well. They looked for opportune times to spread the "good news" and help others to become worshipers of the true God.—Matthew 24:14.

Modern-day servants of Jehovah in Italy, where Paul wrote those letters, are still responding well to his advice. Like the early Christians, they look for ways to increase their share in the Kingdom-preaching work. How do they find "the opportune time"?

Benefits of Identification

Giuseppe, an elderly full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses in Rome, recalls the time that he held a secular job. He had made sure that all his colleagues knew that he was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. This identification led to an "opportune" time for sharing Bible truths. One day he was assigned to train a man named Gianni. Right away the other workers told

Gianni that his teacher was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. As soon as the worker was alone with Giuseppe, he told Giuseppe: "Now we talk about our job, but at lunchtime I want to learn something about Jehovah."

During lunchtimes, they had several discussions. Giuseppe taught Gianni that God has a name, Jehovah. He also explained God's purpose for the earth. What happened, though, when the training period was over? "I gave him my phone number and some Bible literature," says Giuseppe. "He accepted the literature but said: 'If I find something in these publications that is not in harmony with Bible truth, I will come back here and prove you wrong in front of all your colleagues.'"

Months passed by. No word from Gianni. "But then," continues Giuseppe, "one day he called me and said that he wanted to see me. We met, and he had a list of questions. We talked for ten hours! He accepted my offer to study the Bible regularly." What was the result? Giuseppe says: "The favorable changes he made impressed his wife and his mother so much

that they, too, began to show interest in the Bible study. Today Gianni, his wife, and his mother are all faithful servants of Jehovah."

Forced to Burn His Bible

Fine Christian conduct also leads to 'opportune times' for sharing Bible truths with others. As the apostle Paul says, good conduct can "adorn the teaching of our Savior, God, in all things."—Titus 2:10.

Pietro, now a Witness in his late 20's, was attracted to such "teaching" by the Christian conduct of a classmate. "I was in the fifth grade," recalls Pietro, "but I still remember that boy's conduct. He was the only one who refused to stay in class during religious instruction."

One day Pietro asked the boy why he always left. The boy explained that he was exempted from class because he was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Pietro's interest was aroused. He asked the boy to bring him a Bible. After reading some parts of the Bible, "I understood that it contained the truth," says Pietro. "I decided that I wanted to follow it from then on. I took the Bible to school with me and told everybody that I was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. I was only ten years old."

Troubles began. Pietro continues: "The priest who conducted the religious classes at school told my parents that I was using the Bible at school, and he advised them to destroy it. When I came home, my mother tried to grab my Bible, but I held it as tightly as I could. Then Mother began to hit me and tore it out of my hands. After that she forced me to burn my own Bible." Pietro lost his Bible but not his faith. He thought: 'As soon as I grow up, I'll buy a new Bible and go out to others to share its message.'

Two years went by. Then Pietro learned that a Bible study was conducted in the house of one of his friends. He secretly

attended the study. "One day," says Pietro, "I told my parents, 'I have decided to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses. This time nothing will change my mind!'" Seeing the determination of their 12-year-old son, the parents gave in. Pietro began attending meetings at the Kingdom Hall right away. Four years later he was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Today, 18 years after he first learned the truth from the Bible because of the faithful conduct of his classmate, Pietro is "buying out the opportune time" by serving as a full-time minister in Italy.

Zealous at 70 Years of Age

Mafalda, a Christian woman from Livorno, is another of the more than 22,000 zealous pioneers, or full-time ministers, in Italy. She began working as a pioneer at age 56. "Pioneer work," she explains, "requires that at least 1,000 hours a year are dedicated to the preaching work. But since this is an important message, I spend 2,000 hours each year as a pioneer worker." Mafalda is now 70 years old. What are her plans? "Among the first-century Christians, there were hardworking housewives who shared in the ministry," she says. "Like them, I want to continue announcing God's Kingdom. That's the goal in my life."

Indeed, from the snow-tipped mountain peaks in the alpine north to the Mediterranean island of Sicily in the south, modern-day witnesses of Jehovah in Italy reflect the zeal of their first-century counterparts. Each day of the year they spend, on an average, over 100,000 hours in the Kingdom-preaching work. The result? Last year alone, almost 12,000 persons were baptized and became ordained ministers of Jehovah. Now they, together with the 131,000 other witnesses of Jehovah, are "buying out the opportune time" in Italy.

Bible Highlights

Proverbs 1:1–31:31

"The fear of Jehovah is the start of wisdom." (9:10) How well this is shown in Proverbs! This Bible book, completed about 716 B.C.E., helps us to display wisdom, applying knowledge aright. Heed these wise sayings and you will be happy.

Listen to Wisdom

Read Proverbs 1:1–2:22. "The fear of Jehovah" is the very essence of knowledge. If we accept discipline, we will not join sinners in wrongdoing. To those fearing Jehovah, he gives wisdom that safeguards them against wrongdoers.

♦ 1:7—What is "the fear of Jehovah"?

It is awe, profound reverence, and a wholesome dread of displeasing him because we appreciate his loving-kindness and goodness. "Fear of Jehovah" means acknowledging that he is the Supreme Judge and the Almighty, with the right and power to bring punishment or death upon those disobeying him. It also means serving God faithfully, trusting in him completely, and hating what is bad in his sight.—Psalm 2:11; 115:11; Proverbs 8:13.

♦ 2:7—What is integrity?

Hebrew terms relating to integrity have the root meaning of that which is "whole" or "complete." They often signify moral soundness and uprightness. "Those walking in integrity" are unwavering in devotion to Jehovah. For such "upright ones" he is a protective "shield" because they manifest true wisdom and conform to his righteous standards.

Lesson for Us: If we fear Je-

Fear Jehovah and You Will Be Happy

hovah, we will accept the discipline he provides through his Word and organization. Failure to do so would class us with "fools," ungodly sinners. So let us accept his loving discipline.—Proverbs 1:7; Hebrews 12:6.

Prize Wisdom

Read Proverbs 3:1–4:27. To have good insight, "trust in Jehovah with all your heart." Happiness is enjoyed by those esteeming wisdom highly. Their path is like an ever-brightening light, but they need to safeguard the heart.

♦ 4:18—How does 'the path of the righteous' get lighter?

The sun's light gets brighter from dawn until "the day is firmly established." Similarly, spiritual light gets brighter for Jehovah's people as time goes on. As we draw much closer to events, our understanding of the outworking of Jehovah's purposes becomes clearer. Divine prophecies open up to us as God's holy spirit sheds light upon them, and as they are fulfilled in world events or in the experiences of Jehovah's people. Thus their 'path gets lighter and lighter.'

Lesson for Us: Displaying true wisdom and complying with divine commands will safeguard us against pursuing a foolish course that may lead to an early death. For instance, those ignoring Jehovah's commands against sexual immorality may contract sexually transmitted diseases that could result in premature death. So let us act in harmony with God's requirements, for then wisdom will be "a tree of life" in our case.—Proverbs 3:18.

Ways to Display Wisdom

Read Proverbs 5:1–9:18. It is a display of wisdom to avoid

immorality and "rejoice with the wife of your youth." Seven things detestable to Jehovah are cited, and warnings are given against the seductions of a harlot. Wisdom personified is God's "master worker." And "fear of Jehovah is the start of wisdom."

♦ 6:1–5—Is this counsel contrary to the spirit of generosity?

This proverb does not discourage generosity, though it does counsel against getting involved in the business dealings of others, especially strangers. The Israelites were to help their brother who had 'grown poor.' (Leviticus 25:35–38) But some got involved in speculative business ventures and obtained financial backing by convincing others to 'go surely' for them, promising to pay their creditors if necessary. If a person got into such a predicament, perhaps through bragging, the wise advice was to deliver himself from it without delay.—Proverbs 11:15.

♦ 8:22–31—Is this merely a description of wisdom?

No, for wisdom has always existed as an attribute of the eternal God. (Job 12:13) Here, though, it is said that wisdom was "produced" and was "beside [Jehovah] as a master worker" during earth's creation. Identifying wisdom personified as God's Son fits the fact that "carefully concealed in him are all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge."—Colossians 1:15, 16; 2:3.

Lesson for Us: By mentioning her "communion sacrifices" and "vows," the immoral woman of Proverbs chapter 7 may have been hinting that she did not lack spirituality. Communion sacrifices consisted of meat,

flour, oil, and wine. (Leviticus 19:5, 6; 22:21; Numbers 15:8-10) So she was indicating that there was plenty to eat and drink at her house, and the "young man in want of heart" would have a good time there. This is typical of how a wrongly motivated person is led into immorality. How important to heed this warning and avoid such sin against God!—Genesis 39:7-12.

Thought-Provoking Contrasts

Read Proverbs 10:1-15:33. Solomon's proverbs begin largely with contrasting maxims. "The fear of Jehovah" is stressed.—10:27; 14:26, 27; 15:16, 33.

♦ 10:25—Why is reference made to a "storm wind"?

Lacking a foundation in righteous principles, the wicked are like unstable buildings that collapse in violent storms. But the righteous are stable because their thinking is solidly founded upon godly principles. Like a structure having a good foundation, they do not cave in under pressure.—Matthew 7:24-27.

♦ 11:22—How could a woman be like a nose ring in a pig's snout?

A gold nose ring inserted through a side of the nose or the partition separating the nostrils suggested that the wearer was a cultured person. But the Israelites considered swine unclean and loathsome. So a pretty but senseless woman is like an inappropriate gold nose ring in a pig's snout.

♦ 14:14—How is a faithless one satisfied?

"One faithless at heart" is satisfied with his materialistic life-style. (Psalm 144:11-15a) Doing what is right in God's eyes is of no consequence to him, and he does not think about having to render an account to Jehovah. (1 Peter 4:3-5)

But "the good man" rejects the practices of faithless ones and is satisfied "with the results of his dealings." He keeps spiritual interests first, adheres to God's standards, has the supreme joy of serving Him, and is satisfied with divine blessings.—Psalm 144:15b.

♦ 15:23—How can we 'rejoice in the answer of our mouth'?

This can happen if our counsel is heeded and produces good results. But to assist someone, we must listen carefully, weigh the factors contributing to his problem, and base our counsel on the Bible. Such "a word at its right time is O how good!"

Lesson for Us: "A foolish person" angrily responds to an insult or "dishonor" quickly, "in the same day." But "the shrewd one"—a prudent individual—prays for God's spirit so as to exercise self-control and follow His Word. (Proverbs 12:16) By doing this, we can avoid further contention that could result in emotional or physical harm to ourselves or others.

Proverbs With Parallels

Read Proverbs 16:1-24:34. These wise sayings of Solomon give guidance mostly through parallel thoughts. Stressed again is "fear of Jehovah."—16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17; 24:21.

♦ 17:19—What is wrong with a high entryway?

Those who did not make the doors to their houses and courts low risked having men on horseback ride in and take their goods. This proverb could also allude to the mouth as an entryway raised high by arrogant speech and boasting. Such talk fosters strife and eventually leads to disaster.

♦ 19:17—Why is helping the lowly like lending to Jehovah?

Lowly ones belong to God, and what we do to them is counted as

done to him. (Proverbs 14:31) If love and generosity prompt us to show favor to the lowly or give gifts to the poor, expecting no return from them, Jehovah considers such giving as loans to him that he repays with favor and blessings.—Luke 14:12-14.

♦ 20:1—How is wine "a mocker"?

Wine can cause one overindulging in it to act in a ridiculous and boisterous way. Since heavy drinking produces such bad effects, Christians must avoid it.—1 Timothy 3:2, 3, 8; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Proverbs 23:20, 21.

♦ 23:27—How is a prostitute a "pit" and a "well"?

As animals were caught in 'deep pits' dug by hunters, so the patrons of a prostitute are trapped in immorality. "A foreign woman" denotes a harlot, doubtless because most prostitutes in Israel were foreigners. Getting water from "a narrow well" involves difficulties because earthenware jars easily break on its sides. Similarly, those having dealings with harlots may experience emotional and physical calamities.—Proverbs 7:21-27.

Lesson for Us: "A lying witness" shows disrespect for God and could be put to death under the Law. Thus he could "perish" at the hands of men or Jehovah. (Proverbs 21:28; Deuteronomy 5:20; 19:16-21; compare Acts 5:1-11.) But 'the man listening' attentively spoke only when sure of what he had heard. His testimony stood "forever," not later being rejected as falsehood. Moreover, he was not executed as a false witness. Those testifying at judicial hearings among Jehovah's Witnesses should have listened carefully so as to be able to provide accurate information, for inaccurate or false testimony can be spiritually damaging.

Helpful Comparisons

Read Proverbs 25:1-29:27. Solomon's proverbs transcribed by King Hezekiah's men teach largely by comparison. Among other things, dependence on Jehovah is encouraged.

- ♦ 26:6—Why is a comparison drawn with 'mutilating one's feet'?

A person mutilating his feet would cripple himself, even as an individual employing "someone stupid" is doing crippling violence to his own interests. A project entrusted to a stupid person will fail. How wise, then, to 'test men for fitness' before recommending them for congregational responsibility! —1 Timothy 3:10.

- ♦ 27:17—How is a face 'sharpened'?

As a piece of iron can be used to sharpen a blade made of the same metal, one person may succeed in sharpening the intellectual and spiritual state of another. If disappointments and contact with un congenial individuals depress us, a fellow believer's sympathetic look and Scriptural encouragement can be very uplifting. Our sad countenance changes for the better, and we are enlivened with fresh hope for renewed action.—Proverbs 13:12.

- ♦ 28:5—What does "everything" include?

Those practicing what is bad are blind spiritually. (Proverbs 4:14-17; 2 Corinthians 4:4) They do not "understand judgment" or what is right according to God's standards. Thus they cannot judge matters correctly and make proper decisions. But those "seeking Jehovah" by prayer and study of his Word "understand everything" needed to serve him acceptably.—Ephesians 5:15-17.

- ♦ 29:8—How do boastful talkers "inflame a town"?

Boasters who disrespect authority speak brashly. They thus fuel

the fires of dispute and fan the flames so much that residents of an entire town are inflamed. But wise persons "turn back anger," speaking mildly and sensibly, dousing flames of wrath and promoting peace.—Proverbs 15:1.

Lesson for Us: If we are proud, haughtiness will result in our being humbled. (Proverbs 29:23) A haughty person is likely to be presumptuous, and this can lead to dishonor, stumbling, and a crash. (Proverbs 11:2; 16:18; 18:12) God may see to it that a proud individual is humbled, brought low in some way, perhaps to the point of destruction. Such a man craves glory, but people find his ways abhorrent. However, a person "humble in spirit will [eventually] take hold of glory."

'Weighty Messages'

Read Proverbs 30:1-31:31. Agur's "weighty message" acknowledges that "every saying of God is refined." Also cited are things too wonderful to comprehend, and so forth. (30:1-33) "The weighty message" Lemuel received from his mother warns that drinking intoxicants can pervert judgment, urges one to judge righteously, and describes a good wife.—31:1-31.

- ♦ 30:15, 16—What is the point of these examples?

They illustrate the insatiability of greed. Leeches gorge themselves with blood, even as greedy persons always demand more money or power. Likewise, Sheol is never satisfied but remains open to receive more victims of death. A barren womb 'cries out' for children. (Genesis 30:1) Drought-stricken land drinks up rainwater and soon appears dry again. And a fire that has consumed things thrown into it sends out flames that lick up other combustibles in reach. So it is with greedy persons. But those guided

by godly wisdom are not endlessly goaded on by such selfishness.

- ♦ 31:6, 7—Why give wine to those "bitter of soul"?

Intoxicating liquor and wine are sedatives. So they would be given to "one about to perish," or die, or to 'those bitter of soul' to make them less conscious of their pain and hardships. The ancient custom of giving criminals drugged wine to blunt the pain of execution may explain why Roman soldiers offered it to Jesus Christ at the time of his impalement. He refused such wine because he wanted to be in full possession of his faculties at that trying time and thus maintain integrity to God.—Mark 15:22-24.

- ♦ 31:15—Who are these "young women"?

Household maidservants are meant here. They had no reason to complain for want of food or assigned work. The industrious wife gave food to her household and also saw to it that these women had something to eat and duties to perform.

Lesson for Us: Being imperfect, at times we may senselessly 'lift ourselves up,' making efforts at self-exaltation. If we do this or speak angrily, we should "put the hand to the mouth," refraining from additional words that would further provoke the one we offended. As milk must be churned to make butter and a nosebleed usually requires the squeezing of the nose, a quarrel occurs when people give free rein to anger. (Proverbs 30:32, 33) In such cases, how wise it is to be silent and prevent more trouble!

What benefits we can derive from the book of Proverbs! Let us cherish these wise sayings that promote reverential fear of Jehovah. Applying them will surely make us happy.

"The Damage Done Will Be Very Considerable"

WORLD WAR I took an enormous toll in human lives and property. Less well known, however, is the damage that the war did to the image of Christendom's missionaries in Africa. According to Catholic missionary Francis Schimlek in his book *Medicine Versus Witchcraft*, news of this global conflagration "was like an earthquake, the tremor of which was felt as far as the last mission station in the African bush. . . . The messengers of Christ were embarrassed, and the Native Christians puzzled."

Why so? Schimlek quotes missionary Albert Schweitzer as explaining: "We are, all of us, conscious that many Natives are puzzling over the question how it can be possible that the whites, who brought the Gospel of Love, are now murdering each other, and throwing to the winds the commands of the Lord Jesus. When they put the question to us we are helpless. . . . I fear that the damage done will be very considerable."

Questions From Readers

■ Moses told the Israelites that "the things revealed belong to us and to our sons to time indefinite." (Deuteronomy 29:29) Have these "things revealed" come to include the light that has been shed on God's Word during these last days?

No, it would not be correct to put the understanding of prophecies that we have been granted during these last days on the same level as "the things revealed" that Moses was discussing.

According to the context of Moses' words, "the things revealed" that he was talking about had to do with the Law covenant. (Deuteronomy 29:25) Moses showed that these "things revealed" carried responsibilities. Failure to live up to these responsibilities would cause Jehovah to discipline his people.

The Law covenant, of course, was a revelation from Jehovah God. It was preceded by other revelations to the patriarchs, to Noah, and going all the way back to Adam. Moses was used to put into writing the things revealed up to his time, and they have been preserved for us in the first five books of the Bible. Later, as the article "The Things Revealed

Belong to Us" (*The Watchtower*, May 15, 1986) explained, these "things revealed" came to include all the information recorded in the Bible.—2 Timothy 3:16.

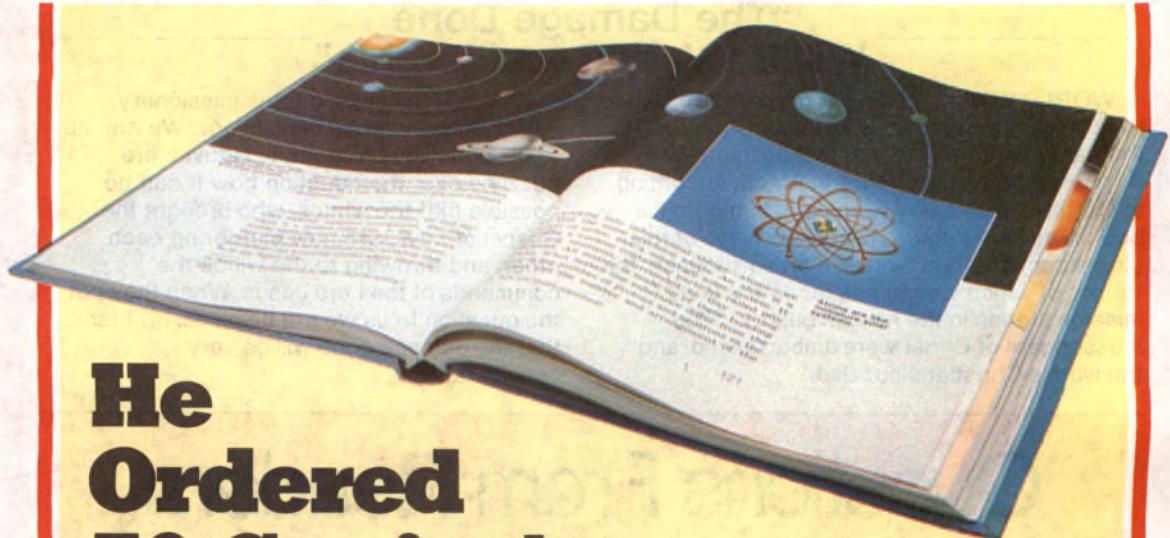
Thus, the Bible contains "the sacred pronouncements of God," the things revealed by him. (Romans 3:2) When the natural Jews proved unfaithful, anointed Christians became the stewards of these "things revealed," and the Christian congregation became "a pillar and support" for them. (1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Corinthians 4:1) Hence, members of that congregation today can properly echo Moses' words, that "the things revealed belong to us."

Today, Jehovah has shed much light on these "things revealed." As prophesied by Daniel, Jehovah's people have 'roved about' in the inspired Word, and 'true knowledge has become abundant.' (Daniel 12:4) Thus, we now know the identity of the "other sheep." (John 10:16) We rec-

ognize the "great crowd." (Revelation 7:9-17) We see the fulfillment of the parable of the sheep and the goats. (Matthew 25:31-46) Such things have been disclosed, or made known, to us but not in the sense of "the things revealed" as recorded in Jehovah's inspired Word.

Therefore, it would not be correct to put such advances in understanding on the same level as the inspired revelations that make up "the things revealed" recorded in the Bible. Rather, through an intensive study of the Bible, Jehovah's people have prayerfully sought a correct understanding of those "things revealed." Jehovah, by means of holy spirit, has given that understanding in his own due time.

The Bible tells us that "the path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established." (Proverbs 4:18) The increasing light that Jehovah has shed on "the things revealed" shows that that "day" is getting closer and proves that his blessing is on the Christian congregation today.



He Ordered 50 Copies!

When the book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* was released about two years ago, a woman in England thought it would be an ideal gift for her uncle, an influential 84-year-old businessman in the Yorkshire area. So she gave him a copy.

Within a week he called her and said: "Marvelous, that book is just marvelous! Can you get me some more copies? I would like to give them as gifts to my business colleagues."

Only 25 were immediately available, and he quickly distributed these among his associates. But he wanted 25 more. These were soon obtained, and he gave these to his colleagues as well—50 in all!

That spokesman for the Watchtower Society, the man who ordered 50 copies of the book, is not alone. In fact, many others have also ordered the book. In fact, the book has sold so well that the publisher has had to print 100,000 additional copies to meet the demand.

What is it about the book that has caused such a response? The author, Dr. Duane Gish, is a well-known authority on evolution. He has written several books on the subject, including "Evolution: The Fossils Say No!" and "Evolution—The Big Lie".

The book is designed to challenge the theory of evolution at every level. It presents scientific evidence that contradicts the theory of evolution and supports the creationist view. The book is well-researched and clearly presented, making it easy to understand. It is a valuable addition to any library or study.