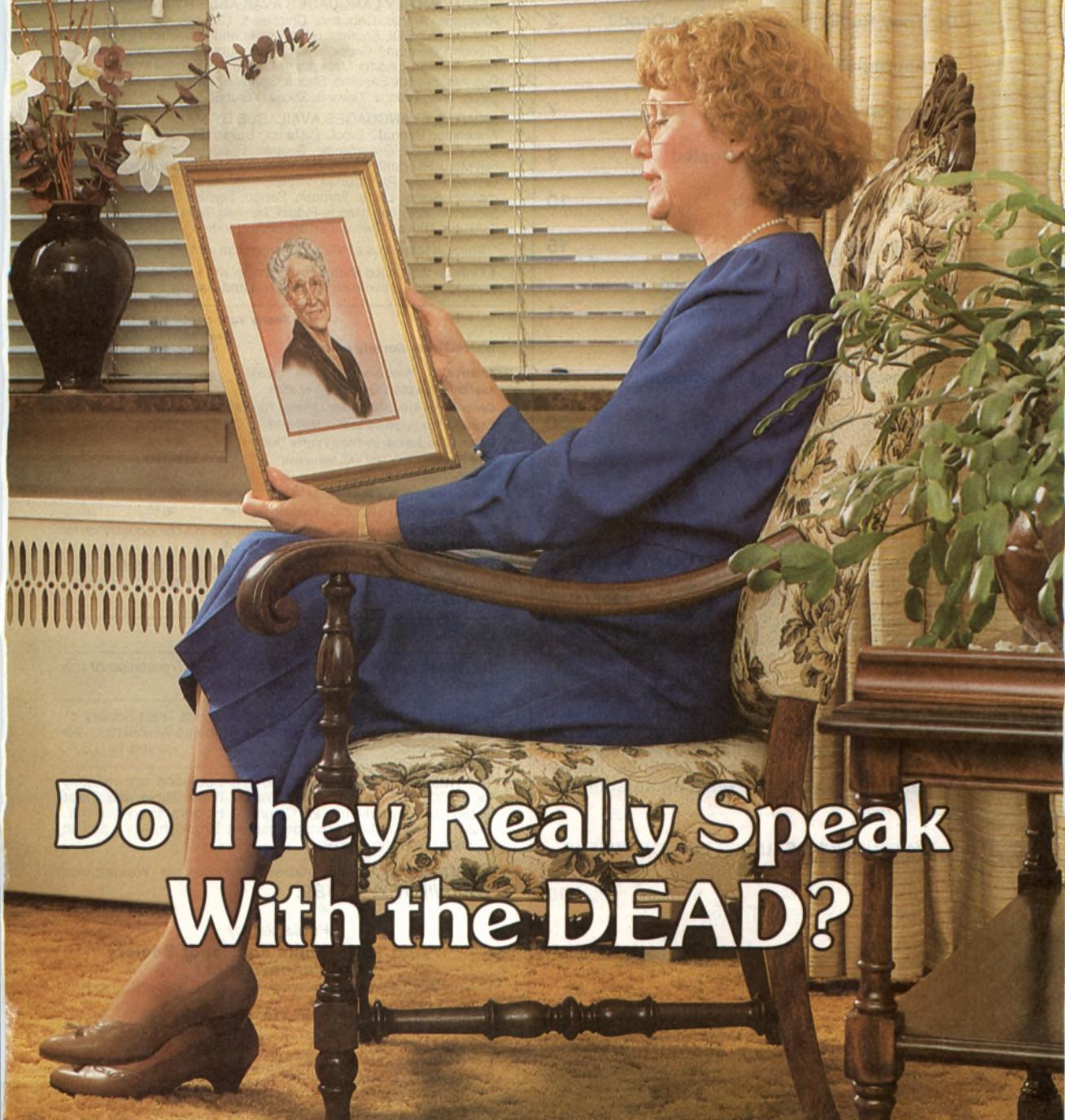


# The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

January 15, 1988



## Do They Really Speak With the DEAD?

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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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# Do They Really Speak With the Dead?

SOCER teams in Brazil sometimes seek help through spirit mediums. Why? In order to get advice because of fear that an opposing team may win. According to one newspaper, the "opportunity to communicate directly with the supernatural in search of solutions to all types of problems exerts a powerful influence upon millions of people." In some countries, high-ranking politicians, artists, and businessmen regularly consult the spirits. In an effort to seek a cure or to solve a financial problem, many try to consult the dead, who are believed to be more enlightened.

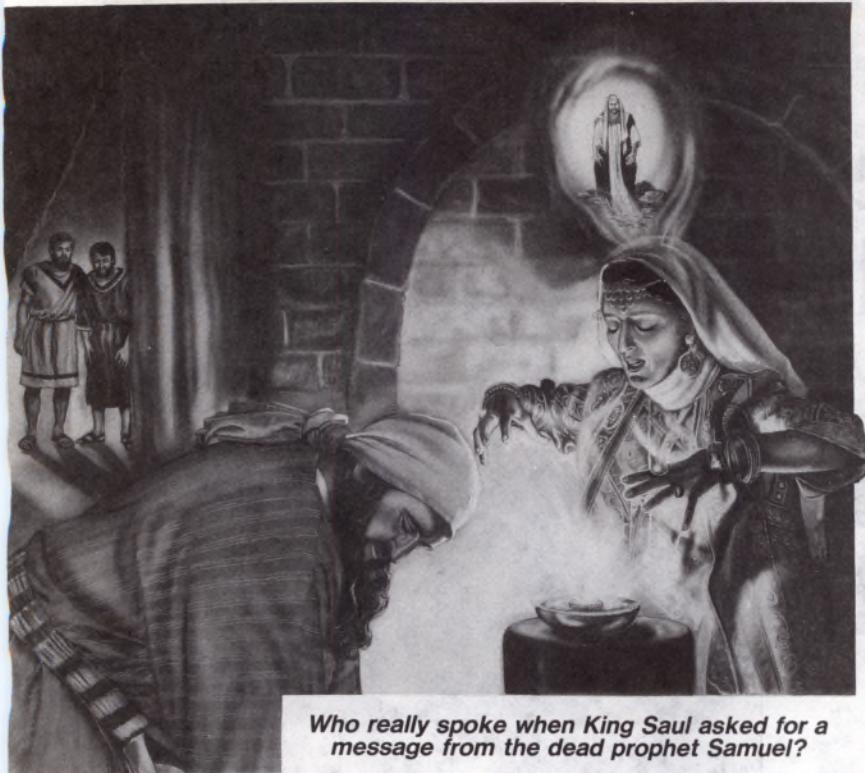
But is it proper to try to speak with the dead? Is it really possible to do so? And are there any risks involved? You may be surprised to see what the Bible says.



## What Happened in Saul's Case?

Consider this real-life experience recorded in the Bible: Fearful of the enemy Philistines, King Saul of ancient Israel sought out a spirit medium in En-dor. He asked her to contact the dead prophet Samuel. On hearing her description of an old man with a sleeveless coat, Saul assumed this apparition to be Samuel. And what was the message? Israel would be given into Philistine hands, and the next day Saul and his sons would be with "Samuel," indicating that they would die while fighting the Philistines. (1 Samuel 28:4-19) Is that what happened?

Not exactly. Saul was severely wounded in battle with the Philistines, but he died a suicide. (1 Samuel 31:1-4) And contrary to the prediction suggesting that all Saul's



*Who really spoke when King Saul asked for a message from the dead prophet Samuel?*

sons would die with him, his son Ish-bosheth survived him.

But was it proper to inquire of the dead in the first place? No, it was not. The Scriptures tell us: "Saul died for his unfaithfulness . . . and also for asking of a spirit medium to make inquiry." (1 Chronicles 10:13) Can we learn something from this? Yes. Saul died for asking a spirit medium to inquire of the dead. Why? Because in doing this, he disobeyed God's explicit law: "There should not be found in you . . . anyone who consults a spirit medium or a professional foreteller of events or anyone who inquires of the dead. For everybody doing these things is something detestable to Jehovah." (Deuteronomy 18:10-12) Why is inquiry of the dead detestable to God? Before answering that question, we may ask:

### Is It Really Possible?

If anyone is to talk with the dead, the deceased must actually be alive. They must have immortal souls. Yet the Bible says: "Jehovah God proceeded to form the man out of dust from the ground and to blow into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man came to be a living soul." (Genesis 2:7) Therefore, the person himself is a soul. He does not have an immortal soul that lives on after the death of the body. In fact, the Scriptures say: "The soul that is sinning—it itself will die." (Ezekiel 18:4) Moreover, God's Word says: "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all . . . There is no

work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol," mankind's common grave.—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10.

Far from being more enlightened, then, the dead are unconscious. So it is impossible to speak with them. Acting in harmony with God's law against inquiring of the dead therefore protects us from being deceived. Yet, messages from the spirit realm are possible, as King Saul's experience shows.

### But What Is the Source?

For one thing, frauds are common among those professing to contact the dead. *The World Book Encyclopedia* informs us: "It has been shown that mediums trick people at séances into believing that spirits can communicate with the living. Scientists offer explanations for much of what happens at séances. For

example, some mediums are ventriloquists. Some use helpers and various types of trick equipment. Others use hypnosis. Many people who attend séances have a strong desire to contact a dead loved one. This desire may make them believe that any message delivered by the medium comes from the spirit world."

But should we think only in such terms? No, for adhering to God's decree against inquiring of the dead also protects us in a far more significant way. Messages do come from the spirit realm, but their source is powerful creatures seeking to mislead mankind. The Bible identifies them as "wicked spirit forces"—Satan the Devil and disobedient angels known as demons. (Ephesians 6:12) When King Saul visited the spirit medium in En-dor, it was a demon that impersonated the dead prophet Samuel.

As illustrated in the case of Saul, the demons have nothing beneficial to convey, and their supposed help is short-lived. Like their ruler, the Devil, they are liars. (Mark 3:22; John 8:44) In this regard, the late British psychic researcher Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote: "We have, unhappily, to deal with absolute cold-blooded lying on the part of wicked or mischievous intelligences. Every one who has investigated the matter has, I suppose, met with examples of wilful deception which occasionally are mixed up with good and true communications." (*The New Revelation*, page 72) Of course, you do not want to be deceived, do you?

Now, consider this: History tells us about the slave trade and related sufferings. Would anyone willingly accept such hardship and humiliation? Of course not. Then why should we permit ourselves to become enslaved by wicked spirits? They not only lie but also rob people of their freedom and may even lead them to violence and murder. For instance, 29-year-

old José of Pernambuco, Brazil, said that 'a spirit entered into him, forcing him to kill his year-old daughter.' Yes, involvement with wicked spirits can lead to such slavery. Well, then, just as grieving slaves of the past yearned for freedom, so those enslaved by the demons today should want to be free. One way to achieve this freedom is to refrain from consulting spirit mediums and attempting to speak with the dead. For that matter, is there . . .

### Any Need to Speak With the Dead?

No, because we are not without assistance. Like children who trust their father, we can freely ask for help from the heavenly Father, who is pleased to assist the honesthearted. (Luke 11:9-13) God's prophet Isaiah wrote: "In case they should say to you people: 'Apply to the spiritistic mediums or to those having a spirit of prediction who are chirping and making utterances in low tones,' is it not to its God that any people should apply? Should there be application to dead persons in behalf of living persons? To the law and to the attestation!"—Isaiah 8:19, 20.

Yes, we have a solid basis for confidence in Jehovah God if we do his will and refuse to have any contact with wicked spirits. The Christian disciple James wrote: "Subject yourselves, therefore, to God; but oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7) After studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, a man who had practiced spiritism for 28 years stated: "Never fear what the Devil may do to those who abandon spiritistic practices, but, rather, trust in Jehovah God."

Filling the mind with the truth from God's Word and acting on it will enable us to "put on the complete suit of [spiritual] armor from God" that we may "stand firm against the machinations of the Devil" and not be enslaved by wicked spirit forces. (Ephesians 6:11) Moreover,

praying to Jehovah regularly will provide a powerful defense against demon molestation.—Proverbs 18:10.

How comforting it is to know the truth about the condition of the dead! Death is like a profound sleep. (John 11:11) And Jesus Christ guaranteed that there would be a resurrection of the dead.—John 5:28, 29.

Together with his wife and children, one man who had been a spiritist learned from

the Scriptures that no one needs to try speaking with the dead or someone impersonating them. Like this family and many others around the world, you too can enjoy spiritual freedom. (John 8:32) Learn the truth about the dead and God's purpose for mankind. Then you can look forward to Jehovah's new system, where you can speak with resurrected loved ones and enjoy eternal life under peaceful conditions. —Isaiah 25:8.

## An Appreciative Oldster

A 79-year-old woman from Japan was moved to write the following letter after reading the June 1, 1987, issue of *The Watchtower* on the theme "Who Will Care for the Elderly?"

To the Brothers Whom I Esteem,

Upon studying the June 1, 1987, issue regarding the elderly, I find the material most understanding and kind. When I reached paragraph 11, I had to get my handkerchief because I just cried and cried and could not stop. Those were tears of deep gratitude. What love and kindness! I could only do what Psalm 150 says—praise Jah! I humbly offer my deepest gratitude to you brothers for publishing these thoughtful articles on showing kindness to elderly people, down to the finest details. Of course, I am grateful for the fine articles you publish each month, and there are no words to express my appreciation adequately. Again, I thank you.

Happily, everyone in our congregation is so loving and kind. They take me to and from the preaching territory in their cars, and because of their kind service, I am an auxiliary pioneer. I am deeply grateful for each and every day that I can live in such a wonderful and protective organization.

In the world today, where old people are becoming more numerous but less welcome, there is nothing more precious than the blessings we receive from such a loving God. It is my prayer that I can help as many people as possible to learn the truth so that they can rejoice together with us.

Praise to Jehovah and thanks to you, my dear brothers. Please excuse my terrible handwriting, which I am ashamed of. May Jehovah bless you and grant you good health.

An unworthy old woman,  
[signed] Nogami

Words and sentiments like these confirm the fact that true Christian love knows no boundary or age limit. Jehovah's Witnesses, young and old, demonstrate their discipleship by living up to Jesus' statement: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves."—John 13:35.

# Insight on the News

## The Wrong Sign

"What's your sign?" For the millions of people who consult "starsign" charts prepared by astrologers, that question is of major importance. They believe that the position of the stars, planets, sun, and moon with respect to the constellations of the zodiac at the time of birth directly influences a person's life. However, according to the London daily *Independent*, astrologers are giving people the wrong sign. "Star-sign" charts used for horoscopes are based on astrological "laws" drawn up some 2,000 years ago.

Says the *Independent*: "An astrologer will tell the parents of today's newborn baby that he or she is a Cancer." However, the report notes: "If they instead looked at the sun's position in the sky, they would find that the sun is in fact in Gemini." What accounts for this? Astronomers call it the "precession of the equinoxes," a phenomenon in which the axis of the earth, in effect, wobbles much as does that of a top as it slows down. This preces-

sion, or "wobble," completes a 360-degree cycle every 25,800 years, which means that the equinoxes advance 50 seconds of arc each year, or one degree in 72 years. Thus, in the past 2,000 years, the sun's apparent position in the sky has slipped backward by one full sign of the zodiac. As a result, "a natal horoscope is not a real picture of the heavens at the moment of one's birth," explains Richard F. Smith in his book *Prelude to Science*. "Most of the Scorpions of this world," he explains, "were really born when the sun was in Libra, most Leos are really Cancers, Cancers are Geminis, and so on."

The unreliability of star charts and horoscopes only emphasizes the wisdom of looking to the Creator for guidance and not to the things he has created. (Romans 1:24, 25) However, an even greater reason to avoid the use of horoscopes is that this could lead to rendering worship "to the sun or the moon or all the army of the heavens, a thing

[God has] not commanded." —Deuteronomy 17:2-5.

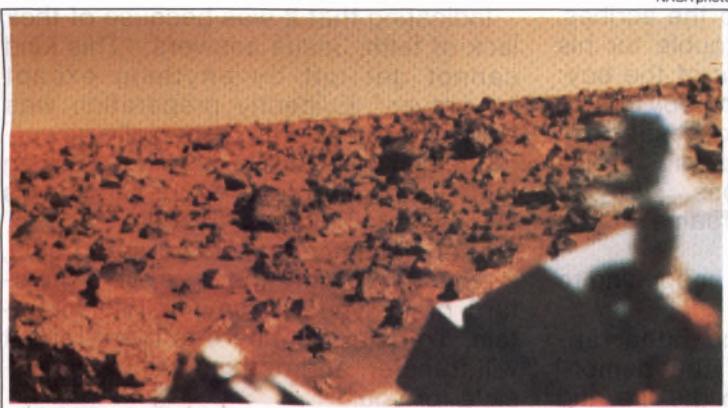
## No Water—No Life

This is the conclusion reached by Professor Norman H. Horowitz, a scientist affiliated with the 1965-76 Mariner and Viking missions to Mars.

In his book *To Utopia and Back: The Search for Life in the Solar System*, Professor Horowitz noted that the findings from these missions clearly resolved the question of whether there is life on Mars or on any other planet in our solar system. "Mars," he says, "lacks that extraordinary feature that dominates the environment of our own planet, oceans of liquid water in full view of the sun." Research confirmed the planet's lack of water.

After careful experiments eliminated every possibility of a life potential on Mars, Horowitz conceded: "The failure to find life on Mars was a disappointment, but it was also a revelation. Since Mars offered by far the most promising habitat for extraterrestrial life in the solar system, it is now virtually certain that the earth is the only life-bearing planet in our region of the galaxy."

How fitting that, when writing about the earth, the ancient prophet Isaiah stated that its Maker "formed it even to be inhabited!" (Isaiah 45:18) Water is mentioned early in the Bible's creation account. Clearly, providing water before the creation of any earthly life form was a necessity. As the missions to Mars have testified: Outside the spirit realm, where there is no water, there cannot be life.—Genesis 1:1-10.



The lifeless surface of Mars, viewed from the "Viking II" spacecraft



## Demon-Possessed Boy Healed

**W**HILE Jesus, Peter, James, and John are away, likely on a spur of Mount Hermon, the other disciples run into a problem. On his return, Jesus immediately sees that something is wrong. There is a crowd gathered around his disciples, and the scribes are arguing with them. On seeing Jesus, the people are greatly surprised and run to greet him. "What are you disputing with them?" he asks.

Coming forward from the crowd, a man kneels before Jesus and explains: "Teacher, I brought my son to you because he has a speechless spirit; and wherever it seizes him it dashes him to the ground, and he foams and grinds his teeth and loses his strength. And I told your disciples to expel it, but they were not capable."

The scribes are apparently making the most of the disciples' failure to heal the boy, perhaps ridiculing their efforts. At just this critical moment, Jesus arrives. "O faithless generation," he says, "how long must I continue with you? How long must I put up with you?"

Jesus seems to address his remarks to everyone present, but no doubt they are directed particularly to the scribes, who have been making trouble for his disciples. Next, Jesus says of the boy: "Bring him to me." But as the boy comes to Jesus, the demon that possesses him knocks him to the ground and throws him into violent convulsions. The boy rolls on the ground and foams at the mouth.

"How long has this been happening to him?" Jesus asks.

"From childhood on," the father answers. "Time and again [the demon] would throw him both into the fire and

into the water to destroy him." Then the father pleads: "If you can do anything, have pity on us and help us."

Perhaps for years, the father has been seeking help. And now, with the failure of Jesus' disciples, his despair is great. Picking up on the man's desperate appeal, Jesus encouragingly says: "That expression, 'If you can! Why, all things can be to one if one has faith."

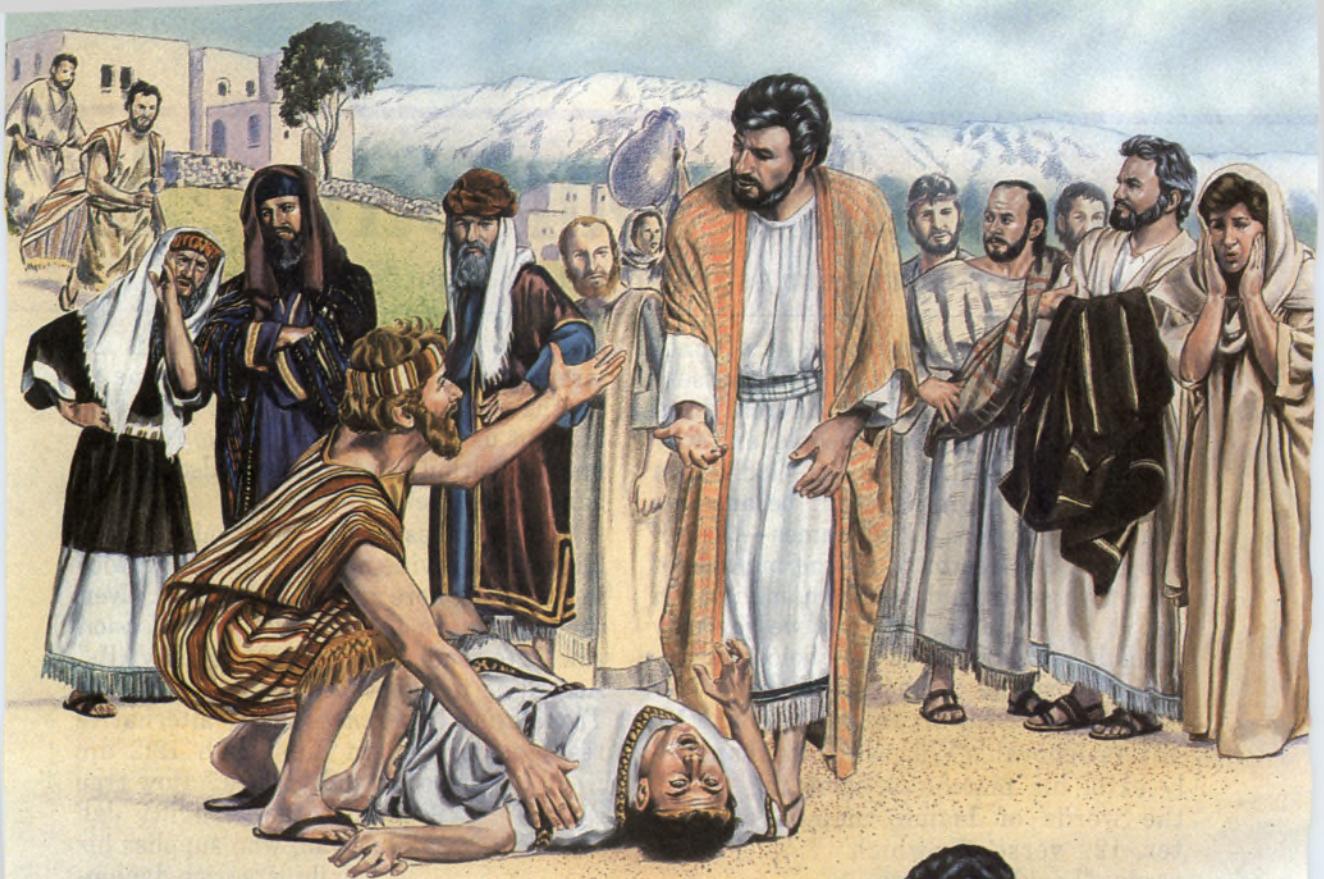
"I have faith!" the father immediately cries out, but he begs: "Help me out where I need faith!"

Noticing that the crowd is running together upon them, Jesus rebukes the demon: "You speechless and deaf spirit, I order you, get out of him and enter into him no more." As the demon departs, it again causes the boy to cry out and drives him into many convulsions. Then the boy lies motionless on the ground, so that most of the people begin saying: "He is dead!" But Jesus takes the boy by the hand, and he rises.

Earlier, when the disciples had been sent forth to preach, they had expelled demons. So now, when they enter a house, they ask Jesus privately: "Why could we not expel it?"

Indicating that it was because of their lack of faith, Jesus answers: "This kind cannot get out by anything except by prayer." Evidently preparation was called for to expel the especially powerful demon involved in this case. Strong faith along with prayer requesting God's empowering help was needed.

Then Jesus adds: "Truly I say to you, If you have faith the size of a mustard grain, you will say to this mountain, 'Transfer from here to there,' and it will transfer, and nothing will be impossible for you."



How powerful faith can be! Obstacles and difficulties that block progress in Jehovah's service may seemingly be as insurmountable and irremovable as a great literal mountain. Yet, Jesus is showing that if we cultivate faith in our hearts, watering it and encouraging it to grow, it will expand to maturity and will enable us to overcome such mountain-like obstacles and difficulties. **Mark 9:14-29; Matthew 17:19, 20; Luke 9:37-43.**

- ♦ What situation does Jesus find when returning from Mount Hermon?
- ♦ What encouragement did Jesus give the father of the demon-possessed boy?
- ♦ Why had the disciples not been able to expel the demon?
- ♦ How powerful does Jesus show that faith can become?



# Jehovah—Our Strength

"Jah Jehovah is my strength and my might."—ISAIAH 12:2.

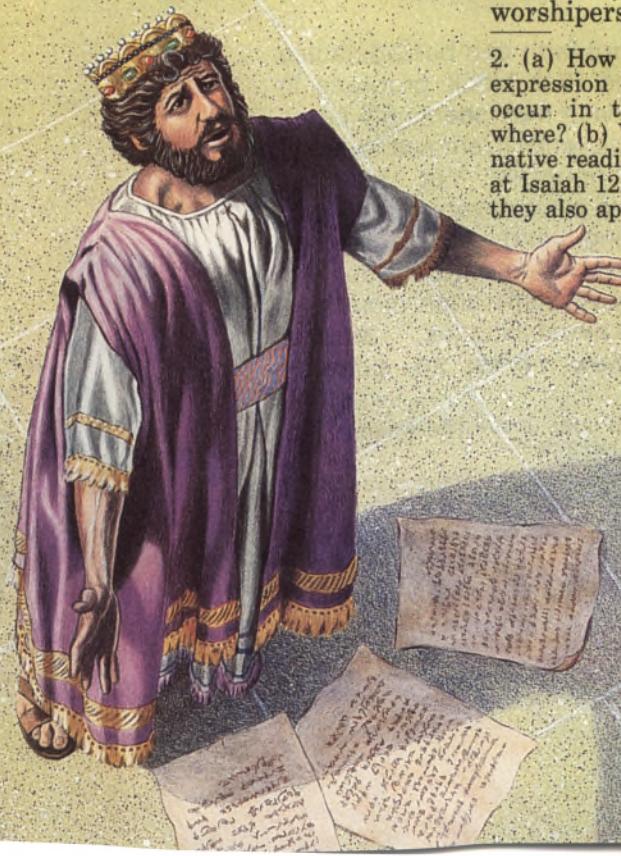
DO YOU attend meetings at a Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses? There you see a people far different from any other! Who are these people, and why are they different? We are God's own people, and we are different because we bear the grandest of all names—that of the glorious Creator of all the marvels of the universe around us. His name is upon us. It is in his name that we joyously assemble to partake of the choice spiritual food that he provides "at the proper time" through his organization. (Luke 12:42) As Jehovah's Witnesses, we thankfully extol his matchless name in the words of Isaiah chapter 12, verse 2, which reads: "Look! God is my salvation. I shall trust

1. (a) Why are Jehovah's Witnesses so different?
- (b) How does Isaiah 12:2 express what Jehovah has done for his people?

and be in no dread; for Jah Jehovah is my strength and my might, and he came to be the salvation of me." Our God has brought us through many trials. Now our final salvation draws near—also at the hand of Jah Jehovah!

<sup>2</sup> This expression "Jah Jehovah," a doubling of the divine name, occurs only twice in the Bible, here and at Isaiah 26:4. Even the translators of the *King James Version* saw fit to render it "the LORD JEHOVAH." According to a footnote in the *New World Translation Reference Bible*, alternative readings for "might" in Isaiah 12:2 are "melody" and "praise." How true it is that the almighty Jah Jehovah, who supplies his worshipers with dynam-

2. (a) How often does the expression "Jah Jehovah" occur in the Bible, and where? (b) What are alternative readings for "might" at Isaiah 12:2, and why are they also appropriate?



ic energy, is worthy of our melodious songs of praise!—Isaiah 40:28-31.

<sup>3</sup> Jehovah's power is balanced by his wisdom, justice, and love. In the exercise of these divine qualities, Jah Jehovah has opened the way for the salvation of believing mankind on the basis of Jesus' ransom sacrifice. In this connection, the apostle Paul exclaimed: "O the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How unsearchable his judgments are and past tracing out his ways are! For 'who has come to know Jehovah's mind, or who has become his counselor?' Or, 'Who has first given to him, so that it must be repaid to him?' Because from him and by him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen." (Romans 11:33-36) Therefore, how fitting it is that we hold fast to Jah Jehovah and declare our complete confidence and trust in him as our almighty God and Sovereign Lord!—Compare Hebrews 3:14.

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah had good reason to declare, 'I will trust and not be afraid.' The prophet later became well acquainted with God's saving acts. He was an eyewitness when Jehovah fulfilled His word by humbling Assyria and its boastful king, Sennacherib. In one night, 185,000 Assyrian soldiers were slain by just one angel sent by our almighty God, Jehovah! That grand salvation resulted because King Hezekiah and all Judah trusted implicitly in Jah Jehovah. (Isaiah 37:6, 7, 21, 36-38) In this 20th century, Jehovah has also delivered his people from oppressions, bannings, persecutions, and concentration camps. Like

3. (a) For what has Jah Jehovah opened the way, and on the basis of what? (b) What is the effect of Paul's words at Romans 11:33-36 on Jehovah's Witnesses?

4. (a) Why did the prophet Isaiah have good reason to declare, 'I will trust and not be afraid'? (b) Why do Jehovah's people have good reason to trust in Jah Jehovah in this 20th century?

those boasting Assyrians of Isaiah's time, the Nazi ruler Adolf Hitler railed against Jehovah's Witnesses, on one occasion screaming, "This brood will be exterminated in Germany!" But it was Hitler and his Nazis that were exterminated. And now the small group of German Witnesses that trusted in Jehovah has grown to over 121,200!—Psalm 27:1, 2; Romans 8:31, 37.

<sup>5</sup> Wherever persecution arises, Jehovah's trusting people are refreshed and strengthened by drinking in life-giving waters of truth. It is just as God's prophet said at Isaiah 12:3-5: "With exultation you people will be certain to draw water out of the springs of salvation. And in that day you will certainly say: 'Give thanks to Jehovah, you people! Call upon his name. Make known among the peoples his dealings. Make mention that his name is put on high. Make melody to Jehovah, for he has done surpassingly. This is made known in all the earth.'" May we continue to drink deeply of Kingdom truth and thankfully magnify the name of our Sovereign Lord, Jehovah. With complete trust in Jehovah, let us "preach the word, be at it urgently in favorable season, in troublesome season." (2 Timothy 4:2) Whatever opposers may do, Jah Jehovah will lovingly guide us in the way of salvation!

### 'The Town of Tyrannical Nations'

<sup>6</sup> Let us turn now to Isaiah chapter 25. In verse 1 we read: "O Jehovah, you are my God. I exalt you, I laud your name, for you have done wonderful things, counsels from early times, in faithfulness, in trustworthiness." Jehovah's trusting

5. How do the words of Isaiah 12:3-5 apply to God's trusting people today?

6. 7. (a) In harmony with Isaiah 25:1, for what should Jehovah's worshipers glorify him? (b) How does Isaiah 25:2, 3 describe a certain city? (c) To what city is the prophet likely referring, and why?

worshipers glorify him for the wonderful works that he has performed in their midst. But Isaiah then draws a sharp contrast, saying to Jehovah: "For you have made a city a pile of stones, a fortified town a crumbling ruin, a dwelling tower of strangers to be no city, which will not be rebuilt even to time indefinite. . . . The town of the tyrannical nations, they will fear [Jehovah]."—Isaiah 25:2, 3.

<sup>7</sup> What is this unnamed city of tyranny? Isaiah may have been referring to Ar, the capital of Moab, always an enemy of God's people. But the context here seems to fit another branch of Satan's organization better—the archenemy Babylon. In due time, Babylon would devastate Judah and Jerusalem, destroy Jehovah's house of worship, and take the survivors of the people into captivity. Isaiah quotes Babylon's king as boasting: "To the heavens I shall go up. Above the stars of God I shall lift up my throne, and I shall sit down upon the mountain of meeting. . . . I shall make myself resemble the Most High." But Jehovah would raise up Cyrus of Persia to cut down Babylon and restore God's people to their land. As prophesied, the site of ancient Babylon was left nothing more than "a pile of stones" and "a crumbling ruin."—Isaiah 14:12-14; 13:17-22.

<sup>8</sup> However, more than 2,500 years after Babylon's overthrow, Jehovah's worshipers still have to contend with another Babylon—"Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and of the disgusting things of the earth." (Revelation 17:5) She is the world empire of false religion. She had her inception shortly after the Flood of Noah's day, when Nimrod built the original Babylon, which became the cradle of false, sectarian religion. After Christianity was

8, 9. (a) With what other Babylon do Jehovah's worshipers have to contend, and how did she develop? (b) How does Isaiah describe her, and why is the term appropriate?

established by Jesus and his apostles, apostates contaminated Bible truth by bringing in pagan Babylonish "teachings of demons," and Christendom's religious system was spawned. (1 Timothy 4:1) This mimic Christianity has become the principal part of "Babylon the Great," which extends throughout the earth into all nations of mankind. Isaiah describes her as a 'town of tyrannical nations.'

<sup>9</sup> For more than four millenniums, from the founding of the original Babylon until now, cruel dictators have used tyrannical clergymen as stooges in suppressing and controlling the common people. Thus, "man has dominated man to his injury." (Ecclesiastes 8:9) Jesus felt pity for the people "because they were skinned and thrown about" by such false religious shepherds. Today, the most reprehensible group is identified as "the man of lawlessness," made up of the self-exalted clergy of Christendom, who have taken the lead in opposing and persecuting Jehovah's Witnesses.—Matthew 9:36; 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4.

<sup>10</sup> In the year 1919 Jehovah released his true people from the control of "Babylon the Great." That 'town of tyrannical nations' was compelled to glorify Jehovah in that she was required to observe with bitterness the "wonderful things" that he accomplished in restoring *his* worshipers to dynamic activity. False religionists are forced to fear Jehovah, too, in anticipation of what lies in store for them. For centuries, tyrannical clergymen have exalted themselves over the laity. But now Isaiah speaks of Jehovah, saying: "You have become a stronghold to the lowly one, a

10. (a) In harmony with Isaiah 25:3, how has 'the town of tyrannical nations' been compelled to glorify Jehovah, as well as fear him? (b) At Isaiah 25:4, 5, how does Isaiah speak of Jehovah, both with regard to "the lowly one" and "the tyrannical ones"?

stronghold to the poor one in the distress that he has, a refuge from the rainstorm, a shade from the heat, when the blast of the tyrannical ones is like a rainstorm against a wall. Like the heat in a waterless country, the noise of strangers you subdue, the heat with the shadow of a cloud. The melody itself of the tyrannical ones becomes suppressed.”—Isaiah 25:4, 5.

### No Joyous Song in “Babylon”!

<sup>11</sup> That, indeed, is the situation today throughout the realm of “Babylon the Great.” No joyous song is to be found there. Her religious leaders are confused as to the gods they should worship. This was clearly borne out at the interreligious gathering at Assisi, Italy, on October 27, 1986. There, in connection with the United Nations’ International Year of Peace, Pope John Paul II assembled the leaders of the principal religions of “Babylon the Great.” They all prayed for peace, some Buddhist monks for as long as 12 hours in one day. But to whom did they pray? Was it to Mary? Or to Christendom’s holy Trinity? Or to the Hindu trinity? Or to the thousands of gods of Buddhism? Or to Allah? Or to that lowly animal, the fox, that Shintoists worship? Or were the most acceptable prayers those of an American Indian of the Crow tribe? He was reported to be ‘glorious in a majestic headdress,’ while he lit a pipe of peace and uttered his prayers “into the smoke as it rose like incense in the cold air.”

<sup>12</sup> One thing is certain: Not one of those religionists, from Buddhism’s Dalai Lama to “His Eminence” Methodius of the Greek Orthodox Church, subscribes to the Bi-

11. Why is there no joyous song throughout the realm of “Babylon the Great,” and how was this illustrated at the interreligious gathering at Assisi, Italy?

12. To what words of Micah and Isaiah do those religionists not subscribe?

ble’s words at Micah 4:5: “We, for our part, shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God to time indefinite, even forever.” They do not subscribe to the truth of Isaiah’s inspired statement at chapter 42, verses 5 and 8: “This is what the true God, Jehovah, has said, the Creator of the heavens and the Grand One stretching them out; the One laying out the earth and its produce, the One giving breath to the people on it, and spirit to those walking in it: ‘I am Jehovah. That is my name; and to no one else shall I give my own glory, neither my praise to graven images.’”

<sup>13</sup> At Assisi, showy ceremony, distinctive garb, and repetitious prayers were the means of making great public display. That is what Jehovah’s Son Jesus condemned when he was here on earth. He said of the religious leaders of his day: “All the works they do they do to be viewed by men,” and he addressed them forthrightly, saying: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut up the kingdom of the heavens before men; for you yourselves do not go in, neither do you permit those on their way in to go in.” (Matthew 23:5, 13; see also Matthew 6:1-8.) It is not outward show or the place of worship that counts with God. As Jesus said: “God is a Spirit, and those worshiping him must worship with spirit and truth.”—John 4:21, 24.

### The True Source of Peace

<sup>14</sup> Viewing the confusion in the world’s religions, could anyone be so naive as to think that the prayers of religious leaders could bring world peace? They have been praying hypocritically for hundreds of

13. What really took place at Assisi, and how was this condemned by Jesus when he was on earth?

14. (a) Why are the prayers of the world’s religions for peace hypocritical? (b) What is the divine judgment of Christendom’s religion?

years, while at the same time sharing fully in the wars of the nations, the Crusades, and the infamous persecutions. Jehovah's prophet inquired: "Can a Cushite change his skin? or a leopard its spots? You yourselves would also be able to do good, who are persons taught to do bad." (Jeremiah 13:23) As the foremost part of "Babylon the Great"—the world empire of false religion—Christendom's religion in particular has been weighed in divine balances and found woefully wanting. It is doomed!—Jeremiah 2:34, 35, 37; 5:29-31; Daniel 5:27.

<sup>15</sup> Jehovah, "the God of peace," will bring in lasting peace by destroying all bloodguilty ones and populating the earth with humans who really love truth and righteousness. (Philippians 4:9) According to King David, it is the meek ones who "trust in Jehovah and do good" that "will possess the earth" and "will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." (Psalm 37:3, 11) Those who 'trust always in Jehovah and do good' serve the cause of peace in a way that those offering

15. How will Jehovah bring in lasting peace, and how do those who trust in him serve the cause of peace?

### Questions in Review

- How is Jah Jehovah our strength and our might?
- What is "the town of the tyrannical nations"?
- How has 'the town of tyrannical nations' been compelled to glorify Jehovah, as well as fear him?
- What shows that there is no joyous song in "Babylon the Great"?
- What "wonderful things" will Jehovah yet do for his people?

mixed-up prayers to conflicting gods, idols, and images never can.—Psalm 115:2-8; Isaiah 44:14-20.

<sup>16</sup> What a contrast exists between the prayers and hopes of God's own people and those of supporters of "Babylon the Great"! How well we appreciate that "the melody itself of the tyrannical ones becomes suppressed"! (Isaiah 25:5) But speaking of meek ones that are being gathered out of "the town of the tyrannical nations," Isaiah goes on to say: "Jehovah of armies will certainly make for all the peoples, in this mountain, a banquet of well-oiled dishes, a banquet of wine kept on the dregs, . . . filtered." (Isaiah 25:6) The spiritual feast shared in today by those who come to worship Jehovah is delightfully satisfying, a banquet indeed! Our hearts are strengthened to endure and our joy overflows as we serve Jehovah zealously in anticipation of the regeneration and banquet of good things that Jehovah has promised for the new earth.

—Psalm 104:1, 14, 15; Matthew 19:28, KJ.

<sup>17</sup> Soon, Jah Jehovah will do "wonderful things" in removing not only "Babylon the Great" but also "the woven work" of condemnation that envelops mankind because of Adam's sin. (Isaiah 25:7) Yes, on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice, our God will fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 25:8: "He will actually swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces. And the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for Jehovah himself has spoken it." What a joy to see Adamic sin and death removed and to welcome loved

16. What banquet does Jehovah provide for those meek ones being gathered out of "the town of the tyrannical nations"?

17. What "wonderful things" will Jehovah accomplish, bringing what joys?

ones as they return from the clutches of death! What a delight to know that Jehovah's faithful witnesses have given the complete reply to the great Taunter, Satan the Devil! (Proverbs 27:11) No longer will anyone cast reproach on them, for they will have triumphed as to their integrity. "In faithfulness, in trustworthiness," Jehovah himself will have carried out the things prophesied—his "counsels from early times." All the earth will have become a righteous paradise, filled with righteous people. A grand prospect indeed!

<sup>18</sup> Our trusting always in Jehovah

18. Despite pressures, what are we determined to do, in harmony with Isaiah 25:9?

through these dark days will have its sure reward. Whatever pressures we must fight in our daily lives—whether in providing for our families, in holding fast to Bible principles at school, or in giving the witness in difficult territories—let us trust always in Jehovah. Our maintaining an intimate relationship with Jehovah as the "Hearer of prayer" will ensure us salvation. (Psalm 65:2) Therefore, let us be determined to remain among those who say, in the words of Isaiah 25:9: "Look! This is our God. We have hoped in him, and he will save us. This is Jehovah. We have hoped in him. Let us be joyful and rejoice in the salvation by him."

# Trust in Jah Jehovah!

"Trust in Jehovah, you people, for all times, for in Jah Jehovah is the Rock of times indefinite."—ISAIAH 26:4.

THE abasing of the 'town of tyrannical nations' calls for a victory song! (Isaiah 25:3) Appropriately, then, the prophecy at Isaiah chapter 26, verses 1 to 6, sets forth an exultant song of praise to the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. It is even now being sung "in the land of Judah," Judah meaning "Lauded." Here, again, the *King James Version* uses the expression "the LORD JEHOVAH" where the divine name is doubled. But how much more thrilling are the words of that song as they appear in the *New World Translation*, where this and all other occurrences of the divine name are rendered correctly!

<sup>2</sup> Listen now to that melodious song:

1, 2. What exultant song of praise is set forth at Isaiah 26:1-6, and why?

"We have a strong city. He [Jehovah] sets salvation itself for walls and rampart. Open the gates, you men, that the righteous nation that is keeping faithful conduct may enter. The inclination that is well supported you will safeguard in continuous peace, because it is in you that one is made to trust. Trust in Jehovah, you people, for all times, for in Jah Jehovah is the Rock of times indefinite. For he has laid low those inhabiting the height, the elevated town. He abases it, he abases it to the earth; he brings it in touch with the dust. The foot will trample it down, the feet of the afflicted one, the steps of the lowly ones." What a joy to be among the trusting ones who now share in singing this song—Jehovah's Witnesses!

<sup>3</sup> The Lord Jehovah—Jah Jehovah—will indeed abase the proud and deliver those who trust in him always. Though once a “little one,” spiritual Israel has become “a mighty nation,” “the righteous nation.” Through the open “gates” of Jehovah’s citylike organization, there has entered also a mighty throng of goodwill companions numbering more than three million. Together they make up an international brotherhood, the population of which exceeds that of at least 57 of the nations making up the so-called United Nations. But God’s “nation” and those associating with it are truly united. Earth wide, their inclination is to obey his righteous principles. The organizational “walls” of God’s “nation” provide a bulwark against Satan’s efforts to tamper with its faithful conduct in support of truth. The enemy cannot break up the loyal forward march of God’s people! Our trust always rests in ‘Jah Jehovah, the Rock to time indefinite.’—Isaiah 54:17; 60:22.

<sup>4</sup> As we sound the warning that Jehovah is about to lay low “the elevated town,” “Babylon the Great,” it is heartening to see the afflicted and lowly ones of earth embracing the good news of the Kingdom. (Revelation 18:2, 4, 5) In a figurative way they, too, trample down that “elevated town,” not by sharing in the destructive work, but by taking part in declaring the day of Jehovah’s vengeance upon that corrupt system. (Isaiah 61:1, 2) For decades now, Jehovah’s Witnesses have shown kindness even to the wicked by calling at

3. (a) What is “the righteous nation,” and who have entered through its open “gates”? (b) How is it that Jehovah’s organization moves forward unitedly despite enemy efforts to break it up?

4, 5. (a) What is “the elevated town,” and how do Jehovah’s people trample it down in a figurative way? (b) When does the prophecy of Isaiah 26:10 have its major fulfillment, and how so? (c) What other application does this prophecy have?

their homes with the lifesaving Kingdom message. But the result has been as stated at Isaiah 26:10: “Though the wicked one should be shown favor, he simply will not learn righteousness. In the land of straightforwardness he will act unjustly and will not see the eminence of Jehovah.”

<sup>5</sup> This restoration prophecy has its major fulfillment today. Though favored with the opportunity, few people want to make over their lives in order to receive Jehovah’s favor in “the land of straightforwardness.” Those who reproach Jehovah and his loyal witnesses “will not see the eminence of Jehovah,” for they will not survive to enjoy the marvelous blessings that will flow to mankind after Jehovah’s name has been sanctified. (Isaiah 11:9) The prophecy may apply, too, in the Paradise earth among those who are raised from the tombs. Any who refuse to conform to God’s requirements, as made plain in the divine “scrolls” of that time, will not have their names written in “the book of life.”—Revelation 20:12, 15; compare Ezekiel 33:11.

#### Jehovah Adjudges Peace

<sup>6</sup> God’s loyal people, though, are intensely interested in seeing Jah Jehovah exalted, vindicated. They call on him to “adjudge peace” to his people, and joyfully they cry out: “You have added to the nation; O Jehovah, you have added to the nation; you have glorified yourself. You have extended afar all the borders of the land.” (Isaiah 26:12, 15) In 210 lands around the earth, Jehovah continues to add sheeplike persons to his spiritual nation. Hundreds of thousands of new associates are being baptized. Over half a million special, regular, and auxiliary pioneers serve in peak months. More Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls are being built. Watch Tower branches are extending their Bethel Homes and facto-

6. What words do Jehovah’s loyal people joyfully cry out, and why so?

ries and are adding printing equipment. The growth is continuous!

<sup>7</sup> This expansion comes because the "Prince of Peace" is directing the affairs of God's people on earth. As Isaiah states earlier in his prophecy: "To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom in order to establish it firmly and to sustain it by means of justice and by means of righteousness, from now on and to time indefinite. The very zeal of Jehovah of armies will do this." (Isaiah 9:6, 7) How grandly those words have been fulfilled today! Those who trust in Jehovah already experience the peace, the justice, the righteousness, of that princely rule. It has brought them together in a loving unity that is enjoyed only by Jesus' true disciples. (John 13:34, 35) Moreover, they look forward with keen anticipation to the fast-approaching time when Jesus' Kingdom rule and "the knowledge of Jehovah" will fill the entire earth.—Isaiah 11:9; Daniel 2:35, 44, 45.

<sup>8</sup> As Kingdom expansion moves to a climax, Jehovah's call at Isaiah 26:20 rings forth: "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." No doubt the "interior rooms" of this prophecy are linked closely with the more than 54,000 citylike congregations that serve Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the earth today. What Jehovah has in mind remains to be seen. But we can be sure that when he destroys the wicked, he will protect his trusting people, just as he did in Isaiah's day in turning back the cruel Assyrian.—Isaiah 10:24-26.

7. What accounts for the expansion of Jehovah's citylike organization?

8. What is indicated by Jehovah's words at Isaiah 26:20, and with what are the "interior rooms" linked?

## Deliverance Assured!

<sup>9</sup> Jehovah's servants today trust in him for the same reason that King Hezekiah did. He relied implicitly on Jehovah as his Sovereign Lord. Hence, at the height of the Assyrian threat, he prayed to Jehovah in these words: "O Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, sitting upon the cherubs, you alone are the true God of all the kingdoms of the earth. You yourself have made the heavens and the earth. Incline your ear, O Jehovah, and hear. Open your eyes, O Jehovah, and see, and hear all the words of Sennacherib that he has sent to taunt the living God." (Isaiah 37:16, 17) When persecuted, mocked, or reviled by haters of Jehovah, does not a similar prayer leap up in your heart? With full trust in Jehovah, do you not petition him to remove the reproach on his name? That is the way Jesus felt when about to die on the torture stake. He even asked that the cup that he was about to drink might "pass away" from him because of the great reproach to his Father.—Matthew 26:39-44.

<sup>10</sup> Hezekiah's prayer showed that he had no selfish motive in seeking deliverance from the Assyrian. He was not just trying to save his own skin. Rather, he was concerned that Jehovah's name be sanctified and His sovereignty be vindicated. Thus, his prayer concluded with the words: "And now, O Jehovah our God, save us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Jehovah, are God alone." (Isaiah 37:20) Similarly, as we face up to the tests that precede the final war of Armageddon, let us have in mind that our personal salvation is secondary to the

9. (a) How did King Hezekiah show his trust in Jehovah? (b) When we are persecuted or reviled by haters of Jehovah, what is our proper response?

10. (a) What did Hezekiah's prayer reveal about his main concern? (b) How can we be like Hezekiah as we face up to the tests just before Armageddon?



sanctifying of Jehovah's name. As our Sovereign Lord declared some 60 times by his prophet Ezekiel: "They will have to know that I am Jehovah."—Ezekiel 38:23.

<sup>11</sup> After Hezekiah had prayed, Isaiah informed the king about the word that Jehovah had spoken against Sennacherib. What a mistake that Assyrian blasphemer had made in reproaching the living God! Through Isaiah, Jehovah said regarding Sennacherib: "Whom have you taunted and spoken of abusively? And against whom have you lifted up your voice and do you raise your eyes on high? It is against the Holy One of Israel." And it was the Holy One of Israel that acted that night! It took only one angel of Jehovah to strike

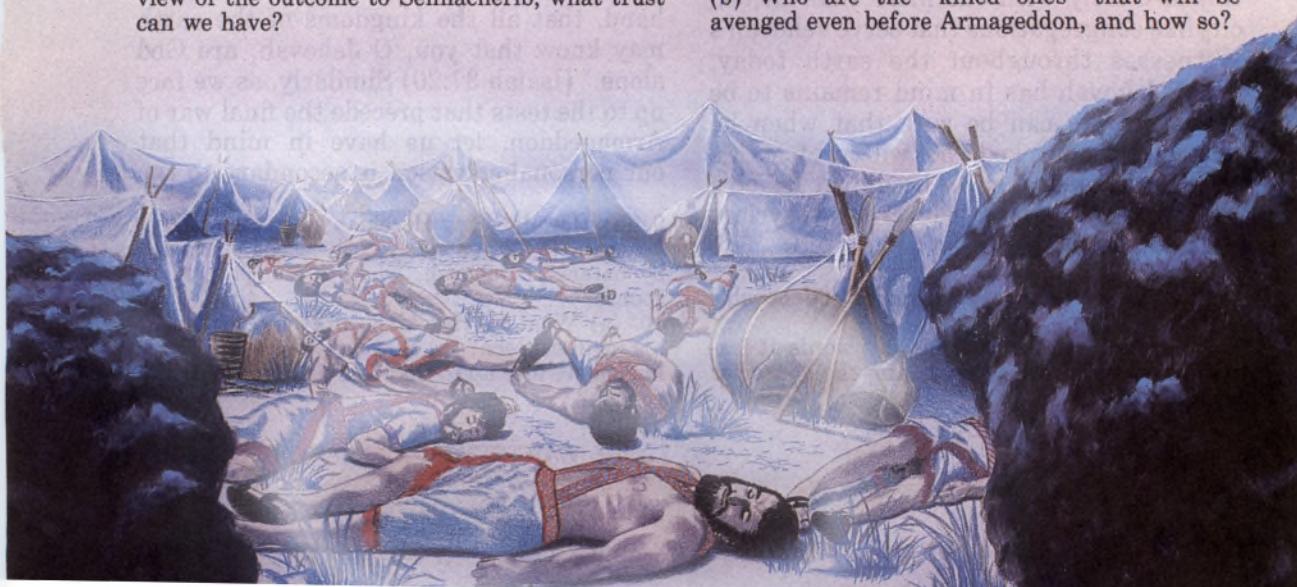
11. (a) What mistake did Sennacherib make, and what did Jehovah say regarding this? (b) In view of the outcome to Sennacherib, what trust can we have?

down and make "dead carcasses" of 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, the cream of Sennacherib's army. That proud king retreated in shame to Nineveh and some years later was struck down by his own sons while persisting in his idolatrous worship. We can trust in Jehovah, confident that He will mete out similar treatment to Satan and all his cohorts that blasphemously revile and persecute Jehovah's Witnesses.—Isaiah 37:23, 36-38.

#### Avenging the "Killed Ones"

<sup>12</sup> It was an awesome battle scene back there, but a far more terrible accounting will take place during the "great tribulation." (Matthew 24:21) Jehovah invites us to view the extent of that slaughter: "For, look! Jehovah is coming forth from his

12. (a) How does Isaiah 26:21 describe the accounting that will take place at Armageddon? (b) Who are the "killed ones" that will be avenged even before Armageddon, and how so?



place to call to account the error of the inhabitant of the land against him, and the land will certainly expose her bloodshed and will no longer cover over her killed ones." (Isaiah 26:21) First, Jehovah will cause the political powers to execute judgment on the advocates of religious error. Their false gods will not save them in that day! Let the Roman pope continue to gather all religions of "Babylon the Great" for multifaith prayers. None of these patrons of interfaith honor the true and living God, Jehovah. Their teachings are erroneous, non-Biblical, and so are their ways. They have slaughtered one another throughout the centuries. They have shed the blood of nonviolent Christians. In this 20th century, many of these wrongdoers have supported the cruel dictators that slew Jehovah's Witnesses in prisons and concentration camps by firing squads and by the ax. As Jehovah forthrightly declares by his prophets, such "killed ones" will be avenged.—Deuteronomy 32:41, 43; Isaiah 1:24; 63:4; Revelation 17:15-18; 18:21, 24.

<sup>13</sup> After false religion has been devastated, Jehovah will move swiftly against all remaining opposers of Christ's Kingdom. To all such opposers, as well as to "Babylon the Great," God's words at Isaiah 13:6, 9 apply: "Howl, you people, for the day of

13. What does Isaiah foretell regarding "the day of Jehovah," and to whom do the words apply?

Jehovah is near! As a despoiling from the Almighty it will come. Look! The day of Jehovah itself is coming, cruel both with fury and with burning anger, in order to make the land an object of astonishment, and that it may annihilate the land's sinners out of it." It will be just as the psalmist David foretold: "Jehovah is guarding all those loving him, but all the wicked ones he will annihilate."—Psalm 145:20; Revelation 19:11-21.

<sup>14</sup> The nations of the earth would do well to heed Isaiah's further words at chapter 34, verses 1 through 8: "Come up close, you nations, to hear; and you national groups, pay attention. . . . For Jehovah has indignation against all the nations, and rage against all their army. He must devote them to destruction; he must give them to the slaughter. And their slain ones will be thrown out; and as for their carcasses, their stink will ascend; and the mountains must melt because of their blood. . . . For Jehovah has a day of vengeance." In the realms of politics, big business, and false religion today, corruption and immorality are rampant. But Jehovah purposes a clean earth. To this end, he is gathering out of the nations—for survival—those persons who are willing to make over their lives to serve him in righteousness. All others

14. What further words of Isaiah do the nations do well to heed, and why?

## Prosecute the Holy See?

In summarizing an article by Umberto Siniscalchi in *Il Giornale* of Milan, *World Press Review* states: "Italy's highest Court of Appeals is under severe criticism because it nullified, in July [1987], the arrest warrants for three Vatican bank officials involved in the Banco Ambrosiano corruption scandal." The decision, based on an old treaty between the Vatican and the Italian government, granted immunity to the bank's chairman, who is an archbishop, as well as the bank's managing director and chief accountant. The review adds: "Some critics, although they do not fault the judges for the decision, maintain that the pact flies in the face of the Italian constitution by granting immunity to those who have committed infractions on Italian soil. Some legislators are pressing for an agreement permitting Italy's justice system to prosecute the Holy See for crimes committed in Italy."

must perish in his day of vengeance.—Jeremiah 25:31-33.

### A Paradise of Peace

<sup>15</sup> In Isaiah chapter 35, God's prophet proceeds, in beautiful pictorial language, to describe the condition of Jehovah's restored people, those today who always place their trust in him. Having been gathered into a spiritual paradise, these "see the glory of Jehovah, the splendor of our God." They also look forward to a physical paradise and the fulfillment of the promise: "At that time the eyes of the blind ones will be opened, and the very ears of the deaf ones will be unstopped. At that time the lame one will climb up just as a stag does, and the tongue of the speechless one will cry out in gladness. For in the wilderness watters will have burst out, and torrents in the desert plain." (Isaiah 35:1, 2, 5, 6) Do you rejoice in that prospect? Do you trust in Jehovah, confident that he will fulfill those promises?

<sup>16</sup> Trusting in Jehovah, you may share in encouraging new ones, as well as others whose faith may need to be strengthened. In the midst of describing Paradise, the prophet Isaiah sandwiches this urgent appeal: "Strengthen the weak hands, you people, and make the knees that are wobbling firm. Say to those who are anxious at heart: 'Be strong. Do not be afraid. Look! Your own God will come with vengeance itself, God even with a repayment. He himself will come and save you people.'" (Isaiah 35:3, 4) Yes, we want to see all whose hearts are righteously inclined build up trust in Jehovah, in order to make it into the Paradise earth.

<sup>17</sup> Let us therefore support any drooping

15. What does Isaiah describe in chapter 35 with regard to (a) today? (b) the future?

16, 17. (a) What urgent appeal does Isaiah make while describing Paradise? (b) How should Jehovah's people respond to this appeal?

hands so that they may keep "a tight grip on the word of life." Let us brace up any having wobbling knees, giving them aid where needed to "walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him." (Philippians 2:16; Colossians 1:10) Yes, let us console any who may be depressed at heart, and let us encourage one another, when faced with trials or persecution, to show "all the more courage to speak the word of God fearlessly." (Philippians 1:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Ephesians 5:15, 16) Then, when Jehovah's day of vengeance strikes, we can be assured of his blessing as 'he comes to save his people.' In that day, will you be among those trusting in Jehovah for salvation?

<sup>18</sup> For those who always trust in Jehovah, what a glorious prospect lies beyond that day! Sinful oppressors will be gone! In a new world, lovers of Jah Jehovah will be restored by his Son to sinless perfection! Do you not yearn for that time? Your trusting in Jehovah will bring you to that marvelous day. Yes, trust always in Jehovah, you people, for this means salvation!

18. What glorious prospect lies ahead for those who trust in Jehovah, and what is their determination?

### Questions in Review

- What does the victory song of Isaiah 26 encourage us to do?
- What "elevated town" will Jehovah abase, and how do we trample it down?
- What do we learn from Hezekiah's prayer in the face of Sennacherib's threat?
- How are the "killed ones" of Isaiah 26:21 avenged?
- What will be the outcome if we trust in Jah Jehovah?

# Were You Once Associated With Jehovah's Organization?

THE young man felt ashamed and deeply dejected. His clothes, tattered and torn, bore signs of once having been fashionable attire. Now they left no doubt that he had fallen upon hard times. As his mind drifted back to his distant homeland, he began to feel a deep revulsion for the debauched life he had been living and the way he had squandered the inheritance he had insisted on having prematurely. His empty stomach added to his misery, and he felt homesick. Why, even his father's servants back home were far better off than he was! Oh, how he would love to be in their shoes!

But what sort of reception could he expect from his father if he went back now? He could hardly expect to be warmly greeted or even allowed inside the house after the shameful way he had abused his father's kindness. Nevertheless, a deep feeling dominated his mind and heart: He must go home.

How little this young man understood his father's feelings for him! What a surprise awaited him as he drew near his old home! In fact, "while he was yet a long way off, his father caught sight of him and was moved with pity, and he ran and fell upon his neck and tenderly kissed him."—Luke 15:20.

Like the prodigal son, have you left your home? Have you drifted away from your Father, Jehovah, and his organization? Do you now also desire to 'come home'?

In most cases, those who have drifted away from Jehovah's organization have

not been exactly like the prodigal son. With many, it was simply a gradual, almost imperceptible, process of drifting away—like a small boat, adrift and slowly floating farther and farther from the land. Some have become so weighed down with financial difficulties or family problems, with sickness or even with "getting ahead" in the world, that spiritual matters have been crowded out. Others have allowed themselves to be stumbled by individuals associated with the Christian congregation or have left because they disagreed with a certain understanding that Jehovah's organization had on a Scriptural point. Still others have allowed themselves to become discouraged and have quit when this present system of things did not end at the time they expected.

If you are one who is no longer actively associated with Jehovah's organization, likely one or more of these reasons will fit your circumstances. But whatever the cause, is it not the time now to consider returning?—Matthew 18:12-14.

## Have You Been Stumbled?

Considering how far mankind has fallen from perfection, one can expect that personality clashes will occur from time to time. This has led to the stumbling of some. Others have been stumbled when an individual they deeply respected suddenly acted in some rash or unchristian way or became involved in wrongdoing.

Has this happened to you? Whatever made you stumble, it certainly was not

Jehovah who caused the stumbling. (Compare Galatians 5:7, 8.) So is there really any point in severing our relationship with him because of what someone else has done? Rather, should we not continue serving him faithfully, confident that Jehovah knows what is taking place and will deal with us lovingly?—Colossians 3: 23-25.

With the passing of time, some have found that what originally stumbled them does not seem nearly as important now or may not even exist anymore. Or in calm consideration of the matter, they may now even conclude that they were actually the ones in the wrong. This is often true when a person has disagreed and stumbled over some counsel or discipline given him. In retrospect, he may realize that such discipline was given in true love and for his good. (Hebrews 12:5-11) How appropriate, then, to act on the apostle Paul's counsel! He wrote: "Stiffen your drooping arms and shaking knees, and keep your steps from wavering. Then the disabled limb will not be put out of joint, but regain its former powers."—Hebrews 12:12, 13, *The New English Bible*.

#### Did You Disagree With a Teaching?

It may be that you left Jehovah's organization because you had a different understanding of some Scriptural point. Just as the Israelites rescued from Egypt quickly "forgot [God's] works" on their behalf and "did not wait for his counsel," you may hastily have concluded that since the organization did not espouse the viewpoint you considered correct, you would sever ties with it. (Psalm 106:13) Perhaps the point has since been clarified, either being changed or established by further Scriptural research under the direction of God's spirit. Would it not have been better just to have stayed with the organization, waiting on Jehovah?

It is good to remember that Jehovah has always worked through one organization only. In our day, "the faithful and discreet slave" is dispensing spiritual food "at the proper time." Note that this slave was to be 'found doing so when the Master arrived.' (Matthew 24:45-47) Really, who today realizes that the Master has already arrived? And who is busy with the work indicated? Only those associated with Jehovah's organization of Christian witnesses!

When others abandoned Jesus, the apostle Peter said: "Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life." Peter knew beyond all doubt that Jesus was the Messiah. So when many disciples found some of Jesus' words shocking, Peter realized that it would be unwise to leave the source of "sayings of everlasting life." In time any doubt or misunderstanding would be clarified. (John 6:51-68; compare Luke 24: 27, 32.) This is still the case today, as Jehovah progressively guides his servants in the way of truth.—Proverbs 4:18.

#### Return Now

"Do let us search out our ways and explore them, and do let us return clear to Jehovah," implored the prophet Jeremiah. (Lamentations 3:40) Yet, some may still hold back, perhaps fearing a poor reception by those in the congregation. But what was the response when the prodigal son returned home? "We just had to . . . rejoice," explained the father, "because this your brother was dead and came to life, and he was lost and was found." (Luke 15:32) A similar warm welcome awaits those who 'return to Jehovah' with a sincere desire to do his will.—Compare Luke 15:7.

But the Christian congregation has not just been sitting back and waiting to wel-



come such ones if and when they decide to 'come home.' In Jesus' illustration, the father ran out to meet his son when "he was yet a long way off." Similarly, Jehovah's Witnesses consider it a personal obligation to seek out those once associated and to help them back into Jehovah's organization.

But what if an individual became guilty of serious misconduct while separated from Jehovah's organization? Or what if someone had to be removed from association with God's people because of serious

wrongdoing but has since stopped engaging in unchristian conduct? The elders will know how to assist him in a kind and loving way so as to set matters straight with Jehovah. So anyone now desirous of returning and living in harmony with God's will should make this desire known to the elders. "Come, now, you people, and let us set matters straight between us," says Jehovah. "Though the sins of you people should prove to be as scarlet, they will be made white just like snow.'"—Isaiah 1:18.

How kind, warm, and loving our heavenly Father is! And how patient he is and interested in each of us personally! Surely, he does not want us to be destroyed with this wicked system of things. (2 Peter 3:9) It was Jehovah who urged his ancient people: "Return to me, and I will return to you." That same invitation stands today.—Malachi 3:7.

Time is running out, so do not delay. With Jehovah's people, enjoy again the 'abundant peace that belongs to those loving God's law.' "For them there is no stumbling block," said the psalmist. (Psalm 119:165) Deep in your heart, do you love Jehovah's law? If you are a dedicated servant of God, this is why you made a dedication to him. Nothing—yes, absolutely nothing—can be more important than restoring your relationship with Jehovah. Do not turn your back on him. Think about the matter carefully and prayerfully. If you have been missing the unity and warmth of Jehovah's people, it is not too late to return to Jehovah's organization. Do so without delay.

# *A Convention That Increased Our Trust in Jehovah*

OUR heavenly Father, Jehovah God, knows just what we need. And he puts it in the minds of his dedicated servants who are directing his work on the earth to satisfy that need. This can certainly be said of the "Trust in Jehovah" District Conventions, held around the earth from June 1987 onward. They truly served to fortify Christians against the skepticism, doubt, and mistrust so prevalent in the world.

The theme "Trust in Jehovah" was masterfully woven into the program. It was highlighted by statements that were strong and pointed, that were marked with candor and forthrightness. All of this reinforced the listeners' trust in Jehovah. They could go home with the theme indeli-

bly impressed upon their hearts and minds, determined that by their actions and their words they would proclaim to all that they fully trust in Jehovah.

## **"Trust in Jehovah, You People"**

Those words found at Isaiah 26:4 expressed the theme for the first day. Most fittingly, the program opened with the talk "Incline Your Ear to God's Sayings." The speaker showed that this expression, which occurs many times in God's Word, means to give full attention with both mind and heart to what is said, with the intention of applying what is heard. That means exercising self-control and concentrating on what is said, not letting the



mind wander. Only by thus inclining our ear will our trust in Jehovah be strengthened by what we hear and then we will be motivated to act on what is said. And should this not be our attitude whenever we hear God's Word expounded, as at our congregation meetings?

The convention chairman presented the next subject, "Those Trusting in Jehovah Are Happy to Be Here." He pointed out that the greater our trust in Jehovah, the greater our happiness. To trust in Jehovah means to rest absolutely and assuredly upon him. The greater our knowledge of Jehovah and our affection for him, the stronger will be our trust in him. The convention theme was no mere slogan. We manifest our trust in Jehovah in many ways, not the least of which is showing consideration for others. To the delight of all, at the conclusion of his remarks, the chairman presented the first release—a colorful, practical witnessing instrument. It was the tract *Why You Can Trust the Bible*.

After discussing the notable example of David when facing the giant Goliath, the next speaker featured "How Some Have Trusted in Jehovah" in modern times. For instance, there was a sister whose unbeliefing husband, with gun in hand, threatened to kill her if she kept going to meetings. Others have demonstrated their trust in Jehovah when told that their life depended on accepting a blood transfusion. Youths have given proof of their trust in Jehovah by resisting pressures to go in for sports or to opt for higher education after completing high school.

The Friday morning program concluded with the talk "A People Set Apart From the World." We show that we trust in Jehovah by keeping our conduct with the opposite sex above reproach, by letting Christian principles govern our recreation, and by avoiding all dress and grooming that would tend to blur the distinction between the sexes. By our thus being set apart from the world, time and again a powerful witness is given,



*Thought-provoking dramas highlighted the need to trust in Jehovah*



*F. W. Franz, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, addressing an attentive convention audience*

even resulting in some coming into the truth.

On Friday afternoon, the program began with the talk "Pioneering Speeds Up Spiritual Growth." And how true that is! Through Jehovah's Word, his holy spirit, and his organization, God provides what we need to progress to "a full-grown man," but pioneering puts us in a position to make better and more thorough use of all these spiritual provisions. (Ephesians 4:13) By means of interviews, pioneers told how the full-time ministry enabled them to cultivate more fully the fruitage of God's spirit, to express more love for people, to be more efficient in the ministry, and to trust Jehovah to a greater extent, thus fostering a closer relationship with him. All of this has speeded up their spiritual growth.

Next came the keynote speech, "A People Trusting Always in Jehovah." This stirring discourse showed that we are different from the world because we completely trust in Jehovah. Based on various

texts from the book of Isaiah, the speaker showed how we have seen these very encouraging prophecies fulfilled in Jehovah's Witnesses because we trust in God. With confidence, we look forward to the time in the near future when Jehovah will express his indignation toward all nations and then usher in Paradise.

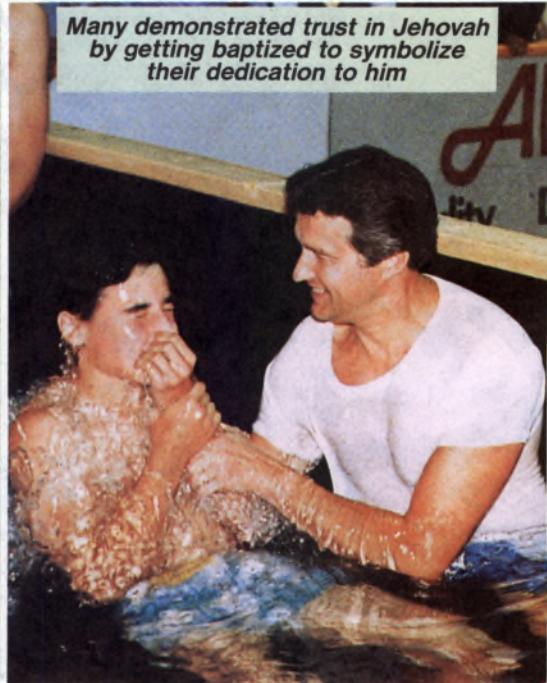
The conventioners were encouraged to "Spread the Good News at Every Opportunity." After the importance of doing that was stressed, a number of demonstrations showed how the new tract *Why You Can Trust the Bible* can be used effectively in both formal and informal witnessing. Surely, we always want to have these tracts with us, for spreading the good news at every opportunity should be characteristic of every witness of Jehovah and is a way to show that we trust in Him.

Very much appreciated was the talk "Parents—Reach Your Child's Heart From Infancy." For a child to grow up trusting in Jehovah, his training must begin in infancy and must receive priori-

### Various "Trust in Jehovah" District Conventions

	Attendance	Baptized
Austria	24,686	360
Brazil	442,731	7,626
British Isles	156,417	1,225
Colombia	82,321	1,852
Denmark	23,029	200
Federal Republic of Germany	159,361	1,455
Finland	26,144	284
France	138,683	2,705
Hong Kong	2,661	49
Ireland	4,326	61
Italy	221,227	5,496
Jamaica	18,540	184
Japan	232,904	3,416
Korea	82,296	2,013
Malaysia	1,154	15
Norway	12,703	218
Portugal	55,057	1,074
Puerto Rico	49,953	377
Spain	105,591	2,394
Sweden	30,099	312
Switzerland	19,459	261
Trinidad	10,649	132
United States	1,288,313	13,562
Venezuela	100,777	1,664
Zimbabwe	45,544	580

Many demonstrated trust in Jehovah by getting baptized to symbolize their dedication to him



ty. Only then will it be possible to negate all the bad influences of television, school, and the street. 'Let your child see in you what you want him to be,' parents were told. Yes, setting a fine example is the best way to reach a child's heart. All aspects of sacred service must come naturally and be happyfying if the atmosphere of the home is to be truly spiritual. We never want to begrudge the time and effort involved. Keep reaching the child's heart also by good communication. Exercise firmness with love, and appeal to reason when giving discipline. Give praise and reward when deserved, but never bribe your child.

Coming to grips with a serious problem among some young Witnesses was the talk "Youths—Guard Against Leading a Double Life." Why do some try to lead a double life? Because they want the approval of their parents and the congregation and yet fear the ridicule of their worldly peers. Or they feel that they are missing out on some pleasure if they do not smoke, take drugs, or share in illicit sex. But there simply is no escaping the fact that all such leading of a double life brings reproach upon Jehovah, grief to one's parents, and misery to oneself. Any one sowing to the flesh reaps corruption, whereas maintaining a good relationship with Jehovah, fully trusting in him, guards one from leading a double life.  
—Galatians 6:8.

Powerfully underscoring all these principles was the drama that immediately followed. Entitled *Loyal Submission to Jehovah and His Organization*, it contained much food for thought as it portrayed how an elder felt compelled to step down because his daughter was exposed as one leading a double life. The drama elicited many enthusiastic expressions of appreciation.

## "Trust in Jehovah and Do Good"

Based on Psalm 37:3, this was the theme of the convention's second day. After a consideration of the day's text, which included encouragement to do this daily, the program featured a three-part symposium entitled "Manifesting Our Trust in Jehovah." The first speaker showed the need to do this "By Diligently Studying God's Word." This we must do to avoid the trap of complacency and the snares of materialism, sexual immorality, and apostasy. The Society has provided an abundance of Bible study aids, such as the new *Watch Tower Publications Index 1930-1985*. Only by taking full advantage of these provisions can we have a good, trusting relationship with our heavenly Father and be effective as his witnesses.

The next speaker stressed the fact that trust in Jehovah is manifested "By Practicing the Things Learned." Yes, we want to be doers of the Word, always concerned with making progress. In what areas? Why, in our relationship with others, in our dress and grooming, in seeking first God's Kingdom, and in promoting peace and unity among our brothers! To avoid the sin of presumptuousness, we must be careful to keep our place in the family and the congregation. If we thus apply the things we learn, it will be evident to all that we trust in Jehovah.

The symposium concluded with a discussion of the subject "Manifesting Our Trust in Jehovah—By Exerting Ourselves in the Field." By doing this, we show our love for God and our neighbor and protect ourselves. We may be satisfied with lukewarm, token service, but is Jehovah? Does not his Son urge us to exert ourselves vigorously? (Luke 13:24) The increases we keep seeing in publishers, pioneers, and average hours spent in the field ministry

should stimulate us to try to do more personally. Is that not so? By such zealous activity, we will set a fine example, demonstrate our trust in Jehovah, and win his smile of approval.

Next came an appeal to our conscience in the talk "Practice Giving in Full Measure." How bountifully Jehovah provides for us spiritually and materially! We show our appreciation by imitating him both by witnessing and by contributing financially toward the preaching work. Could we cut down on costly pleasures so as to give in fuller measure?

The baptism talk, "Your Dedication and Baptism Reflect Trust in Jehovah," showed why we trust in God and not in men. Water baptism denotes dying to our former course of conduct and being raised to a way of life that harmonizes with the divine will. Thereafter, we must continue 'to exercise justice, love kindness, and be modest in walking with our God.' (Micah 6:8) Among those getting baptized were an 8-year-old girl who conducts two Bible studies with schoolmates, a 79-year-old man, and a 44-year-old quadriplegic.

Saturday afternoon's program began with the talk "Doing the 'Necessary Things' to Please God." Based on Acts 15:28, 29, it showed the need to acquaint our doctors with our stand on blood before a medical crisis occurs and gave fine suggestions as to how to do this.

A talk that prompted much favorable comment was "Responsible Childbearing in This Time of the End." It presented a balanced view, showing that while childbearing can bring many joys, it also brings many responsibilities and often results in heartaches, such as when children go wrong. Especially are mothers likely to suffer spiritually because of the burdens of childbearing.

Then came the talk "Elders—Guard Your Trust." This trust is to shepherd

God's flock—leading, feeding, and protecting it, in keeping with Isaiah 32:1, 2. Doing justice to family obligations while caring for congregational duties represents a real challenge. For elders to guard their trust also means avoiding the snares of materialism, excessive recreation, and illicit pleasures. Among those interviewed at the Dortmund district convention in the Federal Republic of Germany was an elder who has been guarding his trust for 60 years.

The talk "Be Obedient to Those Taking the Lead" logically came next. Love will help us to be submissive and obedient to congregation overseers and will keep us from becoming impatient because they are not perfect, for neither are we. (Hebrews 13:17) By showing respect for the elders in matters large and small, we help them to bear their burdens instead of adding to them.

Saturday's program came to a close with the three-part symposium "The Word of God Is Alive," based on Hebrews 4:12. The first speaker showed that it is alive because "It Exerts Transforming Power." Today, even as in Bible times, we have many examples showing how trust in God's Word has caused people to make great changes in their lives and has empowered them to preach fearlessly.

## In Our Next Issue

- Does the Bible Contradict Itself?
- The Universal Court Case That Involves You
- The Great World Powers of Bible History March to Their End!

Part two of this symposium on God's Word showed that "It Is Sharper Than Any Two-Edged Sword." It enables us to slash Babylonish false teachings to pieces. It also helps us to 'divide between soul and spirit' in that it enables us to distinguish between our actions and our real motives. By using the "sword" in this way, we will be more pleasing to Jehovah God and more at peace with others and ourselves.

The concluding part showed that God's Word is alive because "It Fortifies and Motivates Our Heart." In the Bible, the word "heart" is generally used figuratively and refers to the inner person manifested in our mental and emotional qualities. God's Word fortifies our heart by revealing his marvelous qualities through his dealings with mankind. God's unselfish love motivates us to imitate him. In his concluding remarks, the speaker reviewed the Watch Tower Society's record in publishing Bibles and thrilled the audience by announcing the release of a beautiful deluxe pocket edition of the *New World Translation*.

### **"Trust in Jehovah With All Your Heart"**

This theme for Sunday, taken from Proverbs 3:5, was considered by an elder who opened the program and discussed the day's text. Then came the soul-searching talk "Do You Take Sacred Things for Granted?" The world feels that it owes nothing to God, but as Jehovah's Witnesses, we know that to have his approval, we must imitate the faithful men of old by showing appreciation for sacred things. The speaker discussed 13 of these, among which are Jehovah's name, his Word, his holy spirit, his laws, his visible organization, our relationship with God, our meetings, and our privileges of service. If we truly appreciate these sacred things, we

will put them first in our lives, trust in Jehovah fully, and be rewarded by him.

Next came the hard-hitting talk "Detest Utterly the World's Disgraceful Course." Because of its forthrightness, it elicited remarks such as, "Just what we needed!" Since wickedness has become commonplace, Christians must guard against condoning immorality and violence. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Therefore, we should not watch or listen to such broadcasts on TV or the radio, nor should we read about them in periodicals. Indeed, we do not even want to be *thinking* about them. 'Genuine Christians who wish to maintain a good relationship with Jehovah simply cannot have anything to do with pornography,' no, not even a little!

Sunday morning's program concluded with the gripping Bible drama *Jehovah Delivers Those Calling Upon His Name*. It dealt with several events in the life of Joshua. Realistically, it portrayed how Jericho's residents must have viewed the marching of Israel's men of war around the city day after day. Also highlighted was Rahab's great faith, which resulted in deliverance for her and her household. In conclusion, all were asked: 'Do you have the solid faith and confidence of Joshua and his valiant associates? If so, we can hope to share in Jehovah's final victory over his enemies.'

The public feature of the "Trust in Jehovah" District Convention came with the talk entitled "In Our Fearful Times, Whom Can You Really Trust?" It made evident the fact that mankind desperately needs a source of trust! Clearly, it showed the folly of trusting in humans. Hence, God's Word counsels us to trust in Jehovah and gives us strong reasons for doing so. We should trust in him because of his qualities and his record in delivering those who have trusted in him, King Hezekiah being a striking example. Soon a similar deliverance will be

experienced by those whose course of action demonstrates trust in Jehovah.

"Continue 'to Live Peaceably'" was the theme of the talk that immediately followed. To live peaceably means to be actively promoting peace. It also means being at peace with ourselves because of holding a good conscience. By manifesting the fruits of God's spirit, especially love and self-control, we will be able to live peaceably with our own families and with the brothers and sisters in the congregation.

There is no question about the fact that this convention equipped all of us for "Facing the Future With Full Trust in Jehovah," the subject of the concluding talk. How well it summed up the program! The speaker stressed that daily we need to trust in Jehovah with all our heart, take note of him in all our ways, and let him

direct our paths. (Proverbs 3:5, 6) Conventioners greatly appreciated hearing about the 16 new public talks, *The Watchtower* cassettes, and a reprint of an article on blood that appeared in *Awake!* and that will be available for us to give to our doctors. Yes, and we were thrilled to learn about the release of another Bible drama on cassette, the reprinting of *Watchtower* bound volumes (1960-79), and the publication of three more tracts!

All present for the "Trust in Jehovah" District Convention were greatly upbuilt spiritually. They are now ready to face the future with full confidence in their heavenly Father. And all were fittingly encouraged by the concluding exhortation: "As we face the future, may we all unitedly prove by our way of life that we 'trust in Jehovah.'"

## Questions From Readers

### ■ Who were "the twelve" that Jesus appeared to, as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:5?

The appearance being mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:5 seems to be the one recorded in John 20:26-29, which involved Thomas. However, this refers to the apostles as a group and likely included Matthias.

In discussing the resurrection, Paul wrote of Jesus' appearances to humans after He was raised. The apostle said that Christ "appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that he appeared to upward of five hundred brothers." —1 Corinthians 15:5, 6.

From among those who followed him as disciples, Jesus selected 12 apostles. (Matthew 10: 2-5) Judas Iscariot was one of the 12, but he turned traitor, betrayed Jesus, and then hanged himself. (Matthew 26:20-25; 27:3-10) So

at the time of Christ's death and resurrection, there were only 11 faithful apostles of the original 12. Jesus appeared to various disciples between his resurrection and ascension to heaven. Thereafter the apostles recognized the need to replace Judas. With divine guidance, Matthias was selected, and "he was reckoned along with the eleven apostles." —Acts 1:6-26.

Some have thus wondered why Paul would write that Jesus appeared to "the twelve," since at that time Judas was dead and Matthias had not yet been selected. Being specific, there were then only "eleven apostles" that had originally been designated and sent forth by Jesus.—Luke 6: 13-16.

It is normal to speak of a group

collectively even if one member is absent. ("The board of directors decided . . ." "The body of elders met . . .") So the term "the twelve" may well have been used in reference to the whole group of apostles, even if one or two were absent on an occasion. (Compare Acts 6:1-6.) When Jesus first appeared to the disciples in a locked room, "Thomas, one of the twelve, . . . was not with them." Eight days later he was present and had any uncertainty settled. (John 20: 19-29) Though Matthias had not then been designated to replace Judas, he was a longtime disciple. (Acts 1:21, 22) Since he was closely associated with the original apostles and shortly thereafter was "reckoned along with" them, the retrospective comment about Jesus' appearance to "the twelve" likely included Matthias.

# Sacrificing of Young People —*Not From God*

OUTSIDE the walls of Jerusalem, there was in ancient times a place called Topheth. There, apostate Israelites, including Kings Ahaz and Manasseh, used to practice the terrible custom of child sacrifice. Finally, the faithful king Josiah stopped the practice by making Topheth a place unfit for religious ceremonies.—2 Kings 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:1-4; 33:1, 6.

Why was the place called Topheth? The origin of the word is disputed, but it is interesting to note what Jewish scholar David Kimhi (c. 1160-c. 1235) had to say about the place. Discussing 2 Kings 23:10, where Topheth is mentioned, he wrote: "The name of the place where they caused their sons to pass through [the fire] to Molech. The name of the place was Topheth, and they said it was called thus because at the time of worship they would dance and strike tambourines [Hebrew, *tup-pim*] so that the father would not hear his son's cries when they were causing him to pass through the fire, and that his heart might not become agitated over him and he take him from their hand. And this place was a valley that belonged to a man named Hinnom, and it was called 'Valley of

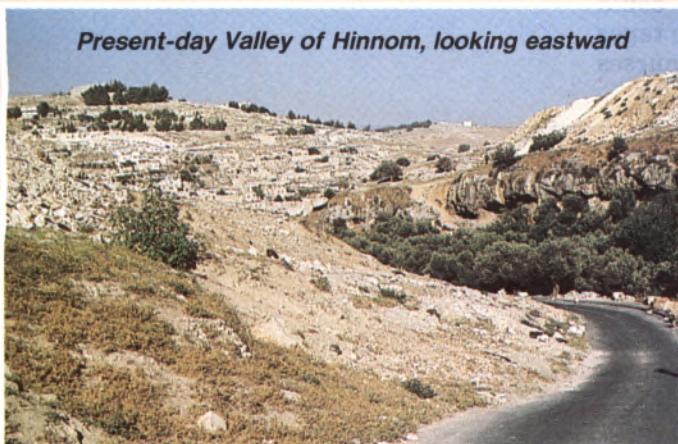


*Child sacrifice to the false god Molech, as depicted some 75 years ago in the "Photo-Drama of Creation"*

Hinnom' and 'Valley of the Son of Hinnom' . . . Josiah defiled that place, reducing it to an unclean place, to cast there carcasses and all uncleanness, that it might never again come up into the heart of a man to cause his son and his daughter to pass through in the fire to Molech."

In modern times, the god Molech is just a historical curiosity, and many doubtless find it hard to understand why people killed their children for him. Yet, adults today still seem ready to kill their young when it suits them. During this century, millions of youths have been sacrificed on the altar of war. Every year, untold millions of unborn babies are purposely killed in abortions, many of them because their conception was the result of casual sex or because their birth would interfere with the life-style of their parents. Thus, these children become sacrifices to the gods of sexual freedom and materialism.

Jehovah said that the burning of children to Molech was an abomination. (Jeremiah 7:31) Does he view any differently the wanton killing of young people in our generation?



*Present-day Valley of Hinnom, looking eastward*

# *Music That Heals*

A young mother from Iowa, U.S.A., explains: "I have to write to tell you just how much your [piano] tapes 'Sing Praises to Jehovah' mean to me and my family. Every day, I rock my three-year-old to sleep. But first we put in one of the tapes, and then I get out my songbook and sing along as she's going to sleep."

This mother goes on to describe the premature birth of her latest child and his ordeal in a respirator, where he had to have a tube down his throat. She relates: "I asked the nurses if we could bring a tape player and some music tapes for him. They said we could. The nurses

couldn't believe how the tapes helped him to relax. They made the comment that every time he would get fussy, all they would have to do was play his music for him. One nurse even said: 'I wish we had this kind of music for all the babies. It's so beautiful. All these babies hear is the beeping of their monitors.'"