

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

October 15, 1988

THE SIGN

PROOF THAT THE
NEW WORLD IS NEAR?



The Watchtower®

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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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The Sign Proof That the New World Is Near?

"Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in [various] places."

—Matthew 24:7, King James Version.

WHILE World War I raged, *The Watch Tower*, April 15, 1917, quoted these words and stated: "We see now a partial fulfillment of this prophetic statement, in that practically all the nations of earth are engaged in deadly conflict. The available food supply is everywhere decreasing and the cost of living increasing."

Now, 71 years later, this magazine is still drawing its readers' attention to this prophecy. Three ancient historians recorded this prophecy as part of "the sign" given by Jesus Christ.—Matthew 24:3, 7; Mark 13:4, 8; Luke 21:7, 10, 11.

Since 1914, hundreds of millions of lives have been snuffed out by wars, famines, pestilences, and other disasters. *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* (1987) lists 63 "Major historical earthquakes" spanning the past 1,700 years. Of this total, 27, or 43 percent, have struck since 1914. The book *Terra Non Firma*, by Professors Gere and Shah, has a list covering a longer period. Of the total "significant" earthquakes in that list, 54 percent have taken place since 1914.* Even granting that records from past centuries are incomplete, we cannot escape the conclusion that in our time man-

* *The World Book Encyclopedia* (1987) lists 37 "Major Earthquakes," from 526 C.E. forward. Of this list, 65 percent have occurred since 1914.

kind has been greatly affected by earthquakes.

Something even more horrifying struck men's hearts with the exploding of atom bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The nuclear powers now possess so many weapons of mass destruction that humanity is threatened with extinction. As the historian Luke went on to record in Jesus' prophecy: "There will be fearful sights and from heaven great signs . . . and on the earth anguish of nations, not knowing the way out . . . while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth."—Luke 21:11, 25, 26.

Although the superpowers may agree to reduce the numbers of some weapons in their arsenals, such agreements will not reduce man's fear of violent crime, economic collapse, and terrorism. "What worries people most nowadays," states an African newspaper, "is their own personal safety.... Crime has gone crazy . . . ; there is an all-pervading fear." Yes, and Jesus foretold that "the increasing of lawlessness" is yet another accurate detail of the sign.—Matthew 24:12.

"Good News"

You will be relieved to hear, though, that the tragic developments just mentioned are foretold to be accompanied by "good news [being] preached in all the inhabited earth." (Matthew 24:14) The "good news" is about God's Kingdom. Already, that superhuman world government has gathered millions of loyal subjects. It will soon intervene in human affairs and satisfy man's need for a righteous new world.—Luke 21:28-32; 2 Peter 3:13.

Many brush aside the "good news" in disbelief. Others say they believe it, but they do little about it. Some act on it for a time, then they begin to doubt. Were such negative reactions also foretold as part of the sign? More important, how can you personally benefit from this sign?

The Sign Are You Heeding It?

WE WANT people of every country to enjoy prosperity, welfare and happiness. The road to this lies through proceeding to a nuclear-free, non-violent world."—*Perestroika*, by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Justifiably, many doubt that man is really capable of producing such world conditions. Another leader, Jesus Christ, promised something grander—a paradise earth where even the death process will be reversed. (Matthew 5:5; Luke 23:43; John 5:28, 29) Of course, the means to accomplish this is divine intervention. In answer to the question of "when" such intervention would come, Jesus said: "The kingdom of God is not coming with striking observableness." At first, only keenly observant ones with a figurative eagle eye would realize it. (Luke 17:20, 37) Why so?

Why We Need the Sign

Since his ascension to heaven, Jesus Christ "dwells in unapproachable light, whom not one of men has seen or can see." (1 Timothy 6:16) Thus, literal human eyes will never see him again. As Jesus said on the last day of his earthly life: "A little longer and the world will behold me no more." (John 14:19) He can be seen only in a *figurative* way. —Ephesians 1:18; Revelation 1:7.

Yet, Jesus said that it would be possible for his disciples to discern when God's Kingdom would commence ruling.

How? By means of a sign. In answer to the question, "What will be the sign of your presence?" Jesus outlined visible proof of his future invisible rule.—Matthew 24:3.

Included in the sign was an illustration showing what kind of people would benefit from it. "Wherever the carcass is," said Jesus, "there the eagles will be gathered together." (Matthew 24:28) All who want to survive the end of the present system into God's new world must 'gather together' and enjoy spiritual food along with Christ's eaglelike "chosen ones."—Matthew 24:31, 45-47.

Guarding Against Impatience

No human can work out the date for the end of the present wicked system. "Concerning that day or the hour," Jesus said, "nobody knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but the Father." —Mark 13:32, 33.

Might it be, though, that the sign could occur over the span of many human generations? No. The sign is to occur during one particular generation. The same generation that witnessed the beginning of the sign will also witness its climax in "a tribulation such as has not occurred from the beginning of the creation." Three historians, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, recorded Jesus' assurance of this.—Mark 13:19, 30; Matthew 24:13, 21, 22, 34; Luke 21:28, 32.

There is, however, the danger of becoming impatient. Seventy-four years have passed since the outbreak of World War I in 1914. From a human viewpoint, this may seem a very long time. But some eagle-eyed Christians who saw World War I are still very much alive. Their generation has not passed away.

When he gave the sign, Jesus warned about the danger of becoming impatient. He spoke of individuals who would



Many are so absorbed in pleasures that they neglect the sign

say in their heart: "My master is delaying." Jesus showed that such feelings, if not checked, could lead to foolish action. (Matthew 24:48-51) Christ's apostles had more to say about this.

"Ridiculers"

According to the Bible writer Jude, Christ's apostles sounded the following warning: "In the last time there will be ridiculers, proceeding according to their own desires for ungodly things."—Jude 17, 18.

The desire for life in a clean new world can easily be replaced by "desires for ungodly things." This is especially dangerous today because of the world's methods of expression and communication. Never before in human history have violence, spiritism, and sexual immorality been paraded to such an extent. They are often the theme of radio and music

presentations, and they are seen in numerous TV programs, videos, advertisements, books, and magazines.

The sign points to the end of such ungodliness. Naturally, then, some people who have an appetite for ungodly things ridicule the sign. As foretold, they argue that "all things are continuing exactly as from creation's beginning." —2 Peter 3:3, 4.

'Love Cools Off'

Recently, a 75-year-old American author, Paul Bowles, was interviewed by *Newsweek* magazine. Answering the question, "What is your view of the world?" Bowles said: "The world has gone to pieces in a moral sense. No one is honest anymore the way they were 60 years ago. There was a concept of what is a gentleman; it was a valued attribute of our Western culture. Now no one [cares]. There is also an enormous emphasis on money."

This situation is just as the Bible predicted. Jesus foretold: "Because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off." (Matthew 24:12; 2 Timothy 3:1-5) As selfishness and greed increase, love for God decreases. More and more people show that they put their own desires ahead of God's laws by engaging in criminal acts, terrorism, dishonest business practices, sexual immorality, and drug abuse.

Some recognize the fulfillment of the sign but fail to act on it because of being so wrapped up in pleasing themselves. On the other hand, heeding the sign requires endurance in showing unselfish love for God and neighbor.—Matthew 24:13, 14.

"Anxieties of Life"

Jesus also warned that, besides selfish pleasures, legitimate physical needs



Heeding the sign involves gathering together to feed on God's Word

could so absorb some that they would neglect the sign. He urged: "Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come in upon all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth."—Luke 21:34, 35.

The Bible, of course, encourages happy family life. (Ephesians 5:24–6:4) Often this requires that a family head be involved in some sort of employment or business to make provisions for his wife and children. (1 Timothy 5:8) Yet, it would be shortsighted to allow one's life to revolve solely around family, business, and material things. Because of this danger, Jesus warned: "Just as it occurred in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of man: they were eating, they were drinking, men were marrying, women were being

given in marriage, until that day when Noah entered into the ark, and the flood arrived and destroyed them all. . . . The same way it will be on that day when the Son of man is to be revealed."—Luke 17:26-30; Matthew 24:36-39.

"Taken Along" or "Abandoned"?

The hour is late. Soon, God's Kingdom will intervene to set matters straight. Then every human will be affected in one of two ways. As Jesus explained: "Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken along and the other be abandoned; two women will be grinding at the hand mill: one will be taken along and the other be abandoned."—Matthew 24:40, 41.

When that crucial time arrives, what will your position be? Will you be abandoned to destruction, or will you be taken along for survival? To guide you in the right direction, consider again the illustration that Jesus gave: "Where the body is, there also the eagles will be gathered together."—Luke 17:34-37; Matthew 24:28.

Jesus was thus emphasizing the need for farsighted, united action. Those who are taken along for survival are ones who regularly gather together and benefit from the spiritual nourishment God provides. Millions have experienced that such spiritual feeding comes through close association with one of over 55,000 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses and through studying Bible-based publications such as the one you are reading.

Over three million of Jehovah's Witnesses show faith in the sign by sharing the "good news of the kingdom" with their neighbors. (Matthew 24:14) Are you responding positively to the good news? If so, you can take to heart the promise of survival into an earthly paradise.

The Sign

Eagles or Vultures?

"WHEREVER the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together." (Matthew 24:28) Instead of learning from this illustration, some find fault with it. They say that eagles are solitary hunters that feed on live prey, not carcasses. Thus, some Bibles use the word "vultures." But the Greek word in question, *a-e-tos'*, is correctly translated "eagle."

One species found in Israel is the tawny eagle. "Like many birds of prey," observe John Sinclair and John Mendelsohn, "the tawny eagle is not averse to carrion and is quite often among the first arrivals at a fresh kill." Another observer reported a gathering of 60 bateleurs and tawny eagles in Africa's Kalahari. He added: "The Tawny Eagle is dominant when they meet at carrion. In a number of cases two birds, presumably a pair, have been seen to share a kill."



Sea eagles are also common in lands of the Mediterranean. In past centuries, sea eagles and land eagles fed on the carcasses of horses slain in battle. "It is well known . . . that they follow armies for that purpose," states McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopaedia*.

Being swift and farsighted, eagles are sometimes the first birds to arrive at a fresh carcass. Jesus was familiar with the description in which Jehovah God asked Job this humbling question: "Is it at your order that an eagle flies upward and that it builds its nest high up, . . . upon the tooth of a crag and an inaccessible place? From there it has to search for food; far into the distance its eyes keep looking. . . . Where the slain are, there it is."—Job 39: 27-30.

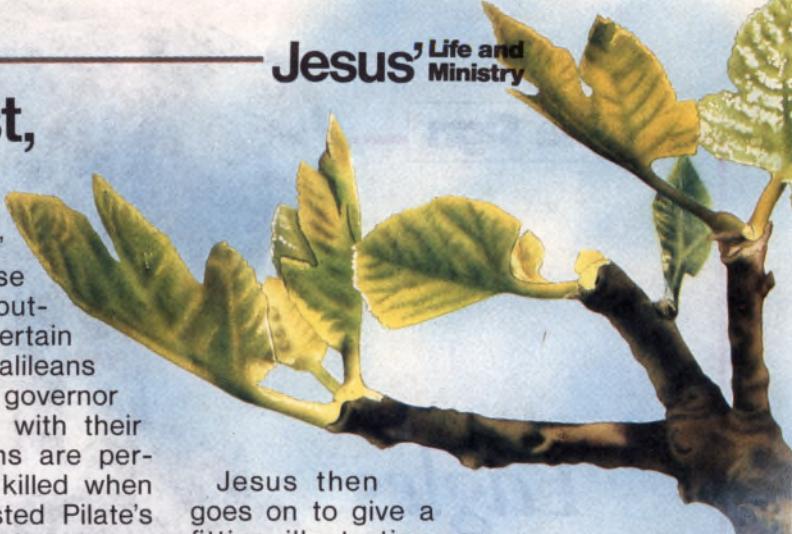
Thus, Jesus well illustrated that only those with a figurative eagle eye would benefit from the sign.

A Nation Lost, but Not All

SHORTLY after Jesus' discussion with those who had gathered outside a Pharisee's house, certain ones tell him "about the Galileans whose blood [the Roman governor Pontius] Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices." These Galileans are perhaps the ones who were killed when thousands of Jews protested Pilate's use of money from the temple treasury to build an aqueduct to bring water into Jerusalem. Those relating this matter to Jesus may be suggesting that the Galileans suffered the calamity because of their own wicked deeds.

Jesus, however, sets them straight, asking: "Do you imagine that these Galileans were proved worse sinners than all other Galileans because they have suffered these things? No, indeed," Jesus answers. Then he uses the incident to warn the Jews: "Unless you repent, you will all likewise be destroyed."

Continuing, Jesus recalls another local tragedy, perhaps also associated with the aqueduct construction. He asks: "Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, thereby killing them, do you imagine that they were proved greater debtors than all other men inhabiting Jerusalem?" No, it was not because of the badness of these persons that they happened to die, Jesus says. Rather, "time and unforeseen occurrence" are generally responsible for such tragedies. Jesus, however, once again uses the occasion to warn: "But, unless you repent, you will all be destroyed in the same way."



Jesus then goes on to give a fitting illustration, explaining: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it, but found none. Then he said to the vine-dresser, 'Here it is three years that I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, but have found none. Cut it down! Why really should it keep the ground useless?' In reply he said to him, 'Master, let it alone also this year, until I dig around it and put on manure; and if then it produces fruit in the future, well and good; but if not, you shall cut it down.'"

Jesus has spent more than three years trying to cultivate faith among the Jewish nation. But only a few hundred disciples can be counted as fruitage of his labors. Now, during this fourth year of his ministry, he is intensifying his efforts, symbolically digging and putting manure around the Jewish "fig tree" by zealously preaching and teaching in Judea and Perea. Yet to no avail! The nation refuses to repent and so is in line for destruction. Only a remnant of the nation respond.

Shortly afterward Jesus is teaching in a synagogue on a Sabbath. There he sees a woman who, because of a de-



mon afflicting her, has been bent double for 18 years. Compassionately, Jesus addresses her: "Woman, you are released from your weakness." At that he lays his hands on her, and instantly she straightens up and begins glorifying God.

The presiding officer of the synagogue, however, is angry. "There are six days on which work ought to be done," he protests. "On them, therefore, come and be cured, and not on the sabbath day." The officer thus acknowledges Jesus' power to heal but condemns the people for coming to be healed on the Sabbath!

"Hypocrites," Jesus answers, "does not each one of you on the sabbath untie his bull or his ass from the stall and lead it away to give it drink? Was it not due, then, for this woman who is a daughter of Abraham, and whom Satan held bound, look! eighteen years, to be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?"

Well, on hearing this, those opposing Jesus begin to feel shame. The crowd, however, rejoices at all the glorious things they see Jesus do. In response Jesus repeats two prophetic illustrations regarding the Kingdom of God, ones that he told from a boat on the Sea of Galilee about a year earlier. **Luke 13: 1-21; Ecclesiastes 9:11; Matthew 13: 31-33.**

- ♦ What tragedies are here mentioned, and what lesson does Jesus draw from them?
- ♦ What application can be made regarding the unfruitful fig tree, as well as the attempts to make it productive?
- ♦ How does the presiding officer acknowledge Jesus' healing ability, yet how does Jesus expose the man's hypocrisy?

"This is the day of all days"

"By inspiration I came to be in the Lord's day."—REVELATION 1:10.

THIS is the day of all days. Behold, the King reigns!" These dramatic words uttered by the second president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society back in 1922 still thrill us today. They continue to remind us that we are living in the most exciting time of all history, the time called in the Bible "the Lord's day." (Revelation 1:10) It is indeed "the day of all days," for it is the time when Jehovah, through Christ's Kingdom, will bring to fulfillment all His grand purposes and will sanctify His holy name before all creation.

This day began in 1914 when Jesus was installed as King of God's Kingdom. And it will continue right through to the end of the Thousand Year Reign, when Christ will 'hand over the kingdom to his God and Father.' (1 Corinthians 15:24) Faithful Christians have looked forward to the Lord's day for many centuries. Now, it is finally here! What has this "day of all days" meant for God's people and for the world in general?

1. What "day" are we living in, and why is this fact so thrilling?
- 2, 3. (a) What is the duration of the Lord's day? (b) Where can we find out about this day?



³ The Bible book that tells us most about the Lord's day is Revelation. Almost all the prophecies of this book are fulfilled during the Lord's day. But Revelation is only the climax of a series of prophetic books that tell us about that day. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, among others, also tell us about it. Often, what they say helps us to understand better the prophecies in Revelation. Let us see how the book of Ezekiel in particular sheds light on the fulfillment of Revelation during the Lord's day.

The Four Horsemen

⁴ For example, in the sixth chapter of Revelation, the apostle John describes a dramatic vision: "I saw, and, look! a white horse; and the one seated upon it had a bow; and a crown was given him, and he went forth conquering and to complete his

4. According to Revelation chapter 6, what happened at the beginning of the Lord's day?

conquest." (Revelation 6:2) Who is this victorious horseman? None other than Jesus Christ, installed as King of God's Kingdom and riding to conquer his enemies. (Psalm 45:3-6; 110:2) Jesus' triumphant ride began back in 1914, at the very beginning of the Lord's day. (Psalm 2:6) His very first conquest was the casting of Satan and his demons to the earth. The result for mankind? "Woe for the earth and for the sea."—Revelation 12:7-12.

⁵ There follow in the vision three grim figures: a fiery-colored horse symbolizing war, a black horse symbolizing famine, and a pale horse whose rider was named "Death." Of this fourth horse, we read: "I saw, and, look! a pale horse; and the one seated upon it had the name Death. And Hades was closely following him. And authority was given them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with a long sword and with food shortage and with deadly plague and by the wild beasts of the earth."—Revelation 6:3-8; Matthew 24:3, 7, 8; Luke 21:10, 11.

⁶ True to the prophecy, mankind has suffered terribly from war, famine, and disease since 1914. But the fourth horseman also kills by means of "the wild beasts of the earth." Has this been a notable feature since 1914? Consideration of a similar prophecy by Ezekiel helps to put this aspect of the prophecy into perspective.

⁷ Writing perhaps five years before the destruction of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E., Ezekiel prophesied a terrible punishment for the Jews because of their unfaithfulness.

5. What grim figures follow the Rider on the white horse, and what authority does each figure have?

6. What has been the effect on the earth of these three fearsome horses and riders?

7. (a) What prophecy did Ezekiel utter concerning Jerusalem? (b) How was this prophecy fulfilled?

ness. He wrote under inspiration: "So, too, it will be when there will be my four injurious acts of judgment—sword and famine and injurious wild beast and pestilence—that I shall actually send upon Jerusalem in order to cut off from it earthly man and domestic animal." (Ezekiel 14:21; 5:17) Was this fulfilled literally back then? Undoubtedly Jerusalem suffered from famine and warfare as its end drew near. And famine usually causes disease. (2 Chronicles 36:1-3, 6, 13, 17-21; Jeremiah 52:4-7; Lamentations 4:9, 10) Was there also a literal plague of wild beasts at that time? Likely there were cases of humans being dragged off or perhaps even killed by animals, since Jeremiah also foretold this.—Leviticus 26:22-33; Jeremiah 15:2, 3.

⁸ What about today? In the developed lands, wild animals are not the dangerous problem that they once were. In other countries, however, wild animals continue to claim victims, especially if we include snakes and crocodiles among "the wild beasts of the earth." Such tragic deaths are seldom reported in the international press, but they are notable. The book *Planet Earth—Flood* speaks of the many in India and Pakistan who "have died in agony from the bites of venomous snakes" while trying to escape from floods. *India Today* reported on one village in West Bengal where an estimated 60 women have lost their husbands because of tiger attacks. Such tragedies may become even more common in the future when human society breaks down and when famine increases.

⁹ But Ezekiel alluded to another kind of "animal" when he said: "There is a

8. What part have wild beasts played during the Lord's day so far?

9. What other kind of "animal" has caused havoc and suffering among mankind during this century?

conspiracy of her prophets in the midst of her, like the roaring lion, tearing prey. A soul they actually devour . . . Her princes in the midst of her are like wolves tearing prey." (Ezekiel 22:25, 27) So humans can act like animals too, and how mankind has suffered from such predators during our century! Many have died at the hands of animalistic criminals and terrorists. Yes, in more than one way death has claimed a rich harvest of victims from "the wild beasts of the earth."

¹⁰ The listing of war, famine, disease, and wild beasts in John's vision helps us to see that the agonies endured by Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. were to be paralleled on many occasions during our day. The Lord's day has thus already meant suffering for the world, largely because mankind's rulers have refused to submit to that first Horseman, the enthroned King, Jesus Christ. (Psalm 2:1-3) What, though, about God's people? What has the Lord's day meant for them?

Measuring the Temple

¹¹ At Revelation 11:1, the apostle John says: "A reed like a rod was given me as he said: 'Get up and measure the temple sanctuary of God and the altar and those worshiping in it.'" This visionary measuring of the temple was very meaningful for God's people. Which temple sanctuary did John measure? Not the literal Jewish temple where John had worshiped before he became a Christian. That temple was rejected by Jehovah, and it was destroyed in 70 C.E. (Matthew 23:37-24:2) Rather, it was Jehovah's great spiritual temple

10. What does John's listing of war, famine, disease, and wild beasts as causes of death help us to see?

11. At Revelation 11:1, what was John commanded to do, and this was with regard to which temple?

arrangement. In this figurative temple, anointed Christians serve as underpriests in the earthly courtyard.—Hebrews 9:11, 12, 24; 10:19-22; Revelation 5:10.

¹² That temple came into being in 29 C.E. when Jesus was anointed as high priest. (Hebrews 3:1; 10:5) It was to have 144,000 underpriests, and in the first century many of these were chosen, sealed, and then died faithful. (Revelation 7:4; 14:1) But when those first-century Christians died, they slept in the grave, not being immediately resurrected to heaven. (1 Thessalonians 4:15) Moreover, after the first century a great apostasy set in, and the priestly anointed Christians were surrounded by flourishing "weeds," apostates. (Matthew 13:24-30) Throughout the centuries since then, it might well have been asked: 'Will all the 144,000 underpriests ever be sealed?' 'Will those who have died faithful ever be resurrected to serve in the heavenly sanctuary?' The visionary measuring of the temple showed that the answer to each of these questions is yes. Why?

¹³ Because in Bible prophecy the measuring of something usually indicates that Jehovah's purpose for that thing is certain to be thoroughly worked out. (2 Kings 21:13; Jeremiah 31:39; Lamentations 2:8) Thus, John's visionary measuring of the temple sanctuary was a guarantee that during the Lord's day, all of Jehovah's purposes regarding the temple would be fulfilled. In harmony with this and according to all the evidence, those of the anointed who had already died faithful began to be resurrected to their promised place in the heavenly sanctuary starting in 1918.

12. When did that temple come into being, and what developments took place regarding it in the first century?

13. What did John's measuring of the temple sanctuary guarantee, and what happened early in the Lord's day?



John's measuring of the temple gave firm guarantees to the anointed in the Lord's day

(1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 6:9-11)
But what of the rest of the 144,000?

¹⁴ Even before the Lord's day began, anointed Christians who had come out of apostate Christendom began to gather into a separate organization. They had built a fine record of faithfulness in announcing the importance of the year 1914, but in that decisive year, as the first world war got under way, they began to suffer oppression, 'trampling.' This reached a climax in 1918 when the directors of the Watch Tower Society were imprisoned, and the organized preaching work almost ceased. At that time, they were virtually 'killed.' (Revelation 11:2-7) What was the meaning of the measuring of the temple sanctuary for these Christians?

¹⁵ In the year 593 B.C.E., 14 years after Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed, Ezekiel saw a visionary

14. What happened to anointed Christians before and during the first world war?

15. What did the measuring of a visionary temple mean for God's people of Ezekiel's day?

house of Jehovah. He was given an extensive tour of this temple and watched as each of its features was carefully measured. (Ezekiel, chapters 40-42) What did this mean? Jehovah himself explained: The measuring of the temple implied a test for Ezekiel's people. If they would humble themselves, repent of their errors, and measure up to Jehovah's laws, they would be told the measurements of the temple. This would evidently encourage them in the hope that one day

Jehovah's people would be freed from Babylon and once again worship Jehovah in his literal temple.—Ezekiel 43:10, 11.

¹⁶ Similarly, if those discouraged Christians back in 1918 would humble themselves and repent of any errors that they had committed, they would be freed to have Jehovah's blessing and play a full part in his temple arrangement. And this is what happened. According to Revelation 11:11, they 'stood up,' or figuratively were resurrected. A related resurrection vision in Ezekiel foreshadowed a restoration of the Jews to their own land. (Ezekiel 37: 1-14) This modern 'resurrection' turned out to be a restoration of God's people from their discouraged, almost inactive state, to a living, vibrant condition in which they could play a full part in Jehovah's service. Such a 'resurrection' occurred in 1919.

16. (a) Of what did John's measuring of the temple sanctuary assure God's people back in 1918? (b) How was this fulfilled?

The Little Scroll

¹⁷ At Revelation 10:1, John saw a "strong angel descending from heaven, arrayed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet were as fiery pillars." This somewhat resembles visions of Jehovah seen previously by Ezekiel and by John himself. (Ezekiel 8:2; Revelation 4:3) But John here saw an angel, not Jehovah. Hence, it must have been Jehovah's great angelic Son, Jesus Christ, who "is the image of the invisible God." (Colossians 1:15) Moreover, Revelation 10:2 depicts Jesus as standing in a position of great authority, with "his right foot upon the sea, but his left one upon the earth." So the angel represents Jesus during the Lord's day.—See Psalm 8:4-8; Hebrews 2:5-9.

¹⁸ Jesus, in this magnificent visionary form, has a little scroll in his hand, and John is instructed to take the scroll and eat it. (Revelation 10:8, 9) In this way, John has an experience very similar to that of Ezekiel, who was also commanded to eat a visionary scroll. In Ezekiel's case, Jehovah himself handed the scroll to the prophet, and Ezekiel saw that "there were written in it dirges and moaning and wailing." (Ezekiel 2:8-10) Ezekiel reports: "I began to eat it, and it came to be in my mouth like honey for sweetness." (Ezekiel 3:3) What did the eating of the scroll imply for Ezekiel?

¹⁹ Clearly, the scroll contained inspired

17. (a) Describe John's vision at Revelation 10:1. (b) Who was the angel that John saw, and during what day was the vision due to be fulfilled?

18. (a) What was John commanded to eat? (b) In a similar vision, what was Ezekiel commanded to eat, and with what effect?

19. (a) What was represented by Ezekiel's eating of the scroll? (b) Who were to receive the bitter messages Ezekiel was commissioned to preach?

prophetic information. When Ezekiel ate the scroll, he accepted the commission to declare this information to such an extent that it became a part of him. (Compare Jeremiah 15:16.) But the contents of the scroll were not sweet for others. The scroll was full of "dirges and moaning and wailing." Whom was this bitter message for? In the first place, Ezekiel was told: "Son of man, go, enter in among the house of Israel, and you must speak with my words to them." (Ezekiel 3:4) Later, Ezekiel's message widened out to include the pagan nations round about.—Ezekiel, chapters 25-32.

²⁰ In John's case, the results of his eating the scroll were similar. He reports: "I took the little scroll out of the hand of the angel and ate it up, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; but when I had eaten it up, my belly was made bitter." (Revelation 10:10) Eating the scroll was sweet for John too. It was thrilling to have Jehovah's word become a part of him. Yet the message had a bitter ring to it. Bitter for

20. What happened when John ate the little scroll, and what resulted from his doing so?

Can You Explain?

- What is the Lord's day?
- What destructive part do "the wild beasts of the earth" play during the Lord's day?
- What assurance did Jehovah provide by means of John's measuring of the temple sanctuary?
- What did John's eating of the little scroll mean for the anointed remnant in 1919?
- So far, what has the Lord's day meant for God's people and for the world in general?

whom? John was told: "You must prophesy again with regard to peoples and nations and tongues and many kings."—Revelation 10:11.

²¹ How has all of this been fulfilled during the Lord's day? According to the historical facts, back in 1919 faithful Christians embraced the privilege of serving Jehovah so thoroughly that it became a part of them, and this was sweet indeed. But their blessing and privilege proved bitter to others—especially to the clergy of Christendom. Why? Because these faithful anointed Christians courageously proclaimed *all* of Jehovah's message for mankind. Not only did they preach the "good news of the kingdom" but they also exposed the spiritually dead condition of

21. (a) What did anointed Christians do in 1919 that corresponded to John's eating of the little scroll, and with what effect? (b) What was the result for Christendom and the world in general?

Christendom and the world in general.—Matthew 24:14; Revelation 8:1-9:21; 16:1-21.

²² This faithful band of Christians was used by Jehovah to gather the final ones of the 144,000 for sealing, and they spearheaded the gathering of the great crowd, who have an earthly hope. (Revelation 7: 1-4, 9, 10) This great crowd plays an important part in Jehovah's purposes toward this earth, and its appearance has caused great joy both in heaven and on earth. (Revelation 7:11-17; Ezekiel 9:1-7) Hence, this "day of all days" has already meant suffering for Satan's world but rich blessings for Jehovah's people. Let us see, now, how this will continue to be true as the Lord's day continues.

22. (a) In what grand way have the anointed been used by Jehovah during the Lord's day so far? (b) What has the Lord's day meant for Satan's world and for God's people?

What will the Lord's day mean for you?

"Go subduing in the midst of your enemies."—PSALM 110:2.

BACK in 1914, Jesus was installed as King of God's Kingdom, and the Lord's day began. Immediately, the new King faced violent opposition from Satan the Devil and his agents here on earth. (Psalm 2:1-6) So these early years of the Lord's day have been a time of conflict in which Jesus has gone 'subduing in the midst of his enemies.'—Psalm 110:2.

² The new King's conquests have been

1-3. (a) Why has the beginning of the Lord's day been a time of conflict, and what have been some of Jesus' successes? (b) How will Jesus "complete his conquest"?

impressive. After 1914, Satan tried to "devour" the newborn Kingdom but, instead, was ignominiously cast out of heaven. (Revelation 12:1-12) He then 'waged war' with the remaining ones of the anointed, but he was unable to prevent their 'standing up' in 1919 or their accepting "the little scroll" from the hand of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 10:8-11; 11:11, 12; 12: 17) He was equally powerless to prevent the gathering of the final ones of the 144,000 and the assembling of the great crowd (out of all the nations), who render "sacred service day and night in



The fate of ancient Jerusalem shows what will soon happen to Babylon the Great

[Jehovah's] temple."—Revelation 7:1-3, 9-15.

³ Indeed, since 1914 Jesus has 'gone forth conquering.' Nevertheless, much remains to be done. Jesus has yet "to complete his conquest." He has yet to take action in removing all traces of Satan's world system of things. (Revelation 6:1, 2; 19:11-21) What will this momentous act mean for us as individuals?

Public Stripping of Babylon the Great

⁴ The destruction of Satan's world begins with the end of false religion. Revelation describes the whole world empire of false religion—including Christendom—as a prostitute, Babylon the Great, who has relations with the kings of the earth and makes mankind drunk with her fornication. She herself is also drunk—revoltingly—from drinking blood, the blood of God's servants. (Revelation 17:1-6) Revelation also describes the end of this disgusting old harlot, and we can better understand what this will mean if we consider what happened to another religious harlot that existed back in the seventh century before our Common Era.

⁵ That harlot was the city of Jerusalem.

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4. How is false religion described in Revelation?
5, 6. Why was unfaithful Jerusalem called a prostitute, and what judgment did this bring on her from the hand of Jehovah?

She was supposed to be the center of Jehovah's worship on earth, but God said to her: "By your blood that you have shed you have become guilty." (Ezekiel 22:4) She was also supposed to be spiritually pure, but she had prostituted herself by consorting with the nations. "O how I am filled up with rage against you," Jehovah said to her, "by your doing all these things, the work of a woman, a domineering prostitute!"—Ezekiel 16:30; 23:1-21; James 4:4.

⁶ Consider, then, Jehovah's judgment on this harlot: "Here I am collecting together all those [the nations] passionately loving you toward whom you were pleasurable and all those whom you loved . . . , and they must strip you of your garments and take your beautiful articles and leave you behind naked and nude. And they must burn your houses with fire." (Ezekiel 16:37, 39, 41; 23:25-30) History records what happened. The Babylonians came in 607 B.C.E. and stripped Jerusalem bare. Her people and her wealth were carried off to Babylon. The city was destroyed, the temple was burned, and the land was left desolate.—2 Chronicles 36:17-21.

⁷ Something similar will happen to Babylon the Great. Revelation warns: "These [modern "kings," or rulers with whom

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7. What will be the end of Babylon the Great?

Babylon the Great has committed spiritual fornication] will hate the harlot and will make her devastated and naked, and will eat up her fleshy parts and will completely burn her with fire." (Revelation 17:2, 16) From the example of ancient Jerusalem, we know what this will mean. False religion will be destroyed by national governments who formerly 'loved' her. Her wealth will be ripped away, and she will be burned, completely destroyed. A fitting end to a disgusting organization!

The Heavens Darkened

⁸ With the destruction of Babylon the Great, we will have entered the "great tribulation" prophesied by Jesus. (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 7:14) Speaking of that time, Revelation says: "A great earthquake occurred; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the entire moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell to the earth." (Revelation 6: 12, 13) This great earthquake is the "great quaking" in "the soil of Israel" that Ezekiel prophesied. (Ezekiel 38:18, 19; Joel 3: 14-16) It is the final destruction of this wicked system of things. Will anything happen to the literal sun, moon, and stars at that time?

⁹ Ezekiel, warning of the coming fall of Israel's large southern neighbor, Egypt, said: "'And when you [Pharaoh] get extinguished I will cover the heavens and darken their stars. As for the sun, with clouds I shall cover it, and the moon itself will not let its light shine. All the luminaries of light in the heavens—I shall darken them on your account, and I will put darkness upon your land,' is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah."—Ezekiel 32:7, 8.

8. What kind of time will the great tribulation be for mankind?

9, 10. What did Ezekiel prophesy in the case of Egypt, and how was this fulfilled?

¹⁰ When Pharaoh and his armies fell, the literal heavens did not darken. But Egypt's future became very dark. As Bible scholar C. F. Keil notes, "the darkness consequent [upon Pharaoh's fall] is a figurative representation of utterly hopeless circumstances." Forever finished as an independent world power, Egypt was dominated by one world power after another! Today, most of the territory of the ancient Pharaonic world power is ruled by an Arab nation.

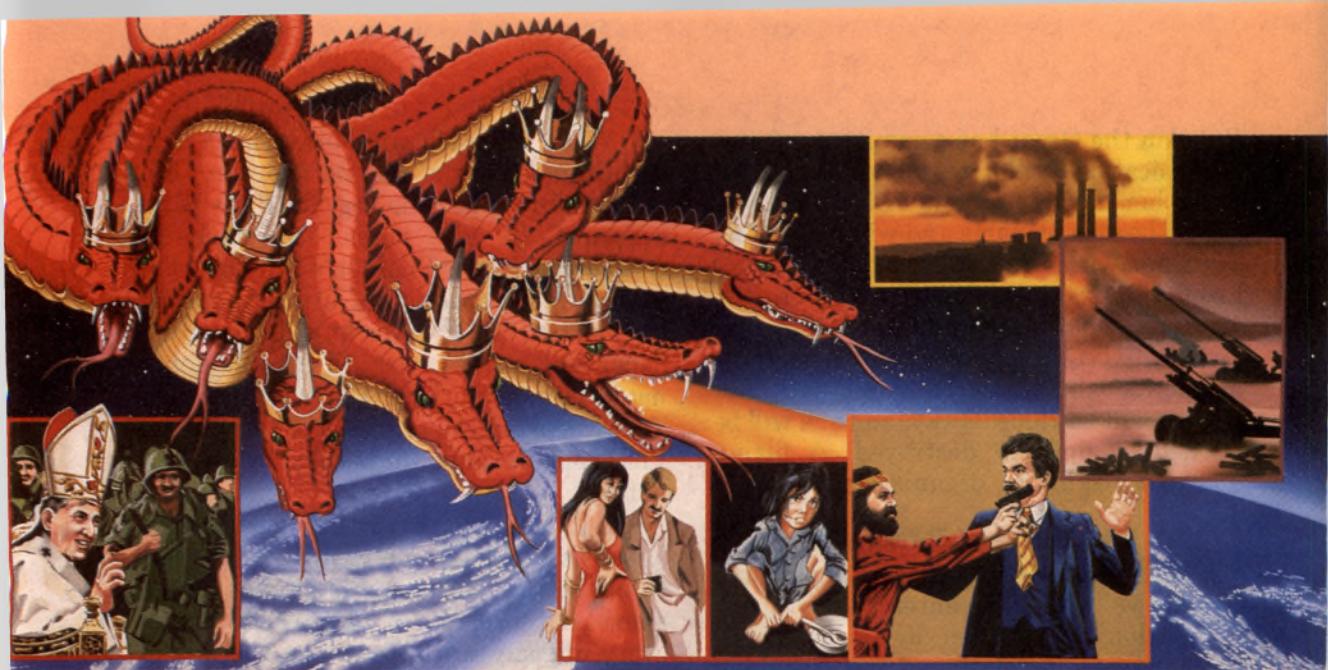
¹¹ But Keil saw a further meaning in Ezekiel's prophecy. He writes: "The overthrow of this world-power [Egypt] is an omen and prelude of the overthrow of every ungodly world-power on the day of the last judgment." This is, in substance, true. As Revelation shows, at the great tribulation ungodly mankind's prospects will be as black as were those of Egypt. It will be as if the sun gave no light by day and the night sky were devoid of any warm light from the moon and without any friendly, twinkling stars. Those who refuse to honor Jehovah's King will perish without even an honorable burial as the Rider on the white horse completes his conquest. (Revelation 19:11, 17-21; Ezekiel 39:4, 17-19) No wonder ungodly men will cry out "to the mountains and to the rock-masses: 'Fall over us and hide us from the face of the One seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, because the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'"—Revelation 6:16, 17; Matthew 24:30.

Ongoing War!

¹² What, though, of Christians in these

11. (a) What is prefigured by what happened to Egypt? (b) How will the future be absolutely black for Satan's world at the great tribulation?

12. How has Satan expressed his hatred of Jesus Christ during the Lord's day?



times? Well, they have been greatly affected by the ceaseless warfare between Satan and the Rider on the white horse. Since Satan has been unable to get at Jesus personally, he has unleashed the full force of his fury on the remaining ones of the anointed and—more recently—on the great crowd of other sheep that has gathered around them. As Jesus warned, these have been “objects of hatred by all the nations on account of [his] name.” (Matthew 24:9) Satan has used every weapon at his disposal, including mobbing, imprisonment, torture, and murder, to fight against them.—2 Timothy 3:12.

¹³ Satan has also skillfully used guile. (Ephesians 6:11) Using “the deceptive power of riches,” he has tempted some to slow down or even to cease their sacred service. (Matthew 13:22; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10) Others he has lured into uncleanness and immorality. (1 Corinthians 5:1, 2) Many are under heavy pressure because of the “anxieties of life,” and Satan takes advantage of this to try to ‘weigh

13. How has Satan used guile in his warfare against God’s people?

them down.’ (Luke 21:34) In other cases, he has used personality conflicts or rebellious tendencies to distract from “the more important things.”—Philippians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 1:11, 12; James 4:1-3.

¹⁴ Hence, Christians have needed to cultivate endurance during the Lord’s day. Some have failed, and each failure has been a small victory for Satan. (1 Peter 5:8) But most have heeded Jesus’ promise: “He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved.” (Matthew 24:13) With help from Jehovah, they have conquered and brought joy to his heart.—Proverbs 27:11; 1 John 2:13, 14.

¹⁵ Surely, none of us want to give Satan the satisfaction of seeing us quit! Hence, let us follow Paul’s counsel and arm ourselves with truth, righteousness, and faith—preaching the good news with zeal and studying to keep our faith strong. Let us also pray incessantly and stay alert. In that way, we will “be open to no accusation in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 1:8; Ephesians 6:10-18;

14, 15. How can we conquer in our struggle against Satan?

1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Peter 4:7) Rather, the Lord's day will be a source of rich blessings for us.

Marvelous Privileges of Service

¹⁶ At Revelation 10:3, 4, John says that he heard "the seven thunders" utter their own voices. He wanted to write down what he had heard, but he reports: "I heard a voice out of heaven say: 'Seal up the things the seven thunders spoke, and do not write them down.'" Evidently, it was not yet time for such information to be released. Instead, John was told to take the little scroll and eat it. The seven thunders appear to represent a complete expression of Jehovah's purposes. (Psalm 29:3; John 12:28, 29; Revelation 4:5) Back in 1919, when anointed Christians figuratively ate the little scroll, it was not time for them to have a complete understanding of Jehovah's purposes. (Compare Daniel 12:8, 9.) But they fearlessly forged ahead with what understanding they had and proved themselves worthy of further enlightenment.

¹⁷ Then, over the years, they were given a progressively clearer understanding of Jehovah's will. For example, they came to realize that the sheep of Jesus' parable were, even before Armageddon, being separated from the goats. (Matthew 25: 31-46) They saw that the birth of the Kingdom in 1914 was in fulfillment of Revelation chapter 12. They came to a deeper appreciation of the importance of Jehovah's name, and they learned who the great crowd of Revelation chapter 7 really are. What confidence these progressive

16. Why was John told not to write down what the seven thunders said, and what did this mean for anointed Christians in 1919?

17. What are some of the new insights that Jehovah has granted to his people in the years since 1919?

revelations gave to God's people!—Proverbs 4:18; 2 Peter 1:19.

¹⁸ At the same time, Jehovah entrusted his earthly servants with outstanding privileges of service. In a lofty vision, John saw angels proclaiming everlasting good news for mankind, proclaiming the fall of Babylon the Great, and warning against receiving the mark of the beast. (Revelation 14:6-10) While angels undoubtedly oversaw these divine service privileges, it was humans, Jehovah's Witnesses on earth, who actually spoke these messages to mankind. John also saw Jesus reaping "the harvest of the earth." (Revelation 14:14-16) But it has been through the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work of Jesus' subjects on earth that he has reaped this harvest. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) What a privilege it is to share with the angels and with Jesus Christ himself in service privileges of such vital importance! In so doing, we feel ourselves truly in harmony with Jehovah's great, invisible heavenly organization of faithful spirit creatures.

Divine Protection

¹⁹ As the end of his world approaches, Satan will put more and more pressure upon Christians. The climax of his hostility is described in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39, where he is prophetically called Gog of Magog. According to this inspired prophecy, Satan will make an all-out attack to try to destroy God's people once and for all. Will he succeed? Revelation answers: "The ten horns [modern-day "kings," or rulers] . . . will battle with the Lamb, but, because he is Lord of lords and King of

18. What outstanding privileges of service have Jehovah's people shared in during the Lord's day, and what awareness does this build in our hearts?

19. (a) What will be the climax of Satan's hostility toward God's people? (b) Who will conquer in the final, climactic conflict?

kings, the Lamb will conquer them. Also, those called and chosen and faithful with him will do so." (Revelation 17:12, 14) Faithful Christians will be certain to conquer if they remain faithful to their great, conquering King. Gog's forces will be utterly destroyed.—Ezekiel 39:3, 4, 17-19; Revelation 19:17-21.

²⁰ Thus, the Lord's day means salvation for God's people. Those of the anointed still alive as humans at the great tribulation will have their heavenly position guaranteed, and they will be unwaveringly determined to finish their life's course in faithfulness. (Revelation 7:1-3; 2 Timothy 4:6-8) The great crowd will also survive, and Jesus "will guide them to fountains of waters of life. And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes." (Revelation 7:14, 17) What a fine reward for faithful endurance!

²¹ Now the Lord's day enters into a wonderful phase: the Thousand Year Reign of Christ Jesus. (Revelation 20:6, 11-15) The river of water of life, prophesied both in Revelation and in Ezekiel, will flow down from Jehovah's throne to mankind, and those who drink of it will gradually be raised to human perfection. (Ezekiel 47:1-12; Revelation 22:1, 2) Hades will be emptied, and billions of those who have died will also have the opportunity to drink of this river.—John 5:28, 29.

²² At the end of the thousand years, mankind will have been raised to perfection. What an appropriate time for Satan to make his final appearance on the earthly scene! Once again he will try to deceive mankind, and some will follow him, even then. These are significantly called "Gog

20. What blessings will the Lord's day bring to faithful Christians at the great tribulation?
21. What will happen on earth during the Lord's day after the great tribulation?
22. What momentous events await mankind at the end of the Thousand Year Reign of Christ?

and Magog" since they will manifest the same evil spirit as that shown by 'Gog's crowd' in Ezekiel's prophecy. But their rebellious spirit will be wiped out for all eternity when they, along with Satan himself and his demons, are cast into the symbolic lake of fire. (Revelation 20:7-10; Ezekiel 39:11) A truly blessed future awaits those who remain faithful through that final test, and then the perfected human race will become one with Jehovah's righteous universal organization. Jehovah God himself will be "all things to everyone"!—1 Corinthians 15:24, 28; Revelation 20:5.

²³ What unimaginable blessings, then, await us if we endure! Remember, the Lord's day is now well under way. Wonderful things have already started to happen. Fitting, then, are Paul's words: "Let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out." (Galatians 6:9) Let us indeed "not give up in doing what is fine" in this the Lord's day. If we endure, this day will bring eternal benefits to each one of us.

23. In view of the time we are living in, what counsel of Paul is it most appropriate for each one of us to heed?

Can You Explain?

- What is the first stage of the destruction of Satan's world?
- How will Jesus "complete his conquest" of his enemies?
- How has Satan fought against Jehovah's Witnesses during the Lord's day?
- What remarkable blessings have God's people enjoyed since 1919?
- In view of where we are in the stream of time, what are you personally determined to do?

Insight on the News

Not Outdated

Many people have long held the view that the principles of good living outlined in the Bible are outdated and unworkable. However, recent studies have caused some medical authorities to rethink the value of the Bible's advice on doing good to others.

According to *American Health*, two doctors claim that "doing good may be good for your heart, your immune system—and your overall vitality." In Michigan another medical team conducted a survey spanning a ten-year period to determine to what extent social relationships affected health. The surprising find was that volunteer work in the community dramatically increased life expectancy and also vitality. The survey revealed that men were particularly affected. Those who did no volunteer work were said to be two and a half times more likely to die during the survey period than men who did some kind of volunteer work at least once a week.

A doctor in California reports that his arranging for two patients who disliked each other to do each other's laundry had the effect of reducing their cholesterol levels and chest pains.

Centuries ago the apostle Paul told Timothy to "give orders to those who are rich in the present system of things not to be high-minded, and to rest their hope, not on uncertain riches," but "to work at good, to be rich in fine works, to be liberal, ready to share." He also reminded the Hebrew Christians not to forget "the doing of good and the sharing of things with others." The reason? "Glory and honor and peace for everyone who works what is good." True Christians

have long known that heeding this up-to-date counsel brings benefits both physically and spiritually.—1 Timothy 6:17, 18; Hebrews 13:16; Romans 2:10.

A "Heavier Judgment"

Members of the General Synod of the Anglican Church recently found themselves in an awkward predicament. They had spoken out unanimously in favor of "traditional teaching on chastity and fidelity in personal relationships." However, when parish priest Tony Higton presented a motion asking the synod to declare that clergy are to be "exemplary in all spheres of morality, including sexual morality, as a condition of being appointed to or remaining in office," it was rejected. The reason? The *Ecumenical Press Service* reports that the synod members found the proposal "a bit too strong," adding that "Michael Baughen, bishop of Chester, suggested it would require the immediate resignation of all the church's bishops and other clergy."

Instead, Higton's motion was modified to call on all Christians, "particularly . . . Christian leaders," to be examples "in all spheres of morality, including sexual morality." The *Press Service* also noted that the synod defeated a call for "appropriate discipline" among the clergy in cases of sexual immorality.

While such disciplinary measures may be "too strong" for many of today's clergymen, God's Word is clear: "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves." (1 Corinthians 5:13) God directs that firm action be taken against all who unrepentantly practice what is bad to protect the moral and spiritual

cleanliness of the Christian congregation. Indeed, discipline is even more appropriate for Christian leaders, for the disciple James wrote: "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment."

—James 3:1.

Glorifying God

"The quality of an athlete's performance can reveal the quality of his love for God." Is this claim of Wes Neal, president of IAP (Institute for Athletic Perfection), as reported in *Christianity Today*, true? IAP, an agency used by evangelicals to "sanctify competitive sport," has promoted the idea that athletes on the playing field should emulate the same intensity that Jesus showed toward "accomplishing his Father's purpose." Such reasoning has become a popular doctrine of the evangelicals' "locker-room religion," notes *Christianity Today*. In fact, the article cites the example of one professional football player who "painted crosses on his shoes and wristbands as a reminder that he was playing to glorify Christ."

However, can it be said that participation in a highly competitive or violent sport is glorifying God? Hardly! As *Psychology Today* notes: "The very nature of competition requires that self-interest be temporarily adopted while the athlete strives to win." Yet the Bible says that Christians should be "keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just [their] own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others." (Philippians 2:3, 4) True Christians glorify God by doing his will, not their own. —Compare Isaiah 58:13, 14.

The Caymans

The Islands Time Forgot



YOU can swim in the calm, blue waters. You can dive to explore the many wrecks on the ocean floor. Or you can pay a visit to a turtle farm. Where? In the Cayman Islands—Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac, and Little Cayman.

'But where on earth are the Cayman Islands?' you might ask. That is an understandable question because they are so small that they are seldom shown on world maps. When they do appear, they may merely be shown as three tiny dots in the Western Caribbean Sea, 150 miles south of Cuba, or some 500 miles south of Miami, Florida.

Discovered in 1503 by Christopher Columbus on his last voyage through the West Indies, the islands—Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, since Columbus never saw Grand Cayman—were called *Las Tortugas* (The Turtles). That was because of the large number of turtles that was seen on and around the islands. In 1670, by the Treaty of Madrid, Spain ceded the islands to Britain, and they have remained a British colony ever since.

Turtles, Pirates, and High Tech

In the days of sailing ships, these islands were a favorite port of call of the great ships plying the Caribbean waters. The abundant green sea turtles became a convenient source of fresh meat for the hungry sailors. The turtles were eaten fresh, or they were carried aboard dried or salted. They became a major source of protein during long voyages.

But the islands were noted for something else. The flat terrain and safe harbors attracted other men of the

high seas. Notorious privateers and pirates, such as Sir Henry Morgan and Edward Teach, also known as Blackbeard, used these islands as hideouts or bases of operation for their forays against commercial vessels. This colorful bit of history is commemorated by an annual festival called Pirates' Week, considered locally to be a highlight of the year.

As the turtle population dwindled and steamships replaced sailing ships, fewer and fewer ships called. And since few islanders had radios, for all practical purposes the Cayman Islands were cut off and forgotten by the rest of the world. They earned for themselves the title "The Islands Time Forgot."

By the 1960's, however, the picture began to change. Local banking and taxation laws, coupled with the advent of high-tech communi-



cations systems, turned this once forgotten territory into one of the best known international banking centers. The islands counted their 500th bank opening in June 1987. The upturn also spurred the tourist business. The local tourist board was elated when a total of 8,244 visitors came in 1966. That figure had jumped to 430,000 in 1986, making tourism second in importance only to the financial industry. There is, however, another group of people who are keenly interested in these islands.

Visitors of Another Kind

Jehovah's Witnesses, who take seriously Jesus' words that the good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all nations, did not overlook the Cayman Islands. (Matthew 24:14) As early as 1929, Patrick Davidson, who was overseeing the preaching work in Jamaica, paid a visit to Grand Cayman. In spite of opposition, he managed to sow the seeds of Kingdom truth.

Davidson made a second visit in 1937, but it was not until 1950 that a thorough coverage of Grand Cayman was undertaken by Aleck Bangle and a fellow missionary. Hundreds of pieces of Bible literature were distributed in a short time. The missionaries reported that they found the people friendly, easy to talk to, and eager to hear the good news.

Caymanians Hear the Good News

Steadily and patiently, the missionaries and other full-time ministers continued their work. By 1959 there was a small group of 12 Kingdom publishers, and a

congregation was organized. One of the first local residents to accept Bible truth was Wilbert Sterling. He can well remember the days when the small band of Witnesses had to cover their territory on foot. Although now blind and in his 80's, Brother Sterling still serves as an elder in the Georgetown Congregation.

The diligent efforts of those early Kingdom proclaimers have been blessed by Jehovah. There is now an average of 60 Kingdom publishers amid a population of about 17,000. Many of the islanders have come to appreciate that the Witnesses are different because their worship is Bible based.

For example, a woman working in a restaurant saw a Witness preaching from house to house. She approached him and asked what she had to do to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses. She was told that she would have to take in accurate knowledge of Jehovah God and his Son, Jesus Christ, and then put it into practice. (John 17:3) Upon hearing that, she accepted a home Bible study. Today, she is serving Jehovah as one of his witnesses.

Many of those who have accepted the truth are from other countries. They have made Cayman their home or are temporary residents on work contracts. Thus, one sister expressed the desire to see more native Caymanians in the congregation. She prayed to Jehovah to help her find a native who wanted to study the Bible. Not long after that, she contacted a young woman who already had the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, and the sister started a Bible study with her. Within a few months, the woman began attending meetings, abandoned her former religion, and started to share what she was learning with others. Within a year she became a dedicated, baptized witness of Jehovah.

The preaching work received a further

boost in 1982, when a missionary couple were assigned to Grand Cayman. They conducted many home Bible studies and laid a fine foundation for further expansion.

Opposition Defeated on Cayman Brac

The island of Cayman Brac is about 90 miles northeast of Grand Cayman. From time to time, missionaries and other full-time workers from Grand Cayman stopped over to bring the good news to its 1,700 inhabitants. But exciting things began to happen there in 1986.

A couple working there on contract started to study and progressed to the point of dedication and baptism. Then, two other Witnesses moved in from other lands. The increased activity soon brought the wrath of opposers, who tried to get the immigration authorities to cancel the work permits of the newly baptized couple. Their efforts were thwarted, however, when the chief immigration officer in Georgetown, Grand Cayman, took the position that if the religious opposers were upset by the work of the Witnesses, they should also go from house to house to counter it. No open hostility has been felt since.

Remembered by Jehovah

The people of the Cayman Islands have certainly not been forgotten by Jehovah, the Grand Creator. Rather, he is making it possible for the good news to be preached in these small islands, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah: "Sing to Jehovah a new song, his praise from the extremity of the earth, you men that are going down to the sea and to that which fills it, you islands and you inhabiting them."—Isaiah 42:10.

The Cayman Islands can rejoice that from Jehovah's standpoint, they are not "The Islands Time Forgot."

Mental Distress

When It Afflicts a Christian

MENTAL-HEALTH experts say that perhaps 1 in 5 individuals in the United States suffers some sort of recognizable mental disorder. The World Health Organization adds that there may be as many as 40 million untreated cases of mental illness in developing lands. Mental problems have even been discovered among some inhabitants of the paradisaic Pacific isles.

It should therefore not surprise us that a number of Christians today experience mental or emotional difficulties ranging from simple anxiety and mild depression to serious illnesses such as major depression, bipolar disorders (manic-depression), phobias, and schizophrenia. Some had such problems before becoming Witnesses, while others have begun suffering distress in their older years.



Why Christians Are Not Immune

One Christian woman with over 20 years of dedicated service reports being tormented by forceful and unrelenting voices. "I'll be thinking on any other subject," says she, "and up comes the voice saying, 'kill yourself.' . . . Over and over you hear these voices until you can't take it anymore." How is it possible for a faithful Christian to suffer this way? Does not 2 Timothy 1:7 say: "God gave us not a spirit of cowardice, but that of power and of love and of soundness of mind"?

Yes, but soundness of mind generally refers less to psychological well-being than to a Christian's ability to exercise Bible-based judgment. Unlike a person of the world who is "in darkness mentally," or "corrupted in mind," a Christian has 'made his mind over' by studying God's Word. (Ephesians 4:17, 18; 2 Timothy 3:8; Romans 12:2) This unquestionably does much to promote a Christian's emotional and mental balance, yet it does not make him immune to mental health problems. Some faithful servants of God in Bible times, such as Epaphroditus, suffered forms of mental distress.—Philippians 2:25, 26; Luke 2:48.

"In Adam all are dying," the apostle Paul reminds us. (1 Corinthians 15:22) Many of us have obvious physical ailments. Others suffer from mental or emotional sickness.

Causes of Mental Distress

Physical factors appear to be at the root of many cases of mental distress. For example, the Bible tells of a person whose eyes "see strange things." The cause of such mysterious hallucinations? "Staying a long time with the wine"! (Proverbs 23:29-33) Clearly, alcohol can cause the brain to hallucinate. Doctors say that in a similar way, faulty brain chemistry, genetic factors, and possibly even diet can cause

brain malfunctions. Mental and emotional difficulties can result.*

Strong psychological pressures, such as stress, may also trigger emotional problems. Simply trying to maintain moral purity and a Christian personality in these "critical times hard to deal with" can be a source of stress. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Why, Lot "was tormenting his righteous soul" over the wickedness he was daily exposed to in Sodom! (2 Peter 2:8) Furthermore, some Christians have been mentally affected because of having been raped, sexually abused, or owing to past acts of promiscuity or drug abuse. Such things can exact a fearsome toll on a person's mental health.

What Elders Can Do

Elders are concerned with shepherding all the flock entrusted to their care—in-

* See the October 22, 1987, and September 8, 1986, issues of our companion magazine, *Awake!*



By being sympathetic listeners and counselors, elders can often help persons suffering emotional distress

cluding those suffering emotional distress. (1 Peter 5:2; Isaiah 32:1, 2) True, they are not doctors, and they cannot cure individuals of their ills any more than the apostle Paul cured Epaphroditus of his physical sickness or subsequent depression. (Philippians 2:25-29) Yet, by showing real concern and fellow feeling, they can often do much to help and encourage such ones.—1 Peter 3:8.

What, then, if a brother begins behaving peculiarly or complains of emotional upheaval? The elders may first try to draw out the sufferer, trying to determine just what is bothering him. Has some personal calamity or unusually stressful circumstance—perhaps the loss of a job or death of a loved one—temporarily thrown him off balance? (Ecclesiastes 7:7) Is the afflicted one mildly depressed due to loneliness and thus in need of someone to “speak consolingly” to him? (1 Thessalonians 5:14) Or could it be that the brother is disturbed over some personal shortcoming? Reassurance of God’s love and mercy—along with appropriate counsel—may help to alleviate his anxieties. (Psalm 103:3, 8-14) Much good may be accomplished simply by praying with the distressed brother.—James 5:14.

Elders can also share practical wisdom with the sufferer. (Proverbs 2:7) For example, we noted that some emotional disturbances may be related to diet. The elders may therefore suggest that the brother eat balanced meals and avoid dietary extremes. Or they may discern that the distressed one has been under great pressure on his job and would benefit greatly from “a handful of rest”—more regularly getting a good night’s sleep.—Ecclesiastes 4:6.

Those Who ‘Need a Physician’

When severe distress persists, though, it is well to recall Jesus’ words: “Persons

in health do not need a physician, but the ailing do.” (Matthew 9:12) Many distressed persons are reluctant to see a physician. Elders and family members may thus need to encourage a brother to seek medical attention, such as having a thorough examination by a trusted doctor. Says Professor Maurice J. Martin: “A wide variety of physical diseases masquerade as psychiatric disorders.” And even where mental illness really is involved, effective treatments often exist.

The wife of an elder tells how her disturbed husband “became afraid to be around the brothers and didn’t want to go to the meetings.... He desperately wanted to die!” But after he received professional medical attention, his wife was able to report: “He is no longer deeply depressed, nor does he want to stay away from meetings. This morning he gave the public talk!”

Admittedly, not all situations are resolved so easily. Science is just beginning to unravel the mysteries of mental problems. Getting properly diagnosed and treated can be a long, complicated process—but it often pays off.

Afflicted by the Demons?

Some victims of mental difficulties fear they are under demonic attack, claiming at times to hear “voices.” True, the demons have been known to make sane individuals behave irrationally. (Mark 5:2-6, 15) There is no proof that the demons are involved in most cases of bizarre behavior, any more than that they are involved in all cases of speechlessness, blindness, and epilepsy. Yet, back in Bible times, the demons sometimes caused (or at least aggravated) these very ailments! (Matthew 9:32, 33; 12:22; 17:15-18) The Bible makes a clear distinction, though, between “those who were ill and those demon-possessed.” (Mark 1:32-34; Matthew 4:24; Acts 5:16)

Obviously, then, the vast majority of cases of blindness or epilepsy today are caused by physical—not demonic—factors. The same no doubt can be said of most cases of mental distress.

Still, it must be remembered that Satan and his demons are ‘waging war’ with God’s people and have been known to harass faithful Christians. (Revelation 12:17; Ephesians 6:12) The demons are fiendish, and it should not surprise us that they take sadistic delight in tormenting some mentally distressed souls—compounding their difficulties.

So if the elders have good reason to suspect that demonic influence is involved, there is no harm in their making some inquiry. Has the person, for example, received any suspicious items directly and deliberately from individuals who are involved in some form of demonism? Disposal of such objects may bring relief. (Acts 19:18-20) Since Christians are told to “oppose the Devil,” the elders can also advise the afflicted one to reject any strange “voices” that could be of demonic origin. (James 4:7; Matthew 4:10) If a person feels under attack, he should pray fervently, calling upon Jehovah’s name out loud.—Ephesians 6:18; Proverbs 18:10.

Demonic involvement, however, appears to be the exception—not the rule. One sister relates: “I thought I was possessed by a demon until I sought medical help and was informed that I had a chemical imbalance. It gave me great relief to find out that it was an illness that was causing my actions and not some demon person that was inside of me!”

Psychiatric Medications

A variety of medications are now used by doctors in the treatment of mental disturbances. Medically supervised use of some such medications has permitted severely ill Christians to function normally.

Some well-intentioned brothers, though, have discouraged patients from taking prescribed medication, perhaps fearing that it might be harmful or addictive. There are, of course, risks involved with any kind of medical treatment, and “the shrewd one considers his steps,” considering long-term results.—Proverbs 14:15.

Interestingly, however, many psychiatric drugs are not hallucinogenic, tranquilizing, or addictive; they serve merely to correct chemical imbalances in the brain. Antipsychotics, for example, may help to tame the often bizarre symptoms of schizophrenia. Lithium can help to ease depression and level the highs and lows of manic-depression.

Granted, powerful drugs are sometimes used to tranquilize a patient or to suppress suicidal tendencies. Yet, if a brother is taking prescribed medication not for pleasure but so that he can function normally, this can be viewed in much the same way as a diabetic’s using insulin.

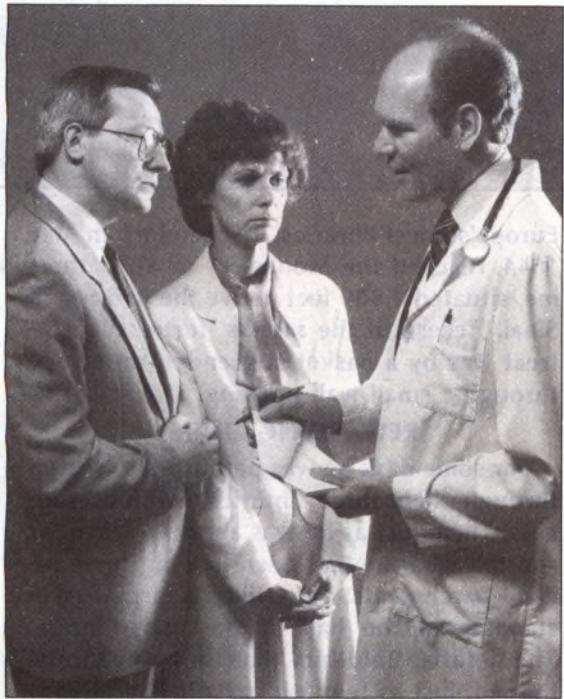
It should be remembered that psychiatric medications are often slow acting and may have unpleasant side effects. At times, too, there is a measure of trial and error in a doctor’s finding an effective medication and/or dosage that produces the fewest side effects. Patients often become discouraged. Family members and

In Our Next Issue

■ Will There Always Be Wars?

■ The Sheepfolds and the Shepherd

■ When Marital Peace Is Threatened



Sometimes it is advisable for a mentally ill person to seek medical help

others can therefore be supportive of the person undergoing treatment, encouraging him to be patient and to cooperate with qualified medical personnel. What if he has questions about a certain medication? Or what if problems develop or a treatment seems ineffective? Such problems should be discussed with his physician.* If necessary, a second opinion can be obtained.

Talk Therapies

In some cases, consideration may also be given to having the patient talk matters out with a trained professional. Perhaps a trusted family doctor who is personally acquainted with the patient can serve in this way. What, though, about

* The Society does not recommend or pass judgment upon the various medications and treatments employed by physicians. Research in the Society's publications may, nevertheless, prove helpful.

accepting treatment from a psychiatrist or a psychologist? This would be a personal decision to be made with due caution. Therapists differ in their approaches to treatment. Some, for example, still practice forms of Freudian psychoanalysis, the validity of which is challenged by many in the mental health field.

Of even more concern is the fact that some well-intentioned practitioners have given advice that flatly contradicts the Bible. Failing to understand Christian principles—even viewing such as “foolishness”—some therapists have even concluded that following the Bible’s strict moral code is the source of a person’s difficulties!—1 Corinthians 2:14.

However, some practitioners, including psychologists and psychiatrists, offer forms of talk therapy that are not really psychoanalysis but are a means of helping a patient to understand his illness, reinforcing the need for medication, and ironing out practical problems. A Christian may find such therapies helpful, but he needs to get his facts straight before accepting treatment: Just what does the treatment involve? What kind of advice will be given? Does the physician understand and respect the beliefs of Jehovah’s Witnesses?* If talk therapy is agreed to, ‘test out the words’ of a doctor instead of just accepting everything unquestioningly.—Job 12:11, 12.

For the most part, then, mental distress can be viewed as a medical problem—not a spiritual one. Understanding this fact, families, elders, and congregation members can better be of support to sufferers. At times distressed ones also need spiritual support. How the congregation can provide this will be considered in a future issue.

* If an ill one has difficulty explaining his Bible-based stand to a physician or therapist, perhaps some mature Christian can assist him.

Rescuing the Codex Sinaiticus

THE Codex Sinaiticus has been described as "the most important, exciting, and valuable book in existence." This is not just because it is at least 1,600 years old but because it forms a vital link in our catalog of Bible manuscripts. Its rediscovery, by Tischendorf just over a hundred years ago, is a fascinating story.

Konstantin von Tischendorf was born in Saxony, northern Europe, in the year 1815 and educated in Greek at the University of Leipzig. During his studies, he was disturbed by higher criticism of the Bible, voiced by famous German theologians seeking to prove that the Christian Greek Scriptures were not authentic. Tischendorf became convinced, however, that a study of early manuscripts would prove the genuineness of the Bible text. As a result, he determined to research for himself all known manuscripts, hoping to discover others in the course of his travels.

After four years spent searching through

Europe's finest libraries, Tischendorf, in May 1844, reached the Monastery of St. Catherine, situated 4,500 feet above the Red Sea in Sinai. Access to the monks' fortresslike retreat was by a basket suspended on a rope through a small wall opening.

REWARDING FINDS

For some days he was permitted to search through their three libraries, without success. Then, just as he was about to leave, he spotted what he had been looking for—ancient parchments! They filled a large basket standing in the hall of the main library. The librarian told him that they were to be burned, just as two full baskets had already been. Among these parchments, Tischendorf was amazed to find 129 leaves from the oldest manuscript he had ever seen, a Greek translation of parts of the Hebrew Scriptures. He was given 43 sheets, but the rest were denied him.

Tischendorf revisited the monastery in

Using the Codex

The symbol for the Codex Sinaiticus is the Hebrew letter נ. This codex confirms the accuracy of more recent papyrus manuscripts of the Bible. It also helps modern Bible scholarship by pinpointing subtle errors that crept into later copies.

For example, John 1:18 reads: "No man has seen God at any time; the only-begotten god who is in the bosom position with the Father is the one that has explained him." The footnote of the "New World Translation Reference Bible" reveals that "the only-begotten god," rather than the alternative rendering of "the only-begotten Son," is supported by the Codex Sinaiticus and other old manuscripts. The footnote reference נ^c also gives the notation of a corrector of this codex to substantiate the restoration of the definite article in "the only-begotten god." The position of Jesus Christ is unique, as this scripture testifies.

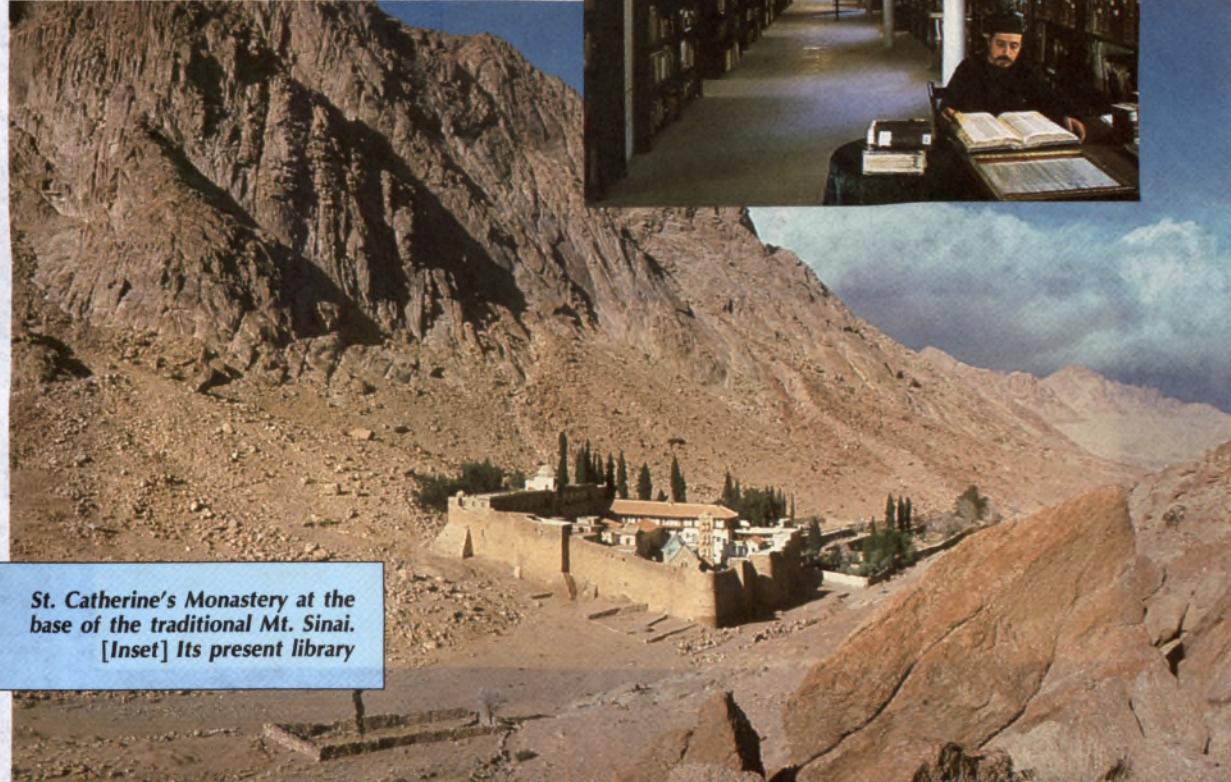
Courtesy of the British Museum, London

1853 to discover only a fragment of Genesis from the same fourth-century manuscript. He was convinced "that the manuscript originally contained the entire Old Testament, but that the greater part had been long since destroyed." The complete manuscript probably consisted of 730 leaves. It was written in Greek uncial (capital) letters on vellum, fine sheep and goat skins.

Six years later Tischendorf made his third visit to the monks at Sinai. On the eve of his departure, he was casually shown not only the leaves he had saved from the fire 15 years earlier but many others as well. They contained the entire Christian Greek Scriptures plus part of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Tischendorf was permitted to take the manuscript to Cairo, Egypt, to copy it, and

Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.



St. Catherine's Monastery at the base of the traditional Mt. Sinai.
[Inset] Its present library

eventually to carry it to the czar of Russia as a gift from the monks. Today it reposes in the British Museum, exhibited alongside the Codex Alexandrinus. The earlier 43 sheets are in the University Library of Leipzig, in the German Democratic Republic.

We should be grateful to Tischendorf for devoting his life and talents to searching for ancient Bible manuscripts and particularly for rescuing the great Codex Sinaiticus from destruction. But our highest thanks go to Jehovah God, who has seen to it that his Word has been so accurately preserved for our benefit today.

Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

To Cope With Life's Difficulties

Last year the house of a schoolteacher in Bignona, Senegal, burned down. Afterward, the branch of the Watch Tower Society in that West African country received this letter:

"What upsets me so much," the schoolteacher explained, "is that in the fire I lost books that are of inestimable value to me. The titles include *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It* and *Is This Life All There Is?* I can get by all right without my clothes and my house, but I can't get by without those books! They are more important to me than all else I lost. I beg you, please contact me as soon as possible, and let me know how I can get replacement copies. Life is full of difficulties, and we need such information to solve them and help us make right decisions and conduct ourselves properly."

