

# The WATCHTOWER

## THE CREATING OF A NEW EARTH

*The Coming Deliverance*  
FROM THE  
ANTI-  
RELIGIOUS  
“AX”

JANUARY 15, 1976

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

# The WATCHTOWER

January 15, 1976  
Vol. 97, Number 2

A watchtower enables a person to see far into the distance and announce to others what is coming. Can a magazine serve similarly in our day? Yes, from its first issue (July 1879) onward, *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's witnesses, has done just that.

How can it benefit you? Consider: Do you long for a better world, one of true justice and free from sorrow, hatred and war? Do you want to live at a time when genuine peace and love prevail among people of all races? Then this magazine can aid you. Using God's Word, the Bible, as its authority, it points out the clear evidence that the present wicked system of things will soon end, destroyed by God. But it also announces the coming in of a righteous new order. There, under the rule of God's kingdom, his heavenly government, people will enjoy life forever in true peace, health and happiness on a paradise earth.

Faithfulness to the Word of God lifts *The Watchtower* above the contradicting religious teachings and philosophies of men. It stays strictly neutral as regards political affairs. It wholeheartedly upholds the highest moral standard—that of man's Maker, Jehovah God. From this source, it shows solutions to the problems of daily life.

We know that many sincere persons would appreciate a discussion of these things in their own home with a qualified person. One of Jehovah's witnesses will be glad to call on you free of charge. To arrange for this, simply write the publishers of this magazine or contact Jehovah's witnesses locally.

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Five cents a copy

| Yearly subscription rates for semi-monthly editions in local currency |        |  |
|---|--------|--|
| America, U.S.A., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201                  | \$1.50 |  |
| Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135                 | \$2.50 |  |
| Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6A 1Z5                 | \$1.50 |  |
| England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN              | £1.50  |  |
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| (Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)                         |        |  |

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to 117 Adams Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

**CHANGES OF ADDRESS** should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). Write Watchtower, R.D. 1, Box 300, Wallkill, New York 12589, U.S.A. POSTMASTER: Send Form 3579 to same address.

The Bible translation used in "The Watchtower" is the modern-language "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated. Printed in U.S.A.

# THE CREATING OF A NEW EARTH

**S**CIENTISTS say that this earth we live on will someday be engulfed by an explosion from the sun. Major so-called "Christian" religions teach similarly, that the earth will end in a fiery holocaust.

What, then, does the Bible mean when it says that "the earth is standing even to time indefinite"? (Eccl. 1:4) How can this be harmonized with the apostle Peter's words: "There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting . . . and in these righteousness is to dwell"?—Isa. 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:13.

To find an answer, let us turn to Jesus Christ, God's chief spokesman. Note what he indicated for the earth when he taught his disciples to pray: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth."—Matt. 6:10.

In the heavens God's will is completely carried out by his angels. The inspired psalmist wrote: "Bless Jehovah, O you angels of his, mighty in power, carrying out his word." (Ps. 103:20) So, God's will being done on earth *as it is done in heaven* would mean peace and happiness on earth.

From this prayer of Jesus it is clear that the planet we live on is to remain, not to be burned up or destroyed. It is just as Jehovah declared: "This is what Jehovah has said, the Creator of the heavens, He the true God, the Former of the earth and the Maker of it, He the One who firm-

**"There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell."—2 Pet. 3:13.**

ly established it, who did not create it simply for nothing, who formed it even to be inhabited."—Isa. 45:18; compare Psalm 148:3-6.

What, then, is going to be made new? Not the *planet* earth, though it will be renewed in the sense of being beautified, its present waste and polluted places being cleansed and refreshed. The creating of a new earth will mean a renewed human society. The 'old earth' of corrupt practices, disease and death will 'pass away.' However, not all the people will pass off the scene.—1 John 2:17.

Jesus Christ is authority for this view of matters, for he said: "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 . . . until that day when Noah entered into the ark, and the flood arrived and destroyed them all." (Luke 17:26, 27) The earth was cleansed, primarily in the sense that the corrupt, violent world of people was destroyed off it. However, those who turned to God and made over their minds to his way were preserved, to live on this side of that great destructive deluge.—1 Pet. 3:20.

How will those surviving the cleansing of our earth by the destruction of the present man-made system live as a society? After the Flood, mankind multiplied on

the face of the earth and the stronger came to dominate the weak. Is this to be repeated? No. Men will not be dictating to others what to do. This kind of arrangement was not purposed by God, as the inspired writer declares: "I have seen . . . the time that man has dominated man to his injury."—Eccl. 8:9.

When men dominate other men, there is always unhappiness. The only proper dominion over all mankind will be dominion from the "new heavens." This dominion cannot be oppressive, for the Creator knows exactly what suits and satisfies human needs. (Matt. 6:8; Ps. 145:16) Furthermore, the Creator needs nothing from men and can have no selfish motives, but he has man's well-being at heart. Encouraging people to seek help from God, Jesus said: "If you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will your Father who is in the heavens give good things to those asking him?" (Matt. 7:11) And Jesus told the Jewish ruler Nicodemus: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

So a rulership by the kingdom of the heavens would be in no way objectionable. As it communicates its laws and directions to men on earth, this rulership would be recognized as being superior, as well as being perfect, and mankind would know that it was always acting altogether in their interests. This would motivate willing obedience. But it is different now with imperfect, often selfish men telling everyone what to do. All men are equal before God, and so it goes contrary to human nature for a person to dominate another. That is why the present human society that we see existing today—called in the Bible the "earth"—must pass away, to be replaced by a "new earth" of righteous

human society under the Kingdom of the heavens.—Rev. 21:1.

Also, that is why man-made political systems of rule—called in the Bible the "heavens," as they bear rule over imperfect, unrighteous mankind now—must pass away and "new heavens," the kingdom of the heavens, must take their place.—2 Pet. 3:12, 13.

What happiness this creating of a "new earth" under "new heavens" will bring to mankind! This earthly globe is a wonderful place in which to live, with capacity to produce bountifully for all. We revel in the grandeur of the earthly creation even now, though pollution and misuse have destroyed its beauty in many places. How much more so will we delight in the earth when it has been cleansed of its ruiners!—Rev. 11:18.

A pattern of what will be provided is shown in the description of the land that God gave to his ancient people Israel. Moses said to them in a farewell address: "Jehovah your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of torrent valleys of water, springs and watery deeps issuing forth in the valley plain and in the mountainous region, a land of wheat and barley and vines and figs and pomegranates, a land of oil olives and honey, a land in which you will not eat bread with scarcity, in which you will lack nothing."—Deut. 8:7-9.

The conditions upon earth today, along with the Bible's prophecies, indicate that the time for the creating of a "new earth" is at hand. Mankind does not need to worry about losing this beautiful home, the planet earth, but can look forward to enjoying it forever under righteous conditions, when it produces to the full. Of that future time, the psalmist wrote: "Jehovah, for his part, will give what is good, and our own land will give its yield." (Ps. 85:12) What a glorious prospect is just ahead for this planet!

## WHEN NOT TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT

# What Others Say

A GOOD name or reputation is a valuable possession. "A name," says an ancient proverb, "is to be chosen rather than abundant riches." (Prov. 22:1) In modern times a good name has been considered of such value as to merit legal protection against slander and libel. Rightly people want their name to be cleared of gross misrepresentation, especially when such misrepresentation could seriously affect their livelihood.



But often what others say, though it be critical and uncomplimentary, is not slanderous. How should you react when you are cast in a poor light? Should you concern yourself about this?

The Bible helps one to evaluate realistically what people may say. It urges: "Do not give heed to every word that is spoken lest you hear your servant speaking ill of you, for you know in your heart that you have many times spoken ill of others."—Eccl. 7:21, 22, *New American Bible*.

This Scriptural admonition comes to grips with the way life really is. The best of people have their faults. "There is no man righteous in the earth," we read in the Bible, "that keeps doing good and does not sin." (Eccl. 7:20) All humans are sinful descendants of imperfect Adam. That is why a person should not be surprised if even a close friend, perhaps in an angry or vexed state, speaks about him to others in uncomplimentary terms. Hard as they may try to prevent it, imperfect people time and again fail to use their tongue for good. The Christian disciple James acknowledged: "We all stumble many times. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man, able to bridle also his whole body."—Jas. 3:2.

Human imperfection is indeed a fact. Individually,

we repeatedly fall far short of being the kind of persons we would like to be. Obviously, then, we cannot take seriously every remark that people may make. If a person were to do so, he would experience much emotional hurt. For example, he might hear that a close friend made some unfavorable comment about him. He could reason, 'Well, if that's the way he feels about me, I'm going to cut him off. I don't want his friendship.' In this way a good relationship could be ruined.

How much better it is to



follow the Bible's counsel 'not to give heed to every word that is spoken!' This enables one to view objectively what people say. The person who is honest with himself knows that he has often said unfavorable things about others, without any malicious intent. This should help him to see that what others might say about him need not be regarded as a personal insult.

Then, too, we should keep in mind that secondhand information is often unreliable. Hence, a good principle to follow is: "Do not admit an

accusation against an older man, except only on the evidence of two or three witnesses." (1 Tim. 5:19) Acting in harmony with this principle will prevent us from being hasty in accepting as fact what someone supposedly said about us as individuals.

Also, undue interest in what people say in a favorable way can lead to trouble. Their praise can be a snare, causing the one who is lauded to begin thinking too highly of himself. When a person's pride is thus fed, his good qualities may be shoved into the background. As a result, he may lose the fine reputation that he once enjoyed. A Bible proverb says: "Pride is before a crash, and a haughty spirit before stumbling."—Prov. 16:18.

On the other hand, a person may learn that his words or actions have given a basis for valid criticism. In that case he would do well to consider what he might do to avoid giving reason for other's complaining in the future. This would be in harmony with the Scriptural counsel: "Make sure of the more important things, so that you may be flawless and not be stumbling others."—Phil. 1:10.

Even when misrepresented, a person may find it the course of wisdom not to make an issue of the matter. Instead of clearing up the misrepresentation, a person's trying to put it down may only advertise it and cause more people to believe it.

Jesus Christ set a fine example in handling misrepresentations. Falsely accused of being a drunkard and a glutton, he did not argue about this. He simply said: "Wisdom is proved righteous by its works." (Matt. 11:19) With these words, he invited others to look at the evidence. That evidence—the works—made it clear that the accusations were false.

The person who maintains fine conduct, treating others with consideration, in due course silences those who misrepresented him. It does not take long for sincere ob-

servers to see that what they have been told is false.

Those desiring to be in harmony with God's will should be especially concerned about maintaining fine conduct. The Bible encourages them: "The will of God is, that by doing good you may muzzle the ignorant talk of the unreasonable men." —1 Pet. 2:15.

When faced with name-calling or other misrepresentation designed to provoke one, it is usually best to turn a deaf ear to it. God's faithful servant David did this with fine results. In one of his psalms, he said: "As for me, like someone deaf, I would not listen; and like someone speechless, I would not open my mouth. And I came to be like a man that was not hearing, and in my mouth there were no counterarguments."—Ps. 38:13, 14.

What enabled David to act this way in the face of provocation? He realized that personally he could not straighten out the matter to full satisfaction. But he had confidence that his God, Jehovah, could do so. That is why he said: "For on you, O Jehovah, I waited; you yourself proceeded to answer, O Jehovah my God." (Ps. 38:15) Would it not be beneficial to imitate the example of David? It most certainly would. The person who does not try to take everything into his own hands but patiently waits on his God is spared the frustrations and irritations resulting from fruitless fighting against moral wrongs.

Truly, in the daily affairs of life, wisdom dictates that one should not be overly concerned about what others say. Our 'not giving heed to every word that people speak' prevents us from taking needless offense or having our pride fed. At the same time we can profit from valid criticism, by endeavoring to make improvement. And, by preserving fine conduct, we can silence the 'ignorant talk of unreasonable' persons.

# Insight on the News

● At the first of five global conferences on "Limits to Growth," a former president of the

European Common Market, Sicco Mansholt, warned 300

"Limits to Growth" scientists, scholars and other leaders of disasters looming up before mankind. He asserted that growing hunger,

freshwater shortages and nuclear wastes could trigger major political instability and catastrophe. The answer, he said, lies in a political and economic "new order." "To master supernational problems we need supernational institutions and power," Mansholt declared.

But what are the prospects for "supernational institutions and power" arising in the world? "There appear to be no world leaders with vision enough to do the job," he observed.

Many world leaders recognize the need for supernational authority and that it is not likely to come from among their fellow humans. The truly realistic answer to the need for supernational authority is found in the Bible: "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin." That supernational kingdom will indeed "bring to ruin those ruining the earth!"—Dan. 2:44; Rev. 11:18.

● The wonders of creation continue to amaze scientists. A previously misunderstood feature of certain climbing vines is one example. "Farmers have long known that if you put a pole near a bean plant, the bean will find the pole and grow up it," explains researcher Dr. Donald R.

**Who Did the Thinking?** Strong, Jr. But no one ever stopped to find out how or why. In 1925, he says, one observer noted that a vine pursued a stake that was moved daily and concluded that this proved that the vines must "think." Do they?

Well, most plants are "phototropic," that is, they grow toward light. But now scientists believe that certain vines are "skototropic"—growing toward darkness, toward a tree trunk to climb. However, once the vine reaches the tree, remarkably it becomes photo-

tropic again like any other plant. Is "thinking" involved? By whom?

Pointing toward the real source, the noted scientific historian Loren Eiseley offers some food for thought. Writing in "Audubon" magazine, he marvels at the instinctive perception found in certain animal creations. Though "an evolutionist," he admits being reluctantly drawn to "the dreadful otherness of the Biblical challenge [at Isaiah 55:8], 'Your ways are not my ways.'" He says: "I had come to feel at last that the human version of evolutionary events was perhaps too simplistic for belief." Thus the evidence of "thinking" found in creation compels us to acknowledge the One whose "invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made."—Rom. 1:20.

● Pope Paul VI recently made a rare criticism of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation. He complained that it had foiled attempts at European unity, which had "known their time of glory" before the Reformation.

However, history shows that it was a "time of glory" for none but the Roman Church, whose political power was then at its zenith. On the other hand, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Barbara Tuchman writes in the December issue of "Atlantic" that the period was "unquestionably . . . a bad time for humanity." She noted that it was a time "variously called out of joint, in moral disarray, of sinking values, of perpetual strife, . . . of bad government."

So, when Pope Paul spoke of that past "time of glory," he no doubt had in mind the Church's political progress toward a united "Holy Roman Empire" under her control. Yet this time of political glory found the Church herself, as Barbara Tuchman says, "undoubtedly at a low point in prestige, credibility, and (what people minded most) spirituality; hence [came] heresy and ultimately the Reformation." Thus the Church's attempt to gain worldly glory had brought her down to the world's level, the sure result of violating Christ's principle: "Mine is not a kingdom of this world . . . my kingdom is not of this kind."—John 18:36, Catholic "Jerusalem Bible."

# THE "AX" AND *The Chopper*

**I**T IS nothing unusual for one person to be used as the tool of another person to get something done. It is nothing unknown in human history for an entire nation to be used as a tool by some person in authority who is looked up to as being superior to the ruler of the nation used as a tool.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, there is the case of King David of Jerusalem. He used his Field Marshal, General Joab, as a tool in having the faithful Hittite military officer, Uriah, abandoned to certain death in battle. Thus Uriah died in ignorance of the fact that King David had violated his wife, Bathsheba. (2 Sam. 11:1 through 12:9; 1 Ki. 15:5) Then there is the case of Pope Hadrian (Adrian) IV, an Englishman by birth. In the year 1155 C.E., he made England under King Henry II his tool to start the subjecting of all Ireland in order to bring the Irish religious leaders under the control of the papacy of Rome.\*

\* On this matter, McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia*, Volume IV, page 641, column 2, under "Ireland," says: "These invasions [by the Northmen] were followed by a period of anarchy, during which the moral condition of the Irish clergy greatly degenerated. The complaints of Rome at this time referred chiefly to the peculiar ecclesiastical practices of the Irish—the marriage of the clergy, the administration of baptism without chrism, and the use of their own liturgy. The legates of the popes finally succeeded in obtaining the entire submission of the Irish Church to the Church of Rome about the middle of the twelfth century, which until then is believed to have been without auricular confession, sacrifice of the mass, and indulgences, and to have celebrated the Lord's Supper in both kinds. In 1155 a bull of pope Hadrian IV allowed king Henry II of England to subject Ireland, the king, in his turn, promising the pope to protect the papal privileges."

1, 2. (a) What use of individuals or nations is not uncommon in history? (b) What instances do we have of this use of humans as tools?

"Will the ax enhance itself over the one chopping with it?" —Isa. 10:15.

<sup>3</sup> In ancient times, centuries before the submission of the Irish Church, there was an instance of where a mighty, highly militarized nation was employed as a tool or an instrument by a still greater power. That ancient nation was Assyria, at the time that it was the world power of the day, the second world power of Bible history. What, though, was the greater power that was able to use the Assyrian World Power as a mere tool or hand instrument? The identity of that greater power was made known to men sometime before the Assyrians under King Sennacherib invaded the land of the Kingdom of Judah in the year 732 B.C.E. The identification of the power superior to the Assyrian Empire was imbedded among the following words:

<sup>4</sup> "Will the ax enhance itself over the one chopping with it, or the saw magnify itself over the one moving it back and forth, as though the staff moved back and forth the ones raising it on high, as though the rod raised on high the one who is not wood? Therefore the true Lord, Jehovah of armies, will keep sending upon his fat ones a wasting disease, and under his glory a burning will keep burning away like the burning of a fire. And Israel's Light must become a fire, and his Holy One a flame; and it must blaze up

3, 4. (a) In ancient times, what nation was used as a mere hand instrument? (b) In what prophecy of Isaiah is the name of the One using the Assyrian nation as a tool embedded?

and eat up his weeds and his thornbushes in one day. And the glory of his forest and of his orchard He will bring to an end, even from the soul clear to the flesh, and it must become like the melting away of one that is ailing. And the rest of the trees of his forest—they will become such a number that a mere boy will be able to write them down.”—Isa. 10:15-19.

Those words were recorded by the inspired prophet, Isaiah the son of Amoz, who completed writing his marvelous book of prophecy about the year 732 B.C.E., the year in which the Assyrian invasion of the land of Judah took place. Thus Isaiah declares that the Great Power using the tool is “the true Lord, Jehovah of armies,” yes, “Israel’s Light . . . and his Holy One.” Is this Holy One capable of using an entire nation as a mere tool? For an inspired answer to this question let us hear what the prophet Isaiah says, later on, about “the true Lord, Jehovah of armies,” as follows:

“Who has measured the waters in the mere hollow of his hand, and taken the proportions of the heavens themselves with a mere span and included in a measure the dust of the earth, or weighed with an indicator the mountains, and the hills in the

scales? . . . Look! The nations are as a drop from a bucket; and as the film of dust on the scales they have been accounted. Look! He lifts the islands themselves as mere fine dust.”—Isa. 40:12-15.

#### THE SYMBOLIC AX

In comparison with the “true Lord, Jehovah of armies,” all the nations, including Assyria, are like a tiny drop of water falling from a bucket or like the film of dust on the scalepans. With the greatest of ease, then, he can use any

7. So, in comparison with Jehovah, the nations are like what, and, in Isaiah 10:15, He likens himself to what?



5, 6. What does Isaiah say later on about the capability of Jehovah to use Assyria as a mere tool?

nation that he chooses as his tool in carrying out his divine purpose. So, in Isaiah 10:15, he likens himself to a chopper, a sawyer, a wielder of a staff, a brandisher of a rod. He declares that He is "not wood." No, he is not the handle of the ax, or the staff or the rod. He is the living God, the almighty Handler of these symbolic instruments. What, then, is the symbolic ax with which he does a chopping work?

<sup>8</sup> Earlier in the same tenth chapter of Isaiah's prophetic book Jehovah himself identifies what the symbolic ax is. So, in Isaiah 10:5, 6, we read these words of Jehovah: "Aha, the Assyrian, the rod for my anger, and the stick that is in their hand for my denunciation! Against an apostate nation I shall send him, and against the people of my fury I shall issue a command to him, to take much spoil and to take much plunder and to make it a trampling place like the clay of the streets." Ah, yes, the symbolic instrument that Jehovah uses in the carrying out of his stated purpose is "the Assyrian." This designation does not mean an individual Assyrian, not even the imperial king of Assyria. It means the entire nation of Assyria, the Second World Power of Bible prophecy. No individual Assyrian, not even the king himself, could single-handedly carry out the work that Jehovah has assigned to "the Assyrian." This is indicated by the fact that, after calling the Assyrian the "rod for my anger," Jehovah addresses the "stick that is in *their* hand for my denunciation!" (Isa. 10:5; note verse 24.) From this it is clear that a composite Assyrian is meant, namely, the whole nation of Assyria, and particularly its military forces.

<sup>9</sup> However, of what interest is that an-

8. Exactly who is "the Assyrian" spoken of in Isaiah 10:5, 6?

9. In what way does fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 10:5, 6 affect us today, and how does the apostle Paul indicate this?

cient prophecy about "the Assyrian" to us today? It is of much interest. It is not a prophecy that belongs just to the long-dead past. It is a living prophecy, the fulfillment of which in our day will affect all of us. In our own generation it must have its large-scale, final, complete fulfillment! The application of the prophecy was not all over with at a fulfillment of it in the eighth century before our Common Era. Why, look! the Christian apostle Paul quoted verse twenty-two of that same tenth chapter of Isaiah and applied it to his own day in the first century of our Common Era. True to Isaiah's prophecy, a bare remnant of the Jews accepted Christianity, for which reason the apostle Paul went on to say: "Moreover, Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: 'Although the number of the sons of Israel may be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved. For Jehovah will make an accounting on the earth, concluding it and cutting it short.'"—Rom. 9:27, 28. Also, see Romans 15:4.

<sup>10</sup> What ancient nation was it against whom Jehovah of armies used the Assyrian as a "rod" and an "ax"? The reason why such a question concerns all of us today is that the ancient nation foreshadowed modern Christendom! Jehovah called the ancient nation "an apostate nation" and "the people of my fury." (Isa. 10:6) By those words Jehovah meant the nation and people that made up the ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel, with its capital at Samaria. It had broken away from the kingdom of David, which had its capital in Jerusalem. The breakaway had taken place after the death of King Solomon the son of David. Testifying to the religious apostasy of the ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel, "the Assyrian" himself speaks contemptuously of the capital city Samaria

10. How is the identification of the "apostate nation" and "the people of my fury," as spoken of by Jehovah in Isaiah 10:6, made sure?

and "her valueless gods." (Isa. 10:11) Since, in the year 997 B.C.E., that kingdom of Israel apostatized from the worship of Jehovah as God, how could the gods introduced by the apostate kings of the nation be anything else but "valueless gods"? After Israel persisted for more than two hundred and fifty years in rejecting Jehovah as God, He was fully justified in speaking of them as "the people of my fury," upon whom to use the "rod for my anger."—1 Ki. 12:25 through 13:6; 16:8-33; Isa. 10:5, 6.

<sup>11</sup> How well Christendom of today matches the apostate ten-tribe nation of Israel! Christendom's apostasy from true Christianity was more than merely foreshadowed by ancient Israel's rebellion against Jehovah as God. It was also distinctly foretold by Jesus Christ and his apostles. (Matt. 13:24-43; Acts 20:29-31; 2 Thess. 2:1-12; 2 Tim. 4:3, 4) All believers in the Bible may confidently expect, therefore, that, at the due time, Jehovah of armies will use the symbolic "rod" for His anger, yes, the symbolic "ax" upon this modern-day "people of my fury." We certainly do not want to be found among such people as that! That being the case, it will be good for us to learn what today is symbolized by the "rod" and the "ax."

<sup>12</sup> In the days of the prophet Isaiah, Jehovah wielded the Assyrian World Power just like a "rod" in dealing the final blow to the apostate ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel. The fatal year was 740 B.C.E. Then Jehovah used the Assyrian World Power as his "ax" to chop down the idol-worshiping nation of Israel. This He did by letting the Assyrian armies climax their three-year-long siege of the capital of Samaria by capturing and making it like a miry trampling place. (2 Ki. 17:7-23; 18:9-12)

11. What religious organization today matches the apostate ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel, and why do we not want to be found now in that organization?

12. (a) How did Jehovah use "the Assyrian" as an "ax" with respect to ancient Israel? (b) At that time, what was Assyria's relationship with Jehovah's organization?

Here let us be careful to note one particular thing. What? This: Although Jehovah used the Assyrian World Power as his implement for destruction upon apostates from His worship, Assyria was not a part of Jehovah's organization. It was a part of the visible organization of Satan the Devil. The land of Assyria was called "the land of Nimrod." This was the Nimrod who founded the city of Nineveh, which became the capital of Assyria. The founder became notorious as "Nimrod a mighty hunter in opposition to Jehovah." (Mic. 5:6; Gen. 10:8-12) Here, another fact for us to note is this: Although Jehovah used Assyria as his "rod" and "ax," that world power did not thereby become a part of Jehovah's visible organization. It did not take up His worship!

#### THE "AX" TRIES TO ENHANCE ITSELF OVER THE CHOPPER

<sup>13</sup> Ancient Assyria never had the idea of serving Jehovah and had no desire to continue to serve His purpose for his vindication and glory. That is why He went on to say concerning "the Assyrian": "Though he may not be that way, he will feel inclined; though his heart may not be that way, he will scheme, because to annihilate is in his heart, and to cut off nations not a few."—Isa. 10:7.

<sup>14</sup> "The Assyrian" felt inclined in a direction in which he was not meant to go. At that time Jehovah meant for "the Assyrian" merely to be an instrument in the divine hand, to serve the divine purpose in administering discipline to a wayward nation. But, contrariwise, "the Assyrian" felt inclined to be something else, something in line with his own ambition. Yes, he schemes, but is it because his heart lovingly moves him to serve as a tool in

13. What was the attitude of "the Assyrian" toward being used as Jehovah's instrument?

14. (a) Although the way in which "the Assyrian" was used was merely as an instrument, how did he himself "feel inclined"? (b) In keeping with that inclination, what is it in his heart to do, and why?

the hand of the God against whom the mighty hunter Nimrod had set himself in opposition? No, his heart is not that way; that is not how his heart is. It does not move him to purpose and plan in harmony with Jehovah's righteous purpose. He schemes to annihilate and cut off nations merely for the sake of doing so, with the zest of a hunter who likes to kill animal life wantonly. Thus he hopes to please his own false gods, and not Jehovah. He is purely out for world conquest. He does not want to be what Jehovah chooses him and commissions him to be, that is, to be a disciplinary agency. The further course of "the Assyrian" demonstrated this to be the case.

<sup>16</sup> Because "the Assyrian" does not recognize the Almighty God who uses him like a mere tool, he does not give any credit to Jehovah but takes all the credit to himself. It is easy for us to note this attitude of "the Assyrian" as he approaches the overthrow of the ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel and the capture of its capital city Samaria. That Israelite kingdom was one of the nations that "the Assyrian" was determined to annihilate and cut off: "For he will say, 'Are not my princes at the same time kings? Is not Calno just like Carchemish? Is not Hamath just like Arpad? Is not Samaria just like Damascus? Whenever my hand has reached the kingdoms of the valueless god whose graven images are more than those at Jerusalem and at Samaria, will it not be that just as I shall have done to Samaria and to her valueless gods, even so I shall do to Jerusalem and to her idols?'"—Isa. 10:8-11.

<sup>16</sup> What blasphemous words these are,

15. To whom does "the Assyrian" give the credit for his conquest, and how do his words recorded in Isaiah 10:8-11 indicate this?

16. Against whom were those words of "the Assyrian" words of blasphemy, and despite what religious forces had he become "King of kings"?

for they are aimed contemptuously at the one living and true God, Jehovah! To "the Assyrian," the cities to which his hands reach out to conquer will prove to be just like the cities that he has already conquered. The territories that he had conquered had been ruled by local kings. Now he had made them vassal princes. So his princes were in reality "kings," and for this reason he could boast of himself as being "King of kings." "The Assyrian" noted the fact that the cities whose kings he had overpowered had many "gods" along with many man-made images, in fact, many more than those of Samaria and of Jerusalem. And yet, despite the numerousness of all such gods and artificial images of those non-Israelite cities, "the Assyrian" had conquered those pagan cities. Did this not prove him to be more powerful than all those gods? To himself "the Assyrian" answered Yes!

<sup>17</sup> Those "gods" were just as valueless as nonentities! Hence, the capital cities of Samaria and Jerusalem ought to be conquered easily, because these cities had fewer gods and graven images than those non-Israelite cities that had bowed in subjection to "the Assyrian." That is how "the Assyrian" King of kings reasoned.

<sup>18</sup> At that time the ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel had become an apostate nation, a religious renegade! It had gone over to the worship of golden calves, yes, even of the pagan Baals. Samaria did not have Jehovah as its God. Instead, it had valueless gods and man-made idol images. Little wonder, then, that "the Assyrian" crowned his three-year-long siege of Samaria with the capture of it in 740 B.C.E.! At this exploit "the Assyrian's" arrogance would be built up still more, and, likewise, his insolence toward the worship of Jehovah

17. So why did "the Assyrian" reason that Samaria and Jerusalem would be conquered easily?

18. "The Assyrian's" ability to conquer Samaria was owing to what vital things?

in Jerusalem. For the military victory over Samaria and for plundering it and making it a "trampling place like the clay of the streets," the Assyrian conqueror took the glory to himself. He prided himself on his seemingly irresistible war machine. How little did he realize that he was being used as an executional tool in the hand of the God from whom Israel had apostatized!

<sup>19</sup> Now a very interesting question bobs up. It is this: Since Christendom was foreshadowed by Samaria and the ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel, are we in our day going to see the duplicate of apostate Israel's experience in connection with present-day Christendom?

#### AN ACCOUNTING WITH THE IMPERIALIST PROMISED

<sup>20</sup> What do we think? When a city upon which the name of Jehovah has been placed is spoken of in a threatening way, ought He himself to be interested? Naturally so! Hence, by his prophet Isaiah, Jehovah breaks in upon the self-glorying monologue of the Assyrian empire-builder and says:

<sup>21</sup> "And it must occur that when Jehovah terminates all his work in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, I shall make an accounting for the fruitage of the insolence of the heart of the king of Assyria and for the self-importance of his loftiness of eyes. For he has said, 'With the power of my hand I shall certainly act, and with my wisdom, for I do have understanding; and I shall remove the boundaries of peoples, and their things stored up I shall certainly pillage, and I shall bring down the inhabitants just like a powerful one. And just as if a nest, my hand will reach the resources of the peoples; and just as when one gathers eggs that have been left, I

19. So what question now bobs up?

20, 21. Why should Jehovah be interested in what "the Assyrian" has to say, according to Isaiah 10:12-14?

#### IN THE NEXT ISSUE

■ Freedom from Want—Is It Impossible?

■ Matthew's Good News  
—The Messiah Has Come!

■ "All You Are Brothers."

myself will gather up even all the earth, and there will certainly be no one fluttering his wings or opening his mouth or chirping." —Isa. 10:12-14.

<sup>22</sup> From such speech out of the mouth of "the Assyrian" it is plain that the Assyrian World Power would not be satisfied with capturing Samaria. It would want to "gather up even all the earth." Jerusalem and the land of Judah would be nice eggs for it to gather up. The Assyrian imperialist would think that he had the power, the wisdom and the understanding to make his conquests earth wide.

<sup>23</sup> Presumably this would be an easy thing for "the Assyrian," just like picking out eggs from the nest that has been abandoned by the parent bird in fright. There would be no fluttering of the wings to beat back the aggressive hand that reaches out for the eggs. There would be no opening of the mouth in protest. There would not be even a chirp of complaint at the plundering and spoiling and the deportations carried on by the Assyrian war machine. So "the Assyrian" would do what he pleased with the conquered territories, changing or wiping out the boundary lines or deporting people from their native land, just as when "the Assyrian" deported the

22. In order to make his conquest earth wide, what prize of war would "the Assyrian" have to take?

23, 24. (a) In what way would "the Assyrian's" gathering up all the earth be as one gathering eggs from an abandoned nest, as he thought? (b) Why did Jehovah feel that he had something to say about this?

surviving Israelites from the God-given land of Israel to Assyria and repeopled the emptied land with other national groups.

<sup>24</sup> Jehovah knew that the specially coveted prize of "the Assyrian" was Jerusalem and the land of Judah. That was the last remaining stronghold of Jehovah's worship on earth. Rightly He should have something to say about that. He was obliged to act in such a case!

<sup>25</sup> At that critical time in the eighth century B.C.E. Jehovah, as "Israel's Light . . . and his Holy One," had a work to do in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, which was located on Mount Zion. (Isa. 10:17) During the reign of apostate King Ahaz the land of Judah, including Jerusalem, had become polluted with pagan idolatry. But early in the reign of his son, Hezekiah, Jehovah's spirit moved the new king of Jerusalem to cleanse the land of the worship of false, valueless gods and to restore the pure worship of Jehovah on Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, where Jehovah's temple stood. Hezekiah began to reign five years before "the Assyrian" overthrew Samaria. He ruled in righteousness for twenty-nine years, till 716 B.C.E.

<sup>26</sup> King Hezekiah broke off the political alliance that his father, King Ahaz, had made with Assyria. This brought on a confrontation between "the Assyrian" and Jehovah, the God of Hezekiah. Under such

25. Why, at that time, was there a work for Jehovah to do on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem?

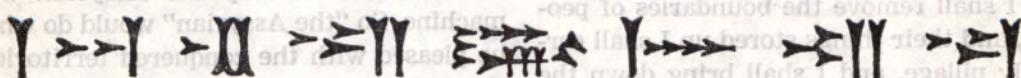
26. What did Jehovah now find the occasion ripe for doing, and what particular Assyrian king was involved?

circumstances it was that Jehovah found the occasion just ripe to punish the God-defying king of Assyria, thereby to "make an accounting for the fruitage of the insolence of the heart of the king of Assyria and for the self-importance of his loftiness of eyes." (Isa. 10:12) The particular king here involved was Sennacherib, the son of Sargon II. His long name means "Sin Has Multiplied The Brothers," or, "May Sin Replace The (Lost) Brothers," the word "Sin" being the name of the Assyrian moon god.

<sup>27</sup> Sennacherib has his counterpart in our day. Just how Jehovah handles the modern-day antitypical "ax" with which he will do some chopping provides us now an interesting subject for consideration. As we undertake this study, let us keep in mind that Jehovah let the ancient Assyrian Empire have its own organization. He did not interfere with its own internal arrangements. Still it was possible for him to use the Assyrian World Power as his "ax." How? By his directing its blows, by his guiding where the symbolic "ax" should strike. In that way Jehovah caused to be chopped down what he wanted to be chopped.\*

\* As an illustration of this, note Jesus' words at Matthew 22:7 in his parable of the King's marriage feast. His prediction there was fulfilled upon the unchristianized city of Jerusalem by the pagan Roman armies under General Titus in the year 70 C.E.

27. Without interfering with Assyria's internal organization, how could Jehovah nonetheless use it as his symbolic "ax"?



*Sin  
(Moon)*      *achi  
(brothers)*      *ir-i-ba  
(he increased)*

**"the Moon has multiplied brothers"**

Cuneiform for the name of Sennacherib along with its meaning

# The Coming Deliverance FROM THE ANTI- RELIGIOUS “AX”

ONE thing hard for many people today to understand is that there can be and there is only one true religion. Why do they rebel against such fact? It is because this would mean that all the other religions are false, and this would include their own religion. Hence, they will need to have the true fact demonstrated to them forcibly. This will be done in the near future, for then, in the midst of the world's greatest tribulation, all false religions will be wiped out and only the one true religion will survive. It will be delivered from the most tremendous anti-religious movement in all human history.

<sup>2</sup> Whom does the Sacred Bible present as the only One for all mankind to worship? It is the Most High and Almighty God, whose name is given as Jehovah. (See Exodus 6:3; Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 12:2 and 26:4 in the King James Authorized Version of the Bible.) Just as there is one living and true God, there can be only one right religion, the pure and undefiled religion that He has revealed in the Sacred Bible. (See James 1:27.) Mankind started out with the one pure religion. Now the time has come for the Almighty God to unite all mankind in the one correct form of worship of Him and thus banish all re-

1. What fact about religion will have to be demonstrated to many people, and how?
2. What must Jehovah now do to banish all religious wars?

ligious wars.—Zeph. 3:8, 9; Eph. 1:9, 10; 4:4-6.

<sup>3</sup> The destruction of all false religion was foreshadowed in the eighth century before our Common Era. At that time the Assyrian Empire, with capital at Nineveh, was the world power. In the progress of this empire's expansion, the ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel, with capital at Samaria, was destroyed and the adjacent two-tribe Kingdom of Judah, with capital at Jerusalem, came under terrific attack. The crucial time for both of those kingdoms came during the reign of King Hezekiah of Jerusalem, who began to reign in the year 745 B.C.E. Five years later, or in 740 B.C.E., the ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrian aggressors. It then appeared that the neighboring Kingdom of Judah would be next to fall, and that right soon! Yet, eight years passed, with Hezekiah still on the throne at Jerusalem. Also, Sennacherib, the son of Sargon II, had become king of the expanding Assyrian Empire.

<sup>4</sup> The line of Assyrian kings that was involved in this course of world conquest

3. How was it that the crucial time for both the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah came during the reign of King Hezekiah?
4. Why were the military conquests of the nations, including that of Israel, an anti-religious campaign by the Assyrian Empire—in an indirect way?

made an exposure of the falsity of the gods of the conquered kingdoms and nations, for it showed them to be no-gods, nonentities, "valueless gods." (Isa. 10:10, 11; 2 Ki. 18:33-35; Isa. 36:18-20 and 37:12, 13) Such demoting of the gods of the worldly nations reached its climax in the overthrow of Samaria and the false gods that it had adopted in place of Jehovah, the God of their forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The reason why all those gods failed to rescue their respective nations from the mighty hand of the Assyrian World Power was that, as King Hezekiah said in prayer to Jehovah, "they were no gods, but the workmanship of man's hands." (Isa. 37:18-20) By so many military victories over the "no gods" of the nations, what an anti-religious campaign that was on the part of the Assyrian World Power—in an indirect way!

#### **THE MODERN ANTI-RELIGIOUS AGENCY**

<sup>5</sup> Unknown to the Assyrian World Power, Jehovah God was behind that anti-religious campaign, particularly so when it struck the apostate Kingdom of Israel. Jehovah was using the Assyrian World Power as his symbolic "ax" or "rod." (Isa. 10:5, 15) All that was so, so long ago, and yet what it prophetically foreshadowed must be brought to reality. This must occur in the near future, inside our generation. The agency, the symbolic "ax" or "rod" that Jehovah will use in wrecking all false religion—what is it? Like in the ancient past, the agency is not a part of Jehovah's visible organization, not a worshiper of Him as the one living and true God. The last book of the Bible describes it. Revelation, chapter seventeen, pictures it as a scarlet-colored "wild beast" with seven heads and ten horns, and which is ridden by the international religious har-

lot, Babylon the Great. According to Revelation 17:7-12, that "wild beast" must be the Eighth World Power, the international organization for world peace and security, the United Nations.

<sup>6</sup> In the Revelation picture, the "wild beast" destroys its rider, this symbolic "woman" that, figuratively speaking, has had immoral sexual relations with all the political rulers of the world. What else could the "woman" picture but the world empire of false Babylonish religion? This religious empire includes Christendom, the modern-day counterpart of the ancient apostate, renegade Kingdom of Israel, which had its capital at Samaria. To this day Christendom has refused to obey God's command to part company with the world empire of false Babylonish religion: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues. For her sins have massed together clear up to heaven, and God has called her acts of injustice to mind." (Rev. 18:4, 5) Hence, the destruction that befalls Babylon the Great as a whole will embrace Christendom, just as surely as destruction befell the apostate Kingdom of Israel and its capital city of Samaria.

<sup>7</sup> We today get a preview of what the ten-horned "wild beast" will do then to the world empire of false religion, when God's angel says to the apostle John: "And the ten horns that you saw mean ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they do receive authority as kings one hour with the wild beast [now the United Nations]. . . . And the ten horns that you saw, and the wild beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her devastated and naked, and will eat up her fleshy

<sup>6</sup> Whom does the rider of the "wild beast" picture, and why is the destruction of Christendom embraced in that of the rider?

<sup>7, 8.</sup> (a) What pictorial preview does the apostle John give us of the destruction of the world empire of false religion? (b) To whom does Heaven give the glory for that destruction, but what remains on earth after that start of the "great tribulation"?

5. In spite of occurring so long ago, why does that anti-religious campaign of Assyria have a bearing on our day?

parts and will completely burn her with fire.”—Rev. 17:12-16.

<sup>8</sup> Unrecognized by the United Nations “wild beast,” Jehovah will use it as his symbolic “ax” in destroying Babylon the Great, yes, in destroying hypocritical Christendom, the modern-day organization that corresponds with the ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel and its capital Samaria.\* This is why the credit for the destruction of all of Babylon the Great is given to Jehovah. In heaven the cry will ring out: “The salvation and the glory and the power belong to our God, because his judgments are true and righteous. For he has executed judgment upon the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he has avenged the blood of his slaves at her hand.” (Rev. 19:1, 2) Jehovah’s execution of judgment upon the international religious harlot, Babylon the Great, starts off the foretold “great tribulation,” without equal in human history. (Matt. 24:21, 22) This “tribulation” does not end with the destruction of Christendom and all the rest of Babylon the Great. There will still remain the seven-headed, ten-horned, scarlet-colored “wild beast,” the symbolic “ax” that Jehovah God uses in chopping down all parts of the world empire of false Babylonish religion.

<sup>9</sup> Here, as in the case of ancient Assyria, we can ask the question: Because of being used as Jehovah’s “ax,” does the United Nations “wild beast” become a part of His visible organization? We properly ask this question. Why? Because, back in December of 1918, the forerunner of the United Nations, namely, the League of Nations, was hailed as “the political expression of the kingdom of God on earth.” By whom? By the Federal Council of the

\* Compare the fate of Samaria as described in Ezekiel 23:1-10.

9. Why is it proper to ask the question as to whether the United Nations becomes a part of Jehovah’s organization because of its executive work, and from whom can we get the answer?

Churches of Christ in America. The failure of the League of Nations with respect to World War II created the need for it to be succeeded by the present-day world organization, the United Nations. (Rev. 17:8) The pope of Rome has declared it to be “the last hope of the world.” Are we to say, then, that the United Nations is a part of the visible earthly organization of Jehovah God? For an answer, all we have to do is to ask the half of the 144 member nations that do not profess to be Christian. As far as they are aware of it, they do not want to be or become part of Jehovah’s organization.

<sup>10</sup> After the United Nations “wild beast” is used by Jehovah as his “ax” in chopping down Babylon the Great, what attitude will that “wild beast” organization take toward the Wielder of the “ax”? Will its attitude be in favor of Jehovah God and his Christ or not? For an advance answer we go to Bible prophecy. Vividly the prophecy depicts how the worldly nations give their united support to the international organization for world peace and security. They thus present a united front against the heavenly kingdom of Jehovah’s anointed Son, Jesus Christ, “the Lamb of God.” Revelation 17:13, 14 says regarding the “wild beast” and its “ten horns”: “These have one thought, and so they give their power and authority to the wild beast. These will battle with the Lamb, but, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings, the Lamb will conquer them. Also, those called and chosen and faithful with him will do so.”—See also Revelation 19:19-21; John 1:29.

<sup>11</sup> There we have the answer to our question. There we have prophetically portrayed to us the attitude that is adopted by the symbolic “ax” that Jehovah God

10. After being used as an “ax” by Jehovah, what will be the attitude of the “wild beast” organization toward Him, as indicated by Revelation 17:13, 14?

11. Why does this match, duplicate, the attitude assumed by the Assyrian World Power after overthrowing Samaria?

wields when executing judgment upon Babylon the Great. The "ax" turns against its heavenly Wielder and tries to enhance itself over Him! In unitedly fighting against Jehovah's anointed Lord of lords and King of kings, the nations fight against Jehovah God himself in an organized way. Why? In order to maintain their national sovereignties on earth. How remarkably this matches, duplicates, the action taken by "the Assyrian" in the eighth century before the birth of Jesus, "the Lamb of God"! Insolent self-enhancement was the attitude assumed by the Assyrian World Power after it had overthrown Samaria and had deported the surviving Israelite apostates to Assyrian territories.

<sup>12</sup> In that ancient time the symbolic "ax" took to itself alone the glory and credit for its conquests and turned itself upon its User. This course reached its height of arrogance and insolence in the days of Sennacherib as emperor of Assyria. With his mighty military machine he invaded the land of the two-tribe Kingdom of Judah. (2 Ki. 18:9-25) His very invasion route is realistically mapped out in Isaiah 10:28-32, which tells how Sennacherib's army spread terror as it advanced, unopposed, from place to place, toward Jerusalem upon Mount Zion. Surely that city's inhabitants must have heaved a sigh of relief as the Assyrian army moved past Jerusalem, merely making a threatening wave of the hand toward it.

<sup>13</sup> Yet, Sennacherib's chief aim was that of bringing to ruin the holy city where King Hezekiah sat upon "Jehovah's throne." (1 Chron. 29:23) So, in order to frighten Jerusalem's inhabitants into revolting against King Hezekiah and handing over the city to Sennacherib, a de-

legation backed by a sizable Assyrian military force stood before Jerusalem's walls. A Hebrew-speaking Assyrian officer openly made the claim that Sennacherib had a commission from Jehovah and was the agent of Jehovah in subduing Jerusalem. For the sake of the Jews atop Jerusalem's wall, Sennacherib's mouthpiece presumptuously said:

<sup>14</sup> "Now is it without authorization from Jehovah that I have come up against this place to bring it to ruin? Jehovah himself said to me, 'Go up against this land, and you must bring it to ruin.'"—2 Ki. 18:9-25.

<sup>15</sup> For solid reasons, then, in his prophecy against the Assyrian, Jehovah exposed the God-defying purpose of the king of Assyria and asked: "Will the ax enhance itself over the one chopping with it, or the saw magnify itself over the one moving it back and forth, as though the staff moved back and forth the ones raising it on high, as though the rod raised on high the one who is not wood?" (Isa. 10:15) In other words, is the symbolic "ax," the Assyrian World Power, now going to use as its implement Jehovah God, who is not a carved wooden image for use in idolatry? The answer is No! And yet the Assyrian king was presuming to do so by threatening to make a ruinous assault upon Jerusalem and its temple.

<sup>16</sup> In order to give his people the assurance that the Assyrian World Power would not successfully enhance itself over Jehovah, the One chopping with the symbolic ax, he continued on to say: "Therefore the true Lord, Jehovah of armies, will keep sending upon his fat ones [Assyria's stout, sturdy ones] a wasting disease, and under his glory [or, plenty] a burning will keep burning away like the burning of a fire.

12. How did the Assyrian "ax" then act in the days of King Sennacherib, and to what extent did he at first make a threat to Jerusalem?

13, 14. What commission did Sennacherib claim to have, and what was the purpose of voicing such a claim to Jerusalem's inhabitants?

15. According to Isaiah 10:15, what was Sennacherib presuming to do by threatening to make a ruinous attack on Jerusalem?

16. In order to assure His people that Assyria would not succeed, what did Jehovah say that he would do, according to Isaiah 10:16-19?

And Israel's Light must become a fire, and his Holy One a flame; and it must blaze up and eat up his weeds and his thornbushes in one day. And the glory of his forest and of his orchard He will bring to an end, even from the soul clear to the flesh, and it must become like the melting away of one that is ailing. And the rest of the trees of his forest—they will become such a number that a mere boy will be able to write them down.”—Isa. 10:16-19.

<sup>17</sup> Jehovah of armies was “Israel’s Light” and “his Holy One.” So how was He going to burn down Sennacherib’s ground troops like numerous weeds and thornbushes and bring the Assyrian military officers to an end like upstanding trees of a forest or of an orchard? How would Jehovah reduce the number of the treelike officers of Sennacherib’s army so that the number of those who remained would be so small that a mere boy would be able to write down the number of them after counting upon his ten fingers?<sup>\*</sup> Also, how will the modern parallel of all of this be accomplished by Jehovah the Almighty God in the near future? Interesting questions these are, and they now deserve consideration.

#### THE ANTITYPES OF SENNACHERIB AND HEZEKIAH

<sup>18</sup> Inasmuch as that prophetic drama of the eighth century B.C.E. has a modern fulfillment, whom, then, did King Sennacherib portray and whom did King Hezekiah foreshadow? Their identification still stands good as given in the article entitled “Jehovah’s Universal Sovereignty Vindicated,” published in *The Watchtower* under date of April 1, 1945. In its open-

\* In contrast with this, note what is said in 2 Kings 18:23, 24.

17. The use of such figurative language by Jehovah raises what questions, both for back there and for the near future?

18, 19. What identification of whom Sennacherib and Hezekiah pictured, as given in earlier issues of *The Watchtower*, still holds good?

ing paragraph, on page 102, this article said: “Christ Jesus is the Greater Hezekiah; that is, he is the reigning King foreshadowed by Hezekiah. King Hezekiah’s aggressive opponent, Sennacherib, pictured Satan the Devil, whom Sennacherib worshiped and served in the interest of Satan’s world domination.” This identification was in line with the earlier issue of *The Watchtower*, that of September 1, 1942. In its article entitled “No Come-Back for Religion,” on pages 270, 271, when discussing the removal of Shebna and the appointing of Eliakim to be the royal steward of King Hezekiah, the fourth paragraph from the end said:

<sup>19</sup> “The change of stewardship made by King Hezekiah was in preparation for the approaching crisis which was to take place at the time of the attack of Sennacherib against Jerusalem. Sennacherib pictures the Devil with his organization in an assault upon Jehovah’s covenant people after the Lord’s coming to the temple and when he puts down the unfaithful and bestows his favor upon the faithful servants.”—See Isaiah 22:15-25.

<sup>20</sup> Who, then, were pictured by the inhabitants of Jerusalem when Sennacherib’s military delegation stood before Jerusalem’s walls and tried to downgrade King Hezekiah and to get the surrender of the city without a siege? Since that was about eight years after the Assyrian armies had destroyed the apostate ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel, King Hezekiah’s loyal subjects inhabiting Jerusalem pictured Jehovah’s Christian worshipers who have come out of modern-day Babylon the Great, including the modern counterpart of apostate Israel. They have taken their stand for Jehovah’s Messianic kingdom under his Greater Hezekiah, Jesus Christ.—Rev. 18:4.

20. Whom, then, do the inhabitants of Jerusalem under King Hezekiah picture?

<sup>21</sup> This pictures a specific time in the modern fulfillment of the prophetic drama. The time is when the world's "great tribulation" will have been in progress. Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, including Christendom, will have been destroyed by means of Jehovah's symbolic "ax." Because Jehovah's Christian witnesses have obeyed the divine command and have come out of Babylon the Great (including the modern-day counterpart of the apostate ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel), they do not share in the sins of Babylon the Great and therefore do not suffer any part of her "plagues" during the coming "great tribulation."

#### THE ATTEMPT OF THE ANTI-RELIGIOUS "AX"

<sup>22</sup> Here we need to remember that it is the Dragon, Satan the Devil, who gave "power" and "throne" and "great authority" to the symbolic "wild beast," to which a political "image" has been made since 1919 C.E. So the time of Sennacherib's threat to Jerusalem pictures the time when the nations that make up the "image" of the wild beast begin to battle for Satan the Devil and against the "Lamb of God," the Lord of lords and King of kings. (Rev. 17:14; 19:19-21) It is the dawn of the "great day of God the Almighty" upon the world situation called Har-Magedon. (Rev. 16:14-16) What does that betoken? It betokens that world developments have gone so far that Jehovah can once again properly raise the question first raised in the eighth century B.C.E.: "Will the ax enhance itself over the one chopping with it, or the saw magnify itself over the one moving it back and forth, as though the staff moved back and forth the ones raising it on high, as though the rod raised

21. What point of time in the fulfillment of the prophetic drama is here pictured, with Jehovah's Christian witnesses yet on the scene?

22. The nations will then begin fighting for whom and against whom, and what question of the eighth century B.C.E. will Jehovah again properly raise?

on high the one who is not wood?"—Isa. 10:15.

<sup>23</sup> By then Jehovah God the Almighty will drop the symbolic "ax" as being of no further use to Him. He now finds added reason for destroying it. (Isa. 10:16-19) It was never a part of His organization, and His temporary use of it as a symbolic "ax" does not make it a part of his theocratic organization. For that powerful reason Jehovah's Christian witnesses will never cooperate with the violent hordes of the modern-day "Assyrian" in destructive work against the world empire of false religion during the coming "great tribulation." Neither will the religious corporation that has long been associated with Jehovah's witnesses, namely, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, do so. This Society will not do so, even though since its incorporation in December of 1884 it has uncompromisingly exposed Babylon the Great and has pointed forward to its destruction at God's hand.

<sup>24</sup> In a way far different from how He uses the modern-day Assyrian "ax," Jehovah has used as his instrument the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Jehovah has used it as his agency in laying bare Scripturally the falsity of the religion of Babylon the Great, including Christendom. Jehovah has used this Society in warning all peoples (especially professed Christian people) to get out of that world empire of false religion before He executes judgment upon it. The publications of the Watch Tower Society have gone out to the whole world in the hundreds of millions of copies, in now

23. Why will Jehovah's Christian witnesses not cooperate with the modern-day counterpart of "the Assyrian" against Babylon the Great, and why neither the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania?

24. (a) How has Jehovah used the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania as his instrument in a manner unlike the way in which he uses the modern-day "Assyrian" as an "ax"? (b) Has this Society ever in its history tried to imitate the ancient "Assyrian" in self-enhancement, or will it do so in the "great tribulation"?

more than 160 languages. Never in all its operations for now more than ninety years has this instrument in Jehovah's hand tried to imitate the ancient "Assyrian" and "enhance itself over" the One using it, namely, the unreachably High One, the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.\* (Isa. 10:15) At the outbreak of the "great tribulation" the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania and its Branches around the earth will refuse to join the United Nations "wild beast" in its violent anti-religious actions against Babylon the Great.

<sup>25</sup> Should the Society survive that violent destruction of Babylon the Great (including Christendom), the Society will absolutely refuse to unite itself with the modern-day Assyrian "ax" in enhancing itself or magnifying itself over the One chopping with that "ax." Such a refusal would certainly move the Assyrian "ax" of today to take drastic action against the Society and the Christian witnesses of Jehovah whom the Society represents and serves. Such international action against these announcers of Jehovah's kingdom by Christ would be the way in which the United Nations "wild beast" fights against the "Lamb," the Lord of lords and King of kings. (Rev. 17:14) It would be the form in which the modern-day Assyrian "ax" tries to enhance itself over the One who will have done some chopping with it. The anti-religious political authorities

of the earth will be able to dissolve religious corporations that were legalized by the former law of the land, but never will they be able to dissolve the worldwide brotherhood, "the whole association of brothers," Jehovah's Christian witnesses, who are not incorporated as a religious body by worldly law.—1 Pet. 2:17; 5:9, NW; *Authorized Version*.

#### DELIVERANCE BY THE WAR AT HAR-MAGEDON

<sup>26</sup> Since we Christian witnesses of Jehovah are pictured by the inhabitants of Jerusalem under King Hezekiah, let us recall the insolent words of the Assyrian delegation back there before the walls of Jerusalem in 732 B.C.E.: "Who are there among all the gods of the lands that have delivered their land out of my hand, so that Jehovah should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" (2 Ki. 18:35) When that ancient prophetic drama is fulfilled in the latter half of the impending "great tribulation," are words similar to those going to be heard by the faithful remnant of spiritual Israelites and the "great crowd" of their loyal earthly companions? Rather than capitulate at that critical time to the modern-day Sennacherib, Satan the Devil, and his presumptuous earthly agents, we, as upholders of Jehovah's universal sovereignty, will call to mind his words of encouragement to Jerusalem on Mount Zion:

<sup>27</sup> "Do not be afraid, O my people who are dwelling in Zion, because of the Assyrian, who with the rod used to strike you and who used to lift up his own staff against you in the way that Egypt did. For yet a very little while—and the [divine] denunciation will have come to an end, and my anger, in their wearing away.

\* The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania was originally incorporated on December 13, 1884, under the laws of the state of Pennsylvania. At present it has legal authorization to have a maximum of 500 members, but at this writing it has only 397 members listed. The Society has a board of seven directors, for the management of the Society's affairs. According to the Society's charter at each annual meeting members of the Board of Directors are elected by all the incumbent members of the Society. After such annual election the Board of Directors elects its own officers, such as president of the Society, etc. According to the terms of the Charter the Society acts as the "administrative agency" for all of Jehovah's Christian witnesses earth wide. The Society maintains 96 Branch offices around the globe.

25. (a) The refusal to unite with the modern "Assyrian" ax in self-enhancement will result in what? (b) What will anti-religious political authorities be able to dissolve, and what not?

26, 27. (a) Words similar to what words of the ancient "Assyrian" may Jehovah's Christian witnesses hear at that time? (b) What words of encouragement, as recorded at Isaiah 10:24-26, will the upholders of Jehovah's sovereignty then call to mind?

And Jehovah of armies will certainly brandish against him a whip as at the defeat of Midian by the rock Oreb; and his staff will be upon the sea, and he will certainly lift it up in the way that he did with Egypt."—Isa. 10:24-26; Judg. 7:12 through 8:21; Ex. 14:1-31.

<sup>28</sup> When the situation becomes blackest for Jehovah's witnesses as the world's "great tribulation" nears its climax, what is to be expected? Back in 732 B.C.E., Sennacherib went to the limit in ridiculing Jehovah, as if He were no more powerful than the false gods of the idol-worshiping nations. (2 Ki. 19:10-13) Then King Hezekiah took the matter to Jehovah in his temple at Jerusalem. Jehovah not only gave reassurance to Hezekiah through the prophet Isaiah but also sent a defiance to Sennacherib, who was then at Libnah, some miles distant from Jerusalem. (2 Ki. 19: 8, 14-34) Thus the blasphemous Sennacherib was put on notice to expect disastrous defeat at the hands of the God whom he defied. Then action by Jehovah followed for vindication of Him as a real God!

<sup>29</sup> After such humiliating notification from Jehovah through the prophet Isaiah, how did Sennacherib sleep? Likely after such a rebuff, he determined that, next day, he would show this God, Jehovah, something! With his army of around 200,000 troops Sennacherib would see to that! But first some sleep for him! Suddenly a strange stillness occurred that could be felt. It settled down over the Assyrian troops who were spread out like weeds and thornbushes over the area. Their sleep was not normal! What had happened?

<sup>30</sup> "And it came about on that night that the angel of Jehovah proceeded to go out and strike down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyr-

28. When the situation looked blackest back in 732 B.C.E., what did King Hezekiah do, and what was Sennacherib put on notice to expect?

29, 30. (a) How may Sennacherib have felt after receiving that rebuke from Jehovah through Isaiah? (b) What then happened?

ians. When people rose up early in the morning, why, there all of them were dead carcasses. Therefore Sennacherib the king of Assyria pulled away and went and returned, and took up dwelling in Nineveh. And it came about that as he was bowing down at the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, themselves struck him down with the sword, and they themselves escaped."—2 Ki. 19:35-37.

<sup>31</sup> Aha! The Assyrian "ax" had failed to enhance itself successfully over the One chopping with it! Like that it will be during the coming "great tribulation" when the modern counterpart of Sennacherib and his army tries to enhance itself over the same God by threatening to wipe out His witnesses from the earth. What will follow in fulfillment of the ancient prophetic drama *The Watchtower* under date of April 1, 1945, pages 108, 109, explains:

. . . Then Jehovah's witnesses, sheltered within his Theocratic organization, will be under siege and will seem threatened with destruction by the overwhelming hosts of the antitypical Assyrian, Satan the Devil. Yet be not anxious of such a future: Jehovah will fight the battle for his remnant and their companions. He will perform his "strange act" at Armageddon, as he did thousands of years ago in the land of Judah, 'for his own sake and for the sake of his beloved King.' Doubtless by that same Son of God who served as the angel to slay 185,000 of Sennacherib's hosts and send him reeling back to his own violent death, namely, by his reigning King-Son, Christ Jesus, will Jehovah God go forth to battle and will wreak destruction upon the wicked challenger's world-organization. Like Sennacherib, Satan the Devil will see his visible organization on earth utterly laid low in death. Next he will see his invisible organization of demons dissolved in destruction, and will finally himself be wiped out violently. No demon power will be able to save him.

31. In fulfillment of that ancient drama, how will the modern Assyrian "ax" fail to enhance itself successfully against the One chopping with it?

<sup>32</sup> So, then, one of these days in the near future, we faithful witnesses of Jehovah will see the anti-religious "ax" being wielded in the almighty hand of our God against Babylon the Great. Terrible will it be in its execution of destruction upon that world empire of false religion! Do we need to be anxious at that time when the world's political element turns anti-religious and expresses hatred for the great international "harlot" with which it used to have immoral relations? No! The world already hates us, but Jehovah God and Jesus Christ do not. And when Jehovah starts swinging the anti-religious "ax," it will not be against us his loyal witnesses. Great will be our privilege of beholding Babylon the Great chopped down and burned with fiery destruction! We know now that, after that destruction, the anti-religious "ax" will try to enhance itself over its User, Jehovah. This will pose a fear-inspiring threat to our existence. But we need not then succumb to fear of the men who hate our God. May Jehovah then be our fear!

<sup>33</sup> At that awesome time the nations will have arrived in full force at Har-Magedon, the field for the final decisive battle between men and God. (Rev. 16:14-16) The

32. Why do we not need to be anxious ahead of time or fear when Jehovah begins wielding the symbolic "ax"?

33. What angel will Jehovah send forth to execute adverse judgment, and what will the outcome be for us witnesses and for Jehovah?

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### A Typing Job That Changed a Life

● In India, one of Jehovah's Christian witnesses who was assigned to speak at the "Divine Victory" District Assembly was able to arrange for a fellow worker at his place of employment to type up his notes. The worker became so engrossed in the material that he wanted to know whether he too could attend the assembly. Of course he could, and he did. The first day so impressed him that he applied for a leave of absence from his office. This being granted, he attended the entire assembly. Thereafter he began a serious study of the Bible, started going to all the meetings of Jehovah's witnesses and soon began telling to others what he was learning. Though coming from a staunch Hindu family and having to face opposition, he has stood firm, wanting to be a loyal disciple of Jesus Christ.

time will have arrived for Jehovah's greatest execution of adverse judgment. It will be upon that anti-religious "ax," then discarded by Jehovah. Never will that anti-religious "ax" be able to move itself with effectiveness to hack us to pieces. Jehovah of armies will send forth his greatest Angel, the Archangel Jesus Christ, to strike down all the attack forces of the Greater Sennacherib, Satan the Devil, and will plunge them into a sleep from which they will never wake up! What a deliverance for us that will be from the anti-religious "ax" at the climax of the "great tribulation"! But, most importantly, what a glorious vindication that will be for "the true Lord, Jehovah of armies," by means of his ever-faithful agent, Jesus Christ, the Greater Hezekiah!

<sup>34</sup> Take courage, then, all zealous witnesses of Jehovah! Never will the true religion, the Scriptural form of worship that we practice, be swept off the face of the earth. With this worship of the one living and true God, Jehovah, whose active witnesses we now are, we shall be safeguarded through the violent end of the entire wicked system of things and shall be introduced into Jehovah's indestructible new system of things. There his pure worship will flourish forever under the Greater Hezekiah, the King Jesus Christ.

34. What will come to pass with regard to the true religion and with regard to us who practice it now?

## FINDING THE MOST VALUABLE POSSESSION

**A**SURPRISINGLY large number of men and women are finding that there exists a possession so precious that it overshadows everything of material value. Their taking hold of it has had a wholesome effect on their lives, giving them a joy and a satisfaction that money cannot buy. What is this possession?

It is a fine relationship with the Creator, based on having an accurate knowledge of his will and living in harmony therewith. Those who have gained this relationship are so happy about it that they eagerly share with others the knowledge they have acquired.

Some have even given up material advantages in order to have more time to acquaint fellowmen with what they have found to be the most valuable possession. That is what an electrical engineer working for the Hitachi Manufacturing Company in Japan did. He relates how this came about:

"My work took me all over Japan, and often overseas, to Iran and the United States. On one trip, my wife accompanied me, and we stayed in an apartment at Placerville, near Sacramento, California. It was then that one of Jehovah's witnesses called on us, and we accepted copies of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. Since our English was limited, we did not get very far in reading them.

"Shortly thereafter we returned to live in a company apartment in Hitachi City, Japan. Hardly had we arrived home when my wife had a caller, who showed her the same two magazines—that is, the covers were the same, but the titles were written in Japanese. This immediately impressed my wife with the fact that the activity of Jehovah's witnesses was international. She gladly accepted the magazines. The Japanese Witness made repeated calls, and soon my wife was studying the Bible regularly with her."

In time, the husband also began to study and became just as enthusiastic about it as his wife. Both continued to progress to the point of getting baptized at a circuit assembly of Jehovah's witnesses in Adachi, Tokyo.

Appreciating how much accurate Bible knowledge had benefited them, both he and his wife wanted to devote as much time as possible in helping others to gain this knowl-

edge. They wanted to be "pioneers," spending at least one hundred hours each month in preaching and teaching Bible truths to others, in addition to caring for their little boy. The husband realized, however, that as long as he continued his full-time employment at the Hitachi Manufacturing Company he simply could not be a "pioneer." So what did he do? He continues:

"I resigned from my firm. My wife and I established ourselves as private tutors, teaching five or six junior high school children on most evenings. Instead of our calling on them, parents began calling on us, requesting tutoring for their children. Soon we were teaching more than twenty children. In July 1972 I became a regular pioneer and my wife followed in May 1973. Though we had to leave the Hitachi Company's apartment, we were able to obtain, in Hitachi City, a very fine apartment with two bedrooms and all other facilities, for just \$11 a month. By living reasonably, and eating nourishing foods, we have had no problem in continuing our full-time service to Jehovah."

As to the effect of this activity on their son, the husband says: "Our four-year-old boy, Shinya (meaning, 'It Is Truth'), loves the service most of all. Even on mornings when the rain is pelting down, Shinya cries out, '*Ikitai! Ikitai!*' ('I want to go! I want to go!') So go we do. Then, each afternoon, to conserve time and gasoline, we conduct home Bible studies and make return visits on interested persons in one district only, meeting back at the car when it is time to go home. Shinya usually goes along with me, and this makes it possible for me to make calls on womenfolk who might otherwise be embarrassed if I went alone."

This former electrical engineer and his wife are delighted with what they are now enjoying. He observes: "I have found that one of my greatest joys is that I am free from the tension of having to associate all day long with people whose thoughts are only of the world. Now the greater part of our association is with fellow Christians who are concerned about helping others to gain accurate Bible knowledge, and righteously inclined people who are studying the Bible with us. 'Pioneering' has brought real joy to our family!"

# ABUSE ENDURED

COULD a person's being reviled, spit upon, slapped or beaten bring glory to anyone? Generally acts of this nature would be humiliating to the individual. But there is nothing disgraceful about enduring such abusive action if it results from being a loyal disciple of Jesus Christ. The apostle Peter pointed this out to fellow believers, saying: "If he suffers as a Christian, let him not feel shame, but let him keep on glorifying God in this name." —1 Pet. 4:16.

The apostle Paul's experiences illustrate the sufferings a Christian may undergo and he explains why these brought him no sense of shame.

In discharging his commission as an apostle to the nations, Paul endured much—imprisonment, blows and near-deaths. About the year 55 C.E. he wrote to Christians at Corinth: "By Jews I five times received forty strokes less one, three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I experienced shipwreck, a night and a day I have spent in the deep; in journeys often, in dangers from rivers, in dangers from highwaymen, in dangers from my own race, in dangers from the nations, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the wilderness, in dangers at sea, in dangers among false brothers, in labor and toil, in sleepless nights often, in hunger and thirst, in abstinence from food many times, in cold and nakedness." —2 Cor. 11:24-27.

## Results in Glory

What the apostle here described was only a part of the sufferings he had undergone when, some five or six years afterward, he wrote to Christians at Ephesus. Aware that some Ephesian Christians might become fearful upon learning about all the tribulation he was undergoing, Paul, while imprisoned at Rome, encouraged them: "I ask you not to give up on account of these tribulations of mine in your behalf, *for these mean glory for you.*" —Eph. 3:13.

It was because of laboring among the non-Jews as a disciple of Jesus Christ that the apostle Paul incurred the wrath of his own countrymen. This finally led to his being imprisoned at Rome. For this reason he could speak of himself as suffering for "people of the nations," the Gentiles. He was a 'prisoner of Christ Jesus in their behalf.' —Eph. 3:1.

Was Paul's tribulation any reason for fellow believers to become fearful or ashamed? No, instead it meant glory for them. How so? For one thing, Paul's love had been so great that he had been willing to serve in their behalf despite any and all personal difficulties that might result therefrom. Where among people in the world could they find such a marvelous love in evidence?

Furthermore, the apostle's willingness to endure tribulation demonstrated to the

Ephesians that what they had as Christians was truly valuable. Their hope and their relationship with Jehovah God and Jesus Christ were worth suffering for, yes, worth dying for. Had Paul given up when faced with tribulation, it would have made it appear that there was little substance to Christianity. His faithful endurance, however, exalted and honored Christianity, for it showed that being a disciple of Jesus Christ was something that persons would hold to as of the highest value, worth any sacrifice. Thus Paul's tribulation meant "glory" for fellow believers.

The same is true today. The terrible suffering and abuse experienced by loyal disciples of Jesus Christ result in glory for the whole association of brothers throughout the earth. It is, of course, saddening to hear that devoted Christians have been cruelly beaten, sexually assaulted by mobs or abused in other ways. Nevertheless, their faithful endurance brings them a moral victory over their persecutors. Such victories add nobility and luster to true worship. They elevate the worth of genuine Christianity in the eyes of thinking persons who do not blindly 'follow the crowd for evil ends.' (Ex. 23:2) On the other hand, were a person to give in to persecutors, the worth of true Christianity would appear to be cheapened and degraded.

#### WHY PERSECUTED

When suffering personally or hearing about the tribulation of others, one may naturally ask, 'Why must this be?' That was the experience of God's servant David in ancient times. Surrounded by enemies, he felt as if God had abandoned him. Unaware of any guilt on his part, he asked: "My God, my God, why have you left me? Why are you far from saving me?"—Ps. 22:1.

Even when a person knows the reason for persecution, the weight of intense difficulties may still move him to ask, "Why?" For this reason it is especially important to have the right view of tribulation or persecution. Otherwise the extremes of certain situations may cause one to draw the wrong conclusions.

Devoted disciples of Jesus Christ should not be surprised when they are forced to undergo suffering for faithful adherence to the Holy Scriptures. "All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus," says the Bible, "will also be persecuted." (2 Tim. 3:12) Jesus Christ himself was a victim of intense persecution and finally was put to death on an execution stake. He told his disciples: "If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also."—John 15:20.

The reason for intense hatred of God's true servants is that the rest of mankind is controlled by another god, Satan the Devil. The Bible tells us: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) In connection with God's faithful servant Job, that "wicked one" claimed: "Everything that a man has he will give in behalf of his soul." (Job 2:4) This is really the Devil's contention respecting all who want to serve Jehovah God. Satan maintains that none are moved by love but that all, being motivated by selfish interests, can eventually be induced to turn their backs on the Creator. Jehovah God has permitted Satan to have time to prove his claim. Persecution, including the threat of violent death, has been one of the means by which the adversary has tried to break the integrity of God's servants.

By remaining faithful despite persecution, God's people have shared in proving the adversary to be a liar. Yes, their appreciating the real issue involved and their

looking to Jehovah to strengthen them have enabled them to maintain integrity. They know that even though they may be killed, men can never prevent their being restored to life. This has aided them, with the help of God's spirit, to act in harmony with Jesus' words: "He that is fond of his soul destroys it, but he that hates his soul in this world will safeguard it for everlasting life."—John 12:25.

#### JOY IN THE FACE OF PERSECUTION

Of course, great suffering in itself could never occasion joy. Much sadness results when homes are burned, land is confiscated, children are ripped away from their parents and when men and women are brutalized and even killed. Yet, despite all of this, a person can have a great inward joy.

There is the joy of knowing that one is doing the right thing, sticking loyally to one's God. By preserving a clean conscience in the face of persecution, the individual has the assurance that he stands approved before the Almighty. The apostle Peter made a point of this when he wrote: "If you are being reproached for the name of Christ, you are happy, because the spirit of glory, even the spirit of God, is resting upon you."—1 Pet. 4:14.

Firm faith in God as "the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him" also contributes immensely to the joy of those being persecuted for righteousness' sake. (Heb. 11:6) The prospect of that reward can result in such great joy that the worst of sufferings pale into insignificance. This is the way the Scriptures express it: "For though the tribulation is momentary and light, it works out for us a glory that is of more and more surpassing weight and is everlasting."—2 Cor. 4:17.

That is how Jesus Christ felt about the reward. His example can be a real source

of encouragement in faithful endurance. "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us," the Bible urges, "as we look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus. For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Indeed, consider closely the one who has endured such contrary talk by sinners against their own interests, that you may not get tired and give out in your souls."—Heb. 12:1-3.

As in the case of Jesus Christ, nothing, not even a person's death, will prevent Jehovah God from rewarding that faithful one. "I am convinced," wrote the apostle Paul to Christians at Rome, "that neither death nor life nor angels nor governments nor things now here nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creation will be able to separate us from God's love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:38, 39) God's love is manifested in sustaining his servants now, and in giving them the richest reward possible—life everlasting as persons approved by him. What greater joy could there possibly be! Should not that joy impel us to remain faithful even when faced with intense persecution?

Whether persecution is experienced by ourselves or others, we need to keep the real issue clearly in mind. We should never become frightened to the point of siding with the adversary by breaking integrity. May we, instead, always appreciate that faithful endurance under persecution brings glory to Jehovah's name and supports his side of the issue. It also means glory for the whole association of brothers. If we endure, we can look forward with confidence and joy to the glorious reward—life everlasting as approved servants of Jehovah God and loyal disciples of his Son.

# GENESIS

## A BASIS AND A PATTERN

**W**HAT book can compare with the Bible? Whether viewed as literature, poetry or drama, as history, as prophecy or as a guide for wise and right living, it is without peer. It consists of sixty-six "books," written by some forty penmen over a period of some sixteen centuries.

Most appropriately, the first book, Genesis, furnishes the basis and sets the pattern for the books that follow. Without it, much that is found in the rest of the Bible could not be understood, for the later writers not only presuppose familiarity with Genesis but also take for granted its being historical, which it truly is. For example, it furnishes the basis for the genealogical lists found in the books of First Chronicles, Matthew and Luke.

Genesis, and especially chapters 1 through 11, has been the favorite target of men who deny God's willingness to perform miracles. But Genesis, and particularly these eleven chapters, furnish the basis, or first floor, as it were, for what follows in the Bible. To charge it with being composed of myths is like trying to

imagine a sixty-five-story skyscraper resting on air, having no first floor or foundation on which to stand.\*

Originally, Genesis was just the first part of the Pentateuch (meaning "Five Books"), which comprises what are now the first five books of the Bible. Both the Jews and the early Christians accepted all of them as having been written by Moses. These five books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, were termed the Torah, or Law, and in the succeeding Scriptures this Law is credited to Moses twenty-seven times.

Logically, Genesis begins by telling of the creation of the universe. Among the sacred writings of the world's major religions only the Bible relates that God created something out of nothing, this being one of the meanings of the Hebrew word rendered "create." Time and again, the rest of the Bible portrays God as the Creator of the universe. Typical is Isaiah chapter 40, which encourages us to look to God in faith because of his great power and wisdom displayed in the creation of the starry heavens. See also Isaiah 45:12, 18; Acts 14:15; 17:24; Revelation 10:6.

Next, Genesis tells of six "days," or epochs, during which the Creator prepared the earth for man's habitation, and created man and woman.† This factual record is used as a basis for the Israelites' sabbath:

\* For answers to the usual objections raised to what appears in Genesis chapters 1 through 11, see *Did Man Get Here by Evolution or by Creation?* and *Is the Bible Really the Word of God?*

† One of America's leading geologists, Wallace Pratt, stated: "If I as a geologist were called upon to explain briefly our modern ideas of the origin of the earth and the development of life on it to a simple, pastoral people, such as the tribes to whom the Book of Genesis was addressed, I could hardly do better than follow rather closely much of the language of the first chapter of Genesis." Commenting on the six "days" he asked, "Are we not assured, indeed, that with the Creator, a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day?" —*The Lamp*, Fall 1971, Vol. 53, No. 3.

"For in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea and everything that is in them, and he proceeded to rest on the seventh day." (Ex. 20:11) At Hebrews, chapters 3 and 4, Christians are admonished to rest from their works by exercising faith, even as God rested from his. See also Psalm 95:11.

Chapter 2 of Genesis fills in further details on God's creating man and woman, and their becoming "one flesh." Jesus Christ quoted from this chapter in defining the Christian standards with regard to marriage and divorce. (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-6) And the apostle Paul uses this account in explaining the principle of headship among Christians and particularly in the Christian congregation. Man takes precedence, since 'man was formed first.'

—1 Tim. 2:13; 1 Cor. 11:7-9.

#### SIN'S ENTRY AND CHRIST'S RANSOM

Chapter 3 of Genesis tells of Eve's being deceived, of Adam's joining her in her transgression and of their being sentenced to death. Paul refers to this record in warning Christians of Satan's devices and in stressing woman's role of subjection: "I am afraid that somehow, as the serpent seduced Eve by its cunning, your minds might be corrupted." "Adam was not deceived, but the woman was thoroughly deceived."—2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14.

The Christian Greek Scriptures show that it was as a consequence of Adam's falling into sin and death that God was moved to show his incomparable undeserved kindness in providing the ransom. "For if by one man's trespass many died," God's free gift "by the one man Jesus Christ abounded much more to many." This gives the lie to the evolution teaching, which denies man's fall into sin. Only on the basis of the Genesis record does it make sense for Jesus to say that he came "to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many," or for John the Baptist to hail Jesus as "the

Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." Yes, "just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive."—Rom. 5:15; Matt. 20:28; John 1:29; 1 Cor. 15:22.

#### FROM ABEL TO THE TOWER OF BABEL

Genesis chapter 4 records the first human murder, Cain's killing his brother Abel. Warning us against hating our brothers, the apostle John refers to that event: "We should have love for one another; not like Cain, who originated with the wicked one and slaughtered his brother" because "his own works were wicked, but those of his brother were righteous." (1 John 3:11, 12) The fifth chapter tells that Enoch walked with God. Both Paul and Jude make reference to Enoch's righteous course.—Heb. 11:5; Jude 14, 15.

Noah's life and the flood through which he and his family passed alive are reported in Genesis chapters 6 through 9. Prophets such as Isaiah make reference to the flood and to Noah. Also, Jesus foretold that, just as an indifferent world perished at the time of the Flood, so it would be at the conclusion of this system of things. (Isa. 54:9; Matt. 24:37-39) Paul and Peter also refer to Noah and the flood. (Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5) Chapter 10 of Genesis gives us "The Table of the Nations." Archaeologist W. F. Albright stated that this "remains an astonishingly accurate document." Genesis chapter 11 describes the origin of Babel, or Babylon, and God's confusing of mankind's languages.

#### ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB

In the remaining chapters, 12 through 50, we find the detailed history of the three patriarchs of the nation of Israel. These are mentioned time and again in the rest of the Bible. In fact, Abraham's name appears in twenty-six of the later books, and his sojourning as an alien (and

also that of Isaac and Jacob) are dwelt on by both Stephen, the early Christian martyr, and by Paul. (Acts 7:2-16; Heb. 11:8-22) At Galatians 3:16, 29 we learn that Jesus Christ and his associate body members are the spiritual seed of Abraham. Thus attention is called to the fulfillment of God's promise made to Abraham, almost two thousand years previously, that 'all nations of the earth would certainly bless themselves by means of his seed.' (Gen. 22:17, 18; compare Genesis 3:15.) Truly, the Genesis record concerning the Abrahamic promise forms the basis for understanding much that follows in the Bible.

Genesis chapters 11 through 19 includes events involving Lot's family and Sodom and Gomorrah. Jesus warned against being like Lot's wife, who lost her life because of her disobedience in looking behind on doomed Sodom, and foretold that just as it was in the days of Lot, so it would be in the days of the Son of man. (Luke 17:28-32) In confirmation of Genesis, both Peter and Jude commented on the depravity of Sodom, and Jesus also referred to it as a wicked city, but classed cities that rejected his message of the Kingdom as even more reprehensible.—Luke 10:12; 2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7.

Abraham's son Isaac continued faithful and obedient, even as did his father, and Isaac's son Jacob did likewise. Jacob truly appreciated sacred things, as in his showing concern to obtain the birthright and in his wrestling all night with an angel to get a blessing, reference to which is also made at Hosea 12:3. On his deathbed Jacob also gave a most remarkable prophecy regarding his sons. (Gen. 49:1-28) But we are warned not to be like Esau, Jacob's brother, who did not appreciate sacred things.—Heb. 12:16; Gen. 25:34.

b Of Jacob's twelve sons, Judah and Jo-

seph were outstanding. Judah 'proved himself superior among his brothers.' (1 Chron. 5:2) Through Judah, Shiloh the Messiah was to come and, sure enough, Jesus Christ was born in that tribe. Jesus is termed the "Lion that is of the tribe of Judah."—Rev. 5:5; Gen. 49:10.

Genesis chapters 37 through 50 shows Joseph to have been blameless in every respect. Though sold into slavery, he kept his integrity toward his God Jehovah. As a result, he was blessed to the extent of becoming the prime minister of the world power of Egypt and the savior of its people, as well as of his father's family.—Acts 7:9-14.

#### GENESIS SETS THE PATTERN

Truly the book of Genesis furnishes us the basis for ever so much that is recorded in the rest of the Bible. Not only that, but it also sets the pattern for the rest of God's Word as being a revelation of his will and purpose for humankind. Genesis also establishes the Bible pattern in being true as regards human nature, in being marked with candor and in revealing God's attributes or qualities.

Genesis 1:26-28 makes known Jehovah God's purpose regarding the earth and man—for man to be fruitful, fill the earth, subdue it and exercise dominion over its other creatures. The Lord's Model Prayer and the prophecy at Revelation 21:4—about there being no more death, neither sorrow, crying or pain—assure us that someday God's will and purpose for earth and man will be fully realized. Genesis 3:15 gives the first Messianic prophecy, that the spiritual seed of the woman, namely, the Christ, would bruise the head of the serpent, Satan the Devil, reference to which is made at Romans 16:20. Genesis 22:15-18 reveals Abraham's role in connection with that seed, even as noted above.

The book of Genesis, with regard to human nature, also tells how Satan got at Adam through Eve, first deceiving her. Unprincipled men likewise use women to ensnare their victims, even as the Philistines used Delilah to trap Samson. (Judg. 16:4-21) God spoke of Adam as dominating his wife. And through the centuries, how unjustly have many men followed Adam in dominating their wives! Also true to fallen human nature is Cain's murderous jealousy of Abel, as well as that of the brothers of Joseph, because of his being favored by his father Jacob.

In further revealing fallen human nature, Genesis tells of the weaknesses of God's servants: Noah's getting drunk; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn son, 'defiling his father's couch' by having relations with one of Jacob's concubines; the murderous cruelty of Simeon and Levi, two other sons of Jacob, who wiped out the males of a whole clan because one of them ravished their sister. In passing, let it be noted that this candor found in Genesis refutes the claims of critics that early writers attributed imaginary fine qualities to their personalities!—Gen. 49:3-7.

In particular does the book of Genesis set the pattern for the Bible books that follow by revealing to us Jehovah God's matchless qualities and how he rewards those who serve him and follow a course of uprightness. Certainly in telling of his creating all things seen and unseen it testifies to the Creator's *love* as the Life-Giver, his infinite *wisdom* and his almighty *power*. God's commissioning Adam to fill the earth, subdue it and rule over earth's animal creation was also an expression of His *love* toward Adam and his offspring to come. Jehovah's prohibition placed on the fruit of a certain tree called attention to his *wisdom* and *justice*. Only by meet-

ing such a test of obedience could Adam show that he appreciated all his blessings.

When Adam and Eve rebelled, God's *justice* came into play as well as his consistency by sentencing them to death. Yet by letting them live on the outside of the Garden of Eden, God extended *mercy* to their yet unborn offspring, giving them an opportunity for life.

When earth became corrupt, due to angelic sons of God coming down to earth and marrying the daughters of men, God displayed *power*—cleansing the earth by means of the Deluge. But again, in *mercy*, he spared Noah and his family and representative kinds of all the animals. God's *justice* is also seen in his decreeing, after the Flood, the death sentence for human murderers. In another display of his *mercy* God provided for Lot and his daughters when He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

God's qualities of *justice*, *wisdom* and *love* are also made prominent in the way he dealt with the patriarchs. We read of Abraham, and later of Isaac, that they died "old and satisfied." (Gen. 25:8; 35:29) What a rewarding life Jacob led with his large flocks and large family, and how mightily Joseph was rewarded by Jehovah God for his integrity-keeping!

There is no question about it. The book of Genesis provides the basis for so much that is recorded in the succeeding sixty-five books of the Bible. It also sets the pattern for them by being a revelation of God's will and purpose for humankind.

Truly of Genesis, even as of the rest of the Sacred Scriptures, it can be said that it "is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work."—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.



# Questions from Readers

- Was Delilah, who cut Samson's hair, an Israelite or a Philistine?

The Scriptural evidence suggests that she was an Israelite.

Jehovah raised up Samson and gave him His spirit, to 'save Israel' from the enemy Philistines. (Judg. 13:1, 5, 25) After years of doing that Samson "fell in love" with Delilah. Though the Bible does not state her nationality, many Bible commentators think that she was a Philistine courtesan after whom Samson lusted. But God's Word does not say that. It says that in visiting Delilah judge Samson was going to see a woman whom he loved.—Judg. 16:4.

Furthermore, when the Philistines tried to get her help, they did not use an appeal based on patriotic sentiment as they likely would have done if Delilah had been a fellow Philistine.

work."—S. Tim. 3:16, 15.

tine. Rather, they bribed her with a very large sum of money.—Judg. 16:5.

Earlier, three thousand Judeans had, out of fear, helped the Philistines to capture Samson. (Judg. 15:9-13) But Delilah did so out of greed. She pestered Samson until he revealed the secret of his strength. Then she brought the enemy down on him. Later, God enabled Samson to undo the effect of this treachery even as He had helped on that earlier occasion.—Judg. 15: 14; 16:28-30.

Consequently, it seems that Delilah was an Israelite woman who was bribed into being a traitor for the Philistines. But the Bible lists Samson as an example of faith.—Heb. 11:32-34.

## "WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

## February 22: The “Ax” and the Chopper, ¶1-19.

Page 40. Songs to Be Used: 17, 21.

**February 29: The "Ax" and the Chopper, ¶20-27,  
and The Coming Deliverance from the Anti-  
Religious "Ax," ¶1-17. Page 45. Songs to Be  
Used: 11, 7.**

March 7: The Coming Deliverance from the Anti-Religious "Ax," ¶18-34. Page 51. Songs to Be Used: 1, 3.