

JUNE 15, 2012

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY EDITION

STUDY ARTICLES

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JUNE 15, 2012

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ENGLISH

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

STUDY ARTICLES 1, 2 PAGES 7-18

What Bible prophecies can help you to understand developments that lie ahead on the world scene? These two articles will examine the prophecies of the immense image in Daniel chapter 2 and the wild beast and its image in Revelation chapters 13 and 17. See what insights the Bible provides about the future.



STUDY ARTICLE 3 PAGES 20-24

A person who submits to Christian baptism agrees to put God's interests first in his life. Meditating on the decisions made by devoted servants of Jehovah in Bible times can encourage us to examine the way we are using our time, energy, and resources.

STUDY ARTICLE 4 PAGES 25-29

This article shows how the prophets and Bible writers were "borne along by holy spirit" and why we can be sure that the Bible is of divine origin. (2 Pet. 1:21) The article also discusses what will help us to maintain our appreciation for the Bible.

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COVER: To reach as many people as possible, witnessing is done in many locations and situations. That includes this floating market in Damnoen Saduak.



THAILAND

POPULATION
66,720,000

PUBLISHERS
3,423

REGULAR PIONEERS
824

“The Secret” We Learned From Our Sacred Service

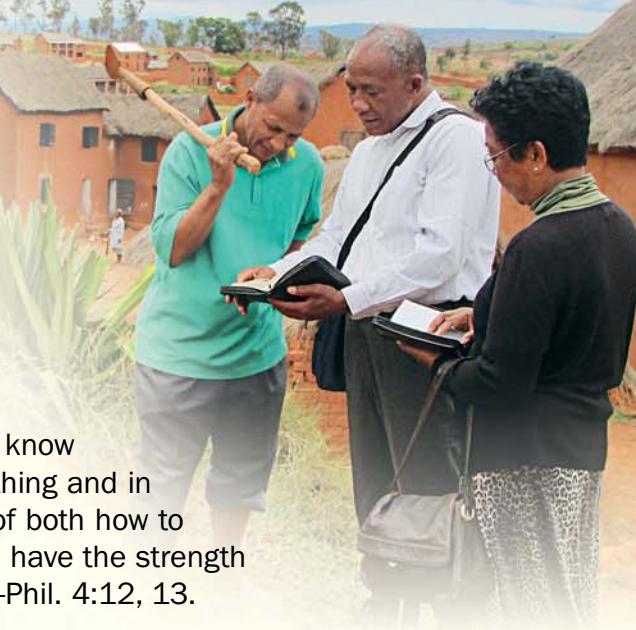
AS TOLD BY OLIVIER RANDRIAMORA

“I know indeed how to be low on provisions, I know indeed how to have an abundance. In everything and in all circumstances I have learned the secret of both how to be full and how to hunger . . . For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me.”—Phil. 4:12, 13.

THESE words of the apostle Paul have long been of great encouragement to me and my wife, Oly. Like Paul, we have learned “the secret” by relying fully on Jehovah while serving Him here in Madagascar.

When Jehovah’s Witnesses started studying the Bible with Oly’s mother in 1982, Oly and I were already engaged. I too accepted a Bible study, and Oly joined me later. We were married in 1983, got baptized in 1985, and immediately thereafter commenced auxiliary pioneering. In July 1986, we became regular pioneers.

In September 1987, we began to serve as special pioneers. Our first assignment was a small town in northwest Madagascar where there was no congregation. There are some 18 main ethnic groups as well as countless clans in Madagascar, and social customs and traditions vary considerably. Malagasy is the official language, but there are also distinct dialects. So we set about learning the dialect spoken in our new assignment, and that helped us to be more readily accepted in the community.



Initially, I gave a public talk every Sunday, after which Oly would dutifully clap. We were the only ones present. We also had the full program for the Theocratic Ministry School, with Oly using an imaginary householder. How relieved we were when the visiting circuit overseer kindly suggested that we modify the meetings!

Because the mail was unreliable, we did not receive our monthly allowance regularly. Thus, we learned how to be low on provisions. On one occasion, we did not have enough money for the bus fare to attend a circuit assembly, held about 80 miles (130 km) away. We recalled some good advice from a fellow Witness: “Tell Jehovah about your problems. After all, it is his work that you are doing.” So we prayed and decided to go on foot. Just before we left, however, a brother unexpectedly visited us and gave us a monetary gift—just enough for the bus fare!

CIRCUIT WORK

In February 1991, I was appointed a circuit overseer. By then, our small group had grown to 9 publishers, 3 of whom were baptized, and we



Madagascar, called the Big Red Island, is the fourth-largest island on earth. Its soil is red, and numerous unique species thrive there.



had an average meeting attendance of 50. After being trained, we served a circuit in the capital, Antananarivo. In 1993, we were reassigned to a circuit in the eastern part of the country. Living conditions there were very different from those in the city.

To reach congregations and isolated groups, we traveled on foot, sometimes up to 90 miles (145 km) through densely forested mountains. We kept our luggage to the bare minimum. Of course, whenever the circuit overseer's public talk included a slide presentation, as it sometimes did in those days, our load was heavier. Oly carried the slide projector, while I lugged a 12-volt car battery.

We often covered about 25 miles (40 km) a day in order to reach the next congregation. En route, we tramped up and down mountain tracks, traversed rivers, and sloshed through mud. At times, we slept along the roadside, but we usually tried to find a village where we could seek lodging for the night. Sometimes we asked total strangers to let us stay overnight. After finding accommodations, we would begin to prepare a meal. Oly would borrow a cooking pot and go to the nearest river or lake to fetch water. In the meantime, I would borrow an ax to chop firewood for cooking. Everything took time. Occasionally, we bought a live chicken, which we then had to slaughter and clean.

After the meal, we fetched more water for bathing. Sometimes we slept in the kitchen. When it rained, we might sleep leaning against a

wall, trying to keep ourselves dry from the leaking roof.

We always made it a point to witness to our hosts. When we reached our destination, the kindness and hospitality of our Christian brothers and sisters were overwhelming. Their heartfelt appreciation for our visit made up for any inconveniences we experienced along the way.

When staying in the homes of fellow Witnesses, we enjoyed helping them with the household chores. This, in turn, freed them to join us in the field ministry. We did not expect luxuries or special food, which our hosts could not afford.

VISITING ISOLATED GROUPS

We enjoyed visiting isolated groups, where brothers welcomed us with a schedule packed with activity. We rarely had time to "rest up a bit." (Mark 6:31) At one place, a Witness couple had invited all their Bible students—40 of them—to their home so that we could share in their studies. Oly joined the sister in conducting 20 or so studies, and I was with the brother for the other 20. As one student left, the next study commenced immediately. Later in the day, we took a break to have the congregation meetings, after which the Bible study sessions resumed. The marathon day might end after eight o'clock in the evening!

When we visited another group, all of us headed for a neighboring village about eight o'clock in the morning. We were all wearing old clothes. After a long trek through the forest, we reached

the territory about noon. We put on clean clothes and immediately began preaching from door to door. The homes were few and the publishers many. So we covered the entire territory in about 30 minutes. Then we headed for the next village. After preaching there, we faced the long trek home. At first, this pattern made us a little discouraged. We had expended a lot of time and effort but had engaged in the house-to-house work for only about an hour. However, the local Witnesses did not complain. They remained enthusiastic.

One isolated group at Taviranambo was located near a mountaintop. There we found a Witness family living in a one-room house. Another small structure nearby served as the meeting place. Suddenly, our host began to call out in a loud voice, "Brothers!" From the next mountaintop, a voice answered, "Oh!" Our host called out again, "The circuit overseer has arrived!" The response came, "Yeah!" The message was apparently relayed to others living still farther away. Soon people began to gather, and when the meeting started, more than 100 were present.

TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES

In 1996 we were reassigned to a circuit closer to Antananarivo, in the central highlands. This circuit also had its share of unique challenges. There was no regular public transportation to the outlying areas. We were scheduled to visit a group at Beankàna (Besakay), about 150 miles (240 km) from Antananarivo. After some negotiation with the driver, we boarded a small truck traveling in that direction. There were some 30 other passengers in and on the truck, some lying on the roof and others hanging on the back.

As so often happens, the vehicle soon broke down, and we continued on foot. After we had trudged along for some hours, a large truck came by. It was already packed with people and goods, but the driver stopped anyway. We got on, accepting the standing-room-only situation. Later we came to a river, but the bridge was under repair. Once again we set off on foot and finally arrived at a small village, where some special pioneers were living. Although no visit was scheduled, we spent the time preaching with them while waiting for the bridge to be repaired and for another means of transport to pass.



Traveling was one of the biggest challenges we faced

We enjoy sharing in Bible studies

It was a week before a vehicle came by, and we resumed our journey. The road was full of huge potholes. We frequently had to help push the vehicle through knee-deep water, often stumbling and falling in the process. In the wee hours of the morning, we arrived at a small village, where we got off. Leaving the main road, we continued on foot through rice paddies, waist-deep in muddy water, toward our destination.

That was our first visit to the area, so we decided to witness to some who were working in the rice fields and to ask for directions to where the local Witnesses lived. How delighted we were to discover that those workers were, in fact, our spiritual brothers!

ENCOURAGING OTHERS TO ENTER THE FULL-TIME MINISTRY

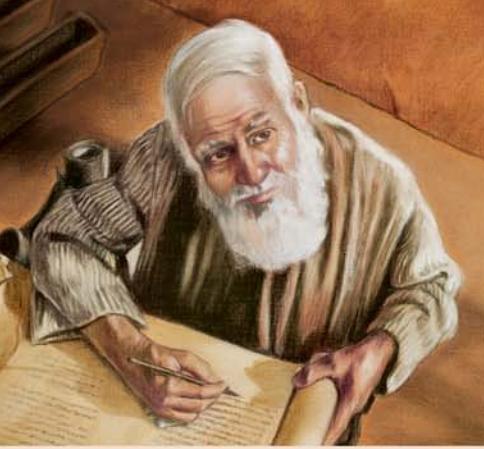
Over the years, it has brought us great joy to see the results of encouraging others to en-

ter the full-time ministry. While visiting one congregation that had nine regular pioneers, we encouraged each pioneer to set the goal of helping one other publisher to enter the pioneer ranks. When we visited six months later, the number of regular pioneers had mushroomed to 22. Two pioneer sisters had encouraged their fathers, who were both elders, to become regular pioneers. These brothers had, in turn, motivated a third elder to join them. A short while later, the third elder was appointed a special pioneer. Later, he and his wife began in the circuit work. What of the other two elders? One serves as a circuit overseer, and the other is a Kingdom Hall construction volunteer.

We thank Jehovah every day for his help, as we recognize that we cannot accomplish anything in our own strength. True, we sometimes feel tired and become ill, yet we are happy when we reflect on the results of our ministry. Jehovah makes his work progress. We are happy to have a small share in it, serving him now as special pioneers. Yes, we have learned "the secret" by relying on Jehovah, "who imparts power" to us.



*We have learned
"the secret"
by relying
on Jehovah*



JEHOVAH IS “A REVEALER OF SECRETS”

“Truly the God of you men is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a Revealer of secrets.”—DAN. 2:47.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What details about the future has Jehovah revealed to us?

What do the first six heads of the wild beast represent?

What relationship do we find between the wild beast and the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar?

WHICH governments will be dominating the earth when God’s Kingdom brings an end to human rulership? We know the answer—it has been disclosed to us by the “Revealer of secrets,” Jehovah God. He enables us to discern the identity of those governments through the writings of the prophet Daniel and the apostle John.

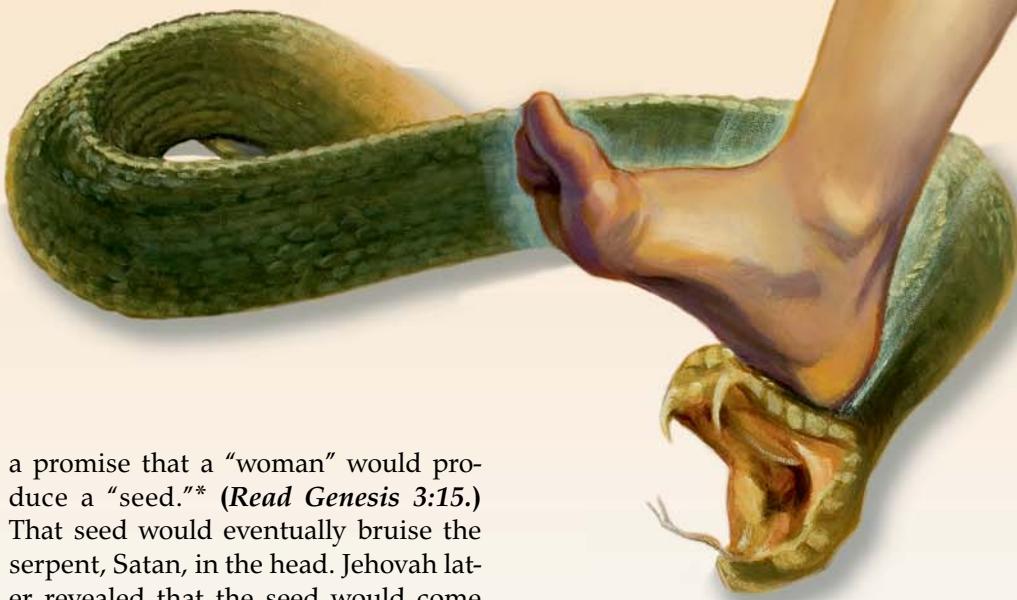
² Jehovah revealed to those men a series of visions involving a succession of beasts. He also told Daniel the meaning of a visionary dream depicting an immense metal image. Jehovah had those accounts recorded and preserved in the Bible for our benefit. (Rom. 15:4) He did so to strengthen our hope that soon his Kingdom will crush all human governments.—Dan. 2:44.

³ Taken together, the accounts of Daniel and John not only identify eight kings, or human rulerships, but also show the sequence in which those powers would appear. However, we can accurately understand those prophecies only if we comprehend the meaning of the very first prophecy recorded in the Bible. Why so? Because the outworking of that prophecy is the uniting theme of the Bible. It is, in a way, the cord on which all other prophecies hang.

THE SERPENT’S SEED AND THE WILD BEAST

⁴ Soon after the rebellion in Eden, Jehovah made

1. **2.** What has Jehovah revealed to us, and why has he done so?
3. In order to understand prophecy accurately, what do we first need to comprehend, and why?
4. Who make up the seed of the woman, and what will that seed do?



a promise that a "woman" would produce a "seed."^{*} (*Read Genesis 3:15.*) That seed would eventually bruise the serpent, Satan, in the head. Jehovah later revealed that the seed would come through Abraham, belong to the nation of Israel, be a Judean, and be a descendant of King David. (Gen. 22:15-18; 49:10; Ps. 89:3, 4; Luke 1:30-33) The principal part of that seed proved to be Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:16) The secondary part of the seed is made up of the spirit-anointed members of the Christian congregation. (Gal. 3:26-29) Jesus and these anointed ones unite to form God's Kingdom, the instrument with which God will crush Satan.—Luke 12:32; Rom. 16:20.

⁵ That first prophecy given in Eden also stated that Satan would produce a "seed." His seed would express enmity, or hatred, for the seed of the woman. Who make up the seed of the serpent? All those who imitate Satan's hatred of God and oppose God's people. Throughout history, Satan has organized his seed into various politi-

* This woman represents Jehovah's wifelike organization that is made up of spirit creatures in heaven.—Isa. 54:1; Gal. 4:26; Rev. 12:1, 2.

5, 6. (a) How many great powers do Daniel and John identify? (b) What do the heads of the wild beast of Revelation stand for?

cal movements, or kingdoms. (Luke 4:5, 6) However, only relatively few human kingdoms have exerted a major influence on God's people, whether the nation of Israel or the congregation of anointed Christians. Why is this fact significant? Because it explains why the visions of Daniel and John describe a total of only eight such great powers.

⁶ At the close of the first century C.E., the resurrected Jesus gave the apostle John a series of stunning visions. (Rev. 1:1) In one of them, John saw the Devil, represented as a dragon, standing on the shore of a vast sea. (*Read Revelation 13:1, 2.*) John also saw a strange beast rise from that sea and receive great authority from the Devil. An angel later indicates to John that the seven heads of a scarlet beast, which is an image of the beast of Revelation 13:1, represent "seven kings," or governments. (Rev. 13:14, 15; 17:3, 9, 10) At the time of John's writing, five of those had fallen, one was currently in power, and one had "not yet arrived." What is the identity of those kingdoms, or world powers? Let us con-

sider each of the heads of the beast described in Revelation. We will also see how the writings of Daniel added detailed insights into many of these kingdoms, sometimes centuries before they came into existence.

EGYPT AND ASSYRIA —THE FIRST TWO HEADS

⁷ The first head of the beast represents Egypt. Why? Because Egypt was the first major power to express enmity toward God's people. The descendants of Abraham—through whom the promised seed of the woman would come—grew numerous in Egypt. Then, Egypt oppressed Israel. Satan attempted to wipe out God's people before the seed could arrive. How? By motivating Pharaoh to execute all male Israelite children. Jehovah thwarted that attempt and liberated his people from enslavement to Egypt. (Ex. 1:15-20; 14:13) Later he established the Israelites in the Promised Land.

⁸ The second head of the beast represents Assyria. This mighty kingdom also attempted to wipe out God's people. True, Jehovah used Assyria as his instrument to punish the ten-tribe kingdom for their idolatry and rebellion. However, Assyria then attacked Jerusalem. Satan may have had the goal of obliterating the royal line that would eventually lead to Jesus. That assault was not part of Jehovah's purpose, and he miraculously delivered his faithful people by destroying the invaders.—2 Ki. 19:32-35; Isa. 10:5, 6, 12-15.

7. What does the first head represent, and why?

8. What is the identity of the second head, and what did it attempt to do?

BABYLON—THE THIRD HEAD

⁹ The third head of the beast that John saw represents the kingdom of which Babylon was capital. Jehovah allowed the Babylonians to overthrow Jerusalem and to take his people into captivity. Before permitting this humiliation, though, Jehovah warned the rebellious Israelites that such a tragedy would strike them. (2 Ki. 20:16-18) He foretold that the line of human kings who were said to sit on "Jehovah's throne" in Jerusalem would be removed. (1 Chron. 29:23) However, Jehovah also promised that a descendant of King David, one who had "the legal right," would come and reclaim that authority.—Ezek. 21:25-27.

¹⁰ Another prophecy indicated that the Jews would still be worshipping at the temple in Jerusalem when the promised Messiah, or Anointed One, arrived. (Dan. 9:24-27) An earlier prophecy, written before Israel was taken captive to Babylon, stated that this person would be born in Bethlehem. (Mic. 5:2) If those prophecies were to be fulfilled, the Jews would have to be liberated from captivity, return to their homeland, and rebuild the temple. But it was not Babylon's policy to release captives. How would that challenge be overcome? Jehovah revealed the answer to his prophets.—Amos 3:7.

¹¹ The prophet Daniel was among the captives taken to Babylon. (Dan. 1:1-6) Jehovah used him to reveal the succession of kingdoms that would follow that world power. Jehovah

9, 10. (a) What did Jehovah allow the Babylonians to do? (b) In order for prophecy to be fulfilled, what would have to happen?

11. The Babylonian Empire is pictured in what different ways? (See footnote.)

disclosed these secrets, using a number of different symbols. For instance, he caused Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar to have a dream of an immense image that was made of various metals. (*Read Daniel 2:1, 19, 31-38.*) Through Daniel, Jehovah revealed that the gold head of the image symbolized the Babylonian Empire.* The world power after Babylon is pictured by the breasts and arms of silver. What would that power be, and how would it treat God's people?

MEDO-PERSIA—THE FOURTH HEAD

12 More than a century before Daniel's time, Jehovah revealed through the prophet Isaiah details about the world power that would conquer Babylon. Jehovah disclosed not only the manner in which the city of Babylon would be defeated but also the name of the conqueror. That leader was Cyrus the Persian. (Isa. 44:28–45:2) Daniel received two other visions regarding the Medo-Persian World Power. In one, the kingdom was depicted as being like a bear that was raised up on one side. It was told to "eat much flesh." (Dan. 7:5) In a separate vision, Daniel saw this dual world power symbolized by a two-horned ram.—Dan. 8:3, 20.

13 Jehovah used the Medo-Persian Empire to fulfill prophecy by overthrowing Babylon and restoring the Israelites to their homeland. (2 Chron. 36:22, 23) However, this same power later

* Babylon is pictured both by the head of the image in the book of Daniel and by the third head of the wild beast described in Revelation. See the chart on pages 12-13.

12, 13. (a) What did Jehovah reveal about the defeat of Babylon? (b) Why is Medo-Persia fittingly depicted as the fourth head of the wild beast?

came close to eradicating God's people. The Bible book of Esther records a plot hatched by the prime minister of Persia, a man named Haman. He arranged for the extermination of all the Jews who lived in the vast Persian Empire and set a specific date on which the genocide was to happen. It was only due to Jehovah's intervention that His people were once again protected from the animosity of Satan's seed. (Esther 1:1-3; 3:8, 9; 8:3, 9-14) Medo-Persia, therefore, is fittingly depicted as the fourth head of the beast of Revelation.

GREECE—THE FIFTH HEAD

14 The fifth head of the wild beast of Revelation represents Greece. As Daniel had revealed earlier when he interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream, this same power is symbolized by the copper belly and thighs of the image. Daniel also received two visions that provide remarkable details both about the nature of this empire and about its most prominent ruler.

15 In one vision, Daniel saw Greece depicted as a leopard with four wings, indicating that this empire would conquer swiftly. (Dan. 7:6) In another vision, Daniel described how a goat with a prominent single horn quickly kills a two-horned ram, Medo-Persia. Jehovah told Daniel that the goat symbolized Greece and the large horn depicted one of its kings. Daniel further recorded that the large horn would be broken and four smaller horns would grow in its place. Even though this prophecy was written hundreds of years before Greece became dominant, every detail came true. Alexander the Great, the most prominent

14, 15. What details does Jehovah reveal about the ancient Greek Empire?

king of ancient Greece, led the charge against Medo-Persia. This horn was soon broken, though, the great king dying at the height of his power and at only 32 years of age. Then, his kingdom was eventually divided among four of his generals.—*Read Daniel 8:20-22.*

16 After conquering Persia, Greece ruled over the land of God's people. By this time, the Jews were resettled in the Promised Land and had rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem. They were still God's chosen people, and the rebuilt temple was still the center for true worship. However, in the second century B.C.E., Greece, the fifth head of the wild beast, attacked God's people. Antiochus IV, one of the heirs to Alexander's divided empire, placed a pagan altar on the grounds of the temple in Jerusalem and made practicing the Jewish religion a crime punishable by death. What an act of hatred by part of Satan's seed! Soon, though, Greece was supplanted as the world power. What would be the sixth head of the wild beast?

ROME—THE SIXTH HEAD, “FEARSOME AND TERRIBLE”

17 Rome was the dominant power when John received the vision of the wild beast. (Rev. 17:10) This sixth head played a key role in the fulfillment of the prophecy recorded at Genesis 3:15. Satan used Roman officials to deliver a blow that temporarily crippled the seed, bruising it “in the heel.” How so? They tried Jesus on the false charge of sedition and had him executed. (Matt. 27:26) But that wound soon healed because Jehovah resurrected Jesus.

16. What did Antiochus IV do?

17. The sixth head played what key role in fulfilling Genesis 3:15?

18 The religious leaders of Israel conspired with Rome against Jesus, and the majority of the nation also rejected him. Thus, Jehovah abandoned natural Israel as his people. (Matt. 23:38; Acts 2:22, 23) He now chose a new nation, “the Israel of God.” (Gal. 3:26-29; 6:16) That nation was the congregation of anointed Christians made up of both Jews and Gentiles. (Eph. 2:11-18) After Jesus' death and resurrection, the seed of the serpent continued to express animosity toward the seed of the woman. On more than one occasion, Rome attempted to wipe out the Christian congregation, the secondary part of the seed.*

19 In the dream that Daniel interpreted for Nebuchadnezzar, Rome is depicted by the legs of iron. (Dan. 2:33) Daniel also saw a vision that well describes not only the Roman Empire but also the next world power that would grow out of Rome. (*Read Daniel 7:7, 8.*) For centuries, Rome appeared to her enemies to be “fearsome and terrible and unusually strong.” However, the prophecy foretold that “ten horns” would grow from this empire and one in particular would gain prominence. What are these ten horns, and what is the identity of the small horn? In what way does the small horn correspond to the description of the giant image seen by Nebuchadnezzar? The article on page 14 will consider the answers.

* Although Rome destroyed Jerusalem in 70 C.E., that act of aggression was not part of the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15. By that time, fleshly Israel was no longer God's chosen nation.

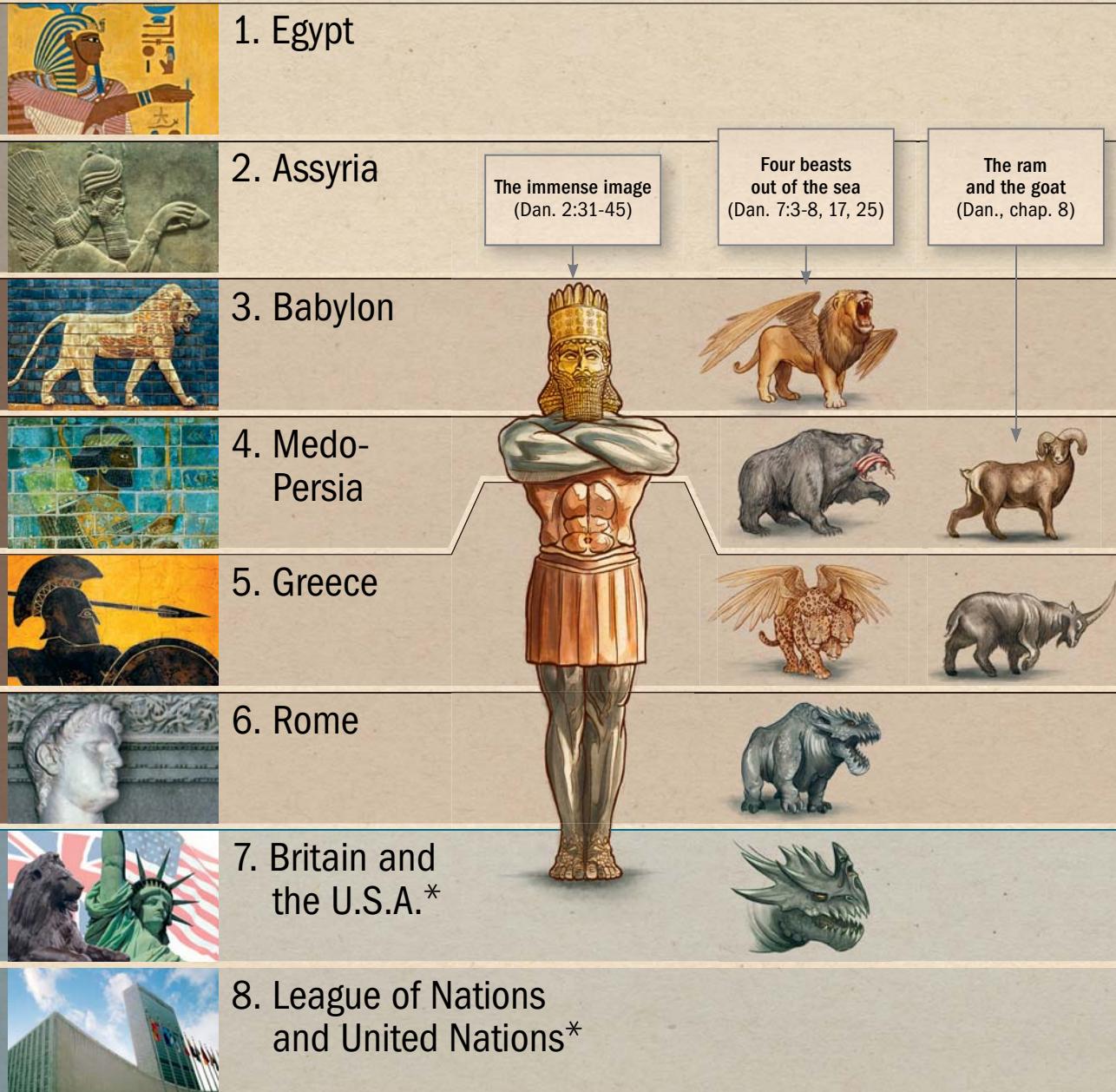
18. (a) What new nation did Jehovah choose, and why? (b) How did the serpent's seed continue to express animosity toward the seed of the woman?

19. (a) How does Daniel describe the sixth world power? (b) What will another article consider?

EIGHT KINGS REVEALED

Taken together, the Bible books of Daniel and Revelation not only identify eight kings, or human rulerships, but also show the sequence in which they would appear. We can decipher those prophecies, as we understand the very first prophecy recorded in the Bible.

PROPHECIES IN DANIEL



Throughout history, Satan has organized his seed into various political movements or kingdoms. (Luke 4: 5, 6) However, only a relatively few human kingdoms have exerted a major influence on God's people,

whether the nation of Israel or the congregation of anointed Christians. The visions of Daniel and John describe a total of only eight such great powers.

PROPHECIES IN REVELATION



The seven-headed wild beast
(Rev. 13:1-10, 16-18)

The two-horned beast
promotes the
making of an image
of the wild beast
(Rev. 13:11-15)



GOD'S PEOPLE





JEHOVAH REVEALS WHAT “MUST SHORTLY TAKE PLACE”

“A revelation by Jesus Christ, which God gave him, to show his slaves the things that must shortly take place.” —REV. 1:1.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Which parts of the immense image symbolize the Anglo-American World Power?

How does John depict the relationship between the Anglo-American World Power and the United Nations?

How do Daniel and John portray the end of human rulership?

THE prophecies of Daniel and John correspond in ways that allow us to understand the meaning of many present and future world events. What can we learn by comparing John’s vision of the wild beast, Daniel’s account of the fearsome beast that had ten horns, and Daniel’s interpretation of the immense image? And what should a clear understanding of those prophecies move us to do?

2 Let us address John’s vision of the wild beast. (Rev., chap. 13) As we saw in the preceding article, the first six heads of the beast represent Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. All of those expressed hatred for the seed of the woman. (Gen. 3:15) Rome, the sixth head, remained a dominant political force for centuries after John wrote down his vision. Eventually, the seventh head would take the place of Rome. Which political world power did that prove to be, and how would it treat the seed of the woman?

BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES RISE TO POWER

3 We can identify the seventh head of the wild beast of Revelation chapter 13 by comparing John’s vision with Daniel’s vision of the frightening ten-horned beast.* (*Read Daniel 7:7, 8, 23, 24.*) The beast that Daniel saw represented the Roman World Power. (See the chart on pages 12-13.) In the fifth century C.E., the Roman Empire began to fragment. The

* In the Bible, the number ten often symbolizes a complete group—in this case, all the kingdoms that grew from the Roman Empire.

1, 2. (a) The prophecies of Daniel and John allow us to do what? (b) What do the first six heads of the wild beast represent?

3. What does the frightening ten-horned beast represent, and what do the ten horns picture?

ten horns sprouting from the head of that fearsome beast represent kingdoms that grew out of that empire.

4 Four of the horns, or kingdoms, that sprouted from the head of the ferocious beast receive special mention. Three are plucked out by another horn, "a small one." This was fulfilled when Britain, a former outpost of the Roman Empire, grew to prominence. Until the 17th century, Britain was a relatively insignificant power. Three other regions of the old Roman Empire—Spain, the Netherlands, and France—were far more influential. Britain plucked those powers out one by one, removing them from their positions of prestige. By the mid-18th century, Britain was on its way to become the dominant power on the world scene. But it had not yet become the seventh head of the wild beast.

5 Though Britain gained dominance, colonies in North America broke away. Even so, the United States was allowed to grow mighty, protected by British naval power. By the time the Lord's day began in 1914, Britain had built the largest empire in history and the United States had become the greatest industrial power on earth.* During World War I, the United States forged a special partnership with Britain. The seventh head of the beast had now emerged as the Anglo-American World Power. How did this head treat the seed of the woman?

* Although the components of the dual world power have existed since the 18th century, John describes it as it would appear at the start of the Lord's day. In fact, the fulfillment of the visions recorded in Revelation takes place during "the Lord's day." (Rev. 1:10) It was not until World War I that the seventh head began operating as a united world power.

4, 5. (a) What did the small horn do? (b) What is the identity of the seventh head of the wild beast?

6 Shortly after the start of the Lord's day, the seventh head launched an attack on God's people—the remaining ones of Christ's brothers on earth. (Matt. 25:40) Jesus indicated that during his presence, a remnant of the seed would be active on earth. (Matt. 24:45-47; Gal. 3:26-29) The Anglo-American World Power waged war with those holy ones. (Rev. 13:3, 7) During World War I, it oppressed God's people, banned some of their publications, and threw representatives of the faithful slave class into prison. The seventh head of the wild beast as much as killed the preaching work for a period of time. Jehovah fore-saw this dramatic event and revealed it to John. God also told John that the secondary part of the seed would be revived to increased spiritual activity. (Rev. 11:3, 7-11) The history of Jehovah's modern-day servants confirms that those events took place.

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN WORLD POWER AND THE FEET OF IRON AND CLAY

7 What is the relationship between the seventh head of the wild beast and the immense image? Britain—and by extension, the United States—grew out of the Roman Empire. What, though, about the feet of the image? They are described as an amalgam of iron and clay. (*Read Daniel 2:41-43.*) This description coincides with the time when the seventh head—the Anglo-American World Power—would come to prominence. Just as an iron structure mixed with clay is weaker than solid iron, so too the Anglo-American World

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6. How has the seventh head treated God's people?
 7. What is the relationship between the seventh head of the wild beast and the immense image?

Power is weaker than the power from which it emerged. How?

8 At times, the seventh head of the beast has displayed ironlike characteristics. For example, it proved its power by winning World War I. During World War II, the ironlike power of the seventh head was also evident.* After that war, the seventh head at times still displayed ironlike characteristics. However, from early on, that iron has been mixed with clay.

9 Jehovah's servants have long sought to understand the symbolic meaning of the feet of the image. Daniel 2:41 describes the mixture of iron and clay as one "kingdom," not many. The clay, therefore, represents elements within the sphere of influence of the Anglo-American World Power, elements that make it weaker than the solid iron of the Roman Empire. The clay is referred to as "the offspring of mankind," or the common people. (Dan. 2:43) In the Anglo-American World Power, people have risen up to claim their rights through civil rights campaigns, labor unions, and independence movements. The common people undermine the ability of the Anglo-American World Power to act with ironlike strength. Also, opposing ideologies and close election results that do not end up in a clear majority have weakened the power base of even popular leaders, so that they have no clear mandate to implement their poli-

* Daniel foresaw the terrible destruction this king would cause during that war, writing: "In a wonderful [awful] way he will cause ruin." (Dan. 8:24) For example, the United States caused terrible ruin on an unprecedented scale when it dropped two atomic devices on an enemy of the dual world power.

8, 9. (a) How did the seventh world power manifest ironlike strength? (b) What does the clay in the feet of the image represent?

cies. Daniel foretold: "The kingdom will partly prove to be strong and will partly prove to be fragile."—Dan. 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:1-3.

10 In the 21st century, Britain and the United States have continued their special partnership, often acting together in world affairs. The prophecies about the immense image and the wild beast confirm that the Anglo-American World Power will not be replaced by some future world power. This last world power may be weaker than that represented by the legs of iron, but it will not disintegrate on its own.

11 Does the number of toes of the image have special meaning? Consider: In other visions, Daniel mentions specific numbers—for example, the number of horns on the heads of various beasts. Those numbers are significant. However, when describing the image, Daniel does not mention the number of toes. Therefore, the number seems no more significant than the fact that the image had multiple arms, hands, fingers, legs, and feet. Daniel does specifically mention that the toes would be made of iron and clay. From his description, we can conclude that the Anglo-American World Power is the one that will be dominating when the "stone" representing God's Kingdom hits the feet of the image.—Dan. 2:45.

ANGLO-AMERICA AND THE TWO-HORNED WILD BEAST

12 Though the Anglo-American World Power is a mixture of iron and clay, the visions that Jesus gave to John

10, 11. (a) What is the future of "the feet"? (b) What can we conclude about the number of toes?

12, 13. The two-horned wild beast represents what, and what does it do?

WHO MAKE UP “ALL THESE KINGDOMS”?

The prophecy at Daniel 2:44 states that God’s Kingdom “will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms.” That prophecy refers only to the kingdoms pictured by the various parts of the image.

What about all other human governments? The parallel prophecy in Revelation reveals the larger picture. It shows that “the kings of the entire inhabited earth” will be gathered against

Jehovah on “the great day of God the Almighty.” (Rev. 16:14; 19:19-21) Hence, not only the kingdoms of the image but also all other human governments will be destroyed at Armageddon.

show that this power would continue to play a key role during the last days. How so? John saw a vision of a two-horned wild beast that spoke like a dragon. What does this strange beast represent? It has two horns, so it is a dual power. John is again seeing the Anglo-American World Power but in a special role.—*Read Revelation 13:11-15.*

¹³ This wild beast promotes the making of an image of the wild beast. John wrote that the image of the beast would appear, disappear, and then rise again. That is exactly what happened to an organization promoted by Britain and the United States, one that was intended to unite and represent the world’s kingdoms.* This organization appeared after World War I and was known as the League of Nations. It disappeared with the onset of World War II. During that war, God’s people declared that according to the prophecy in Revelation, the image of the wild beast would ascend again. And rise it did—as the United Nations.—Rev. 17:8.

¹⁴ John described the image of the beast as “an eighth king.” In what sense? It is not depicted as an eighth head

* See *Revelation—Its Grand Climax at Hand!* pages 240, 241, 253.

14. In what sense is the image of the wild beast “an eighth king”?

on the original wild beast. It is only an image of that beast. Any power it has comes from its member nations, especially from its key backer, the Anglo-American World Power. (Rev. 17:10, 11) But it does receive authority to act as a king to carry out a specific task, one that triggers a chain of events that will change history.

THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST DEVOURS THE HARLOT

¹⁵ According to John, upon a scarlet-colored wild beast—the image of the wild beast—rides a symbolic harlot, dominating it. She bears the name “Babylon the Great.” (Rev. 17:1-6) This harlot fittingly stands for all false religion, foremost of which are the churches of Christendom. Religious organizations have given their blessing to the image of the beast and have tried to exert influence over it.

¹⁶ However, during the Lord’s day, Babylon the Great has seen the waters, the people who support her, dry up dramatically. (Rev. 16:12; 17:15) For example, when the image of the beast first appeared, the churches of Christendom—an influential part of Babylon the Great-dominated the Western world.

15, 16. The harlot symbolizes what, and what has happened to her support?

Today, the churches and their ministers have lost the respect and support of the masses. In fact, many people believe that religion contributes to or causes conflict. An increasingly vocal and militant group of Western intellectuals is calling for the end of religion's influence on society.

17 False religion, however, will not just fade away. The harlot will remain a potent force, attempting to bend kings to her will until God plants an idea in the hearts of those in power. (*Read Revelation 17:16, 17.*) Soon Jehovah will cause the political elements of Satan's system, as represented by the United Nations, to attack false religion. They will destroy her influence and devastate her riches. Such an event may have

17. What will soon happen to false religion, and why?



seemed unlikely just decades ago. Today, the harlot teeters on the back of the scarlet-colored beast. Even so, she will not slip slowly from her seat. Her tumble will be sudden and violent.—Rev. 18: 7, 8, 15-19.

THE BEASTS COME TO THEIR END

18 After false religion is destroyed, the wild beast, Satan's earthly political set-up, will be goaded into an attack on God's Kingdom. Unable to reach into heaven, the kings of the earth will vent their rage on those on earth who support God's Kingdom. The result is inevitable. (Rev. 16:13-16; 17:12-14) Daniel describes one aspect of the final battle. (*Read Daniel 2:44.*) The wild beast mentioned at Revelation 13:1, its image, and the two-horned wild beast will be destroyed.

19 We are living in the days of the seventh head. No more heads will appear on this beast before it is annihilated. The Anglo-American World Power will be the dominant world power when false religion is eradicated. The prophecies of Daniel and John have been fulfilled to the smallest detail. We can be confident that the destruction of false religion and the battle of Armageddon will soon come. God has revealed these details in advance. Will we pay attention to the prophetic warnings? (2 Pet. 1:19) Now is the time to take sides with Jehovah and to support his Kingdom.—Rev. 14:6, 7.

18. (a) What will the wild beast do, and with what outcome? (b) Daniel 2:44 refers to God's Kingdom as destroying which kingdoms? (See box on page 17.)

19. What confidence can we have, and it is now time to do what?

When did the Anglo-American World Power become the seventh world power of Bible prophecy?

■ The giant metal image seen by King Nebuchadnezzar does not represent all world powers. (Dan. 2:31-45) It depicts only the five that ruled from Daniel's time forward and that had significant dealings with God's people.

Daniel's description of the metal image conveys the idea that the Anglo-American World Power would emerge from, rather than conquer, Rome. In the image, Daniel sees the iron in the legs extending down through the feet and into the toes. (In the feet and toes, the iron is mixed with clay.)* That description indicates that the Anglo-American World Power would emerge from the legs of iron. History bears out the accuracy of that description. Britain, a former part of the Roman Empire, began rising to prominence in the late 1700's. Later, the United States of America became a nation to be reckoned with. However, the seventh world power of Bible prophecy had not yet been formed. Why not? Britain and the United States had not yet acted together in a significant way. This occurred during World War I.

By that time, "the sons of the kingdom" were active mostly in the United

* The clay that is mixed with iron represents elements *within* the realm of the ironlike Anglo-American World Power. Over time, this clay has made it difficult for that power to be as strong as it would like to be.

Eight brothers from the Watchtower headquarters were sent to prison in June 1918

States, their world headquarters being located in Brooklyn, New York. (Matt. 13:36-43) Members of the anointed class were actively preaching in countries dominated by the British Empire. During World War I, the British and American powers forged a special bond when fighting mutual political enemies. They also, in the increased nationalism created by the war, expressed enmity toward those who were part of the seed of God's "woman," banning publications they produced and imprisoning those taking the lead in the preaching work.—Rev. 12:17.

From the perspective of Bible prophecy, then, the seventh world power did not become established in the late 1700's when Britain first began its rise to prominence. Rather, it attained that position at the beginning of the Lord's day.*

* This explanation updates the information discussed on page 57, paragraph 24, of the *Daniel's Prophecy* book and depicted in the charts on pages 56 and 139.





"My own mouth will recount your righteousness, all day long your salvation."—PS. 71:15.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What factors determined the life course of Noah, Moses, Jeremiah, and Paul?

What evaluation on your part will determine how you use your life?

Why are you determined to put Jehovah's service first?

WHY PUT JEHOVAH'S SERVICE FIRST?

WHEN you become a dedicated and baptized follower of Jesus, you take a very serious step. Your dedication to God is the most serious decision that you as an individual can make. It is as if you are saying: 'Jehovah, I want you to be my Master in every aspect of my life. I am your servant. I want you to determine how I should spend my time, what my priorities should be, and how I should use my resources and talents.'

² If you are a dedicated Christian, this is basically what you promised Jehovah. You are to be commended for your decision; it was the right and wise thing to do. What, though, does your recognizing Jehovah as your Master imply as to the way you use your time? The examples of Noah, Moses, Jeremiah, and the apostle Paul can help us to examine that question. Each of them was a whole-souled servant of Jehovah. Our situation is similar to theirs. The decisions they made with regard to their principal pursuits can encourage us to examine how we are using our time.—Matt. 28:19, 20; 2 Tim. 3:1.

BEFORE THE FLOOD

³ Jesus drew a parallel between Noah's time and ours. "Just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be," he said. They were "eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and they took no note until the flood came and swept them all away." (Matt. 24:37-

1, 2. (a) What is indicated by a person's dedicating himself to Jehovah? (b) How can we profit by considering the choices made by Noah, Moses, Jeremiah, and Paul?

3. How are our days similar to those of Noah?

39) Most of mankind today go about their lives heedless of the urgency of our times. They take no note of the warnings that God's servants proclaim. Many even deride the idea of God's intervening in human affairs—as people did in Noah's day. (2 Pet. 3:3-7) Yet, in that hostile environment, how did Noah use his time?

4 After being informed of God's intentions and receiving his commission, Noah built an ark to preserve men and animals alive. (Gen. 6:13, 14, 22) Noah also proclaimed Jehovah's impending judgment. The apostle Peter calls him "a preacher of righteousness," indicating that Noah strove to help his neighbors appreciate the gravity of their situation. (*Read 2 Peter 2:5.*) Do you think that it would have been reasonable for Noah and his family to focus their efforts on developing a business, getting ahead among their contemporaries, or establishing a comfortable lifestyle? Of course not! Knowing what lay ahead, they avoided such distractions.

THE CHOICES OF AN EGYPTIAN PRINCE

5 Next, let us look at the example of Moses. He was raised in an Egyptian palace as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. As a young prince, he was educated "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." (Acts 7:22; Ex. 2:9, 10) This education was likely intended to prepare him for a career in Pharaoh's court. He could have become prominent in the most powerful government of the day,

4. How did Noah use his time after receiving his commission from Jehovah, and why?

5, 6. (a) The education Moses received was likely meant to prepare him for what? (b) Why did Moses shun the possibilities offered to him in Egypt?



People gave no heed to Noah's warning

having the luxuries, privileges, and pleasures that such a position would afford him. But was enjoyment of these things Moses' objective?

6 Because of the training that he received from his real parents early in life, Moses likely knew what Jehovah had promised his ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses exercised faith in those promises. He must have thought carefully about his future and his loyalty to Jehovah. So when the time came to choose between being an Egyptian prince or an Israelite slave, what did he decide? Moses chose "to be ill-treated with the people of God rather than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin." (*Read Hebrews 11:24-26.*) Later, he followed Jehovah's guidance regarding how he should use his life. (Ex. 3:2, 6-10) Why did Moses do that? Because he believed God's promises. He concluded that there was no future for him in Egypt. Indeed, that nation was soon thereafter crushed by ten plagues from God. Do you see the lesson in this for those dedicated to Jehovah today?

Rather than focusing on a career or any pleasures of this system of things, our focus must be on Jehovah and his service.

JEREMIAH KNEW WHAT WAS COMING

7 Another man who put Jehovah's service first was the prophet Jeremiah. Jehovah commissioned Jeremiah as his prophet to preach a message of judgment on apostate Jerusalem and Judah. In a sense, Jeremiah lived "in the final part of the days." (Jer. 23:19, 20) He knew perfectly well that the system in which he lived would not continue as it was.

8 What was the logical consequence of Jeremiah's convictions? He did not try to build a future in that doomed system. What sense would there be in doing so? However, for a time Jeremiah's secretary, Baruch, did not see things clearly. So God inspired Jeremiah to tell his secretary: "Look! What I have built up I am tearing down, and what I have planted I am uprooting, even all the land itself. But as for you, you keep seeking great things for yourself. Do not keep on seeking. For here I am bringing in a calamity upon all flesh, . . . and I will give you your soul as a spoil in all the places to which you may go."—Jer. 45:4, 5.

9 We cannot be sure what "great things" Baruch was seeking for himself.* We do know, though, that they

* See *God's Word for Us Through Jeremiah*, pages 104-106.

7. How was Jeremiah's situation similar to ours?

8, 9. (a) Why did Baruch's thinking need to be corrected? (b) What should we have in mind when making plans?

were things with no future, things that would end when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. Do you see in that a lesson for us? Obtaining life's necessities requires that we make some plans for the future. (Prov. 6:6-11) But how wise would it be to invest a lot of time and energy in pursuits that are not of lasting value? Granted, Jehovah's organization continues to plan for new Kingdom Halls, branch facilities, and other theocratic projects. These endeavors, however, do have a future because their objective is that of promoting Kingdom interests. It would be appropriate for all of Jehovah's dedicated people to set similar priorities when they make plans. Are you convinced in your heart that you are "seeking *first* the kingdom and [Jehovah's] righteousness"?—Matt. 6:33.

"I CONSIDER THEM AS A LOT OF REFUSE"

10 Finally, let us consider the example of Paul. Before his conversion to Christianity, he had what seemed to be a promising future. He had studied Jewish law with one of the most famous teachers of his day. He had received authority from the Jewish high priest. And he was making greater progress in Judaism than were many of his contemporaries. (Acts 9:1, 2; 22:3; 26:10; Gal. 1:13, 14) Yet, all of that changed when Paul realized that Jehovah was no longer blessing the Jews as a nation.

11 Paul recognized that a career in the Jewish system had no value from Jehovah's point of view; it had no future. (Matt. 24:2) This former Phari-

10, 11. (a) On what had Paul centered his efforts prior to becoming a Christian? (b) Why did Paul's objective change completely?

see went so far as to say that compared with his new, enlightened understanding of God's purposes and the privilege of the Christian ministry, what he once thought was important he now considered to be "a lot of refuse." Paul abandoned his pursuits in Judaism and dedicated the rest of his days on earth to preaching the good news.—*Read Philippians 3:4-8, 15; Acts 9:15.*

EXAMINE YOUR PRIORITIES

12 Noah, Moses, Jeremiah, Paul, and many others like them spent the majority of their time and energy in theocratic pursuits. They are good examples for us. Of course, the greatest of all of Jehovah's dedicated servants is Jesus. (1 Pet. 2:21) After being baptized, Jesus devoted the rest of his life on earth to preaching the good news and honoring Jehovah. The obvious conclusion for a Christian who recognizes Jehovah as his Master is that serving Him should have priority in his life. Is it yours? And how can the pursuit of theocratic goals be reconciled with necessary secular activities?—*Read Psalm 71:15; 145:2.*

13 Over the years, Jehovah's organization has repeatedly encouraged Christians to consider prayerfully whether they could pioneer. For various reasons, the circumstances of some faithful servants of Jehovah do not allow them to devote themselves to the preaching work an average of 70 hours per month. They should not feel bad about this. (1 Tim. 5:8) But what about you? Is pioneering really beyond your reach?

12. What did Jesus focus on after his baptism?

13, 14. (a) All dedicated Christians are encouraged to consider what? (b) What satisfaction can God's people enjoy?

14 Reflect back on the joy that so many of God's people had during the Memorial season this year. During March, a special provision allowed auxiliary pioneers to choose whether they would devote 30 or 50 hours to the field service. (Ps. 110:3) Millions shared in auxiliary pioneer service, and congregations seemed to radiate exceptional excitement and joy. Could you arrange your affairs so as to experience similar joy more often? At the end of each day, it gives a dedicated Christian great satisfaction to be able to say, "Jehovah, I did everything I could in your service."

15 If you are approaching the end of the schooling required of you, you may find yourself in good health and with few responsibilities. Have you seriously considered entering the regular pioneer ranks? No doubt, school counselors sincerely believe that it is in your best interests to pursue higher education and to plan for a secular career. Yet, their confidence lies in a social and financial system that has no lasting future. On the other hand, by pursuing a theocratic career, you will be pursuing truly worthwhile and lasting goals. And you will be following Jesus' perfect example. Such a wise decision will make you happy. It will protect you. And it will show that you are determined to live up to your dedication to Jehovah.—Matt. 6:19-21; 1 Tim. 6:9-12.

16 Many of God's servants today work long hours to care for the basic necessities of their families. Yet, some may be working more hours than necessary.

15. What should be a young Christian's objective as regards secular education?

16, 17. What questions arise concerning secular employment and other pursuits?

(1 Tim. 6:8) The commercial world is doing its utmost to convince us that we cannot live without its many products and every new model that comes on the market. But true Christians do not want Satan's world to dictate their priorities. (1 John 2:15-17) As for those who have retired from secular employment, what better way to use their time than in the pioneer ministry, putting Jehovah's service first?

17 All dedicated servants of Jehovah can ask themselves: What is my prima-

ry objective in life? Am I putting Kingdom interests first? Do I imitate Jesus' self-sacrificing attitude? Am I heeding Jesus' advice to follow him continually? Could I adjust my schedule in order to devote more time to the Kingdom-preaching work or to other theocratic pursuits? Even if my circumstances do not at the moment allow me to expand my service, am I continuing to cultivate a self-sacrificing spirit?

"TO WILL AND TO ACT"

18 The zeal of God's people is a joy to behold. However, some may not feel particularly inclined to pioneer or qualified to do so—even if their circumstances would allow it. (Ex. 4:10; Jer. 1:6) Then what? Might this not be a suitable subject for prayer? Certainly. Paul told fellow believers that Jehovah, "for the sake of his good pleasure, is acting within you in order for you both to will and to act." (Phil. 2:13) If you do not feel motivated to expand your ministry, ask Jehovah to give you both the desire and the ability to do so.—2 Pet. 3:9, 11.

19 Noah, Moses, Jeremiah, Paul, and Jesus were all devoted men. They used their time and energy to proclaim Jehovah's warning message. They did not allow themselves to be distracted. The end of the present system of things is imminent; hence, all of us who have dedicated our lives to God need to be sure that we are continuing to do our utmost in following these excellent Scriptural examples. (Matt. 24:42; 2 Tim. 2:15) By doing so, we can please Jehovah and reap his rich blessings.—*Read Malachi 3:10.*

18, 19. About what might you pray, and why would such a request be pleasing to Jehovah?



Have you seriously considered entering the regular pioneer ranks?



"THEY WERE BORNE ALONG BY HOLY SPIRIT"

"Prophecy was at no time brought by man's will, but men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit."—2 PET. 1:21.

POINTS TO PONDER

How was God's message transmitted by holy spirit to Bible writers?

What evidence proves that the Bible is inspired of God?

What can you do daily to maintain your appreciation for God's Word?

WHENCE do we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? Why is the world the way it is? What happens to us when we die? People around the globe ask these questions. How would we know the answers to these and other important questions if we did not have the inspired Word of God? Without the Holy Scriptures, our primary teacher would be personal experience. With personal experience as our teacher, could we ever have the same sentiments as the psalmist had toward "the law of Jehovah"?—*Read Psalm 19:7.*

² The sad reality, though, is that some have allowed the love they first had for Bible truth to cool off. (Compare Revelation 2:4.) They no longer walk in the way that pleases Jehovah. (Isa. 30:21) That does not have to happen to us. We can and should work at maintaining our appreciation for the Bible and its teachings. The Bible is an important gift from our loving Creator. (Jas. 1:17) What will help us deepen our appreciation for "the word of God"? A key is reflecting on how Bible writers were guided to write the Scriptures. That involves calling to mind some of the abundant evidence of its inspiration. Doing so should stimulate us to read from God's Word daily and to apply its counsel.—Heb. 4:12.

"BORNE ALONG BY HOLY SPIRIT"—HOW?

³ Over a period of 1,610 years—spanning from 1513 B.C.E. to 98 C.E.—some 40 different men

1. Why do we need the inspired Word of God?
2. What will help us to maintain our appreciation for the Bible as a precious gift from God?
3. How were the prophets and Bible writers "borne along by holy spirit"?



A letter is viewed as coming from the person whose signature it bears

wrote the Bible. Some were prophets "borne along by holy spirit." (*Read 2 Peter 1:20, 21.*) The Greek expression rendered "borne along" has the sense "to bear or carry from one place to another," and it "can be variously rendered: be moved, be driven, let oneself be moved."* Acts 27:15 uses it in describing a boat that was seized and moved, or driven along a certain course, by the wind. Bible prophets and writers were "borne along by holy spirit" in that God communicated with, motivated, and guided them by means of his active force. That being the case, they wrote, not their own ideas, but God's thoughts. Sometimes the inspired prophets and writers did not even know the meaning of what they foretold or were writing. (Dan. 12:8, 9) Yes, "all Scripture is

inspired of God" and is free of human opinions.—2 Tim. 3:16.

⁴ How, though, was God's message transmitted by holy spirit to Bible writers? Did they receive precise wording or just ideas that they could express in their own words? Consider how a businessman might compose a letter. When precise wording is important, he writes the letter himself or dictates it to his secretary word for word. The secretary types it, and the letter bears the businessman's signature. At other times, he provides only the principal ideas, and the secretary prepares the letter, using her own style or vocabulary. The businessman may then proofread the letter and have the secretary make any needed changes. In the end, the letter bears his signature and is viewed as coming from him.

⁵ Similarly, some parts of the Bible were supplied "by God's finger." (Ex. 31:18) Jehovah also used dictation when precise wording was crucial. At Exodus 34:27, for example, we read: "Jehovah went on to say to Moses: 'Write down for yourself *these words*, because it is in accordance with *these words* that I do conclude a covenant with you and Israel.'" Likewise, Jehovah told the prophet Jeremiah: "Write for yourself in a book *all the words* that I will speak to you."—Jer. 30:2.

⁶ In most cases, though, thoughts rather than specific words were miraculously conveyed to the hearts and minds of Bible writers, permitting them to choose their own words to express them. "The congregator sought to find the delightful words and the writing of correct words of truth," states Ecclesiastes 12:10. The Gospel writer Luke

* A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.

4-6. In what ways did Jehovah convey his message to the Bible writers? Illustrate.

"traced all things from the start with accuracy, to write them in logical order." (Luke 1:3) God's spirit ensured that human imperfection did not taint his message.

7 God's great wisdom is made evident in his use of humans to write the Bible. Words convey not just information but also emotions and feelings. What if Jehovah had used angels as writers? Could they have conveyed with a human touch such emotions as fear, sorrow, and disappointment, so common to mankind? By allowing imperfect men to choose the wording for the ideas they received through holy spirit, God conveyed his message with warmth, variety, and the appeal of human emotions and feelings!

KEEP EVIDENCE IN SIGHT

8 Evidence abounds that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. The Bible acquaints us with God like no other book of religion. For example, the writings of Hinduism include books of Vedic hymns, a collection of ritualistic commentaries about these hymns, philosophical treatises called the Upanishads, and the epic stories known as *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The Bhagavad Gita, a book containing moral instructions, is a part of the *Mahabharata*. Of Buddhism's *Tipitaka* (Three Collections), one volume is mainly about rules and regulations of community living for monks and nuns. Another volume deals mostly with Buddhist doctrines. A third volume is a record of the oral teachings of the Buddha. Buddha himself did not claim to be a god,

7. How is God's wisdom made evident in his use of humans to write the Bible?

8. Why can it be said that the Bible is like no other book of religion?

and he said very little about God. The texts of Confucianism are an amalgam of records of events, moral rules, magical formulas, and songs. Granted, the holy book of Islam teaches belief in one God and presents him as God who is omniscient and has foreknowledge, but it does not even reveal the name of God, Jehovah, which appears thousands of times in the Bible.

9 While most major books of religion say very little, if anything, about God, the Bible acquaints us with Jehovah God and his activities. It helps us to see the many facets of his personality. The Bible reveals God not only as an all-powerful, wise, and just God but also as a God who loves us. (*Read John 3:16; 1 John 4:19.*) Moreover, the Bible tells us: "God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35) In a sense, the availability of the Bible testifies to this truth. Linguists say that of some 6,700 languages spoken in the world today, approximately 100

9, 10. What can we learn about God from the Bible?



cover 90 percent of the world's population. Still, the Bible has been translated, either in whole or in part, into more than 2,400 languages. Nearly everyone in the world has access to at least parts of it.

10 Jesus said: "My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working." (John 5:17) 'From time indefinite to time indefinite Jehovah is God.' So think of all of his accomplishments! (Ps. 90:2) The Bible alone acquaints us with God's activities both past and present and reveals what he will do in the future. The Scriptures also teach us what pleases him and what displeases him, and they show how we can draw close to him. (Jas. 4:8) Let us not allow any personal pursuits or concerns to draw us away from him.

11 The vast and reliable wisdom found in the Bible also indicates that the book is from a Source higher than man. The apostle Paul wrote: "Who has come to know the mind of Jehovah, that he may instruct him?" (1 Cor. 2:16) That verse is based on what the prophet Isaiah asked those of his day: "Who has taken the proportions of the spirit of Jehovah, and who as his man of counsel can make him know anything?" (Isa. 40:13) The answer, of course, is no one. No wonder that applying Scriptural counsel on marriage, children, entertainment, association, industriousness, honesty, and morality brings superior results! We never get bad advice from the Bible. Humans, on the other hand, are simply not wise enough to recommend what always works. (Jer. 10:23) Their advice is constantly being revised and updated as they come to realize that earlier advice was flawed. "The thoughts of

11. What vast and reliable wisdom is found in the pages of the Bible?

men," says the Bible, "are as an exhalation."—Ps. 94:11.

12 Another line of evidence that the true God is the Author of the Bible comes from what history reveals about efforts made to destroy its message. In 168 B.C.E., Syrian King Antiochus IV tried to seek out the inspired books of the Law to burn them. Roman Emperor Diocletian's decree to demolish the meeting places of the Christians and to burn their Scriptures was issued in 303 C.E. The destruction continued for a decade. After the 11th century, popes led the efforts to suppress the spread of Bible knowledge, opposing the translation of the Scriptures into languages of the common people. Despite such attempts by Satan and his agents, the Bible has survived down to our day. Jehovah has not permitted anyone to eliminate his gift to mankind.

EVIDENCE THAT HAS CONVINCED MANY

13 There is other evidence of the Bible's inspiration: the internal harmony, scientific accuracy, fulfilled prophecies, unusual candor, power to transform lives, historical soundness, and satisfying answers to the questions mentioned in paragraph 1. Consider what helped certain ones to see that the Bible is from God.

14 Anwar* grew up as a Muslim in a Middle Eastern country. While he was

* Some names have been changed.

12. The Bible has survived what efforts over the centuries?

13. We can point to what evidence of the Bible's inspiration?

14-16. (a) What convinced a Muslim, a Hindu, and an agnostic of the divine origin of the Bible? (b) What evidence of divine inspiration of the Bible do you like to use in the ministry?

temporarily living in North America, Jehovah's Witnesses came to his door. "At that time," says Anwar, "I had a negative opinion of Christian religions because of the Crusades and the Inquisition. However, being a curious person by nature, I agreed to a Bible study." Before long, Anwar returned home and lost contact with the Witnesses. Years later, he moved to Europe, where he resumed his Bible study and came to this conclusion: "The fulfillment of Bible prophecies, the internal harmony of the Holy Scriptures, the absence of contradiction in the Bible, and the love among Jehovah's worshippers convinced me that the Bible is God's Word." Anwar was baptized in 1998.

15 Sixteen-year-old Asha comes from a devout Hindu family. "I prayed only when I went to the temple or was going through rough times," she says, "but never did I think of God when life was treating me well." She continues: "When Jehovah's Witnesses knocked on my door, however, my life took a 180 degree turn." Asha studied the Bible and came to know God as her Friend. What convinced her that the Bible is inspired of God? She explains: "The Bible answered every question that I could ask. It helped me to have faith even without seeing God—that is, without my going to a temple to bow to an idol."

16 Paula was reared a Catholic, but by the time she was a young adult, she considered herself an agnostic. Then something happened. "I met a friend whom I had not seen in months," she relates. "That was in the hippie era. When I saw how he had changed—now clean-cut and happy—I asked him, 'What happened to you, and where have you been?' He said that he had been study-

ing the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses and proceeded to witness to me." Seeing Scriptural truth exert such power attracted this former agnostic to the message of the Bible, and she accepted it as inspired of God.

"YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FOOT"

17 The Bible is a marvelous gift that Jehovah has provided by means of his holy spirit. Take delight in reading it daily, and your love for it and its Author will

**Read the Bible daily,
and your love for
its Author will grow**

grow. (Ps. 1:1, 2) Open each study session with prayer, asking for God's spirit to direct your thoughts. (Luke 11:13) The Bible contains God's thoughts, so as you meditate on what it says, you can make God's thinking your thinking.

18 While you continue to grow in accurate knowledge of the truth, live by what you learn. (*Read Psalm 119:105.*) Peer into the Scriptures as you would into a mirror. If you thus see that you should make changes, do so. (Jas. 1:23-25) Utilize God's Word as a sword to defend your beliefs and to cut away false teachings in the hearts of meek ones. (Eph. 6:17) As you do so, be grateful that the prophets and men who were used to pen the message of the Bible truly were "borne along by holy spirit."

17. What can reading God's Word daily and meditating on it do for you?

18. Why do you want to continue to learn from the Bible?

Be Wise

Seek “Skillful Direction”

Life has been compared to a voyage. However, human wisdom has often proved to be of limited value in helping people to navigate through life successfully. Many have experienced shipwreck in the stormy waters of life.

(Ps. 107:23, 27) Why is that metaphor fitting?

In ancient times, traveling by sea was a challenge that required experience. It was an art usually learned at the feet of longtime sailors, perhaps a helmsman. (Acts 27:9-11) Many ancient paintings emphasize the importance of the helmsman’s role by portraying him as being larger than others. To venture out into the open sea, seafarers learned about stars, winds, and other points of reference. The Bible describes certain seamen as being “skilled,” using a term that can mean “wise.”—Ezek. 27:8; ftn.

Navigating life’s problems today can seem as arduous as going to sea in ancient times. What can help us?

HOW CAN WE ATTAIN “SKILLFUL DIRECTION”?

Having in mind the metaphor of life being like a voyage, consider this Biblical truth: “A wise person will listen and take in more instruction, and a man of understanding is the one who acquires skillful direction.” (Prov. 1:5, 6) The Hebrew term rendered “skillful direction” can describe the actions of the commander of an ancient ship. It implies the ability to guide and direct with skill.

Though it calls for effort, we can acquire “skillful direction” and learn to “sail” successfully on the sea of life. As Proverbs indicates, we have to let “wisdom,” “understanding,” and “insight”



To emphasize their role, pilots were often portrayed larger than other sailors

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work together. (Prov. 1:2-6; 2:1-9) And we cannot neglect seeking divine guidance, for even the wicked may know how to ‘steer’ for unjust ends.—Prov. 12:5.

It is vital, then, that we be diligent students of God’s Word. By such study, we can take in precious information about Jehovah and the one who best reflects Him, Jesus Christ. (John 14:9) We receive much wise counsel at Christian meetings. In addition, we can draw on the experience of others, including our parents.—Prov. 23:22.

ANTICIPATE AND PLAN

“Skillful direction” is especially important when we find ourselves in troubled waters, figuratively speaking. Doubts regarding what action to take in a complex situation could paralyze us, with catastrophic results.—Jas. 1:5, 6.



Interestingly, the term rendered “skillful direction” is also used with reference to warfare. We read: “By skillful direction [“by skillful strategy,” *The Revised English Bible*] you will carry on your war, and in the multitude of counselors there is salvation.”—Prov. 20:18; 24:6.

Like a strategist organizing a battle, we do well to anticipate potential dangers to our spirituality. (Prov. 22:3) For example, you may have to decide whether to accept a new job or a promotion at work. You would logically consider pay, travel time to and from work, and other details. However, there are other points to keep in mind: Will the type of work be compatible with Bible principles? How might the hours, such as with shift work, affect my Christian activities?—Luke 14:28-30.

Loretta, one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, had a good job at a food-preparation company. When the company was to relocate, Loretta was offered an important position at the new place: “It’s the chance of a lifetime,” the directors told her. “We’ve already found out that there’s a Kingdom Hall there.” But Loretta wanted to simplify her life to serve the Creator more fully. She saw that the new post would leave her less time for Christian activities. Hence, she submitted her resignation, though the director confided that she was the only employee whom they really want-

ed to keep. Loretta, who now has been a regular pioneer for some 20 years, is convinced that the good results obtained were directly related to her having planned with “skillful direction,” yes, in harmony with the advice found in God’s Word. She strengthened her relationship with Jehovah and has had the privilege of helping several to accept Bible truth.

“Skillful direction” is certainly needed in the family. Raising children is a long-term job, and the choices made in spiritual or material areas affect the future of all in the family. (Prov. 22:6) Christian parents, for example, might ask themselves: ‘By our conversations and example, are we teaching our children spiritual values that will help them to cope wisely with adult life? Is our lifestyle helping them to understand how to be content with a simple life and to focus on their Christian ministry?’—1 Tim. 6:6-10, 18, 19.

True success is not determined by the material or social goals that those in the world often pursue. King Solomon understood this. He was inspired to write: “It will turn out well with those fearing the true God, because they were in fear of him.” (Eccl. 8:12) That certainly bears out the wisdom of seeking “skillful direction” based on and in harmony with God’s Word.—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

Kindness Melts Bitterness

AN ELDERLY lady was particularly unfriendly when George and Manon, two Witnesses in the Netherlands, approached her with the good news of the Kingdom. They learned that she had lost two husbands and a son in death and she was suffering from severe arthritis. Though she calmed down somewhat during the conversation, she never became really friendly.

George, however, suggested to Manon that they return with a bouquet of flowers for the lady because she seemed so lonely and bitter. When they did, the householder, Rie, was pleasantly surprised. It was an inconvenient time for her, though, so an appointment was made for a later date. When George and Manon returned at the arranged time, no one answered the door. Although they tried at different times, they did not find her again. They even began to think that she was avoiding them.

One day, George finally found Rie at home. She apologized for not keeping the appointment and explained that she had been in the hospital. "But you'll never guess what I did after you two left," she said. "I started reading the Bible!"

A pleasant discussion ensued, and a Bible study was started.

As Rie studied the Bible, she was transformed from an embittered person into a happy, kind lady. Though housebound, she immediately began to share her newfound faith with anyone visiting her. Her health did not allow her to attend congregation meetings very often, yet she delighted in having brothers and sisters visit her. On the day she turned 82, she attended a circuit assembly and was baptized in symbol of her dedication to God.

After her death just a few months later, a poem that she had written was found. In it, she described the misery of loneliness in old age and stressed the importance of kindness. "Reading that poem really touched me," says Manon, "and I am so happy that Jehovah helped us to show kindness to her."

Yes, Jehovah's personal example prompts us to show such love and kindness. (Eph. 5:1, 2) Our ministry will be fruitful as we "recommend ourselves as God's ministers . . . by kindness."

—2 Cor. 6:4, 6.

