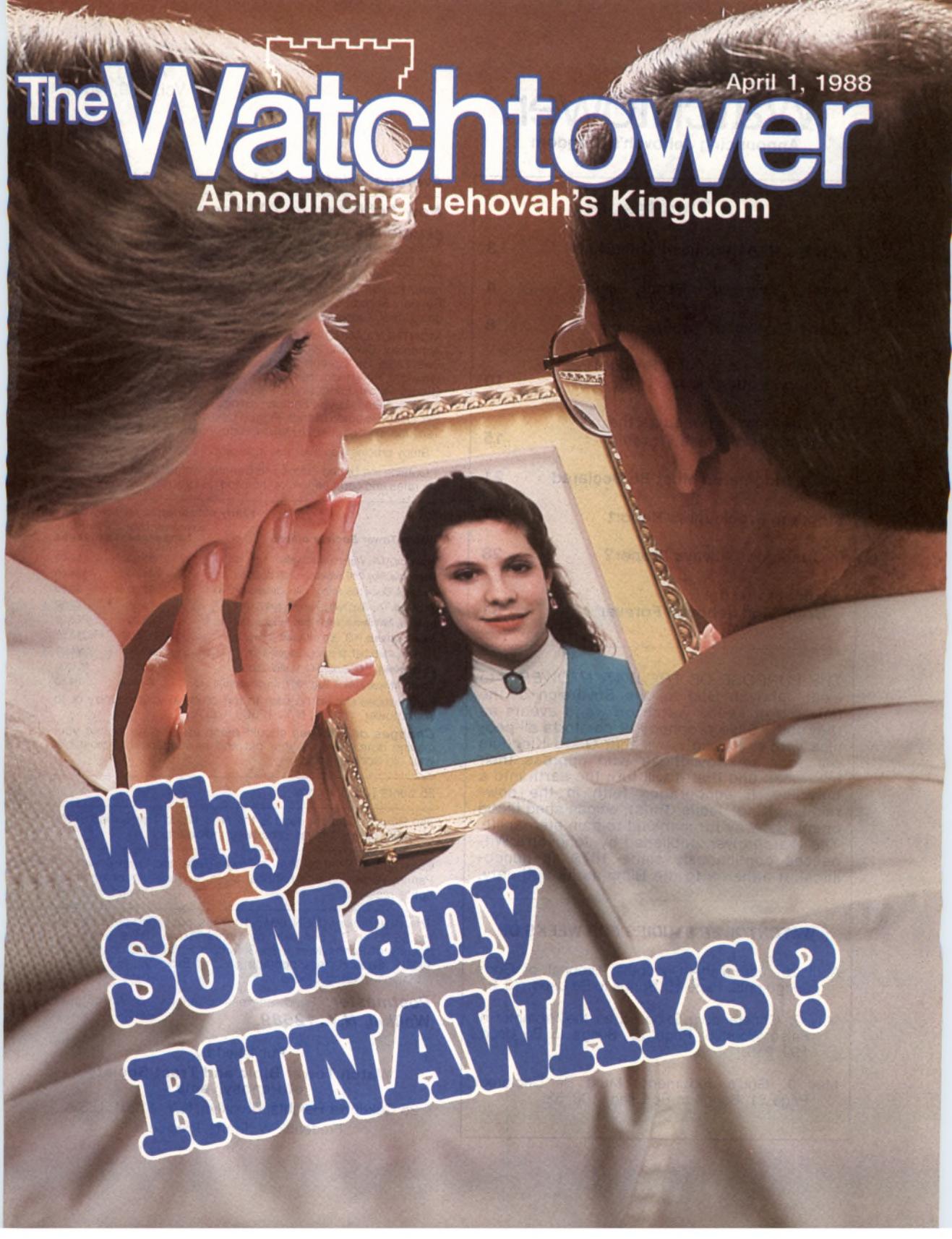


The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

April 1, 1988



A woman with dark hair is shown from the side, looking down at a framed portrait of a young girl with dark hair and bangs. She is wearing a blue jacket over a white collared shirt. The woman is holding the frame with both hands. The background is a warm, reddish-brown color.

**Why
So Many
RUNAWAYS?**

In This Issue

Why So Many Runaway Children?	3
How to Strengthen Family Bonds	4
At the Festival of Tabernacles	8
Jeremiah—Unpopular Prophet of God's Judgments	10
Christendom Exposed as the Promoter of False Worship	15
God's Judgments Must Be Declared	21
Kingdom Proclaimers Report	27
Is Obedience Always Proper?	28
'Dedicated to the Great God Jehovah Forever'	31

THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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April 25: Jeremiah—Unpopular Prophet of God's Judgments. Page 10. Songs to Be Used: 70, 27.

May 2: Christendom Exposed as the Promoter of False Worship. Page 15. Songs to Be Used: 199, 215.

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Frederick W. Franz, President

Why So Many Runaway Children?

"Can anyone imagine how much a mother suffers when her daughter runs away? It is a nightmare. Why did she leave? I cannot understand it. She was such a sweet and happy girl and very young.

"Where is she tonight? Is she warm? Is she hungry? Is she lonely? I love her so much. There is no one I can talk to. There is nothing I can do but wait.

"Every time the phone rings my heart leaps. But she doesn't call and there is no news. I have prayed for her safety and for the strength to see this through. I keep imagining that at any moment she will walk through the door.

"... I think of so many crazy things as I try to deaden the pain. Oh, dear God, bring my little girl home."

THE above letter was sent to a noted advice columnist in the early 1970's. It was a time when it was thought that runaways were leaving for frivolous reasons: a search for adventure, a test of independence, disagreement over a curfew, despondency due to a broken romance. While some still leave for the same reasons, things have changed in the last 15 years.

Today's youth often leave be-



cause of situations that are much more tragic—seriously eroded family conditions in which they feel unwanted and unloved; they may even be abused. And instead of running *to* something—a more alluring and appealing life-style—they are running *from* something, a disintegrating and unhappy homelife. "Runaways are very different now from what they were when so much was being written about them" in the early 1970's, says Dr. Douglas Huenergardt, supervisor of a Florida runaway shelter. "During that time we had kids seeking alternative lifestyles. That's not what's happening today. The child who's running is one who simply can't stand it at home any longer."

Recent studies bear that out. Yet they also show something else that is startling. Not only are many children running to escape an intolerable family life but today close to half of the runaways in the United States leave home involuntarily—pushed out or encouraged to leave home by their own parents! "For many adolescents running away is a response to an unhealthy family, work or school situation," notes the journal

The Bible and Family Life

This theme will be featured in four successive issues of *The Watchtower*

Family Relations. "Many runaways are, in actuality, throwaways, castaways, or pushouts. These youths are told to leave or are abandoned by their parents. Some are severely and repeatedly abused and see no alternative but to leave."

How tragic! How sad for the children! For, once out on the street, with little money and no means of support, youths often turn to begging, drug dealing, prostitution, and thievery, or they are victimized by others. "It is not social workers and psychologists who greet runaways in bus stations, but pimps, drug dealers and pornographers," says the magazine *Psychology Today*. "Eighty-six percent of the experts polled said that little or nothing is being done to prevent runaways from falling victim to these predators. Not surprisingly, the health of runaways deteriorates the longer they are on the street."

True, more and more shelters are being set up to house, feed, and guide homeless children. But getting the runaways there and actually being able to help them is another matter. "Our job is to instill in them a degree of self-esteem, to have them care about themselves," states one counselor. "And it's the hardest job I've ever had." By the time youths get there, they are often wary and distrustful of adults, are hurt, angry, or despondent, and may even be suicidal.

Could problems be solved at their source? "By far, the greatest number of runaway episodes will stem from family matters of some sort," notes *Search*, a New Jersey based registry of the missing. "A basically happy person will not run away." What, then, will work for happiness in the family? Can the parent-child bonds be strengthened?

How to Strengthen Family Bonds

The reasons why youths leave home are many and often quite involved. While this article cannot address them in depth, it does show that Bible principles, when applied, can work to keep the family intact.

IT IS hard to establish just how many children run away from home. Printed estimates range from 600,000 to 3,000,000 missing children a year in the United States alone. Such estimates often lump together such categories as runaways, pushouts, throwaways, and children abducted by divorced parents without legal custody. Estimates they must be, for children who are abandoned by their parents are not reported as missing, and some

children regularly run away. "A 16-year old who runs away five times in a year and stays overnight each time he runs away would show up in the . . . statistics as five missing children," says *The New York Times*.

More important than numbers are the reasons why children leave home. "When a youngster runs away, it is generally a symptom of dysfunction in the home environment," states the magazine *Medical*

Aspects of Human Sexuality. It may be because of problems that already exist, such as physical abuse, neglect, lack of love, divorce, excessive demands, or harsh and unbending rules. Or it may be due to fear of repercussions, as in cases of pregnancy or brushes with the law. When asked why they left home, most runaways cite reasons involving their relationship with their parents. "The parent-child relationship is apparently an extremely influential factor relative to runaway behavior," says the journal *Adolescence*. It adds: "Runaways report poor parent-child relationships, extreme family conflict, alienation from parents, interpersonal tension, and poor communication with parents as primary factors behind running away from home."

Understanding the Reasons

These are stressful times. "With unemployment climbing, and more and more families in difficult financial straits, domestic tensions and problems multiply," says the magazine *Ladies' Home Journal*. "When a father is laid off and a mortgage goes unpaid, everyone in the family feels the stress. Young people, who haven't developed the skills to cope with these pressures, use flight as a means to escape." Sometimes parents themselves unwittingly drive their children out. Angrily, they may tell their offspring to accept their decisions or leave. Irritated and exhausted from fighting their daily economic battles, they have little energy to deal with their children.

At the same time, just being an adolescent produces its own stress. Teens are torn between the need for the security and



*Parent-child relationships
are most important*



care they received as children and the sense of being independent from their parents as they struggle to become adults. It causes confusion and anxiety for them. Bodily changes are also taking place. Their lives have suddenly become quite complex, and they may feel overwhelmed. They feel pressure from parents and peers. They also experience periods of self-doubt and depression. "While you try to figure yourself out, don't be surprised if you sometimes feel misunderstood at home," advises *'Teen' magazine*. "After all, if you can't understand yourself, how can your parents know what's on your mind?"

Many parents, especially with their first offspring, are unsure as to how much freedom to allow their children. Overcontrol and lack of understanding have led many youths to run away.

"But running away doesn't solve anything," notes author Judy Blume in her book *Letters to Judy*. "Running away is a symptom, not a solution. Instead, families have to sit down together and face the facts. They have to deal with reality. Only then can they make the changes that will help them live together in peace. And often they need help in doing that."

Finding the Needed Help

The best source of that help is God's Word, the Bible. Why so? Because as man's Creator, God knows what is best for his creation. And he has given us instruction with that purpose in mind, "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 Timothy 3:16, 17) Bible principles work, and they cover every aspect of life.

As noted, though, all members in the family must be willing to face the facts and make changes. Without such recognition and desire, improvement will not be made, and the impelling force to escape will remain. Especially is that so in families with problems of alcohol, drug, and sexual abuse. These must be overcome before the normal pressures of life can be dealt with. Faith in God and a sincere desire to please him, based on accurate knowledge of his Word, have helped many families to overcome tragic situations that in other families have impelled youths to run away.—Compare 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11.

Just living in this modern world with its increasing selfishness, distrust, and soaring crime rate can put a strain on the

family bonds. That is why "all the things that were written aforetime [in the Bible] were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope."—Romans 15:4.

Applying Bible Principles

With knowledge of the factors that induce a child to run away, Bible principles can be applied. The Bible addresses these factors by advising parents to spend the needed quality time with their children, to give consistent, loving training. Both extremes of lack of interest and of overly strict discipline are to be avoided. God's Word advises: "Fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah."—Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6.

As in Bible times, proper supervision, attention, and instruction are to be things that parents constantly give—"when they sit in their house, when they walk on the road, when they lie down, and when they get up." (Deuteronomy 11:19) While discipline is needed at times, it is to be administered with love. (Proverbs 13:24) Family happiness certainly will be enhanced if such advice is followed!

Children also are to do their share: "Children, be obedient to your parents in union with the Lord, for this is righteous: 'Honor your father and your mother.'" (Ephesians 6:1, 2) The ancient wise man Solomon, who wrote so as "to give to the inexperienced ones shrewdness, to a young man knowledge and thinking ability," also advises: "Listen, my son, to the discipline of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother. . . . If sinners try to seduce you, do not consent."—Proverbs 1:1-10.

How would family problems be handled?

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

Spend time with your children; know their problems and needs

Be constant in attention and supervision

Administer discipline and training in love

Make the home a happy place

WHAT CHILDREN CAN DO

Be obedient, loving, and respectful to parents

Avoid isolation; take an active interest in family affairs

Think of the family as a whole, not just your own desires

Be open and communicate



In love, for the Bible counsels: "Let all your affairs take place with love." (1 Corinthians 16:14) This should be a deep-rooted love that is willing to overlook the imperfections and idiosyncrasies of another, which might otherwise irritate and grate on one's nerves. "Above all things, have intense love for one another," says the Bible, "because love covers a multitude of sins."—1 Peter 4:8.

Such love also takes an interest in the happiness and well-being of others and draws the family closer together. Note that the so-called golden rule was positive: "Do for others what you want them to do for you." (Matthew 7:12, *Today's English Version*) Most runaway youths interviewed in one study said that their involvement in their family was at a minimum prior to leaving home. "'Family disengagement' is a major factor in the process of deciding to run and remain away from home," says *Adolescence*. But

by following the Bible's admonition to be "keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others," more time will be spent together as a family, and the problems of poor relationships, alienation, and poor communication can be overcome. (Philippians 2:4) With close feeling and interest at home, the influence by peers that may induce a child to run away will be minimal.

With the application of Bible principles, running away from home no longer appears as the solution to the problems in life that each person must face. With loving support from individual family members, the family becomes a sanctuary from the pressures of the outside world. A fuller understanding of Bible principles and their application, together with the hope that God gives, will further enhance that happiness. Why not let Jehovah's Witnesses discuss it with you?

At the Festival of Tabernacles

JESUS has become famous during the nearly three years since his baptism. Many thousands have seen his miracles, and reports about his activities have spread throughout the country. Now, as the people gather for the Festival of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, they look for him there. "Where is that man?" they want to know.

Jesus has become a subject of controversy. "He is a good man," some say. "He is not, but he misleads the crowd," others assert. There is a lot of subdued talk of this sort during the opening days of the festival. Yet no one has the courage to speak out publicly in Jesus' behalf. This is because the people fear reprisal from the Jewish leaders.

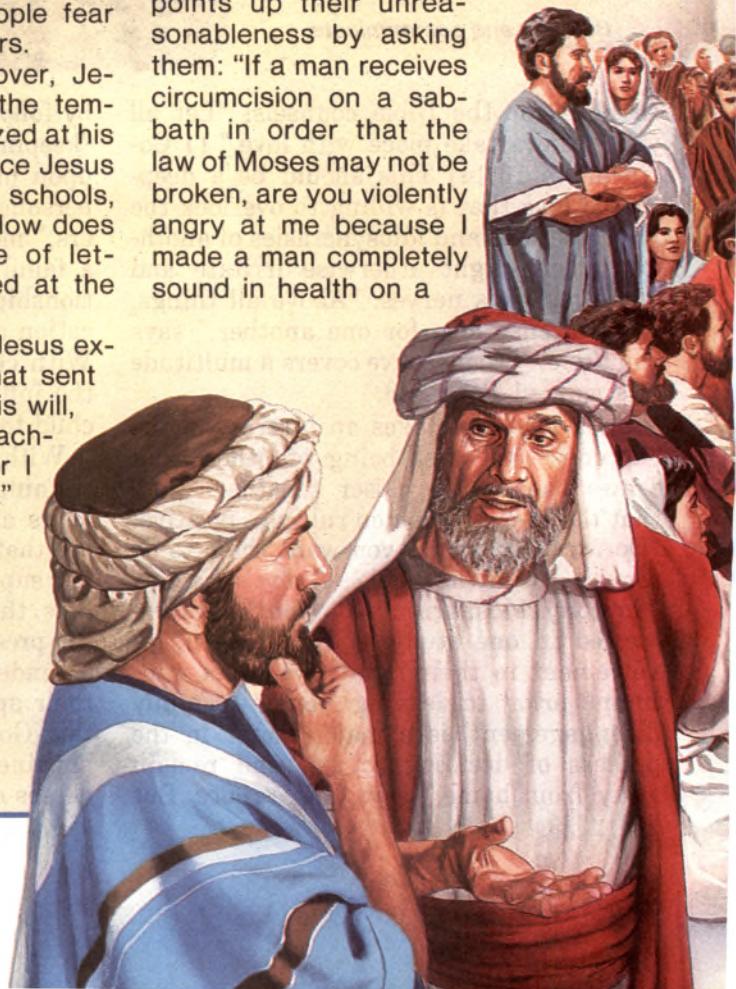
When the festival is half over, Jesus arrives. He goes up to the temple, where the people are amazed at his marvelous teaching ability. Since Jesus never attended the rabbinical schools, the Jews fall to wondering: "How does this man have a knowledge of letters, when he has not studied at the schools?"

"What I teach is not mine," Jesus explains, "but belongs to him that sent me. If anyone desires to do His will, he will know concerning the teaching whether it is from God or I speak of my own originality." Jesus' teaching holds closely to God's law. Thus, it should be obvious that he is seeking God's glory, not his own. "Moses gave you the Law, did he not?" Jesus asks. And by way of rebuke, he went on to say: "Not one of you obeys the Law."

"Why are you seeking to kill me?" Jesus then asks.

The crowd, probably visitors to the festival, is unaware of such efforts. They consider it inconceivable that anyone would want to kill such a wonderful teacher. So they believe that something must be wrong with Jesus for him to think this. "You have a demon," they say. "Who is seeking to kill you?"

The Jewish leaders want Jesus killed, even though the crowd may not realize it. When Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath a year and a half before, the leaders tried to kill him. So Jesus now points up their unreasonableness by asking them: "If a man receives circumcision on a sabbath in order that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you violently angry at me because I made a man completely sound in health on a



sabbath? Stop judging from the outward appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

Inhabitants of Jerusalem, who are aware of the situation, now say: "This is the man they are seeking to kill, is it not? And yet, see! he is speaking in public, and they say nothing to him. The rulers have not come to know for a certainty that this is the Christ, have they?" These residents of Jerusalem explain why they do not believe that Jesus is the Christ: "We know where

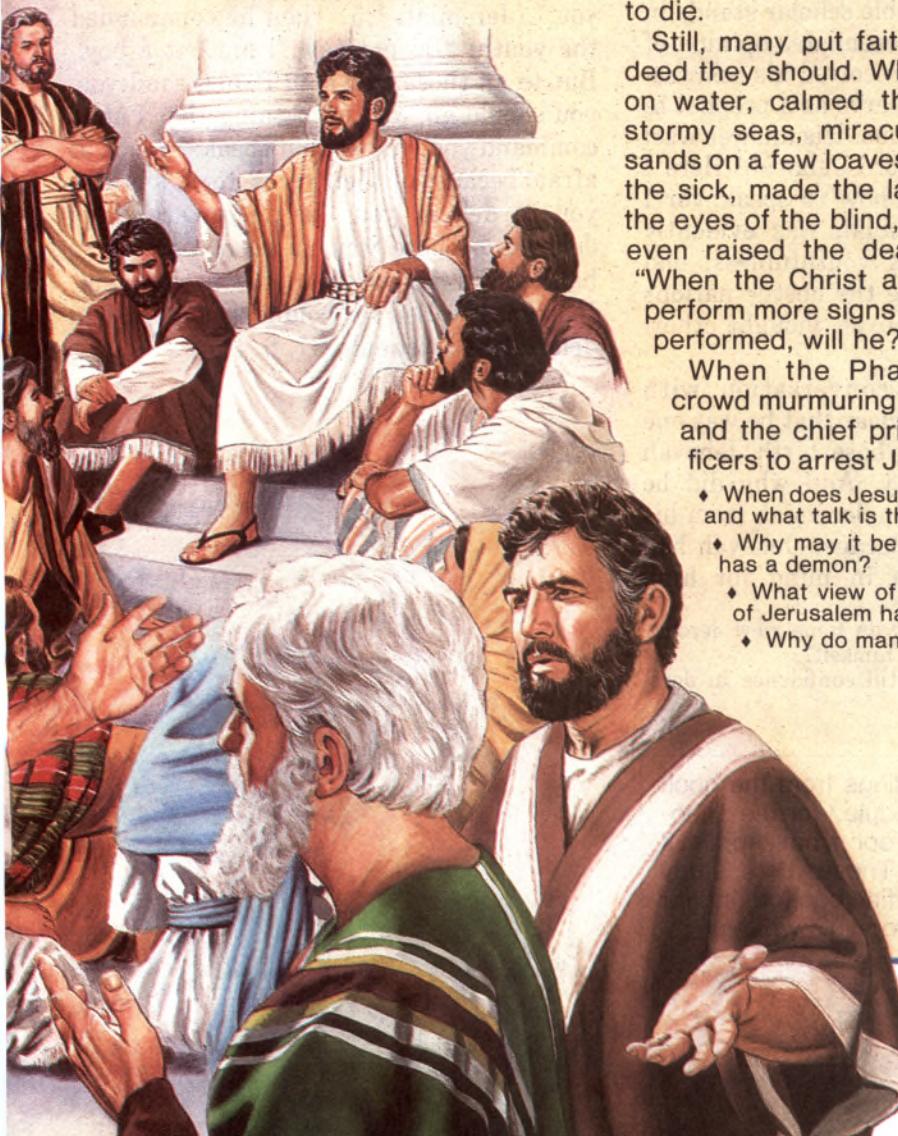
this man is from; yet when the Christ comes, no one is to know where he is from."

Jesus answers: "You both know me and know where I am from. Also, I have not come of my own initiative, but he that sent me is real, and you do not know him. I know him, because I am a representative from him, and that One sent me forth." At this they try to lay hold on him, perhaps to put him in prison or to have him killed. Yet they do not succeed because it is not time for Jesus to die.

Still, many put faith in Jesus, as indeed they should. Why, he has walked on water, calmed the winds, quieted stormy seas, miraculously fed thousands on a few loaves and fishes, cured the sick, made the lame walk, opened the eyes of the blind, cured lepers, and even raised the dead. So they ask: "When the Christ arrives, he will not perform more signs than this man has performed, will he?"

When the Pharisees hear the crowd murmuring these things, they and the chief priests send out officers to arrest Jesus. John 7:11-32.

- ♦ When does Jesus arrive at the festival, and what talk is there about him?
- ♦ Why may it be that some say Jesus has a demon?
- ♦ What view of Jesus do inhabitants of Jerusalem have?
- ♦ Why do many put faith in Jesus?



Jeremiah

Unpopular Prophet of God's Judgments

**"Before I was forming you in the belly I knew you . . .
Prophet to the nations I made you."**—JEREMIAH 1:5.

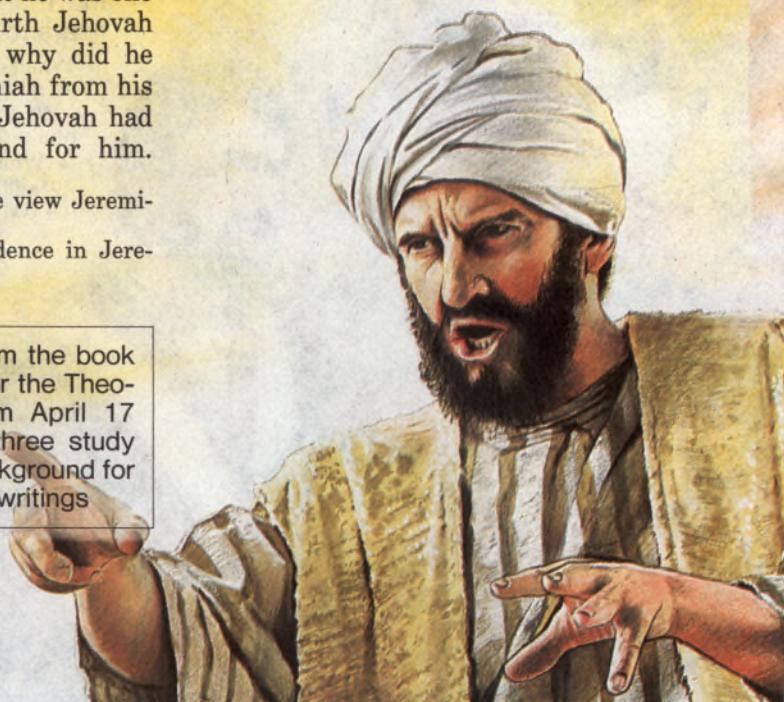
EVEN in the company of the prophets, Jeremiah towers as a giant." That comment by a Bible scholar stands in striking contrast to Jeremiah's opinion of himself when he first received his commission from Jehovah to serve as a prophet to Judah and to the nations. His answer was: "Alas, O Sovereign Lord Jehovah! Here I actually do not know how to speak, for I am but a boy." Jeremiah was evidently very conscious of his youthfulness, and the challenge of facing the hostile nations seemed too much. Jehovah thought otherwise.—Jeremiah 1:6.

From Jehovah's conversation with young Jeremiah, it is clear that he was one of the few men for whose birth Jehovah assumed responsibility. And why did he take specific interest in Jeremiah from his conception onward? Because Jehovah had a special commission in mind for him.

1. (a) In retrospect, how do some view Jeremiah? (b) How did he view himself?
2. How did Jehovah instill confidence in Jeremiah?

Weekly Bible readings from the book of Jeremiah are scheduled for the Theocratic Ministry School from April 17 through August 21. These three study articles will provide a fine background for understanding the prophet's writings

Thus, he could say: "Before you proceeded to come forth from the womb I sanctified you." (Jeremiah 1:5) Then he commanded the youth: "Do not say, 'I am but a boy.' But to all those to whom I shall send you, you should go; and everything that I shall command you, you should speak. Do not be afraid because of their faces, for 'I am with you to deliver you,' is the utterance of Jehovah." There was no room here for a halfhearted approach to his assignment. Instead, it called for boldness and trust in Jehovah.—Jeremiah 1:7, 8.



³ How impressed and perhaps overwhelmed this young man must have felt at receiving such a direct commission from God! And what a commission! "See, I have commissioned you this day to be over the nations and over the kingdoms, in order to uproot and to pull down and to destroy and to tear down, to build and to plant." Certainly, the setting of those remarks in Judah about the middle of the seventh century B.C.E. imposed a tremendous responsibility on this budding prophet. He had to face a proud, complacent nation that trusted in its holy city, Jerusalem, and its temple, like a talisman. As he completed his 40-year prophetic ministry in Jerusalem, he would have to present his message during the reigns of five different kings (Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah). He would have to announce unpopular condemnatory judgments to the Jewish and Babylonian nations.—Jeremiah 1:10; 51:41-64.

Why Should Jeremiah Interest Us?

⁴ But we might ask, What do those events back there have to do with us, living here near the end of the 20th century? The apostle Paul gives the answer when reviewing some of the history of Israel in his letter to the congregation in Corinth. He wrote: "Now these things became our examples, for us not to be persons desiring injurious things, even as they desired them . . . and they were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived."—1 Corinthians 10:6, 11.

⁵ The events that took place in Israel and Judah serve as a warning example to the true Christian congregation in this time of

the end. We can also see parallels and types that give foregleams of future events. (Compare Jeremiah 51:6-8 and Revelation 18:2, 4.) Therefore, Jeremiah's prophetic ministry and the events that befell Jerusalem have deep significance for Jehovah's Witnesses today, especially regarding their activity in the realm of Christendom, as we shall see in the following articles.

Jeremiah's Fearless Proclamation of God's Judgments

⁶ To strengthen Jeremiah for his awesome responsibility, Jehovah further assured him: "You must rise up and speak to them everything that I myself command you. Do not be struck with any terror because of them . . . Here I have made you today a fortified city . . . against all the land, toward the kings of Judah, toward her princes, toward her priests and toward the people of the land." No doubt about it, Jeremiah was going to have to be like a fortified city in order to face up to the rulers and priests of Judah. And presenting an unpopular and challenging message to the people was going to be no easy task.—Jeremiah 1:17, 18.

⁷ "And they will be certain to fight against you," warned Jehovah, "but they will not prevail against you." (Jeremiah 1:19) Now why would the Jews and their rulers want to fight against this prophet? Because his message attacked their complacency and their formalistic form of worship. Jeremiah did not pull his punches: "Look! The very word of Jehovah has become to them a reproach, in which word they can take no delight. For from the least one of them even to the greatest one of them, every one is making for himself

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3. Why was Jeremiah's commission quite a challenge?
 - 4, 5. (a) Why do the events of Jeremiah's day concern us? (Romans 15:4) (b) What special application interests us?
 6. What made Jeremiah's assignment more difficult, yet what encouragement did he receive?
 7. Why would the Jewish rulers resist Jeremiah?

Jeremiah fearlessly proclaimed God's judgments to the Jewish leaders and to the people

unjust gain; and from the prophet even to the priest [the very ones who should have been the guardians of moral and spiritual values], each one is acting falsely.”—Jeremiah 6:10, 13.

⁸ True, they were leading the nation in making sacrifices. They were going through the motions of true worship, but their hearts were not in it. Ritual meant more to them than right conduct. At the same time, the Jewish religious leaders were lulling the nation into a false sense of security, saying, “There is peace! There is peace!” when there was no peace. (Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11) Yes, they were fooling the people into believing that they were at peace with God. They felt that there was nothing to worry about, for they were Jehovah’s saved people, possessing the holy city and its temple. But is that how Jehovah viewed the situation?

⁹ Jehovah commanded Jeremiah to take a position in full public view at the gate of the temple and deliver His message to the worshipers who entered there. He had to tell them: “Do not put your trust in fallacious words, saying, ‘The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah they are!’ . . . It will certainly be of no benefit at all.” The Jews were walking by sight, not by faith, as they boasted in their temple. They had already forgotten Jehovah’s cautionary words: “The heavens are my throne, and the earth is

8. How were the priests and the prophets deceiving the people?
9. What warning did Jeremiah give the worshippers regarding their temple?

my footstool. Where, then, is the house that you people can build for me?” Jehovah, the Sovereign Lord of this vast universe, was certainly not restricted to the confines of their temple, no matter how glorious it might be!—Jeremiah 7:1-8; Isaiah 66:1.

¹⁰ Jeremiah continued with his stinging public rebuke: “Can there be stealing, murdering and committing adultery and swearing falsely and making sacrificial smoke to Baal and walking after other gods whom you had not known, . . . and must you say, ‘We shall certainly be delivered,’ in the face of doing all these detestable things?” The Jews, as God’s ‘chosen people,’ thought he would tolerate any kind of conduct, as long as they were bringing their sacrifices to the temple. However, if they perceived him as a sentimental father pampering a spoiled and only child, they were in for a rude awakening.—Jeremiah 7:9, 10; Exodus 19:5, 6.

¹¹ Judah’s worship had sunk so low in Jehovah’s eyes that the devastating question could be raised: “Has this house upon which my name has been called become a mere cave of robbers in your eyes?” Nearly 700 years later the situation was no better, as Jesus, a prophet greater than Jeremiah, used these very words to condemn the exploitation and commercialism that were being carried on in the rebuilt temple in his time. And the situation today in Christendom is no better.—Jeremiah 7:11; Matthew 16:14; Mark 11:15-17.

Watchmen Ignored, Disaster Foretold

¹² Jeremiah was by no means the first prophet used by God to warn Israel and

10, 11. What was the spiritual condition of the nation that Jeremiah denounced, and is the situation in Christendom any better? (2 Timothy 3:5)

12. How did the Jews react to the prophets that Jehovah sent to them?

Judah of their false course. During the previous hundred years or more, the prophets Isaiah, Micah, Hosea, and Oded had been sent as watchmen to warn the nation. (Isaiah 1:1; Micah 1:1; Hosea 1:1; 2 Chronicles 28:6-9) How had the majority reacted? "I raised up over you people watchmen, 'Pay attention to the sound of the horn!' But they kept saying: 'We are not going to pay attention.'" (Jeremiah 6:17; 7:13, 25, 26) They refused to pay attention to Jeremiah. Instead, they persecuted him and tried to silence him. Jehovah therefore determined that they would pay the price for their arrogance and disbelief.—Jeremiah 20:1, 2; 26:8, 11; 37:15; 38:6.

¹³ As a reaction to the nation's rejection of his messengers, Jehovah sent out a call, as it were, to the nations of the earth, saying: "Listen, O earth! Here I am bringing in calamity upon this people as the fruitage of their thoughts, for they paid no attention to my very own words; and my law—they also kept rejecting it." Why would the nation suffer calamity? Because of their wrong actions based on their wrong thoughts. They rejected Jehovah's words and Law and followed their own selfish, fleshly inclinations.—Jeremiah 6:18, 19; Isaiah 55:8, 9; 59:7.

¹⁴ And what were they doing in Judah that called down Jehovah's wrath? They were making sacrificial cakes to "the Queen of Heaven." They were pouring out drink offerings to other gods deliberately to offend Jehovah. Therefore, Jehovah

13. What was the basis for God's judgment of the nation?

14. To what extremes did their false worship go? (Compare 2 Chronicles 33:1-9.)



The women baked cakes to "the Queen of Heaven"

asks: "Am I the one they are provoking? . . . Are they not rather harming themselves, to their own shame?" (Jeremiah 7:18, 19, *New International Version*) Yet, their blasphemous misdeeds sank to even lower depths—they set disgusting idols in the house that bore Jehovah's name. They built altars outside Jerusalem, in the valley of Hinnom, "in order to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire." What price would they pay for all their disdain of true worship?—Jeremiah 7:30, 31.

Judah Pays the Price

¹⁵ By about 632 B.C.E., Assyria had fallen to the Chaldeans and the Medes, and Egypt was reduced to a minor power to the south of Judah. The real threat to Judah would come through the invasion route to the north. Thus, Jeremiah had to give his fellow Jews some bad news! "Look! A people is coming from the land of the north . . . It is a cruel one, and they will have no pity. . . . It is drawn up in battle order like

15. What bad news did Jeremiah have for Judah?

a man of war against you, O daughter of Zion." The ascendant world power at that time was Babylon. This would be God's instrument for punishing faithless Judah.—Jeremiah 6:22, 23; 25:8, 9.

¹⁶ Was there any point in Jeremiah's trying to intercede in behalf of his countrymen? Could there perhaps be a compromise on true worship? Would Jehovah perhaps accept half measures and forgive his people? Jehovah's position was clear. He commanded Jeremiah on at least three occasions: "Do not pray in behalf of this people, . . . for I shall not be listening to you." In the parallel fulfillment, this grim warning bodes ill for Christendom.—Jeremiah 7:16; 11:14; 14:11.

¹⁷ How did matters eventuate for Judah? Exactly as Jehovah had foretold through Jeremiah. During King Jehoiakim's reign, Judah became a vassal nation to mighty Babylon. Three years later Jehoiakim rebelled. This foolish action led to even greater humiliation at the hands of the Babylonians, who put the city of Jerusalem under siege. By this time Jehoiakim had died and been succeeded by his son

16. Why was there no point in Jeremiah's interceding on behalf of the nation?

17, 18. How was God's judgment finally executed against Judah?

Do You Recall?

- How did Jeremiah react to his commission, and what was Jehovah's answer?
- Why are we interested in the events of Jeremiah's day?
- What religious condition did Jeremiah denounce, and in what were the Jews trusting?
- What was the final outcome for Jerusalem and Judah?

Jehoiachin. The Babylonian siege brought Judah to its knees, and Jehoiachin and all the royal family, along with the upper echelons of Jewish society, were taken into exile to Babylon.—2 Kings 24:5-17.

¹⁸ What happened to the sacred temple and all its valuable holy ornaments? They certainly did not serve as a lucky charm for Judah. Nebuchadnezzar "brought out from there all the treasures of the house of Jehovah and the treasures of the king's house, and went on to cut to pieces all the gold utensils that Solomon the king of Israel had made in the temple of Jehovah." (2 Kings 24:13) Eventually, Babylon's appointee king, Zedekiah, who was left behind to rule what was remaining in Jerusalem, also rebelled against his overlords. That was the final straw for Nebuchadnezzar. The city of Jerusalem was again besieged, and in 607 B.C.E. it fell to Nebuzaradan and was completely demolished.—Jeremiah 34:1, 21, 22; 52:5-11.

¹⁹ What a calamitous debacle for the 'chosen people'! But how clearly Jeremiah's judgment proclamations had been vindicated. While the Jews were living in a world of fantasy, believing that no harm could come to them, "calamity howler" Jeremiah had actually been a realist, not a defeatist dreamer. (Jeremiah 38:4; note that the word "calamity" occurs 64 times in the book of Jeremiah.) How accurate Jehovah's judgment had been: "And you must say to them, 'This is the nation whose people have not obeyed the voice of Jehovah its God, and have not taken discipline. Faithfulness has perished, and it has been cut off from their mouth.' And I will cause to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of exultation and the voice of rejoicing, . . .

19, 20. What contrast was there in the attitude of Judah and Jeremiah toward the predicted calamity, and with what outcome?

for the land will become nothing but a devastated place!"—Jeremiah 7:28, 34.

²⁰ In this tragic way, the proud, complacent Jews had to recognize that their invoking of God and their having a special relationship with him had not guaranteed their salvation. As the prophecy stated: "There was a hoping for peace, but no good came; for a time of healing, but, look! terror! The harvest has passed, the summer has come to an end; but as for us, we have not been saved!" (Jeremiah 8:15, 20) For Judah it was now a time of reckoning. But the intrepid prophet Jeremiah was protected throughout his career and al-

lowed to finish his assignment. He ended his days in exile, not in Babylon with the disgraced nation, but in Egypt. For over 65 years, he had fearlessly and faithfully proclaimed God's judgments.

²¹ But now we are interested in knowing what application this life and ministry of Jeremiah has to our times. Who would be the counterpart of Jeremiah in this 20th century? And of Judah and Jerusalem? And what corresponds to the threat coming from the north? Our following articles will examine those questions.

21. What further questions concern us?

Christendom Exposed as the Promoter of False Worship

"This is the nation whose people have not obeyed the voice of Jehovah its God, and have not taken discipline."—JEREMIAH 7:28.

THE fire of true conviction burned within him; there was a compelling force to speak the truth, to chide but also to sustain." With those words two Hebrew scholars describe the role of Jeremiah. Even though his assignment from God was awesome, he knew that he had to fulfill his responsibility toward the nation of Judah. As he himself expressed it: "For the word of Jehovah became for me a cause for reproach and for jeering all day long. And I said: 'I am not going to make mention of him, and I shall speak no more in his name.' " Yes, the pressure and the persecution almost became too much for him. But did he give up?—Jeremiah 20:8, 9a.

1, 2. How did Jeremiah react to his God-given assignment?

² Jeremiah continued: "And in my heart it proved to be like a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I got tired of holding in, and I was unable to endure it." (Jeremiah 20:9b) Jeremiah did not sidestep his commission to announce God's judgments to Judah.—Jeremiah 6: 10, 11.

The Modern Jeremiah

³ Like Jeremiah, Christ Jesus and the early Christian disciples fearlessly proclaimed the unpopular message of God's Kingdom to the Jews and the nations. Although previously jailed for preaching, Peter and the other apostles courageously answered their religious accusers: "We

3. What attitude did Jesus and the disciples show toward their assignment?

must obey God as ruler rather than men." On the order of the religious authorities, they were flogged for their boldness. How did the apostles react? "Every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus."—Acts 5:29, 40-42; Matthew 23:13-33.

⁴ Thus the early anointed Christians acted like Jeremiah. Although faced with overwhelming odds and stubborn religious enemies, they announced God's judgments. Now, who in this 20th century have fol-

4. Who have followed Jeremiah's example in the 20th century, and how have they done this?

lowed that same example? Who have announced publicly and from house to house God's judgments on this system of things and especially on Jerusalem's counterpart, Christendom? The historical evidence has been piling up for more than 68 years to show that the modern Jeremiah class has been the small but courageous group of Jehovah's anointed witnesses. These have been augmented and aided since 1935 by the growing "great crowd" of millions of willing companions, also known as Jehovah's Witnesses. With a united voice, they have fulfilled their Jeremiah role by denouncing false religion as a snare and a racket.—Revelation 7:9, 10; 14:1-5.

Christendom —Why Jerusalem's Modern Parallel?

⁵ 'But,' one might ask, 'wherein do we find a parallel between ancient Jerusalem and Christendom?' By reason of the similar attitudes and conditions that exist in proud Christendom today. They put their trust in their 'holy cities' and shrines, such as Rome, Jerusalem, Canterbury, Fatima, Guadalupe, and Zaragoza, to mention but a few. They love to exalt their cathedrals, basilicas, temples, and churches, boasting about their antiquity and their architecture, as if these gave them some special standing with God. They even say that their religious edifices were built 'to the glory of God.' Yet, how many of these buildings actually bear the name of Jehovah God? On the contrary, one is constantly reminded of the architects who designed them, the artists and sculptors who decorated



In 1938 the Witnesses were denouncing false religion

5. In what ways is Christendom like ancient Jerusalem?

them, the wealthy patrons who paid for them, or the "saints" to whom they are dedicated. Christendom's trust in antiquity and tradition is just as fallacious as was Judah's trust in its holy temple.—Jeremiah 7:4.

⁶ In accordance with Jeremiah's denunciation of the Jewish priests and prophets, what can be said of Christendom's religious leaders today? With Jeremiahlike frankness, Jesus gave a description of the Jewish clergy that fits the clergy of Christendom to this day: "They do not practise what they preach... Everything they do is done to attract attention... like wanting to take the place of honour at banquets and the front seats in the synagogues." (Matthew 23:3-7, *The Jerusalem Bible*) How often we see prominent clergymen and preachers blessing political and nationalistic meetings and rallies with their presence—and sharing the media limelight with the politicians!

⁷ Now, in the age of television, we have TV preachers exploiting that medium with every kind of theatrical trick and psychological device to beguile the masses and empty the pockets of the flock. How appropriate is Jeremiah's denunciation even now, some 2,600 years later! "For from the least one of them even to the greatest one of them, every one is making for himself unjust gain; and from the prophet even to the priest, each one is acting falsely." At the same time, none of them want to accept the challenge of the true Christian minis-

6. How does Jesus' denunciation of the Jewish clergy apply to Christendom's clergy?

7. (a) How are some preachers misleading the masses? (b) What challenge have the clergy avoided?



Christendom trusts in its time-honored shrines just as the Jews trusted in the temple



try, face-to-face with the people, from house to house. Only Jehovah's Witnesses—the anointed Jeremiah class and the "great crowd"—have accepted that responsibility.—Jeremiah 6:13; Acts 20:20, 21.

Is Christendom Saved?

⁸ These same TV preachers lull the public into a false sense of security with their indiscriminate use of "born again" and "once saved, always saved" slogans and theology. Millions of people from nearly every religion and sect of Christendom have been led to believe that they are "born again" and "saved." Unblushing politicians

8. Why does Christendom believe that it is beyond Armageddon's reach?



Christendom's TV preachers lull millions into believing that they are "saved" or "born again"

blithely make the same claim. Yes, their favorite preachers tell them that they are at peace with God because they are "saved"—and this in spite of their religious, political, and nationalistic divisions! And the people love it, even as they did in Jeremiah's day! (Jeremiah 5:31; 14:14) They think they are beyond the reach of God's Armageddon judgment.—Jeremiah 6:14; 23:17; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Revelation 16:14, 16.

⁹ However, a careful study of God's Word and Christ's teachings shows that only a limited number share the privilege of being born again, born 'from water and from spirit,' thus to share heavenly rulership with Christ. (John 3:3-5; Romans 8:16, 17; Revelation 14:1-3) The "great crowd" of true Christians today do not need to be born again, since their hope of everlasting life is earthly, not heavenly. (2 Peter 3:13;

9. (a) To whom does being "born again" really apply? (b) What does the Bible say about the soul? (For both questions, supply further support from *Reasoning From the Scriptures*.)

Revelation 21:3, 4) Furthermore, Christendom's teaching is based on a false premise—that man has an immortal soul in need of salvation. Nowhere in the Bible is there support for such a doctrine, which is in fact derived from ancient Greek philosophy.*

No Delight in His Word or Name

¹⁰ There are other points of similarity between ancient Jerusalem and modern Christendom. Jeremiah stated: "Look! The very word of Jehovah has become to them a reproach, in which word they can take no delight." (Jeremiah 6:10) The clergy prefer to quote

philosophers and scientists, rather than the Word of Jehovah. Many are ashamed of the Bible; they even ridicule it by means of their "higher criticism." They claim that it is myths and legends presented as good literature. (Jeremiah 7:28) And as for its Author's name, they disdain it. What proof do we have for this assertion?

¹¹ Although the Hebrew tetragrammaton (יהוָה) appears nearly 7,000 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, the name "Jehovah," or "Yahweh," has been replaced in many English Bibles by the anonymous "LORD." For example, the name is totally omitted from current translations of the Bible in the Afrikaans language. The Spanish Franquesa-Solé translation used the name

* For a detailed consideration of these points, see pages 76-80, 356-61, 379-80 in *Reasoning From the Scriptures*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

10. How do many of the clergy view the Bible?
11. What contrast exists between Christendom and Jeremiah in their use of God's name?

in its original edition. When the revised version was published, the divine name had disappeared, replaced by *Serñor* (Lord). And even when Christendom's translations do include God's name, the clergy seldom use it. Yet, Jeremiah used God's distinctive name 726 times in his prophetic message!*

The "Queen of Heaven" and Idolatry

¹² We find another parallel as we examine Jeremiah's message to Jerusalem. When Jehovah told his prophet not to pray on behalf of the people, he pointed out why. "Are you not seeing what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The sons are picking up sticks of wood, and the fathers are lighting the fire, and the wives are kneading flour dough." And in what zealous enterprise was the whole family involved? "To make sacrificial cakes to the 'queen of the heavens'!"—Jeremiah 7:16-18; 44:15, 19.

¹³ One Jewish commentary states: "The cult of the 'queen of heaven' was eagerly and openly pursued." Incredibly, the nation of Judah was practicing idolatry, worshiping a pagan goddess, possibly the Babylonian fertility goddess, Ishtar, the third divinity of the Babylonian astral triad. Or this "queen" could have been the corresponding Canaanite goddess, Ashtoreth.—1 Kings 11:5, 33.

¹⁴ In addition to this goddess worship, they were indulging in other idolatry. Jehovah condemned them for this, saying: "Why is it that they have offended me with their graven images, with their vain foreign gods?" The indictment continued:

* For further information on suppression of the divine name, see the 32-page brochure *The Divine Name That Will Endure Forever*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

12-14. (a) In what zealous activity were Jewish families involved? (b) How did Jehovah view their worship?

"They have not obeyed my voice and have not walked in it, but they kept on walking after the stubbornness of their heart and after the Baal images, about which their fathers had taught them." (Jeremiah 8:19; 9:13, 14) Has Christendom fallen into the same trap?

¹⁵ Visit virtually any church or cathedral—Protestant, Catholic, or Orthodox—and you will at least find images of the cross. But in the Catholic and Orthodox realms, there are images of "the ever-virgin Holy Mary, Mother of the True God" in an endless variety of settings and postures.* Every superlative title is heaped upon her, including "Queen of heaven" and "Queen of the universe"! On the other hand, the Jeremiah class, while respecting Mary as Jesus' mother and an anointed believer, has carefully followed the apostolic counsel: "Guard yourselves from idols."—1 John 5:21; Jeremiah 10:14.

Trinity Replaces the One Sovereign Lord Jehovah

¹⁶ 'But,' you might ask, 'how has this worship and veneration of Mary come about?' By reason of another move by the early apostate church to absorb pagan worshipers. The three-gods-in-one concept was widely held in the pagan world. The ancient Romans had temples with groups of three cells "dedicated to a triad of divinities associated in beliefs and worship. Such was the case of the temple of Jupiter Optimus

* *The Image of Guadalupe—Myth or Miracle?*, by Jody Brant Smith, page 6.

[#] *The Glories of Mary*, by Alphonsus de Liguori, page 424.

15. (a) What situation regarding idolatry do we find in Christendom today? Cite local examples. (b) What position on Mary do true Christians take? (See also *Reasoning From the Scriptures*, pages 254-61.)

16. What teaching made way for the veneration of Mary, and how?

Maximus in the Capitol, consecrated to the Capitoline triad Jupiter-Juno-Minerva.”*

¹⁷ In order to promote the emerging doctrine of the “Most Holy Trinity” in the third and fourth centuries, it was necessary for the Catholic Church to suppress the Hebrew concept expressed so clearly in Jeremiah’s words: “In no way is there anyone like you, O Jehovah. You are great, and your name is great in mightiness. But Jehovah is in truth God. He is the living God and the King to time indefinite.” Jesus confirmed that understanding when he quoted from the words of Moses: “Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.”—Jeremiah 10:6, 10; Mark 12:29; Deuteronomy 6:4.

¹⁸ Aided by the Jewish superstition of not pronouncing “Yahweh,” or “Jehovah,” the use of God’s name was dropped by apostate Christendom. This permitted a theological vacuum that the ‘Holy Trinity’ could fill.^a

¹⁹ Thus, Christendom has chosen to ‘walk after another god,’ the trinitarian god, that was totally unknown to the Jews and to Christ and true Christians. And to bolster this three-in-one mystery, Christendom’s copyists even resorted to fraud by tampering with the Greek manuscripts.^a Further-

* *Las Grandes Religiones Ilustradas* (The Great Religions Illustrated), page 408.

^a For a study of the Trinity teaching, see *Reasoning From the Scriptures*, pages 405-26.

^a 1 John 5:7 includes a spurious addition, and Matthew 24:36, which lacks “nor the Son,” is a fraudulent omission. See *The Emphatic Diaglott*, footnote, page 803, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., and *The Codex Sinaiticus and The Codex Alexandrinus*, page 27, published by the Trustees of the British Museum.

17, 18. (a) What has been suppressed, thus allowing the Trinity teaching to prosper? (b) Give additional arguments from *Reasoning From the Scriptures*.

19. (a) What has been the result of Christendom’s acceptance of the Trinity? (b) What fraud was resorted to in order to bolster the Trinity argument?

Do You Recall?

- How has the modern Jeremiah class been identified?
- What are some of the parallels between ancient Jerusalem and Christendom?
- How have the clergy lulled the people into believing that they are at peace with God?
- What neglect and idolatry have been typical of Christendom?

more, as a logical consequence of the Trinity teaching, a large section of Christendom has also fallen into the worship or veneration of its “Queen of Heaven.”—Jeremiah 7:17, 18, *New International Version*.

Clergy Promote Persecution

²⁰ In view of the foregoing, Jeremiah’s question is appropriate for Christendom’s clergy: “How can you men say: ‘We are wise, and the law of Jehovah is with us’? Surely, now, the false stylus of the secretaries has worked in sheer falsehood. . . . Look! They have rejected the very word of Jehovah, and what wisdom do they have?” (Jeremiah 8:8, 9) They have rejected Jehovah and his representatives, his witnesses. Just as the priests and prophets persecuted Jeremiah, so the clergy of Christendom have been behind most of the atrocious persecution of Jehovah’s Witnesses throughout this century.

²¹ But why have they promoted this persecution? What have the Witnesses done to provoke their ire and draw their fire? The final article in this series will examine those and related questions.

20, 21. What course have Christendom’s clergy followed, and what questions are now appropriate?

God's Judgments Must Be Declared

"You must rise up and speak to them everything that I myself command you. Do not be struck with any terror because of them."—JEREMIAH 1:17.

THE persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Holocaust Kingdom [Nazi Germany] has taken its place among other times of trial in their history." (*Holocaust Studies Annual, Volume II—The Churches' Response to the Holocaust*) The South African *Daily News* of July 15, 1939, also stated about the German Witnesses: "Like a light that never flickers, this little body of Christian men and women stand steadfast in their faith, a thorn in the side of the Monarch of Munich [Adolf Hitler] and a living testimony to his mortality." These words remind us that Jesus said his followers would be "the light of the world" and would have to let their light shine before the world, regardless of the cost.—Matthew 5:11, 12, 14-16.

² Another report, from terrorist-torn Sri Lanka, tells of a young Tamil Witness, David Gunaratnam, who, in true Jeremiah style, fearlessly preached to the military authorities. He had been rounded up with other young men for questioning. The report states: "The officers and the men were most impressed by the man's erudition, and more than that, by his obvious sincerity, particularly when he said, 'And if I were to meet any so-called terrorists, I would preach this same thing to them too.'"

1. How did Jehovah's Witnesses 'let their light shine' in Nazi Germany?
2. What example of fearless preaching took place in Sri Lanka?

³ That same night he was abducted from his home by terrorists, who accused him of collaborating with the army. He insisted on his neutrality and said that he was only preaching the message of God's Kingdom. "I am doing God's work and shall continue to do it. I preach indiscriminately to anyone who will listen." This bold Witness was shot and killed by the terrorists, leaving behind a young widow and a baby boy.—Compare Acts 7:51-60.

⁴ From a Latin American country, where the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses has been approved and condoned by some Catholic and Presbyterian clergy, comes this report: "There were five Jehovah's Witnesses in the garrison . . . They were frequently beaten and placed in isolation without food. The political officer in charge of indoctrination in our unit punished them because they preached to the other soldiers. He said that of all the religious dissidents, the Jehovah's Witnesses were the most dangerous."

Motivation and Reaction

⁵ Yes, just as Jeremiah was persecuted by the religious and political rulers of his day, so Jehovah's Witnesses face opposition worldwide from these same elements.

4. What clergy-approved persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses took place in a Latin American country?
5. As in Jeremiah's case, what is often behind the persecution of the Witnesses?

What motivates these actions? Even though the Witnesses are the most peaceable and law-abiding segment of any community, their enemies consider the Word of God dangerous, for they resent and reject its message about the Kingdom of God. Their uncompromising preaching and principles expose the selfishness and duplicity of the political, commercial, and religious elements of Satan's system.—John 15:18, 19; 1 John 5:19.

⁶ Yet, in spite of imprisonment, beatings, and even death, Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide have reacted like Jeremiah of old. While showing love and tact, they continue to preach God's unpopular judgments to the nations. (2 Timothy 2:23-26) They know they must obey God as Ruler rather than men. (Acts 4:19, 20; 5:29) They are conscious of Paul's counsel to the Hebrew Christians, namely, to endure in doing God's will. Then they will see the fulfillment of the promise, everlasting life. So, like Paul and Jeremiah, we should be able to say: "Now we are not the sort that shrink back to destruction, but the sort that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul."—Hebrews 10:35-39.

The Modern Jeremiah Exposes Christendom

⁷ Just as Jehovah kept sending his prophets to Israel and Judah, he has sent his witnesses to hammer away at the message of his coming judgment. (Jeremiah 7:25, 26; 25:4, 8, 9) Especially since the spiritually invigorating year 1919, the anointed remnant of Christ's brothers fearlessly presented God's judgments, powerful messages of calamity, to Christendom. (Compare Jeremiah 11:9-13.) In

6. How have Jehovah's Witnesses reacted to persecution?
7. How have the Witnesses in the 20th century followed the example of Jehovah's faithful prophets sent to Israel and Judah?

that year the magazine *The Golden Age* was launched. Over the years and with its changed titles, *Consolation* (1937) and *Awake!* (1946), it has served to expose Christendom's religious lies and its pseudo-Christianity.

⁸ For example, the *Golden Age* of October 11, 1922, denounced false religion in these terms: "All efforts of the denominational church organizations, their clergy, their leaders and their allies, to save and re-establish the order of things in the earth . . . must of necessity fail, because they do not constitute any part of the kingdom of Messiah. That on the contrary, during the World War [I] the clergy of these various church denominations were disloyal to the Lord Jesus Christ in this, that they wrongfully united with big business and big politicians to further the World War."

⁹ The denunciation continued: "They further repudiated the Lord and his kingdom and showed their disloyalty by voluntarily uniting themselves with Satan's organization and boldly announcing to the world that the League of Nations is the political expression of God's kingdom on earth." Finally came the message of

- 8, 9. (a) Why were the churches denounced in 1922? (b) What calamity was predicted for them?

In Our Next Issue

- When Children Have Children
- In Our Fearful Times,
Whom Can You Really Trust?
- Discipline That Can
Yield Peaceable Fruit

"calamity," or judgment: "There is now impending and about to fall upon the nations of the earth, according to the words of Christ Jesus, a great time of 'tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor shall ever be again.'

¹⁰ The Jeremiah role was expanded through the use of other publications, such as the *Watchtower* magazine, booklets, and books. For example, in 1926 the book *Deliverance* included a powerful exposé of Christendom's misleading teachings. On page 203 it states: "False doctrines were freely introduced [into apostate Christendom] and substituted for the truth. Amongst these were and are the doctrines of the trinity, immortality of all souls, eternal torture of the wicked, the divine right of the clergy and the divine right of kings to rule. In the course of time Mary, the mother of the child Jesus, was deified; and the people called upon to worship her as the mother of God."

Divisive Christendom Warned

¹¹ The same publication exposed the clergy's complicity in wars, saying: "The clergy of these various ecclesiastical systems bless the armies which are sent out by the commercial and political wings, and their blessing is extended regardless of which side these armies are fighting on. The clergy all pretend to pray to the same God for a blessing upon the warring ar-



In time, Mary was idolized and people were called upon to adore her as the "Mother of God"

mies of both sides." (Compare Jeremiah 7:31.) Then an imminent judgment was implied: "All these elements that go to make up the visible part of Satan's organization are being gathered together and assembled for the great battle of Armageddon."—Revelation 16:14-16.

¹² Just as in Jeremiah's day, when the leaders said they were safe and at peace with God, "so these ecclesiastical leaders confess to themselves that they are safe, that they need only to be called by the name of Christ, while they continue to play with the Devil's fire. They blind themselves to the real situation by putting sand into their own eyes as well as into the eyes of their fellow men." (*Deliverance*, page 270) Their self-deception was exposed by those zealous Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known.

—Matthew 7:21-23.

¹³ As time passed, the Bible Students became even more closely identified with

10. What denunciation was made in 1926?
11, 12. (a) How was the clergy's nonneutral stance exposed? (b) What warning was given by the Jeremiah class?

13. What event took place in 1931, and why was it appropriate?

Jeremiah when, in 1931, at a convention in Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A., it was announced that the Biblical name for this courageous group of Christians should be "Jehovah's Witnesses." (Isaiah 43:10-12) That name had been brought to the fore in the eighth century B.C.E. when Jehovah applied it to Israel. Hence, about a hundred years later, when Jeremiah served as a prophet, he was also a witness for Jehovah. (Jeremiah 16:21) Likewise Jesus, when he came to the earth as a Jew, was a witness for his Father, Jehovah. (John 17:25, 26; Revelation 1:5; 3:14) Therefore, it was appropriate that at God's due time, his people should finally qualify for this divinely appointed name—"Jehovah's Witnesses."—John 17:6, 11, 12.

Christendom Unmasked

¹⁴ Over the last seven decades, in conjunction with proclaiming the glorious hope of Jehovah's incoming Kingdom, Jehovah's Witnesses have spread around the world a veritable flood of denunciation and judgment. In hundreds of millions of frank, hard-hitting Bible-based publications, they have exposed Christendom as the most powerful force in the religious whore, "Babylon the Great," denounced in Revelation chapters 17 and 18. (See "*Babylon the Great Has Fallen!*" *God's Kingdom Rules!*, pages 576-615, published in 1963 by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.)

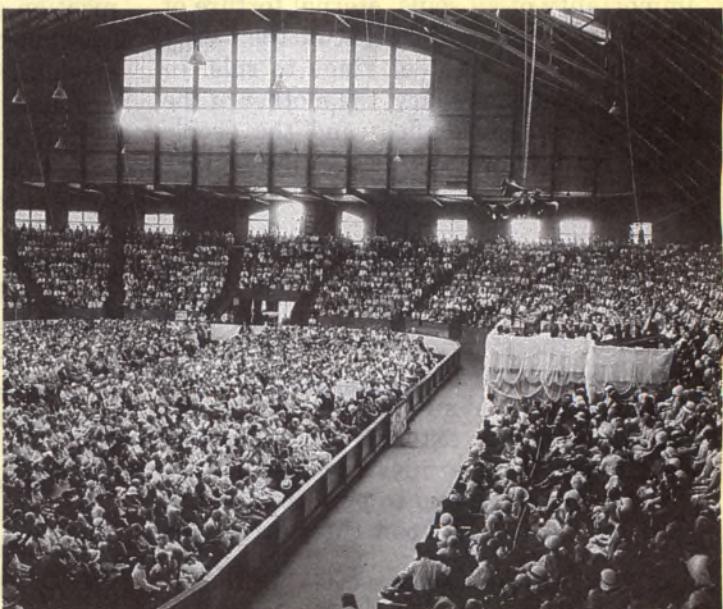
¹⁵ In 1955 Jehovah's Wit-

14. How has Christendom been exposed over the last 70 years?
15. How was Christendom exposed in 1955?

nesses distributed millions of copies of the booklet *Christendom or Christianity—Which One Is "the Light of the World?"* Thousands were delivered directly to the clergy of Christendom. And what did that booklet tell them? In true Jeremiah fashion, it stated: "Despite all her advantages that have pushed her ahead economically, mentally and militarily, Christendom has not proved herself 'the light of the world.' Why not? . . . She does not preach or practice [the Bible's] Christianity." Then it raised the question: "Is the exposing of false religions a persecution of their adherents? Is it un-Christian bigotry?" ¹⁶

¹⁶ The answer was: "No; otherwise Jesus Christ was a bigoted persecutor of the Jews, . . . and all of Jehovah's prophets of ancient times [including Jeremiah] before Jesus were persecutors and bigots, for they all exposed the false religion of apos-

16. Was it bigotry for the Witnesses to expose Christendom? Explain.

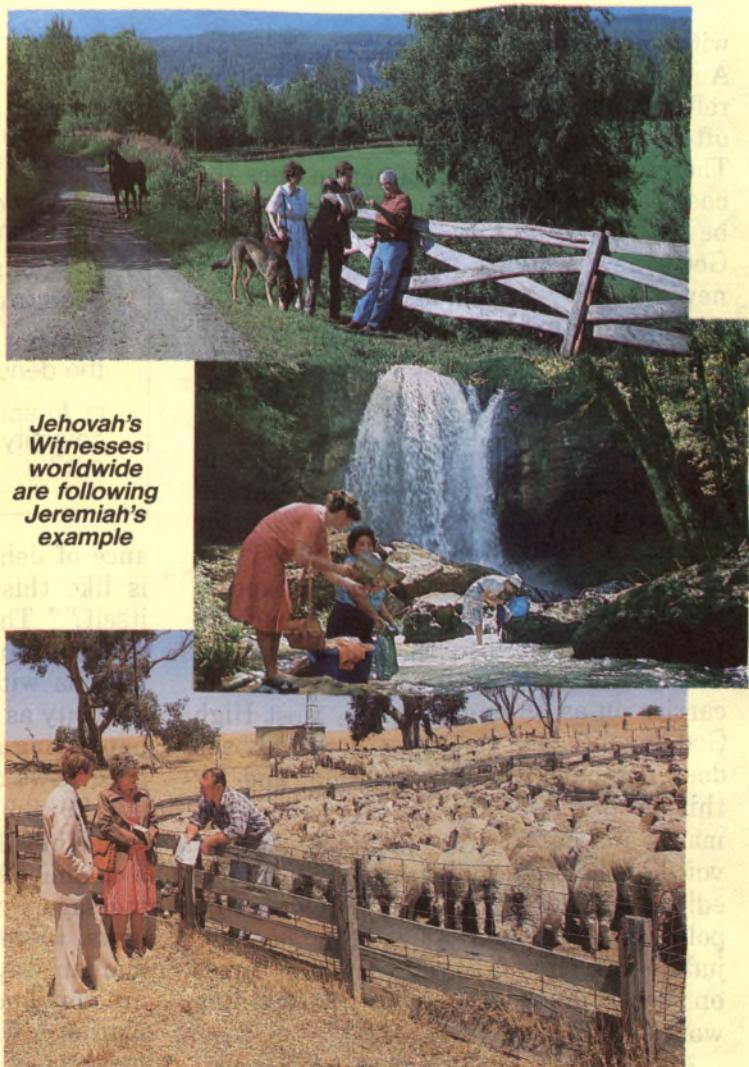


In 1931 the Bible Students accepted the name "Jehovah's Witnesses" at their convention in Columbus, Ohio

tate Jews and of the heathen nations." Certainly, if true Christians are to be "the light of the world," then spiritual "darkness" must be exposed. (2 Corinthians 6:14-17) This does not mean that individuals are attacked but, rather, the system that enslaves them. Thus, Jehovah gave the command to Jeremiah: "You should gird up your hips, and you must rise up and speak to them everything that I myself command you. Do not be struck with any terror because of them . . . And they will be certain to fight against you, but they will not prevail against you, for 'I am with you,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'to deliver you.'" —Jeremiah 1:17, 19.

The Jeremiah Work Coming to Completion

¹⁷ Have Jehovah's Witnesses toned down God's judgment? True, we live in an age when criticizing another religion is not considered the thing to do. Nevertheless, Jehovah's Witnesses' publications are spelling out the same message of judgment for Christendom as always. For example, in the last four years Jehovah's Witnesses have printed 32 million copies of the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, in 76 languages. This pub-



**Jehovah's
Witnesses
worldwide
are following
Jeremiah's
example**

17, 18. (a) How have Jehovah's Witnesses continued their Jeremiah work in recent years? (b) What counsel has been offered to honest-hearted ones?

lication presents the answers to many current questions, such as "What Happens at Death?" "Why Has God Permitted Wickedness?" and "Identifying the True Religion." But it also gives a clear warning regarding the world empire of false religion.

¹⁸ In chapter 25, entitled "For Satan's World, or for God's New System?" it states: "In the Bible false religion is represented as a 'great harlot,' or prostitute,

with the name ‘Babylon the Great.’ . . . And it is a fact that throughout history religion has been mixed up with politics, often telling governments what to do.” Therefore, what course of action does the book recommend? It asks: “Do you want to be part of Satan’s world? Or are you for God’s new system? If you are for God’s new system, you will be separate from the world, including its false religion. You will heed the command: ‘Get out of her [Babylon the Great], my people.’ (Revelation 18:4)”

¹⁹ This same powerful message of separation and judgment rings clear in the book *Worldwide Security Under the “Prince of Peace,”* published in 1986 (six million copies in 25 languages). It exposes the clergy of Christendom for ‘preaching the young men into the battlefields’ of World War I. It continues: “Christendom carries on as an enemy of the Most High God down to this very time. Certainly she does not have divine protection, and for this vital reason her very existence remains insecure.” (See pages 30-2.) The voice of the modern Jeremiah is not muted! While efforts are made by clergy and politicians to stifle the preaching of God’s judgments, his faithful witnesses press on, determined to complete the warning work.—Jeremiah 18:18.

²⁰ And why must this work be completed? Because Jehovah, the living Sovereign Lord of the universe, has an accounting with the nations and their religions. Even as Jehovah asked deceptive Judah and Jerusalem, so the question applies equally to Christendom today: “‘Should I not take an accounting because of these very things?’ is the utter-

Do You Recall?

- Like Jeremiah, how are Jehovah’s Witnesses being persecuted?
- Why do the Witnesses persist in preaching?
- How has the Jeremiah work been expanded?
- What recent examples show that the denunciation has not changed?
- In spite of the message of calamity, what hope is also held out?

ance of Jehovah. ‘Or upon a nation that is like this should not my soul avenge itself?’” Therefore, Jehovah’s Witnesses will continue to visit the people of the nations with a message that stings the majority as an unpopular judgment but is happyifying good news for a minority—the good news of God’s Kingdom.—Jeremiah 5:9, 29; 9:9; Acts 8:4, 12.

²¹ While Jeremiah has often been called a calamity howler, it is also true that his message introduced rays of hope to the Jews. (Jeremiah 23:5, 6; 31:16, 17) In a similar way, while Jehovah’s Witnesses are announcing the imminent “great tribulation,” with God’s Armageddon judgment, they are also proclaiming the blessings of the “new heavens and a new earth” that will result in the restoration of justice and Paradise to this planet, along with everlasting life. (Matthew 24: 21, 22; Revelation 16:16; 21:1-4) Therefore, now is the time to heed Jehovah’s judgment message and to lend support to the completing of the great Jeremiah work.—Compare Jeremiah 38:7-13.

19. How can you show that the voice of the modern Jeremiah is not muted at this late date?
20. Why will Jehovah’s Witnesses continue to announce Jehovah’s judgments to the nations?

21. In spite of foretold calamity, what great hope lies before those who pay heed to the Jeremiah work? (Psalm 37:9, 11, 18, 19, 28, 29)

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

Jehovah Blessed Their Firm Stand for His Law

IN A Middle Eastern country, a father was fixing a flat tire beside the road when a car hit his four-year-old son and then sped away. With the injured child on the mother's lap, the father headed for the nearest hospital only to be directed to another hospital 16 miles away. The doctor decided that the boy had internal bleeding and that he needed an operation and a blood transfusion. Eight other doctors agreed. Knowing God's law against blood transfusions, the parents refused. "You have only five minutes to decide or else we will not touch your child even if you agree to a blood transfusion afterward," threatened the doctor. In the meantime, the child's stomach continued to swell and was reaching a dangerous state.

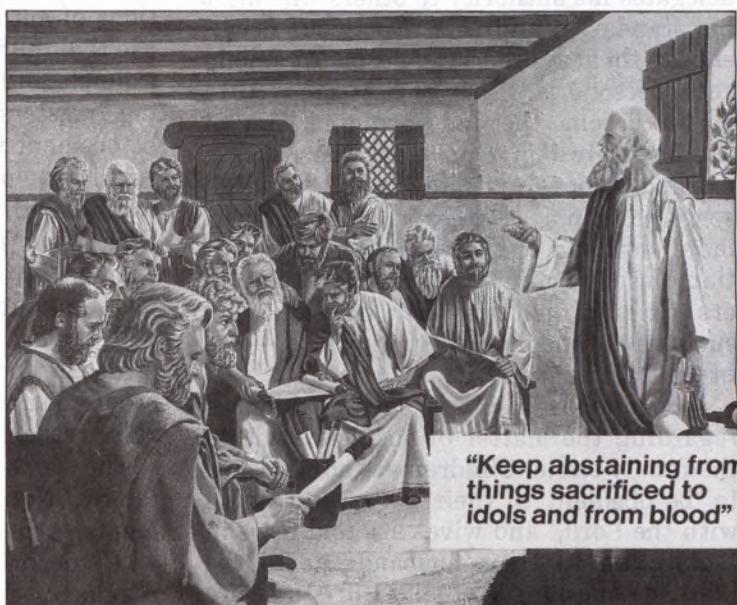
The father's fleshly brother, not in the truth, put pressure on the father to permit a blood transfusion. He even said: "Please consider this boy not yours but mine. Since your conscience is bothering you, I will bear the responsibility, including the hospital cost, to give the child the needed blood. This is your only son." The pressure was hard to bear, but the parents were firm in their decision.

They took the boy and left, looking for a certain hospital, but they lost their way. By chance they saw the sign of another hospital, and they went to it, although it was not the one they were looking for. After seeing the boy, the doctor said: "The swelling of the child's stomach may or may not be a sign of internal bleeding. Let the

boy sleep, and tomorrow we will make the necessary examinations to find out." The examinations showed that there was no bleeding, but the swelling was due to the accident. There was no need for an operation. In fact, the doctor said that an operation could have been very dangerous. "Thanks to Jehovah," said the parents, "for the safety of our son and for directing us to the right hospital and to the right doctor."

Ten years later, what has been the outcome of this situation? The father relates: "My fleshly brother that put pressure on me in the hospital came to appreciate our stand and see Jehovah's direction in this case. This aroused his interest in the truth, which he accepted, and he is now baptized and serves

as an elder in the congregation. His wife and children are serving Jehovah zealously with him. My two other brothers are also in the truth with their families, and one of them is serving as a ministerial servant. My father and mother were baptized recently despite their old age. So, although it was a terrible experience for my wife and me, because of it some 30 members of my family have accepted the truth; some are already baptized and serving as elders and ministerial servants. Others are on their way to baptism. My son, now 14 years old, is a healthy, zealous publisher, and he looks forward to baptism. How thankful my wife and I are to Jehovah for helping us make the right decision in harmony with his law stated at Acts 15:29!"



"Keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols and from blood"

Is Obedience Always Proper?

DID you hear me?" mother shouts to little Johnnie as he goes out the door. No, she is not checking Johnnie's hearing. She is making sure that he will obey her and be home at the proper time.

Indeed, hearing and obeying are closely related. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the original languages of the Bible, the words denoting obedience are related to hearing. But to whom should we give our listening ear? Should we render obedience to everyone who demands it? And is obedience always proper?

When Obedience Is Proper

Obedience to our Creator, Jehovah God, is always proper. As our Maker and the Source of life, he has the first claim to the obedience of his creatures. (Psalm 95:6, 7) As the Supreme Sovereign, Jehovah also delegates his authority to others who meet his standards, and this makes our obedience to them appropriate. Foremost among such persons is Jesus Christ. Since 1914 he has become the God-appointed King of the heavenly Kingdom "that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him." (Daniel 7:13, 14) Furthermore, as Head of the Christian congregation, Jesus has imparted authority to others therein, making our obedience to such undershepherds appropriate.—Hebrews 13:17.

Jehovah has also set down guidelines regarding the matter of obedience within the family circle. Children are admonished to 'be obedient to their parents in union with the Lord,' and wives are told to be in "subjection to their husbands as to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:21-6:3) Christians are

even reminded "to be in subjection and be obedient to governments and authorities as rulers." (Titus 3:1) In all of this, however, is our obedience to be absolute? Is it always proper?

When Obedience Is Not Proper

Of course, listening to those who have not been entrusted with authority from Jehovah can result in disaster. The first man, Adam, "listened" to the voice of Eve and joined her in eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. (Genesis 3:17) What was the outcome? "Through the disobedience of the one man many were constituted sinners." (Romans 5:19) What a disastrous result from listening to the wrong person.

Is it always proper, however, to listen to those who have been entrusted with positions of authority? Not if they attempt to use their authority in an ungodly way. For example, in line with the principle of obeying "masters in a fleshly sense," we would be obedient to our employers. But what if such ones order us to do something in conflict with the laws of the almighty God? What Paul said next indicates the proper course: "Not by way of eye-service as men pleasers, but as Christ's slaves, doing the will of God whole-souled." (Ephesians 6: 5, 6) On another occasion, Peter and the other apostles said: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

The same principle applies within the family. Not appreciating divine requirements, a husband may disapprove of his wife's desire to attend Christian meetings regularly. Suppose he puts pressure on

her, even resorting to violence, as sometimes has been the case, to stop her from going to Christian meetings. What should she do? If she were to acquiesce, she might endanger her own spirituality, as well as that of her family, and lose out on the hope of everlasting life. Would it not be better to obey Jehovah, realizing that no human, not even her husband, has been vested with the authority to override the command 'not to forsake the gathering of ourselves together'?—Hebrews 10:25.

Miyoko's husband objected that his earnings were being "wasted" by her attending meetings that he did not approve. Eventually, he stopped handing over housekeeping money, and Miyoko had to walk the hour's distance to the Kingdom Hall.

Did she give up? No. She approached Jehovah in prayer and analyzed her situation. Realizing the reason for her husband's opposition, Miyoko decided to take a job delivering newspapers. Her husband agreed, provided she would give him half of her wages.

Again, she prayed that if it be Jehovah's will, she would have a nearby route. Usually, it takes a year or so to get what one wants. But, surprisingly, within six weeks Miyoko was offered a route right near her home. Encouraged by the thought that Jehovah heard her prayers, she worked from 4:30 to 6:00 every morning. Seeing this, her husband's attitude gradually changed, and he became cooperative. Just as Miy-

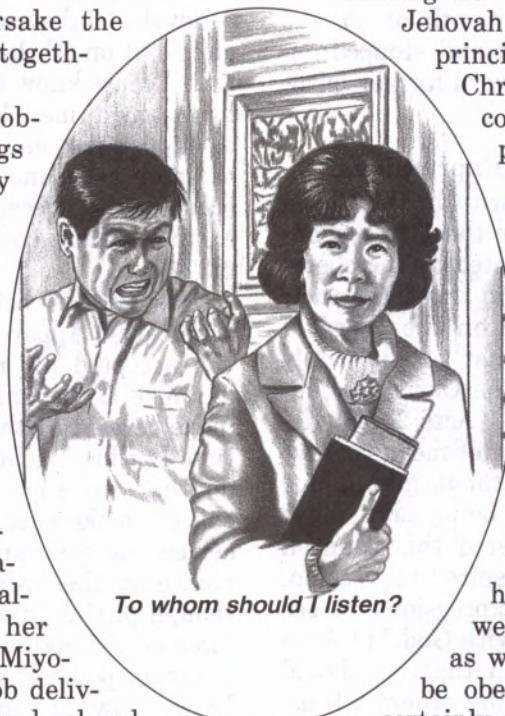
ko, who regularly serves as an auxiliary pioneer, thought out and analyzed her situation, prayed about it and then acted positively, you too will find that this will result in Jehovah's blessing.

Of course, there may be special reasons for which an unbelieving husband may ask his wife to miss a Christian meeting. He may do so without any intention of undermining her worship and service to Jehovah God. Understanding the principles involved will help a Christian woman to decide correctly according to her particular circumstance.

Taking matters one step further, what if her husband tells her not to take their children to Christian meetings? She knows, of course, that even though her husband does not accept the headship of Christ, he is still the head of the family. (1 Corinthians 11:3) And yet, she also has at heart the spiritual well-being of the children, as well as her own desire to be obedient to Jehovah. It is certainly a test of her faith to live up to her obligations in all these areas.

Praying to Jehovah for wisdom and discernment surely would help. (James 1:5; Philippians 4:6, 7) Tactfully reasoning with her husband and speaking graciously, displaying a quiet and mild spirit, may also help in resolving the dilemma.—Colossians 4:6; 1 Peter 3:1-5.

A Christian woman in Yamato, Japan, faced such a situation when her husband forbade her to take their three children to the meetings. What could she do? She



To whom should I listen?

diligently taught her children at home, and when they were old enough to make their own decisions, each took a stand for Jehovah and started to attend meetings. Outraged, the husband threw all of them out of his house.

The wife found a job and settled temporarily in a sister's apartment. But she did not leave matters at that. She went back to clean her husband's house and fix his meals. Finally, after a month or so, the husband took them back and stopped opposing them. What a reward for her faithful course!

"Test the Inspired Expressions"

What about the authority in the Christian congregation? Since those in responsible positions are appointed by the operation of the holy spirit and they base their counsel and admonition on the Word of God, we can be sure that obeying duly appointed authority in the Christian congregation is appropriate. (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17) But it does not mean that we obey such authority without giving due consideration to what is being said. Why?

The apostle John offered this counsel: "Do not believe every inspired expression, but test the inspired expressions to see whether they originate with God." (1 John 4:1) This does not mean that we should be suspicious of everything others tell us. Rather, we bear in mind Paul's words at Galatians 1:8: "Even if we or an angel out of heaven were to declare to you as good news something beyond what we declared to you as good news, let him be accursed."

Is the information before us different from what we have been taught through "the faithful and discreet slave"? Is the person spreading that message speaking to honor the name of Jehovah, or is he trying to exalt himself? Is the information in harmony with the overall teachings of the Bible? These are questions that will help

us in 'testing' anything that may sound questionable. We are admonished to "make sure of all things; hold fast to what is fine."—Matthew 24:45; 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

An interesting case in point is that of Judge Gideon. To be sure that Jehovah was going to be with him, Gideon proposed a test: "Here I am keeping a fleece of wool exposed on the threshing floor," he said to Jehovah. "If dew comes to be on the fleece alone but on all the earth there is dryness, then I must know that you will save Israel by means of me." When Jehovah caused it to happen just as requested, Gideon wanted more assurance: "Let, please, dryness occur to the fleece alone, and upon all the earth let there come to be dew."—Judges 6:37-39.

Was Gideon being overly cautious or suspicious? Apparently not, because Jehovah accepted his request both times and did just as he asked. Gideon wanted to make certain of the rightness of his position. Not having God's written Word as we do, that was a most effective way for Gideon to "make sure." However, once he received the assurance, he gave strict obedience to the orders from Jehovah even though pitting 300 men against an enemy force of 135,000 would seem suicidal from a human point of view. (Judges 7:7; 8:10) Do we show the same attitude by searching in the Word of God for what Jehovah's will really is and then sticking to it?

The Wisest Choice

Jehovah does not expect us to show blind credulity. He does not want from us the kind of obedience that a trainer gets from a beast with a bridle or a whip. That is why he told David: "Do not make yourselves like a horse or mule without understanding, whose spiritedness is to be curbed even by bridle or halter." (Psalm 32:9) Rather, Jehovah has endowed us

with thinking ability and discernment so that, based on understanding, we can choose to obey him.

In Japanese, the word *kiku* (to hear) includes the meaning not only of listening and obeying but also of judging whether a thing is good or bad. When someone speaks to us, it is good to listen in this sense so that when obeying, we do so not by mere credulity but by choice. When our heavenly Father, Jehovah God, speaks, whether through his Word, the Bible, or through his earthly organization, it is all the more important for us to listen and obey, thus proving that we are obedient worshipers who do not ignore the loving reminder: "Did you hear me?"



Gideon searched out Jehovah's will and obeyed him

'Dedicated to the Great God Jehovah Forever'

IN APRIL 1935, a well-known American minister and speaker visited Hawaii. This was of special interest to Jehovah's Witnesses, who numbered only 12 at that time, since this renowned visitor was Joseph F. Rutherford, the second president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. The talk "Who Shall Rule the World?" discussed the incoming world rulership of God's Kingdom. It was given in a local high school auditorium and received much publicity.

God's name and his Kingdom have been the theme of Jehovah's Witnesses' preaching activity since their modern-day inception. So it is of interest

to all who appreciate and use the personal name of the almighty God, Jehovah, that the Hawaiian equivalent, Iehova, was commonly used by early Hawaiian worshipers. One of the first churches built by Christendom's ministers in Hawaii, the stone church at Kawaiahao in Honolulu, had its cornerstone laid in 1839. Inscribed on this dedication stone are the words: "To Iehova our God forever and ever."

Since 1935, when Judge Rutherford visited, the work of Jehovah's Witnesses in Hawaii has grown from only 12 active Witnesses to over 5,400 today. They are truly 'dedicated to the great God Jehovah forever.'



Why Miss Them?

While standing in line in a New York City bank last summer, a middle-aged woman noted that the man in front of her was reading the *Watchtower* magazine. She was quite anxious to read the article in it on prayer, so she took note of the issue date.

A few days later, Jehovah's Witnesses called at her home, and she asked: "Do you have the July issues of *The Watchtower*?" After learning why she was interested in a particular magazine, one of the Witnesses noted: "The best way not to miss any interesting issues is to subscribe."

"I didn't know you could!" the woman exclaimed. When told the year's subscription was \$5, she answered: "Are you sure? Only \$5 for the whole year?" When assured that it was, she wanted not only *The Watchtower* but its companion magazine *Awake!* as well. "Are you sure I can get both magazines for just \$10?" she asked again.

The woman was pleased to have the Witness subscribe for her.