

MARCH 1, 2002

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

WHY
WAS AN
ANCIENT
WORLD
Destroyed?



THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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THE PURPOSE OF THE WATCHTOWER is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these 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 God's 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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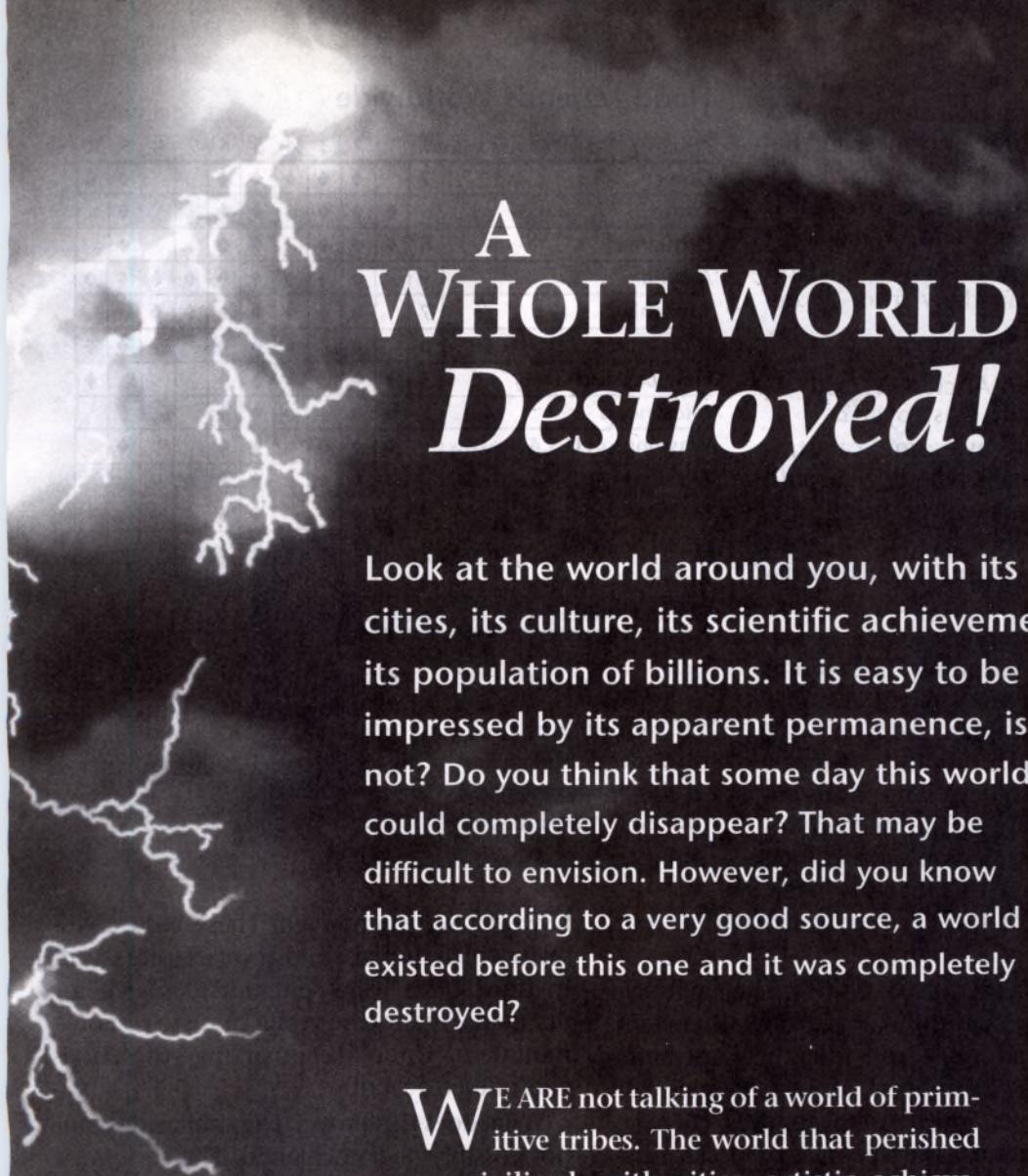
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A WHOLE WORLD *Destroyed!*

Look at the world around you, with its cities, its culture, its scientific achievements, its population of billions. It is easy to be impressed by its apparent permanence, is it not? Do you think that some day this world could completely disappear? That may be difficult to envision. However, did you know that according to a very good source, a world existed before this one and it was completely destroyed?

WE ARE not talking of a world of primitive tribes. The world that perished was civilized, with cities, artistic achievements, scientific knowledge. Yet, the Bible record tells us that suddenly, on the 17th day of the 2nd month, 352 years before the patriarch Abraham was born, a deluge began that swept away a whole world.*

* Genesis 7:11; 11:10-25, 32; 12:4.

Is that record correct? Did such a thing really happen? Was there really an ancient world before the present one that flourished and was then destroyed? If so, why did it end? What went wrong? And is there any lesson that we can draw from its demise?

Was an Ancient World Really Destroyed?

Such an awesome catastrophe, if it really happened, would never have been completely forgotten. Hence, in many nations there are reminders of that destruction. Consider, for example, the precise date recorded in the Scriptures. The second month of the ancient calendar ran from what we now call mid-October to mid-November. So the 17th day corresponds approximately to the first of November. It may not be a coincidence, then, that in many lands, festivals for the dead are celebrated at that time of year.

Other evidences of the Deluge linger in mankind's traditions. Practically all ancient peoples have a legend that their ancestors survived a global flood. African Pygmies, European Celts, South American Incas—all have similar legends, as do peoples of Alaska, Australia, China, India, Lithuania, Mexico, Micronesia, New Zealand, and parts of North America, to mention only a few.

Of course, over time the legends have been embellished, but they all include several details indicating a common source narrative: God was angered by mankind's wickedness. He brought a great flood. Mankind as a whole was destroyed. A few righteous ones,

Flood Legends Worldwide

Country	Correspondencies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Greece	7	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦			♦	♦
Rome	6	♦	♦	♦		♦	♦			♦	
Lithuania	6	♦	♦	♦		♦	♦			♦	
Assyria	9	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Tanzania	7		♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	
India - Hindu	6		♦		♦	♦	♦			♦	♦
New Zealand - Maori	5	♦	♦			♦	♦				♦
Micronesia	7	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦				♦
Washington U.S.A. - Yakima	7	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦				♦
Mississippi U.S.A. - Choctaw	7		♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	
Mexico - Michoacan	5		♦			♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	
South America - Quechua	4		♦		♦	♦	♦			♦	
Bolivia - Chiriguano	5		♦	♦	♦	♦	♦				
Guyana - Arawak	6	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦				

- 1: God angered by wickedness
- 2: Destruction by a flood
- 3: Ordered by God
- 4: Divine warning given
- 5: Few of mankind survive
- 6: Saved in a vessel
- 7: Animals saved
- 8: Bird or other creature sent out
- 9: Finally comes to rest on a mountain
- 10: Sacrifice offered

however, were preserved. These built a vessel in which humans and animals were saved. In time, birds were sent out to search for dry land. Finally, the vessel came to rest on a mountain. Upon disembarking, the survivors offered a sacrifice.

What does this prove? The similarities cannot possibly be coincidental. The combined evidence of these legends corroborates the Bible's ancient testimony that all humans descend from the survivors of a flood that destroyed a world of mankind. Hence, we do not need to rely on legends or myths to know what happened. We have the carefully preserved record in the Hebrew Scriptures of the Bible.—Genesis, chapters 6-8.

The Bible contains an inspired record of

history extending back to the dawn of life. Evidence proves that it is more than mere history, however. Its unfailing prophecy and deep wisdom demonstrate that it is what it claims to be—God's communication to mankind. Unlike myths, the Bible includes names and dates as well as genealogical and geographical details in its historical accounts. It

gives us a picture of what life was like before the Flood and reveals why a whole world came to a sudden end.

What went wrong with that antediluvian society? The following article considers that question. It is an important question for those who may wonder just how secure the future of our present civilization is.

Why Did That ANCIENT WORLD PERISH?

THE global Deluge was not a natural disaster. It was a judgment from God. Warning was given, but it was largely ignored. Why? Jesus explained: "In those days before the flood, [people 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."—Matthew 24:38, 39.

A Developed Civilization

In certain respects, the pre-Flood civilization enjoyed advantages that we do not have today. For example, all of mankind spoke one common language. (Genesis 11:1) This would have favored achievements in arts and sciences that require the collective effort of many people with diverse skills. Also, the long life span that most people then enjoyed meant that they could continue to build on what they had learned over the centuries.

Some claim that the human life span was not really so long back then and that the years mentioned in the Bible account were really months. Is that true? Well, consider the case of Mahalalel. The Bible says: "Mahalalel lived on for sixty-five years. Then he became father to Jared. . . . All the days of Mahalalel amounted to eight hundred and ninety-five years and he died." (Genesis 5:15-17) If a year means a month, Mahalalel fathered his son when only five years old! No, people then were closer



Metalworking
was known before
the Flood

to the perfect vitality of the first man, Adam. They really did live for centuries. What did they achieve?

Many centuries before the Flood, earth's population had grown to such an extent that Adam's son Cain was able to build a city, which he called Enoch. (Genesis 4:17) Down through the pre-Flood ages, a variety of industries developed. There were forges for "every sort of tool of copper and iron." (Genesis 4:22) Doubtless these tools were used for construction, carpentry, tailoring, and agriculture. All these trades are referred to in the accounts of the earth's earliest human inhabitants.

Accumulated knowledge would have made it possible for successive generations to develop such specialties as metallurgy, agronomy, rearing sheep and cattle, writing, and the fine arts. Jubal, for example, was "the founder of all those who handle the harp and the pipe." (Genesis 4:21) Civilization developed extensively. Yet, everything came to a sudden end. What happened?

What Went Wrong?

With all its advantages, pre-Flood society had a bad start. Its founder, Adam, was a rebel against God. Cain, the builder of the first recorded city, murdered his own brother. Little wonder that evil snowballed! The consequences of the defective legacy that Adam left his offspring were cumulative.—Romans 5:12.

Things were evidently coming to a head when Jehovah determined that he would allow the situation to continue just another 120 years. (Genesis 6:3) The Bible says: "The badness of man was abundant in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time. . . . The earth became filled with violence."—Genesis 6:5, 11.

In time, Noah was told specifically that God would destroy all flesh in a deluge. (Gen-

esis 6:13, 17) Although Noah became "a preacher of righteousness," it was evidently difficult for people to believe that everything around them was going to end. (2 Peter 2:5) Only eight people heeded the warning and were saved. (1 Peter 3:20) Why is this important for us today?

What Significance for Us?

We live in times similar to those of Noah. We regularly hear about horrifying acts of terrorism, campaigns of genocide, mass killings by gunmen with little apparent motive, and domestic violence on a shocking scale. The earth has again become filled with violence, and as before, the world has been put on notice of a judgment to come. Jesus himself said that he would come as God's appointed Judge and separate people as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. Those found unworthy, said Jesus, "will depart into everlasting cutting-off." (Matthew 25:31-33, 46) The Bible says that this time, however, there will be millions of survivors—a great crowd who worship the only true God. In the world to come, these will enjoy life in permanent peace and security as never before.—Micah 4:3, 4; Revelation 7:9-17.

Many scoff at such Biblical statements and at warnings about the judgment act that will show such statements to be true. But the apostle Peter explained that such cynics are ignoring the facts. He wrote: "In the last days there will come ridiculers . . . saying: 'Where is this promised presence of his?' . . . For, according to their wish, this fact escapes their notice, that there were heavens from of old and an earth standing compactly out of water and in the midst of water by the word of God; and by those means the world of that time suffered destruction when it was deluged with water. But by the same word the heavens and the earth that are now are stored up for fire and are being reserved to the day of

judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men.”—2 Peter 3:3-7.

A worldwide warning about this coming day of judgment and a message of good news about the peace that will follow are today being zealously preached in obedience to Jesus’ prophetic command. (Matthew 24:14) This warning is not to be taken lightly. Almighty God keeps his word.

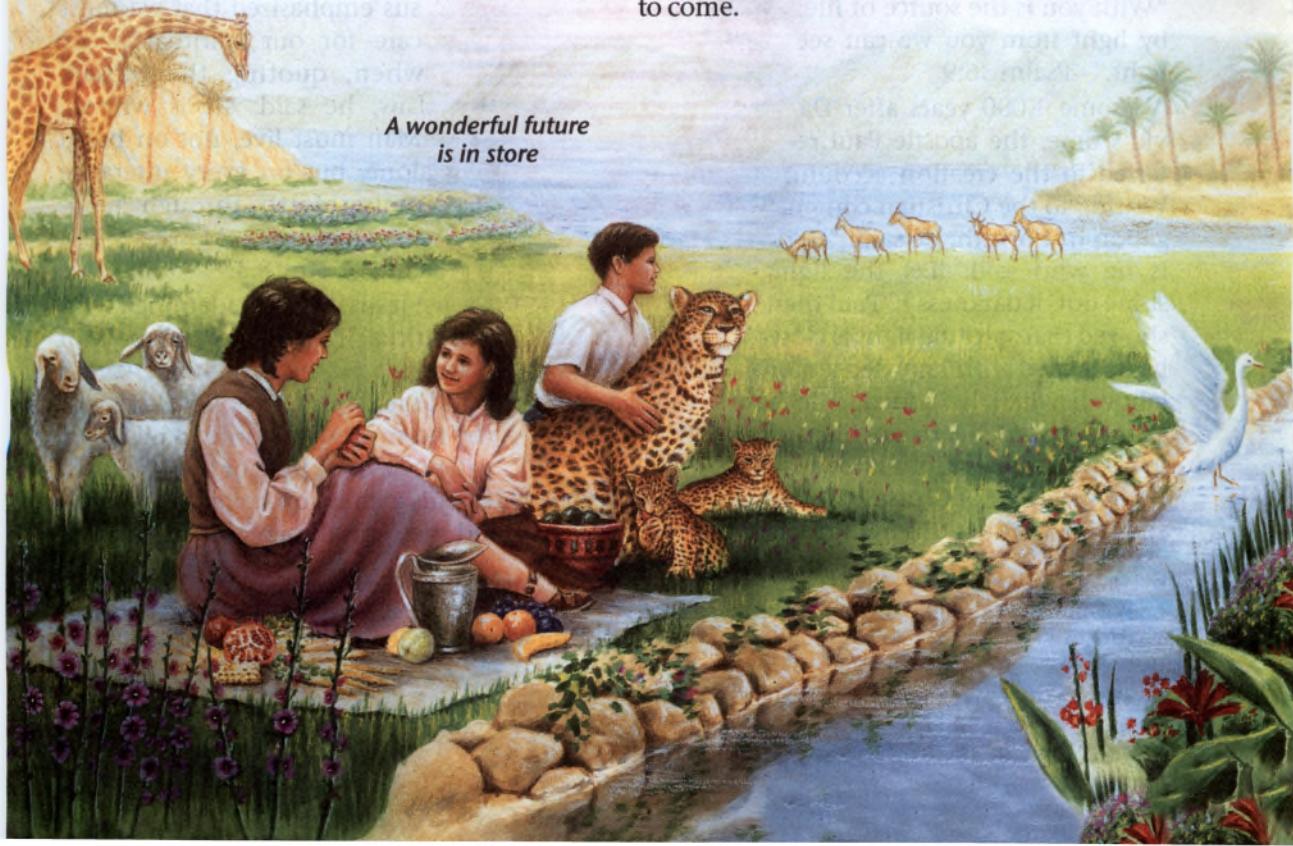
The World to Come

What is the future of mankind, considering the coming momentous change? In the introduction to his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus promised: “Happy are the mild-tempered ones, since they will inherit the earth.” Then he went on to teach his disciples to pray to God: “Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth.” (Matthew 5:5; 6:10) Yes, Jesus himself taught that a wonderful future is in store for faithful mankind right here on earth. He referred to it as “the re-creation.”—Matthew 19:28.

So as you contemplate the future, do not allow ridiculers to make you doubt God’s warning. True, our surroundings may seem stable, and the present world has a long history. Still, we should not place our confidence in it. The world of mankind has been judged. Take heart, then, from the conclusion of the apostle Peter’s letter:

“Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion, awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah . . . Since you are awaiting these things, do your utmost to be found finally by him spotless and unblemished and in peace. . . . Go on growing in the undeserved kindness and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:11, 12, 14, 18) Hence, learn from what happened back in Noah’s day. Draw close to God. Grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Cultivate godly devotion, and be among the millions who choose to survive the end of this world into the peaceful world to come.

*A wonderful future
is in store*



DIVINE LIGHT DISPELS DARKNESS!

"It is Jehovah that makes my darkness shine."—2 SAMUEL 22:29.

GOD proceeded to say: 'Let light come to be.' Then there came to be light." (Genesis 1:3) With those momentous words, the creation account in Genesis identifies Jehovah as the source of light, without which life on earth would be impossible. Jehovah is also the source of spiritual light, which is vital for our guidance on life's roadway. (Psalm 43:3) King David showed the close relationship between spiritual light and life when he wrote: "With you is the source of life; by light from you we can see light."—Psalm 36:9.

² Some 1,000 years after David's time, the apostle Paul referred to the creation account. Writing to the Christian congregation in Corinth, he said: "God is he who said: 'Let the light shine out of darkness.'" Paul then showed that spiritual light is closely associated with knowledge from Jehovah when he added: "He has shone on our hearts to illuminate them with the glorious knowledge of God by the face of Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6) How does this light reach us?

1. How does light relate to life?
2. As Paul showed, light is closely associated with what?

Jehovah is the source of physical and spiritual light

The Bible—Transmitter of Light

³ Jehovah conveys spiritual light primarily through his inspired Word, the Bible. So as we study the Bible and take in knowledge from God, we are allowing his light to shine toward us. Through the Bible, Jehovah sheds light on his purposes and tells us how we can do his will. This gives purpose to our lives and helps to satisfy our spiritual needs. (Ecclesiastes 12:1; Matthew 5:3) Jesus emphasized that we must care for our spiritual needs when, quoting the Mosaic Law, he said: "It is written, 'Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth.'"—Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3.

⁴ Jesus is closely identified with spiritual light. Indeed, he spoke of himself as "the light of the world" and said: "He that follows me will by no means walk in darkness, but will possess the light of life." (John 8:12) This expression helps us to understand the central role Jesus has in con-

3. Through the Bible, what light does Jehovah provide?
4. In what way is Jesus "the light of the world"?

veying Jehovah's truth to mankind. If we are to avoid the darkness and walk in God's light, we must listen to all that Jesus says and follow closely his example and teachings as recorded in the Bible.

⁵ A few days prior to his death, Jesus, again referring to himself as light, told his disciples: "The light will be among you a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, so that darkness does not overpower you; and he that walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, exercise faith in the light, in order to become sons of light." (John 12:35, 36) Those who became sons of light learned the Bible's "pattern of healthful words." (2 Timothy 1:13, 14) They then used these healthful words to draw other honesthearted individuals out of the darkness into God's light.

⁶ The apostle John wrote: "God is light and there is no darkness at all in union with him." (1 John 1:5) Notice the contrast here between light and darkness. Spiritual light originates with Jehovah, and spiritual darkness cannot be associated with him. Who, then, is the source of the darkness?

Spiritual Darkness—The Source

⁷ The apostle Paul spoke of "the god of this system of things." By that expression, he meant Satan the Devil. He went on to say that this one "has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through." (2 Corinthians 4:4) Many profess belief in God; yet, a growing number of them do not believe in a Devil. Why? They are unwilling to accept that some evil, superhuman power

5. What responsibility did Jesus' followers have after his death?
6. What basic truth about light and darkness do we find at 1 John 1:5?
7. Who is behind the world's spiritual darkness, and what influence does he have?

could possibly exist and influence the way they think. Nevertheless, as Paul shows, the Devil does exist and does influence people so that they cannot see the light of truth. Satan's power to influence human thinking is seen in the prophetic description of him as "the one . . . who is misleading the entire inhabited earth." (Revelation 12:9) As a consequence of Satan's activities, the condition foretold by the prophet Isaiah now applies to all mankind except for those who serve Jehovah: "Look! darkness itself will cover the earth, and thick gloom the national groups."—Isaiah 60:2.

⁸ In dense darkness it is impossible to see anything. One easily becomes lost or disoriented. Similarly, those in spiritual darkness lack perception and soon become disoriented in a spiritual sense. They can lose the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood, good from bad. The prophet Isaiah spoke of those in such darkness when he wrote: "Woe to those who are saying that good is bad and bad is good, those who are putting darkness for light and light for darkness, those who are putting bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20) Those who dwell in spiritual darkness are being influenced by the god of the darkness, Satan the Devil, and consequently they are alienated from the source of light and life.—Ephesians 4:17-19.

From Darkness to Light—The Challenge

⁹ Faithful Job pointed out the affinity that wrongdoers have with literal darkness when he said: "As for the eye of the adulterer, it has watched for evening darkness, saying, 'No eye will behold me!' And over his face he puts a covering." (Job 24:15) Wrongdoers are also in spiritual darkness, and such

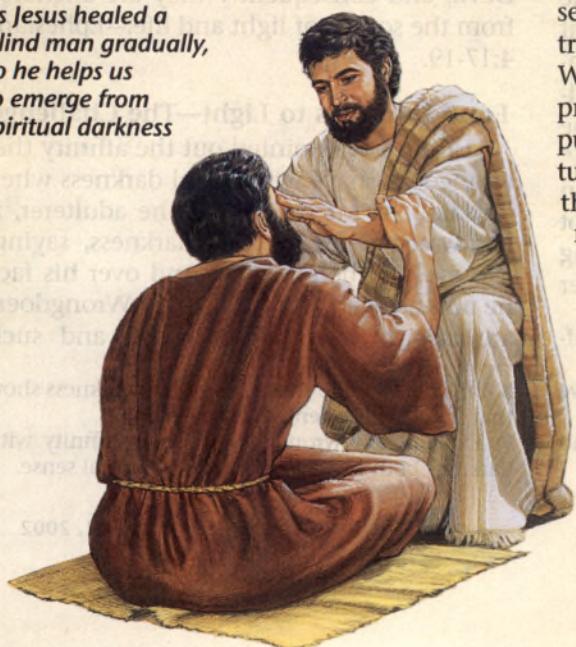
8. In what ways do those in spiritual darkness show that they are disoriented?
9. Explain how wrongdoers have an affinity with darkness both in a literal and in a spiritual sense.

darkness can be overpowering. The apostle Paul said that sexual immorality, theft, greediness, drunkenness, reviling, and extortion are common among those ensnared in that darkness. But any who come to the light of God's Word can change. That such a change is possible Paul makes clear in his letter to the Corinthians. Many Corinthian Christians used to practice works of darkness, yet Paul told them: "But you have been washed clean, but you have been sanctified, but you have been declared righteous in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the spirit of our God."—1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

¹⁰ When a person comes out of dense darkness into the light, his eyes will likely need a little time to adjust. At Bethsaida, Jesus cured a blind man but kindly did so in stages. "He took the blind man by the hand, brought him outside the village, and, having spit upon his eyes, he laid his hands upon him and began to ask him: 'Do you see anything?' And the man looked up and began saying: 'I see men, because I observe what seem to be trees, but they are walking about.'

10, 11. (a) How did Jesus show consideration for a man whose sight he restored? (b) Why do many not choose the light?

As Jesus healed a blind man gradually, so he helps us to emerge from spiritual darkness



Then he laid his hands again upon the man's eyes, and the man saw clearly, and he was restored, and he was seeing everything distinctly." (Mark 8:23-25) Apparently, Jesus restored the man's sight gradually so that the man could adjust himself to the bright sunlight. We can imagine the joy of that man when he was able to see.

¹¹ However, the joy that man felt is more than matched by the joy of those who are helped to emerge, step-by-step, from spiritual darkness into the light of truth. When we behold their joy, we may wonder why more are not attracted to the light. Jesus gives the reason: "This is the basis for judgment, that the light has come into the world but men have loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were wicked. For he that practices vile things hates the light and does not come to the light, in order that his works may not be reproved." (John 3:19, 20) Yes, many love practicing "vile things"—such as immorality, oppression, lying, defrauding, and stealing—and Satan's spiritual darkness is a perfect environment for them to do as they wish.

Making Progress in the Light

¹² Since we came to a knowledge of the light, what changes have we seen in ourselves? It is sometimes good to look back and trace the spiritual progress we have made. What bad habits have we discarded? What problems in our life have we been able to put right? How have our plans for the future changed? In Jehovah's strength and with the aid of his holy spirit, we can continue to make changes in our personality and pattern of thinking that will show that we are responding to the light. (Ephesians 4:23, 24) Paul puts it this way: "You were once darkness, but you are now light in connection with the Lord. Go on walking as

12. In what ways have we been benefited by coming to the light?



Being misled by Satan's false lights results in spiritual shipwreck

children of light, for the fruitage of the light consists of every sort of goodness and righteousness and truth." (Ephesians 5:8, 9) Allowing ourselves to be guided by Jehovah's light gives us a hope and a purpose as well as enhances the lives of those around us. And what joy our making such changes brings to Jehovah's heart!—Proverbs 27:11.

¹³ We show our gratitude for the happier life that we enjoy by reflecting Jehovah's light—sharing what we have learned from the Bible with our family members, friends, and neighbors. (Matthew 5:12-16; 24:14) To those who refuse to listen, our preaching along with our exemplary Christian life course becomes a reproof. Paul explains: "Keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord; and quit sharing with them in the unfruitful works that belong to the darkness, but, rather, even be reproving them." (Ephesians 5:10, 11) Helping others to abandon the darkness and choose the light calls for courage on our part. More important, it calls for compassion and concern for others and a heartfelt desire to share the light of

truth with them for their eternal benefit.
—Matthew 28:19, 20.

Beware of Decoy Lights!

¹⁴ To those at sea during the hours of darkness, any light is a welcome sight. In times past, fires were lit on the rocky cliffs of England to indicate where refuge from storms could be found. Ships' crews were grateful to be guided by these lights into safe harbors. Some fires, though, were decoys. Instead of finding a harbor, many vessels were misled and were wrecked on the rocky shoreline, where their cargoes were stolen. In this deceptive world, we must be careful not to be drawn to decoy lights that can lure us to spiritual shipwreck. "Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light," we are told. Likewise, his servants, including apostates, are "deceitful workers" who "also keep transforming themselves into ministers of righteousness." If we entertain the false reasonings of such ones, our confidence in Jehovah's Word of truth, the Bible, can be weakened and our faith can die.—2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 1 Timothy 1:19.

13. How can we show our gratitude for Jehovah's light, and what is needed for such a course?

14. In the matter of light, what warning should we heed?

¹⁵ The psalmist wrote: "Your word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my roadway." (Psalm 119:105) Yes, the 'cramped road leading off into life' is clearly illuminated by our loving God, Jehovah, "whose will is that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (Matthew 7:14; 1 Timothy 2:4) Applying Bible precepts will safeguard us from wandering off that cramped road into the pathways of darkness. Paul wrote: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16) As we grow spiritually, we are taught by God's Word. We can, in the light of God's Word, reprove ourselves or, if needed, be reproved by loving shepherds in the congregation. Likewise, we can set things straight and humbly accept discipline in righteousness to keep our feet on the road to life.

Appreciatively Walk in the Light

¹⁶ How can we show appreciation for Jehovah's wonderful provision of light? John chapter 9 tells us that when Jesus healed a man born blind, the man was moved to express his appreciation. How? He put faith in Jesus as the Son of God and publicly identi-

15. What will help us to stay on the road leading to life?

16. How can we show appreciation for Jehovah's wonderful provision of light?

What Have You Learned?

- How does Jehovah provide spiritual enlightenment?
- What challenge does the spiritual darkness surrounding us present?
- What dangers must we avoid?
- How can we demonstrate our gratitude for the light of truth?

fied him as "a prophet." Moreover, he bravely spoke out against those who tried to belittle Jesus' miracle. (John 9:17, 30-34) The apostle Peter calls anointed members of the Christian congregation "a people for special possession." Why? Because they have the same grateful spirit as the man who was born blind and who was healed. They show appreciation for Jehovah, their Benefactor, by 'declaring abroad the excellencies of the one that called them out of darkness into his wonderful light.' (1 Peter 2:9; Colossians 1:13) Those with an earthly hope have the same thankful spirit, and they support their anointed brothers in the public declaration of Jehovah's "excellencies." What an inestimable privilege God grants to imperfect humans!

¹⁷ Having a heartfelt appreciation for the light of truth is vital. Remember, none of us are born knowing the truth. Some learn it as adults, and they quickly see the superiority of the light over the darkness. Others have the great privilege of being reared by God-fearing parents. For such, it might be easy to take the light for granted. One Witness whose parents were serving Jehovah before she was born admits that it took her much time and effort to grasp the full significance and importance of the truths she had been taught from infancy. Young or old, each one of us needs to cultivate a deep appreciation for the truth that Jehovah has revealed.

¹⁸ The young man Timothy had been taught "the holy writings" from his infancy, but it was only by exerting himself in his ministry that he gained maturity as a Christian. (2 Timothy 3:15) He was then in a position to assist the apostle Paul, who exhorted him: "Do your utmost to present yourself approved to God, a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the 17, 18. (a) What is the responsibility of each individual? (b) In imitation of Timothy, what is each Christian encouraged to avoid?"

truth aright." May we all, like Timothy, avoid doing anything that might make us ashamed—or make Jehovah ashamed of us!—2 Timothy 2:15.

¹⁹ We have every reason to praise Jehovah, who gave us the light of his truth. Like

19. (a) Like David, what do all of us have reason to say? (b) What will be discussed in the following article?

HOW PRECIOUS IS THE TRUTH TO YOU?

"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."—JOHN 8:32.

"WHAT is truth?" When Pilate asked this question, his interest, such as it was, appeared to refer to truth in general. Jesus, on the other hand, had just said: "For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." (John 18:37, 38) Unlike Pilate, Jesus used the definite article and

1. How did Pilate's use of the word "truth" apparently differ from Jesus' use of it?

King David, we say: "You are my lamp, O Jehovah, and it is Jehovah that makes my darkness shine." (2 Samuel 22:29) Still, we dare not become complacent, as this could lead to our slipping back into the darkness from which we have been rescued. Therefore, the following article will help us to evaluate the importance we give to divine truth in our lives.

2. What statement of Jesus shows the value of truth?

The World's Attitude to the Truth

² Paul said: "Faith is not a possession of all people." (2 Thessalonians 3:2) The same can be said of the truth. Even when confronted

2. What statement of Jesus shows the value of truth?

Jesus bore witness to the truth



with truth based on the Bible, many people deliberately ignore it. Yet, how precious it is! Jesus said: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."—John 8:32.

³ The apostle Paul said that the truth was not to be found in human philosophies and traditions. (Colossians 2:8) Indeed, such teachings are deceptive. Paul warned Ephesian Christians that if they put faith in them, they would be like spiritual babes "tossed about as by waves . . . by every wind of teaching by means of the trickery of men, by means of cunning in contriving error." (Ephesians 4:14) Today, "trickery of men" is promoted by the propaganda of those who oppose divine truth. "Propaganda" is defined by *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* as "the systematic effort to manipulate other people's beliefs, attitudes, or actions." Such propaganda cunningly twists truth into falsehood and promotes lies as truth. To find the truth in the face of such insidious pressures, we must diligently consult the Scriptures.

Christians and the World

⁴ Referring to those who had become his disciples, Jesus Christ prayed to Jehovah: "Sanctify them by means of the truth; your word is truth." (John 17:17) Such ones would be sanctified, or set apart, for the purpose of serving Jehovah and making known his name and Kingdom. (Matthew 6:9, 10; 24:14) Although not the possession of all people, Jehovah's truth is available as a free gift to all who seek it, whatever their nationality, race, or cultural background. The apostle Peter said: "I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."—Acts 10:34, 35.

3. What warning regarding deceptive teachings should we heed?
4. To whom is the truth made available, and what is the obligation of those who receive it?

⁵ Christians share Bible truth with others but are not welcomed everywhere. Jesus warned: "People will deliver you up to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be objects of hatred by all the nations on account of my name." (Matthew 24:9) Commenting on this verse, Irish cleric John R. Cotter wrote in 1817: "Their [Christians'] endeavours to reform the lives of mankind by their preaching, so far from making the people feel grateful, would, in reality, cause them to hate and persecute the disciples for exposing their vices." Such persecutors do not "accept the love of the truth that they might be saved." For this reason, "God lets an operation of error go to them, that they may get to believing the lie, in order that they all may be judged because they did not believe the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness."—2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.

⁶ The apostle John admonishes Christians living in this hostile world: "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. . . . Everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world." (1 John 2:15, 16) In saying "everything," John excludes nothing. For this reason we dare not cultivate a desire for *anything* this world has to offer that could divert us from the truth. Heeding John's counsel will exert a powerful influence on our lives. How?

⁷ During the year 2001, Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide each month conducted over four and a half million home Bible studies, instructing individuals and groups in the divine requirements for life. As a result, 263,431 persons were baptized. The light of the

5. Why are Christians often persecuted?
6. What desires should a Christian not cultivate?
7. How does a knowledge of the truth motivate righthearted ones?

**Like physical food,
spiritual food is vital
for our well-being**

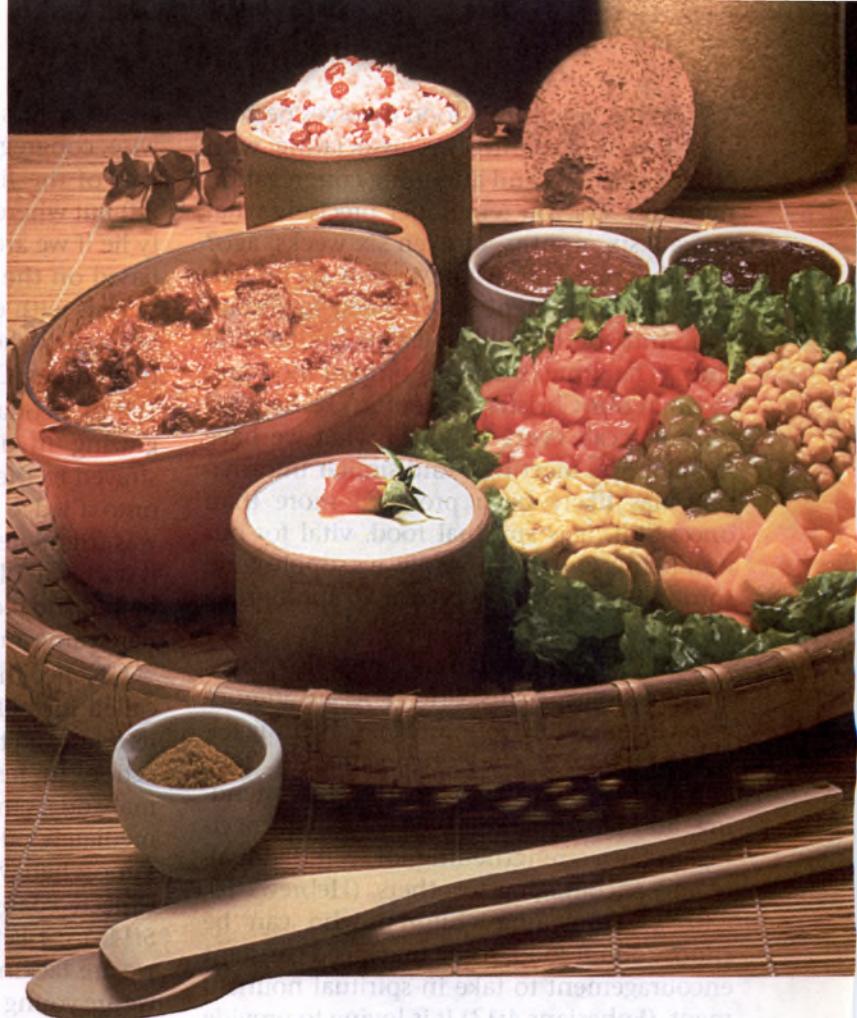
truth became precious to these new disciples, and they repudiated the bad associations and immoral, God-dishonoring ways that are rampant in this world. Since being baptized, they have continued to live by the standards Jehovah sets for all Christians. (Ephesians 5:5) Is the truth that precious to you?

Jehovah Cares for Us

⁸ Despite our imperfections, Jehovah graciously accepts our dedication, reaching down, as it were, to draw us to him. He thereby teaches us to elevate our goals and desires. (Psalm 113:6-8) At the same time, Jehovah allows us to have a personal relationship with him, and he promises to care for us if we "keep on . . . seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness." If we do this and safeguard ourselves spiritually, he promises: "All these other things will be added to you."—Matthew 6:33.

⁹ Jesus Christ selected his 12 apostles and laid the foundation for the congregation of anointed Christians that came to be called "the Israel of God." (Galatians 6:16; Revelation 21:9, 14) This was later described as "the congregation of the living God, a pillar and

8. How does Jehovah respond to our dedication, and why is it wise to 'seek first the kingdom'?
9. Who is "the faithful and discreet slave," and using this "slave," how does Jehovah care for us?



support of the truth." (1 Timothy 3:15) Jesus identified members of that congregation as "the faithful and discreet slave" and as "the faithful steward, the discreet one." That faithful servant, Jesus said, would be responsible for giving Christians "their measure of food supplies at the proper time." (Matthew 24:3, 45-47; Luke 12:42) Without food we starve to death. Likewise, without partaking of spiritual food, we weaken and die spiritually. Therefore, the existence of "the faithful and discreet slave" is yet another proof that Jehovah cares for us. May we always appreciate the precious spiritual provisions made for us through that "slave."—Matthew 5:3.

¹⁰ Taking in spiritual food involves personal study. It also involves associating with other Christians and attending congregation meetings. Do you remember precisely what you ate six months, or even six weeks, ago? Probably not. Still, whatever you ate provided the nourishment you needed to sustain you. And you have likely eaten similar food since. The same is true of spiritual food provided at our Christian meetings. Perhaps we do not recall every detail of what we have heard at the meetings. And similar information has likely been provided more than once. Still, it is spiritual food, vital for our well-being. Our meetings always supply good spiritual sustenance, served at an appropriate time.

¹¹ Attending Christian meetings also places a responsibility on us. Christians are admonished to 'encourage one another,' inciting fellow members of the congregation to "love and fine works." Our preparing for, attending, and participating in all Christian meetings is faith-strengthening for us individually and encouraging to others. (Hebrews 10: 23-25) Like young children who can be choosy about food, some may need constant encouragement to take in spiritual nourishment. (Ephesians 4:13) It is loving to provide that encouragement when needed so that such ones can develop into mature Christians, of whom the apostle Paul wrote: "Solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong." —Hebrews 5:14.

Caring for Ourselves Spiritually

- ¹² Our marriage mate or our parents can
-
10. Why is it vital for us to be present at meetings regularly?
 11. What obligations do we have when attending Christian meetings?
 12. Who has the ultimate responsibility for our remaining in the truth? Explain.

encourage us in the way of the truth. Likewise, congregation elders can shepherd us as part of the flock under their care. (Acts 20: 28) But where does the ultimate responsibility lie if we are to persevere in our way of life based on the truth? Really, the responsibility rests with each one of us. And that is true both under normal circumstances and in difficult times. Consider the following incident.

¹³ In Scotland some young lambs were grazing in a pasture when one of them strayed to the side of a hillock and tumbled onto a ledge below. It was uninjured, but it was frightened and unable to climb back. So it started to bleat plaintively. Its mother heard it, and she too began to bleat until the shepherd came and retrieved the young lamb.

¹⁴ Notice the sequence of events. The lamb called for help, the ewe added her voice to its cries, and the alerted shepherd sprang into action to rescue it. If a very young animal and its mother can sense danger and immediately call for help, should we not do the same when we stumble spiritually or face unexpected dangers from Satan's world? (James 5:14, 15; 1 Peter 5:8) We should, especially if we are lacking in experience either because we are young or because we are relatively new in the truth.

Following Divine Direction Brings Happiness

¹⁵ Consider the value of Bible understanding and the peace of mind that it brings to those who serve the God of truth. A 70-year-old woman who had attended the *Church of England* all her life agreed to have a personal Bible study with one of Jehovah's Witnesses. She soon learned that the name of God is Jehovah and joined in saying "Amen" to the

^{13, 14.} As illustrated by an experience involving a lamb, how can we get the needed spiritual help?

^{15.} How did one woman feel when she began to associate with the Christian congregation?

heartfelt public prayers offered at the local Kingdom Hall. With great feeling she said: "Rather than portraying God as being so far above us mere mortals, you seem to bring him right into our midst like a dear friend. It is something I have never experienced before." Likely, that dear interested person will never forget the first impression the truth made on her. May we, likewise, never forget how precious the truth was to us when we first accepted it.

¹⁶ Many believe that if they had more money, they would be happier. However, if we make the gaining of money our chief goal in life, we might suffer "untold agonies of mind." (1 Timothy 6:10, Phillips) Consider how many buy lottery tickets, spend money in casinos, or speculate recklessly in the stock market, dreaming of making a fortune. Very, very few see the fortune they hope for. And often even those who do see it find that their sudden wealth does not bring happiness. Rather, abiding happiness comes from doing Jehovah's will, working with the Christian congregation with the guidance of Jehovah's holy spirit and the help of his angels. (Psalm 1:1-3; 84:4, 5; 89:15) When we do this, unexpected blessings may come our way. Is the truth precious enough to you to bring such blessings into your life?

¹⁷ Consider an experience of the apostle Peter. In the year 36 C.E., he made a missionary journey to the Plain of Sharon. He stopped at Lydda, where he cured paralyzed Aeneas and then proceeded to the seaport of Joppa. There he resurrected Dorcas. Acts 9:43 tells us: "For quite a few days he remained in Joppa with a certain Simon, a tanner." This fleeting reference reveals Peter's unprejudiced attitude as he ministered to the people in that city. How?

16. (a) What could happen if we make the gaining of money our chief goal? (b) How can we find true happiness?

17. What did Peter's staying with Simon, a tanner, reveal about the apostle's attitude?

Bible scholar Frederic W. Farrar writes: "At the house of a tanner no strict and uncompromising follower of the Oral [Mosaic] Law could have been induced to dwell. The daily contact with the hides and carcases of various animals necessitated by this trade, and the materials which it requires, rendered it impure and disgusting in the eyes of all rigid legalists." Even if Simon's "house by the sea" was not adjacent to his tannery, Simon was engaged in 'a trade that was looked on with disgust and thus tended to lower the self-respect of all who undertook it,' says Farrar.—Acts 10:6.

¹⁸ The unprejudiced Peter accepted Simon's hospitality, and there Peter received unexpected divine direction. He saw a vision in which he was commanded to eat creatures unclean according to Jewish law. Peter protested that he had never "eaten anything defiled and unclean." But three times he was told: "Stop calling defiled the things God has cleansed." Understandably, "Peter was in great perplexity inwardly over what the vision he had seen might mean."—Acts 10:5-17; 11:7-10.

¹⁹ Peter was unaware that the preceding day in Caesarea, 30 miles away, a Gentile named Cornelius had also had a vision.

18, 19. (a) Why was Peter perplexed at a vision he received? (b) What unexpected blessing came Peter's way?

What Have We Learned?

- Why do many not accept the truth?
- How should Christians view the things of Satan's world?
- What should be our attitude toward meetings, and why?
- What responsibility do we have to care for ourselves spiritually?

Jehovah's angel had instructed Cornelius to send servants to locate Peter in the house of Simon the tanner. Cornelius sent his servants to Simon's house, and Peter accompanied them back to Caesarea. There he preached to Cornelius and his relatives and friends. As a result, they became the first uncircumcised Gentile believers to receive the holy spirit as Kingdom heirs. Even though the men were uncircumcised, all those hearing Peter's word were baptized. This opened up the way for people of the nations, viewed as unclean from a Jewish standpoint, to become members of the Christian congregation. (Acts 10:1-48; 11:18) What an extraordinary privilege for Peter—all because the truth was precious to him and led him to heed direction from Jehovah and act in faith!

²⁰ Paul exhorts: "Speaking the truth, let us by love grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ." (Ephesians 4:15) Yes, the truth will bring us unparalleled happiness now if we put it first in our lives and allow Jehovah through his holy spirit to direct our steps. Also keep in mind the support of the holy angels in our evangelizing activity. (Revelation 14:6, 7; 22:6) How privileged we are to have such backing in the work Jehovah has commissioned us to do! Maintaining integrity will lead us to praise Jehovah, the God of truth, for all eternity. Could anything be more precious than that?—John 17:3.

20. What divine assistance are we given when we put the truth first in our lives?

Peter followed divine direction and reaped unexpected blessings

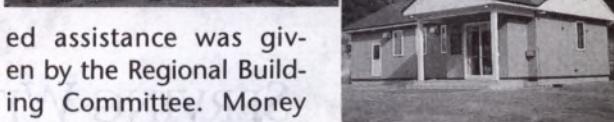


'Our Love Has Been Deepened'

ON Friday, March 31, 2000, Mount Usu in Hokkaido, Japan, erupted after lying dormant for 23 years. Thousands of residents were forced to flee from the danger zone. Many lost their homes and jobs, but fortunately none of them lost their life. Among the people who had to flee were 46 Witnesses of Jehovah, but they were not left on their own.

On the very day of the eruption, with the help of a traveling Christian minister serving in that area, arrangements were made for relief activities. Before long, relief supplies were arriving from neighboring congregations. Under the supervision of the Japan branch, a relief committee was quickly formed, and donations from Jehovah's Witnesses all over Japan flooded into the relief fund. To support spiritual activities, full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses were sent to the most affected congregation, and the circuit overseer visited the area repeatedly to provide emotional and spiritual support.

The Witnesses in the affected area continued to hold their Christian meetings during that difficult period by using private homes in a safer area. When the evacuation order was lifted from the area where the Kingdom Hall was located, the brothers returned and found a tilted, cracked, and damaged building. Not far from the Kingdom Hall, the newly formed crater was still spewing thick smoke. The Witnesses wondered, 'Is it wise to continue to hold meetings in this location? Can the Kingdom Hall be repaired?' The decision was made to construct a new Kingdom Hall in a safer nearby location. Need-



ed assistance was given by the Regional Building Committee. Money donated by Witnesses throughout the country was used for this construction. Land was quickly obtained, and thanks to the help of hundreds of volunteers, a new Kingdom Hall was completed in a short period of time. On Sunday, July 23, 2000, the first meeting held in this newly built Kingdom Hall was attended by 75 people. Many in attendance shed tears of joy. When the Kingdom Hall was dedicated in October that same year, one of the elders of the local congregation was moved to say: "The eruption caused hardships and suffering. Yet, this construction has turned our fear into joy. Our love for Jehovah and our dear Christian brothers has been deepened!"

Eruption of Mount Usu: AP Photo/Koji Sasahara

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Good Leadership—Where Can We Find It?

You Can Conquer Loneliness

The Waldenses—From Heresy to Protestantism



SERVING WITH A SPIRIT OF SELF-SACRIFICE

AS TOLD BY
DON RENDELL

My mother died in 1927 when I was only five years old. Yet, her faith greatly influenced my life. How was that possible?

MY MOTHER was a staunch member of the Church of England when she married my father, a professional soldier. That was before World War I. World War I broke out in 1914, and Mother took issue with her vicar for using his pulpit as an army recruiting platform. The clergyman's reply? "Go home, and don't bother yourself about such questions!" That did not satisfy her.

In 1917, at the height of the war, Mother went to see the "Photo-Drama of Creation." Convinced that she had found the truth, she immediately left her church to associate with the Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known. She attended meetings with a congregation in Yeovil, the nearest

town to our village of West Coker, in the English county of Somerset.

Mother soon shared her newly found faith with her three sisters. Older members of the Yeovil congregation have described to me how my mother and her sister Millie zealously cycled around our extensive rural territory, distributing the Bible study aids *Studies in the Scriptures*. Sadly, though, for the last 18 months of her life, Mother was confined to bed with tuberculosis, for which there was no cure at that time.

Self-Sacrifice in Practice

Aunt Millie, who was living with us at the time, nursed Mother when she became ill

and looked after me and my seven-year-old sister, Joan. When Mother died, Aunt Millie immediately offered to care for us children. Father, glad to be relieved of this responsibility, readily agreed that Aunt Millie should live with us permanently.

We had grown to love our aunt and were happy that she was to remain with us. But why did she make such a decision? Many years later, Aunt Millie told us that she knew she had an obligation to build on the foundation Mother had laid—to teach Bible truth to Joan and me—something she realized our father would never do, as he had no interest in religion.

Subsequently, we also learned that Aunt Millie had made another very personal decision. In order to care for us adequately, she would never marry. Such self-sacrifice! Joan and I have every reason to be deeply grateful to her. All that Aunt Millie taught us and the sterling example she set have remained with us.

A Time of Decision

Joan and I attended the Church of England village school where Aunt Millie took a firm stand with the headmistress regarding our religious education. When the other children marched to church, we went home, and when the vicar came to school to give religious instruction, we sat apart and were given Scripture texts to learn by heart. This stood me in good stead, as these passages remain indelibly fixed in my mind.

I left school at 14 years of age to take a four-year apprenticeship in a local cheese-making factory. I also learned to play the piano, and music and ballroom dancing became my hobbies. Bible truth, although rooted in my heart, had yet to motivate me. Then one day in March 1940, an elderly Witness invited me to accompany her to an assembly at Swin-



Mother in 1915

don, some 70 miles away. Albert D. Schroeder, the presiding minister for Jehovah's Witnesses in Britain, gave the public address. That assembly proved to be the turning point for me.

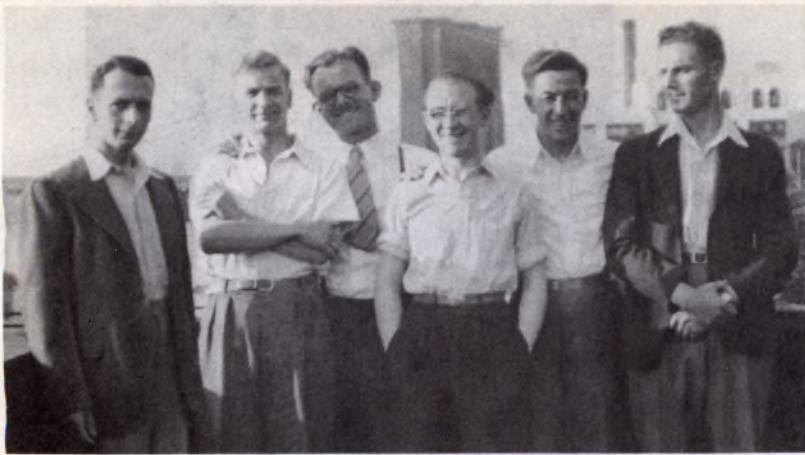
World War II was raging. What was I doing with my life? I decided to go back to the Yeovil Kingdom Hall. At the first meeting I attended, street witnessing was introduced. Despite my limited knowledge, I volunteered to share in this activity, much to the amazement of many so-called friends who mocked me as they walked by!

In June 1940, I was baptized in the city of Bristol. Within a month I enrolled as a regular pioneer—a full-time evangelizer. How happy I was when, a little later, my sister also symbolized her dedication by water baptism!

Pioneering in War Time

A year after the war started, I received papers drafting me into the army. Having registered as a conscientious objector in Yeovil, I had to appear before a tribunal in Bristol. I had joined John Wynn to pioneer in Cinderford, Gloucestershire, and afterward in Haverfordwest and Carmarthen, Wales.*

* John Wynn's life story, "My Heart Overflows With Gratitude," appeared in *The Watchtower*, September 1, 1997, pages 25-8.



On the roof of Brooklyn Bethel in 1946, me (fourth from the left) and other brothers from the eighth class of Gilead

Later, at a court hearing in Carmarthen, I was sentenced to three months in Swansea jail, with an additional fine of £25—a considerable sum of money in those days. Subsequently, I received a second three-month prison term for nonpayment of that fine.

At a third hearing, I was asked: "Don't you know that the Bible says, 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's'?" "Yes," I replied, "I appreciate that, but I would like to finish that verse: 'and to God the things that are God's.' That is what I am doing." (Matthew 22:21, King James Version) A few weeks later, I received a letter telling me I was free of obligations for military service.

Early in 1945, I was invited to join the London Bethel family. The following winter, Nathan H. Knorr, who took the lead in organizing the worldwide preaching work, and his secretary, Milton G. Henschel, visited London. Eight young brothers from Britain were enrolled in the eighth class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead for missionary training, and I was among them.

Missionary Assignments

On May 23, 1946, we set sail from the small Cornish port of Fowey on a wartime

Liberty ship. The harbor-master, Captain Collins, was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and as we left the quay, he sounded a siren. Naturally, we all had mixed feelings as we saw the English coastline slip away. That Atlantic crossing was extremely rough, but 13 days later we arrived safely in the United States.

Attending the eight-day international Glad Nations Theocratic Assembly at Cleveland, Ohio, from August 4 to 11, 1946, was a memorable experience. Eighty thousand delegates were present, including 302 from 32 other countries. At that convention the magazine *Awake!** made its appearance, and the Bible study aid "*Let God Be True*" was released to the enthusiastic crowd.

We graduated from Gilead in 1947, and Bill Copson and I were assigned to Egypt. But before we left, I had the benefit of some good office training from Richard Abrahamson at Brooklyn Bethel. We disembarked in Alexandria, and I soon acclimatized to the Middle-East life-style. Learning Arabic was a challenge, however, and I had to make use of testimony cards in four languages.

Bill Copson stayed for seven years, but I could not get my visa renewed after the first year, so I had to leave the country. I look back on that year of missionary service as the most productive of my life. I was privileged to conduct more than 20 home Bible studies each week, and some of those who learned the truth then are still actively praising Jehovah. From Egypt, I was directed to Cyprus.

* Formerly known as *Consolation*.

Cyprus and Israel

I began to study a new language, Greek, and to become familiar with the local dialect. A little later, when Anthony Sideris was asked to transfer to Greece, I was appointed to oversee the work in Cyprus. At that time the Cyprus branch office also cared for Israel, and along with other brothers, I had the privilege of visiting the few Witnesses there from time to time.

On my first trip to Israel, we held a small assembly in a restaurant in Haifa, attended by 50 or 60 people. By separating the national groups, we presented the assembly program in six different languages! On another occasion, I was able to show in Jerusalem a film produced by Jehovah's Witnesses, and I gave a public talk that was reported on favorably by the English-language newspaper.

There were about 100 Witnesses in Cyprus at that time, and they had to fight hard for their faith. Mobs led by priests of the Greek Orthodox Church interrupted our assemblies, and it was a new experience for me to be stoned when witnessing in rural areas. I had to learn to make a quick retreat! In the face of such violent opposition, it was faith strengthening to have more missionaries assigned to the island. Dennis and Mavis Matthews along with Joan Hulley and Beryl Heywood joined me in Famagusta, while Tom and Mary Goulden and Nina Constanti, a London-born Cypriot, went to Limassol. At the same time, Bill Copson was also transferred to Cyprus, to be joined later by Bert and Beryl Vaisey.

Adapting to Changing Circumstances

By the end of 1957, I became ill and was unable to continue in my missionary assignment. With sadness I decided that to regain my health, I should return to England, where I continued pioneering until 1960. My sister and her husband kindly accommodat-



With Aunt Millie after my first return to England

ed me, but circumstances had changed. Joan was finding things increasingly difficult. As well as looking after her husband and young daughter, during the 17 years of my absence, she had lovingly cared for our father and Aunt Millie, who by this time were elderly and not well. The need to follow my aunt's example of self-sacrifice became evident, so I stayed with my sister until both my aunt and my father died.

It would have been so easy to settle down in England, but after a short rest, I felt an obligation to return to my assignment. After all, had not Jehovah's organization spent a lot of money training me? So in 1972, I made my own way back to Cyprus to pioneer there again.

Nathan H. Knorr arrived to arrange for a convention to be held the following year. When he found out that I had returned, he recommended my appointment as circuit overseer for the whole island, a privilege I held for four years. It was a daunting assignment, however, since it meant speaking Greek most of the time.



A Time of Trouble

I shared a home in the village of Karakoumi, just east of Kyrenia on the northern coast, with Paul Andreou, a Greek-speaking Cypriot Witness. The Cyprus branch office was in Nicosia, south of the Kyrenia Mountains. Early in July 1974, I was in Nicosia when a coup to depose President Makarios took place, and I saw his palace go up in flames. When it was safe to travel, I hastened back to Kyrenia, where we were preparing for a circuit assembly. Two days later I heard the first bomb drop on the harbor, and I saw the sky full of helicopters bringing invading troops from Turkey.

As I was a British subject, Turkish soldiers took me to the outskirts of Nicosia, where I was interrogated by United Nations personnel who made contact with the branch office. I then faced the daunting task of walking through a mass of tangled telephone and electric cables to the deserted homes on the other side of no-man's-land. How glad I was that my line of communication with Jehovah God could not be disrupted! My prayers

sustained me through one of the most harrowing experiences of my life.

I had lost all my belongings, but I was glad to have the security of the branch office. This situation was short-lived, however. Within days, the invading forces had taken control of the northern third of the island. Bethel had to be abandoned, and we moved to Limassol. I was glad to be able to work there with a committee formed to care for the 300 brothers who had been affected by the turmoil, many of whom had lost their homes.

More Changes of Assignment

In January 1981, the Governing Body asked me to transfer to Greece to join the Bethel family in Athens, but by the end of the year, I was back in Cyprus and appointed Branch Committee coordinator. Andreas Kontoyiorgis and his wife, Maro, Cypriots who had been sent from London, proved to be "a strengthening aid" to me.—Colossians 4:11.

At the conclusion of a zone visit by Theodore Jaracz in 1984, I received a letter from the Governing Body that simply said: "When he finishes, we would like you to accompany Brother Jaracz to Greece." No reason was given, but when we arrived in Greece, another letter from the Governing Body was read to the Branch Committee, appointing me Branch Committee coordinator in that country.

By this time, we were facing outbreaks of apostasy. There were also many accusations of illegal proselytism. Daily, Jehovah's people were being arrested and brought before the courts. What a privilege it was to get to know brothers and sisters whose integri-

ty had stood the test of time! Some of their cases were subsequently heard before the European Court of Human Rights, with marvelous results that have had a good effect on the preaching work in Greece.*

While serving in Greece, I was able to attend memorable conventions in Athens, Thessalonica, and the islands of Rhodes and Crete. They were four happy, fruitful years, but another change was under way—a return to Cyprus in 1988.

Cyprus and Back to Greece

During my absence from Cyprus, the brothers had acquired new branch premises in Nissou, a few miles from Nicosia, and Carey Barber, from the Brooklyn headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, gave the dedication talk. Things were more settled on the island now, and I was happy to be back—but it was not to be quiet for long.

The Governing Body had approved plans to build a new Bethel home in Greece, some miles north of Athens. As I could speak both English and Greek, I was invited to return to work on the new building site in 1990 as interpreter for the family of international servants working there. I still recall the joy of being on the site at six o'clock on summer mornings, welcoming the hundreds of Greek brothers and sisters who had volunteered to work alongside the construction family! Memories of their happiness and zeal will always remain with me.

Greek Orthodox priests and their supporters tried to gain entrance to the site and disrupt our work, but Jehovah heard our prayers, and we were safeguarded. I remained on site to see the new Bethel home dedicated on April 13, 1991.

* See *The Watchtower*, December 1, 1998, pages 20-1, and September 1, 1993, pages 27-31; *Awake!*, January 8, 1998, pages 21-2, and March 22, 1997, pages 14-15.

Supporting My Dear Sister

The following year, I returned to England on vacation, staying with my sister and her husband. Sadly, while I was there, my brother-in-law suffered two heart attacks and died. Joan had given me unstinting support during my missionary service. Hardly a week passed when she did not write me a letter of encouragement. What a blessing such contact is for any missionary! Now she was a widow, in failing health and needing support. What should I do?

Joan's daughter, Thelma, and her husband were already looking after another faithful widow in their congregation, one of our cousins who was terminally ill. So after much prayer, I decided that I should stay to help care for Joan. The adjustment did not come easily, but I am privileged to serve as an elder in Pen Mill, one of the two Yeovil congregations.

Brothers with whom I have served abroad keep in regular contact by telephone and letter, and for that I am very grateful. Should I ever express the wish to return to Greece or Cyprus, I know that my travel tickets will arrive promptly. But I am now 80 years old, and neither my eyesight nor my health is what it used to be. It is frustrating not to be as active as formerly, but my years of Bethel service helped me to develop many habits that stand me in good stead today. For example, I always read the daily text before breakfast. I also learned to get along with people and to love them—the key to successful missionary service.

As I look back over some 60 wonderful years spent praising Jehovah, I know that the full-time ministry is the greatest safeguard and provides the best education. I can echo with all my heart David's words to Jehovah: "You have proved to be a secure height for me and a place to which to flee in the day of my distress."—Psalm 59:16.

THE BAPTISM OF CLOVIS

1,500 Years of Catholicism in FRANCE

"IN THE name of the Pope, boom," read the message that accompanied a makeshift bomb discovered in a French church that Pope John-Paul II was to visit in September 1996. This was an extreme example of the opposition that characterized his fifth visit to mainland France. Nevertheless, some 200,000 people came to the French city of Reims that year to commemorate with the pope the 1,500th anniversary of the conversion of the Frankish King Clovis to Catholicism. Who was this king whose baptism has been called the baptism of France? And why has its commemoration caused such controversy?

The Waning Empire

Clovis was born about 466 C.E., the son of Childeric I, king of the Salian Franks. Following their subjugation by the Romans in 358 C.E., this Germanic tribe was allowed to settle in what is now Belgium on the condition that they defend the border and supply soldiers for the Roman army. The close contact with the local Gallo-Roman population that followed resulted in a gradual Romanization of these Franks. Childeric I was an ally of the Romans, fighting against the incursions of other Germanic tribes, such as the Visigoths and the Saxons. This earned



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Clovis' baptism depicted in a 14th-century manuscript

him the gratitude of the Gallo-Roman population.

The Roman province of Gaul stretched from the Rhine River, in the north, to the Pyrenees, in the south. However, following the death of the Roman General Aetius in 454 C.E., a power vacuum existed in the land. What is more, the fall of Romulus Augustulus, the last emperor in Rome, in 476 C.E. and the end of the western part of the Roman Empire brought great political instability to the region. In consequence, Gaul was like a ripe fig waiting to be plucked by one of the tribes settled within its borders. It is hardly surprising that after succeeding his father, Clovis began seeking to extend the frontiers of his kingdom. In 486 C.E., he defeated the last representative of Rome in Gaul in a battle near the city of Soissons. This victory gave him control of all the territory between the river Somme, in the north, and the river Loire, in central and western Gaul.

The Man That Would Be King

Unlike other Germanic tribes, the Franks had remained pagans. However, Clovis' mar-

riage to a Burgundian princess, Clotilda, had a profound influence on his life. A fervent Catholic, Clotilda tirelessly sought the conversion of her husband. According to the history recorded in the sixth century C.E. by Gregory of Tours, it was in 496 C.E., during the battle of Tolbiac (Zülpich, Germany) against the tribe of the Alemanni, that Clovis promised to abandon paganism if Clotilda's God would grant him victory. Although Clovis' troops were on the verge of defeat, the Alemanni king was killed and his army surrendered. As far as Clovis was concerned, Clotilda's God had given him the victory. According to tradition, Clovis was baptized by "Saint" Remigius in the cathedral of Reims, on December 25, 496 C.E. However, some believe that a later date, 498/9 C.E., is more likely.

Clovis' attempts to seize the Burgundian kingdom to the southeast failed. But his campaign against the Visigoths was crowned with success when, in 507 C.E., he defeated them at Vouillé, near Poitiers, a victory that gave him control of most of southwest Gaul. In recognition of this victory, Clovis was granted an honorary consulship by the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, Anastasius. He thus had a status above all the other western kings, and his rulership was legitimized in the eyes of the Gallo-Roman population.

Having brought under his domination the territory of the Rhenish Franks to the east, Clovis made Paris his capital. In the closing years of his life, he strengthened his king-



dom by giving it a written legal code, the Lex Salica, and by convening a church council in Orléans to define relations between Church and State. Upon his death, likely on November 27, 511 C.E., he was the sole ruler of three quarters of Gaul.

The New Encyclopædia Britannica calls Clovis' conversion to the Catholic faith "a decisive moment in the history of western Europe." Why was this pagan king's conversion so important? The significance lies in the fact that Clovis chose Catholicism as opposed to Arianism.

The Arian Controversy

About 320 C.E., Arius, a priest in Alexandria, Egypt, began to spread radical ideas concerning the Trinity. Arius denied that the Son was of the same essence, or substance,



Sculpture of the baptism of Clovis (central figure) on exterior of Reims Cathedral, France

as the Father. The Son could not be God or equal to the Father, since he had a beginning. (Colossians 1:15) As for the holy spirit, Arius believed that it was a person but that it was inferior to both the Father and the Son. This teaching, which gained wide popularity, roused fierce opposition within the church. In 325 C.E., at the Council of Nicea, Arius was exiled and his teachings were condemned.*

However, this did not end the controversy. The doctrinal crisis went on for some 60 years, with successive emperors siding with one party or the other. Finally, in 392 C.E., Emperor Theodosius I made orthodox Catholicism with its Trinity doctrine the State religion of the Roman Empire. In the meantime the Goths had been converted to Arianism by Ulfila, a Germanic bishop. Other Germanic tribes were quick to adopt this form of "Christianity."#

By the time of Clovis, the Catholic Church in Gaul was in crisis. The Arian Visigoths had been trying to suppress Catholicism by refusing to allow bishops who died to be replaced. Furthermore, the church was in the throes of

two papal schisms, with priests from opposing factions killing one another in Rome. Adding to this confusion, some Catholic writers had put forward the idea that the year 500 C.E. would mark the end of the world. Thus, the conversion of the Frankish conqueror to Catholicism was seen as an auspicious event, heralding "the new millennium of the saints."

But what were Clovis' motives? While religious motivations cannot be ruled out, he certainly had political goals in mind. By choosing Catholicism, Clovis gained favor with the predominantly Catholic Gallo-Roman population and the support of the influential church hierarchy. This gave him a decided advantage over his political rivals. *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* notes that "his conquest of Gaul became a war of liberation from the yoke of the hated Arian heretics."

Who Was the Real Clovis?

In the run-up to the 1996 commemoration, the archbishop of Reims, Gérard Debois, described Clovis as "the symbol of a well-thought-out and responsible conversion." However, French historian Ernest La-

* See *The Watchtower*, August 1, 1984, page 24.

See *The Watchtower*, May 15, 1994, pages 8-9.

visse commented: "The conversion of Clovis in no way changed his character; the gentle and peaceful moral of the Gospel did not touch his heart." Another historian declared: "Instead of Odin [a Norse god], he invoked Christ and remained the same." Reminiscent of the conduct of Constantine after his so-called conversion to Christianity, Clovis set out to consolidate his rulership by systematically killing off all rivals to the throne. He exterminated "all his relatives to the sixth degree."

After Clovis died, a process of mythmaking began that would turn him from a cruel warrior into a reputed saint. Gregory of Tours' account, written almost a century later, is viewed as a conscious effort to identify Clovis with Constantine, the first Roman emperor or to accept "Christianity." And by making Clovis 30 years old at his baptism, Gregory seems to be trying to establish a comparison with Christ.—Luke 3:23.

This process was continued in the ninth century by Hincmar, bishop of Reims. At a time when cathedrals were vying for pilgrims, the biography he wrote about his predecessor, "Saint" Remigius, likely was intended to increase the renown of his church and to enrich it. In his account, a white dove brought a vial of oil to anoint Clovis at his baptism—clearly a reference to Jesus' anointing with holy spirit. (Matthew 3:16) Hincmar thereby established a link between Clovis, Reims, and the monarchy and gave credence to the idea that Clovis was the Lord's anointed.*

A Controversial Commemoration

Former French president Charles de Gaulle once said: "For me, the history of France starts with Clovis, chosen as king of France by the tribe of the Franks, who gave their

* The name Louis is derived from Clovis, after whom 19 French kings (including Louis XVII and Louis-Philippe) were named.



The visit of John Paul II to France to commemorate Clovis' baptism caused controversy

name to France." However, not everybody sees things that way. The commemoration of the 1,500th anniversary of Clovis' baptism was controversial. In a nation where Church and State have been officially separated since 1905, many criticized the State's participation in what they viewed as a religious commemoration. When the city council of Reims announced plans to pay for the dais to be used during the pope's visit, one association had the decision overturned in court as unconstitutional. Others felt that the church was trying to reimpose its moral and temporal authority on France. Further complicating the commemoration was the appropriation of Clovis as a symbol of the far-right National Front and fundamentalist Catholic groups.

Others criticized the commemoration from a historical point of view. Clovis' baptism, they said, did not convert France to Catholicism, since this religion was already firmly implanted in the Gallo-Roman population. And, they claimed, neither does his baptism mark the birth of France as a nation. They considered that this should be more properly placed at the division of Charlemagne's kingdom in 843 C.E., making Charles the Bald, and not Clovis, the first king of France.

1,500 Years of Catholicism

How is Catholicism in France faring today after more than 1,500 years as the "Church's eldest daughter"? France had the world's largest number of baptized Catholics until 1938. Now it is in sixth position, behind such countries as the Philippines and the United States. And while there are 45 million Catholics in France, only 6 million regularly attend

Mass. A recent survey among French Catholics revealed that 65 percent "take no notice of the Church's teaching on sexual matters," and to 5 percent of them, Jesus represents "nothing at all." Such negative trends are what prompted the pope to ask during his visit to France in 1980: "France, what have you done with the promises of your baptism?"

Questions From Readers

Is it correct to say that Jehovah's mercy tempers his justice?

Although this expression has been used, it is best to avoid it since it seems to imply that Jehovah's mercy softens or restrains his justice, as if his mercy were superior to the harsher quality of justice. This is not correct.

The Hebrew word translated "justice" in the *New World Translation* can also mean "judgment." Justice is closely related to righteousness. However, justice usually has legal implications. Righteousness usually does not. It is true that Jehovah's justice can involve the meting out of deserved punishment, but it can also involve the providing of salvation for deserving ones. (*Genesis 18:20-32; Isaiah 56:1; Malachi 4:2*) Hence, Jehovah's justice should not be viewed as harsh or needing to be softened.

The Hebrew word for "mercy" can refer to the exercise of restraint in the administering of judgment. It can also refer to an active expression of compassion, bringing relief to the disadvantaged.—*Deuteronomy 10:18; Luke 10:29-37*.

Jehovah is a God of both justice and mercy. (*Exodus 34:6, 7; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 145:9*) His justice and his mercy are both perfect, and they work together harmoniously. (*Psalm 116:5; Hosea 2:19*) Both qualities perfectly balance or complement each other. Hence, if we were to say that Jehovah's mercy tempered his

justice, we would also have to say that his justice tempered his mercy.

Isaiah prophesied: "Jehovah will keep in expectation of showing you favor, and therefore he will rise up to show you mercy. For Jehovah is a God of judgment [*"justice," The New English Bible*]."
(*Isaiah 30:18*) Isaiah here shows that Jehovah's justice motivates acts of mercy rather than that his mercy softens or restrains his justice. Jehovah shows mercy because he is just and also because he is loving.

True, the Bible writer James wrote: "Mercy exults triumphantly over judgment." (*James 2:13b*) However, in context James is speaking not of Jehovah but of Christians who show mercy—for example, toward the afflicted and the poor. (*James 1:27; 2:1-9*) When such merciful ones are brought into judgment, Jehovah takes note of their conduct and mercifully forgives them on the basis of his Son's sacrifice. Thus, their merciful conduct triumphs over any adverse judgment they might have been liable for.—*Proverbs 14:21; Matthew 5:7; 6:12; 7:2*.

Therefore, it is not correct to say that Jehovah's judgment is tempered by his mercy in the sense that his justice needs to be softened by mercy. In Jehovah the two qualities are in perfect equilibrium. They balance each other just as they balance—and are balanced by—Jehovah's other qualities, such as love and wisdom.

THE Bible describes the end of this present system of things as "a day of fury, a day of distress and of anguish, a day of storm and of desolation, a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick gloom." (Zephaniah 1:15) Surely this is not the kind of day you would normally look forward to! Yet, the apostle Peter admonished his fellow Christians to be "awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah, through which the heavens being on fire will be dissolved and the elements being intensely hot will melt! But there are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell."—2 Peter 3:12, 13.

Peter was not here speaking of a destruction of the literal heavens and earth. The "heavens" and "earth" to which Peter referred in this context are symbolic of present corrupt human governments and of ungodly human society. "The day of Jehovah" will not destroy earth itself but will "annihilate the land's sinners out of it." (Isaiah 13:9) For those who are "sighing and groaning over all the detestable things" that are being done in today's wicked human society, the day of Jehovah will therefore be a day of salvation.—Ezekiel 9:4.

How, then, can anyone be saved in "the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah"? "The word of Jehovah" revealed to one of his prophets provides the answer to that question: "It must occur that everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will get away safe." (Joel 1:1; 2: 31, 32) Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to help you learn what it means to call on the name of Jehovah.

How Can You Survive the End of This World?



"Now, This May Hurt"

HAVE you ever heard those words? Perhaps a doctor or a nurse said them before administering a recommended treatment.

Likely, you did not refuse to submit to the treatment simply to avoid the anticipated pain. Rather, you endured the pain in order to reap future healthful benefits. In extreme cases, acceptance or rejection of uncomfortable treatment could be a matter of life and death.

Although we may not always require the attention of a medical practitioner, all of us as imperfect humans cannot do without discipline, or correction, even that which, at times, may be painful. (Jeremiah 10:23) Emphasizing this need on the part of children, the Bible says: "Foolishness is tied up with the heart of a boy; the rod of discipline is what will remove it far from him."—Proverbs 22:15.

The rod, in this instance, is a symbol of parental authority. It is true that few children like discipline. If it involves punishment of some sort, they may resent it. However, wise and loving parents look beyond the child's hurt feelings to the eventual gain. Christian parents know that God's Word is true when it says: "No discipline seems for the present to be joyous, but grievous; yet afterward to those who have been trained by it it yields peaceable fruit, namely, righteousness."—Hebrews 12:11; Proverbs 13:24.

Of course, children are not alone in needing discipline. Adults need it too. The Bible is speaking to adults when it says: "Take hold on discipline; do not let go. Safeguard it, for it itself is your life." (Proverbs 4:13) Yes, wise persons—young and old—will embrace discipline based on God's Word, the Bible, because doing so will, in the long run, preserve their life.

