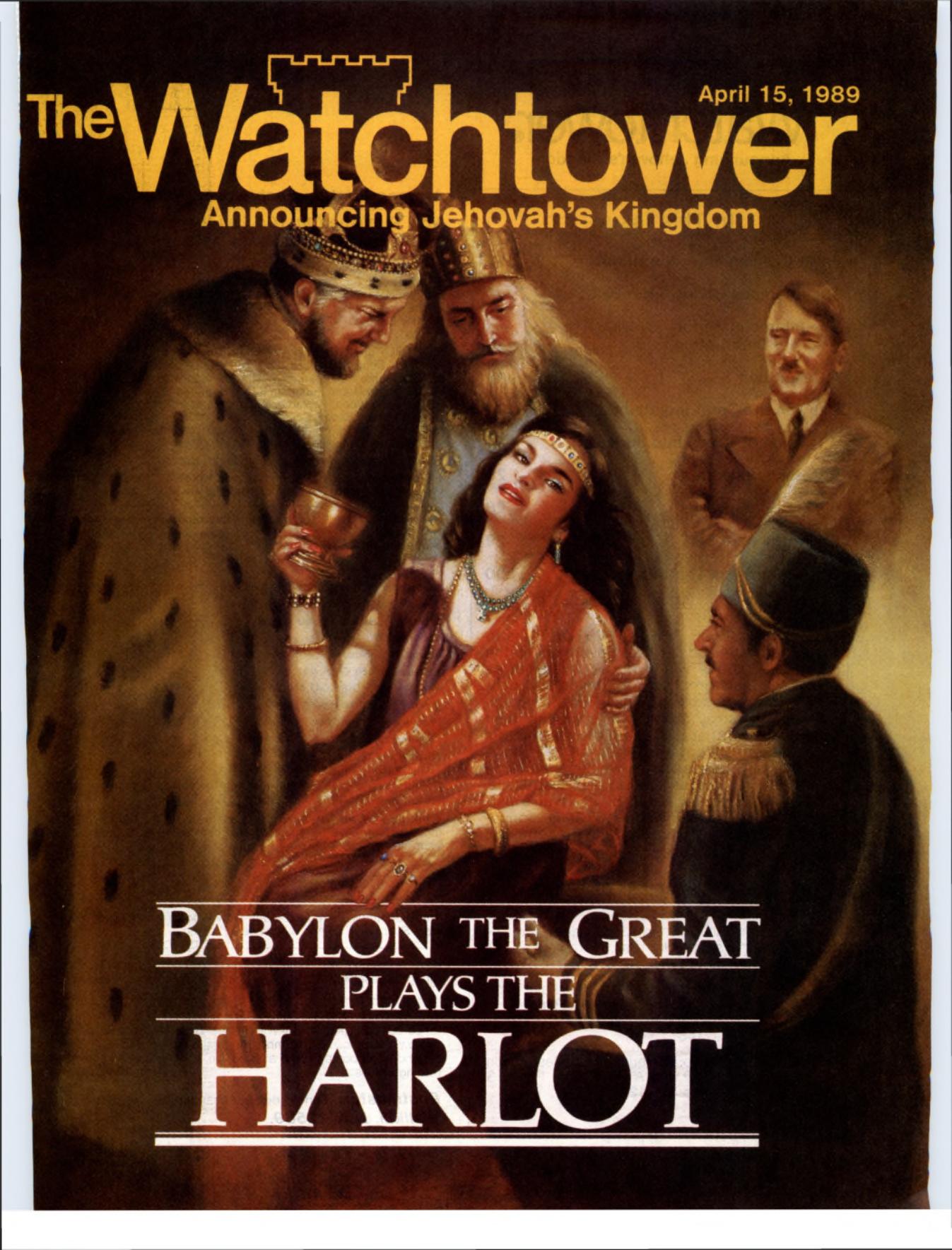


The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

April 15, 1989



BABYLON THE GREAT PLAYS THE HARLOT

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

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False Religion PLAYS THE HARLOT

SOME call it the oldest profession—that of the harlot, prostitute, or whore. As commonly used, all these words have the same meaning, referring to an immoral woman who sells the use of her body to men. Yet, there was a time when this was regarded as an honored calling!

² Speaking of ancient Babylon's priesthood, Professor S. H. Hooke, an authority on Biblical archaeology, stated: "The priesthood was not confined to men, but women formed part of the staff of the great temples. It was considered an honor to belong to the order of priestesses, and we hear of several kings who dedicated their daughters to the priestly calling. . . . Their most important function was to serve as sacred prostitutes at the great seasonal festivals. . . . The temple of Ishtar [goddess of fertility and war], naturally, contained a large staff of such women."

³ This was in stark contrast with worship that was to be rendered to Jehovah God by the nation of Israel. The Law clearly stated: "None of the daughters of Israel may become a temple prostitute, neither may anyone of the sons of Israel become a temple prostitute [practicing homosexuality]. You must not bring the hire of a harlot or the price of a dog into the house of Jehovah your God for any vow, because they are something detestable to Jehovah your God." (Deuteronomy 23:17, 18) Thus, a harlot's payment was unacceptable as a contribution to God's sanctuary. Even har-

1. How has prostitution been viewed by many?
2, 3. How did the role priestesses played in ancient Babylon contrast with Jehovah's law to Israel regarding male and female prostitution?

lotry without any religious connotation was disgraceful. The Israelites were commanded: "Do not profane your daughter by making her a prostitute, in order that the land may not commit prostitution and the land actually be filled with loose morals." The laws against prostitution and homosexuality, which is described as "a detestable thing," were a protection for the nation, both spiritually and physically.—Leviticus 19:29; 20:13.

Spiritual Harlotry Even Worse

⁴ From God's viewpoint, however, there is a worse form of prostitution—spiritual harlotry, or claiming to worship the true God while actually giving worship and affection to other gods. Ancient Jerusalem took her prostitution a step further. She gave presents to those nations that spiritually fornicated with her, polluting true worship.—Ezekiel 16:34.

⁵ Even in this 20th century, spiritual harlotry is common in the world religious system. Christendom is the most prominent part of that system—a system that the Bible calls "Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and of the disgusting things of the earth."—Revelation 17:5.

⁶ But what is the final destiny of Babylon the Great? And how will that final outcome affect you and your loved ones? If God judged harlots adversely in ancient Israel, what will he do about modern spiritual harlotry? The following articles will examine those questions and related ones.

4. What is the worst form of harlotry?
5, 6. Who are committing spiritual harlotry in this 20th century, leading to what questions?

The Infamous Harlot HER FALL

"She has fallen! Babylon the Great has fallen, she who made all the nations drink of the wine of the anger of her fornication!"—REVELATION 14:8.

THE infamous "harlot"—who is she? Why do we need to talk about her? Do not thriller novels, movies, TV, and videos serve up enough sickening doses of immorality? True! But this is no ordinary lady of the evening. She is, in fact, the most influential, the most notorious, the most murderous prostitute in all history. And she has been selling her favors for more than 4,000 years! We need to know about her for our protection. At Revelation 14:8, a heavenly angel calls this woman of ill repute "Babylon the Great" and describes her as a seducer of nations. Since she is that dangerous, we should be happy to know that Jehovah's "appointed time is near" for executing judgment on her.—Revelation 1:3.

² This harlot takes her name from ancient Babylon, the proud city established in Mesopotamia more than 4,000 years ago by Nimrod, the "mighty hunter in opposition to Jehovah." When the Baby-

1. Who is the infamous "harlot," and why do we need to know about her?
2. From where does this harlot get her name, and how did a world empire of false religion get started?

This article and the one following made up the concluding talk of the symposium entitled "The Appointed Time Is Near," presented during 1988 at the Divine Justice District Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses

nians started to build a pagan religious tower, Jehovah confused their language and scattered them to the ends of the earth. They took their religion with them, and that is how a world empire of Babylonish religion got started. Truly, it is Babylon THE GREAT. (Genesis 10:8-10; 11:1-9) Down to our time, the mysteries of ancient Babylon are reflected in the beliefs and practices of the world's religions. (Revelation 17:7) The Hebrew name for the city, Babel, means "Confusion," a fitting label for today's hodgepodge of false religion!

³ Ancient Babylon recovered from that first setback and, with the overthrow of Assyria in 632 B.C.E., became the third world power of Bible history. Her glory as such was short-lived—less than a hundred years—but for almost 70 of those years, she held God's people Israel captive. This placed them in proximity to Babylon's thousand temples and chapels, her triads of gods and triads of devils, her mother-and-son worship, and her astrology that idolized supposedly immortal gods. Thus, the captive Israelites were on hand at the world center of false religion when, in 539 B.C.E., the city of Babylon suffered a disastrous fall. But her end was not yet! Her conquerors continued to use her as a prestigious religious center.

3. (a) For how long did Babylon hold God's people captive, placing them in proximity with what? (b) When did Babylon suffer a disastrous fall, and why did her end not come at that time?



A Global Religious Empire

⁴ Jehovah's prophets had declared his judgment that Babylon must be swept "with the broom of annihilation"—"just as with God's overthrow of Sodom and of Gomorrah." Were those prophecies later fulfilled? Yes, to the last detail! In time, ancient Babylon became a pile of rubble—uninhabited except for reptiles and wild beasts—exactly as foretold! (Isaiah 13:9, 19-22; 14:23; Jeremiah 50:35, 38-40) However, that other Babylon, modern-day Babylon the Great, lives on. As the world empire of false religion, she perpetuates the original Babylon's teachings and haughty spirit. She is Satan's chief instrument for blinding the people to Jehovah's Kingdom purposes.—2 Corinthians 4:3, 4.

⁵ About the sixth century before Christ, when the world power Babylon was at the

4. (a) What did Jehovah's prophets declare regarding Babylon, and what happened to Babylon? (b) What other Babylon lives on, to the detriment of the people of the earth?

5. (a) What religions developed while Babylon was at the zenith of her glory, but why did Satan not succeed in swamping the entire world with false religion? (b) How did Satan use false religion after the introduction of Christianity?

zenith of her glory, the religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shintoism also came to the fore. But did Satan succeed in swamping the entire world with false religion? No, for a remnant of Jehovah's ancient witnesses returned from Babylon to Jerusalem to reestablish Jehovah's worship. Thus, faithful Jews were on hand there, six centuries later, to welcome the Messiah and become the first members of the Christian congregation. False religion brought about the martyrdom of God's own Son and became Satan's instrument for opposing true Christianity, just as Jesus and his apostles had warned.—Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Peter 2:1.

⁶ Particularly after the second destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., did Satan use false apostles to corrupt Christian teachings, fusing these with Babylonish mysticism and worldly Grecian philosophy. Thus, a 'divine triune,' the Trinity, was substituted for the Bible's "one Jehovah." (Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29;

6. (a) How did Satan corrupt Christian teachings, and what God-dishonoring teachings developed? (b) What happened to thousands who preferred Bible truth to Babylonish dogma?

1 Corinthians 8:5, 6)
And the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul, as taught by the pagan philosopher Plato, was brought in to negate the precious Bible teachings of Christ's ransom and the resurrection. This opened the way for belief in a fiery hell and a less fiery purgatory. (Psalm 89:48; Ezekiel 18:4, 20) Such God-dishonoring teachings that play upon people's fears have helped to fill the coffers of the churches. Further, in the days of the Inquisition and of the Reformation, the clergy could not wait for flames of hellfire to do the tormenting.

Thousands who preferred Bible truth to Babylonish dogma were burned alive at the stake by both Catholics and Protestants. But as we shall see, the harlotry of Babylon the Great extends far beyond promoting falsehood.

Jehovah's Day of Judgment

7 Jehovah's day of judgment of this harlot had to come! (Hebrews 10:30) There was a preparatory period, commencing in the 1870's, when Jehovah sent his "messenger"—a sincere group of Bible students—to restore basic Bible truths and expose false Babylonish teachings. (Malachi 3:1a) This "messenger" group sub-

7. (a) When and how did Jehovah begin to restore basic Bible truths and expose false, Babylonish teachings? (b) What basic Bible truths did the Bible Students restore?

Images of triune gods —from ancient Egypt and from Christendom

Saint-Rémi Museum collection, Reims, photo by J. Terrisse



Louvre Museum, Paris



scribed to the prophetic words of Revelation 4:11: "You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created." The "messenger" also became a forthright advocate of Jesus' ransom sacrifice, God's provision for redeeming mankind. Redeemed mankind would include, first, the "little flock" that is to rule with Jesus in his heavenly Kingdom and, later, the hundreds of millions who will live forever in the Paradise earth—most of whom will be resurrected from the dead. (Luke 12:

32; 1 John 2:2; Acts 24:15) Yes, those Bible Students restored these fundamental truths, and in a figurative way, they even 'turned the hose on hell and put out the fire' of the Babylonish eternal-torment dogma!*

8 For some 40 years the Bible Students boldly proclaimed that the year 1914 would mark the end of the Gentile Times.

* On November 1, 1903, following the last of a series of debates at Carnegie Hall, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., between Charles T. Russell and Dr. E. L. Eaton, one of the attending clergymen acknowledged Brother Russell's victory, saying: "I am glad to see you turn the hose on hell and put out the fire."

8. (a) How did the clergy of Christendom use World War I to try to destroy the Bible Students? (b) What happened to the judge who kept eight officials of the Watch Tower Society in prison by refusing bail?

As expected, that year brought world-shaking events, not the least of these being the first world war. Oh, how the clergy of Christendom—the most prominent part of Babylon the Great—tried to use the world crisis to destroy those outspoken Bible Students! At last, in 1918, they had eight officials of the Watch Tower Society railroaded into prison on trumped-up charges of sedition. But these officials were released after nine months and were later exonerated. U.S. federal judge Martin T. Manton, who had kept these Bible Students in prison by refusing bail, was later decorated by Pope Pius XI, being made a “knight of the order of St. Gregory the Great.” However, his glory was short-lived, for in 1939 he was sentenced to two years in prison and a heavy fine. Why? Because he was found guilty of selling six court decisions for a total of \$186,000 in bribes!

“GET OUT OF . . . HER, O MY PEOPLE”!

¹⁰ As an unrepentant part of Babylon the Great, Christendom’s clergy could not stand Jehovah’s judgment. They had sullied their garments terribly as participants in the carnage of the world war and as persecutors of true Christians. (Jeremiah 2:34) Instead of hailing Christ’s incoming heavenly Kingdom, they promoted a man-made League of Nations, which they came to describe as “the political expression of the Kingdom of God on earth.” By 1919 it was apparent that Jehovah had passed judgment on Christendom—and indeed on all false religion. Babylon the Great had fallen, condemned to death! It was high time for all lovers of truth and righteousness to act on the prophetic command at Jeremiah 51:45: “Get out of the

10. What divine judgment came upon Christendom and on all false religion by 1919, resulting in what for Babylon the Great?

⁹ As we have just noted, Jehovah’s people entered a period of severe testing in 1918. The prophet’s further words at Malachi 3:1-3 explain what was happening: “And suddenly there will come to His temple the true Lord [Jehovah], whom you people are seeking, and the messenger of the [Abrahamic] covenant”—Jesus. Yes, Jehovah came with his Christ for judgment. Jehovah then asks: “Who will be putting up with the day of his coming, and who will be the one standing when he appears? For he will be like the fire of a refiner and like the lye of laundrymen.” According to 1 Peter 4:17, judgment would start with those professing to be of “the house of God.” Thus, true Christians were refined and cleansed for Jehovah’s service.

9. How did Malachi’s prophecy explain what was happening to Jehovah’s people, and so judgment began with whom?

midst of her, O my people, and provide each one his soul with escape from the burning anger of Jehovah.”

¹¹ Babylon the Great has fallen! But she is not yet destroyed. As a world empire of false religion, she will exist a short time longer as Satan’s masterpiece of deception. What is God’s final judgment on her? We are not left in doubt! Let us turn in our Bibles to Revelation 17:1, 2. Here an angel addresses the apostle John and, through him, students of prophecy today, saying: “Come, I will show you the judgment upon the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the

11, 12. (a) What does an angel say at Revelation 17:1, 2 with regard to the judgment on Babylon the Great? (b) What are the “many waters” the great harlot sits on, and how has she made earth’s inhabitants “drunk with the wine of her fornication”?

earth committed fornication, whereas those who inhabit the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." The term "many waters" refers to the turbulent masses of mankind, so long oppressed by the great harlot. And the prophecy states that "those who inhabit the earth" are made drunk with her wine. They imbibe the false teachings and worldly, immoral ways of Babylon the Great and are sent reeling, as though inebriated by cheap, illicit wine.

¹² At James 4:4 we read: "Adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God?" Twentieth-century religion is all too ready to curry favor with the world, and that is especially true of Christendom. Not only do her clergy fail to proclaim the good news of Jehovah's incoming Kingdom but they water down the Bible's moral teachings, condoning worldly permissiveness among church members. Even the clergy are not so innocent as to fleshly fornication, which was so roundly condemned by the apostle Paul when he said: "Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men . . . will inherit God's kingdom. And yet that is what some of you were. But you

have been washed clean."—1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

"Rolling in the Mire"

¹³ Have the modern-day clergy "been washed clean"? Well, as an example, note the situation in Britain, once a stronghold of Protestantism. In November 1987, when Britain's prime minister was calling on the clergy to provide moral leadership, the rector of an Anglican church was saying: "Homosexuals have got as much right to sexual expression as everybody else; we should look for the good in it and encourage fidelity [among homosexuals]." A London newspaper reported: "The homosexual practices became so rampant in one Anglican theological college that students from another college had to be forbidden by staff to visit it." One study calculated that "in one London district, the number of clergy with homosexual leanings may be more than half the total." And at a church synod, 95 percent of the Church of England clergy supported a motion that la-

13, 14. (a) What examples show that the modern-day clergy have not "been washed clean"? (b) What attitude did a synod of the Church of England take toward homosexual genital acts, and what did a news writer suggest that the church be renamed? (c) The apostate clergy well fit what words of the apostle Peter?

CLERGY MORALS

"Hundreds of children molested by Catholic priests in the United States during the past five years have suffered severe emotional trauma, say parents, psychologists, police officers and attorneys involved in the cases."—*Akron Beacon Journal*, January 3, 1988.

"The Roman Catholic Church in the United States has been forced to pay millions of dollars in damages to families who contend that their children have been sexually abused by priests. In spite of that, the problem has grown so severe that many lawyers and victims say the church ignores and covers up such cases."—*The Miami Herald*, January 3, 1988.



The Bible likens immoral religious leaders to a bathed sow that returns to rolling in the mire

beled fornication and adultery as sins, but *not* homosexual genital acts; such homosexual acts were said merely to fall short of the ideal. Commenting on all of this, one news writer suggested that the Church of England might well be renamed Sodom and Gomorrah. Another London newspaper declared: "The British people are appalled as they contemplate the results of a generation of permissiveness."

¹⁴ How well the apostate clergy over the years fit the apostle Peter's words: "The saying of the true proverb has happened to them: 'The dog has returned to its own vomit, and the sow that was bathed to rolling in the mire'!"—2 Peter 2:22.

¹⁵ Throughout Christendom, and indeed the whole world, there is a frightful breakdown in moral values. In some societies, marriage is now regarded as unnecessary, and those who are married think marital faithfulness is unfashionable. Fewer legalize their unions, and the divorce rate soars among those who do. In the United States, divorces have more than tripled over the past 25 years to well over one million each

15. (a) What breakdown in moral values has taken place throughout Christendom? (b) Who must share responsibility for this woeful harvest?

year. During the 20-year period from 1965, divorces in Britain quadrupled, from 41,000 to 175,000. Singles prefer to cohabit with singles of either sex, and many move from partner to partner. They lament the terrible sexually transmitted diseases, outstandingly AIDS, that proliferate as a result of their immoral life-style but continue to

insist on their degrading sexual practices. Christendom's clergy have not disciplined erring church members. To the extent that they have winked at immorality, they must share responsibility for this woeful harvest.—Jeremiah 5:29-31.

¹⁶ The sorry moral state in the world empire of false religion also underscores the fact that Babylon the Great has fallen. God has judged her and has marked her for destruction. How appropriate, then, is the angel's strong-voiced cry at Revelation 18:2: "She has fallen! Babylon the Great has fallen, and she has become a dwelling place of demons and a lurking place of every unclean exhalation and a lurking place of every unclean and hated bird!" And how important that all who want to survive the world's end act now in answering the call in verse 4: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues"! Getting out of false religion is a vital step toward surviving "the great tribulation" just ahead. (Revelation 7:14) But more is required, as we shall see!

16. (a) What underscores the fact that Babylon the Great has fallen, and what angelic cry at Revelation 18:2 is appropriate? (b) All who want to survive the world's end must do what?

The Infamous Harlot HER DESTRUCTION

"Praise Jah, you people! The salvation and the glory and the power belong to our God, because his judgments are true and righteous. For he has executed judgment upon the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he has avenged the blood of his slaves at her hand."—REVELATION 19:1, 2.

ALL that we have been discussing is serious enough. However, we should note that Revelation 17:2 speaks also of the great harlot's fornication with "the kings of the earth." Though she has suffered a fall, she is still very much a friend of the world, and she tries to manipulate worldly rulers to gain her ends. (James 4:4) This spiritual harlotry, consisting of illicit relations between Babylon the Great and the political rulers, has resulted in the untimely death of *tens of millions* of innocent people! It was bad enough that the great harlot was involved on both sides of the fighting in World War I. But her sins in relation to World War II have surely "massed together clear up to heavy-

en"! (Revelation 18:5) Why do we say so?

² Well, to take one example, how did the tyrant Adolf Hitler become chancellor—and dictator—of Germany? It was through the political intrigue of a papal knight whom the previous German chancellor, Kurt von Schleicher, described as "the kind of traitor next to whom Judas Iscariot is a saint." This was Franz von Papen, who marshaled Catholic Action and leaders in industry to oppose communism and unite Germany under Hitler. As part of a sellout bargain, von Papen was made vice-chancellor. Hitler sent a delegation headed by von Papen to Rome to

2. (a) How did Franz von Papen help Adolf Hitler to become the ruler of Germany, and how did a previous German chancellor describe that papal knight? (b) In the Concordat between the Nazi State and the Vatican, what two clauses were kept secret? (See footnote.)

1. How has the great harlot committed fornication with "the kings of the earth," and in what has this resulted?



negotiate a concordat between the Nazi State and the Vatican. Pope Pius XI remarked to the German envoys how pleased he was that "the German Government now had at its head a man uncompromisingly opposed to Communism," and on July 20, 1933, at an elaborate ceremony in the Vatican, Cardinal Pacelli (who was soon to become Pope Pius XII) signed the concordat.*

³ One historian writes: "The Concordat [with the Vatican] was a great victory for Hitler. It gave him the first moral support

* For obvious reasons, two clauses of the Concordat were kept secret at the time, these dealing with a common front against the Soviet Union and the duties of Catholic priests conscripted in Hitler's army. Such conscription was a violation of the Treaty of Versailles (1919) to which Germany was still bound; public knowledge of this clause could have disturbed other Versailles signatories.

3. (a) What did a historian write about the Concordat between the Nazi State and the Vatican?
- (b) During the celebrations at the Vatican, what honor was conferred on Franz von Papen?
- (c) What role did Franz von Papen play in the Nazi takeover of Austria?

he had received from the outer world, and this from the most exalted source." During the celebrations at the Vatican, Pacelli conferred on von Papen the high papal decoration of the Grand Cross of the Order of Pius.* Winston Churchill, in his book *The Gathering Storm*, published in 1948, tells how von Papen further used "his reputation as a good Catholic" to gain church support for the Nazi takeover of Austria. In 1938, in honor of Hitler's birthday, Cardinal Innitzer ordered that all Austrian churches fly the swastika flag, ring their bells, and pray for the Nazi dictator.

⁴ A terrible bloodguilt therefore rests on the Vatican! As a leading part of Babylon

* Franz von Papen was among the Nazis who were tried as war criminals at Nuremberg, Germany, in the late 1940's. He was acquitted but later drew a stiff sentence from a German denazification court. Still later, in 1959, he was made a Papal Privy Chamberlain.

- 4, 5. (a) Why does terrible bloodguilt rest on the Vatican? (b) How did the German Catholic bishops give open support to Hitler?

THE POPE'S SILENCE

In his book *Franz von Papen—His Life and Times*, published in 1939, H. W. Blood-Ryan describes in detail the intrigues whereby that papal knight brought Hitler to power and negotiated the Vatican's concordat with the Nazis. With regard to the terrible pogroms, which included the Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others, the author states: "Why did Pacelli [Pope Pius XII] keep silent? Because in von Papen's plan for a Holy Roman Empire of Western Germans he saw in the future a stronger Catholic Church, with the Vatican back again in the seat of temporal power . . . That same Pacelli is now wielding the power of spiritual dictatorship over millions of souls, yet scarcely a whisper was raised at Hitlerian aggression and persecution. . . . As I write these lines, three days of slaughter have passed and not a prayer has come from the Vatican for the souls of the contestants, quite half of whom are Catholic. Terrible will be the reckoning when these men, stripped of all their earthly influences, stand before their God, Who will ask for an accounting. What can be their excuse? Nothing!"

the Great, it helped significantly in putting Hitler into power and in giving him "moral" support. The Vatican went further in tacitly consenting to Hitler's atrocities. During the long decade of Nazi terror, the Roman pontiff kept quiet while hundreds of thousands of Catholic soldiers were fighting and dying for the glory of the Nazi regime and while millions of other unfortunates were being liquidated in Hitler's gas chambers.

⁵ The German Catholic bishops even gave open support to Hitler. On the same day that Japan, Germany's wartime partner at the time, made the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, *The New York Times* carried this report: "The Conference of German Catholic Bishops assembled in Fulda has recommended the introduction of a special 'war prayer' which is to be read at the beginning and end of all divine services. The prayer implores Providence to bless German arms with victory and grant protection to the lives and health of all soldiers. The Bishops further instructed Catholic clergy to keep and remember in a special Sunday sermon at least once a month German soldiers 'on land, on sea and in the air.'"

⁶ If there had been no love affair between the Vatican and the Nazis, the world might have been spared the agony of having scores of millions of soldiers and civilians killed in the war, of six million Jews murdered for being non-Aryan, and —most precious in Jehovah's sight—of

6. The world might have been spared what great agony and atrocities if there had been no spiritual fornication between the Vatican and the Nazis?



UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos
The Vatican shares a terrible bloodguilt with von Papen and Hitler

thousands of his Witnesses, both of the anointed and of the "other sheep," suffering great atrocities, with many Witnesses dying in the Nazi concentration camps.
—John 10:10, 16.

A Close View of the Harlot

⁷ How fitting is the vision that next unfolds in the Revelation prophecy! Turning to chapter 17, verses 3 to 5, we find John saying of the angel: "And he carried me away in the power of the spirit into a wilderness. And I caught sight of a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored wild beast that was full of blasphemous names and that had seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and was adorned with gold and precious stone and pearls and had in her

7. How does the apostle John describe his close-up view of the great harlot?

hand a golden cup that was full of disgusting things and the unclean things of her fornication. And upon her forehead was written a name, a mystery: ‘Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and of the disgusting things of the earth.’”

⁸ Here John observes Babylon the Great at close quarters. She truly belongs in that wilderness, among the wild beasts that inhabit it. This great harlot is clearly identified by what she carries in her cup, though it is deceptively precious-looking from the outside. She drinks of a potion that is disgusting from God’s standpoint. Her friendship with the world, her false doctrines, her moral permissiveness, her philandering with the political powers —none of these things are tolerated by Jehovah, “the Judge of all the earth.” (Genesis 18:22-26; Revelation 18:21, 24) Oh, how beautifully she decks herself out! She is famed for her stately cathedrals with their imposing architecture and stained-glass windows, her bejeweled pa-

8. (a) What does the great harlot carry in her golden cup, thus identifying herself? (b) How is Babylon the Great figuratively “arrayed in purple and scarlet” and adorned with “gold and precious stone and pearls”?

goda and wats, her time-honored temples and shrines. True to the stylized fashions set by the great harlot, her priests and monks are arrayed in costly robes of scarlet, purple, and saffron.—Revelation 17:1.

⁹ Most reprehensible, though, is her bloodthirstiness. Jehovah has a longtime account to settle on that score! She has sponsored bloodthirsty dictators of modern times, and her disgusting history of bloodletting stretches back through the centuries, through the religious wars, the Inquisitions, the Crusades, yes, back to the martyrdom of some of the apostles and the slaying of God’s own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and beyond. (Acts 3:15; Hebrews 11:36, 37) Add to all of this the killings of Jehovah’s Witnesses in more recent years by firing squad, hanging, the ax, the guillotine, the sword, and inhuman treatment in prisons and concentration camps. No wonder John ends his description by saying: “And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the holy ones and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus”—Revelation 17:6.

9. Babylon the Great has what long history of bloodguilt, and how does John appropriately end his description of her?

‘THE MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN AND THE BEAST’

¹⁰ John “wondered with great wonderment” at what he saw. Today, we also wonder! During the 1930’s and 1940’s, the great harlot used Catholic Action and political intrigue to persecute and ban Jehovah’s faithful witnesses. To this day, where she can exercise sufficient influence, Babylon the Great continues to hin-

10. (a) How has the great harlot persecuted Jehovah’s Witnesses down to this day? (b) What kind of leaders are the clergy of Babylon the Great?

der, restrict, and misrepresent the work of Jehovah’s Witnesses, who proclaim the glorious hope of God’s Kingdom. By keeping hundreds of millions captive in the great harlot’s religious organizations, her clergy serve as ‘blind leaders of the blind,’ leading these toward the ditch of destruction. Never, never could this infamous harlot say with the apostle Paul: “I call you to witness . . . that I am clean from the blood of all men.”—Matthew 15:7-9, 14; 23:13; Acts 20:26.

¹¹ Noting John's wonderment, the angel said to him: "Why is it you wondered? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the wild beast that is carrying her and that has the seven heads and the ten horns." (Revelation 17:7) What is this "beast"? More than 600 years earlier, the prophet Daniel had seen visionary beasts, and it had been explained to him that these represented "kings," or political rulerships here on earth. (Daniel 7:2-8, 17; 8:2-8, 19-22) John here sees in vision a combination of such rulerships—"a scarlet-colored wild beast." This is the man-made League of Nations that appeared on the world scene in 1920 but plunged into an abyss of inactivity when World War II erupted in 1939. What, though, is "the mystery of the woman and of the wild beast"?

¹² By divine providence, Jehovah's Witnesses received enlightenment on that mystery in 1942. World War II was then raging at its height, and many thought it would escalate into Armageddon. But Jehovah had a different thought! There was still much work for his Witnesses to do! At their New World Theocratic Assembly of September 18-20, 1942, with the key city Cleveland, Ohio, tied in with 51 other locations in the United States, Nathan H. Knorr, president of the Watch Tower Society, gave the public talk, "Peace—Can It Last?" Therein he reviewed Revelation 17:8, which says of the "scarlet-colored wild beast" that it "was, but is not, and yet is about to ascend out of the abyss, and it is to go off into destruction." He showed how the League of Nations "was" from 1920 to 1939. Then the "is not" stage was reached because of the League's demise. But after World War II, this com-

11, 12. What is the mystery of the "scarlet-colored wild beast" that is carrying the infamous harlot, and what enlightenment did Jehovah's Witnesses receive on this mystery in 1942?

bine of nations would ascend out of the abyss. Was that Bible-based forecast fulfilled? Truly it was! In 1945 the international "wild beast" emerged from its abyss of inactivity as the United Nations.

¹³ Babylon the Great, though weakened by her fall, has continued to pursue her harlotlike ways with the UN "beast." For example, in June 1965, dignitaries from the world's seven leading branches of religion, so-called Christian and non-Christian, said to represent one half of the world's population, assembled in San Francisco to celebrate the UN's 20th birthday.* In that same year, Pope Paul VI described the UN as "the last hope of concord and peace," and later Pope John Paul II expressed his hope that "the United Nations will ever remain the supreme forum of peace and justice." In 1986 the world empire of false religion took the lead in sponsoring the UN's International Year of Peace. But did true peace and security come in response to their religious prayers? Far from it! More and more, member nations of the UN are showing that they have no real love for the great harlot.

Disposing of the Harlot

¹⁴ In due course, the "scarlet-colored wild beast" itself must go off into destruction. But before this happens, and even before its final beastly attack on God's people, that UN beast has a special service to perform. Jehovah puts 'his thought into

* Commenting on this gathering, Pope Paul VI said: "How truly right and proper it is that a religious convocation for peace has been included among the ceremonies commemorative of the signing of the United Nations Charter twenty years ago."

13. How has Babylon the Great continued to pursue her harlotlike ways with the UN "beast"?
14. What special service has the UN "beast" to perform, and how is this described by God's angel?



Rather than advocate God's Kingdom, the popes have proclaimed the UN to be 'the last hope of peace'

Inset: UN photos

the hearts of the wild beast and its militarized horns.' With what result? God's angel answers: "And the ten horns that you saw, and the wild beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her devastated and naked, and will eat up her fleshy parts and will completely burn her with

fire." "She glorified herself and lived in shameless luxury," but now all of this is reversed. Her imposing religious edifices and vast property holdings will not save her. As the angel declares: "That is why in one day her plagues will come, death and mourning and famine, and she will be completely burned with fire, because Jehovah God, who judged her, is strong."

—Revelation 17:16, 17; 18:7, 8.

¹⁵ Her political paramours will lament her demise, declaring: "Too bad, too bad, you great city, Babylon you strong city, because in one hour your judgment has arrived!" Likewise, big-business magnates, who made dishonest profits with her, will "weep and mourn, saying, 'Too bad, too bad . . . because in one hour such great riches have been devastated!'" —Revelation 18:9-17.

15. How will the harlot's political paramours, along with big-business magnates, react to her demise?

VATICAN INVOLVEMENT

The New York Times of March 6, 1988, reported that the Vatican expected a record budget deficit of \$61.8 million for 1988. The paper stated: "One capital expense presumably involves a promise made in 1984 to pay nearly \$250 million to the creditors of Banco Ambrosiano. The Vatican was deeply involved with the Milan bank before its collapse in 1982." So deeply involved in that scandal, indeed, that the Vatican has steadfastly refused to hand over to the authorities three high Vatican officials, including an American archbishop, to stand trial in Italian courts!

¹⁶ However, what response will God's own people make? All of these are included in the angel's words: "Be glad over her, O heaven, also you holy ones and you apostles and you prophets, because God has judicially exacted punishment for you from her!" With a swift pitch Babylon the Great will have been hurled down, never again to reproach Jehovah's holy name. The destruction of the great harlot will call for celebration and victory songs in praise of Jehovah. As the first of a series of hallelujah choruses, the joyous refrain will sound forth: "Praise Jah, you people! The salvation and the glory and the power belong to our God, because his judgments are true and righteous. For he has executed judgment upon the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he has avenged the blood of his slaves at her hand."—Revelation 18:20-19:3.

16. What response will God's people make to the great harlot's destruction, and how does Revelation confirm this?

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¹⁷ God's judgment acts will run swiftly on to completion as the "King of kings and Lord of lords," Christ Jesus, treads "the winepress of the anger of the wrath of God the Almighty" at Armageddon. There he will dispose of wicked rulers and all other remaining ones of Satan's organization on earth. Carrion birds will devour their carcasses. (Revelation 16:14, 16; 19:11-21) How happy we should be that God's appointed time is near for ridding our beautiful earth of everything that is unholy, filthy, and corrupting!

¹⁸ Is that the climax of the book of Revelation? No, not yet! For with the completed resurrection of the 144,000 to heaven,

17. After the disposal of the great harlot, how will God's judgment acts continue to completion?
18. What is the grand climax of the book of Revelation?



the marriage of the Lamb takes place. His "bride," adorned for her husband, is installed in "a new heaven," and from there she descends, figuratively, as her Bridegroom's helpmeet in carrying out Jehovah's purpose to 'make all things new.' The bride's spiritual beauty is that of the holy city, New Jerusalem, which Jehovah God the Almighty lights with his glory, and the Lamb is its lamp. (Revelation 21: 1-5, 9-11, 23) So here Revelation reaches its grand climax, with Jehovah's name sanctified and the Lamb, Christ Jesus, along with his bride, New Jerusalem, proceeding to bless obedient mankind with everlasting life in the earthly Paradise.

¹⁹ Have you awakened to the duplicity of false religion and come out of Babylon the Great? And have you taken the further step of coming to Jehovah God, through

19. (a) Besides coming out of Babylon the Great, what else is essential to salvation?
- (b) What urgent invitation is still open, and what should be our response?



Christ Jesus, in wholehearted dedication leading to baptism? This too is essential to salvation! As the appointed time for Jehovah's execution of final judgment draws near, the invitation echoes forth with compelling urgency: "The spirit and the bride keep on saying: 'Come!'" May all who heed that call dedicate their lives to Jehovah and be zealous in saying "Come!" to still others. Yes, "let anyone thirsting come; let anyone that wishes take life's water free." (Revelation 22:17) The invitation is still open. You will be happy indeed if you take your stand and maintain that stand before the throne of God and the Lamb as one of Jehovah's dedicated, baptized people. The appointed time is nearer than you may think! Yes, the grand climax of Revelation is at hand!

As a conclusion to this week's *Watchtower* Study, the conductor should call for the reading of the following Resolution and review it with the help of the questions that are provided. This is the Resolution that was presented worldwide at the "Divine Justice" District Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in 1988, at the close of the talk "The Infamous 'Harlot'—Her Fall and Destruction."

A RESOLUTION

We, who since 1914 have been living in "the Lord's day" and at this time of divine judgment, rejoice in the grandest of all privileges, that of serving the Sovereign Lord Jehovah under his King of kings, Jesus Christ. (Revelation 1:10) As JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES, we testify that:

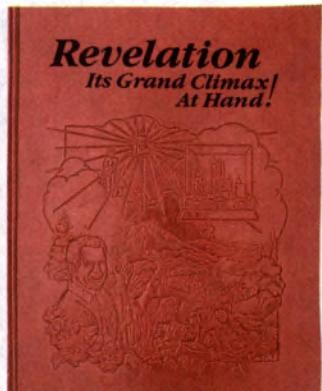
(1) WE ABHOR the reproach that Babylon the Great, and Christendom in particular, has cast upon the name of the one true and living God, Jehovah. For our part, WE AFFIRM wholeheartedly, in the words of Revelation 4:11: "You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power."

(2) WE ABHOR Christendom's adherence to Babylonish teachings, notably those of a triune god, the human soul's immortality, eternal torment in hell, a fiery purgatory, and worship of images—such as the Madonna and the cross. In line with Revelation 22:18, 19, WE FIRMLY ABIDE by God's written Word and all that it contains.

(3) WE ABHOR anti-God philosophies and practices, so common in Christendom, such as evolution, blood transfusions, abortions, lying, greed, and dishonesty. In our worship and way of life, WE WILL HONOR our Creator, Jehovah God, the Almighty, whose ways are described at Revelation 15:3 as "righteous and true."

(4) WE ABHOR Christendom's failure to heed Jesus' messages to the seven congregations at Revelation chapters 2 and 3 in such matters as sectarianism, idolatry, fornication, the Jezebel influence, lukewarmness, and lack of watchfulness. For our part, WE WILL HEAR AND OBEY what "the spirit says to the congregations."

Attendance at "Divine Justice" Conventions will no doubt have exceeded that of the previous year, when 6,443,597 assembled at 1,098 locations worldwide, with 93,822 being baptized. The talk, "The Infamous 'Harlot,'" given at all "Divine Justice" Conventions, was followed by the release, in more than 20 languages, of the beautifully illustrated 320-page bound book *Revelation—Its Grand Climax at Hand!* The speaker told his listeners: "Use this new book well in your personal and congregational studies. Use it, too, in announcing to the world that Babylon the Great is doomed, that the nations now face Armageddon, and that the grand climax will be reached in Jehovah's magnificent Kingdom rule by Christ and his bride. You will be happy in hearing and observing these things, 'for the appointed time is near'!"—Revelation 1:3.



(5) WE ABHOR the immorality and permissiveness in Christendom and among its clergy, and we welcome Jehovah's clear judgment stated at Revelation 21:8 that those who continue in their filth—fornicators, liars, and suchlike—will be utterly destroyed. WE WHOLEHEARTEDLY SUPPORT Bible standards on sex, marriage, and family life.

(6) WE ABHOR the centuries-long spiritual prostitution of the clergy of Babylon the Great in conniving with worldly rulers to gain power, wealth, and oppressive dominance over the common people. WE ARE RESOLVED to help honesthearted ones to obey the angel's call at Revelation 18:4: "Get out of her, my people."

(7) WE ABHOR the massive bloodguilt resulting from over 100 million lives sacrificed in war in this century alone, largely attributable to the great harlot's fornication with the political powers. WE REJOICE that the appointed time is near for God to execute judicial punishment on Babylon the Great, as clearly stated at Revelation 18:21-24.

As Jehovah's Witnesses, WE COUNT IT A JOY AND A PRIVILEGE to announce to the world that in 1914 "the kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord [Jehovah] and of his Christ." (Revelation 11:15) WE ARE RESOLVED to move forward fearlessly in making known Jehovah's declared judgments on Babylon the Great and in warning of the imminence of God's war of Armageddon. WE ARE DETERMINED to echo, in a loud voice and "to every nation and tribe and tongue and people," the glad tidings that "a new heaven and a new earth" are at hand for the blessing of obedient mankind. (Revelation 14:6; 21:1) WE REJOICE that as a result of this proclamation, a great crowd of more than three million from all nations is now united with us around the globe. Along with the angel flying in midheaven, all of us declare: "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of the judgment by him has arrived, and so worship the One who made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters."—Revelation 14:7.

Questions for Study of "A Resolution":

1. In what do Jehovah's Witnesses now rejoice?
2. On each of the Resolution's seven points, state (a) what Jehovah's Witnesses abhor and (b) what positive affirmation the Witnesses make.
3. (a) What joy and privilege do Jehovah's Witnesses have? (b) What is the resolve of the Witnesses? (c) What also are we determined to do? (d) In what rejoicing and declaration do Jehovah's Witnesses share?

BABYLON THE GREAT INDICTED

IN A series of conventions around the world in 1988-89, millions of Jehovah's Witnesses endorsed the resolution expressing their abhorrence of the conduct of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion—especially as represented by Christendom. Some sincere persons may ask, Is that not too strong a stand? No, not at all! When we see how the prophets of ancient Israel boldly denounced the idolatry of their day and with what strong language Jesus exposed the religious hypocrisy of his times, we as Jehovah's Witnesses believe that this stand is fully justified. It is even commanded by God.—Isaiah 24:1-6; Jeremiah 7:16-20; Matthew 23:9-13, 27, 28, 37-39.

So on what basis do we abhor the conduct of Babylon the Great? What historical evidence do we have of religion's failure to honor the true Sovereign Lord of the universe, Jehovah?

Modern Babylon Despises the Name

The Sovereign Lord of the universe is not anonymous. He has identified himself some 7,000 times in the Bible as Jehovah. He attributes vital importance to his name. The third of the Ten Commandments states: "You must not take up the name of Jehovah your God in a worthless way, for Jehovah will not leave the one unpunished who takes up his name in a worthless way." And Jesus highlighted his Father's name in the Lord's Prayer, saying, "Let your name be sanctified."—Exodus 20:7; Matthew 6:9.

Christendom's record in honoring God's name is dismal. Even the King James Bible of 1611 uses the name Jehovah, alone and in combination, only seven times.* Other translations have totally eliminated the name. Most religions fail to honor it. Instead, they have elevated their "holy" Trinity and, in some cases, Mary the so-called Mother of God above the God of the Bible. Jehovah's precious name has been allowed to sink into relative disuse.[#]

Commendably, Islam recognizes one God, whom they call Allah, in accordance with their holy book, the Koran. However, they do not use his name, Jehovah, as first revealed in the Bible at least two thousand years before the Koran existed. Hindus worship millions of gods and goddesses, but Jehovah is not among them.

Outstanding as an offender regarding God's name is Judaism. For thousands of years, Jews have claimed to be the name people of God, and yet by reason of their tradition, they have caused God's true name to fall into total disuse.

Therefore, as witnesses of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, we have to express our disgust at the neglect of God's holy name on the part of Babylon the Great.

* Genesis 22:14; Exodus 6:3; 17:15; Judges 6:24; Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 12:2; 26:4.

[#] For a detailed consideration of the importance and significance of God's 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.

Why We Detest Babylonish Teachings

Millions of people have been exploited and kept in fear on the basis of the Babylonish teaching that man has an immortal soul. From ancient times, false religion has exploited fear of the soul's possible torture eternally in hellfire after death. A more subtle refinement of that teaching is the temporary suffering in the fires of purgatory. Sincere people pay to have Masses said for the dead but never know when the payments cease to be necessary! These blasphemous doctrines have no basis in the Bible.—Compare Jeremiah 7:31.

In fact, the Bible teaches that man is a living, mortal soul. For his disobedience Adam was not sentenced to hellfire or purgatory but to death. Simply stated, "the wages sin pays is death." (Romans 6:23; Genesis 2:7, 17; 3:19) The Scriptural hope for the dead is based, not on an immortal soul, but, rather, on God's promise of a resurrection to perfect life on a paradise earth.—John 5:28, 29; Revelation 21:1-4.

Yet another Babylonish teaching is the "holy" Trinity. This teaching of three persons in one God was never a part of the faith of the ancient Hebrews. (Deuteronomy 5:6, 7; 6:4) A Jew himself, Jesus certainly never believed or taught that he was almighty God. He claimed no part in a triad as taught in Babylonish doctrine or dogma.—Mark 12:29; 13:32; John 5:19, 30; 14:28; 20:17.

Therefore, we reject Babylon's blasphemous doctrines as taught in the false religions of the world. We render worship to the one true God, Jehovah, through his Son, who became "a propitiatory sacrifice" for the sins not only of anointed Christians but of the whole world of mankind.—1 John 2:2.

Why We Reject Anti-God Philosophies

Christendom's popes and clergy bewail the upsurge of atheism, and many use it to

justify their support of right-wing politics. Yet, the question has to be asked: Who condoned the injustices and inequalities that fomented this rise of atheism, particularly in the last century? It occurred in an outstanding way in the realm of Christendom. For example, the Russian Orthodox Church had consorted with the czars, who had cruelly oppressed the people. The lack of true Christian values on the part of those who presented themselves as representatives of God contributed to conditions that formed a breeding ground for atheism.

Christendom's religions have also embraced the Creator-dishonoring teaching of evolution. They attribute the complexity and diversity of over a million life forms to the blind forces of nature. In effect, they say that this diversity developed by a series of beneficial flukes. Such a philosophy makes God superfluous and man responsible to no one. Ethics become a matter of personal choice. (Psalm 14:1) One result is that abortions now run into the tens of millions each year—in countries claiming to be religious!

We reject these anti-God philosophies and practices. We worship Jehovah, "the One who lives forever and ever, who created the heaven and the things in it and the earth and the things in it and the sea and the things in it."—Revelation 10:6; 19:6.

Why We Abhor the Fruitage of Babylon the Great

Christendom has failed to heed the warning messages to the seven congregations set out in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. These counsel against the practice of sectarianism, idolatry, and fornication, and against lukewarmness and negligence.

A visit to almost any place of worship will reveal how many religious people have elevated the creature above the Creator.

How so? By their image and icon veneration and their worship rendered to "saints," Madonnas, and crosses.—Compare Psalm 115:2-8; 2 Corinthians 5:7; 1 John 5:21.

In their case, Paul's words have a fulfillment: "Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God . . . They became foolish and turned the glory of the incorruptible God into something like the image of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed creatures and creeping things."—Romans 1:21-23.

Why We Condemn Babylon's Immorality

The last 20 years have seen homosexuality approved or condoned as an alternative life-style. Millions of homosexuals have "come out of the closet" and now parade on the streets, flaunting their "Gay Pride." How does God view their homosexuality?

The Bible clearly stated some 3,500 years ago: "And you must not lie down with a male the same as you lie down with a woman. It is a detestable thing." (Leviticus 18:22) And nearly 2,000 years ago Paul showed that God's standards had not changed when he wrote: "That is why God gave them up to disgraceful sexual appetites, for both their females changed the natural use of themselves into one contrary to nature; and likewise even the males left the natural use of the female and became violently inflamed in their lust toward one another, males with males, working what is obscene and receiving in themselves the full recompense, which was due for their error."—Romans 1:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; 1 Timothy 1:10.

Yet, so many of the clergy of Christendom are practicing homosexuals that they have been able to establish a powerful homosexual lobby in many of the major religions. They demand that their life-style be recognized and that they be accorded the status of minister. A case in point is that

of Canada's largest Protestant denomination, the United Church of Canada, whose leaders voted 205 to 160 on August 24, 1988, in favor of admitting homosexuals to the ministry.

Why We Abhor Babylon's Spiritual Prostitution

Revelation denounces Babylon's fornication with "the kings of the earth," its political rulers. The harlot is pictured as sitting "on many waters," meaning "peoples and crowds and nations and tongues." (Revelation 17:1, 2, 15) By having a cozy relationship with the political rulers, false religion over the centuries has overtly or covertly used its influence in suppressing and exploiting the common people.

Examples of this dominance are the concordats, or agreements, that the Vatican signed with Nazi and Fascist rulers in this 20th century. As a consequence, church influence over the flocks led to total subservience to ruthless rulers. In 1929 the Vatican concluded a concordat with Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. What followed in Germany? German cardinal Faulhaber, attributing the following words to Pius XI, gives insight into the pope's thinking about Hitler: "I am pleased; he is the first statesman to have spoken out against Bolshevism." Faulhaber later noted: "My journey to Rome confirmed what I might have suspected for a long time. In Rome, National Socialism and Fascism are considered the only deliverance from Communism and Bolshevism."

Germany's Catholic bishops had opposed the Nazi philosophy prior to 1933. But as German author Klaus Scholder states in his book *The Churches and the Third Reich*, the bishops were commanded by the Vatican's ambassador to Germany, Cardinal Pacelli, to revise their attitude toward National Socialism. What prompted this change? It was the prospect of the concor-

dat between the Third Reich and the Vatican, which was concluded July 20, 1933.

Klaus Scholder reports: "At the election and plebiscite of 12 November [1933] Hitler reaped the fruits of the Reich concordat by surprisingly high 'yes' votes, above all in predominantly Catholic circles of the electorate."

Although a few Protestant leaders expressed opposition to the Nazi takeover in 1933, their voices soon became lost in the mass clamor of nationalism. Scholder explains: "There was clearly an increasing readiness in the Protestant church to abandon the caution exercised in the past and now at last also to get caught up in the national enthusiasm. . . . Official church statements appeared for the first time which supported the new Reich without reservations." In fact, Protestantism sold itself out to Nazi nationalism and became its handmaiden, just as the Catholic Church had done.

Down through the centuries, the historical record shows, false religion has consorted with the powerful ruling elite groups and bolstered their prestige to the detriment of the common people. The 'mental attitude of Christ' has not been reflected by the world's religious leaders, who have hungrily sought after power, property, and wealth. As Jehovah's Witnesses, we abhor such spiritual prostitution.—John 17:16; Romans 15:5; Revelation 18:3.

Why We Abominate Babylon's Bloodguilt

In the book of Revelation, Babylon the Great is accused of massive bloodguilt: "And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the holy ones and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. Yes in her was found the blood of prophets and of holy ones and of all those who have been slaughtered on the earth."—Revelation 17:6; 18:24.

The history of false religion is one of hatred and bloodshed, with Christendom being the most bloodguilty. Two world wars started in the realm of so-called Christian nations. "Christian" political leaders resorted to arms in 1914 and 1939, and the clergy in all contending nations gave their blessing. *The Columbia History of the World* states regarding World War I: "Truth was devalued along with life, and hardly a voice was raised in protest. *The guardians of God's word led the martial chorus.* Total war came to mean total hatred." (Italics ours.) Army chaplains urged their soldiers on with patriotic fervor as the youth of both sides became cannon fodder. The same history book states: "The systematic poisoning of men's minds by paroxysms of nationalism . . . further obstructed the search for peace."

False religion worldwide continues to engender hatred as conflicts rage between Jew and Muslim, Hindu and Sikh, Catholic and Protestant, Muslim and Hindu, Buddhist and Hindu. Yes, false religion continues to contribute to the bloodbath "of all those who have been slaughtered on the earth."—Revelation 18:24.

In view of all the proof set out above, Jehovah's Witnesses feel that the convention resolution of 1988 is appropriate and timely. Properly, we denounce false religion as the bloodguilty harlot, Babylon the Great. We announce to the world the only true way to peace and true worship—turning to the Sovereign Lord of the universe, Jehovah God, through the One he sent to earth, the Christ, or Messiah, Jesus. This means accepting God's Kingdom as the righteous, everlasting government that alone can satisfy mankind's needs. And it also means that now is the time to obey the command: "Get out of her [Babylon the Great], my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues."—Revelation 18:4; Daniel 2:44; John 17:3.

A Mission of Mercy Into Judea

SOME weeks earlier, during the Festival of Dedication in Jerusalem, the Jews tried to kill Jesus. So he traveled north, evidently to an area not far from the Sea of Galilee.

Recently, he has been heading south again toward Jerusalem, preaching along the way in the villages of Perea, a district east of the Jordan River. He has just finished telling the illustration about the rich man and Lazarus. Now he continues teaching his disciples things that he had taught earlier while in Galilee.

He says, for example, that it would be more advantageous for a person "if a millstone were suspended from his neck and he were thrown into the sea" than for him to cause one of God's "little ones" to stumble. He also emphasizes the need of forgiveness, explaining: "Even if [a brother] sins seven times a day against you and he comes back to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

When the disciples request, "Give us more faith," Jesus answers: "If you had faith the size of a mustard grain, you would say to this black mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea!' and it would obey you." So even a little faith can accomplish great things.

Next, Jesus relates a true-to-life situation that illustrates the proper



attitude of a servant of the almighty God. "Who of you is there that has a slave plowing or minding the flock," Jesus observes, "who will say to him when he gets in from the field, 'Come here at once and recline at the table'? Rather, will he not say to him, 'Get something ready for me to have my evening meal, and put on an apron and minister to me until I am through eating and drinking, and afterward you can eat and drink'? He will not feel gratitude to the slave because he did the things assigned, will he? So you, also, when you have done all the things assigned to you, say, 'We are good-for-nothing slaves. What we have done is what we ought to have done.'" Thus, God's servants should never feel that they are doing God a favor by serving him. Rather, they should always remember the privilege that they have of worshiping him as trusted members of his household.

Apparently it is shortly after giving this illustration that a messenger arrives. He is sent by Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, who live in Bethany of Judea. "Lord, see! the one for whom you have affection is sick," the messenger relates.

Jesus replies: "This sickness is not with death as its object, but is for the glory of God, in order that the Son of God may be glorified through it." After remaining two days where he is, Jesus says to his disci-

ples: "Let us go into Judea again." However, they remind him: "Rabbi, just lately the Judeans were seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?"

"There are twelve hours of daylight, are there not?" Jesus asks in response. "If anyone walks in daylight he does not bump against anything, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he bumps against something, because the light is not in him."

What Jesus apparently means is that the "hours of daylight," or the time God has allotted for his earthly ministry, have not yet elapsed, and until they do, nobody can harm him. He needs to use to the full the short time of "daylight" left for him, since afterward will come "the night" when his enemies will have killed him.

Jesus adds: "Lazarus our friend has gone

to rest, but I am journeying there to awaken him from sleep."

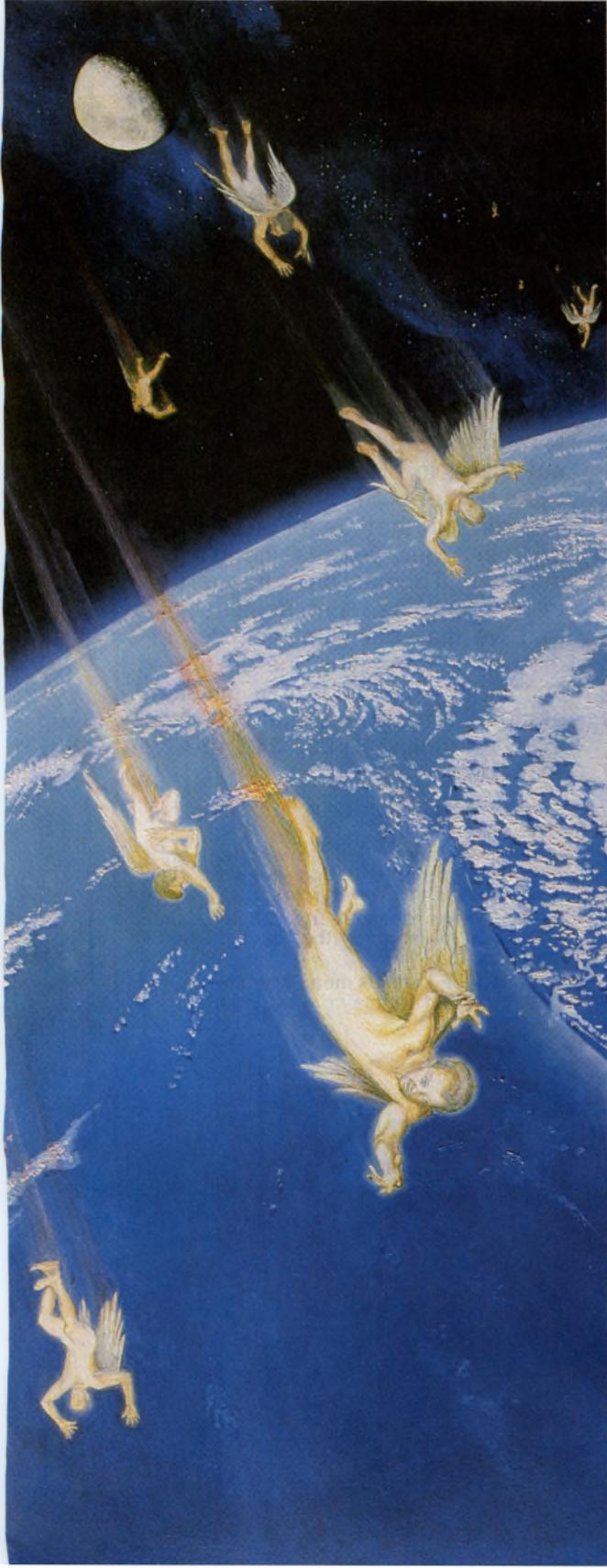
Evidently thinking that Lazarus is resting in sleep and that this is a positive sign that he will recover, the disciples respond: "Lord, if he has gone to rest, he will get well."

Then Jesus tells them outspokenly: "Lazarus has died, and I rejoice on your account that I was not there, in order for you to believe. But let us go to him."

Realizing that Jesus could be killed in Judea, yet desiring to support him, Thomas encourages his fellow disciples: "Let us also go, that we may die with him." So at the risk of their lives, the disciples accompany Jesus on this mission of mercy into Judea. **Luke 13:22; 17:1-10; John 10:22, 31, 40-42; 11:1-16.**

- ♦ Where has Jesus been preaching recently?
- ♦ What teachings does Jesus repeat, and what true-to-life situation does he describe to illustrate what point?
- ♦ What news does Jesus receive, and what does he mean by the "daylight" and "the night"?
- ♦ What does Thomas mean when he says, 'Let us go that we may die with him'?





A CATHOLIC DILEMMA



Picture Book of Devils, Demons and Witchcraft/Ernst and Johanna Lehner/Dover

THE Catholic Church is currently facing two problems in connection with the Devil. On the one hand, it is having to fight a tendency among modern-day Catholics to doubt the Devil's existence. On the other hand, it is having to deal with a spate of unofficial exorcisms, or expellings of evil spirits.

Pope John Paul II reminded Catholic youths that they should take the Devil se-

*The Devil and his demons
have been cast down
to the vicinity of the earth.
—Revelation 12:9, 12*

riously. In a letter, he wrote: "You should not be afraid to call *the first worker of badness* by his name: *the Evil One*. He has used and continues to use the tactics of *not revealing himself*."

Likewise, cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in Rome, stated: "Whatever the less discerning theologians may say, the devil, as far as Christian belief is concerned, is a puzzling but real, personal and not merely symbolical presence. He is a powerful reality."

Cardinal Ratzinger also expressed great concern about unauthorized Satan-related meetings being held by Catholics in many countries. In a letter dated September 29, 1985, addressed to all Catholic bishops throughout the world, he wrote: "For several years, in certain church circles, more and more prayer meetings are being held with a view to delivering people from demon influence." He reminded the prelates that according to canon law, no such meetings can be held without express permission from the local bishop and that such permission should be granted only to priests. No lay person has the right to pronounce "the exorcist formula against Satan and fallen angels."

The French daily *Le Figaro* reported: "The 'boom' in exorcisms and anti-Satan activities has burst into the open during the past few months in Italy, particularly in Turin, where cardinal Anastasio Balles-trero has just appointed six new exorcists." Giving the matter worldwide scope, the Paris daily *International Herald Tribune* wrote: "The interest in Satan's possible presence in Turin is only part of a broader discussion within the Roman Catholic Church about the personification of evil referred to variously in Scripture and church teaching as 'the prince of this world,' 'the power of darkness,' the 'ancient serpent,' the 'slanderer.'"

French Academy member Jean Dutourd

made some interesting comments on modern-day doubts about Satan's existence—even by Catholic prelates. He wrote in the French daily *L'Est-Républicain*: "Belief in God is rather frowned upon these days, but it is more or less tolerated. Belief in the Devil, however, is looked upon as completely ridiculous. The mere mention of the name Satan . . . highly amuses intellectuals, the bourgeois, politicians, and also, no doubt, a goodly number of bishops. Their mirth surprises me all the more because it would seem that the Devil has been giving us particular attention since 1914."

If Catholics, including some of the clergy, need to be reminded by the pope and others that Satan really exists, is it not because the church for centuries has placed greater emphasis on tradition, philosophy, and unproved scientific theories than on the Bible?

The mention above of 1914 is indeed appropriate. That year is marked in Bible prophecy as beginning "the last days" when the Devil, as "the ruler of the world," makes his last-ditch effort to ruin all mankind. (2 Timothy 3:1; John 14:30) As a Catholic Bible translation states: "Disaster is coming—because the devil has gone down to you in a rage, knowing that he has little time left." Sincere Catholics do well to accept the Bible's testimony. Why? Because world conditions today prove that "the kingdom of God is near."—Revelation 12:7-12; Luke 21:25-31, *The New Jerusalem Bible*.

Since that Kingdom promises to end all unrighteousness and its causes, the removal of the Devil and his supporters is imminent. However, only people who know that the Devil exists can take a stand against his rulership and hope for survival. How? Not through exorcisms but, rather, as the apostle Paul wrote, by putting on "the complete suit of armor from God." Yes, God's Word is clear: "Oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you."—Ephesians 6:11-18; James 4:7.

Insight on the News

Solving Crime

Despite promises by campaigning politicians to provide better legislation on crime in the United States, the ABA (American Bar Association) recently admitted that crime is out of control and that the criminal justice system simply cannot contain it. The ABA estimated that 34 million crimes were committed in 1986, yet federal studies reveal that "only a few hundred thousand resulted in prison terms," reports *The New York Times*. In addition, the ABA claims that the majority of crimes go unreported to the police. In spite of this, prisons are bursting at the seams, and criminal cases are flooding the courts. The study conceded that "there is no realistic hope that more prosecution and imprisonment can ever contain crime," states the *Times*.

While a frustrated public may find this admission shocking, informed Bible students do not. Centuries ago the apostle Paul foretold that in "the last days" of this present system, "wicked men . . . will advance from bad to worse." (2 Timothy 3:1, 13) However, what man is incapable of doing, God can do. He promises that the wicked "will be cut off from the very earth." —Proverbs 2:22.

Who's Responsible?

When Pan American World Airways flight 103 exploded in the skies over Lockerbie, Scotland, last December, all 258

passengers were killed. Eleven citizens of Lockerbie also died when portions of the wreckage crashed into a number of residences. Loved ones lost in the shocking air disaster were mourned by relatives and friends alike. Is God responsible for this tragedy?

One Catholic bishop in Scotland seems to think so. According to *The New York Times*, he said in his sermon at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church: "Father, if You are the God of love, why did You let this happen? Why did You allow the destruction of hundreds of innocent lives? . . . And why do You permit so many people to have to suffer the cruel, tragic burden of bereavement?"

Is God really to blame for such suffering? According to investigators, evidence was found in the wreckage that pointed to sabotage by a terrorist bomb. When men fight against one another to further their own selfish interests, should God be held responsible for the harm it may bring to others? No! It should be expected that humans would not be immune to the consequences of what they do. The apostle Paul wrote: "Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap." (Galatians 6:7) What is more, regarding the innocent victims of the cruel and irresponsible actions of others, Ecclesiastes 9:11 says that "time and unforeseen occurrence befall them all." Thus, a person may get hurt or even lose his life, not because God wants man to suffer but be-

cause, by chance, he is in the wrong place at the critical time.

A Real Killer

Experts have believed for many years that people who were aggressive and always in a hurry were prime targets of heart attacks. Now, however, new evidence suggests that anger, not impatience, may be the real killer. Dr. Redford Williams, Jr., of Duke University Medical Center, explained that being in a hurry or being a workaholic is "not necessarily bad for your heart," reports the *New York Post*. Williams pointed out that "what is bad is if you have high levels of hostility and anger and you don't bother to hide it when dealing with other people." Those at high risk of heart attack were said to be "quick to reach the boiling point" and mistrustful of others' motives. "They get angry often and openly express their displeasure, rather than holding it in," notes the *Post*.

The ill effects of anger have long been known to students of the Bible. Centuries ago wise King Solomon wrote: "He that is quick to anger will commit foolishness" and "an enraged man stirs up contention." However, a person who is "slow to anger quiets down quarreling." (Proverbs 14:17; 15:18) Those who wisely follow this Biblical advice may lower the risk of heart disease. God's Word is true: "A calm heart is the life of the fleshly organism, but jealousy is rottenness to the bones." —Proverbs 14:30.

Do You Remember?

Have you found the recent issues of *The Watchtower* of practical value to you? Then why not test your memory with the following?

□ What did Jesus mean when he said that no one could become his disciple unless he 'hated his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own soul'? (Luke 14:26)

Jesus did not mean that one of his followers should literally hate his relatives or his own life. Rather, he meant that a disciple must love others or his own life less than he loves Jesus.—1/1, page 8.

□ What are three basic factors that have contributed to the success of the Witness missionary work, past and present?

One is personal contact with the people at their homes. Another is the direct and simple Bible-based Kingdom message. A third is the Christlike love manifested by missionaries in dealing with people.—1/1, page 14.

□ Why did God temporarily add the Law covenant to the Abrahamic covenant?

The Law covenant proved that the Israelites were sinners needing a permanent priest and a perfect sacrifice. It guarded the line of the Seed and helped to identify who that Seed was. It also showed that one day God would have a nation of kingpriests.—2/1, page 16.

□ What are seven progressive divine covenants leading to eternal blessings for all of us?

The Edenic covenant, the Abrahamic covenant, the Law cove-

nant, the covenant for a priest like Melchizedek, the Davidic Kingdom covenant, the new covenant, and the Kingdom covenant.—2/1, page 19.

□ Do the thousands of variations in Bible manuscripts weaken the Bible's claim to be the Word of God?

No. Bible scholars tell us that nearly all these variations are of little importance to the text. They simply serve to strengthen the proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures. (Psalm 119:105; 1 Peter 1:25)—2/1, pages 29, 30.

□ From what is the term "agnostic" derived, and how is it used in the Bible?

"Agnostic" is derived from the Greek word *a'gnostos*, which means "unknown." Paul used a form of it in his speech to the Athenians when he referred to a pagan altar dedicated "To an Unknown God." (Acts 17:23)—2/15, page 5.

□ How should we act when some Scriptural direction may seem to be open to different opinions?

We should demonstrate the humble responsiveness that was shown by the early Christians, accepting decisions and directions from God's congregation. (Acts 15:6-29)—2/15, page 20.

□ What did Jesus mean when he said: "Make friends for yourselves by means of the unrighteous riches, so that, when such fail, they may receive you into the everlasting dwelling places"? (Luke 16:9)

We should be diligent to use any wealth at our disposal to support Kingdom interests and thus cultivate friendship with Jehovah

and his Son. They are the only ones who can provide a place for us in heaven or on a paradise earth when material riches fail or perish.—3/1, page 9.

□ What three things are required on our part if we are to benefit from the insight that Jehovah makes available?

We need to appreciate Jehovah's organization; we must regularly study God's Word and the helps that are provided, which enable us to understand it; and we must meditate on what we have learned and how to apply this in our daily life.—3/15, page 14.

□ Why did the people of ancient Israel act with such a gross lack of insight?

They failed to ponder appreciatively over all the things Jehovah had done for them. (Psalm 106:7, 13)—3/15, page 17.

□ What is represented by "the armies of cavalry" spoken of at Revelation 9:16?

These symbolic horses represent not only the diminishing remnant of anointed ones but also the growing and powerful "great crowd" of "other sheep." (Revelation 7:9; John 10:16)—4/1, page 19.

In Our Next Issue

■ Babylon the Great
—Fallen and Judged

■ Worship the Creator,
Not the Creation

■ What the Love of God
Means

Divine Warnings That Affect You

Lessons From the Scriptures: Obadiah 1-21

HE THAT is touching you is touching my eyeball." (Zechariah 2:8) Those ominous words stand as a message of caution to everyone: Jehovah notices how nations treat his people. What happens, though, to a nation that flies in the face of such a divine warning and harmfully touches God's people? The shortest book in the Hebrew Scriptures, Obadiah, answers.

Calamity for Edom

No one escapes Jehovah's judgment. Obadiah's prophecy, uttered about 607 B.C.E., foretold the expulsion of the Edomites from their land despite their seemingly secure position high "among the stars." And although the personal life of this Bible writer is not revealed, he lives up to the meaning of his name, "Servant of Jehovah." How? By heralding a devastating judgment. When Edom falls, she will be completely plundered by friends in covenant with her. Not even her wise and mighty ones will survive.—1-9.

God brings calamity upon those guilty of violence against his people. What is the reason for the Edomites' calamity? Repeated acts of violence against the sons of Ja-

cob, their brothers. As descendants of Esau, the Edomites were related to the Israelites. Yet, they are charged with plundering their kin, rejoicing maliciously in Jerusalem's fall, and climaxing this by handing survivors over to the enemy. Thus, Edom has sealed its doom.—10-16.

The House of Jacob Restored

Jehovah's promises are always reliable. In Obadiah's day, Jehovah guaranteed that His people would repossess their land and more. No longer would Israel be divided. The house of Jacob, the two-tribe kingdom of Judah, would be reunited with the house of Joseph, the ten-tribe northern kingdom, in devouring Edom as fire eats up stubble and in occupying Edom's territory. Ending on an encouraging note, Obadiah declares that the repatriated Israelites will unitedly worship their God and be his subjects. Indeed, the kingship will become Jehovah's.—17-21.

Lesson for today: Ignored warnings yield harmful fruitage. Thus, Obadiah's stark warning to Edom should reverberate in the ears of modern-day opposers of God: Those who fight against Jehovah and his people will be cut off eternally.

BIBLE TEXTS EXAMINED

o 7—In Bible times, "eating food" together with someone was virtually a covenant of friendship. How ironic! The Babylonians, "men in covenant" with the Edomites, would prove to be their destroyers. True, the Babylonians of Nebuchadnezzar's day allowed Edom a share in Judah's loot after Jerusalem was laid waste. But the later Babylonian king Nabonidus curbed once and for all the commercial and mercantile ambitions of Edom.

o 10—Edom was doomed to be "cut off to time indefinite" because of its caustic hatred and callous lack of natural affection for its brother nation, "the sons of Judah." (Verse 12) Such national extinction meant that an Edomite state with a government and a population at a specific geographical location would disappear off the face of the earth. Today, there is no identifiable people of Edomite nationality; they have "become as though they had never happened to be."—Verse 16.

AVOID calamity! Receive mercy! How? By heeding the lesson of a true story that is more than 2,800 years old—the book of Jonah. Written about 844 B.C.E. by the prophet Jonah of Galilee, it is filled with spiritual insight.

Jonah Runs Away

We should trust in Jehovah to support us in his service. However, Jonah flees a God-given task instead of relying on Jehovah to uphold him. True, his was no easy assignment. He was to warn shamelessly wicked Nineveh of divine calamity. But Jonah goes in the opposite direction, setting sail for Tarshish, now Spain. En route, a storm becomes so fierce that survival of the ship and crew seems impossible. Jonah confesses, the mariners toss him overboard, and the sea quiets. A great fish swallows the prophet.—1:1-17.

God's servants can be confident that he will answer their prayers. Inside the fish, Jonah cries to Jehovah for help, prayerfully thanks God for deliverance from a watery grave, and promises to pay what he has vowed. In time, he is vomited out onto dry land.—2:1-10.



Jonah Goes to Nineveh

Never evade an assignment from Jehovah. Apparently having learned this lesson, the once reluctant prophet preaches in "the great city." Jonah sounds a simple but pointed warning: "Only forty days more, and Nineveh will be overthrown." In a most remarkable turn of events, the Ninevites repent and avoid calamity.—3:1-10.

Man cannot limit God's mercy. Jonah's anger grows because Nineveh is spared. But by means of a plant, Jehovah teaches Jonah that He will show mercy according to His own good pleasure.—4:1-11.

Lesson for today: Calamity can be averted by heeding divine prophecy! Imitate the Ninevites. Humbly listen to Jesus Christ, a prophet greater than Jonah.—Luke 11:32.

BIBLE TEXTS EXAMINED

o 1:17—Because of its large head and gullet, the sperm whale is capable of swallowing a man. Although whales are rare in the Mediterranean, whalers once docked at Joppa. A fish known to follow ships in the Mediterranean and to eat whatever is thrown overboard is the great white shark. It too is capable of swallowing a man whole. In Jonah's case, however, God used "a great fish," perhaps a creature unknown to modern science.

o 2:1, 2—Jonah surely did not have ideal conditions for composing a poem while in "the inward parts of the fish." But he later recorded his experience. From the depth of his heart came words echo-

ing those in the Psalms that expressed his sentiments.—Compare 2:2 with Psalm 120:1 and 130:1; 2:5 with Psalm 69:1.

o 3:3—The size of Nineveh is not exaggerated. Although the walls surrounding it were only about 8 miles in circumference, the name of the city evidently included its suburbs, which may have covered a distance of some 26 miles.

o 3:10—The Hebrew word rendered "felt regret" means to "change one's mind with regard to past (or intended) action." Thus, Jehovah can 'feel regret' or change his mind about bringing punishment upon erring humans when they truly repent.

REVELATION

Its Grand Climax At Hand!

That is the title of a new book that discusses in detail the entire Bible book of Revelation. An enthusiastic reader from California writes:

"I love it! I particularly like its format. The scriptures being in bold, dark print, and the clear, crisp, understandable explanation given of *each* scripture. It makes for easy reading. I also appreciate the chapters being short. The charts and illustrations help further.

"Just think, as a housewife I can sit down and read with understanding the deep things of God. Because you took the time and care to simplify this material, we can all grow closer to our God."



Revelation
*Its Grand Climax
At Hand!*



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