

April 15, 1988

# The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



**When  
CHILDREN  
Have Children**

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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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May 16: In Our Fearful Times, Whom Can You Really Trust? Page 10. Songs to Be Used: 170, 74.

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Frederick W. Franz, President

# **When Children Have Children**

**H**E SEEMED like something out of a fairy tale," a young woman we will call Sharon recalls bitterly. "He used to tell me all the time that he loved me and that if a girlfriend of his ever got pregnant, he would never leave her."

One day Sharon visited her doctor to check out what she thought was appendicitis; it turned out that she was three months pregnant. "I called my boyfriend immediately," Sharon recalls. His reaction? "You have to get an abortion! Just get rid of it!" The fairy tale had become a nightmare.

Nearly one million teenage girls in the United States alone become pregnant each year. The United States has the dubious distinction of having the highest teen pregnancy rate among industrialized lands—the only land where the rate has increased in recent years. However, a 37-country study done by The Alan Guttmacher Institute reveals that pregnancy among unwed teenagers is a global problem.

Wrote researchers Black and DeBlassie in the journal *Adolescence*: "School-age girls who become pregnant come from all socioeconomic classes and from both public and private schools. All races, all faiths, and all parts of the country, rural and



"School-age girls who become pregnant come from all socioeconomic classes and from both public and private schools. All races, all faiths, and all parts of the country, rural and urban, are represented."—The journal *Adolescence*.

urban, are represented." As for the reason why birth rates are higher among girls from poor or minority families, the *Journal of Marriage and the Family* says: "White and higher S[ocio] E[economic] S[tatus] girls more often have abortions."

In the United States, women under 20 years of age account for a third of all legal abortions. Moral considerations aside, the decision to have an abortion often proves to be a difficult one to live with. "Believe me," recalls one woman who had an abortion while just a teenager, "it hurts to know that I was the cause of a murder, a murder for which the victim will never know how sorry I am."

## Searching for Solutions

Social stigma, unstable marriages, poverty—these are common aftermaths of a teen pregnancy. Little wonder, then, that this matter has become a focus of concern for educators, doctors, politicians, and parents. Some call for sex-education programs, even demanding that contraceptives and abortion services be made easily accessible to youths.

Nevertheless, some youths have emotional needs that sex education cannot satisfy. Some girls, for example, have actually wanted to become pregnant! As one young girl put it: "I tried to get into trouble to get the attention of my parents. I figured this

[baby] would be something that could be mine—nobody could take it and I would have a little piece of me left that would give me a reason for living."

Furthermore, sex-education programs do not give youths moral guidance. Lands such as Sweden and the Netherlands, where such programs are common, may have few teenage pregnancies but promiscuity is rampant. Could it be that, in addition to pregnancies, promiscuity incurs grave emotional, moral, and spiritual costs? If so, is there valid reason to encourage, not contraception, but chastity? In answer, let us look at what the oldest book in existence—the Bible—has to say on this matter.

# The BIBLE and Teenage Morality

"Teenagers seem to have inherited the worst of all possible worlds regarding their exposure to messages about sex: Movies, music, radio and TV tell them that sex is romantic, exciting, titillating . . . Yet, at the same time, young people get the message good girls should say no."—The Alan Guttmacher Institute.

**TODAY'S** youths have grown up in an age of moral ambiguity. The Bible, though, offers clear, unambiguous direction on sexual morality. While sex-education programs tend to focus on avoiding pregnancy, the Bible shows that premarital sex itself is the thing to be avoided. "You can be quite certain that nobody who actually indulges in fornication [which includes premarital sex] or impurity or promiscuity . . . can inherit anything of the kingdom of God," says the

Bible. (*Ephesians 5:5, The Jerusalem Bible*) Clearly, sex relations are to be confined to marriage.

The answer to the problem of teen pregnancy thus is, not teaching youths contraception, but giving them moral and spiritual guidance. The Bible makes plain whose responsibility it is to give this guidance: "Fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah."—*Ephesians 6:4*.

In one survey, though, youths were asked to "rate their parents on a scale ranging from unsatisfactory to highly satisfactory as sources of sex information. Adolescents' ratings of their mothers were mostly in the low satisfactory range. Ratings of fathers were very unsatisfactory."

Is it realistic, then, to expect parents to give their children direction on sexual matters?

### Giving Youths Moral Guidance

At Proverbs 4:1-4, King Solomon urges youths: "Listen, O sons, to the discipline of a father . . . For I proved to be a real son to my father, tender and the only one before my mother. And he would instruct me and say to me: 'May your heart keep fast hold of my words.'" It is evident that Solomon was able to discuss even intimate things with his father; Solomon himself goes on to discuss sexual immorality in a very frank manner.—Proverbs 5:1-19.

Among Jehovah's Witnesses, many families are maintaining a similarly open dialogue with their children—and with great success! They do more than simply tell their children "No!" regarding sexual relations. The Bible helps them give their children sound *reasons* for avoiding promiscuity. Consider, again, Solomon's words. At Proverbs 5:3, 4, he encourages young men to avoid sexual relations with a prostitute. "As a honeycomb the lips of a strange woman [prostitute] keep dripping, and her palate is smoother than oil." Yes, the prospect of immorality may seem quite enticing. However, warns Solomon: "The after-effect from her is as bitter as wormwood; it is as sharp as a two-edged sword."

Like Solomon, parents can reason with their children on the aftereffects of sexual relations. A troubled conscience, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS—these are bitter returns for a few moments of enticing pleasure. Solomon further exhorts youths not to "give to others [their] dignity." (Proverbs 5:9) Does it not show a lack of self-respect for a youth to give of himself or herself to someone who is not interested in marriage? Is it not humiliating to serve merely as a means of satisfying one's own or someone



*Parents can keep an ongoing dialogue with their children when it comes to sexual matters*

else's selfish passions? Parents can help their children to appreciate these facts.

Solomon gave further advice about dealing with an immoral person: "Keep your way far off from alongside her, and do not get near to the entrance of her house." (Proverbs 5:8) Similarly, parents can give youths practical advice in avoiding compromising circumstances. They can urge them not to date unprincipled individuals. And when they reach the point of being qualified to pursue courtship, they can be encouraged to take practical steps to avoid sinful conduct. For example, the courting couple might arrange for someone always to accompany them on dates. Old-fashioned? Perhaps. But it is better to take reasonable precautions than to "have to groan in your future when your flesh and

## **Jehovah's Witnesses try to instill in their children something far more influential than the fear of AIDS or of pregnancy: a healthy fear of Jehovah God**

your organism come to an end. And you will have to say: 'How I have hated discipline . . . And I have not listened to the voice of my instructors.'”—Proverbs 5:11-13.

### **Helping Youths Fear Jehovah**

According to some estimates, there are over 12 million sexually active youths in the United States alone. Even the AIDS epidemic has done little to stem this immoral tide. However, Jehovah's Witnesses try to instill in their children something far more influential than the fear of AIDS or of pregnancy: a healthy fear of Jehovah God. Solomon reminds youths at Proverbs 5:21: "For the ways of man are in front of the eyes of Jehovah, and he is contemplating all his tracks." John, one of Jehovah's Witnesses and a father of four, gives this advice: 'What helps is for children to have a loving fear of Jehovah. Don't be afraid to let your child know that Jehovah can be saddened by our selfish actions.'—Compare Proverbs 27:11.

Of course, for the fear of God to be an effective deterrent to immorality, God must be very real to a young person. (Compare Hebrews 11:27.) Parents can help their children cultivate a genuine relationship with God through a regular study of the Bible, daily prayer, and real-life experience. When a youth comes to appreciate that God cares for him, he will be moved to avoid conduct that could displease Him.—1 Peter 5:7.

Interestingly, a youth's relationship

with God can also help fill certain needs that often go unfulfilled in many other youths. Experts claim, for example, that promiscuity is commonly a youth's way to combat feelings of powerlessness or a lack of self-esteem. Such feelings, though, need not plague one who has a friendship with Jehovah! Such a youth can say: "God is my helper; Jehovah is among those supporting my soul."—Psalm 54:4.

### **A Balanced View of Sex and Marriage**

Of course, parents do not want their children to develop a prudish or negative view of sexual relations. While the Bible condemns fornication, it also shows that sexual intimacies can be quite beautiful—within the framework of marriage, that is. Using poetic language, Solomon adds: "Let your water source prove to be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth . . . Let her own breasts intoxicate you at all times. With her love may you be in an ecstasy constantly."—Proverbs 5:18, 19.

Considering this lofty view of marital relations, there is no reason for parents to feel awkward in discussing intimate matters. Says John (referred to earlier): "We always talk honestly with them, so the subject of sex is no secret. We highlight that it is a gift from the Creator, Jehovah, to be enjoyed by husband and wife at the proper time." Says another father of two teenage boys: "From their early years, we have discussed sex frankly with them. We have tried to teach them a respectful, elevated view of love and sex. We keep an ongoing dialogue." Significantly, their children have remained chaste.

**According to some estimates, there are over 12 million sexually active youths in the United States alone**

**Christian youths will avoid conduct that can ruin their relationship with God**

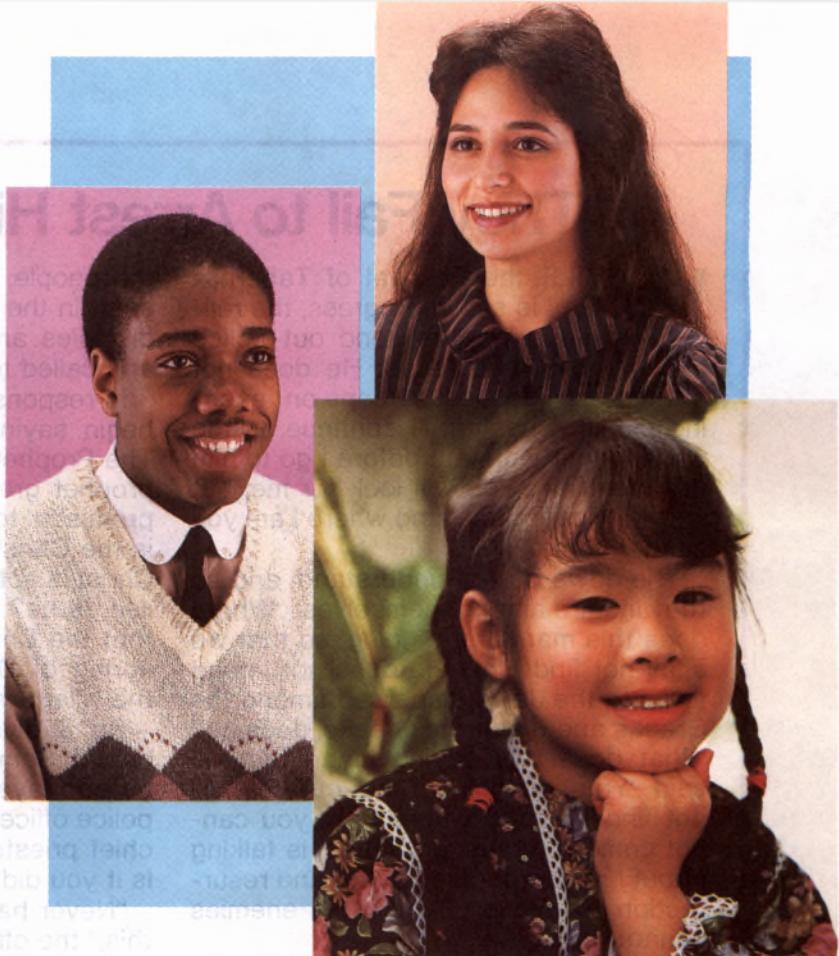
### **Making Youths "Wise for Salvation"**

"Wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse," predicted the apostle Paul. (2 Timothy 3:13) Moral standards will thus continue to decline. Teenage promiscuity and pregnancy will continue to plague society.

Godly parents will turn to the Bible so as to make their children "wise for salvation." (2 Timothy 3:15) If you realize that you yourself need instruction in the Bible, feel free to contact Jehovah's Witnesses by writing the publishers of this magazine.

They will be happy to arrange for you to receive such instruction free of charge. Jehovah's Witnesses can also provide you with publications such as the book *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It.\** This contains Scriptural information that has helped thousands of youths escape the world's immoral snares.

What, though, of girls who have already experienced the tragedy of an illegitimate pregnancy? Such situations are far from hopeless. God 'forgives in a large way' the one who is truly sorry for his course of conduct. (Isaiah 55:7) While being a single parent is not easy, one can make a success



of it by applying Bible principles. A young woman who had three out-of-wedlock children before becoming a Christian has done just that. She endeavors to apply God's Word in her family. By associating closely with a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, she has gained much comfort and support. She says: "It certainly is wonderful to serve a God who is so forgiving, and to have brothers and sisters who are so understanding. For the first time in my life, I feel clean and wholesome, spiritually and physically."

Of course, it would be best to avoid the problems of premarital sex in the first place. Happily, thousands of youths today are doing so because they follow the Bible's timeless advice.

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## They Fail to Arrest Him

**W**HILE the Festival of Tabernacles is still in progress, the religious leaders send out police officers to arrest Jesus. He does not attempt to hide. Jesus keeps on teaching publicly, saying: "I continue a little while longer with you before I go to him that sent me. You will look for me, but you will not find me, and where I am you cannot come."

The Jews do not understand, and so they inquire among themselves: "Where does this man intend going, so that we shall not find him? He does not intend to go to the Jews dispersed among the Greeks and teach the Greeks, does he? What does this saying mean that he said, 'You will look for me, but you will not find me, and where I am you cannot come'?" Jesus, of course, is talking about his approaching death and resurrection to heaven, where his enemies cannot follow.

The seventh and last day of the festival arrives. Each morning of the festival, a priest has poured out water, which he took from the pool of Siloam, so that it flowed to the base of the altar. Likely reminding the people of this daily ceremony, Jesus cries out: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He that puts faith in me, just as the Scripture has said, 'Out from his inmost part streams of living water will flow.'"

Actually, Jesus is here speaking about the grand consequences when the holy spirit would be poured out. The following year this pouring out of holy spirit occurs at Pentecost. There, streams of living water flow forth when the 120 disciples begin ministering to

the people. But until then, there is no spirit in the sense that none of Christ's disciples are anointed with holy spirit and called to heavenly life.

In response to Jesus' teaching, some begin saying: "This is for a certainty The Prophet," evidently referring to the prophet greater than Moses who was promised to come. Others say: "This is the Christ." But others protest: "The Christ is not actually coming out of Galilee, is he? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ is coming from the offspring of David, and from Bethlehem the village where David used to be?"

So a division develops among the crowd. Some want Jesus arrested, but no one lays a hand on him. When the police officers return without Jesus, the chief priests and Pharisees ask: "Why is it you did not bring him in?"

"Never has another man spoken like this," the officers reply.

Filled with anger, the religious leaders stoop to ridicule, misrepresentation, and name-calling. They sneer: "You have not been misled also, have you? Not one of the rulers or of the Pharisees has put faith in him, has he? But this crowd that does not know the Law are accursed people."

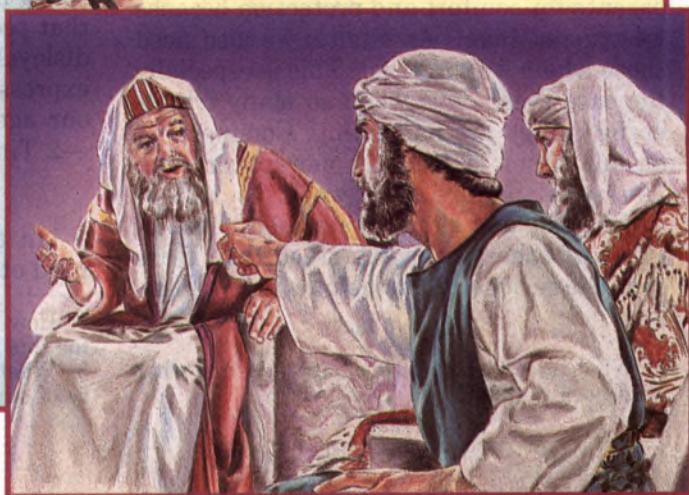
At this, Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews (that is, a member of the Sanhedrin), dares speak in Jesus' behalf. You may recall that two and a half years previously, Nicodemus came to Jesus at night and expressed faith in him. Now Nicodemus says: "Our law does not judge a man unless first it has heard from him and come to know what he is doing, does it?"



The Pharisees are angered even more that one of their own should defend Jesus. "You are not also out of Galilee, are you?" they caustically remark. "Search and see that no prophet is to be raised up out of Galilee."

Although the Scriptures do not directly say that a prophet would come out of Galilee, they do point to the Christ as coming from there, saying that "a great light" would be seen in this region. And contrary to misconceptions, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and he was an offspring of David. While the Pharisees are probably aware of this, they are likely responsible for spreading the misconceptions that people have about Jesus. **John 7:32-52; Isaiah 9:1, 2; Matthew 4:13-17.**

- ♦ What happens every morning of the festival, and how may Jesus be drawing attention to this?
- ♦ Why do the officers fail to arrest Jesus, and how do the religious leaders respond?
- ♦ Who is Nicodemus, what is his attitude toward Jesus, and how is he treated by his fellow Pharisees?
- ♦ What evidence is there that the Christ would come out of Galilee?



# In Our Fearful Times, Whom Can You Really Trust?

"Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs."

—PSALM 146:3.

**W**HEN we were children and were frightened, we went to our caring parents for comfort and protection because we trusted them. As adults, we also need those whom we can trust. This is especially the case these days when so many frightening things are happening. Commenting on our times, a German newspaper said: "As never before, the world is full of fear." Time and again, statesmen, journalists, and others have expressed their fears over the serious problems now facing mankind.

1. What is a characteristic of our time, and what need does it show?



<sup>2</sup> Such comments reflect what Jesus Christ foretold about our time when he said that it would be marked by "anguish of nations, not knowing the way out . . . while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth." (Luke 21:25, 26) The Bible foretold that in these "last days critical times hard to deal with will be here" and that people would be 'lovers of themselves, disloyal, slanderers, and betrayers.' These expressions show that one characteristic of our age would be a serious lack of trust.  
—2 Timothy 3:1-4.

## Diminishing Trust

<sup>3</sup> In these fearful times, we very much need others whom we can trust, those who

2. How were the fear and lack of trust foretold for this generation?
3. What evidence is there that trust is a casualty of our age?

will be loyal, a help in time of need. But many feel let down by the ones whom they trusted. A newspaper in one land declared: "People Don't Trust Most Public Institutions." The least trusted were political and business leaders. Distrust has increased in the family too, as evidenced by high divorce rates. In some nations, there is one divorce for every three marriages or even one for every two. In one country, 70 percent of all new marriages end in divorce within ten years! So trust is a growing casualty. Distrust is taking its place. No longer unusual is the comment of a person who said: "I don't trust anyone anymore."

<sup>4</sup> There is so much distrust because this is the most fearful time in all human history. This century has seen two world wars and scores of other wars that have taken over a hundred million lives. Now, nuclear weapons threaten to annihilate all life on earth. And this affects the trust of even the very young. A medical journal reported: "More and more children, even toddlers, are becoming frightened by the threat of nuclear holocaust." A Canadian newspaper said that there is now "a cynicism, sadness, bitterness and sense of helplessness" in many young people. One youth said: "We just don't feel protected by the adult population. We may grow up to be the most cynical generation ever."

<sup>5</sup> And what would another group of young ones say—if they could speak—about not feeling protected by adults? We mean those who are killed by abortions before they are born. One estimate puts the number of abortions worldwide at about 55 million every year. What a betrayal of the most innocent and helpless part of humanity!

<sup>6</sup> Distrust has increased because of an-

4. How are many young people affected by fear?
5. If they could talk, how might the most innocent and helpless group of young ones feel?
6. How has crime added to distrust in our time?

other growing fear in our day: the fear of becoming a victim of crime. Many now do like the woman who said that she sleeps with a revolver under her pillow. Another fearful woman said: "I resent it. . . . My grandmother never locked her doors." Thus, a newspaper editorial in Puerto Rico declared: "The ones who are imprisoned are us," yes, in our own barred and locked homes. These fears are well founded. In the United States, for example, one woman in three is likely to be assaulted during her lifetime. The surgeon general there noted that "some four million Americans fall victim to serious violence every year —murder, rape, wife-beating, child-abuse, muggings." Such crime is common in many lands, further damaging the trust that people have in others.

<sup>7</sup> In underdeveloped nations, most people live in poverty. Few trust anyone to get them out of it. The president of one such country said that in one province, out of every 1,000 babies born, 270 die before they are one year old. Only one out of every 100 houses has water. Another country's government says that 60 percent of its children are needy, and seven million abandoned children "are growing up as illiterate, alienated and unemployable outcasts." In the United States, the number of homeless youths is estimated to be 500,000, but some say the real figure is much higher. How much trust can such young ones have in their parents, in society, in law and order, or in the promises of leaders?

<sup>8</sup> Economic problems plague even wealthy nations. Recently, the United States had the largest number of bank

7. Why do bad economic conditions contribute to distrust?
8. (a) How is the stability of wealthy nations and the global economy threatened? (b) To what extent can experts be trusted to solve economic problems?

failures since the Great Depression of the 1930's. An economist wrote: "The net result is a banking system that is surely as fragile today as it was in the 1920's," just before it collapsed. An observer spoke of "a potentially devastating approaching storm" in the world economy. Another said: "The feeling of urgency comes because these strains in the international system are no longer looming; they have arrived." Can economists be trusted to guide the nations out of this trouble? One of them said that their forecasting record "is so appalling that there is no doubt they are mostly spreading confusion."

### Misplaced Optimism

<sup>9</sup> How different all of this is from the optimism that existed when the world entered the 20th century. There had been decades of comparative peace, and it was felt that peace and prosperity would reach new heights. But in 1914 World War I shattered that outlook. In 1945, after a more terrible second world war, the United Nations Charter was signed. The nations put into writing their vision of a postwar world of peace, prosperity, and justice. A recent report said: "The final document was signed by 51 countries, representing every continent, race and religion." Yet there was one religion that was not represented, nor wanted to be, Jehovah's Witnesses. They knew that those promises of peace, prosperity, and justice would not be realized by any nation of this world or by any association of them, such as the United Nations.

<sup>10</sup> That same report says: 'Forty years later it seems appropriate to review the

9. (a) What has happened to the optimism that existed at the turn of the century? (b) Why would Jehovah's Witnesses not have wanted to sign a United Nations document in 1945?

10. What is the reality today compared to the dream of the United Nations back in 1945?

realities against the ideals. The evidence is sobering. A less equitable, less secure world, and growing violence, are the realities. The population lacking food, water, shelter, health care, and education is steadily growing larger. This was not in the dream of 1945.' It adds: 'Forty years after nations joined together to ensure that all people could live in freedom from fear and want, the real world of the 1980's is one of crushing poverty for at least one quarter of humanity. Deaths related to hunger average 50,000 a day.' Yet, the nations spend over a hundred million dollars *every hour on war!*

<sup>11</sup> In view of this dismal record after centuries of opportunity, can we trust human promises to solve these problems? Such promises are about as trustworthy as the words of the captain of a large ocean liner who said: "I cannot imagine any condition which would cause a [large] ship to founder. . . . Modern shipbuilding has gone beyond that." A crew member of that vessel said to a passenger: "God himself could not sink this ship." Yet, that ship, the *Titanic*, sank in 1912 with the loss of 1,500 lives. In 1931 the National Education Association in the United States said that by means of education "crime will be virtually abolished before 1950." In 1936 a British journalist wrote that "food, clothing and shelter will cost as little as air" by 1960. Do you not agree that today's realities belie those promises?

### The One to Trust Completely

<sup>12</sup> Thus, we desperately need a source that we can trust to help us through these fearful times. That source cannot be human. Mankind has brought itself into problems so huge that it cannot get itself

11. How trustworthy are human promises of a better world?

12. Whom can we trust completely, and what guide has he given us?

out. The Source that can be completely trusted is the Creator of humans, Jehovah God. He knows why the world is in its present condition, where it is heading, and what he will do about it. He has also revealed this information in the book that he gave us for our guidance, the Bible. Of it, 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 says: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work."

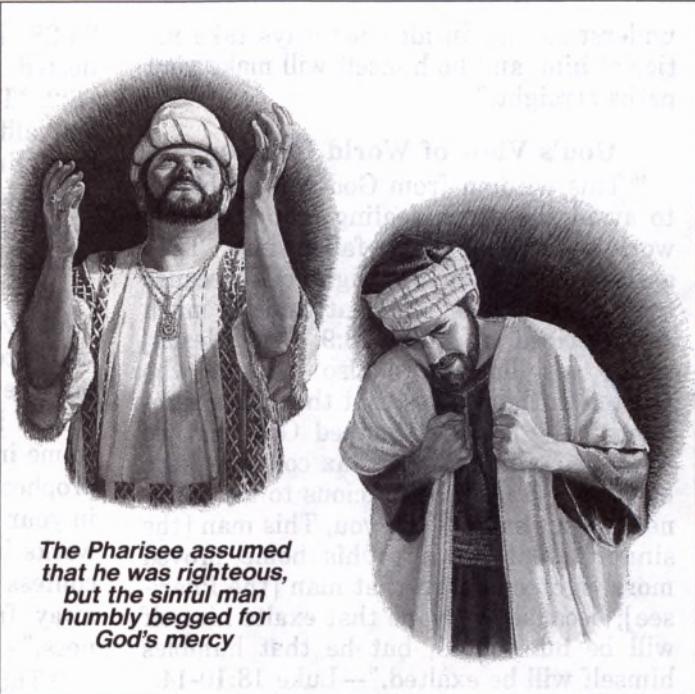
<sup>13</sup> Notice those emphatic statements. God's inspired Word sets things straight. It tells us what is right. It makes us fully competent. It equips us completely for what is good. True, many people do not accept the Bible for what it is—the Word of God. But Jehovah's Witnesses do. (1 Thessalonians 2:13) We appreciate that the Creator of this awesome universe of billions of galaxies and quintillions of stars surely has the capacity to originate a book. He has the capacity also to see that its accuracy is preserved for the benefit of truth seekers.

—1 Peter 1:25.

<sup>14</sup> In our fearful times, what does God's Word have to say about this matter of trust? Its comments harmonize completely with the actual conditions as they exist. Jeremiah 10:23 accurately says: "I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his

13. What do Jehovah's Witnesses appreciate about the Bible?

14. How does the Bible harmonize with the realities of today?



*The Pharisee assumed  
that he was righteous,  
but the sinful man  
humbly begged for  
God's mercy*

step." And Psalm 146:3 correctly urges: "Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs."

<sup>15</sup> God's Word cautions us not even to trust in ourselves because humans are imperfect. (Romans 5:12) Jeremiah 17:9 notes: "The heart is more treacherous than anything else." For this reason Proverbs 28:26 declares: "He that is trusting in his own heart is stupid, but he that is walking in wisdom is the one that will escape." Where can we find this wisdom that can provide escape? Proverbs 9:10 answers: "The fear of Jehovah is the start of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Most Holy One is what understanding is." Yes, only the Creator's wisdom can guide us through these fearful times. Thus, Proverbs 3:5, 6 counsels: "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own

15. What counsel does the Bible give us regarding trust?

understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight."

### God's View of World Religion

<sup>16</sup> This wisdom from God will enable us to avoid the death-dealing trap that this world's religions have fallen into. They assume that they are righteous because they are religious. Their attitude is much as described at Luke 18:9: "He [Jesus] spoke this illustration also to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous." A Pharisee thanked God that he was not a sinner, but a tax collector kept begging: "O God, be gracious to me a sinner." Jesus said: "I tell you, This man [the sinner] went down to his home proved more righteous than that man [the Pharisee]; because everyone that exalts himself will be humiliated, but he that humbles himself will be exalted."—Luke 18:10-14.

<sup>17</sup> The Pharisee did not humble himself before God. Instead, he felt that by his own standards he was righteous. But that is not how God viewed it. (Matthew 23:

16. What mistaken assumption do this world's religions make, as did the Pharisees in the time of Jesus?

17. How does God view the religious efforts of those like the Pharisees?

### Questions for Review

- What has contributed to distrust in our time?
- Why was this world's optimism misguided?
- Whom can we trust completely, and what guide has he given us?
- Why should we not trust in ourselves or other humans?
- How does God view this world's religions?

25-28) It was the humble sinner who reflected what God's Word says at Isaiah 66:2: "To this one, then, I shall look, to the one afflicted and contrite in spirit and trembling at my word." The Jewish religious leaders did not tremble at God's Word. They ignored it. They did what they wanted and then thought that God approved them. However, Jesus said to them: "Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?' And yet then I will confess to them: I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness."—Matthew 7:21-23.

<sup>18</sup> Those religious leaders in the first century did not trust God. Instead, they put their trust in traditions that violated God's laws. (Matthew 15:3, 9) So Jesus told them: "Your house is abandoned to you." (Matthew 23:38) As evidence that God had indeed abandoned their Jewish religion, in the year 70 of our Common Era they, their national capital, Jerusalem, and their temple were devastated by Roman armies. It is no different today. This world's religions have set their own standards of worship that do not conform to God's standards. So they are doing not his will but their own. Hence, in God's eyes, they are considered workers of lawlessness. (Titus 1:16) As proof that God has abandoned these religions, they will soon be devastated by the nations, just as Jerusalem with its temple was devastated by Roman armies in the first century. —See Revelation, chapters 17, 18.

18. How will God judge religions that claim to serve him but that do not conform to his laws?



*God condemns religions not doing his will just as he condemned Judaism in the first century when Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem*

<sup>19</sup> Is this assessment of the world's religions too severe? How can we be certain that God's judgments will shortly be against them? What must a religion do

19. What questions may be asked regarding religion?

to meet God's approval? Are there historical precedents that show that Jehovah protects those who sincerely turn to him and submit to his laws? The following article will comment on these questions.

## Make Jehovah Your Trust

"Trust in Jehovah and do good; . . . take exquisite delight in Jehovah."—PSALM 37:3, 4.

**I**N THE first century of our Common Era, the Jewish religious leaders claimed to worship God. But they did not trust in him. They broke his commandments and persecuted his representatives. (Matthew 15:3; John 15:20) As a result, 'their house was abandoned' by Jehovah. (Matthew 23:38) In 70 C.E., Roman ar-

mies devastated Jerusalem and its temple, with great loss of life to the religious leaders and their followers. But those who trusted in Jehovah were protected, for they had heeded the warnings of his spokesmen and had fled to safety.—Matthew 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24.

1, 2. (a) What happened to those who did not trust in Jehovah in the first century, and to those who did? (b) What questions may be asked about religion in our time?

<sup>2</sup> In these last days of this system of things, are this world's religions trusting in the true God, Jehovah? Are they obeying his commandments and doing his will, or are they imitating the religious leaders

of the first century whom God abandoned? Which of today's religions can expect to be protected by Jehovah because they "trust in Jehovah and do good"?—Psalm 37:3.

### Where Is the Brotherly Love?

<sup>3</sup> Not long ago, Pope John Paul II warned that "all of humanity faced grave threats to its survival." He emphasized that "those threats were best countered by joint efforts among diverse religious groups." It is God's will, he said, that religious leaders "work together" for "peace and reconciliation." However, if that is God's will, then why has God not blessed the centuries of efforts in this direction? He has not done so because these religions have not trusted in God's way to bring peace by means of his heavenly Kingdom. (Matthew 6:9, 10) Instead, they have supported the politics and wars of the nations. As a consequence, in wartime, religious people of one nation have killed religious people of another nation, even killing people of their own religion. Catholic has killed Catholic, Protestant has killed Protestant, and other religions have done the same. But do true spiritual brothers kill one another while claiming to serve God?

<sup>4</sup> Jesus set the standard for true religion when he said to his followers: "I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:34, 35) So those who practice true religion must love one another. This was "a new commandment" in that Jesus said: "Just as I have loved you, . . . you also love one

3. Why have religious efforts to bring peace failed?
4. What did Jesus say was the standard for true religion, and why was this "a new commandment"?

another." He was willing to lay down his life for his followers. They must be willing to do the same—no, not *take* the life of fellow believers, but *lay down* their own life if necessary. That was new, for such had not been required by the Mosaic Law.

<sup>5</sup> God's Word states: "If anyone makes the statement: 'I love God,' and yet is hating his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot be loving God, whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that the one who loves God should be loving his brother also." (1 John 4:20, 21) By this love, those who trust in Jehovah maintain true international unity. The apostle Paul, at 1 Corinthians 1:10, says: "I exhort you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you should all speak in agreement, and that there should not be divisions among you, but that you may be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought."—See also 1 John 3:10-12.

<sup>6</sup> *The World Book Encyclopedia* says that 55 million people were killed in World War II. They were killed by people of every major religion *except Jehovah's Witnesses*. Not one of those deaths was caused by a witness of Jehovah, for they obeyed the command to love one another and refused involvement in the wars of the nations. While many witnesses were martyred for their neutral stand, they could say as did the apostle Paul: "I am clean from the blood of all men."—Acts 20:26.

<sup>7</sup> A Catholic chaplain for the airmen who dropped the atom bombs on Japan in 1945

5. How does God's Word forcefully emphasize the need for love and unity among his true worshipers?
6. Why can Jehovah's Witnesses say that they are "clean from the blood of all men"?
- 7, 8. How do some churchmen acknowledge their bloodguilt?

stated recently: "For the last 1,700 years the church has been making war respectable. It has been inducing people to believe that it is an honorable Christian profession. This is not true. We have been brainwashed.... The gospel of the Just War is a gospel that Jesus never taught. .... There is nothing in the life or teaching of Jesus that would suggest that while it is illegitimate to incinerate people by a nuclear warhead, it is legitimate to incinerate people by napalm or flamethrower."

<sup>8</sup> The *Catholic Herald* of London stated: "The first Christians . . . took Jesus at His word and refused to be conscripted into the Roman army even if the penalty was death. Would the whole of history have been different if the Church had stuck to its original stand? . . . If the churches of today could come out with a joint condemnation of war . . . , which would mean that every member would be bound in conscience to be, like the Christians, a conscientious objector, peace might indeed be assured. But we know that this will never happen."

<sup>9</sup> Thus, the religions of this world have fatally compromised God's laws. They do not trust him any more than the Pharisees did. "They publicly declare they know God, but they disown him by their works, because they are detestable and disobedient and not approved for good work of any sort." (Titus 1:16) As a result, God has abandoned this

9. Why do we conclude that Jehovah has abandoned this world's religions?

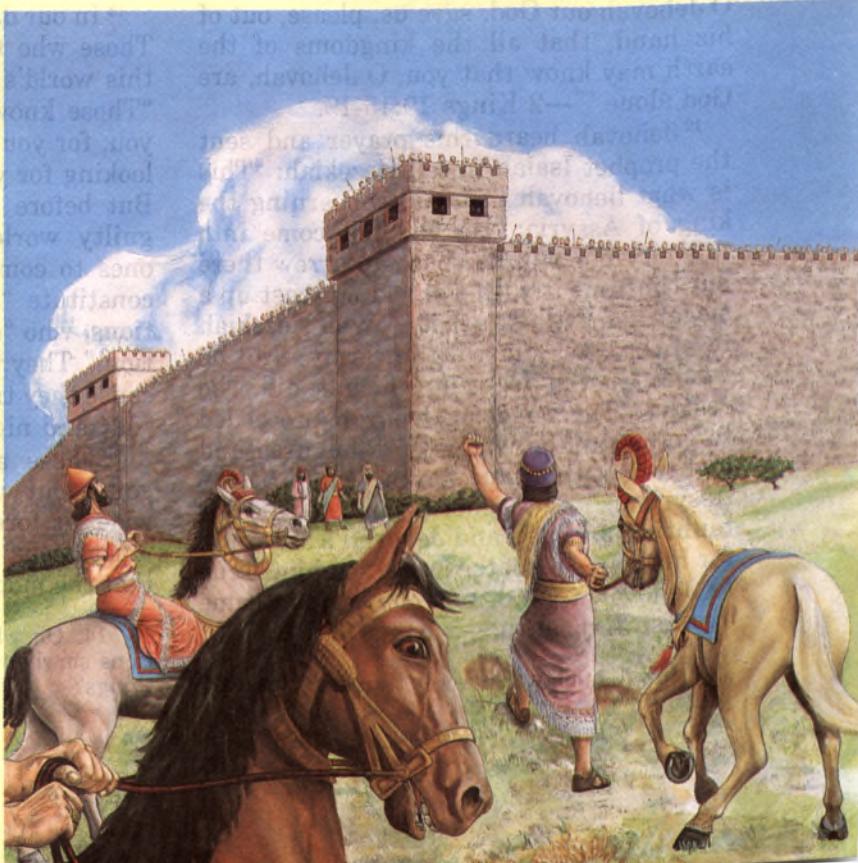
world's religions as certainly as he abandoned the hypocritical Jewish religion in the first century.—Matthew 15:9, 14.

### Survival by Trusting in Jehovah

<sup>10</sup> Do not put your trust in human solutions to this world's problems. Instead, trust the One who can fulfill his promises. (Joshua 23:14) As an example, note what happened in the eighth century before Christ, in the days of King Hezekiah of Judah. The Bible says of him: "He continued to do what was right in Jehovah's eyes." (2 Kings 18:3) During his rule, the mighty world power Assyria came against Jerusalem. Assyrian king Sennacherib's spokesman demanded Jerusalem's surrender, saying: "This is what the king has

10, 11. What did King Hezekiah do when Assyria demanded the surrender of Jerusalem, and who was Sennacherib's spokesman taunting?

*The Assyrian king's spokesman taunted Jehovah and demanded Jerusalem's surrender*



said, ‘Do not let Hezekiah deceive you people, for he is not able to deliver you out of my hand. And do not let Hezekiah cause you to trust in Jehovah.’”—2 Kings 18:29, 30.

<sup>11</sup> What did Hezekiah do? The Bible states: “Hezekiah began to pray before Jehovah and say: ‘O Jehovah the God of Israel, sitting upon the cherubs, you alone are the true God of all the kingdoms of the earth. You yourself have made the heavens and the earth. Incline your ear, O Jehovah, and hear. Open your eyes, O Jehovah, and see, and hear the words of Sennacherib that he has sent to taunt the living God. . . .’

O Jehovah our God, save us, please, out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Jehovah, are God alone.’”—2 Kings 19:15-19.

<sup>12</sup> Jehovah heard this prayer and sent the prophet Isaiah to tell Hezekiah: “This is what Jehovah has said concerning the king of Assyria: ‘He will not come into this city nor will he shoot an arrow there nor confront it with a shield nor cast up a siege rampart against it.’” Was Hezekiah to oppose Assyria with an army? No, he was to trust in Jehovah, which he did. The result? “The angel of Jehovah proceeded to go out and strike down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians.” Sennacherib himself paid for taunting Jehovah and Jehovah’s servants, for his own sons later murdered him. True to Jehovah’s word, not one weapon came against Jerusalem.—2 Kings 19:32-37.

## 12. How did Jehovah answer Hezekiah’s prayer?



*In the new world,  
those who trust in  
Jehovah will enjoy  
complete peace  
and security*

<sup>13</sup> In our day a similar thing will happen. Those who trust in Jehovah will survive this world’s taunts and this world’s end. “Those knowing your name will trust in you, for you will certainly not leave those looking for you, O Jehovah.” (Psalm 9:10) But before Jehovah executes this blood-guilty world, he invites honesthearted ones to come to him for security. These constitute “a great crowd” from all nations, who “come out of the great tribulation.” They survive this system’s end because they trust in Jehovah and serve him “day and night.”—Revelation 7:9-15.

<sup>14</sup> These are answering the call now going out with increasing force worldwide, as foretold at Isaiah 2:2, 3: “And it must occur in the final part of the days that the mountain of the house of Jehovah

<sup>13, 14.</sup> On what basis will people from all nations survive the end of this present system of things?

[his true worship] will become firmly established . . . And many peoples will certainly go and say: 'Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, . . . and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths.' " Verse 4 says: "And they will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore."

<sup>15</sup> Who, in our time, 'turn their swords into plowshares'? Who 'do not learn war anymore'? Who have unbreakable love for their spiritual brothers and sisters all over the earth and unity with them? Who really trust in Jehovah and invite others to do the same? The facts of our time show that the answer can only be: Jehovah's Witnesses. They, like Hezekiah, trust in Jehovah with all their heart and demonstrate it by keeping his commandments.

### A Bright Future

<sup>16</sup> To those who trust in him, Jehovah offers the brightest future imaginable when he replaces this old world society with his new one. In the new world here

15. Who are fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 2:2-4, and how?

16, 17. What bright future does Jehovah offer to those who trust in him?

## In Our Next Issue

- How to Be a Successful Parent
- Jehovah Does Not Forsake His Servants
- The Sixth World Power—Rome!

on earth, there will be no fear or distrust, no poverty, injustice, or crime. No longer will people be slaughtered in wars or by abortions. Revelation 21:4 even promises that "death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore."

<sup>17</sup> In time, earth will become a paradise as Jesus promised. (Luke 23:43) And since even death will be abolished, those who trust in Jehovah will be able to live forever in Paradise. Completely fulfilled will be Micah 4:4: "They will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble." Imagine living in a society where everyone you meet will be someone you can trust! Why will that be so? Because, as Isaiah 54:13 says: "All your sons will be persons taught by Jehovah, and the peace of your sons will be abundant."

<sup>18</sup> However, even now millions of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide reap benefits by trusting in Jehovah. For instance, because of obeying Jehovah's laws and principles, Jehovah's servants are free from lung cancer caused by smoking tobacco. Because of living in a morally clean environment, they are generally not endangered by the worldwide epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS. Their not abusing drugs guards them greatly against mind-damaging and death-dealing afflictions that many drug abusers have. And since they do not take blood transfusions, they avoid the deadly diseases that are transmitted through blood, including hepatitis, which kills or permanently injures ten thousand blood recipients each year in the United States alone.

<sup>19</sup> Even if some of those who now trust in Jehovah should die because of old age,

18. What benefits do those who trust in Jehovah reap even now?

19. How will Jehovah rescue those who serve him even if they die now?

sickness, or an accident, Jehovah will rescue them. He will redeem them by means of the resurrection. Thus, the apostle Paul encouraged us to "have our trust, not in ourselves, but in the God who raises up the dead."—2 Corinthians 1:9.

### Jehovah Upholds His Servants

<sup>20</sup> Keep in mind that "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one," Satan the Devil. (1 John 5:19) So if you trust in God, you will be opposed by Satan and his world. They will try to damage your trust by ridicule or persecution, as was the case with Jesus. After he was nailed to the torture stake, "passersby began speaking abusively of him, wagging their heads and saying: . . . 'If you are a son of God, come down off the torture stake!' In like manner also the chief priests with the scribes and older men began making fun of him and saying: 'Others he saved; himself he cannot save! . . . He has put his trust in God; let Him now rescue him if He wants him.'"—Matthew 27:39-43.

<sup>21</sup> Three days later, God indeed rescued Jesus by resurrecting him from the dead. That generation of mockers, however, were killed or enslaved by Roman armies. Since Christ as King of God's heavenly Kingdom will oversee the resurrection, if those mockers come back from the dead, they will have to submit to the One they mocked two thousand years ago! Yes, Jehovah vindicates his servants, who say: "In God I have put my trust. I shall not be afraid. What can earthling man do to me?"—Psalm 56:11.

<sup>22</sup> Regarding his servants, Jehovah de-

20, 21. (a) What opposition can we expect, as evidenced by what happened to Jesus? (b) How does Jehovah vindicate his people, as he did Jesus?

22. What does Jehovah declare regarding those who trust in him, and those who do not?

clare: "Blessed is the able-bodied man who puts his trust in Jehovah, and whose confidence Jehovah has become. And he will certainly become like a tree planted by the waters, that sends out its roots right by the watercourse; and he will not see when heat comes, but his foliage will actually prove to be luxuriant. And in the year of drought he will not become anxious, nor will he leave off from producing fruit." But Jehovah also declares: "Cursed is the able-bodied man who puts his trust in earthling man and actually makes flesh his arm, and whose heart turns away from Jehovah himself. And he will certainly become like a solitary tree in the desert plain and will not see when good comes."—Jeremiah 17:5-8.

<sup>23</sup> Thus, in these critical times, "trust in Jehovah and do good; reside in the earth, and deal with faithfulness. Also take exquisite delight in Jehovah, and he will give you the requests of your heart." (Psalm 37:3, 4) May your fulfilled requests include the gift of everlasting life in the righteous new world, promised by the God in whom we trust.

23. What must we do if we want everlasting life?

### Questions for Review

- What standard must be observed by those who trust in Jehovah?
- Do this world's religions teach trust in Jehovah?
- How was King Hezekiah's trust in Jehovah vindicated?
- In our day, how is the prophecy of Isaiah 2:2-4 fulfilled?
- What future will be realized by those who trust in Jehovah?

# Insight on the News

## Foretold Violence

"Adolescents are becoming a lot more violent than they were years ago," notes James Fox, criminologist at Northeastern University. "I see a real change in the type of youngster we are getting," states Faye Harrison, a Michigan judge. "Much harder, much quicker (to violence), much deeper into serious delinquency at an earlier age." In fact, teenagers in a rage are "responsible for about 300 paricides (the murder of a parent) by adolescents yearly," reports the *Detroit Free Press*.

Why the increase in violence among today's youth? Fox cites greater access to weapons, television violence, and "generally, less respect for authority," according to *USA Today*. Focusing on parents, David Ramirez, a Denver judge, believes that "traditional values and concepts of respect are not being passed on to children and many parents seem to have a lack of commitment to their youngsters," notes *The Denver Post*.

Most timely are the words written by the apostle Paul when, centuries ago, he foretold "that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, . . . disobedient to parents, . . . having no natural affection, . . . without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness." (2 Timothy 3:1-3) Christians can guard against intrusion of such attitudes by building loving family relationships, as indicated in such Bi-

ble passages as Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Colossians 3:12-14, 18-21.

## Paying the Price

"We don't read the Bible and don't know what is in it," says American pollster George Gallup, Jr. "We are paying for this and suffering accordingly in the divorce rate, child abuse, drug misuse, and cheating and dishonesty at all levels of society." According to the Gallup poll, 40 percent of Americans are in church on Sunday and about 80 percent get married in church, yet the divorce rate has tripled since 1960, the number of unmarried couples living together has increased nearly fivefold, and illegitimacy has nearly quadrupled. Abortions tripled between 1972 and 1979.

Pointing squarely to the root of the problem, Gallup observed: "Clearly the churches are not penetrating to the basic level of inculcating values. We are living religion on a very superficial level. It is not life-changing and redirecting. Nor is it biblically based."

Yet Christianity *should* be life-changing, redirecting and Bible based. Originally it was. Early Christians were taught to "put away the old personality." Paul wrote: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons . . . will inherit God's kingdom. And yet that is what some of you were." —Ephesians 4:22; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

## "The First Man Was a Man"

Some evolutionists claim that evolution is "one hundred percent" believable and that it is "a theory one can verify in a laboratory." But at the Second International Congress of Human Paleontology, recently held at Turin, Italy, it was clear that many scientists still have misgivings on the matter.

Instead of confirming that evolution is "one hundred percent" believable, the congress apparently exposed major differences of opinion between scientists over when and how man evolved. Paleontologist Bernard Vandermeersch, for example, underscored the fact that, as far as man's origins are concerned, the results of paleontology "contradict the data furnished by genetics," which point to one common ancestor.

However, such contradictions exist only among persons who fail to accept the simple truth that God "made out of one man every nation of men, to dwell upon the entire surface of the earth." (Acts 17:26) How did he do so? Genesis 2:7 tells us that "God proceeded to form the man out of dust from the ground and to blow into his nostrils the breath of life," causing man to become "a living soul."

Not surprisingly, biologist Giuseppe Sermonti, commenting on the conclusions of the congress, conceded that "all attempts to get us to descend from the trees of the apes have produced no interesting results. The first man was a man."

# Greece

## The Fifth Great World Power

Like a speedy, winged leopard, Alexander came out of Greece to conquer Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), Palestine, Egypt, and the Medo-Persian empire all the way to the edge of India. Would you like to know more about this exceptional conqueror and what the Bible said about him?

**A**T THE age of only 20, young Alexander inherited the throne of Macedon. Two years later, following his father Philip's plan, Alexander set out on a war of revenge against the mighty Persians, whose empire lay to the east. Before he stopped, Alexander had conquered the world of his day.

This dashing young military strategist swept through Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Babylonia, and the entire Medo-Persian empire as far as the threshold of ancient India! Reckoned as perhaps the greatest general of ancient times, he is known today as Alexander the Great.

In a surprisingly short time, Greece had become the fifth of the world powers of Bible history—larger than any that had preceded it. How did such a thing happen? How does it relate to God's Word? What does it mean to you?

### Foretold in Bible Prophecy

Two hundred years before Alexander's time, when Babylon held sway and the Medes and the Persians had not yet become the world power, Jehovah's prophet Daniel was given two great prophetic visions that outlined future world history. Then, after Babylon fell, he received a third prophecy regarding things that would occur long after his time. Daniel wrote them down. These prophecies, which did not begin fulfillment until some two centuries afterward, contain specific information about things that would happen to Alexander and to his kingdom.

What was revealed to Daniel? You can find the prophecies in the Bible book of Daniel, written about the year 536 B.C.E. In brief, these are the things that he saw as they related to the fifth world power, Greece:

In the first prophetic vision, Greece was represented as a leopard equipped for fast movement. "It had four wings of a flying creature on its back. . . . And there was given to it rulership indeed."—Daniel 7:6.

In the second prophetic vision, a male goat was seen "coming from the sunset [the west] upon the surface of the whole earth," moving with such speed that "it was not touching the earth." It came all the way to the two-horned ram that the angel said "stands for the kings of Media and Persia." The male goat "proceeded to strike down the ram and to break its two horns." Daniel was told: "The hairy he-goat stands for the king of Greece."—Daniel 8:5-8, 20, 21.

In the third instance, Daniel was told that a king of "Persia . . . will rouse up everything against the kingdom of Greece. And a mighty king will certainly stand up and rule with extensive dominion and do according to his will."—Daniel 11:2, 3.

What did these symbolisms mean? Did these things happen the way Daniel had been told they would? Let us see.

## The Prophecies Fulfilled

In the spring of the year 334 B.C.E., Alexander entered Asia at the Dardanelles (the ancient Hellespont) with some 30,000 foot soldiers and 5,000 cavalrymen. With the speed of a symbolic four-winged leopard or of a goat that seemed not to touch the ground, he swept through the domains of the Persian empire—50 times the size of his own kingdom! Would he “rule with extensive dominion and do according to his will”? History answers.

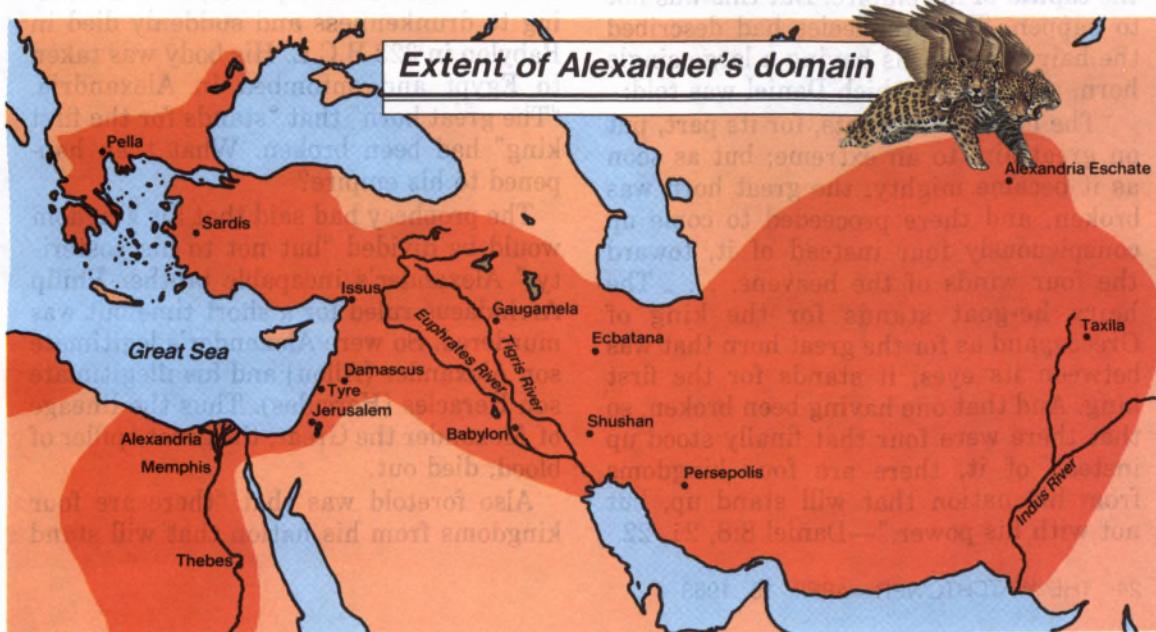
At the Granicus River in the northwest corner of Asia Minor (modern Turkey) Alexander won his first battle against the Persians. That winter he conquered western Asia Minor. The following autumn at Issus in the southeastern corner of Asia Minor, he utterly defeated a Persian army estimated at half a million men, and the great king, Darius III of Persia, fled, abandoning his family to Alexander's hands.

Rather than pursuing the fleeing Persians, Alexander marched southward along the Mediterranean coast, conquering the bases used by the powerful Persian fleet. The island city of Tyre resisted for

seven months. Finally, using the rubble of the old mainland city that Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed, Alexander built a causeway out to the island city. Remains of that causeway are visible today, bearing out the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy that the dust of Tyre would be pitched into the sea.—Ezekiel 26:4, 12.

Sparing Jerusalem, which surrendered to him, Alexander pushed south, conquering Gaza and enlarging his “extensive dominion” and doing “according to his will” in Egypt, where he was greeted as a deliverer. At Memphis he sacrificed to the Apis bull, thus pleasing the Egyptian priests. He also founded the city of Alexandria, which later rivaled Athens as a center of learning and which still bears his name.

All the objectives of Philip's plan had been met and exceeded, but Alexander was far from through. Like a fast-moving he-goat, he turned back northeast, through Palestine and on up toward the Tigris River. There, in the year 331 B.C.E., he engaged the Persians at Gaugamela, not far from the crumbling ruins of the former Assyrian capital, Nineveh. Alexander's



47,000 men overpowered a reorganized Persian army of 1,000,000. Darius III fled and was later murdered by his own people.

Flushed with victory, Alexander turned south and took the Persian winter capital, Babylon. He also occupied the capitals at Susa and Persepolis, seizing the immense Persian treasury and burning the great palace of Xerxes. Finally, the capital at Ecbatana fell to him. This speedy conqueror then subdued the rest of the Persian domain, going as far to the east as the Indus River in modern-day Pakistan. Unquestionably, Greece had become the fifth of the great world powers in Bible history.

Alexander's conquest also spread the Greek language and culture throughout this vast realm. With Greek colonies established in conquered lands, the common Koine Greek became the international language of that day. It was the language later used to record the Christian Greek Scriptures of the Bible.

### Alexander's Kingdom Divided

Alexander wanted to rebuild Babylon as the capital of his empire. But this was not to happen. The prophecies had described the hairy he-goat as having a large single horn, concerning which Daniel was told:

"The male of the goats, for its part, put on great airs to an extreme; but as soon as it became mighty, the great horn was broken, and there proceeded to come up conspicuously four instead of it, toward the four winds of the heavens. . . . The hairy he-goat stands for the king of Greece; and as for the great horn that was between its eyes, it stands for the first king. And that one having been broken, so that there were four that finally stood up instead of it, there are four kingdoms from his nation that will stand up, but not with his power."—Daniel 8:8, 21, 22.



Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

*Coastline near modern-day Alexandria*

"When he will have stood up, his kingdom will be broken and be divided toward the four winds of the heavens, but not to his posterity and not according to his dominion with which he had ruled; because his kingdom will be uprooted, even for others than these."—Daniel 11:4.

As the Bible predicted, Alexander's enjoyment of world rulership was short-lived. At the very height of his victorious career, at the age of only 32, Alexander's ruthless conquests came to an end. Stricken with malarial fever, he continued feasting to drunkenness and suddenly died in Babylon in 323 B.C.E. His body was taken to Egypt and entombed in Alexandria. "The great horn" that "stands for the first king" had been broken. What then happened to his empire?

The prophecy had said that his kingdom would be divided "but not to his posterity." Alexander's incapable brother Philip Arrhidæus ruled for a short time but was murdered. So were Alexander's legitimate son Alexander (Allou) and his illegitimate son Heracles (Hercules). Thus the lineage of Alexander the Great, the great spiller of blood, died out.

Also foretold was that "there are four kingdoms from his nation that will stand

up, but not with his power" and that his kingdom would be "divided toward the four winds of the heavens, but . . . not according to his dominion with which he had ruled." Did this happen?

In course of time, Alexander's vast empire was divided among four of his generals: (1) General Cassander—Macedonia and Greece. (2) General Lysimachus—Asia Minor and European Thrace. (3) General Seleucus Nicator—Babylonia, Media, Syria, Persia and the eastern provinces to the Indus River. (4) General Ptolemy Lagus—Egypt, Libya, and Palestine. As prophesied, from Alexander's one great kingdom arose four Hellenic, or Grecianized, kingdoms.\*

The longest-lasting of these was the Ptolemaic kingdom in Egypt. It fell to Rome in 30 B.C.E., whereupon Rome replaced Greece and became the sixth of the great world powers.

\* The tumultuous events that followed the division of Alexander's empire were predicted in the prophecy of "the king of the north" and "the king of the south." This prophecy, recorded in Daniel chapter 11, is discussed in detail on pages 229-48 of the book *"Your Will Be Done on Earth,"* published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

## Brighter Prospects Ahead for Mankind

Were oppressive world powers to continue in succession indefinitely? No, for the Bible tells us that we are living near the end of the last one of them.—Revelation 17:10.

After viewing these beastlike human governments, Daniel saw something different. He was given an outstanding vision into the very heavens, where he saw "the Ancient of Days," God himself, giving the Kingdom, not to some future grasping human leader, but to "someone like a son of man"—to the resurrected, heavenly Jesus Christ!—Daniel 7:9, 10, 13.

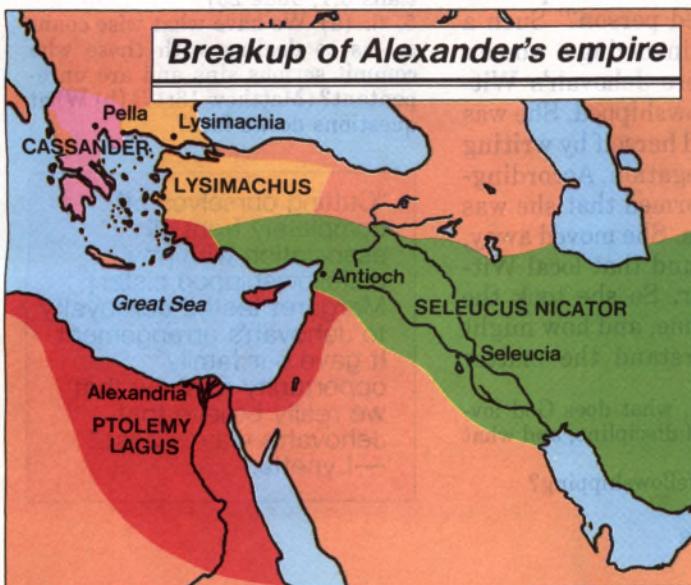
What a contrast! How different that heavenly Kingdom and its rulership was to be from those of earth's former warring human kings. Daniel said of this exalted heavenly "son of man": "To him there were given rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him. His rulership is an indefinitely lasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be brought to ruin." (Daniel 7:14) It was to be a Kingdom of peace and righteousness.

—Isaiah 9:6, 7.

As we look back on the greed and violence of human rule, how happy we can be to know that this heavenly Kingdom has already been established and that its righteous earth-wide rule is near!—Revelation 12:10, 12.

"For the vision is yet for the appointed time, and it keeps panting on to the end, and it will not tell a lie. Even if it should delay, keep in expectation of it; for it will without fail come true. It will not be late."

—Habakkuk 2:3.



# Discipline That Can Yield Peaceable Fruit

"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.

**T**HINK back to your childhood days. Can you recall your parents disciplining you? Most of us can. The apostle Paul used that as an illustration when commenting on discipline from God, as we read at Hebrews 12:9-11.

<sup>2</sup> God's fatherly discipline, which can affect our spiritual lives, can take many forms. One is his arrangement to exclude from the Christian congregation a person who no longer wants to live by God's standards, or who refuses to do so. A person who is thus strongly chastised or disciplined may repent and turn around. In the process, the congregation of loyal ones are also disciplined in that they learn the importance of conforming to God's high standards.—1 Timothy 1:20.

<sup>3</sup> 'But,' someone may ask, 'is it not harsh to expel and then refuse to talk with the expelled person?' Such a view surfaced in a recent court case involving a woman who was raised by parents who were Jehovah's Witnesses. Her parents had been disfellowshipped. She was not, but she voluntarily disassociated herself by writing a letter withdrawing from the congregation. Accordingly, the congregation was simply informed that she was no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses. She moved away, but years later she returned and found that local Witnesses would not converse with her. So she took the matter to court. What was the outcome, and how might this affect you? In order to understand the matter

1, 2. (a) According to Hebrews 12:9-11, what does God lovingly provide? (b) What is one example of discipline, and what can result from this?

3. How do some react to the idea of disfellowshipping?

properly, let us see what the Bible says about the related subject of disfellowshipping.

## Why This Firm Stand?

<sup>4</sup> Most true Christians loyally support God and his righteous laws. (1 Thessalonians 1:2-7; Hebrews 6:10) Occasionally, though, a person deviates from the path of truth. For example, despite help from Christian elders, he may unrepentantly violate God's laws. Or he may reject the faith by teaching false doctrine or by disassociating himself from the congregation. Then what should be done? Such things occurred even while the apostles were alive; hence, let us see what they wrote about this.

<sup>5</sup> When a man in Corinth was unrepentantly immoral, Paul told the congregation: "Quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that is a forni-

4. What occasionally occurs with some in the congregation? (Galatians 6:1; Jude 23)

5, 6. (a) We have what wise counsel as to dealing with those who commit serious sins and are unrepentant? (Matthew 18:17) (b) What questions do we face?

"Cutting ourselves off completely from all association with [my disfellowshipped sister] Margaret tested our loyalty to Jehovah's arrangement. It gave our family opportunity to show that we really believe that Jehovah's way is best." —Lynette.

cator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man." (1 Corinthians 5:11-13) The same was to occur with apostates, such as Hymenaeus: "As for a man that promotes a sect, reject him after a first and a second admonition; knowing that such a man has been turned out of the way and is sinning." (Titus 3:10, 11; 1 Timothy 1:19, 20) Such shunning would be appropriate, too, for anyone who rejects the congregation: "They went out from us, but they were not of our sort; for if they had been of our sort, they would have remained with us. But they went out that it might be shown up that not all are of our sort." —1 John 2:18, 19.

<sup>6</sup> Hopefully, such a one will repent so that he can be accepted back. (Acts 3:19) But meanwhile, may Christians have limited fellowship with him, or is strict avoidance necessary? If so, why?

### Cut Off Thoroughly?

<sup>7</sup> Christians do not hold themselves aloof from people. We have normal contacts with neighbors, workmates, schoolmates, and others, and witness to them even if some are 'fornicators, greedy persons, extortioners, or idolaters.' Paul wrote that we cannot avoid them completely, 'otherwise we would have to get out of the world.' He directed that it was to be different, though, with "a brother" who lived like that: "Quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that [has returned to such ways], not even eating with such a man." —1 Corinthians 5:9-11; Mark 2:13-17.

<sup>8</sup> In the apostle John's writings, we find similar counsel that emphasizes how thoroughly Christians are to avoid such ones: "Everyone that pushes ahead and does not

7. How would our conduct differ as to two classes of sinners?

8. What advice did the apostle John provide on shunning?

remain in the teaching of the Christ does not have God . . . If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, never receive him into your homes or say a greeting to him. For he that says a greeting [Greek, *khai'ro*] to him is a sharer in his wicked works."\* —2 John 9-11.

<sup>9</sup> Why is such a firm stand appropriate even today? Well, reflect on the severe cutting off mandated in God's Law to Israel. In various serious matters, willful violators were executed. (Leviticus 20:10; Numbers 15:30, 31) When that happened, others, even relatives, could no longer speak with the dead lawbreaker. (Leviticus 19:1-4; Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 17:1-7) Though loyal Israelites back then were normal humans with emotions like ours, they knew that God is just and loving and that his Law protected their moral and spiritual cleanliness. So they could accept that his arrangement to cut off wrongdoers was fundamentally a good and right thing.—Job 34:10-12.

<sup>10</sup> We can be just as sure that God's arrangement that Christians refuse to fellowship with someone who has been expelled for unrepentant sin is a wise protection for us. "Clear away the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, according as you are free from ferment." (1 Corinthians 5:7) By also avoiding persons who have deliberately disassociated themselves, Christians are protected from possible critical,

\* John here used *khai'ro*, which was a greeting like "good day" or "hello." (Acts 15:23; Matthew 28:9) He did not use *a-spa'zo-mai* (as in verse 13), which means "to enfold in the arms, thus to greet, to welcome" and may have implied a very warm greeting, even with an embrace. (Luke 10:4; 11:43; Acts 20:1, 37; 1 Thessalonians 5:26) So the direction at 2 John 11 could well mean not to say even "hello" to such ones.—See *The Watchtower* of July 15, 1985, page 31.

9, 10. (a) What happened to unrepentant lawbreakers in Israel, and why? (b) How should we feel about the arrangement today for dealing with persons expelled for unrepentant sin? (2 Peter 2:20-22)

unappreciative, or even apostate views.  
—Hebrews 12:15, 16.

### What About Relatives?

<sup>11</sup> God certainly realizes that carrying out his righteous laws about cutting off wrongdoers often involves and affects relatives. As mentioned above, when an Israelite wrongdoer was executed, no more family association was possible. In fact, if a son was a drunkard and a glutton, his parents were to bring him before the judges, and if he was unrepentant, the parents were to share in the just executing of him, ‘to clear away what is bad from the midst of Israel.’ (Deuteronomy 21:18-21) You can appreciate that this would not have been easy for them. Imagine, too, how the wrongdoer’s brothers, sisters, or grandparents felt. Yet, their putting loyalty to their righteous God before family affection could be lifesaving for them.

<sup>12</sup> Recall the case of Korah, a leader in rebellion against God’s leadership through Moses. In his perfect justice, Jehovah saw that Korah had to die. But all loyal ones were advised: “Turn aside, please, from before the tents of these wicked men and do not touch anything that belongs to them, that you may not be swept away in all their sin.” Relatives who would not accept God’s warning died with the rebels. But some of Korah’s relatives wisely chose to be loyal to Jehovah, which saved their lives and led to future blessings.—Numbers 16:16-33; 26:9-11; 2 Chronicles 20:19.

<sup>13</sup> Cutting off from the Christian congregation does not involve immediate death, so family ties continue. Thus, a man who is disfellowshipped or who disassociates himself may still live at home with his Christian

11, 12. (a) What was the effect on Israelite relatives when a wrongdoer was cut off? (b) Illustrate the benefits of obedience.

13. How will loyal Christians respond if an immediate family member is disfellowshipped or he disassociates himself?

wife and faithful children. Respect for God’s judgments and the congregation’s action will move the wife and children to recognize that by his course, he altered the spiritual bond that existed between them. Yet, since his being disfellowshipped does not end their blood ties or marriage relationship, normal family affections and dealings can continue.

<sup>14</sup> The situation is different if the disfellowshipped or disassociated one is a relative living outside the immediate family circle and home. It might be possible to have almost no contact at all with the relative. Even if there were some family matters requiring contact, this certainly would be kept to a minimum, in line with the divine principle: “Quit mixing in company with *anyone* called a brother that is a fornicator or a greedy person [or guilty of another gross sin], . . . not even eating with such a man.”—1 Corinthians 5:11.

<sup>15</sup> Understandably, this may be difficult because of emotions and family ties, such as grandparents’ love for their grandchildren. Yet, this is a test of loyalty to God, as stated by the sister quoted on page 26. Anyone who is feeling the sadness and pain that the disfellowshipped relative has thus caused may find comfort and be encouraged by the example set by some of Korah’s relatives.

—Psalm 84:10-12.\*

### The Court Decision

<sup>16</sup> You may want to know the outcome of

\* For a discussion of a relative’s being disfellowshipped, see *The Watchtower* of September 15, 1981, pages 26-31.

14. What divine advice should influence our contact with a disfellowshipped or disassociated relative outside our immediate family circle?

15. How can relatives control the influence of emotions in such instances? (Psalm 15:1-5; Mark 10:29, 30)

16-18. What decision was reached in the court case mentioned earlier, and what added opinion did the court offer?

the court case involving a woman who was upset because former acquaintances would not converse with her after she chose to reject the faith, disassociating herself from the congregation.

<sup>17</sup> Before the case went to trial, a federal district court summarily granted judgment against her. That judgment was based on the concept that courts do not get involved in church disciplinary matters. She then appealed. The unanimous judgment of the federal court of appeals\* was based on broader grounds of First Amendment (of the U.S. Constitution) rights: "Because the practice of shunning is a part of the faith of the Jehovah's Witness, we find that the 'free exercise' provision of the United States Constitution . . . precludes [her] from prevailing. The defendants have a constitutionally protected privilege to engage in the practice of shunning. Accordingly, we affirm" the earlier judgment of the district court.

<sup>18</sup> The court opinion continued: "Shunning is a practice engaged in by Jehovah's Witnesses pursuant to their interpretation of canonical text, and we are not free to reinterpret that text . . . The defendants are entitled to the free exercise of their religious beliefs . . . Courts generally do not scrutinize closely the relationship among members (or former members) of a church. Churches are afforded great latitude when they impose discipline on members or former members. We agree with [former U.S. Supreme Court] Justice Jackson's view that '[r]eligious activities which concern only members of the faith are and ought to be free—as nearly absolutely free as anything can be.' . . . The members of the Church [she] decided to abandon have concluded that they no longer want to associate with her. We hold that they are free to make that choice."

\* 819 F.2d 875 (9th Cir. 1987).

<sup>19</sup> The court of appeals acknowledged that even if the woman felt distress because former acquaintances chose not to converse with her, "permitting her to recover for intangible or emotional injuries would unconstitutionally restrict the Jehovah's Witnesses free exercise of religion . . . The constitutional guarantee of the free exercise of religion requires that society tolerate the type of harms suffered by [her] as a price well worth paying to safeguard the right of religious difference that all citizens enjoy." This decision has, in a sense, received even more weight since it was handed down. How so? The woman later petitioned the highest court in the land to hear the case and possibly overturn the decision against her. But in November 1987, the United States Supreme Court refused to do so.

<sup>20</sup> Hence, this important case determined that a disfellowshipped or disassociated person cannot recover damages from Jehovah's Witnesses in a court of law for being shunned.\* Since the congregation was responding to the perfect directions that all of us can read in God's Word and applying it, the person is feeling a loss brought on by his or her own actions.

### Discipline—Many Benefit

<sup>21</sup> Some outsiders, upon hearing about disfellowshipping, are inclined to sympathize with a wrongdoer who can no longer converse with members of the Christian congregation. But is not such sympathy misplaced? Consider the potential benefit that the wrongdoer and others may receive.

\* Though various individuals have brought suit, no court has rendered a judgment against Jehovah's Witnesses over their Bible-based practice of shunning.

19, 20. Why is a person who is cut off from the congregation not in position to recover monetary damages in court?

21. Why is balance needed in viewing disfellowshipping?

<sup>22</sup> For example, on page 26 we noted Lynette's comment about her choice 'to cut herself off completely from all association' with her disfellowshipped sister Margaret. She and her Christian relatives 'believed that Jehovah's way is best.' And it is!

<sup>23</sup> Lynette's sister later told her: 'If you had viewed the disfellowshipping lightly, I know that I would not have taken steps toward reinstatement as soon as I did. Being totally cut off from loved ones and from close contact with the congregation created a strong desire to repent. I realized just how wrong my course was and how serious it was to turn my back on Jehovah.'

<sup>24</sup> In another case, Laurie's parents were disfellowshipped. Yet she says: 'My association with them never stopped but increased. As time went on, I became more and more inactive. I got to the point of not even attending meetings.' Then she read material in *The Watchtower* of September 1 and 15, 1981, that stressed the counsel of 1 Corinthians 5:11-13 and 2 John 9-11. "It was as if a light bulb were turned on in me," she writes. 'I knew I would have to make some changes. I now better understand the meaning of Matthew 10:34-36. My decision was not an easy one for my family to swallow, for my son, five, is the only boy, and they love him dearly.' It is hoped that los-

22, 23. Illustrate the importance and value of obeying God in our view of disfellowshipped persons.

24. How did one sister's response to disfellowshipping affect her and others?

### Points to Remember

- In what ways can disfellowshipping be a form of discipline?
- Why does a Christian's conduct toward disfellowshipped persons differ from his conduct toward sinners in the world?
- What Scriptural direction should be borne in mind even if a relative is disfellowshipped?
- An appeals court reached what conclusion in a case brought by a disassociated person?
- What can we learn from some personal expressions about disfellowshipping?

ing such association will touch the parents' hearts, as it did Margaret's. Still, the discipline involved helped Laurie: 'I am back out in the field ministry. My marriage and family are stronger because of my change, and so am I.'

<sup>25</sup> Or consider the feelings of one who was disfellowshipped and later reinstated. Sandi wrote: 'I would like to thank you for the very helpful and instructive articles [mentioned above] on reproof and disfellowshipping. I am happy that Jehovah loves his people enough to see that his organization

25. What view did a reinstated person have of God's discipline?

## Excommunication—What Effect?

English historian Edward Gibbon wrote about the propriety and effect of disfellowshipping nearer the time of the apostles:

"It is the undoubted right of every society to exclude from its communion and benefits such among its members as reject or violate those regulations which have been established by

general consent. . . . The consequences of excommunication were of a temporal [earthly] as well as a spiritual nature. The Christian against whom it was pronounced was deprived of any part in the oblations of the faithful. The ties both of religious and of private friendship were dissolved."

is kept clean. What may seem harsh to outsiders is both necessary and really a loving thing to do. I am grateful that our heavenly Father is a loving and forgiving God.'

<sup>26</sup> So our God who requires that an unrepentant wrongdoer be expelled from the congregation also lovingly shows that a sinner can be reinstated in the congregation if

26. What righteous fruit can result from accepting discipline? (Psalm 94:10, 12)

he repents and turns around. (A disassociated person can similarly request to become part of the congregation again.) Thereafter he can be comforted by Christians who will confirm their love for him. (2 Corinthians 2:5-11; 7:8-13) Truly, it is just as Paul wrote: "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.

## Do You Remember?

Have you enjoyed reading the recent issues of *The Watchtower*? Well, see if you can answer the following questions:

□ What is the theme of modern-day Biblical evangelism?

The core of the true evangelizer's message today is the good news of God's Kingdom in the hands of his appointed Ruler, Jesus Christ. It includes all the truths Jesus spoke and that his disciples recorded. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20)—1/1, page 4.

□ Why is it necessary to continue preaching the good news in territories where there is little or no result?

Jehovah, through Christ Jesus, has commanded that 'the good news be preached in all the inhabited earth.' (Matthew 24:14) When people refuse to listen, this gives us an opportunity to show the depth of our love and devotion to Jehovah by persistently doing what is right. Also, our love moves us to warn our neighbors as to what the future holds for mankind. (1 John 5:3; 2 Timothy 4:2)—1/1, page 26.

□ What benefits does the full-time ministry bring to many Kingdom publishers?

It helps them to cultivate more

fully the fruitage of the spirit, to express more love for people, to become more efficient in the ministry, and to trust Jehovah to a greater extent. Hence, they enjoy a closer relationship with Jehovah.—1/15, page 26.

□ To what direction and purpose of God did all Bible writers point in spite of their differences in presentation?

They all showed what Jehovah God will do to make mankind happy and also what humans individually must do in order to receive God's approval.—2/1, page 7.

□ What are some of the rewards and benefits from being honest?

A climate of trust and confidence is developed, leading to healthy attitudes and relationships. Honesty also contributes to a clean conscience, and it gives peace of mind, so that one can face others without fear of embarrassment. (Hebrews 9:14; 1 Timothy 1:19)—2/15, page 7.

□ Whose prayers does the almighty God hear and answer?

Jehovah hears prayers offered to him through the right channel,

Jesus Christ; in the right manner; and with the right attitude of mind and heart. God answers such prayers according to his divine will and at his chosen time.—3/15, page 7.

□ What important event occurred in the 20th year of King Artaxerxes' rulership (455 B.C.E.)?

Permission was granted Nehemiah to go back and rebuild Jerusalem and its walls. This command was the start of the "seventy weeks" of years of Daniel's prophecy, pointing forward to Jesus' appearance as "Messiah the Leader" on time in the year 29 C.E. (Daniel 9:24, 25; Nehemiah 1:1; 2:1-9)—3/15, pages 28, 29.

□ How are family problems best handled?

In love, for the Bible counsels, "Let all your affairs take place with love." Also, "Love covers a multitude of sins." (1 Corinthians 16:14; 1 Peter 4:8) This should be a deep-seated love that is willing to overlook the imperfections of other members of the family that might otherwise irritate and grate on one's nerves.—4/1, pages 6, 7.

