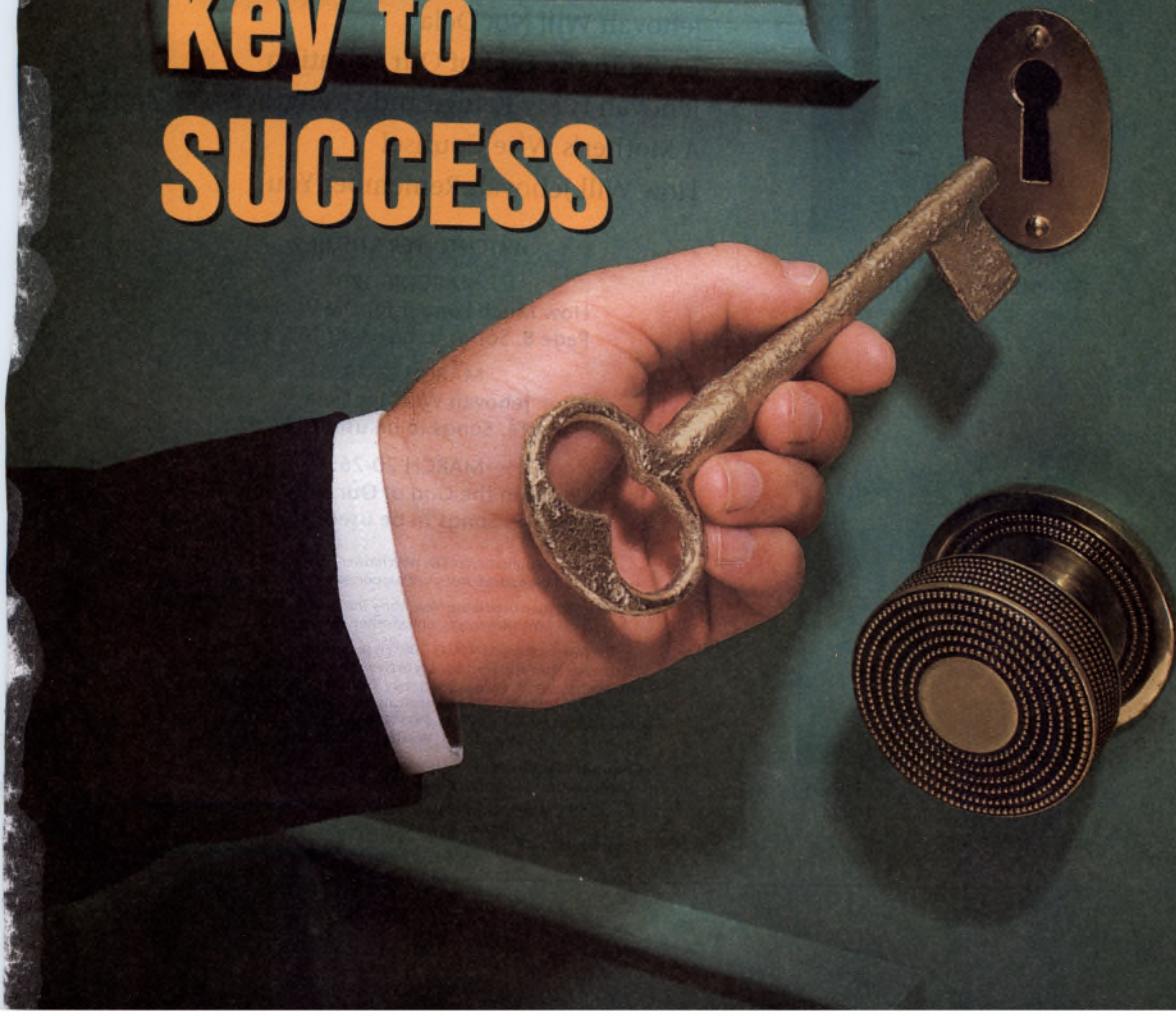


FEBRUARY 1, 2000

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

Finding the Key to SUCCESS



THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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



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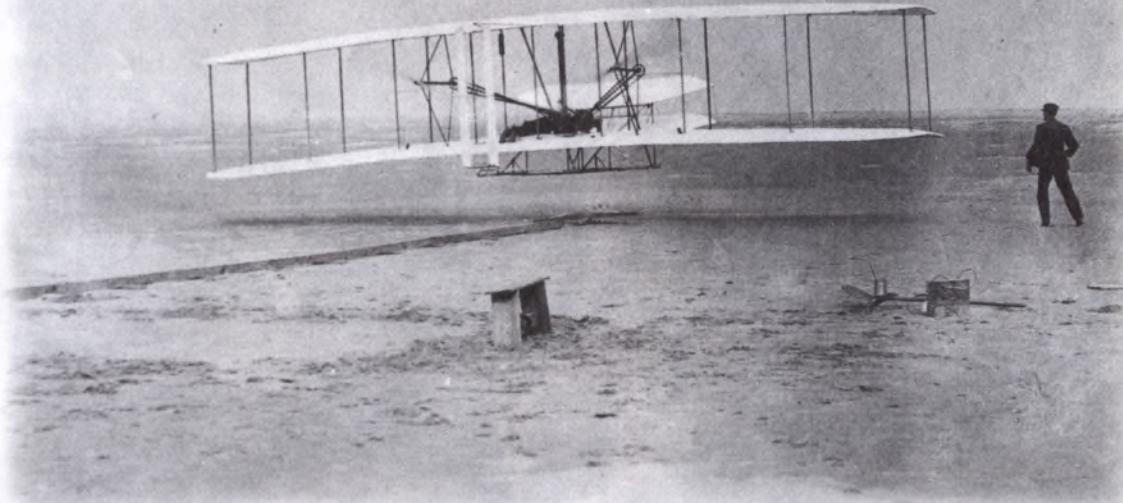
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What Is the Key to Success?



U.S. National Archives photo

TWO enterprising young men were methodically preparing a strange-looking machine for a crucial test. Suddenly, a violent gust of wind grabbed the fragile apparatus, whirled it into the air, and with a sickening thud brought it crashing down. Discouraged, the men stood in silence. Their meticulous hard work lay crumpled in a twisted pile of wood and metal.

For Orville and Wilbur Wright, what happened that October day in 1900 was not the first frustrating setback in their attempt to construct a heavier-than-air flying machine. They had already spent some years and a significant amount of money experimenting.

Finally, though, their persistence paid off. On December 17, 1903, at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, U.S.A., the Wright brothers managed to launch a motor-driven prototype that flew for 12 seconds—short as far as flights go now, but long enough to change the world forever!

Success in most endeavors depends largely on patient perseverance. Whether it is mastering a new language, learning a trade, or even developing a relationship, most things of value are achieved only through sustained effort. "Nine times out of ten," says author Charles Templeton, "success is directly attributable to one thing: hard work." Columnist Leonard Pitts, Jr., notes: "We talk about talent, we nod to luck, but so often, we ignore the most important things. The hard work and many failures. The arriving early and staying late."

This confirms what the Bible long ago stated: "The hand of the diligent one is the one that will rule." (Proverbs 12:24) Diligence means that we persevere in our efforts. This is necessary if we want to achieve what we set out to do. What is perseverance? How can we persevere in the pursuit of our goals, and in what should we persevere? These questions will be answered in the following article.

Success Through Perseverance



Culver Pictures

PERSEVERANCE has become a rare commodity in modern times. Many people believe that success has more to do with being in the right place at the right time than it does with perseverance. Who can blame them? The news media are saturated with advertising slogans that subliminally drive home the message that almost anything you want can be had with a minimum of effort and just a little more money. Newspapers churn out a steady stream of stories about overnight successes and whiz-kid entrepreneurs making millions right out of school.

Laments columnist Leonard Pitts: "In a society obsessed with perception, it looks too easy. . . . Looks like something anyone could do if

he just understood the trick, had the ability, or intercepted the bolt of lightning from God."

What Is Perseverance?

To persevere means to 'hold firmly and steadily to some purpose, state, or undertaking despite obstacles or setbacks.' It implies continuing resolutely in the face of adversity, being tenacious, not giving up. The Bible highlights the importance of this quality. For instance, God's Word admonishes us: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom," "keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you," "persevere in prayer," and "hold fast to what is fine."—Matthew 6:33; Luke 11:9; Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

An important part of perseverance is coping with the inevitable setbacks. Proverbs 24:16 states: "The righteous one may fall even seven times, and *he will certainly get up.*" Rather than 'folding up' when encountering difficulty or failure, the persevering individual 'gets up,' 'keeps on,' and tries again.

Many, though, are unprepared for the difficulties and failures they may encounter. Never having developed the will to persevere, they give up easily. "Too many people react to a failure in a self-damaging way," observes writer Morley Callaghan. "They indulge in self-pity, they blame everybody, they become bitter and ... fold up."

This is unfortunate. "We forget," Pitts points out, "that there is a reason to go through ordeal, some value to be found in adversity." What value is that? He concludes: "[One] learns that failure is not fatal, nor defeat eternal. One gains depth. One becomes ready." The Bible puts it simply: "By every kind of toil there comes to be an advantage."—Proverbs 14:23.

Of course, to get going again after a setback is not always easy. Sometimes we are faced with challenges that may appear to defy all our efforts to overcome them. Rather than getting closer, our goals may seem to be receding further and further into the background. We may feel overwhelmed, incapable, and may become discouraged, even depressed. (Proverbs 24:10) Yet, the Bible encourages us: "Let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out."—Galatians 6:9.

What Can Help Us Persevere?

The first step for persevering in a chosen course is to set worthwhile and attainable goals. The apostle Paul certainly understood this. He told the Corinthians: "The way I am running is not uncertainly; the way I am directing my blows is so as not to be striking the air." Paul knew that if he wanted his efforts to

be successful, he would need clear goals, like a runner focusing his mind on crossing the finish line in a race. "Do you not know that the runners in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may attain it," he exhorted them. (1 Corinthians 9:24, 26) How can we do this?

"The shrewd one considers his steps," says Proverbs 14:15. It is wise to reevaluate our strategies in life from time to time, asking ourselves where we are heading and whether adjustments need to be made. It is vital to have clearly in mind what we want to accomplish and why. We will be less inclined to give up if we keep a vision of our ultimate destination firmly fixed in our mind. "As for your eyes, straight ahead they should look," urges the inspired proverb, so that "all your own ways [may] be firmly established."—Proverbs 4:25, 26.

Having identified your goals, the next step is to analyze how to go about reaching them. Jesus asked: "Who of you that wants to build a tower does not first sit down and calculate the expense?" (Luke 14:28) In harmony with this principle, a mental-health expert observed: "One of the things I've noticed about successful people is that they have a clear understanding of the relationship between cause and effect in their lives. Successful people understand that if they want something, they have to do all the necessary things to get it." Having a clear understanding of all the necessary steps we need to take to achieve what we want will help keep us focused. It will also make it easier for us to regroup if we suffer a setback. Such analysis was the cornerstone of Orville and Wilbur Wright's success.

Hence, when setbacks occur, do your best to view them in a positive light and as a learning experience. Analyze the situation, discern where you went wrong, and then correct the mistake or remedy the weakness. It helps to talk to others, since "by counsel plans themselves are firmly established." (Proverbs 20:18)

Naturally, with each effort, you develop more expertise and skill, ultimately contributing to your success.

A third essential aspect of perseverance is consistent action. The apostle Paul exhorts us: "To what extent we have made progress, let us go on walking orderly in this same routine." (Philippians 3:16) As one educator put it, "moderation and consistency over time produce significant results." This is well illustrated in the widely known Aesop fable about the tortoise and the hare. The tortoise won the race, even though he was much slower than the hare. Why? Because the tortoise had a steady, disciplined approach. He did not quit but chose a speed that he could realistically keep up, and then he stuck to it until he crossed the finish line. Since the organized, steady person makes consistent progress, he remains motivated and is thus less likely to quit or be knocked out of the race. Yes, "run in such a way" that you will attain your goal.

Choosing Worthwhile Goals

Of course, for perseverance to be of any value, we need to have worthwhile goals. Many people strive after things that do not bring happiness. But the Bible points out: "He who peers into the perfect law that belongs to freedom and who persists in it . . . will be happy in his doing it." (James 1:25) Yes, studying to understand God's law as set out in the Bible is a very worthwhile goal. Why? Essentially, it is because God's law is based on his perfect, righteous standards. As the Creator, he knows what is best for his creatures. So if we persist in learning God's instructions and applying them in our lives, such persistence will surely bring us happiness. "Trust in Jehovah

with all your heart . . . In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight," promises Proverbs 3:5, 6.

Additionally, taking in knowledge of God and of Jesus "means everlasting life," says Jesus. (John 17:3) Bible prophecy indicates that we are living in "the last days" of this system. (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Matthew 24:3-13) Soon God's

You will find success if you persevere in learning about God and his will

Kingdom, his righteous government, will assert its rule over earth's inhabitants. (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 6:10) This government will usher in an unprecedented era of peace, prosperity, and well-being for all obedient mankind. (Psalm 37:10, 11; Revelation 21:4) "God is not partial," says Acts 10:34. Yes, everyone is invited to enjoy the benefits!

The Bible is an ancient book full of wisdom and meaning. Understanding it takes time and effort. But with God's help—and if we persist in seeking its knowledge—it will be an open book to us. (Proverbs 2:4, 5; James 1:5) Granted, applying what we learn may be a challenge. We may need to make adjustments in our thinking or habits. Well-meaning friends or family members may even oppose our study of the Bible. So persistence is essential. The apostle Paul reminds us that God will give everlasting life to those who show "endurance in work that is good." (Romans 2:7) Jehovah's Witnesses would be pleased to help you attain this goal.

Be assured that you will find success if you persevere in learning about God and his will and are persistent in applying what you learn. —Psalm 1:1-3.



Helping People of All Sorts in the Netherlands

ABRAHAM was a man of uncommon faith. "When he was called," said the apostle Paul, Abraham obeyed God's voice and "went out, although not knowing where he was going." After moving his entire family, Abraham "resided as an alien in the land of the promise" for the remaining one hundred years of his life.—Hebrews 11:8, 9.

Likewise today, many of Jehovah's Witnesses have accepted the challenge of moving to another country in order to serve where the need is greater. Others have learned a different language so that they can give a witness to foreigners who have immigrated to their country. As the following examples show, this fine spirit has opened "a large door that leads to activity" in the Netherlands, where one million of the 15 million inhabitants are from other lands.—1 Corinthians 16:9.

□ Bahram, a former Kung Fu instructor, came from a country in the Middle East. He obtained a copy of the Bible and some Watch Tower publications. Within a month, Bahram realized that he had found the truth. A study was started with him and his wife, but there was a problem—their Bible teacher did not speak their language. They communicated with gestures, speaking "with hands and feet," as they recalled. In time, Bahram and his wife were able to locate a congregation where their native tongue was spoken, and thereafter they made swift progress. Bahram is now a baptized Witness.



□ A Dutch pioneer couple approached an Indonesian man who was standing in front of a supermarket. He was pleasantly surprised when the couple spoke to him in his own language. Arrangements were then made to call on him at his home. It was discovered that he had lived in Russia for more than 20 years, during which time he became a gynecologist. He claimed to be an atheist, but he admitted that each time he delivered a baby, he could not help but marvel, "How perfect the human body is! What a miracle!" He agreed to study the Bible and soon came to believe that there is a Creator who cares about mankind. (1 Peter 5:6, 7) Now he is a baptized brother and serves with the Indonesian congregation in Amsterdam.

□ In Rotterdam, one of the world's largest shipping ports, a group of pioneers have become proficient in preaching to various language groups that put to shore daily. As a result of the activity of this enthusiastic group of preachers, several seamen, including a captain, a marine officer, and a former bodyguard, have accepted the truth. Now they too help to spread the good news of God's Kingdom worldwide.—Matthew 24:14.

As in other parts of the world, Jehovah's Witnesses in the Netherlands are determined to do their part in declaring the everlasting good news to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.—Revelation 14:6.

HOW MUCH LONGER FOR THE WICKED?

"Why is it . . . that you [Jehovah] keep silent when someone wicked swallows up someone more righteous than he is?"—HABAKKUK 1:13.

WILL God ever destroy the wicked? If so, how much longer must we wait? Such questions are asked by people throughout the earth. Where can we find the answers? We can do so in divinely inspired prophetic words about God's appointed time. They assure us that Jehovah will soon execute judgment upon all wicked ones. Only then will the earth become completely "filled with the knowing of the glory of Jehovah as the waters themselves cover over the sea." That is the prophetic promise found in God's Sacred Word at Habakkuk 2:14.

² Written about 628 B.C.E., the book of Habakkuk consists of a series of three executional judgments by Jehovah God. Two of those judgments have already been carried out. The first was Jehovah's judgment against the wayward nation of ancient Judah. What about the second? It was God's judgment executed upon oppressive Babylon. Surely, then, we have every reason to be confident that the third of these divine judgments will be carried out. In fact, we can expect the fulfillment of it very soon. For the sake of the upright ones in these last days, God will bring destruction upon all wicked humans. The last of them will draw his final breath in the rap-

1. When will the earth be completely filled with knowledge of Jehovah's glory?
2. The book of Habakkuk contains what three divine executional judgments?

idly approaching "war of the great day of God the Almighty."—Revelation 16:14, 16.

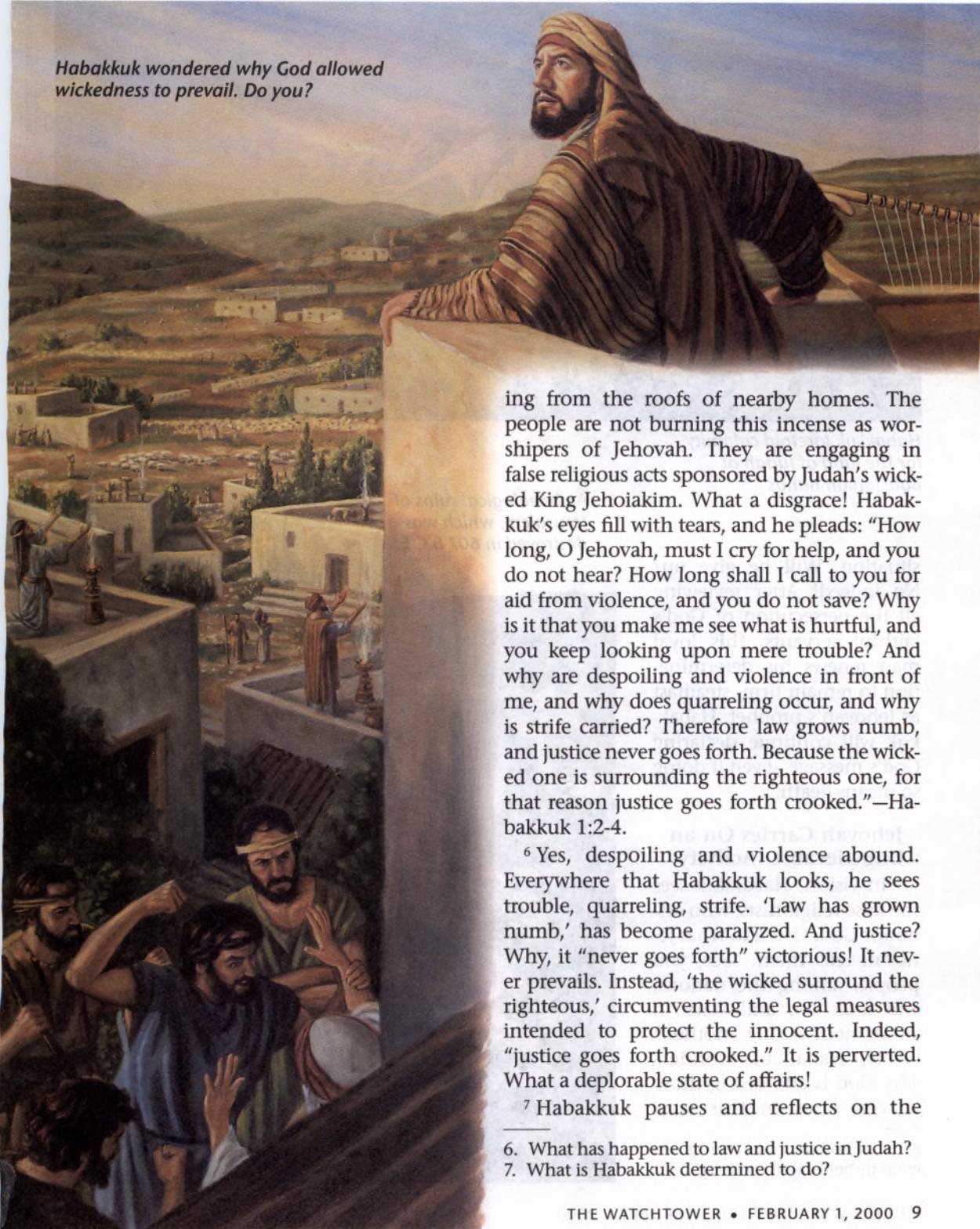
³ The war of God's great day is drawing ever closer. And the execution of divine judgment upon the wicked in our time is just as certain as the fulfillment of Jehovah's judgments against Judah and Babylon. Right now, however, why not imagine that we are in Judah in Habakkuk's day? What is going on in that land?

A Land in Turmoil

⁴ Envision Jehovah's prophet Habakkuk sitting on the flat roof of his house, enjoying the cool evening breeze. At his side is a musical instrument. (Habakkuk 1:1; 3:19, subscription) But Habakkuk hears shocking news. Judah's King Jehoiakim has killed Uriah and has had the corpse of that prophet cast into the graveyard of the common people. (Jeremiah 26:23) True, Uriah did not maintain his trust in Jehovah, becoming fearful and fleeing to Egypt. Yet, Habakkuk knows that Jehoiakim's violence was not prompted by any desire to uphold Jehovah's honor. This is evident from the king's utter disregard for divine law and his hatred of the prophet Jeremiah and others serving Jehovah.

- 5 Habakkuk sees the smoke of incense rising.
3. What is certain to befall the wicked in our time?
4. Habakkuk hears what shocking news?
5. What is the spiritual state of affairs in Judah, and how does Habakkuk react to it?

Habakkuk wondered why God allowed wickedness to prevail. Do you?



ing from the roofs of nearby homes. The people are not burning this incense as worshipers of Jehovah. They are engaging in false religious acts sponsored by Judah's wicked King Jehoiakim. What a disgrace! Habakkuk's eyes fill with tears, and he pleads: "How long, O Jehovah, must I cry for help, and you do not hear? How long shall I call to you for aid from violence, and you do not save? Why is it that you make me see what is hurtful, and you keep looking upon mere trouble? And why are despoiling and violence in front of me, and why does quarreling occur, and why is strife carried? Therefore law grows numb, and justice never goes forth. Because the wicked one is surrounding the righteous one, for that reason justice goes forth crooked."—Habakkuk 1:2-4.

⁶ Yes, despoiling and violence abound. Everywhere that Habakkuk looks, he sees trouble, quarreling, strife. 'Law has grown numb,' has become paralyzed. And justice? Why, it "never goes forth" victorious! It never prevails. Instead, 'the wicked surround the righteous,' circumventing the legal measures intended to protect the innocent. Indeed, "justice goes forth crooked." It is perverted. What a deplorable state of affairs!

⁷ Habakkuk pauses and reflects on the

6. What has happened to law and justice in Judah?
7. What is Habakkuk determined to do?



*Habakkuk foretold calamity
for the land of Judah at
Babylonian hands*

situation. Will he give up?

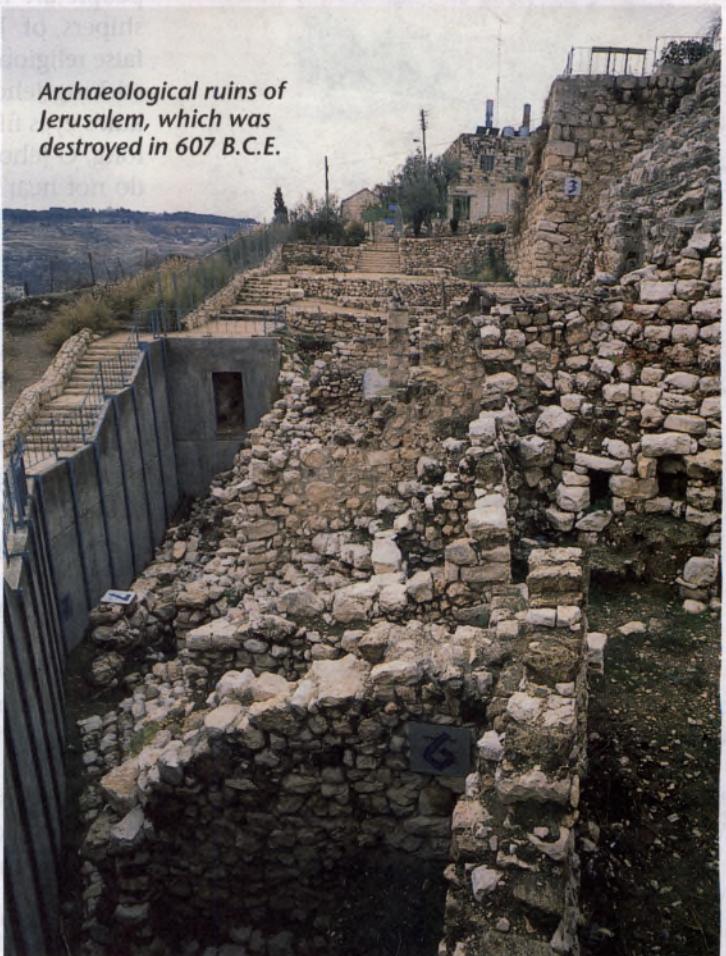
No indeed! After reviewing all the persecution of God's faithful servants, this loyal man renews his determination to remain firm, steadfast as Jehovah's prophet. Habakkuk will continue declaring God's message—even if doing so means death.

Jehovah Carries On an Unbelievable "Activity"

⁸ In vision, Habakkuk sees the false religionists, who dishonor God. Listen to what Jehovah tells them: "See, you people, among the nations, and look on, and stare in amazement at one another." Likely, Habakkuk wonders why God is addressing those wicked ones in this way.

8, 9. Jehovah is carrying on what unbelievable "activity"?

*Archaeological ruins of
Jerusalem, which was
destroyed in 607 B.C.E.*



Then he hears Jehovah tell them: "Be amazed; for there is an activity that one is carrying on in your days, which you people will not believe although it is related." (Habakkuk 1:5) Actually, Jehovah himself is carrying on this activity that they cannot believe. But what is it?

⁹ Habakkuk listens intently to God's further words, recorded at Habakkuk 1:6-11. This is Jehovah's message—and no false god or lifeless idol can block its fulfillment: "Here I am raising up the Chaldeans, the nation bitter and impetuous, which is going to the wide-open places of earth in order to take possession of residences not belonging to it. Frightful and fear-inspiring it is. From itself its own justice and its own dignity go forth. And its horses have proved swifter than leopards, and they have proved fiercer than evening wolves. And its steeds have pawed the ground, and from far away its own steeds come. They fly like the eagle speeding to eat something. In its entirety it comes for mere violence. The assembling of their faces is as the east wind, and it gathers up captives just like the sand. And for its part, it jeers kings themselves, and high officials are something laughable to it. For its part, it laughs even at every fortified place, and it piles up dust and captures it. At that time it will certainly move onward like wind and will pass through and will actually become guilty. This its power is due to its god."

¹⁰ What a prophetic warning from the Most High! Jehovah is raising up the Chaldeans, the savage nation of Babylon. On its march through 'earth's wide-open places,' it will conquer many, many dwellings. How terrifying! The Chaldean horde is "frightful and fear-inspiring," terrible and dreadful. It makes its own inflexible laws. 'Its own justice goes forth from itself.'

10. Who are being raised up by Jehovah?

¹¹ Babylon's horses are swifter than speedy leopards. Its cavalry is fiercer than hungry wolves hunting by night. Raring to go, 'its steeds paw the ground' impatiently. From distant Babylon they head for Judah. Flying like an eagle speeding to a tasty meal, the Chaldeans will soon pounce on their prey. But will this be only a foray, just a raid by a few soldiers? Oh, no! "In its entirety it comes for mere violence," as a gigantic host swarming up to wreak havoc. Their faces aglow with eagerness, they ride westward toward Judah and Jerusalem, moving as rapidly as the east wind. Babylonian forces sweep up so many prisoners that they are 'gathering captives just like sand.'

¹² The Chaldean army jeers at kings and derides high officials, all of whom are powerless to stop its relentless advance. It 'laughs at every fortified place,' for any fortress falls when the Babylonians 'pile up dust' by building a mound of earth from which to assault it. At Jehovah's appointed time, the formidable enemy "will certainly move onward like wind." In attacking Judah and Jerusalem, it "will actually become guilty" of doing injury to God's people. After a whirlwind victory, the Chaldean commander will boast: 'This power is due to our god.' But how little he really knows!

A Sound Basis for Hope

¹³ With increased understanding of Jehovah's purpose, hope grows in Habakkuk's heart. Filled with complete confidence, he speaks in adoration of Jehovah. As noted at Habakkuk 1:12, the prophet says: "Are you not from long ago, O Jehovah? O my God, my Holy One, you do not die." Indeed,

11. How would you describe the coming of the Babylonian forces against Judah?

12. What is the attitude of the Babylonians, and of what does this formidable enemy "actually become guilty"?

13. Why is Habakkuk filled with hope and confidence?

Jehovah is God "from time indefinite to time indefinite"—forever.—Psalm 90:1, 2.

¹⁴ Reflecting on his God-given vision and rejoicing in the insight it provided, the prophet continues: "O Jehovah, for a judgment you have set it; and, O Rock, for a reproving you have founded it." God has judged the apostates of Judah adversely, and they are in line for reproof, severe chastisement, by Jehovah. They should have been looking upon him as their Rock, the only real stronghold, refuge, and Source of salvation. (Psalm 62:7; 94:22; 95:1) Yet, the apostate leaders of Judah do not draw close to God, and they continue to oppress Jehovah's harmless worshipers.

¹⁵ This situation greatly distresses Jehovah's prophet. So he says: "You are too pure in eyes to see what is bad; and to look on trouble you are not able." (Habakkuk 1:13) Yes, Jehovah is "too pure in eyes to see what is bad," that is, to tolerate wrongdoing.

¹⁶ Habakkuk therefore has some thought-provoking questions in mind. He asks: "Why is it that you look on those dealing treacherously, that you keep silent when someone wicked swallows up someone more righteous than he is? And why do you make earthling man like the fishes of the sea, like creeping things over whom no one is ruling? All these he has brought up with a mere fishhook; he drags them away in his dragnet, and he gathers them in his fishing net. That is why he rejoices and is joyful. That is why he offers sacrifice to his dragnet and makes sacrificial smoke to his fishing net; for by them his portion is well oiled, and his food is healthful. Is that why he will empty out his dragnet, and does he have to kill nations constantly, while he shows no compassion?"—Habakkuk 1:13-17.

14. What course has been pursued by the apostates of Judah?

15. In what sense is Jehovah "too pure in eyes to see what is bad"?

16. How would you epitomize what is recorded at Habakkuk 1:13-17?

¹⁷ In assaulting Judah and its capital city, Jerusalem, the Babylonians will act according to their own desires. They will not know that they are serving as God's means for executing his righteous judgment against an unfaithful people. It is easy to see why Habakkuk would find it hard to understand that God would use the wicked Babylonians to execute His judgment. Those ruthless Chaldeans are not worshipers of Jehovah. They view humans as mere 'fish and creeping things' to be captured and subdued. But Habakkuk's perplexity will not last long. Jehovah will soon reveal to his prophet that the Babylonians will not remain unpunished for their greedy despoiling and their wanton bloodguiltiness.—Habakkuk 2:8.

Ready for Jehovah's Further Words

¹⁸ Right now, however, Habakkuk waits to hear Jehovah's further words to him. The prophet resolutely states: "At my guard post I will keep standing, and I will keep myself stationed upon the bulwark; and I shall keep watch, to see what he will speak by me and what I shall reply at the reproof of me." (Habakkuk 2:1) Habakkuk is intensely interested in what God will yet speak by means of him as a prophet. His faith in Jehovah as a God who does not tolerate evil makes him wonder why wickedness prevails, but he is willing to have his thinking adjusted. Well, then, what about us? When we wonder why certain wicked things are tolerated, our confidence in Jehovah God's righteousness should help us to keep our balance and wait on him.—Psalm 42:5, 11.

¹⁹ True to his word to Habakkuk, God executed judgment upon the wayward Jewish na-

17. (a) In assaulting Judah and Jerusalem, how are the Babylonians serving God's purpose? (b) What will Jehovah reveal to Habakkuk?

18. What can we learn from Habakkuk's attitude, as reflected at Habakkuk 2:1?

19. True to God's word to Habakkuk, what happened to the wayward Jews?

tion by allowing the Babylonians to invade Judah. In 607 B.C.E., they destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, killed old and young alike, and took many captives. (2 Chronicles 36:17-20) After a long exile in Babylon, a faithful Jewish remnant returned to their homeland and eventually rebuilt the temple. Thereafter, however, the Jews again proved unfaithful to Jehovah—especially so when they rejected Jesus as the Messiah.

²⁰ According to Acts 13:38-41, the apostle Paul showed Jews in Antioch what it would mean to reject Jesus and thus spurn his ransom sacrifice. Quoting Habakkuk 1:5 from the Greek Septuagint version, Paul warned: “See to it that what is said in the Prophets does not come upon you, ‘Behold it, you scorners, and wonder at it, and vanish away, because I am working a work in your days, a work that you will by no means believe even if anyone relates it to you in detail.’” In keeping with Paul’s quotation, a second fulfillment of Habakkuk 1:5 occurred when Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem and its temple in 70 C.E.

²¹ To the Jews of Habakkuk’s day, God’s “work” of having the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem was unthinkable because that city was the seat of Jehovah’s worship and the place where his anointed king was enthroned. (Psalm 132:11-18) As such, Jerusalem had never before been destroyed. Its temple had never been burned. The royal house of David had never been overthrown. It was unbelievable that Jehovah would allow such things to happen. But through Habakkuk, God gave fair warning that these shocking events would occur. And history proves that they took place as foretold.

-
20. How did Paul use Habakkuk 1:5 with regard to rejection of Jesus?
 21. How did the Jews of Habakkuk’s day view God’s “work” of having the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem?

God’s Unbelievable “Work” in Our Day

²² Is Jehovah going to do an unbelievable “work” in our day? Be assured that he will, even though that seems unbelievable to doubters. This time, Jehovah’s unbelievable work will be the destruction of Christendom. Like ancient Judah, she claims to worship God but has become thoroughly corrupt. Jehovah will see to it that every vestige of Christendom’s religious system will soon be wiped out, as will all of “Babylon the Great,” the world empire of false religion.—Revelation 18:1-24.

²³ Jehovah had more work for Habakkuk to do before Jerusalem’s destruction in 607 B.C.E. What would God yet tell his prophet? Why, Habakkuk would hear things that would move him to take up his musical instrument and sing to Jehovah in prayerful dirges. First, however, God’s spirit would impel the prophet to proclaim dramatic woes. Surely we would appreciate gaining insight into the deep meaning of such prophetic words for God’s appointed time. Let us therefore give further attention to Habakkuk’s prophecy.

-
22. What will Jehovah’s unbelievable “work” involve in our day?
 23. What did God’s spirit impel Habakkuk to do next?

Do You Recall?

- What conditions existed in Judah in Habakkuk’s day?
- Jehovah carried on what unbelievable “activity” in the time of Habakkuk?
- What basis for hope did Habakkuk have?
- God will carry out what unbelievable “work” in our day?

JEHOVAH WILL NOT DELAY

"Even if [the vision] should delay, keep in expectation of it; for it will without fail come true. It will not be late."—HABAKKUK 2:3.

AT MY guard post I will keep standing." That was the resolve of God's prophet Habakkuk. (Habakkuk 2:1) Jehovah's people of the 20th century have shown that same determination. Hence, they have responded zealously to this call sounded at a landmark convention in September 1922: "This is the day of all days. Behold, the King reigns! You are his publicity agents. Therefore advertise, advertise, advertise, the King and his kingdom."

² After World War I, Jehovah restored the faithful anointed remnant to a state of vibrant activity. Like Habakkuk, each of them could then declare: "I will keep myself stationed upon the bulwark; and I shall keep watch, to see what he will speak by me." The Hebrew words for "watch" and "guard" are repeated in many prophecies.

"It Will Not Be Late"

³ As Jehovah's Witnesses sound God's warning today, they must be ever alert to heed the concluding words of Jesus' great prophecy: "Keep on the watch, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether late in the day or at midnight or at cockcrowing or early in the morning; in order that when he arrives suddenly, he does not find you sleeping."

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1. What determination has been shown by Jehovah's people, and what has this moved them to do?
 2. When restored to vibrant activity after World War I, what could anointed Christians declare?
 3. Why must we keep on the watch?

But what I say to you I say to all, Keep on the watch." (Mark 13:35-37) Like Habakkuk, and in harmony with Jesus' words, we must keep on the watch!

⁴ Habakkuk may have completed writing his book about 628 B.C.E., even before Babylon became the dominant world power. For many years Jehovah's judgment on apostate Jerusalem had been sounded forth. Yet, there was no clear indication as to when that judgment would be executed. Who would have believed that it was only some 21 years away and that Babylon would be Jehovah's executioner? Similarly today, we do not know 'the day and the hour' set for this system's end, but Jesus has forewarned us: "Prove yourselves ready, because at an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming."—Matthew 24:36, 44.

⁵ For good reason, Jehovah gave Habakkuk this rousing commission: "Write down the vision, and set it out plainly upon tablets, in order that the one reading aloud from it may do so fluently. 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 2:2, 3) Today, wickedness and violence

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4. How does our situation parallel that of Habakkuk in about 628 B.C.E.?
 5. What is especially encouraging about God's words recorded at Habakkuk 2:2, 3?



run rampant throughout the earth, indicating that we stand at the very brink of "the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah." (Joel 2:31) Encouraging, indeed, are Jehovah's own words of assurance: "It will not be late"!

⁶ How, then, may we survive the coming day of executional judgment? Jehovah answers by drawing this contrast between the righteous and the unrighteous: "Look! His soul has been swelled up; it has not been upright within him. But as for the righteous one, by his faithfulness he will keep living." (Habakkuk 2:4) Proud and greedy rulers and peoples have stained the pages of modern history with the blood of millions of innocent victims, notably in two world wars and in ethnic bloodbaths. In contrast, the peace-loving anointed servants of God have endured in faithfulness. They are "the righteous nation that is keeping faithful conduct." This nation, along with its companions, the "other sheep," follow the admonition: "Trust in Jehovah, you people, for all times, for in Jah Jehovah is the Rock of times indefinite."—Isaiah 26:2-4; John 10:16.

⁷ Writing to Hebrew Christians, the apostle Paul quoted Habakkuk 2:4 when telling Jehovah's people: "You have need of endurance, in order that, after you have done the will of God, you may receive the fulfillment of the promise. For yet 'a very little while,' and 'he who is coming will arrive and will not delay.' 'But my righteous one will live by reason of faith,' and, 'if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him!'" (Hebrews 10:36-38) Our day is no time for slacking the hand or for getting ensnared by the materialistic, pleasure-crazed ways of Satan's world. What must we do until the "very little while" runs out? Like Paul, we of Jehovah's holy nation must

6. How may we survive the coming day of executional judgment?

7. In keeping with Paul's use of Habakkuk 2:4, what must we do?

Like Habakkuk, God's present-day servants know that Jehovah will not delay

'stretch forward to the things ahead, pursuing down toward the goal' of everlasting life. (Philippians 3:13, 14) And like Jesus, we must 'endure for the joy that is set before us.'—Hebrews 12:2.

⁸ Habakkuk 2:5 describes "an able-bodied man" who, in contrast with Jehovah's servants, fails to reach his goal, even though he "made his soul spacious just like Sheol." Who is this man who "cannot be satisfied"? With voracity like that of Babylon of Habakkuk's time, this composite "man," made up of political powers—whether Fascist, Nazi, Communist, or even so-called democratic—fights wars

8. Who is the "man" of Habakkuk 2:5, and why will he meet with no success?

in order to expand his lands. He also fills Sheol, the grave, with innocent souls. But this treacherous composite "man" of Satan's world, drunk with his own self-assured importance, meets with no success in "gathering to himself all the nations and collecting together to himself all the peoples." Only Jehovah God can unite all mankind, and he will accomplish this through the Messianic Kingdom.—Matthew 6:9, 10.

The First of Five Dramatic Woes

⁹ Through his prophet Habakkuk, Jehovah proceeds to announce a series of five woes, judgments that must be carried out in preparing the earth for habitation by God's faithful worshipers. Such righthearted ones 'lift up a proverbial saying' that Jehovah presents. We read at Habakkuk 2:6: "Woe to him who is multiplying what is not his own—O how long!—and who is making debt heavy against himself!"

¹⁰ Here the emphasis is on unrighteous gain. In the world around us, the rich grow richer, and the poor grow poorer. Drug dealers and swindlers amass great fortunes, while many of the common people starve. One fourth of the world's population is said to live below the poverty line. Living conditions are appalling in many countries. Those who yearn for righteousness on earth exclaim: "O how long" these iniquities have been multiplying! Yet, the end is at hand! Indeed, the vision "will not be late."

9, 10. (a) What does Jehovah proceed to announce through Habakkuk? (b) Regarding unrighteous gain, what is the situation today?

¹¹ The prophet tells the wicked one: "Because you yourself despoiled many nations, all the remaining ones of the peoples will despoil you, because of the shedding of blood of mankind and the violence to the earth, the town and all those dwelling in it." (Habakkuk 2:8) What bloodguilt we find on the earth today! Jesus plainly stated: "All those who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Matthew 26: 52) Yet, in the 20th century alone, bloodguilty nations and ethnic groups have been responsible for the slaughter of more than a hundred million humans. Woe to those sharing in these bloodbaths!

The Second Woe

¹² The second woe, recorded at Habakkuk 2: 9-11, falls on "the one that is making evil gain for his house, in order to set his nest on the height, so as to be delivered from the grasp of what is calamitous!" Dishonest gain will be of no avail, as the psalmist makes clear: "Do not be afraid because some man gains riches, because the glory of his house increases, for at his death he cannot take along anything at all; his glory will not go down along with him himself." (Psalm 49:16, 17) Noteworthy, then, is Paul's wise advice: "Give orders to those who are rich in the present system of things not to be high-minded, and to rest their hope, not on uncertain riches, but on God, who furnishes us all things richly for our enjoyment."

—1 Timothy 6:17.

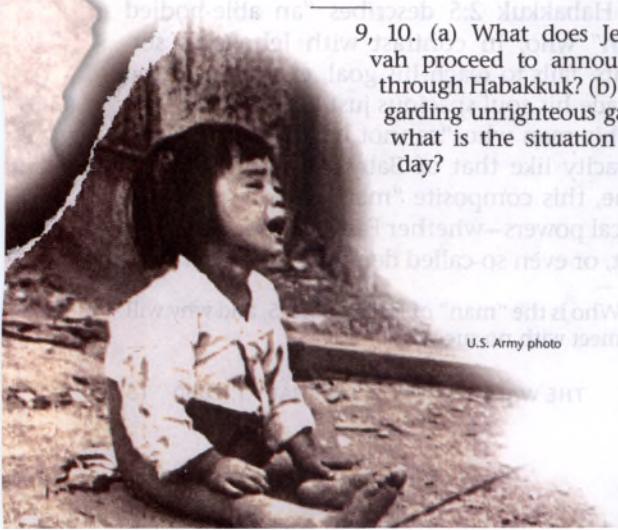
¹³ How important it is that God's judgment messages be sounded forth today! When the Pharisees objected to the crowds' hailing Jesus as "the One coming as the King in Jehovah's name," he said: "I tell you, If these remained

11. What does Habakkuk say about the shedding of human blood, and why can we say that there is great bloodguilt on earth today?

12. What is the second woe recorded by Habakkuk, and how can we be sure that dishonest riches will be of no avail?

13. Why should we continue to sound God's warning?

U.S. Army photo



silent, the stones would cry out." (Luke 19:38-40) Likewise, if God's people today were to fail in exposing the wickedness that exists in this world, 'out of the wall a stone itself would cry out plaintively.' (Habakkuk 2:11) So let us courageously continue to sound God's warning!

The Third Woe and the Issue of Bloodguilt

¹⁴ The third woe announced through Habakkuk takes up the issue of bloodguilt. Says Habakkuk 2:12: "Woe to the one that is building a city by bloodshed, and that has solidly established a town by unrighteousness!" In this system of things, unrighteousness and bloodshed often accompany each other. Notably, the world's religions have been responsible for the most heinous bloodbaths of history. We have only to mention the Crusades, which pitted so-called Christians against Muslims; the Catholic Inquisition in Spain and Latin America; Europe's Thirty Years' War between Protestants and Catholics; and the bloodiest of them all, the two world wars of our century, both of which started in the realm of Christendom.

¹⁵ One of the most wicked features of the second world war was the Nazi Holocaust, which engulfed millions of Jews and other innocents in Europe. Only recently has the Roman Catholic hierarchy in France confessed that it failed to oppose the sending of hundreds of thousands of victims to Nazi death chambers. Yet, the nations continue to prepare to shed blood, with church support or consent. Speaking about the Russian Orthodox Church, *Time* magazine (international edition) recently stated: "The revived church also wields critical influence in an area once unthinkable: the Russian war machine. . . . Blessings of jet-fighters and barracks have become

14. The world's religions have been responsible for what bloodguilt?

15. (a) With church support or consent, what do the nations continue to do? (b) Can the United Nations bring an end to the arming of this world?



almost routine. In November, in Moscow's Danilovsky Monastery, the seat of the Russian Patriarchate, the church went so far as to consecrate Russia's nuclear arsenal." Can the United Nations put a stop to rearming this world with demonic instruments of war? Hardly! According to *The Guardian* newspaper of London, England, a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize commented: "What is truly unsettling is that the five permanent members of the UN Security Council are the world's five major arms suppliers."

¹⁶ Will Jehovah execute judgment on war-mongering nations? Habakkuk 2:13 states: "Look! Is it not from Jehovah of armies that peoples will toil on only for the fire, and that national groups will tire themselves out merely for nothing?" "Jehovah of armies"! Yes, Jehovah has heavenly angelic armies, which he will use in bringing warlike peoples and nations to nothing!

¹⁷ What will follow Jehovah's execution of judgment on those violent national groups? Habakkuk 2:14 provides the answer: "The earth will be filled with the knowing of the glory of Jehovah as the waters themselves cover over the sea." What a grand prospect! At Armageddon, Jehovah's sovereignty will be forever vindicated. (Revelation 16:16) He assures us that he will 'glorify the very place of his

16. What will Jehovah do with respect to war-mongering nations?

17. To what extent will the knowledge of Jehovah fill the earth after the execution of his judgment upon violent national groups?



Do you appreciate the privilege of worshiping Jehovah in the courtyard of his spiritual temple?



feet,' this earth on which we live. (Isaiah 60:13) All mankind will be educated in God's way of life, so that knowledge of Jehovah's glorious purposes will fill the earth even as the oceans fill the sea basins.

The Fourth and Fifth Woes

¹⁸ The fourth woe is described at Habakkuk 2:15 in these words: "Woe to the one giving

18. What is the fourth woe announced through Habakkuk, and how is it reflected in the moral state of the world today?

his companions something to drink, attaching to it your rage and anger, in order to make them drunk, for the purpose of looking upon their parts of shame." This suggests the dissolute, wayward state of the modern world. Its immorality, supported even by permissive religious bodies, has descended to new lows. Plagues, such as AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, are on the rampage worldwide. Instead of reflecting "the glory of Jehovah," the me-first generation of today plummets further into depravity and toward the execution of God's judgment. "Satiated with dishonor instead of glory," this delinquent world is about to drink from the bowl of Jehovah's rage, which represents his will toward it. 'There will be disgrace upon its glory.'—Habakkuk 2:16.

¹⁹ A prelude to the fifth woe sternly warns against the worship of carved images. Jehovah has the prophet pronounce these powerful words: "Woe to the one saying to the piece of wood: 'O do awake!' to a dumb stone: 'O wake up! It itself will give instruction!' Look! It is sheathed in gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it." (Habakkuk 2:19) To this day, both Christen-

19. A prelude to the fifth woe announced by Habakkuk relates to what, and why do such words have significance in today's world?

Do You Recall?

- How do you view Jehovah's words: "It will not be late"?
- What is the present-day significance of the woes announced through Habakkuk?
- Why should we continue to sound Jehovah's warning?
- In the courtyard of what temple are we privileged to serve?

dom and so-called heathendom bow to their crucifixes, Madonnas, icons, and other likenesses of man and beast. None of these can awake to save their worshipers when Jehovah comes to execute judgment. Their overlays of gold and silver pale into dead meaninglessness in comparison to the magnificence of the eternal God, Jehovah, and the glories of his living creations. May we extol his peerless name forever!

²⁰ Yes, our God, Jehovah, is worthy of all praise. With a feeling of deep reverence for

20. In what temple arrangement are we privileged to serve joyfully?

him, let us heed that stern warning against idolatry. But listen! Jehovah is still speaking: "Jehovah is in his holy temple. Keep silence before him, all the earth!" (Habakkuk 2:20) The prophet doubtless had Jerusalem's temple in mind. However, we today are privileged to worship in a far grander spiritual temple arrangement, where our Lord Jesus Christ is installed as High Priest. Here, in the earthly courtyard of that temple, we meet, serve, and pray, rendering to Jehovah the honor that is due his glorious name. And what joy we have in rendering heartfelt worship to our loving heavenly Father!

JOYFUL IN THE GOD OF OUR SALVATION

"I will exult in Jehovah himself; I will be joyful in the God of my salvation."—HABAKKUK 3:18.

MORE than a decade before the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C.E., the aged prophet Daniel saw a thrilling vision. It foretold world events leading right down to the climactic war between Jehovah's enemies and his appointed King, Jesus Christ. What was Daniel's reaction? He said: "I felt exhausted and . . . numbed on account of the thing seen."—Daniel 8:27.

² What about us? We are living so much further along in the stream of time! How do we react when we realize that the conflict seen in vision by Daniel—God's war of Armageddon—is very close? How do we respond when

1. Concerning what did Daniel have a vision before Babylon's fall in 539 B.C.E.?

2. What conflict did Daniel see in vision, and how do you feel about its nearness?

we discern that the wickedness exposed in Habakkuk's prophecy is so rampant that the destruction of God's enemies is inevitable? Likely, our feelings parallel those of Habakkuk himself, as described in the third chapter of his prophetic book.

Habakkuk Prays for God's Mercy

³ Habakkuk chapter 3 is a prayer. According to verse 1, it is expressed in dirges, songs of grief or lamentation. The prophet's prayer is offered as if it were for himself. Actually, though, Habakkuk is speaking on behalf of God's chosen nation. Today, his prayer has a great deal of meaning for God's people, who are engaged in the Kingdom-preaching work. When

3. On behalf of whom did Habakkuk pray, and how may his words affect us?



we read Habakkuk chapter 3 with this in mind, its words fill us with foreboding but also with joy. Habakkuk's prayer, or dirge, gives us strong reason to be joyful in Jehovah, the God of our salvation.

⁴ As we have noted in the two preceding articles, conditions were very bad in the land of Judah in Habakkuk's day. But God would not allow this situation to continue. Jehovah would

take action, as he had in the past. No wonder the prophet cried out: "O Jehovah, I have heard the report about you. I have become afraid, O Jehovah, of your activity"! What did he mean? 'The report about Jehovah' was the recorded history of God's mighty deeds, such as at the Red Sea, in the wilderness, and at Jericho. These acts were well-known to Habakkuk, and they made him afraid because he knew that Jehovah would again use his great power against his enemies. When we see the wickedness of mankind today, we too know that Jehovah will act as he did in ancient times. Does that make us apprehensive? Of course! Nevertheless, we pray as did Habakkuk: "In the midst of the years O bring it to life! In the midst of the years may you make it known. During the agitation, to show mercy may you remember." (Habakkuk 3:2) In God's due time, "in the midst of the years," may he bring his miraculous power into action. And at that time, may he remember to show mercy to those who love him!

Jehovah on the March!

- ⁵ What will happen when Jehovah hears
4. Why did Habakkuk become afraid, and of what exercise of God's power may we be certain?
5. How did 'God proceed to come from Teman,' and what does this indicate regarding Armageddon?

our prayer for mercy? We find the answer at Habakkuk 3:3, 4. First, the prophet says: "God himself proceeded to come from Teman, even a Holy One from Mount Paran." Back in the prophet Moses' day, Teman and Paran were on Israel's route through the wilderness toward Canaan. As the large nation of Israel proceeded on their trek, Jehovah himself seemed to be on the move, and nothing could stop him. Shortly before Moses died, he said: "Jehovah—from Sinai he came, and he flashed forth from Seir upon them. He beamed forth from the mountainous region of Paran, and with him were holy myriads [of angels]." (Deuteronomy 33:2) When Jehovah moves against his enemies at Armageddon, there will be a similar display of his irresistible might.

⁶ Habakkuk also states: "[Jehovah's] dignity covered the heavens; and with his praise the earth became filled. As for his brightness, it got to be just like the light." What a magnificent spectacle! True, humans cannot look upon Jehovah God and live. (Exodus 33:20) As for faithful servants of God, however, the eyes of their hearts are dazzled when they contemplate his magnificence. (Ephesians 1:18) And discerning Christians see something in addition to Jehovah's glory. Habakkuk 3:4 concludes: "He had two rays issuing out of his hand, and there the hiding of his strength was." Yes, we see that Jehovah is ready to act, using his right hand of strength and power.

⁷ God's triumphal march means disaster for those who rebel against him. Habakkuk 3:5 says: "Before him pestilence kept going, and burning fever would go forth at his feet." When the Israelites were close to the boundaries of the Promised Land in 1473 B.C.E., many of them rebelled, engaging in immorality and idolatry. As a result, well over 20,000

6. In addition to God's glory, what do discerning Christians see?
7. God's triumphal march means what for those rebelling against him?

died of a pestilence sent by God. (Numbers 25:1-9) In the near future, when Jehovah marches to "the war of the great day of God the Almighty," those rebelling against him will similarly suffer for their sins. Some may even die by literal pestilence.—Revelation 16: 14, 16.

⁸ Hear now the prophet's graphic description of Jehovah of armies in action. At Habakkuk 3:6, we read: "He [Jehovah God] stood still, that he might shake up the earth. He saw, and then caused nations to leap. And the eternal mountains got to be smashed; the indefinitely lasting hills bowed down. The walkings of long ago are his." First, Jehovah 'stands still,' like a general surveying the battlefield. His enemies shake in fear. They see who their opponent is and are shocked, jumping in agitation. Jesus foretold the time when "all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation." (Matthew 24:30) Too late they will realize that no one can stand against Jehovah. Human organizations

—even those that seem as permanent as "the eternal mountains" and "the

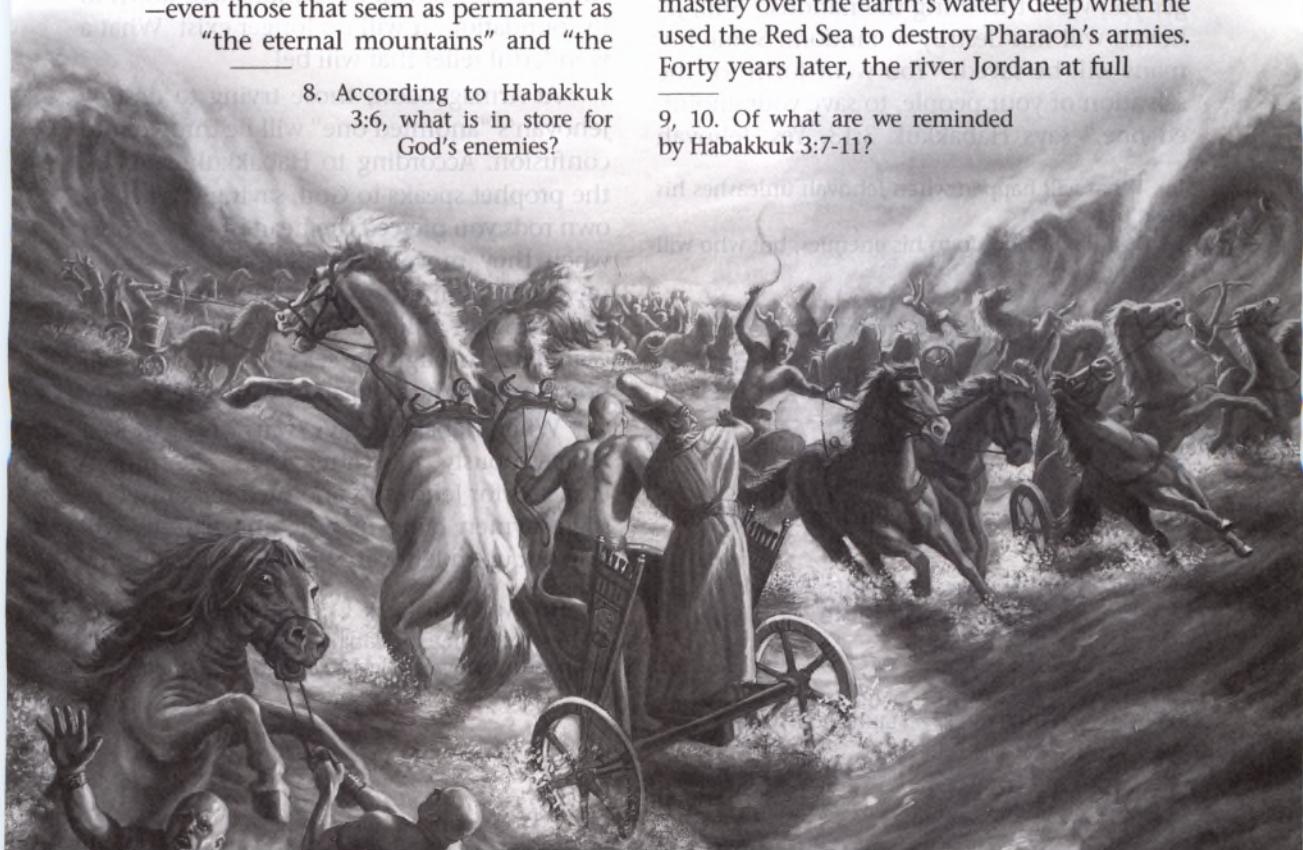
8. According to Habakkuk 3:6, what is in store for God's enemies?

indefinitely lasting hills"—will crumble. It will then be like God's "walkings of long ago," like the way he acted in ancient times.

⁹ Jehovah's "anger has become hot" against his foes. But what weapons will he use in his great war? Listen as the prophet describes them, saying: "In its nakedness your bow comes to be uncovered. The sworn oaths of the tribes are the thing said. With rivers you proceeded to split the earth. Mountains saw you; they got to be in severe pains. A thunder-storm of waters passed through. The watery deep gave forth its sound. On high its hands it lifted up. Sun—moon—stood still, in the lofty abode thereof. Like light your own arrows kept going. The lightning of your spear served for brightness."—Habakkuk 3:7-11.

¹⁰ In the days of Joshua, Jehovah caused the sun and the moon to stand still in an astounding demonstration of power. (Joshua 10:12-14) Habakkuk's prophecy reminds us that this same power will be used by Jehovah at Armageddon. In 1513 B.C.E., Jehovah showed his mastery over the earth's watery deep when he used the Red Sea to destroy Pharaoh's armies. Forty years later, the river Jordan at full

9, 10. Of what are we reminded by Habakkuk 3:7-11?



flood level was no obstacle to Israel's triumphant march into the Promised Land. (Joshua 3:15-17) In the days of Deborah the prophetess, torrential rains washed away the chariots of Israel's enemy Sisera. (Judges 5:21) These same forces of flood, torrential rain, and watery deep will be at Jehovah's disposal at Armageddon. Thunder and lightning too are in his hand, like a spear or a quiver full of arrows.

¹¹ Truly, it will be awe-inspiring when Jehovah unleashes his great power. Habakkuk's words suggest that night will turn into day and day will be brighter than the sun could ever make it. Whether this inspired prophetic description of Armageddon is literal or symbolic, one thing is sure—Jehovah will prevail, allowing no enemy to escape.

Salvation Sure for God's People!

¹² The prophet continues to describe Jehovah's actions in destroying His enemies. At Habakkuk 3:12, we read: "With denunciation you went marching through the earth. In anger you went threshing the nations." Still, Jehovah will not destroy at random. Some humans will be saved. "You went forth for the salvation of your people, to save your anointed one," says Habakkuk 3:13. Yes, Jehovah

11. What will happen when Jehovah unleashes his great power?

12. What will God do to his enemies, but who will be saved?

will save his faithful anointed servants. The destruction of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, will then be complete. Today, however, the nations are trying to wipe out pure worship. Soon, Jehovah's servants will be attacked by the forces of Gog of Magog. (Ezekiel 38:1-39:13; Revelation 17:1-5, 16-18) Will that satanic assault succeed? No! Jehovah will then angrily thresh his enemies, pounding them underfoot like grain on a threshing floor. But he will save those who worship him with spirit and truth.—John 4:24.

¹³ The thorough annihilation of the wicked is foretold in these words: "You [Jehovah] broke to pieces the head one out of the house of the wicked one. There was a laying of the foundation bare, clear up to the neck." (Habakkuk 3:13) This "house" is the wicked system developed under the influence of Satan the Devil. It will be shattered. The "head one," or anti-God leaders, will be crushed. The whole structure will be demolished, down to its foundation. It will no longer exist. What a wonderful relief that will be!

¹⁴ At Armageddon, those trying to destroy Jehovah's "anointed one" will be thrown into confusion. According to Habakkuk 3:14, 15, the prophet speaks to God, saying: "With his own rods you pierced the head of his warriors when they moved tempestuously to scatter me. Their high glee was as of those bent on devouring an afflicted one in a place of concealment. Through the sea you trod with your horses, through the heap of vast waters."

¹⁵ When Habakkuk says "warriors... moved tempestuously to scatter me," the prophet speaks for Jehovah's anointed servants. Like highwaymen lying in wait, the nations will leap out upon Jehovah's worshipers to destroy

13. How will Habakkuk 3:13 be fulfilled?

14-16. According to Habakkuk 3:14, 15, what will happen to Jehovah's people and to their enemies?

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Heed the Warning!

Do You Have "the Mind of Christ"?

Cyril Lucaris—A Man Who
Valued the Bible



them. These enemies of God and of his people will be in "high glee," confident of success. Faithful Christians will appear weak, like "an afflicted one." But when the anti-God forces launch their attack, Jehovah will make them turn their weapons against themselves. They will use their arms, or "rods," against their own warriors.

¹⁶ But there is more on the horizon. Jehovah will use superhuman spirit forces to complete the destruction of his foes. With the "horses" of his heavenly armies under Jesus Christ, he will push onward victoriously through "the sea" and "the heap of vast waters," that is, the surging mass of enemy humanity. (Revelation 19:11-21) Then the wicked will be removed from the earth. What a

Do you know what forces God will use against the wicked at Armageddon?

forceful demonstration of divine power and justice!

Jehovah's Day Is Coming!

¹⁷ We can be sure that Habakkuk's words will soon be fulfilled. They will not delay. How do you react to this foreknowledge? Remember that Habakkuk was writing under divine inspiration. Jehovah will act, and there will be havoc on earth when that happens. It

17. (a) Why can we have confidence in the fulfillment of Habakkuk's words? (b) How can we be like Habakkuk as we await Jehovah's great day?

is no wonder that the prophet wrote: "I heard, and my belly began to be agitated; at the sound my lips quivered; rottenness began to enter into my bones; and in my situation I was agitated, that I should quietly wait for the day of distress, for his coming up to the people, that he may raid them." (Habakkuk 3:16) Habakkuk was very agitated—understandably so. But was his faith shaken? In no way! He was willing to wait quietly for Jehovah's great day. (2 Peter 3:11, 12) Is that not our attitude too? Surely it is! We have full faith that Habakkuk's prophecy will be fulfilled. Until it is, however, we will wait patiently.

¹⁸ Warfare always brings hardship, even to the eventual victors. Food may run short. Property may be lost. Standards of living may go down. If that happens to us, how will we react? Habakkuk had an exemplary attitude, for he said: "Although the fig tree itself may not blossom, and there may be no yield on the vines; the work of the olive tree may actually turn out a failure, and the terraces themselves may actually produce no food; the flock may actually be severed from the pen, and there may be no herd in the enclosures; yet, as for me, I will exult in Jehovah himself; I will be joyful in the God of my salvation." (Habakkuk 3:17, 18) Habakkuk realistically expected hardships, perhaps famine. Still, he never lost his joy in Jehovah, from whom his salvation came.

18. Though Habakkuk expected hardships, what was his attitude?

Do You Recall?

- How may Habakkuk's prayer affect us?
- Why does Jehovah go on the march?
- What does Habakkuk's prophecy say about salvation?
- With what attitude should we await Jehovah's great day?

¹⁹ Today, even before Jehovah's war against the wicked, many suffer severe distress. Jesus foretold that wars, famines, earthquakes, and pestilences would be part of 'the sign of his presence' in royal power. (Matthew 24:3-14; Luke 21:10, 11) Many of our fellow believers live in lands severely afflicted by the fulfillment of Jesus' words, and they suffer great hardships as a result. Other Christians may be similarly affected in the future. For many more of us, it is quite possible that 'the fig tree will not blossom' before the end comes. However, we know why these things are happening, and that gives us strength. Moreover, we have support. Jesus promised: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his [God's] righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33) That does not guarantee a comfortable life, but it does assure us that if we put Jehovah first in our lives, he will watch over us.—Psalm 37:25.

²⁰ Whatever temporary hardships we have to face, we will not lose faith in Jehovah's saving power. Many of our brothers and sisters in Africa, Eastern Europe, and other places have to face extreme hardships, but they keep on 'exulting in Jehovah.' May we, like them, never cease to do the same. Remember that the Sovereign Lord Jehovah is our Source of "vital energy." (Habakkuk 3:19) He will never fail us. Armageddon is sure to come, and God's promised new world is certain to follow. (2 Peter 3:13) Then "the earth will be filled with the knowing of the glory of Jehovah as the waters themselves cover over the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14) Until that wonderful time, let us follow the good example of Habakkuk. Let us always 'exult in Jehovah and be joyful in the God of our salvation.'

19. What hardships exist for many Christians, but of what can we be sure if we put Jehovah first in our lives?

20. Despite temporary hardships, what should we be determined to do?



JEHOVAH IS MY REFUGE AND STRENGTH

AS TOLD BY

MARCEL FILTEAU

"If you marry him, you are bound to go to jail."

That is what people said to the woman I was planning to marry. Let me explain why they would say such a thing.

WHEN I was born in 1927, the Canadian province of Quebec was a stronghold of Catholicism. About four years later, Cécile Dufour, a full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses, began calling at our home in the city of Montreal. For this, she was often threatened by our neighbors. In fact, she was arrested and ill-treated many times for preaching the Bible's message. So we soon learned the truth of Jesus' words: "You will be objects of hatred by all the nations on account of my name."—Matthew 24:9.

At the time, many considered it unthinkable for a French-Canadian family to leave their Catholic religion. Though my parents never became baptized Witnesses, they soon

concluded that the teachings of the Catholic Church were not in harmony with the Bible. So they encouraged their eight children to read literature published by the Witnesses, and they supported those of us who took a stand for Bible truth.

Taking a Stand in Difficult Times

In 1942, while I was still in school, I began to take a real interest in Bible study. The activities of Jehovah's Witnesses were then banned in Canada because they followed the example of early Christians and did not become involved in the wars of the nations. (Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 26:52) My oldest brother, Roland, was put in a labor camp because of his refusal

*Pioneering together
in 1947; with Anne
today*

to take up arms during the world war then raging.

About this time, Father gave me a book in French that described the sufferings of the German Witnesses for their refusal to support the military campaigns of Adolph Hitler.* I was motivated to identify myself with such courageous examples of integrity, and I started attending the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses held in a private home. Soon I was invited to share in the preaching work. I accepted the invitation with full realization that I might be arrested and imprisoned.

After praying for strength, I knocked on my first door. A kind lady answered, and after introducing myself, I read to her the words of 2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial."

"Would you be interested in learning more about the Bible?" I asked.

"Yes," the lady replied.

So I told her that I would bring a friend who knew the Bible better than I did, which I did the following week. After that first experience, I felt more confident, and I learned that we do not carry on the ministry in our own strength. As the apostle Paul said, we do so with Jehovah's help. Indeed, it is vital that we recognize that "the power beyond what is normal [is] God's and not that out of ourselves."—2 Corinthians 4:7.

* The book was originally published in German as *Kreuzzug gegen das Christentum* (Crusade Against Christianity). It was translated into French and Polish but not into English.



Thereafter, the preaching work became a regular part of my life and so did arrests and imprisonment. No wonder that my prospective bride was told, "If you marry him, you are bound to go to jail"! Yet, such experiences were not really that hard. After spending a night in jail, a fellow Witness usually bailed us out.

Important Decisions

In April 1943, I dedicated myself to Jehovah and symbolized it by water baptism. Then, in August 1944, I attended my first big convention, in Buffalo, New York, U.S.A., just across the Canadian border. There were 25,000 in attendance, and the program stimulated my desire to be a pioneer, as full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses are called. The ban on the work of Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada was removed in May 1945, and I started pioneering the following month.

As my share in the ministry increased, however, so did my visits to prison. Once I was put in a cell with Mike Miller, a faithful, long-time servant of Jehovah. We sat on the cement floor and talked. Our upbuilding spiritual con-

versation strengthened me immensely. Afterward, though, the question crossed my mind, "What if a misunderstanding had existed between us and we were not on speaking terms?" The time spent with this dear brother in jail taught me one of the most beautiful lessons of my life—we need our brothers and should therefore be forgiving and kind to one another. Otherwise, as the apostle Paul wrote: "If . . . you keep on biting and devouring one another, look out that you do not get annihilated by one another."—Galatians 5:15.

In September 1945, I was invited to serve at the branch office of the Watch Tower Society in Toronto, Canada, which we call Bethel. The spiritual program there was indeed upbuilding and faith strengthening. The following year, I was assigned to work on the Bethel farm, some 25 miles north of the branch office. As I picked strawberries with young Anne Wolyne, I noticed not only her physical beauty but also her love and zeal for Jehovah. A relationship developed, and we were married in January 1947.

For the next two and a half years, we pioneered in London, Ontario, and after that on Cape Breton Island, where we helped to form a congregation. Then, in 1949, we were invited to the 14th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, where we were trained to become missionaries.

Missionary Work in Quebec

Canadian graduates of previous classes of Gilead had been assigned to open up the preaching work in Quebec. In 1950, we along with 25 others from our 14th class joined them. The increased missionary activity brought on intensified persecution and mob violence, instigated by leaders of the Roman Catholic Church.

Two days after arriving in our first missionary assignment in the city of Rouyn, Anne was arrested and put in the back of a police car. This was a new experience for her, since she

came from a small village in the province of Manitoba, Canada, where she seldom saw a policeman. Naturally, she felt frightened and recalled the words, "If you marry him, you are bound to go to jail." However, before driving off, the police also found me and put me into the car with Anne. "Am I glad to see you!" she exclaimed. Yet, she was amazingly calm, noting, "Well, the same thing happened to the apostles for preaching about Jesus." (Acts 4:1-3; 5:17, 18) Later that day we were released on bail.

About a year after that incident, while in the house-to-house ministry in our new assignment in Montreal, I heard a commotion down the street and saw an angry mob throwing stones. As I went to help Anne and her companion, the police arrived on the scene. Instead of arresting members of the mob, the police arrested Anne and her companion! While in prison, Anne reminded the new Witness that they were experiencing the reality of Jesus' words: "You will be objects of hatred by all people on account of my name."—Matthew 10:22.

At one time, some 1,700 cases against Jehovah's Witnesses were pending trial in Quebec. Generally, we were charged with distributing seditious literature or with distributing literature without a license. As a result, the Watch Tower Society's Legal Department took action against the government of Quebec. After many years of legal battle, Jehovah gave us two great victories before the Supreme Court of Canada. In December 1950, we were cleared of the charge that our literature was seditious, and in October 1953, our right to distribute Bible literature without a license was upheld. Thus we saw in a very visible way how Jehovah is indeed a place of "refuge and strength, a help that is readily to be found during distresses."—Psalm 46:1.

Remarkably, the number of Witnesses in Quebec has increased from 356 in 1945, when

I started pioneering, to over 24,000 today! It has indeed turned out just as the Bible prophecy foretold: "Any weapon whatever that will be formed against you will have no success, and any tongue at all that will rise up against you in the judgment you will condemn."—Isaiah 54:17.

Our Work in France

In September 1959, Anne and I were invited to serve at Bethel in Paris, France, where I was assigned to take the lead in printing. Up until the time of our arrival in January 1960, printing had been done by a commercial firm. Since *The Watchtower* was then banned in France, we printed the magazine each month in the form of a 64-page booklet. The booklet was called *The Interior Bulletin of Jehovah's Witnesses*, and it contained the articles to be studied in the congregations for the month. From 1960 to 1967, the number of those sharing in the preaching work in France increased from 15,439 to 26,250.

Eventually, most missionaries were reassigned to other places, some to French-speaking countries in Africa and others back to Quebec. Since Anne was not well and needed an operation, we returned to Quebec. After three years of medical attention, Anne's health was restored. I was then assigned to the circuit work, visiting a different congregation each week to provide spiritual encouragement.

Missionary Work in Africa

A few years later, in 1981, we were delighted to receive a new assignment as missionaries in Zaire, now Democratic Republic of Congo. The people were poor, and they suffered many hardships. When we arrived, there were 25,753 Witnesses, but today that number has increased to over 113,000, and 446,362 attended the Memorial of Christ's death in 1999!

In 1984 we obtained from the government some 500 acres of land to build a new

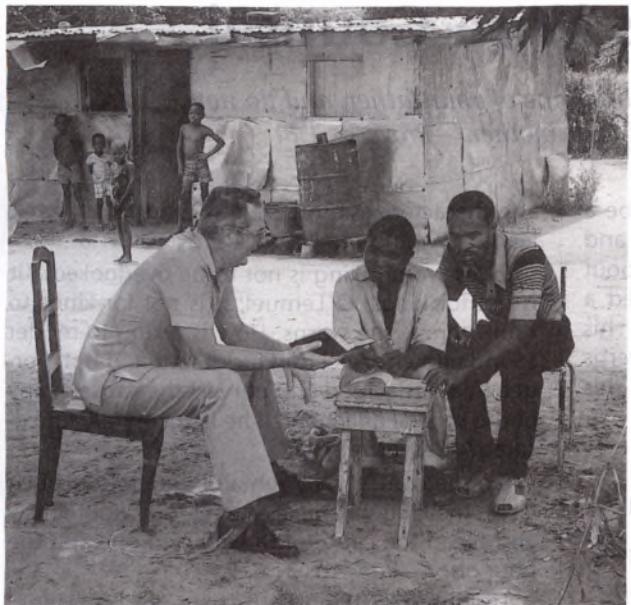
branch office. Then, in December 1985, an international convention was held in the capital city, Kinshasa, with 32,000 delegates attending from many parts of the world. After that, clergy-inspired opposition disrupted our work in Zaire. On March 12, 1986, the responsible brothers were handed a letter that declared the association of Jehovah's Witnesses of Zaire illegal. This ban on all our activities was signed by the then president of the country, the late Mobutu Sese Seko.

Because of those sudden developments, we had to apply the Bible counsel: "Shrewd is the one that has seen the calamity and proceeds to conceal himself." (Proverbs 22:3) We found ways to get paper, ink, film, printing plates, and chemicals from outside the country to print our publications in Kinshasa. We also developed our own distribution network. Once we were organized, our system worked better than the government postal service!

Thousands of Witnesses were arrested, and many were brutally tortured. Yet, with few exceptions, they stood up to such treatment and maintained their faithfulness. I too was arrested and saw the terrible conditions the brothers were subjected to in the jails. Many times we were pressed in every way by the secret police and the authorities, but Jehovah always made a way out for us.—2 Corinthians 4:8.

We had hidden about 3,000 cartons of literature in the warehouse of a businessman. Eventually, however, one of his workers informed the secret police, and they arrested the businessman. On their way to the prison, they by chance crossed paths with me in my car. The businessman informed them that I was the one who had made the arrangement with him to store the literature. The police stopped and questioned me about it, accusing me of putting illegal literature in this man's warehouse.

"Do you have one of the books?" I asked.
"Of course, yes," they answered.



The people we met in Zaire loved Bible truth

"May I see it?" I asked.

They brought me a copy, and I showed them the inside page, which states: "Printed in the United States of America by the Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society."

"What you have in your hands is American property and does not belong to Zaire," I reminded them. "Your government has placed a ban on the legal corporation of the association of Jehovah's Witnesses of Zaire and not on the Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society of the United States. So you should be very careful what you do with these publications."

I was allowed to go because they had no court order to arrest me. That night, we took two trucks to the warehouse and emptied it of the literature. When the authorities came the following day, they were very upset to find the place empty. By then they were searching for me, since they now had a court order for my arrest. They found me, and because they had no car, I drove myself to prison! Another Witness accompanied me so that he could take my car away before they could lay claim to it.

After an eight-hour interrogation, they decided to deport me. But I showed them a photocopy of a letter from the government confirming my appointment to liquidate the assets of the now banned association of Jehovah's Witnesses of Zaire. Thus I was allowed to continue my activity at Bethel.

After four years of serving under the pressures of the ban on the work in Zaire, I developed a bleeding stomach ulcer that was life threatening. It was decided that I should leave to get treatment in South Africa, where the branch took good care of me, and I recovered. After serving eight years in Zaire, which was truly a memorable and happy experience, we moved to the South Africa branch in 1989. In 1998 we returned to our homeland and have since then been serving again in Canada Bethel.

Grateful to Serve

When I look back on my 54 years in the full-time ministry, I am so grateful that I used my youthful vigor in Jehovah's precious service. Though Anne has had to endure many trying circumstances, she has not complained but has been very supportive in all our activities. Together, we have had the privilege of helping many to come to know Jehovah, a number of whom are now in the full-time ministry. It is such a joy to see some of their children and even their grandchildren serving our great God, Jehovah!

I am convinced that there is nothing this world can offer that can compare with the privileges and blessings that Jehovah has given us. True, we have endured many trials, but they have all served to build our faith and confidence in Jehovah. He has indeed proved to be a tower of strength, a place of refuge, and a help that is readily to be found during distresses.

A Mother's Wise Counsel

"Listen, my son, to the discipline of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother."—Proverbs 1:8.

OUR parents—our father and mother—can be a valuable source of encouragement, support, and counsel. The Bible book of Proverbs tells about a certain young king, Lemuel, who received a "weighty message" of "correction" from his mother. These words are recorded in Proverbs chapter 31, and we too can benefit from this mother's wise counsel.—Proverbs 31:1.

Counsel Fit for a King

Lemuel's mother begins with several questions that heighten our interest: "What am I saying, O son of mine, and what, O son of my belly, and what, O son of my vows?" Her thrice-repeated plea demonstrates her anxious concern that her son pay attention to her words. (Proverbs 31:2) Her concern for the spiritual welfare of her offspring sets a fine example for Christian parents today.

Regarding the welfare of her son, what can worry a mother more than revelries and debaucheries in the proverbial wine, women, and song? Lemuel's mother comes right to the point: "Do not give your vital energy to women."

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She characterizes promiscuous conduct as "what leads to wiping out kings."—Proverbs 31:3.

Excessive drinking is not to be overlooked. "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine," she warns. How is a king to render sound and clear-headed judgment and not "forget what is decreed and pervert the cause of any of the sons of affliction" if he is constantly intoxicated?—Proverbs 31:4-7.

On the contrary, by remaining free from such vices, the king will be able to "judge righteously and plead the cause of the afflicted one and the poor one."—Proverbs 31:8, 9.

Though Christian youths may not be "kings" today, the wise counsel of Lemuel's mother is just as timely, if not more so. Alcohol abuse, use of tobacco, and sexual immorality are rampant among young people nowadays, and it is vital that Christian youths pay attention when their parents offer them 'weighty messages.'

A Capable Wife

Mothers are rightfully concerned with the marriage prospects of their sons who are approach-

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ing adulthood. Lemuel's mother next turns her attention to the qualities of an ideal wife. No doubt, a young man would benefit greatly by considering a woman's perspective on this important matter.

In verse 10, "a capable wife" is likened to rare and valuable corals, which in Bible times were obtained only with considerable effort. In a similar way, finding a capable wife requires effort. Rather than anxiously rushing into marriage, a young man would do well to take his time to be selective. Then, he would be more likely to value his precious find highly.

Regarding a capable wife, Lemuel is told: "In her the heart of her owner has put trust." (Verse 11) In other words, he should not insist that his wife obtain his approval in every matter. Of course, marriage mates should consult with each other before making major decisions, such as those involving expensive purchases or the upbringing of their children. Communication in these areas contributes to a close bond between them.

A capable wife, of course, has many things to do. In verses 13 to 27 are listed counsel and principles that wives in any age can use for the benefit of their families. For example, with the rising cost of clothing and furnishings, a capable wife learns to be handy and thrifty so that her family is comfortably dressed and presentable. (Verses 13, 19, 21, 22) To reduce the family food bill, she grows what she can and shops carefully.—Verses 14, 16.

Obviously, this woman does not eat "the bread of laziness." She works hard, and she efficiently coordinates her household's activities. (Verse 27) She girds up "her hips with strength," which means that she prepares to engage in physically demanding tasks. (Verse 17) She rises before the sun to begin her workday, and she works industriously into the night. It is as if the lamp that illuminates her work were always burning.—Verses 15, 18.

Above all, the capable wife is a spiritual person. She fears God and worships him with deep respect and reverential awe. (Verse 30) She likewise assists her husband in training their children to do the same. Verse 26 says: "In wisdom," she instructs her children, and "the law of loving-kindness is upon her tongue."

A capable wife does not eat "the bread of laziness"

A Capable Husband

In order to attract a capable wife, Lemuel would need to fulfill the responsibilities of a capable husband. Lemuel's mother reminds him of several of these.

A capable husband would receive a good report from "the older men of the land." (Proverbs 31:23) That means he would be one who is able, honest, trustworthy, and God-fearing. (Exodus 18:21; Deuteronomy 16:18-20) As such, he would be "known in the gates," where the prominent men gathered to conduct the affairs of the city. To be "known" as a God-fearing man, he would have to be reasonable and work harmoniously with the elders of the "land," perhaps meaning the district or region.

No doubt speaking from personal experience, Lemuel's mother reminds her son about the importance of showing appreciation for his prospective wife. No one on earth would be dearer to him. So imagine the deep emotion in his voice when he confesses before all: "There are many daughters that have shown capableness, but you—you have ascended above them all."—Proverbs 31:29.

It is apparent that Lemuel appreciated his mother's wise counsel. We note, for instance, that in verse 1, he refers to his mother's words as his own. Hence, he took her "correction" to heart and benefited from her advice. May we too profit from this "weighty message" by applying its principles in our lives.





How WILL JEHOVAH REMEMBER YOU?

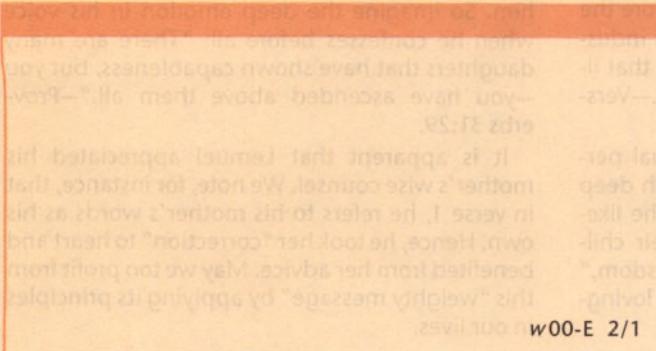
"DO REMEMBER me, O my God." A number of times Nehemiah petitioned God in those words. (Nehemiah 5:19; 13:14, 31) It is quite natural that when people are in dire straits, they turn to God with expressions of entreaty like that.

What, though, do people have in mind when they ask God to remember them? Clearly, they hope for God to do more than simply recall their names. They no doubt hope in the same way as did one of the criminals executed alongside Jesus. This one, unlike the other, implored Jesus: "Remember me when you get into your kingdom." He wanted Jesus not only to remember who he was but also to do something for him—to resurrect him.—Luke 23:42.

Consistently, the Bible shows that with God, "remembering"

means taking positive action. For example, after the earth had been inundated by the floodwaters for 150 days, "God remembered Noah . . . , and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters began to subside." (Genesis 8:1) Centuries later, Samson, blinded and chained by the Philistines, prayed: "Jehovah, remember me, please, and strengthen me, please, just this once." Jehovah remembered Samson by giving him superhuman strength so that he could avenge himself against God's enemies. (Judges 16:28-30) As for Nehemiah, Jehovah blessed his efforts, and true worship was restored in Jerusalem.

"All the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope," wrote the apostle Paul. (Romans 15:4) If we remember Jehovah by seeking to do his will, as his faithful servants did in the past, we can be confident that Jehovah will remember us by helping us to obtain our daily needs, by supporting us in our trials, and by delivering us when he brings judgment upon the ungodly.—Matthew 6:33; 2 Peter 2:9.



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