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THE WATCHTOWER
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



CAN DEATH BE DEFEATED?

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A WATCHTOWER provides a vantage point from which the watchman can observe and warn of approaching danger. This magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses since 1879, serves a similar purpose. It keeps watch on world events in these critical times and calls attention to God's warning of his vengeance soon to be executed on those ruining the earth. It comforts all peoples with the hope that God's kingdom by Jesus Christ is about to bring in a global paradise of peace. It encourages all to exercise faith in the ransoming power of Jesus' shed blood, and points to the joyous prospect of everlasting life on earth under the sovereignty of the true God, Jehovah. "The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom" is nonpolitical, and adheres to the Bible as authority.

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WHEN TRAGEDY STRIKES

THE family apparently did not have much materially. Yet they had a great deal for which to be thankful. Their land was productive, the climate was pleasantly warm most of the year, and they had an ideal location.

Their city of Nain was beautifully situated in the fertile plain of Esdraelon on the northwest side of the Hill of Moreh. From their home the family could look out across a green valley to the gracefully wooded hills of Galilee only a few miles away. And, towering in the distance beyond, the snowcapped summit of Mount Hermon and the Lebanon mountains could be seen. How pleasant it was at the day's end to sit out on the housetop and view the scenery—just the three of them together—the man, his wife and their young son!

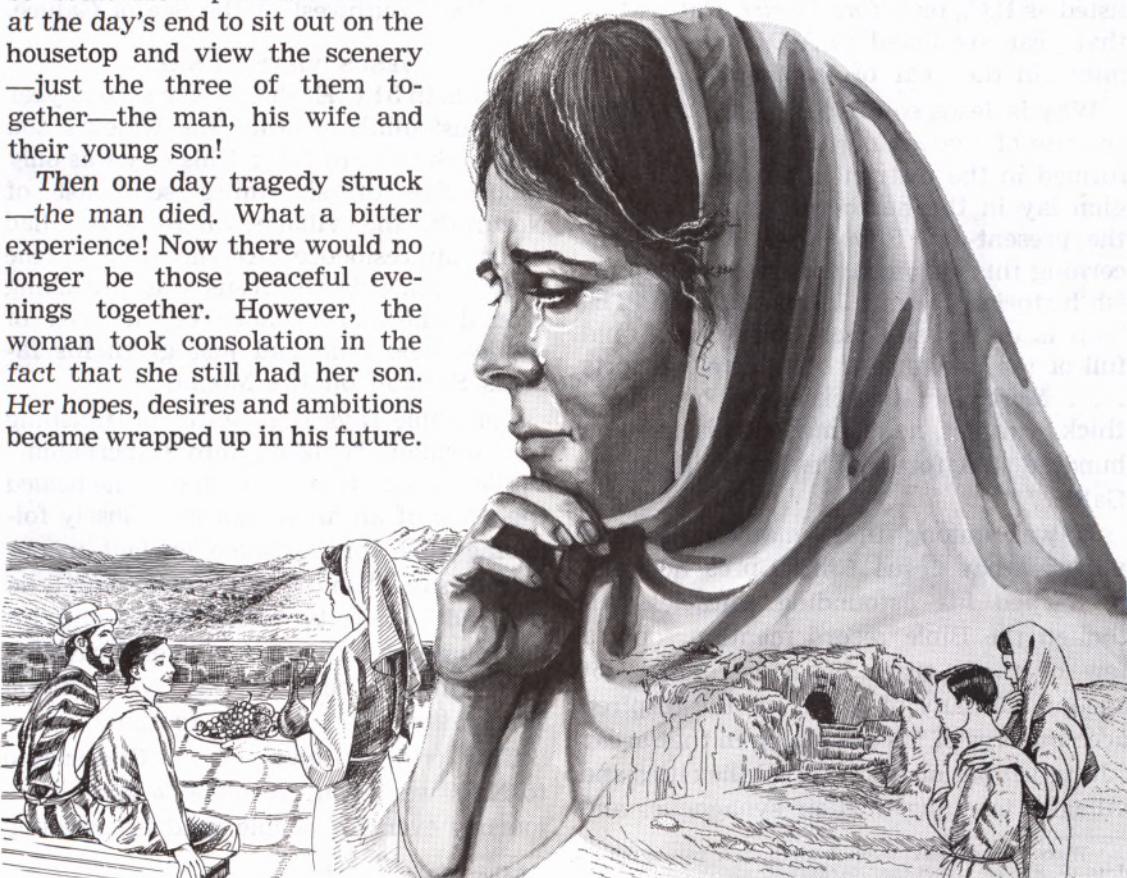
Then one day tragedy struck—the man died. What a bitter experience! Now there would no longer be those peaceful evenings together. However, the woman took consolation in the fact that she still had her son. Her hopes, desires and ambitions became wrapped up in his future.

In this way she again found meaning and purpose in life.

But then tragedy struck once more. The son died. Now there was no one in whom she could find consolation. The widow's grief was great as the son's remains were prepared for burial.

Perhaps you are familiar with the empty feeling that comes with losing a loved one. How depressed and utterly helpless you can feel! Death is indeed a bitter enemy. On such occasions, a person is very concerned about the future for the dead. Is there really hope for them?

Imagine if someone could come along



and take the hand of your dear one and deliver him back to you alive and healthy once again. What joy you would have! How wonderful it would be!

'But that is impossible,' you may say.

True, it has never happened in our lifetime. Yet it *has* happened before. Women have received their dead back by resurrection.

When did this happen? Why can we believe it? What does it mean for us today?

CAN DEATH BE DEFEATED?

DID you ever consider the impact that Jesus Christ made on human history? The very calendar that most persons in the Western world use is based on the year he was thought to have been born. As *The World Book Encyclopedia* observes: "Dates before that year are listed as B.C., or *before Christ*. Dates after that year are listed as A.D., or *anno Domini* (in the year of our Lord)."

Why is Jesus so famous? For one thing, because of the wonderful miracles he performed in the district of Galilee. This region lay in the northern part of what is the present-day Republic of Israel. Concerning this district the first-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus wrote: The "soil is universally rich and fruitful, and full of the plantations of trees of all sorts . . . Moreover, the cities lie here very thick." In fact, he claimed, "there are two hundred and forty cities and villages in Galilee."*

It was among these many cities and villages that Jesus Christ preached and performed his astounding miracles. Although the Bible record mentions only a few of these cities by name, Jesus got around to many of them, for the inspired account says of his preaching in that area: "Jesus set out on a tour of all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and

preaching the good news of the kingdom and curing every sort of disease and every sort of infirmity."—Matt. 9:35.

Many of the Galileans to whom Jesus preached knew him, for he had been raised right in their midst—in the little village of Nazareth, which lay in the hills some 18 miles† southwest of the Sea of Galilee.

JESUS' VISIT TO NAIN

It was in 31 C.E., during the second year of Jesus' ministry, that the widow's son died in the city of Nain. This city was only about five or six miles southeast of Nazareth, the village where Jesus had taken up residence. At the time of the young man's death, Jesus was preaching around the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, where he had just given his famous Sermon on the Mount.

The Bible says that Jesus, on finishing this sermon, "entered into Capernaum." While there in that seacoast city, he healed the slave of an army officer. "Closely following this [or, as some ancient manuscripts say, "On the following day"] he traveled to a city called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd were traveling with him."—Luke 7:1-11, *New World Translation*, 1971 edition, footnote.

This trip southwest from Capernaum to Nain was about 20 miles, a good day's journey even for people used to traveling

* *Wars of the Jews*, Book 3, chapter 3, paragraph 2; *Life of Flavius Josephus*, paragraph 45.

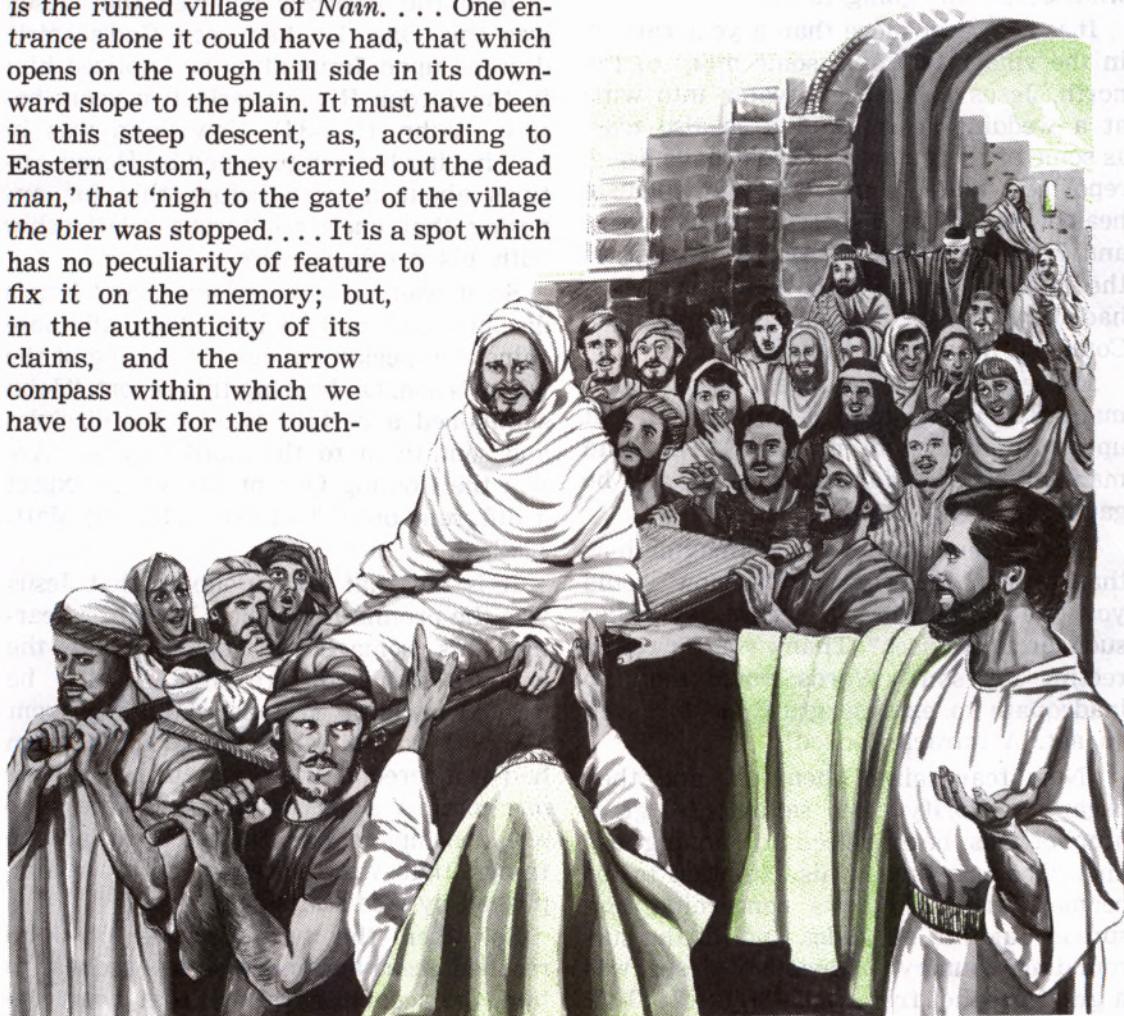
† One mile = 1.6 kilometers.

on foot. Jesus and his band crossed the valley and approached the entrance of this city. Then, the account tells us, "as he got near the gate of the city, why, look! there was a dead man being carried out, the only-begotten son of his mother. Besides, she was a widow. A considerable crowd from the city was also with her. And when the Lord caught sight of her, he was moved with pity for her."—Luke 7:12, 13.

Regarding this encounter, Arthur P. Stanley, who visited this location during the last century, wrote in his book *Sinai and Palestine*: "On the northern slope . . . is the ruined village of *Nain*. . . . One entrance alone it could have had, that which opens on the rough hill side in its downward slope to the plain. It must have been in this steep descent, as, according to Eastern custom, they 'carried out the dead man,' that 'nigh to the gate' of the village the bier was stopped. . . . It is a spot which has no peculiarity of feature to fix it on the memory; but, in the authenticity of its claims, and the narrow compass within which we have to look for the touch-

ing incident, it may rank amongst the most interesting points of the scenery of the Gospel narrative."

Another 19th-century visitor to this place, J. W. McGarvey, wrote in his book *Lands of the Bible*: "Nain is perched on a bench, with a steep slope of about 60 feet descending to the plain just north of it. The road from the north approaches it by a narrow valley at its western end, and beyond this are some rock-cut sepulchres . . . As Jesus approached the gate of the town, coming from the direction of Capernaum, where he was the previous day, the



procession bearing the son of the widow was going out toward this burying-place, and thus they happened to meet."

AN AMAZING MIRACLE

On meeting the mourning crowd and the grief-stricken woman, Jesus was moved with pity for her. His heart was touched by her extreme sadness. So with tenderness, and yet with a firmness that imparted confidence, he said to her: "Stop weeping." His manner and action arrested the crowd's attention, so that when 'he approached and touched the bier, the bearers stood still.' All must have wondered what Jesus was going to do.

It is true that more than a year earlier, in the village of Cana, some miles to the north, Jesus had turned water into wine at a wedding feast. And it is also true, as some of the mourners might have heard reported, that Jesus had miraculously healed persons of diseases in other cities and villages not far away. But as far as the inspired Bible record indicates, never had Jesus raised anyone from the dead. Could he do such a thing?

Addressing the corpse, Jesus commanded: "Young man, I say to you, Get up!" And marvel of marvels! "The dead man sat up and started to speak, and he gave him to his mother."

What a remarkable thing! Imagine how that woman must have felt. How would you feel? What does a person say under such circumstances? 'Thank you for resurrecting my son'? Words would seem so inadequate to express gratitude for such an act. A miracle indeed!

"Now fear seized them all, and they began to glorify God, saying: 'A great prophet has been raised up among us,' and, 'God has turned his attention to his people.' And this news concerning him spread out into all Judea and all the surrounding country." Obviously Jesus was a great prophet from God.—Luke 7:13-17.

THE PROMISED MIRACLE WORKER?

Fifteen centuries earlier, the prophet Moses had performed amazing miracles by God's power, even parting the Red Sea to allow the entire Israelite nation to pass through dry-shod. But a greater miracle-working prophet was prophesied to come. Said Moses under inspiration of God: "A prophet from your own midst, from your brothers, like me, is what Jehovah your God will raise up for you—to him you people should listen." (Deut. 18:15) Therefore, in the first century the question was: 'Is this Jesus of Nazareth the prophet of God that was foretold to come?'

John the Baptizer believed that Jesus was this One. He had seen God's spirit descend upon Jesus after he baptized him in the Jordan River nearly two years before. (John 1:32-34) Now John was in jail, having been imprisoned by Herod Antipas about a year before this for exposing that one's adulterous relationship with his brother's wife.

So it was there in prison that "John's disciples reported to him about all these things," especially about the raising of the widow's son. On hearing this report, "John summoned a certain two of his disciples and sent them to the Lord to say: 'Are you the Coming One or are we to expect a different one?' "—Luke 7:18, 19; Matt. 11:2, 3.

It is not that John doubted that Jesus was the promised prophet. But after hearing this remarkable report about the widow's son being restored to life, he wanted a verbal statement directly from Jesus as to his Messianic identity. John had wondered if there was to be another one coming, a successor, as it were, who would complete the fulfillment of all the things that were foretold to be accomplished by God's Messiah.

So when the two disciples of John reached Jesus and made John's request to him, the account says: "In that hour [Je-

sus] cured many of sicknesses and grievous diseases and wicked spirits, and granted many blind persons the favor of seeing. Hence in answer he said to the two: 'Go your way, report to John what you saw and heard: the blind are receiving sight, the lame are walking, the lepers are being cleansed and the deaf are hearing, *the dead are being raised up*, the poor are being told the good news. And happy is he who has not stumbled over me.'”—Luke 7:20-23.

Certainly this report was encouraging

to John. It was confirmative proof that Jesus was indeed performing the remarkable works that would distinguish the prophet foretold by Moses. Never before had there been such a demonstration of miraculous powers by a man! So John, despite his being left in prison, had the assurance that Jesus was the one and only prophet who fulfilled what Moses had foretold.

There is no question about it. Even death can really be defeated, as in the case of the dead son of the widow of Nain!

»WHAT IT MEANS TO US«

ALTHOUGH there is no miracle-working prophet of God on earth today who can resurrect the dead, yet we can be absolutely confident that soon our dead loved ones will be restored to life.

A short time before visiting Nain, while Jesus was in Jerusalem attending the Jewish passover in the early spring of 31 C.E., he made a remarkable promise regarding this resurrection of the dead. Up until that time he apparently had not raised anyone. Nevertheless, he said:

"Just as the Father raises the dead up and makes them alive, so the Son also makes those alive whom he wants to. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted also to the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to do judging, because Son of man he is. Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment."—John 5:21, 26-29.

Those religious opposers to whom Jesus was speaking did not believe him. Even when authoritative reports began spreading throughout Judea that Jesus had raised the widow's son to life up in Galilee, they refused to believe. In fact, two years later, when Jesus resurrected his friend Lazarus, they were so angered that they plotted his death. They even "took counsel to kill Lazarus also, because on account of him many of the Jews were . . . putting faith in Jesus."—John 12:10, 11; 11:38-53.

However, just because some in the first century refused to accept the overwhelming evidence that Jesus was the foretold prophet of God is no reason for us today to be skeptical and to fail to put faith in Jesus' promise of a resurrection. Jesus' words are reliable! He can do what he promised! His resurrecting the widow's son was proof that he can make "those alive whom he wants to."

Therefore, we have every reason today to have confidence in Jesus' promise that "all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out." The evidence is

that the time for this to occur is now near at hand. Since the year 1914, we have seen in our generation the fulfillment of all the things Jesus Christ and his apostles said would mark the "last days" of this system of things. World war, food shortages, pestilences, earthquakes, lawlessness, delinquency—all are the order of the day. The end of this wicked system is unquestionably near.—Matt. 24:3-14; Luke 21:10, 11; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 2 Pet. 3:3, 4.

After the end occurs, the resurrection will take place here on earth. If you exercise faith, you may live to see it. What a grand time that will be! How happy will be the reunion of the resurrected dead with their loved ones! Then the promise will be fulfilled: "He [God] will actually swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces."—Isa. 25:8.

The Welcome Rain of Truth in Botswana



"GOROGA ka pula"—"Welcome with the rain." This traditional greeting of Botswana is appropriate, often containing depth of feeling, for this is a hot, dusty, semiarid country where rain means so much to life. Likewise, righteously disposed people in Botswana welcome the refreshing rains of spiritual truth from God's Word, the Bible.

Known formerly as Bechuanaland (when under British rule), Botswana lies in the heart of southern Africa, between South Africa, Zimbabwe and South-West Africa/Namibia.

Most of the rivers flow for only a few days after a flash flood. But, in many cases, for months after the flow has stopped water can be obtained by digging holes in the sand of the dry riverbed. Even the Okavango River, which brings a heavy

flow of water from Angola in the north, never reaches the sea. It forms a delta embracing a huge area, called the Okavango Swamps, and is full of a great variety of wildlife, including elephants and lions. It finally evaporates in the Makarikari salt lakes.

No doubt the climate is the main reason why the population of Botswana (718,000) is very small when compared to its size, 216,911 square miles (561,800 km²). That is over four times the size of England.

For many years, Botswana has enjoyed relatively stable and peaceful conditions. Until recently it was one of the few countries in the world that had no army. The two official languages are English and Setswana.* Very significantly, the basic

* Botswana is the country, Setswana the language and Batswana the people.

unit of currency is the *pula*, meaning "rain"!

OPPOSITION OVERCOME

In 1932, two of Jehovah's Witnesses visited Botswana and placed 1,700 publications containing the message of God's kingdom. This was the first little shower of spiritual truth in this country. But at that time there was no one to continue the 'planting and watering' work. (1 Cor. 3: 5-9) Moreover, a serious problem arose. In 1941, due to war hysteria, the literature of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned in this land, then a British colony. Moreover, a former chief had decreed that only three religions had the right to establish churches: the Roman Catholic Church, the London Missionary Society and the Seventh-Day Adventists.

Nevertheless, waters of truth seeped through. During the 1940's and 1950's some of the menfolk from Botswana obtained work in South Africa, learned the truth while there and, on returning home, brought the Kingdom message to their families and neighbors.

These new Witnesses soon came under the fire of opposition. Some were flogged by chiefs for preaching, being charged with bringing another religion into the country. A visiting overseer, Joshua Thongoana, was arrested twice and told to leave the country. On the second occasion, he was brought before the local African court. A minister of the London Missionary Society was present. His church had the monopoly on religion in the area and he was obviously determined to keep it. However, in the discussion Thongoana did so well in explaining his work and the Kingdom message from the Bible (the minister had not even bothered to bring one) that the chief dismissed the case.

Until the ban was lifted in 1959, arrests of the Witnesses were many. However, with Jehovah's help they stood firm.

BREAKING FREE FROM WRONG PRACTICES

In most parts of Africa there are many local customs and practices that are based on superstition and witchcraft and, hence, are displeasing to Almighty God. For example, when an African becomes sick, he usually consults a witch doctor, who "throws the bones" and then tells his client what he considers to be the cause of and remedy for the trouble. A common belief is that the "spirits" of ancestors are involved and have to be pacified. Horns of animals are displayed on roofs of huts for "protection" against the "spirits." In 1961 a determined effort was made to help the local Witnesses to break free from these strongly entrenched traditions.

Consider the case of a young sister who received an urgent message from her father to return to her home village. Instead of an emergency, she found that the family was preparing to "bless" a new house by means of witchcraft. For this pagan ceremony, each member of the family was required to give blood. The sister refused. She was beaten and locked inside a hut. That night she was made to sleep outside in the cold. However, early the next morning, before the sun was up, she quietly went to the main road and there got a ride back to town. This sister is very happy to have overcome enslavement to false worship and is very zealous in Kingdom preaching. She also helps to translate Bible literature into Setswana.

A publication that has helped many new ones in Botswana to break free from demonism is the booklet *Unseen Spirits—Do They Help Us? Or Do They Harm Us?* One young couple were members of a church where they had to wear religious clothes, tie strings and ropes around their bodies for "protection" and use "holy water." But they found that these caused them to have bad dreams and to be influenced by the demons. After only two studies in the *Unseen Spirits* booklet, they

destroyed all these spiritistic items and began attending the Christian meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses. They have made rapid progress and are now sharing in preaching the "good news" to others.

TRAINING YOUNG ONES

Problems with raising children are widespread today. In Botswana some children of Witnesses have fallen away to immorality or to the material pleasures of this system of things. However, a real effort has been made to help both parents and young ones to improve in Christian life and activity.

Training from infancy has been stressed. For example, one Christian father now spends 15 minutes each morning speaking to his children about Jehovah and His Word. He also applies firm but loving discipline when needed. How happy this brother felt when he heard his little two-year-old son speaking to a non-Christian visitor about Jehovah and the need to pray to Him! He feels further rewarded by the fact that his eight-year-old daughter conducts a regular home Bible study with a classmate at school.

In another town a young Witness was asked to stand in front of her class as an example in neatness, personal grooming and conduct. The teacher concerned was so impressed that she sought out the girl's parents, which resulted in the starting of another home Bible study.

GOOD PROGRESS

There has been an increase in full-time Kingdom workers among Botswana Witnesses. For example, one Witness and his wife gave up good jobs in South Africa to return to Botswana. In spite of having a family of their own, they are now serving as special pioneers (full-time Kingdom proclaimers) and are having good success encouraging young ones to join the "pioneer ranks." Moreover, they feel that they

have lost nothing by entering the full-time preaching work. As they said: "Jehovah has blessed us in so many ways, both spiritually and materially, that we often have more than we need. For a recent district assembly we not only had sufficient funds to attend ourselves but also were able to help other brothers and sisters to travel to the assembly and back."

For taking up the pioneer activity, another young Witness was severely criticized by his family, teachers, classmates and even other young ones in the congregation. He was told to be practical and to think about his future. But he had faith that if he sincerely put Kingdom interests first, all else would be provided. (Matt. 6:30-34) The young Witness obtained part-time employment and is now actually better off materially than some of those in full-time employment who tried to discourage him from being a pioneer. Of much greater importance is the spiritual improvement he has made. He said: "My faith has been strengthened by having a fuller share in the harvest work, by studying God's Word and the Society's publications every day and by applying what the Bible says."

As one looks around the country of Botswana, the results of much hard work are encouraging. Many new "green shoots" are springing up in response to the regular "rain" of spiritual truth in many towns and villages. There are nearly 300 active Witnesses in the country, and 964 Witnesses and interested persons attended the celebration of the Memorial of Christ's death on March 31, 1980. However, there is still much to be accomplished. The ratio of Jehovah's Witnesses to population is 1 to 2,578. New mining towns are springing up and in the vast reaches of the desert are thousands of nomadic Bushmen who as yet have heard little or nothing about God's kingdom. The harvest is still great, but the workers are still too few.—Matt. 9:37, 38.

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

● 'Fornication or adultery unhampered by contraceptives is a lesser evil than a husband and wife using a form of contraception during intercourse,' said Catholic philosopher Elizabeth Anscomb of the University of Cambridge in England. She stated:

Warped View of Sexual Morality
"An act of contraceptive intercourse is an act of rather gross unchastity. . . . Marriage doesn't make it respectable. If you're going to do that sort of thing, it's better to go do it with a whore, not with your wife." She declared that the Catholic Church 'always considered contraception as a breach of chastity.'

Priest Richard Roach of Marquette University in the United States agreed, saying that 'the introduction of contraceptives into a marriage changes the status of a wife from an honorable to a dishonorable woman.'

However, nowhere does God's Word, the Bible, equate such birth control with fornication or adultery. While it condemns the latter, it is silent about the former, making it a matter for personal decision. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10) Too, it is of interest to note that in many polls taken of Catholics, the majority do not agree with the comments of such Catholic teachers, since they practice birth control, including the use of contraceptives.

● The average life span of people in various countries has increased in recent decades.

The Problem of Aging

From this, one could conclude that individuals are living longer, due to better nutrition, health care and other modern scientific advancements.

However, Britain's "Economist" notes: "Almost all the gains reflect progress in eliminating premature death. The average life-span has risen because fewer people die young, not because the oldest members of the population live longer. While life expectancy from birth has risen dramatically [due to fewer premature deaths], for persons aged 40 and older life expectancy has changed relatively little. For those aged 75, it has changed hardly at all."

Scientists cannot understand why aging occurs, since theoretically body cells should divide in two and multiply indefinitely. Bacteria do not age and die naturally, for these one-celled organisms can go on dividing and multiplying. But human cells do age and die. Some think that the hereditary mechanism in man is "programmed" to age and die, for in laboratory tests human cells that were isolated and given the needed nutrients still grew old and died. Cells taken from younger persons lasted longer than cells from older persons, but eventually they died too.

Evolutionary scientists do not face the fact that man grows old and dies because of inheriting this condition from our first parents who rebelled against God. (Rom. 5:12) Only in God's new order will the aging and death processes be reversed.—Rev. 21:4.

● Being a disciple of Jesus means to imitate him in teaching and conduct. The evangelical publication "Christianity Today" acknowledges

Churches Not Making Disciples

that members of Christendom's churches have failed on both counts. (Matt. 28:19, 20) The magazine states: "The churches of the Western world have not made discipleship a condition of being a Christian. One is not required to be . . . a disciple in order to become a Christian, and one may remain a Christian without any signs of progress toward or in discipleship. Contemporary American churches in particular do not require following Christ in his example, spirit, and teachings as a condition of membership."

The magazine also noted the need to imitate Jesus "as he walked from place to place announcing, showing, and explaining the governance of God. Disciples had to be with him to learn how to do what he did." Today, the average churchgoer does not imitate Jesus in talking to others about God's purposes.

On the other hand, anyone who is baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses clearly understands that he must imitate Jesus not only in doctrine and conduct but also by sharing in 'preaching the good news of the kingdom in all the inhabited earth for a witness before the end comes.'—Matt. 24:14; 1 Pet. 2:21.

The Waldenses— Heretics or Truth-Seekers?

THE time? The 12th century C.E.—200 years before Wycliffe and Huss and 300 years before Luther. The place? Southern France and the Alpine valleys of that country and northern Italy. The situation? The common people live in poverty and are purposely kept in ignorance by a rich and often profligate clergy class. In all Europe, the Roman Catholic Church reigns supreme, being powerful, opulent and worldly.

Against this background we find a group of people that stand out in stark contrast. They believe the Bible to be the Word of God and endeavor to live according to its righteous principles. They go up hill and down dale, two by two, preaching and teaching whatever truths they have been able to discover by their reading of the parts of the Scriptures available to them in their language. For this, they are hounded persistently as heretics, many paying with their life. Who are they?

They came to be known in France as the *Vaudois*. Their Catholic persecutors called them, in Latin, *Valdenses*, from which the English word Waldenses is derived.

FORERUNNERS

Catholic and Protestant historians disagree on the origins of the Waldenses. The former would have us believe that what they term the "heretical sect" of the Waldenses was an isolated phenomenon that



suddenly sprang up at the end of the 12th century under the leadership of a Frenchman from Lyons named Valdès or Waldo. Many Protestants, on the other hand, claim that the Waldenses were a link in the unbroken chain of dissenters between the time of Emperor Constantine (fourth century C.E.) and the Protestant reformers of the 16th century. These Protestants are of the opinion that the name Waldenses was derived from the Latin word *vallis*, meaning "valley," and refers to the fact that these dissenters, hounded persistently as heretics, were obliged to take refuge in the Alpine valleys of both France and Italy.

Naturally, Catholic historians reject this Protestant explanation as unhistorical. However, by claiming that the Waldenses exploded onto the scene of medieval history with Valdès or Waldo, the Catholic Church is playing down the patent historical fact that there were many other dissenters before Waldo began his preaching in the late 1170's. The truth seems to be that Waldo and his associates became a rallying point for similar groups of dissenters, some of which had long been in existence.

The Catholic Church would like us to forget that seeds of discontent were pres-

ent within her midst many years before Waldo. For example, Bishop Agobard of Lyons, France (779-840 C.E.), came out strongly against image worship, churches dedicated to saints and church liturgy that was not in line with the Holy Scriptures.

Across the Alps, in Turin, Italy, a contemporary of Agobard, Bishop Claudius, took a similar stand. He condemned prayers to saints, the veneration of relics and the cross and, in general, rejected church tradition as being opposed to the Scriptures. Claudius of Turin has been called "the first Protestant reformer." He died sometime between 827 and 839 C.E.

In the 11th century archdeacon Bérenger, or Berengarius, of Tours, France, said to be one of the most influential theologians of his time, opposed the dogma of transubstantiation, maintaining that the bread and wine used to commemorate Christ's death are emblematic and not miraculously changed into the body and blood of Christ. He also upheld the superiority of the Bible over tradition. Bérenger was excommunicated as a heretic in 1050.

Very early in the 12th century two men stand out as prominent dissenters in France. They were Peter of Bruys and Henry of Lausanne. The former began his adult life as a priest in the Alps of southeast France. He soon gave up the priesthood because he disagreed with the church on such important doctrines as infant baptism, transubstantiation, prayers for the dead, worship of the cross and the need for church buildings. Banished from the dioceses of the southern Alps, he preached directly to the people throughout southern France, making many disciples. He was finally burned at the stake at St. Gilles, near Arles, in 1140.

The work of Peter of Bruys was continued by Henry of Lausanne, also called Henry of Cluny. He was a monk who, as early as 1101, had begun speaking out

boldly against church liturgy, the corrupt clergy of his day and the religious hierarchy system. He maintained that the Bible is the sole rule of faith and worship. Henry of Lausanne started his preaching at Le Mans, in western France. Expelled from there, he continued his missionary work throughout southern France, eventually meeting up with Peter of Bruys. In 1148 he was arrested and thrown into prison for life. But the ideas of these men spread like wildfire from the southern Alps to the Mediterranean and right across southern France to the Bay of Biscay.

WALDO AND THE "POOR MEN OF LYONS"

It was in this historical setting that a layman came onto the scene in Lyons, France. Nothing is known of this man's birth, said to have occurred around 1140 C.E. Even his name is something of a mystery, being variously spelled Valdès, Valdo or Waldo. The forename Pierre, or Peter, does not appear in any manuscript dated earlier than 1368. The name is thought to have been attributed to him by his later followers, to indicate that he was a more worthy imitator of the apostle Peter than were the popes of Rome, who claim to be Peter's successors.

Waldo was a wealthy merchant of Lyons. He was married and had two daughters. Being a devout man and a practicing Catholic, he asked a theologian friend for Scriptural advice on what he should do to please God. In reply, his friend quoted Matthew 19:21, where Jesus told the rich young man: "If you want to be perfect, go sell your belongings and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven, and come be my follower."

Waldo took this counsel to heart. After making provision for his wife and putting his two daughters in a convent, he commissioned two priests, Etienne d'Anse and Bernard Ydros, to translate the Gospels and other Bible books into the vernacular

language spoken in the Provence and Dauphiné provinces of southeastern France. He then distributed the remainder of his worldly possessions among the poor and set about studying the Word of God. Moreover, he preached in the streets of Lyons, inviting the inhabitants to awake spiritually and to return to simple, Biblical Christianity.

Having been well known as a prosperous businessman, Waldo gained many hearing ears and soon had a group of followers. They rejoiced at hearing the Bible's comforting message in their own tongue, for up to that time the church had prevented the translating of the Bible into any language other than Latin. Many agreed to give up their belongings and to devote themselves to teaching the Bible in the language of the common people. They became known as the "Poor Men of Lyons."

This lay preaching aroused the ire of the clergy. In 1179 Pope Alexander III forbade Waldo and his followers to preach without permission of the local bishop. As was to be expected, Bishop Bellesmains of Lyons refused to consent to this. Historical records indicate that, faced with this ban, Waldo replied to the hierarchy in the words of Acts 5:29: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."

Waldo and his associates kept on preaching. So in 1184 Pope Lucius III excommunicated them, and the bishop of Lyons banished them from his diocese. The result was similar to what occurred when the early Christians were hounded out of Jerusalem. Of them, the Bible states: "Those who had been scattered went through the land declaring the good news of the word."—Acts 8:1-4.

These 12th-century dissenters took refuge in the Alps and throughout southern France, teaching the Bible as they went from place to place. Undoubtedly they met up with other dissident groups, such as the followers of Peter of Bruys and Henry

of Lausanne. Across the Alpine passes leading into northern Italy, they met up with dissident groups that already existed in the valleys of Piedmont and Lombardy. These Bible-oriented dissident groups, who later became known all over Europe as the Waldenses, are to be distinguished from contemporary "heretical" groups, such as the Cathars and the Albigenses, whose doctrines were based more on Persian philosophy than on the Bible. Historical records show that by the beginning of the 13th century Waldenses were to be found not only in southern France and northern Italy but also in eastern and northern France, Flanders, Germany, Austria and even Bohemia, where Waldo is said to have died in 1217.

THE SEARCH FOR BIBLE TRUTH

Whether Waldo was the actual founder of the Waldenses or not, to him must go the credit for taking the initiative of having the Bible translated from Latin into the vernacular languages then spoken by the common people to whom he and his associates preached. And remember, this was some 200 years before Wycliffe translated the Bible for English-speaking dissenters.

The basic position of the early Waldenses was that the Bible is the one source of religious truth. In a world that was just emerging from what has been termed the "Dark Ages," they groped in search of Christian truth. They apparently did the best they could with the few books of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures they possessed in a language they could read and understand. It would seem, from certain records, that they did not get straightened out on such doctrines as the Trinity, immortality of the soul and hellfire.

Nonetheless, these early Waldenses understood the Bible well enough to reject image worship, transubstantiation, infant baptism, purgatory, the worship of Mary,

prayers to saints, veneration of the cross and relics, deathbed repentance, confession to priests, Masses for the dead, papal pardons and indulgences, priestly celibacy and the use of carnal weapons. They also rejected imposing, elaborate church buildings and considered "Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots" to be the Church of Rome, from which they invited their listeners to flee. (Rev. 17:5; 18:4) All of this in the late 12th and early 13th centuries!

In their preaching work the early Waldenses taught the Bible, laying much emphasis on the Sermon on the Mount and the Model Prayer, both of which set forth God's kingdom as the thing to pray for and to seek first. (Matt. 6:10, 33) They maintained that any Christian man or woman who possessed a sufficient knowledge of the Bible was authorized to preach the "good news." Additionally, they believed Jesus to be the only intermediary between God and man. Inasmuch as Jesus had died once for all time, they held that his sacrifice could not be renewed by a priest celebrating Mass. The early Waldenses celebrated the Memorial of Christ's death once a year, using bread and wine as symbols.

PREACHING BRINGS PERSECUTION

The primitive Waldenses contended that it is not necessary to go to a church building to worship God. They held underground meetings in barns, private homes or wherever they could do so. There they studied the Bible and trained new preachers, who were sent out with more experienced ones. They traveled two by two from farm to farm and, in the towns and villages, from house to house. The authoritative *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (Vol. 15, column 2591) states in an article that is otherwise unfavorable to the Waldenses: "From their very earliest years, their children began to learn the

Gospels and the Epistles. The preaching of their deacons, priests and bishops consisted mainly of quotations from the Bible."

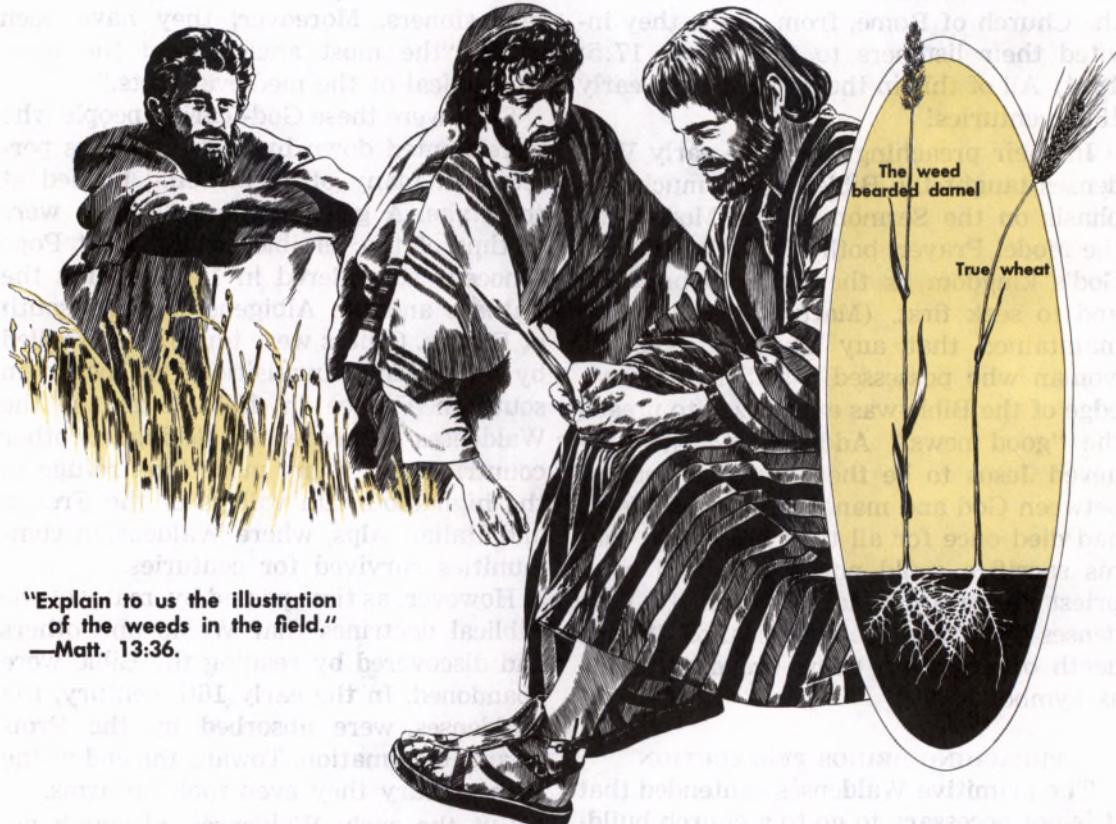
Other works inform us that the Waldenses had a fine reputation for hard work, high morality and honesty in paying their taxes. They disfellowshipped unrepentant sinners. Moreover, they have been called "the most ancient and the most evangelical of the medieval sects."

Such were these God-fearing people who were hunted down by their religious persecutors, many of them being burned at the stake. A great number of them were victims of the terrible crusade that Pope Innocent III ordered in 1209 against the Cathars and the Albigenses in the south of France. Others were tortured and killed by the dreaded Inquisition that began in southern France in 1229. Some of the Waldenses succeeded in fleeing to other countries, and many more took refuge in the high mountain valleys of the French and Italian Alps, where Waldensian communities survived for centuries.

However, as time passed by, many of the Biblical doctrines that Waldo and others had discovered by reading the Bible were abandoned. In the early 16th century, the Waldenses were absorbed by the Protestant Reformation. Toward the end of the 17th century they even took up arms.

But the early Waldenses, although accused of being "heretics," were in fact sincere truth-seekers and pioneers in Bible translation, Bible teaching and simple Christian living. To be sure, they did not break free from all the false doctrines of Babylonish false religion. But they apparently lived up to the knowledge they had of God's Word. Many, it would appear, were willing to die rather than renounce their faith. Of course, only "Jehovah knows those who belong to him." We can, therefore, safely leave any reward of future life in his hands.—2 Tim. 2:19.

A field producing wheat and weeds



"Explain to us the illustration of the weeds in the field."

—Matt. 13:36.

Seed sowing and harvest" constitute one of the cycles that Jehovah God said in his heart would never cease "for all the days the earth continues." (Gen. 8:21, 22) A related basic principle was expressed by the apostle Paul, when he wrote: "Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap."—Gal. 6:7.

2 On the basis of these fundamental facts, a farmer who had worked hard sow-

ing good wheat at seedtime was confident that in due season there would be a harvest. The one would logically follow the other. Likewise, when his farm workers informed him sometime later that his field was producing not only wheat but a certain weed, he was sure that there had been foul play. He knew what he had sown: wheat, not weeds. This new development required a decision. His employees suggested immediate action. They wanted to uproot the weeds right away, but the wise farmer tempered their eagerness. He told

1, 2. (a) As regards sowing, what principles can be counted upon? (b) What illustration is based on these two principles?

them to hold off, for fear of hurting the wheat while uprooting the weeds. Let both grow together. The harvest season would be time enough to separate the genuine wheat from the false.

³ This illustration was used by Jesus Christ to portray certain developments that would occur in the work he had started on earth. That sowing work was meant to produce the required crop of true Christians to be associated with him in the heavenly government known as "the kingdom of the heavens." He thus foretold that his good sowing would be infringed upon by the enemy Satan the Devil. The field would produce not only the desired harvest of wheatlike, true Christians but also a crop of weedlike counterfeit Christians. Both would be allowed to grow together until harvesttime, when the separating work would take place. Moreover, this separating work would be a further feature of the "last days," the "conclusion of a system of things."—Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43; compare Matthew 24:3; 2 Timothy 3:1.

⁴ Are you interested in seeing the end of the present wicked system? Will you be affected personally by the outcome of this harvesting work? And, incidentally, does Jesus' illustration provide a key to understanding the history of Christianity throughout the centuries? Let us see.

THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE WEEDS

⁵ On the shores of the Sea of Galilee, not far from the house where he was staying, Jesus introduced this parable to his disciples and to a great throng of curious people, saying: "The kingdom of the heavens has become like a man that sowed fine

seed in his field. While men were sleeping, his enemy came and oversowed weeds in among the wheat, and left. When the blade sprouted and produced fruit, then the weeds appeared also."—Matt. 13:24-26.

⁶ A quick look through the other kingdom illustrations in Matthew chapter 13 helps us to realize that the expression "the kingdom of the heavens" as used in these illustrations cannot refer to the completed Messianic government or kingdom in the heavens. Can one imagine "weeds," leaven-like "badness" (verse 33; 1 Cor. 5:8) or people likened to wicked, unsuitable "fish" (verses 47-50) being associated with Christ in his heavenly kingdom? Hardly! These illustrations must, therefore, be referring to good and bad developments with respect to the choosing of Christ's future associates in "the kingdom of the heavens." In particular, the parable of the wheat and the weeds illustrates a condition among those on earth who claim to be called to reign with Christ in his kingdom. This situation would be permitted for a time, before being brought to an end at the symbolic "harvest."

⁷ Jesus himself later explained the symbolic meaning of the "householder," or the "man that sowed," "his field," the "fine seed," "his enemy" and the "weeds." The account reads: "After dismissing the crowds he went into the house. And his disciples came to him and said: 'Explain to us the illustration of the weeds in the field.' In response he said: 'The sower of the fine seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; as for the fine seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; but the weeds are the sons of the wicked one, and the enemy that sowed them is the Devil.'" —Matt. 13:36-39.

⁸ Jesus identified himself as the "Son of man." (Matt. 8:20; 25:31; 26:64) In-

3. What important developments in connection with the Kingdom did Jesus illustrate, and of what would the separating work be a feature?
4. Why should this illustration be of interest to us?
5, 6. (a) Why cannot the expression "the kingdom of the heavens" in this parable refer to Christ's heavenly government? (b) What, then, do the kingdom illustrations refer to and illustrate?

7, 8. (a) Who is the "Son of man"? (b) What other prophecy mentions the "son of man" and those symbolized by the "fine seed"?

terestingly, it was in connection with the Kingdom that Jesus was prophetically called the "son of man" in a vision received by Daniel. That prophecy states: "To him [the "son of man"] 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." Showing that the Son of man would have associates ruling with him, the prophetic vision also says: "And the kingdom and the rulership and the grandeur of the kingdoms under all the heavens were given to the people who are the holy ones of the Supreme One. Their kingdom is an indefinitely lasting kingdom, and all the rulerships will serve and obey even them."

—Dan. 7:13, 14, 27.

SOWING "FINE SEED"

⁹ It is with a view to gathering out of the world the required number of such "holy ones," or "sons of the kingdom," that Jesus, the "householder" of the parable, sows "fine seed in his field." This "field" is explained as being "the world [Greek, *ko'smos*]," the world of mankind. From the time of Jesus' earthly ministry onward, mankind became a "field under cultivation," a religious field of opportunity for sowing and cultivating the "fine seed," or "sons of the kingdom." (1 Cor. 3:9) Jesus zealously prepared the Jewish part of the "field" during the three and a half years of his earthly ministry. (Matt. 9:35-38) Then, from Pentecost 33 C.E. onward, he planted "fine seed," first among Jews, and finally in the entire world, or "field."—Acts 1:8.

¹⁰ Explaining the "fine seed," Jesus said:

9. What is the "field," and why has Jesus sown "fine seed" in it?

10. What progress did the sowing work make among the Jews and the proselytes?

"These are the sons of the kingdom." The first of these spirit-begotten, anointed "sons of the kingdom" were Jesus' faithful apostles and the hundred or so other disciples, both men and women, who received the gift of the holy spirit at Pentecost 33 C.E. in Jerusalem. (Acts 1:13-15; 2:1-4) That same day, about 3,000 others, both Jews and proselytes, were added to the newly founded Christian congregation. (Acts 2:5-11, 41) Jehovah blessed this sowing work and "continued to join to them daily those being saved," so that soon "the number of the men [possibly not counting the women] became about five thousand." A little later, the account adds: "Believers in the Lord kept on being added, multitudes both of men and of women." (Acts 2:47; 4:4; 5:14) The sowing work was moving ahead rapidly among the Jews and the proselytes.

¹¹ After having arranged for seeds to be sown among the Samaritans (Acts, chap. 8), the Sower Jesus, by means of the holy spirit, extended the sowing work to the uncircumcised non-Jews or Gentiles. (Acts, chap. 10; 13:1-5, 46, 47) Within a few decades Christian congregations were established from North Africa to the Black Sea and from Babylonia to Italy, if not even farther west. (Acts 2:5-11; 1 Pet. 5:13; Rom. 15:24; Col. 1:5, 6, 23) As a result of zealous sowing, 'blades were sprouting and producing fruit.'—Matt. 13:26.

OVERSOWING OF WEEDS

¹² But there was mischief afoot. Jesus' parable had warned: "While men were sleeping, his [the Sower's] enemy came and oversowed weeds in among the wheat, and left. When the blade sprouted and produced fruit, then the weeds appeared also." (Matt. 13:25, 26) Jesus identified "his en-

11. How did the sowing progress among the Samaritans and the non-Jews?

12, 13. Who is the "enemy," and how did he sow weeds "while men were sleeping"?

emy" as being "the Devil," who would do his sabotaging work "while men were sleeping." In the Bible "sleep" can symbolize death or spiritual drowsiness. (Matt. 9:24; Rom. 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:6) After having spoken of 'finishing his course,' Paul told the elders from the Christian congregation in Ephesus: "I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore keep awake."

—Acts 20:24-31.

¹³ Historical facts show that it was "while men were sleeping" that Satan "came and oversowed weeds in among the wheat." Once the apostles, who collectively 'acted as a restraint' upon apostasy, began falling asleep in death, many Christian elders failed to "keep awake." (2 Thess. 2:3, 6-8) Becoming spiritually drowsy, they did not protect the "sons of the kingdom" from the "oppressive wolves" that began entering in among them. These were "weeds" sown among the "fine seed." Referring to the approaching end of the apostolic period, John, the last of the apostles to die, wrote: "It is the last hour, and, just as you have heard that antichrist is coming, even now there have come to be many antichrists; from which fact we gain the knowledge that it is the last hour. 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.

¹⁴ Jesus stated: "The weeds are the sons of the wicked one." (Matt. 13:38) In his book *Natural History of the Bible*, H. B. Tristram comments on the type of weeds

14. What information is given about the type of weed referred to in Jesus' parable?

referred to in this parable. He writes: "The Tares (*zizania*) are the same as the Arabic *zawān*, from which the Greek name is derived, the *Lolium temulentum*, or Bearded Darnel. . . . It is a kind of rye-grass, and is the only species of the grass family the seeds of which are poisonous. The derivation of *zawān* is from *zān*, 'vomiting,' the effect of eating darnel being to produce violent nausea, convulsions, and diarrhoea, which frequently ends in death. The plant, having a broader leaf than most wild grasses, is entirely like wheat until the ear appears."

¹⁵ It should be noted that the "weeds" are not, as some Jewish Talmudists* and others once believed, a degenerate form of wheat. Wheat seed never transforms itself into weeds. This would be contrary to Jehovah's immutable law: "Let the earth cause grass to shoot forth, vegetation bearing seed, fruit trees yielding fruit according to their kinds." (Gen. 1:11, 12) This scientific fact exonerates the "Son of man," Christ Jesus, the "sower of the fine seed," from any responsibility for what happened in "his field." The "fine seed" he sowed would never have become a crop of weeds. It could only produce "wheat," or true "sons of the kingdom." What later developed in his "field" was the direct result of his enemy's deliberate and malicious oversowing of "weeds," or "sons of the wicked one."

¹⁶ Thus, Jesus' illustration of the "wheat" and the "weeds" does much to explain the history of Christianity throughout the centuries. Historical facts show that after the death of the apostles Satan introduced

* "The Jerusalem Talmud quotes a view that tares are called *zunim* because as a result of them the wheat *mezannot* ('commit[s] adultery'), i.e., it changes its characteristics and is turned into tares."—*Encyclopædia Judaica*, Volume 15, column 810.

15. (a) Are the "weeds" degenerate "wheat"? (b) Therefore, of what is the "Son of man" blameless?

16. Of what historical interest is the parable of the "wheat" and the "weeds"?

among the congregations of true Christians many "weeds," "oppressive wolves" and "antichrists," just as Jesus, Paul, Peter, John and Jude had foretold. (Acts 20:29; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 1 John 2:18; Jude 4) It has been just as Jesus stated: "When the blade sprouted and produced fruit, then the weeds appeared also."—Matt. 13:26.

¹⁷ These "weeds" became particularly apparent during the second and third centuries, at which time such unscriptural doctrines as the inherent immortality of the soul, hellfire and the Trinity began to be taught by so-called church fathers. Many of these men were more philosophers than true Christian overseers faithful to

"LET BOTH GROW TOGETHER"

¹⁸ This situation could not fail to disturb the 'Son of man's' "slaves." Jesus' parable continues: "So the slaves of the householder came up and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow fine seed in your field? How, then, does it come to have weeds?' He said to them, 'An enemy, a man, did this.' They said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go out and collect them?' He said, 'No; that by no chance, while collecting the weeds, you uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the harvest season I will tell the reapers, First collect the weeds and bind them in bundles to burn them up, then go to gathering the wheat into my storehouse.'"—Matt. 13:27-30.

¹⁹ Whether these worried "slaves" (verse 27) are identical with the "reapers" (verse 30) Jesus does not explain. If they are, this would mean that the angels were distressed by the abundant growth of "weeds" in their Master's field. (Matt. 13:39) These "slaves" asked if they should immediately weed out the bearded darnel, symbolizing the "sons of the wicked one." (Matt. 13:38) They feared that these counterfeit Christians, or "weeds," maliciously sown by the "enemy," the Devil, might choke the true "wheat," the authentic "sons of the kingdom."

²⁰ But the "householder," the "Son of man," did not authorize his "slaves" to go out and collect the "weeds," or pseudo-Christians, separating them from the "wheat," true Christians. He said: "Let both grow together until the harvest." And so it has been that true and false Christianity have grown together in the "field," or "world," of mankind. Nevertheless, the "harvest season" had to come. When? And how does this affect *you*?

the teachings of the Bible. The climax came early in the fourth century, when pagan Emperor Constantine fused this apostate Christianity with the pagan religion of Rome. Such counterfeit Christianity, in its Roman Catholic, Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox and Protestant varieties, has produced a bumper crop of "weeds" not only throughout the centuries but also right up until the present time.

17. When did the "weeds" become particularly apparent?

18. According to Jesus' parable, what further developments are there?

19. Why were the "slaves of the householder" distressed?

20. What reply did the "householder" give to his "slaves," and how has this been borne out by history?

In Coming Issues

- Will You Listen to God?
- "Who Really Is the Faithful Steward, the Discreet One?"
- A Day in the Life of a Missionary

Harvesting in the “time of the end”



“The harvest is a conclusion of a system of things.”
—Matt. 13:39.

A GOOD harvest is always a reason for joy and thanksgiving. It is a time for reaping the fruits of long, hard labor. The harvest foretold in Christ's parable of the “wheat” and the “weeds” would provide a two-fold reason for all mankind to rejoice. Why? Not only because it would mean the ingathering of the

1. Why is the “harvest” foretold by Jesus a twofold reason for joy?



required number of "sons of the kingdom," or "holy ones," to be associated with Christ in his "indefinitely lasting rulership," thus ensuring good government for the earth, but also because this "harvest" would of itself be proof that we are living at the "conclusion of a system of things" and at the dawn of a righteous new order.—Dan. 7:14, 27; Matt. 13:38, 39; 2 Pet. 3:13.

"SYNTE'LEIA" AND "TELOS"

² Jesus did not say that the "harvest" is "the end of the world," as some Bible translations would have us believe. (*Authorized Version; American Standard Version; The Jerusalem Bible*) Such translations make no distinction between the two Greek words *synte'leia* and *telos*. Explaining *synte'leia*, W. E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* states: "The word does not denote a termination, but the heading up of events to the appointed climax." So when Jesus said "the harvest is a conclusion [*synte'leia*] of a system of things," he was speaking of a period of activity that would have a beginning and an end. According to Matthew 13:30, Jesus referred to "the harvest season," obviously designating a period of time, the period the prophet Daniel spoke of as "the time of the end." (Dan. 12:4) Interestingly, when the translators of the Greek *Septuagint Version* translated this verse in Daniel, they used the word *synte'leia*.

³ This same word is used in Matthew 24:3, where the disciples asked Jesus: "Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion [*synte'leia*] of the system

2. Why is the Greek word *synte'leia* better translated by "conclusion" than by "end," and so with what period mentioned in Daniel does the *synte'leia* correspond?

3. With what is the "harvest season" connected, and what does the Greek word *telos* mean and refer to in Matthew 24:14?

of things?" So the "harvest season" is connected with Christ's invisible presence as Harvester. In answer to his disciples' question, Jesus enumerated international warfare, food shortages, pestilences, great earthquakes, lawlessness and a general climate of fear. (Compare parallel accounts in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21.) Then, showing that the "harvest season" would come to an end, he added: "And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end [*telos*] will come." (Matt. 24:14) The word *telos* means "end," "in the sense termination, cessation . . . the last part, close, conclusion esp[ecially] of the last things, the final act in the cosmic drama."^{*}

⁴ Facts of modern history since 1914, in fulfillment of Bible prophecy, show that the present system of things is well into its "time of the end," or "conclusion" (*synte'leia*). To requote W. E. Vine, we are witnessing "the heading up of events to the appointed climax" or end (*telos*). Therefore, the "harvest" of Jesus' illustration must be on; in fact, it must be nearing its culmination. Have the events foretold in the rest of the parable been observable since 1914?

"THE HARVEST OF THE EARTH IS THOROUGHLY RIPE"

⁵ Continuing his explanation of "the illustration of the weeds in the field," Jesus stated: "The harvest is a conclusion of a system of things, and the reapers are angels. Therefore, just as the weeds are collected and burned with fire, so it will be in the conclusion of the system of things. The Son of man will send forth his angels,

* A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, W. Bauer, translated by W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich.

4. When did the "conclusion," or the "time of the end," begin, and so what can be said of the "harvest"?
5. At harvesttime, what would the "Son of man" order his angels to do?

and they will collect out from his kingdom all things that cause stumbling and persons who are doing lawlessness, and they will pitch them into the fiery furnace. There is where their weeping and the gnashing of their teeth will be.”—Matt. 13:39-42.

⁶ The “reapers,” or angels, would be sent forth by the “Son of man” at “the conclusion of the system of things,” in order to weed out from among the true “sons of the kingdom” “all things that cause stumbling and persons who are doing lawlessness.” As the preceding article has shown, the Devil’s oversowing “weeds” by night has resulted in organized apostasy, false Christianity under a hierarchy of oppressive religious leaders who came to form the composite “man of lawlessness,” foretold by the apostle Paul. (2 Thess. 2:3-12) The true “wheat” was left to grow among such “weeds” until the “time of the end.” Then the “Son of man” would order his “reapers” to separate the “sons of the kingdom” from the “sons of the wicked one.”

⁷ When did this separating work begin? An interesting parallel prophecy leaves us in no doubt as to when it would be. It reads: “And I saw, and, look! a white cloud, and upon the cloud someone seated like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. And another angel emerged from the temple sanctuary, crying with a loud voice to the one seated on the cloud: ‘Put your sickle in and reap, because the hour has come to reap, for the harvest of the earth is thoroughly ripe.’ And the one seated on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.”—Rev. 14:14-16.

⁸ Here we see the “Son of man,” Jesus Christ, not as a sower sowing “fine seed

in his field” but as a crowned king moving into action for the “harvest of the earth.” His being seated on a cloud symbolizes his invisible presence. (Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 1:7) The “harvest” must, therefore, take place during Christ’s presence, after he is crowned and receives “rulership and dignity and kingdom” from Jehovah, the “Ancient of Days.” (Dan. 7:13, 14) So the harvesting began sometime after 1914, the year that marked the beginning of the “time of the end,” or the “conclusion of the system of things.”

⁹ When, after 1914, did the Son of man “send forth his angels” to separate the “sons of the kingdom” from “the sons of the wicked one,” the imitation “wheat,” that is, “persons who are doing lawlessness” and who include the “man of lawlessness,” the religious leaders of counterfeit Christianity? The answer must correspond with the facts, and these show that it was in 1919 that the spirit-begotten, anointed “sons of the kingdom,” symbolized by the “wheat,” began to be freed from the “weeds,” or false Christians, that had overrun the religious field of mankind. The “harvest of the earth” was ripe and the time had come for the “Son of man” to thrust in his sickle and reap. The parable reveals that he did this by means of his “reapers,” angels.

WEEDS COLLECTED TO BE BURNED

¹⁰ In his “illustration of the weeds in the field,” Jesus said: “In the harvest season I will tell the reapers, First collect the weeds and bind them in bundles to burn them up.” (Matt. 13:30) For centuries the clear identity of the “wheat,” or true “sons of the kingdom,” had been obscured by the proliferous “weeds,” or apostate Christians, who claimed to have the heavenly

6. Among whom was the “wheat” left to grow?

7. What parallel prophecy helps us to identify the harvesttime?

8. How is the “Son of man” pictured in Revelation 14:14, and so after what event must the harvest have begun?

9. When did the separating work begin?
10. Why was it difficult to identify the true “wheat” throughout the centuries, but since when has it become possible to distinguish clearly the “wheat” from the “weeds”?

hope as heirs to the Kingdom. Only after 1919, when the truly spirit-begotten Christians were delivered from Babylon the Great, the Devil's world empire of false religion, did a clear difference become visible between the "wheat" and the "weeds."

¹¹ The symbolic "weeds" include all counterfeit Christians, not excluding any modern-day apostates who teach "things that cause stumbling," as well as "persons who are doing lawlessness." This would include the "evil slave," the 'foolish virgins' and the "wicked and sluggish slave." (Matt. 24:48-51; 25:1-12, 14-30) Their being 'bound in bundles' ready to be burned up does not represent their being grouped into the various churches and sects of Christendom, for it can hardly be said that the angels are responsible for such apostate church systems. Furthermore, the binding and bundling takes place during the "harvest season," at the "time of the end," whereas many of the religions of counterfeit Christianity have existed for centuries. The binding of "weeds" in bundles means that since 1919 the separation between true and imitation Christians has become ever clearer, both in the people's minds and by actual separation. The "weeds," or the "sons of the wicked one," are 'bound' inasmuch as the angels see to it that they do not get back in among the "wheat," or the true "sons of the kingdom."

¹² Speaking of what the angels would do with the "weeds" after having bound them up, Jesus added: "They will pitch them into the fiery furnace. There is where their weeping and the gnashing of their teeth will be." (Matt. 13:42) Remember that we are studying a parable. If the "wheat" and the "weeds" are symbolic, so are the "fiery furnace," the "weeping" and the

11. Who are included in the "weeds," and how have they been bound in bundles?

12. What does the "fiery furnace" symbolize, and when will the "weeds" be pitched into it?

'gnashing of teeth.' Matthew 25:41, 46 shows that "everlasting fire" symbolizes "everlasting cutting-off," and Revelation (20:14; 21:8) says that the "lake of fire" means "the second death," destruction with no hope of a resurrection. So the "weeds" are heading for destruction.

¹³ Since the "fiery furnace" symbolizes total destruction, the "weeping and the gnashing of their teeth" on the part of the "weeds" must take place before they are destroyed. For decades now, counterfeit Christians, and particularly the "man of lawlessness"—Christendom's clergy—have bewailed the fact that "the sons of the kingdom," Jehovah's anointed witnesses, have been pelting them with hard-hitting Scriptural truths, exposing them for what they really are: "sons of the wicked one." (Matt. 13:38; Rev., chaps. 8, 9*) The apostate clergy have gnashed their teeth against Jehovah's Witnesses for fearlessly proclaiming not only Jehovah's "year of goodwill" but also his "day of vengeance." (Isa. 61:1, 2) However, all such "weeds" will do more lamenting and teeth-grinding when the "Son of man" comes shortly to destroy them and the rest of Satan's world.—Matt. 24:30.

THE RIGHTEOUS ONES SHINE AS BRIGHTLY AS THE SUN'

¹⁴ After having ordered the "reapers" to bundle up the "weeds" for destruction, the "Son of man" gives his angels this further command: "Then go to gathering the wheat into my storehouse." (Matt. 13:30) And Jesus concluded his explanation of the parable by saying: "At that time the righteous ones will shine as

* See chapters 16 and 17 of the book "*Then Is Finished the Mystery of God*," published in 1969 by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

13. When and how have those symbolized by the weeds wept and gnashed their teeth, but when will they do more lamenting?

14. Where is the "wheat" gathered, and what do such "righteous ones" do?

brightly as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let him that has ears listen.”—Matt. 13:43.

¹⁵ Revelation 21:23 says of the heavenly Kingdom government, the New Jerusalem: “And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God lighted it up, and its lamp was the Lamb.” So that heavenly kingdom does not depend for light on the resurrected “sons of the kingdom.” It is bathing in glorious divine light. How different among the nations here on earth! (Eph. 4:17, 18; 5:8) Explaining what Jehovah does for the “sons of the kingdom” while they are still on earth, Paul writes: “He delivered us from the authority of the darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.”—Col. 1:13.

¹⁶ Hence, the “righteous ones” shining “as brightly as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” refers to the enlightened condition and the glorious service of such anointed Christians on earth, where they “are shining as illuminators in the world.” (Phil. 2:15; Matt. 5:14) The “storehouse” into which they have been gathered since 1919 can be said to be “the kingdom of their Father,” inasmuch as the Christian congregation is a theocratic organization, recognizing Jehovah’s universal sovereignty. It is a clean organization, for out of it the angels collect “all things that cause stumbling and persons who are doing lawlessness.”—Matt. 13:30, 41, 43.

“THE HARVEST OF THE EARTH” CONTINUES

¹⁷ How does all of this affect *you*? Remember that Jesus closed this illustration with the words: “Let him that has ears listen.” (Matt. 13:43) True, this parable illustrates the gathering in of the total

number of “sons of the kingdom” required to form Christ’s heavenly government. The same chapter (14) of Revelation that speaks of the “harvest of the earth” reveals the number of those thus harvested to reign with “the Lamb” on heavenly “Mount Zion” as being 144,000. But that chapter adds: “These were bought from among mankind as *firstfruits* to God and to the Lamb.” (Rev. 14:1-4) The harvesting of “firstfruits” would indicate that there was other fruitage to be gathered later as symbolized by the ingathering of the other fruits of the field at the close of the agricultural year. So the ingathering goes on, and it does affect you.

¹⁸ The harvesting of the “sons of the kingdom” went on apace from 1919 up until the early 1930’s. Because these faithful anointed Christians have ‘let their light shine,’ many others with listening ears have allowed themselves to be separated from the “weeds,” or counterfeit Christians within the churches and sects of Christendom. (Matt. 5:16) This separating work was also foretold by Jesus in his prophecy on “the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matt., chaps. 24, 25) He stated: “When the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will put the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. And these [goats] will depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the righteous ones into everlasting life.”—Matt. 25:31-33, 46.

¹⁹ Thus, as the harvesting of the “wheat” class of anointed Christians draws to a

15, 16. (a) Why is it not in heaven that the “righteous ones” shine? (b) Where and how do the “righteous ones” shine, and where are they gathered?

17. How many “sons of the kingdom” are harvested, but why does the ingathering work go on?

18. In addition to the harvesting of the “sons of the kingdom,” what other separating work takes place?

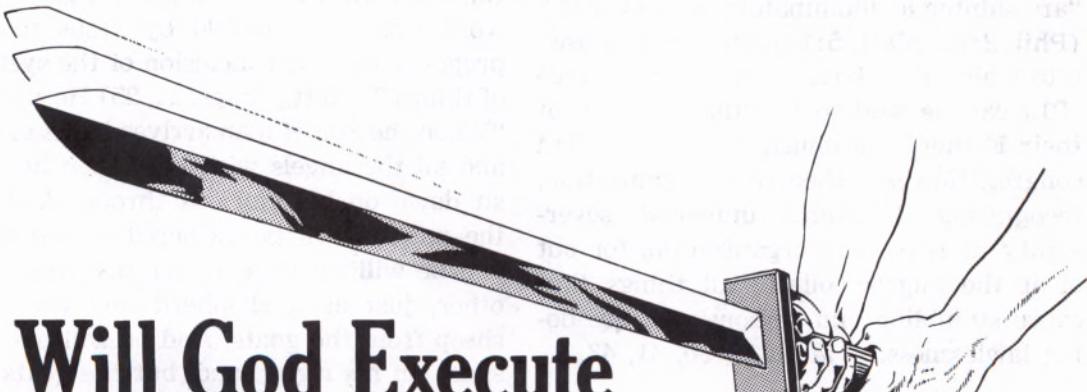
19. In God’s due time, what will happen to the remaining ones of the “wheat” class and to the “great crowd”?

close, the ingathering of the "sheep" continues. In God's due time the remaining ones of the "wheat" class will finish their earthly course and join the "Son of man" as part of his heavenly kingdom or government. They will "receive the kingdom" with the rest of the 144,000 "holy ones." (Dan. 7:18, 22, 27) As for the "great crowd" of "sheep" that are now being gathered, they will survive the "great tribulation" that will mark the end (*telos*) of the present satanic system of things and will become a part of the "peoples, national groups and languages" that will serve the "Son of man" on earth, under his "indefinitely lasting rulership" or heavenly kingdom.—Rev. 7:4, 9, 10, 14; Dan. 7:13, 14.

²⁰ Where do you stand with regard to the fulfillment of the illustration of the

20. What does the fact that the harvest is well advanced prove; so what should you do, and why?

"wheat" and the "weeds"? The fact that the "harvest" of the "sons of the kingdom" is well advanced proves that the "conclusion [*synteleia*] of the system of things" is nearing its end (*telos*). Your attitude toward the wheatlike anointed "brothers" of Christ and the treatment you accord them will be the determining factor as to whether you go into "everlasting cutting-off" or receive "everlasting life." (Matt. 25:34-46) Prove yourself to be a loyal companion of the anointed "wheat" class, the "faithful and discreet slave," whom Christ has appointed to provide spiritual "food at the proper time." (Matt. 24:45) Keep active in the ingathering work, for remember, "this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end [*telos*] will come," and "he that has endured to the end [*telos*] is the one that will be saved."—Matt. 24:13, 14.



Will God Execute the Wicked?

Habakkuk Answers Yes!

PEOPLE all over the world have asked, 'Will God ever execute judgment on the wicked?' The inspired prophecy of Habakkuk gives us complete confidence that God will soon act against the wicked worldwide. Then, and only then, will the earth be "filled with the knowing

of the glory of Jehovah as the waters themselves cover over the sea."—Hab. 2:14.

Habakkuk's short prophecy is, in fact, a series of three executional judgments made by the God of heaven and earth. Two of them have already been fulfilled; the third will soon be fulfilled. Our looking into these judgments will give us confidence in Habakkuk's description and the outcome of the coming global war, Armageddon.

JUDGMENT AGAINST JUDAH

Wherever the prophet Habakkuk looked in the land of Judah he found violence, oppression, quarreling, strife and injustices. This moved him to exclaim: "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?" (Hab. 1:1-4) Habakkuk received an answer that seemed unbelievable. It even shocked the prophet. (Hab. 1:5) What was the judgment of Jehovah?

God answers: "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."—Hab. 1:6, 7.

So the Chaldeans, or Babylonians, would be God's instrument to punish the unfaithful Israelites, and nothing could stop the Babylonians from carrying out God's decree. Why, this nation would 'capture every fortified place'! The kingdom of Judah, with its capital at Jerusalem, simply could not hope to escape.—Hab. 1:10.

True to Jehovah's word to Habakkuk, the Chaldeans did come against Jerusalem in the land of Judah. The Bible tells us that the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, "proceeded to kill their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, neither did he feel compassion for young man or virgin, old or decrepit. . . . Furthermore, he carried off those remaining

from the sword captive to Babylon." —2 Chron. 36:17-20.

Jehovah indeed executed judgment against all the wicked in the land of Judah.

JUDGMENT AGAINST BABYLON

The Babylonians acted according to their own desires and, unknown to themselves, served as God's means for executing his righteous judgment against an unfaithful people. But what about Babylon? Habakkuk had found it hard to understand how God could use the wicked Babylonians to execute His judgment. Not only were they not his worshipers but they were ruthless, simply out for conquest. They viewed men as mere 'fish and creeping things' to be captured and subdued.—Hab. 1:14-17.

Answering Habakkuk's objection to the use of the Chaldeans, God made it known that they would not remain unpunished for their ruthless greed and bloodguiltiness. He declared regarding Babylon: "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." —Hab. 2:8.

Moreover, the Babylonians were idol worshipers. So Jehovah said through his prophet: "Of what benefit has a carved image been, when the former of it has carved it, a molten statue, and an instructor in falsehood? when the former of its form has trusted in it, to the extent of making valueless gods that are speechless? Woe to the one saying to the piece of wood: 'O do awake!' to a dumb stone: 'O wake up!'"—Hab. 2:18, 19.

The idol-worshiping Babylonians now were in line for God's judgment to be executed upon them. That happened in 539 B.C.E. when Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and the Persians.

Those who heard the judgments against Judah and Babylon thought them to be

unbelievable, even shocking. Yet the prophetic word spoken through Habakkuk was fulfilled.—Hab. 2:2, 3.

The Bible indicates that like events are soon to take place against the wicked worldwide.

GOD'S EARTH-WIDE MARCH

AGAINST THE WICKED

The Christian Greek Scriptures quote from Habakkuk's prophecy and locate its final fulfillment in the future, in our own generation. (Heb. 10:36-39; Hab. 2:3, 4) That is why we are especially interested in it. In the third chapter of Habakkuk's prophecy, he prays for God to bring to life again His triumphant activity of old. (Hab. 3:1, 2) Habakkuk then proceeds to describe God on the march against all His enemies. It is an earth-wide march. How varied will be God's way of destroying his enemies!

"Before him pestilence kept going," says the prophet, "and burning fever would go forth at his feet." (Hab. 3:3-5) In the near future, as Jehovah marches to the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Armageddon, he will bring death upon many of his enemies by the nonviolent, silent means of execution—pestilence. It will then be dangerous, fatal, to get in the way of Jehovah's line of march to victory. For ahead of his steps he will send the pestilence; behind his heels he will leave victims afflicted with death-dealing burning fever.—Rev. 16:14, 16.

Habakkuk's dirgelike prayer continues: "He 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."—Hab. 3:6.

Jehovah's taking his stand causes a commotion in the figurative earth that lies before him. It causes, as it were, an earthquake in the earthly organization of the enemy. When it becomes evident that it is

indeed Jehovah who has approached and stands before them, the earthly organization gets all shaken up prior to falling to ruin. The nations at last realize that God the Almighty 'sees' them. They are indeed startled. They leap, not for joy but with a shock in a burst of agitation. No mountainlike organization will obstruct Jehovah's march to triumph. Such will be smashed. Jehovah's pushing forward irresistibly strikes terror into all those who hear the report of it, these ones not being friendly to Jehovah and his people.

For his destruction of the wicked, Jehovah has more kinds of weapons in his divine armory. Habakkuk tells us about this, saying: "A thunderstorm 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."—Hab. 3:7-11.

At the disposal of the Creator are flash floods to engulf the enemies. Waters from the skies can pour down in a thunderstorm. Moreover, the waters deep within the earth can be made to spout up, as if the deep were lifting up its hands on high to play a part in the destruction of the wicked.

Jehovah's superhuman weapons of war make certain that no enemy will escape. Not one of the wicked will get away. Roaring thunderbolts and crackling lightnings are at Jehovah's disposal. At the flashing of God's means of death to his enemies, the light will be so intense by day and night that the natural sun and moon will, as it were, feel themselves not needed for illumination. It will be as if they stood still, not functioning as light bearers, but letting Jehovah's radiant missiles put on a display of an illuminating power. Jehovah's larger weapon, like a spear, will be sent streaking through the air and brightening the battlefield. Imagine the mental effect on foes of Jehovah and his people!

TRUE WORSHIPERS SAVED

The prophet continues: "With denunciation you went marching through the earth. In anger you went threshing the nations. And you went forth for the salvation of your people, to save your anointed one. You 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."—Hab. 3:12, 13.

Jehovah's people can have confidence that he will come to their rescue at the war of Armageddon. The worshipers of Jehovah at that time will be under international attack by all the worldly nations, all of which are by then atheistic. Why are they atheistic? Because the nations will have turned against organized false religion and will have wiped it from the face of the earth. Thus this attack on God's true worshipers takes place after the surprising destruction of "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false religion, including Christendom. (Rev. 17:1-5, 16-18) The irreligious nations that will have brought about this destruction will then concentrate on trying to wipe out from the earth the pure worship of the one living and true God, Jehovah. Even now the stage is being set for this destruction of organized false religion. Some nations, in fact, have already announced their aim to promote atheism.*

* Says the *National Geographic* of October 1980: "Other Communist countries curb religion; Albania forbids it, proclaiming itself in 1967 'the first atheistic state in the world.' All 2,169 mosques, churches, monasteries, and other 'centers of obscurantism and mysticism' have been closed, torn down, or transformed into recreation centers, clinics, warehouses, or stables. . . . Albania's new generation knows only atheism."

Also, *Time* magazine of November 17, 1980, said about Cambodia, now called Kampuchea: "The Khmer Rouge began methodical destruction of every vestige of religion. Christian ministers were slaughtered and Muslim mosques destroyed. The greatest indignities, however, were reserved for Buddhists, who constituted 90% of Kampuchea's population. Insurgents fresh from the jungle looted the country's 2,800 temples. 'Buddhas were thrown into rivers or used as firewood,' recalls Oum Soum, 62, deputy director of Phnom-Penh's Buddhist Institute. 'Wats [temples] not destroyed became fertilizer warehouses.' Bonzes [monks] were denounced as 'parasites.' The lucky ones were merely driven from their temples into the fields. Of 80,000 Cambodian monks, 50,000 were murdered."—P. 90.

In order not to let the godless nations succeed in their wicked purpose, Jehovah will have to go forth for the salvation of his people. So, in "denunciation" of the evil-intentioned nations, he will march through the earth and angrily thresh the nations, pounding them underfoot like grain on a threshing floor.

This action on the part of Jehovah will bring salvation to his "people." The "people" under attack at Armageddon are the remnant of spirit-anointed disciples of Jesus Christ. They make up Jehovah's "anointed one" at Armageddon. Along with Jehovah's "anointed one" there will be a "great crowd" of fellow worshipers that will be saved at Armageddon.—Rev. 7:9-17.

In dramatic contrast with the salvation of the "anointed one" and the "great crowd," there will be the complete desolation of the "house of the wicked one." Like a house that is laid bare and destroyed from the roof to the foundation, the wicked system of things that has been established under the unseen influence of Satan the Devil will be knocked to pieces. The "head one" or leadership of this international "house" will be crushed, broken to pieces. Those making up the underpart of the worldwide structure will not escape, for such will be demolished clear to the base. Not even the "foundation" will be left covered in the ground as a base for a new building. The "house of the wicked one" will be no more on earth.

There at the battlefield of Armageddon the enemies of Jehovah's "anointed one" and their companions will be thrown into suicidal confusion. In a prophetic vision of this, the prophet Habakkuk says in his prayer to Jehovah as a Warrior:

"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 af-

flicted one in a place of concealment. Through the sea you trod with your horses, through the heap of vast waters." —Hab. 3:14, 15.

When speaking of the international attempt to "scatter me" with tempestuous force, Habakkuk is speaking of himself as representing Jehovah's "anointed one," His people in need of salvation from the attackers. Like marauders who lie in wait in a concealed place for a victim, nations assembled in full array at Armageddon will leap out upon Jehovah's "anointed one" and the "great crowd" of fellow worshipers to destroy all of these as they destroyed religious "Babylon the Great." In "high glee," the enemy is confident of doing away with Jehovah's worshipers who appear to be as "an afflicted one."

Jehovah will not be taken by any surprise. He will not lead his afflicted "anointed one" and their loyal companions into any ambush of the enemy. When the anti-God nations storm out tempestuously to scatter those who practice the true religion, God will turn the weapons of the

attacking nations against themselves to fight among and against themselves. Jehovah's enemies will use their own military rods to pierce the heads of their own warriors. God will do even more: He will use superhuman forces to carry their destruction to a completion. With the "horses" of his heavenly armies under Jesus Christ, he will push onward victoriously through the "sea" and the "heap of vast waters" of the surging, roaring enemies. (Rev. 19: 11-21) Thus his own people will be eyewitnesses of Jehovah's sublime victory!

Gone, then, will be all the wicked! And no one throughout eternity will ever be able to question rightly this total destruction of the attacking anti-Jehovah hordes.

Habakkuk's prophecies give us powerful confidence that God soon will execute judgment upon all the wicked. Nothing can prevent it. Since this is so, will you take your stand for the true God now while there is yet time? Jehovah, the Great Warrior, will win the battle against the wicked. Now is the time to take action so that you may be on the winning side!

WHAT DOES CHURCH MEMBERSHIP MEAN?

"There's still an awful lot of belief and participation," comments a researcher at the Hartford Seminary Foundation on the results of a survey done in the greater Boston, Massachusetts, area. Ninety percent of the people interviewed said they believe in God and more than 70 percent said they belong to a church.

However, the Boston "Globe," which sponsored the survey, observes that "organized religion appears to have little influence on individuals." Why? Only 5 percent of the overall population said they would consult a clergyman for advice when they are "in serious trouble," and only 7 percent of church members said they would do so.

The survey also shows that "a large majority of church members do not read the Bible, do not say grace at meals and do not regularly attend services." Among professed Catholics, only 11 percent read the Bible with any regularity and only 8 percent use it as a guide. For Protestants, the corresponding figures are 23 percent and 15 percent.

The Bible foretold that there would be a time when humans would have "a form of godly devotion" but would 'prove false to its power.' That is the apostle Paul's description of the majority of professed Christians during "the last days." (2 Tim. 3:1-5) Can you see the handwriting on the wall?

QUESTIONS from READERS

- What is the definition of "Christendom" as used in Watch Tower publications?

Most often the term "Christendom" is used in the Society's publications in the more restricted way in which the word is first defined in the dictionary: "Christianity"; actually, professed Christianity, in contrast to the true Christianity of the Bible. This focuses primarily on the religious aspects. However, the word is sometimes used in our publications in its enlarged second meaning: "the portion of the world in which Christianity prevails."

Whether the more restricted religious use or the enlarged territorial use of the word is intended will be apparent from the context. For example, if reference is being made to Christendom as a part of the world empire of false religion ("Babylon the Great"), and to the fact that this empire of false religion will be destroyed first at the "great tribulation," it will be evident to the reader that the more restricted use of the word is intended. This is the case since the political and commercial features of the realm of Christendom will not go down at the same time as the religious.

—Rev., chap. 17; Matt. 24:21.

- The appendix of the 1970 edition of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (pages 1455 and 1456) states that the Hebrew expression *ha-A-dōn'* is limited to Jehovah God. Why, then, does the footnote to Romans 10:9 (in the 1971 edition) show that this expression does not there refer to Jehovah?

The footnote on Romans 10:9 merely acknowledges that some translators, in rendering the Greek Scriptures into the Hebrew language, have used this expression *ha-A-dōn'* (meaning, literally, "the Lord") in translating the Greek word *ky'rios* (meaning "Lord").

The word "Lord" here obviously refers to Jesus because the scripture says: "For if you publicly declare that 'word in your own mouth,' that Jesus is Lord [*Ky'rios*], and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved." Translating

the Greek word *Ky'rios* into Hebrew as *ha-A-dōn'* is merely the opinion of certain translators, for in the Greek text the definite article does not occur with "Lord" in this verse.

The word "lord" is a term that is applied in the Scriptures to Jehovah, Jesus, angels, humans and even false deities. The basic meaning is "master" or "owner." It is also a title of respect. In the appendix, the translators of the *New World Translation* make the observation that each time *ha-A-dōn'* occurs in the Hebrew Scriptures, it refers to Jehovah. This is a fact, and appropriately so, since the definite article (*ha*) points to him exclusively as "Lord" in the highest sense.

Jesus is also properly referred to by Christians as their Lord because of his being their "Master" and "Owner." By his sacrificial blood he purchased them and he is the head of the Christian congregation. (John 13:13, 16; Col. 3:24; Jude 4; Rev. 5:9, 10) Paul acknowledges that while there are many "gods" and many "lords," "there is actually to us one God the Father . . . and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 8:5, 6) But Jesus' authority as Lord was given to him by the Father. (Matt. 28:18; John 3:35; 5:19, 30) Jesus has great authority, glory and power, but "every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:9-11) All credit goes to the Father for what he has done and will do through his only-begotten Son. At the end of his thousand-year reign, Jesus "hands over the kingdom to his God and Father" and, in turn, will "subject himself to the One who subjected all things to him, that God may be all things to everyone."

—1 Cor. 15:24-28.

So, with the above in mind, it can be seen that while certain Hebrew translations of the Greek Scriptures employ the expression *ha-A-dōn'* at Romans 10:9, we are not to conclude from this that the "Lord" here is Jehovah, making Jesus and God one and the same Lord, as claimed by the Trinitarians. Nevertheless, wherever this expression occurs in the Hebrew Scriptures, it refers to Jehovah.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

- September 6: A Field Producing Wheat and Weeds. Page 16. Songs to Be Used: 20, 81.
September 13: Harvesting in the "Time of the End." Page 21. Songs to Be Used: 2, 103.

