Awake!

YOUR LIFE and Bible Prophecy

Special Issue

APRIL 22, 1966

THE REASON FOR THIS MAGAZINE

News sources that are able to keep you awake to the vital issues of our times must be unfettered by censorship and selfish interests. "Awake!" has no fetters. It recognizes facts, faces facts, is free to publish facts. It is not bound by political ties; it is unhampered by traditional creeds. This magazine keeps itself free, that it may speak freely to you. But it does not abuse its freedom. It maintains integrity to truth.

The viewpoint of "Awake!" is not narrow, but is international. "Awake!" has its own correspondents in scores of nations. Its articles are read in many lands, in many languages, by millions of persons.

In every issue "Awake!" presents vital topics on which you should be informed. It features penetrating articles on social conditions and offers sound counsel for meeting the problems of everyday life. Current news from every continent passes in quick review. Attention is focused on activities in the fields of government and commerce about which you should know. Straightforward discussions of religious issues alert you to matters of vital concern. Customs and people in many lands, the marvels of creation, practical sciences and points of human interest are all embraced in its coverage. "Awake!" provides wholesome, instructive reading for every member of the family.

"Awake!" pledges itself to righteous principles, to exposing hidden foes and subtle dangers, to championing freedom for all, to comforting mourners and strengthening those disheartened by the failures of a delinquent world, reflecting sure hope for the establishment of God's righteous new order in this generation.

Get acquainted with "Awake!" Keep awake by reading "Awake!"

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY IN THE UNITED STATES BY THE
WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.
117 Adams Street Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.
AND IN ENGLAND BY
WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY
Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway London N.W. 7, England
N. H. KNORR, *President* GRANT SUITER, *Secretary*

Average printing each issue: 4,475,000 **Now published in 26 languages**

4d a copy (Australia, 5c; South Africa, 3½s)

Offices	Yearly subscription rates for semimonthly editions
America, U.S., 117 Adams Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201	$1
Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W.	$1
Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto 19, Ont.	$1
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London N.W. 7	7/6
New Zealand, 821 New North Rd., Auckland S.W. 1	7/-
South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandsfontein, Tvl.	70c

(Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to Brooklyn. Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires.

Semimonthly—Afrikaans, Cebuano, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Iloko, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, Tagalog, Zulu.

Monthly—Chinese, Cinyanja, Hiligaynon, Malayalam, Polish, Tamil, Ukrainian.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). Write Watch Tower, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London N.W. 7, England.

Entered as second-class matter at Brooklyn, N.Y.
Printed in England

The Bible translation regularly used in "Awake!" is the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, 1961 edition. When other translations are used, this is clearly marked.

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Awake!
"It is already the hour for you to awake."
—Romans 13:11

Volume XLVII | London, England, April 22, 1966 | Number 8

Thinking About the FUTURE

EVERYONE at some time or another thinks about the future. True, many persons are concerned only with the immediate future—tomorrow or next week—but others think much farther ahead. They wonder, What kind of world will it be in the years to come? Which ruler or government will control the earth? Will my children live in a peaceful world? Or will some disaster finally destroy the earth and all life on it?

Can anyone give reliable answers to such questions? It is obviously beyond the powers of mortal men to know with certainty what the future holds. Why, humans cannot even be sure about the happenings of tomorrow or next week, much less years from now! But there is One who knows. That One is man's Creator, the Most High God. He knows "from the beginning the finale, and from long ago the things that have not been done."—Isa. 46:10.

What is more, God has often revealed future events to man long before they happened. Even today his Word, the Bible, contains prophecies regarding things that are yet to occur in the future. It is vital that you now give careful consideration to these Bible prophecies.

But some persons may object that it does no good to be so concerned about the future. "We have no control over what is to occur," they say. "Whatever will happen, will happen." It is true that whatever God prophesies will come to pass, but it is also true that if one knows in advance what is to occur he can take action that will benefit himself and his loved ones.

For instance, if advance warning is given regarding an approaching hurricane, persons can take lifesaving measures. They benefit greatly by knowing the future. Similarly with Bible prophecy. When you know what God has foretold for our day you can act wisely in harmony with the advance information. This is vitally important, for God's great prophet Jesus Christ foretold for our day "great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again."—Matt. 24:21.

Knowledge of Bible prophecy will prepare you to survive this "great tribulation," and to enjoy a lasting, happy future. As the following articles stimulate your thinking about the future, heed the words of Jesus Christ: "Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur."—Luke 21:36.

ACKNOWLEDGING the ALMIGHTINESS OF GOD

HOW do you feel when mention is made of the Most High God? Do you believe that he is truly almighty? Do you feel so strongly about it that you would at no time go contrary to his will expressed in the Bible? Do you have absolute confidence in his promises for the future?

One who truly believes in God's almightiness does not acknowledge it simply by lip service. Words mean nothing if one behaves in an underhanded, clandestine manner. The Most High God will soon humble all who ignore his laws, regardless of their worldly prominence.

A Mighty King Learns God Is Almighty

Mighty King Nebuchadnezzar of ancient Babylon had God's almightiness forcefully impressed upon his mind. In the sixth century before the Common Era that world-conquering monarch made the city of Babylon a gorgeous showpiece. Temples and palaces sparkled with gold. His own palace was a tremendous quadrangular building, whose outer ramparts of masonry were nearly seven miles in extent. He called it "The Admiration of Mankind."

No wonder people admired it! Within the enclosure of the royal palace was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world —the hanging gardens of Babylon. This four-acre terraced garden, built on arches of masonry, reached seventy-five to three hundred feet into the air. It was overlaid with enough soil to nourish the largest trees. And nestled among these forest trees was a profusion of the choicest flowers and shrubs. Brooks dashed down artificial crags. What beauty! How dazzling the scene from atop that royal palace! The city's walls, the river, the quays, the boats, the magnificent streets, the splendid buildings—the whole panorama of Babylon's glory lay spread below.

Walking on the roof of his royal palace and admiring it all, King Nebuchadnezzar glowed with pride. From his own previous experience he had good reason to show humility before the all-wise Creator; but he became haughty and boasted: "Is not this Babylon the Great, that I myself have built for the royal house with the strength of my might and for the dignity of my majesty?"—Dan. 4:30; 2:1-47; 3:1-29.

At that moment of prideful boasting Almighty God humbled Nebuchadnezzar, impressing upon him His own superiority. While Nebuchadnezzar was yet speaking, a voice from heaven announced that his kingdom would be ripped from him, and he would wander about with the animals of the field. For what purpose? To teach Nebuchadnezzar "that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind, and that to the one whom he wants to he gives it." —Dan. 4:31-33.

Did this chastising of boastful Nebuchadnezzar have the desired humbling effect? Yes, it did. For later, when coming to his senses, he stated: "I blessed the Most High himself . . . he is doing according to his own will among the army of the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth. And there exists no one that can check his hand or that can say to him, 'What have you been doing?' "—Dan. 4:34, 35.

Acknowledge God's Almightiness Today

We, too, need to acknowledge God's almightiness. There is no person or nation or alliance of nations that is stronger than He is. In God's hand lie all the natural forces. What power! Why, just one moderate-sized earthquake generates more power than all the nuclear bombs exploded in human history! God used such natural forces to thwart the wicked in the past, and he promises to employ such powerful elements in the future.—1 Sam. 14:15; Job 38:22, 23.

The potential energy is staggering. Observed the New York *Times* of February 1, 1966, after a recent snowstorm: "The bitter cold, the abundant snow and the piercing wind combined to give us all a humbling lesson on the enormous energy at nature's disposal and the impact it can have upon men's petty plans.

"These days scientists can send rockets to the moon, to Mars and to Venus; but for many hours on Sunday airlines were grounded, cities cut off, and the Pennsylvania Railroad could not send trains from Baltimore to Washington. . . . Even the most powerful hydrogen bomb ever exploded was but a puny force compared to the sources of the atmospheric maelstrom that produced such disruption all along the Atlantic Seaboard."

Really, what is man when compared with God? God is Almighty! Absolutely nothing in opposition to him can succeed. He may tolerate it for a time, but at his appointed time it will come to ruin. How foolish it would be for us to chart a course in life that brings us into conflict with His prophetic Word! The wise thing, therefore, is to learn God's will and conform to it. What he has in store is for the eternal blessing of obedient mankind.

The Bible FORETELLS THE FUTURE

THE Bible is a book of prophecy. It foretold long in advance the rise and fall of world empires. In remarkable detail it describes conditions that would prevail in the "last days," telling the outcome of the struggle between the Communist and Western democratic powers. It also describes in detail the identity and the works of the Ruler who will replace all the present political potentates and exercise global control.

What God has recorded in the Bible is nothing vague and indefinite. In fact, at times prophecies are so specific as to give details regarding events and the very names of the persons involved, and this even before these persons were born! Consider two examples.

A Judean King Foretold by Name

In 997 B.C.E. a split occurred in the Israelite kingdom of southwest Asia; ten northern tribes rebelled against the royal tribe of Judah and formed a separate government under King Jeroboam. To prevent the people from returning to the temple at Jerusalem to worship, Jeroboam constructed an altar and installed a priesthood at Bethel, a town about ten miles north of Jerusalem. Then he said to the people: "It is too much for you to go up

to Jerusalem. Here is your God, O Israel." —1 Ki. 12:28.

This was not pleasing to Jehovah God, and he sent a prophet from Judah to express his displeasure. According to the Bible record, the prophet said: "O altar, altar, this is what Jehovah has said, 'Look! A son born to the house of David, *whose name is Josiah!* And he will certainly sacrifice upon you the priests of the high places that are making sacrificial smoke upon you, and men's bones he will burn upon you.' "—1 Ki. 13:1-5.

Was it a reasonable assumption that someday a king would bear the name Josiah and perform this work? Not at all! For only two persons of all the many hundreds mentioned in the Bible are named Josiah. Besides, most of the rulers of Judah were supporters of idol worship —very unlikely candidates for such bold action against idolatry! Well, then, was a king named Josiah born in the house of David? Did he burn priests' bones on the altar at Bethel?

Yes! One named Josiah was born in the kingly line of David! The Bible record says: "The altar that was in Bethel, . . . he pulled down. . . . When Josiah turned, he got to see the burial places that were there in the mountain. So he sent and took the bones from the burial places and burned them upon the altar, that he might make it unfit for worship . . . Accordingly he sacrificed all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars and burned human bones upon them." —2 Ki. 23:15-20.

Think of it! Over three hundred years in advance Jehovah God foretold by name the very person that would desecrate Bethel's altar!

Babylon's Conqueror Foretold by Name

On another occasion Jehovah God through his prophet Isaiah foretold the name of the man who would conquer Babylon—and that well over a hundred years before he was born! In the eighth century before the Common Era, nearly two hundred years before the Medes and Persians defeated Babylon and permitted the captive Jews to return to Jerusalem, Jehovah God had the following prophecy recorded:

" 'The One saying of Jerusalem, "She will be inhabited," and of the cities of Judah, "They will be rebuilt, and her desolated places I shall raise up"; . . . *the One saying of Cyrus,* "He is my shepherd, and all that I delight in he will completely carry out"; even in my saying of Jerusalem, "She will be rebuilt," and of the temple, "You will have your foundation laid." ' This is what Jehovah has said to his anointed one, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have taken hold of, to subdue before him nations." —Isa. 44:26–45:1.

True to God's Word, in 539 B.C.E. the Persian general Cyrus did subdue Babylon! But what about the prophecy regarding Cyrus' arranging for rebuilding Jehovah's temple? Was this fulfilled?

The Israelite priest historian Ezra explains that, not long after his conquest of Babylon, Cyrus issued the decree: "Whoever there is among you of all his people, . . . let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of Jehovah the God of Israel." Years later a Persian king named Darius located a record of this decree, not in the writings of the Hebrews, but in the royal archives at Ecbatana, and it governed his decision relative to completing work on the temple. —Ezra 1:1-3; 6:1-15.

How remarkably the Bible foretells the future! Yet Jehovah God inspired the recording of prophecies, not only about such men as Josiah and Cyrus, but even concerning what the future holds for people living today.—2 Pet. 1:20, 21.

The Book of Never-failing Prophecies

"Beyond All Manner of Doubt"

● In his volume "The Supremacy of the Bible," J. Mercier McMullen states: "The Septuagint, or translation by the Seventy of the Old Testament, from the dying or dead Hebrew language into the living Greek tongue, made for Ptolemy Philadelphus, in the earlier part of the third century B.C., forms an epoch in Biblical literature, so clearly fixed and certain, as to be beyond all manner of question whatever. The canon of the Hebrew scriptures was thus definitely determined, and crystallised into a living language then more widely spoken than any other. The charge, therefore, cannot be made that any prophecies were afterwards forged to bolster up, in any direction, either Jewish or Christian opinion. We must, accordingly, accept the evidence of the existence of the prophetic books of the Old Testament just as they stand in the Septuagint. This position is logically incontrovertible, and beyond all manner of doubt. Any one fulfilled prophecy is sufficient to indicate a prescience more than human; but the collective force of all the prophecies, taken together, is such that nothing more can be necessary to prove the interposition of Omniscience than the establishment of their authenticity."—P. 448.

Standing Miracles

● "Where a prophecy is admitted to be ancient, and proved to be authentic, there the voice of God has spoken," says the preface to Alexander Keith's book "The Evidence of Prophecy." "The prophecies are indeed, standing miracles." Regarding these, Alexander Keith himself says: "The multiplicity and precision of the prophecies contained in Scripture is such, that no band of the most subtle deceivers could ever have pretended, or ever did pretend to any such clear and close inspection of futurity; or if, to uphold any system, they had made the trial, they would only have been forging the readiest means of detecting their own imposition; and would have left it to every succeeding event, which they had attempted to foretell, to mar their purpose, and to mark them as lying prophets. . . . The antiquity of Scripture is indisputable. . . . Tacitus, the celebrated Roman historian, who lived in the first century, in referring to prophecies contained in [The Hebrew Scriptures], speaks of the books of the Jewish priests as at that time ancient. . . . The wonderful nature of the events that have ever occurred in the history of the world renders unnecessary even a single remark to show that they are such as mortal man could never have foreseen. Each speaks for itself. And all of them declare, with one united voice, that the word which revealed them is indeed Divine."—Pp. xv, 21-23.

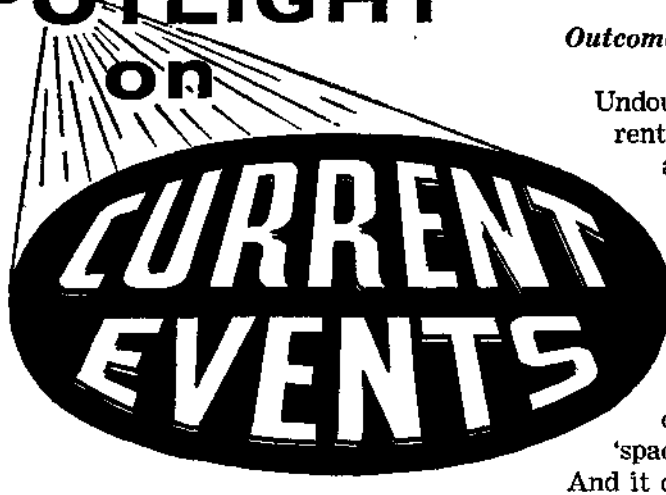
Scientifically Examined

● "In every respect the authority of the Bible, from the most severely scientific point of view, stands higher to-day than it did a century ago," declared Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, former Director and Principal Librarian of the British Museum. "The faith of those who believed in the face of difficulties has been vindicated." —"Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute," Vol. LXXIX.

The Testimony of History

● Speaking of the prophecies in the books of Daniel and Revelation regarding the rise and fall of world empires, Thomas Newton wrote in "Dissertations on the Prophecies": "Their prophecies may really be said to be a summary of the history of the world, and the history of the world is the best comment upon their prophecies. I must confess it was my application to history that first struck me, without thinking of it, with the amazing justness of the Scripture-prophecies. I observed the predictions all along to be verified in the course of events: and the more you know of ancient and modern times, and the farther you search into the truth of history, the more you will be satisfied of the truth of prophecy. . . . What strange disingenuity must it be, when there is all the evidence that history can afford for the prophecy, and in many cases even ocular demonstration for the completion, to be still obstinate and unbelieving?"—P. 635.

PROPHETIC SPOTLIGHT on CURRENT EVENTS



WHAT has been in the news this past week? Has it been continued fighting between Communist guerrillas and soldiers of the democratic Western nations? famine threatening the lives of millions in the East and elsewhere? "natural" disasters from earthquakes or storms? increase in crime? reports of persons dying from heart failure, cancer or other disease? homes disrupted by juvenile delinquency and adult divorce? emphasis on the pursuit of pleasure?

Yes, indeed. All these things have been in the news. Yet not only have they been reported in your newspaper; they were also foretold in the Bible many centuries ago. Why not open your Bible and read what it says about their meaning? You will find it set out in detail in Matthew, chapter 24; Mark, chapter 13; Luke, chapter 21; 2 Timothy, chapter 3; and Daniel, chapter 11. It will be a source of great encouragement to you to appreciate that God foresaw the conditions with which we are faced and that he has had recorded for us a clear statement as to their outcome. Knowledge of what that outcome will be is vital for each one of us, if we are to guide our course of life in wisdom.

Outcome of International Power Struggle

Undoubtedly, one aspect of current events that has caused you anxiety is the international power struggle that rages between the political camps called the East and the West. It has already made to be common terminology phrases such as 'balance of terror,' 'kill capability,' 'space race' and 'escalation.' And it daily threatens to erupt into World War III. But did you know that Jehovah God has already determined the final outcome of this struggle for world control?

If you will open your Bible to Daniel, chapter 11, you can turn the prophetic spotlight of the Scriptures on this conflict between the "democratic" and "communistic" nations. The prophecy recorded there will aid you to know what the future holds.

The prophet Daniel described a long-drawn-out warfare between opposing governments, running from ancient Greece down to our day. Since the nations or blocs were at one time north and south of Daniel's people in Jerusalem, the prophecy refers to them as the "king of the north" and the "king of the south." Farsightedly the prophecy did not mention the names of the two 'kings,' since their identity was to change over the course of centuries. However, the facts of history in fulfillment of this reliable Bible prophecy identify primarily today the Soviet Union as the final "king of the north" and primarily the opposing Anglo-American com-

bine as the last "king of the south."* Yes, the prophecy touches our lives!

After discussing material that is now history, the prophecy focuses on our generation and centers particular attention on the atheistic, communistic "king of the north." What does it say he will do? "The king will actually do according to his own will, and he will exalt himself and magnify himself above every god." (Dan. 11:36) Has that happened? Without question it has, for since the downfall of Hitlerian Nazism the communistic "king of the north" has, at least in his own estimation, exalted the godless political State to a position higher than any god worshiped by his people.

Years in advance the inspired prophecy foretold that Communist Russia would reject the religious gods formerly worshiped by the peoples in its domain and would worship another god. Notice Daniel's words in verse 38: "To the god of fortresses, in his position he will give glory; and to a god that his fathers did not know he will give glory by means of gold and by means of silver and by means of precious stone and by means of desirable things." What is this "god"? Has it been given the foretold worship?

Just as Daniel prophesied, the Communist state has worshiped the "god of fortresses," modern, scientific militarism. Technical science has become its idol, its fetish. In order to maintain an army estimated at well over two million men and to advance in space technology, the Communist "king of the north" has had to deprive his people of many consumer goods and material comforts. These desirable things are sacrificed at the altar of the god of scientific militarism.

What would be the result of such a course? Would the "king of the north" have success? Daniel answers: "He will certainly prove successful . . . He will act effectively against the most fortified strongholds, . . . He will certainly enter into the lands and flood over and pass through. . . . He will keep thrusting out his hand against the lands; . . . He will actually rule over the hidden treasures of the gold and the silver."—Dan. 11:36, 39, 40, 42, 43.

As we consider events that have taken place in recent years, we can appreciate how accurately we have seen the "king of the north" fulfill these prophecies to some extent already. He took over Poland, East Germany, Hungary and many other countries in eastern Europe. In the Far East, Communist troops entered into Manchuria and Korea. Also, by means of military assistance, propaganda and economic aid the "king of the north" has expanded the Communist bloc. Think of what has happened in North Korea, China and North Vietnam. Cuba was the first fortress in the Caribbean to fall, but communism is encouraging political unrest and guerrilla warfare in many South American lands. Africa and the Middle East are also rife with Communist-sponsored subversion, as the "king of the north" tries to spread his control over the treasures in many lands. And we can expect him to continue such attempts.

Sensing that the future cannot be just a continuation of man's past history of aggressions that shred up nations, noted English historian Arnold J. Toynbee wrote: "We are now moving into a chapter of human history in which our choice is going to be, not between a whole world and a shredded-up world, but between one world and no world."—New York *Times Magazine,* April 5, 1964.

But this raises the questions: Will the "king of the north" eventually gain control of the world? Or will the "king of the

* For details on the identification of these two 'kings' see *"Your Will Be Done on Earth"* by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, pages 220-278.

south"? Yes, what will be the outcome of this international power struggle?

Far from being left in the dark on the answers to these vital questions, Daniel's unerring prophecy shows that the communistic "king of the north" will finally be crushed. "He will have to come all the way to his end, and there will be no helper for him." (Dan. 11:45) However, this destruction will not be wrought by the Anglo-American World Power, leaving to it world control. For in an earlier prophecy Daniel saw judgment passed on the "king of the south," "and his own rulership they finally took away, in order to annihilate him and to destroy him totally." (Dan. 7:26)* But who could accomplish this? Who has the power?

World Control by God's Kingdom

Turn, in your Bible, to the seventh chapter of the book of Daniel. There the spotlight of the Scriptures shines, not only on current events, but also on the means for settling the struggle for world domination.

The prophet received from God a vision of the succession of beastly world powers extending from his day down to and including the political systems of our day. However, he saw someone enter the scene that is more powerful than any human potentate or alliance of armed nations. That one is the Son of man, Jesus Christ, now exalted to life in heaven.

Daniel's account says: "I kept on beholding in the visions of the night, and, see there! with the clouds of the heavens someone like a son of man happened to be coming; and to the Ancient of Days [the Lord God Almighty] he gained access, and they brought him up close even before that One. And to him there were given *rulership* and dignity and *kingdom*, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him. His rulership is an indefinitely lasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be brought to ruin." —Dan. 7:13, 14.

So God's decision on the question of world control is that his Son receive power to rule in His kingdom. That involves our earth. But Daniel is plain that this does not mean authority over just a bloc of nations or a section of the world. Rather, he gives assurance that "the peoples, national groups and languages should *all* serve even him."

Does this mean that there will be a peaceful conversion of world communism and the other political powers so they will happily accept God's kingdom? Hardly! In a corresponding prophecy in the second chapter of his inspired book, Daniel explained that once God's kingdom was established it would "never be brought to ruin. . . . It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms [the present governments], and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Dan. 2:44.

While the prospect of the destruction of all political governments by God's kingdom might at first thought seem to some to be a disaster, it is God's just arrangement so that righteous men can have a happy future. This is so because it does not mean the elimination of all mankind, but, rather, the elimination of imperfect, corrupt and oppressive government from the earth. The prophecy clearly shows that all "peoples, national groups and languages" willing to obey the King of the Kingdom can joyfully and unitedly live forever under God's perfect government. —Dan. 7:14, 27.

Sound Reasons for Confidence

Fulfillment of the many aspects of Daniel's prophecy about things that are happening in our very day gives us confidence in the dependability of what he

* For details see *"Your Will Be Done on Earth,"* pages 166-187, 303-307.

wrote under divine inspiration. That confidence is further strengthened when we realize that the fulfillment of many of the prophecies that he recorded is already a matter of history. The fact that these things have already taken place gives sound reason for conviction that the remainder will come to pass exactly as foretold. Let us consider briefly some of the evidence.

While Babylon apparently held a secure position as the dominant empire, Daniel received prophetic visions that showed that Babylon would be succeeded by Medo-Persia. He was also inspired by God to predict that Greece, led by Alexander the Great, would later subdue the Medo-Persian Empire. (Dan. 8:3-8, 20, 21; 7:2-6, 17) The prophecies were so detailed that they even foretold that after Alexander's death his empire would not pass on to his offspring, but would be divided up among four generals of his.—Dan. 8:22; 11:3, 4.

The precise way in which these prophecies were fulfilled moved historian Charles Rollin to write: "Can any thing be more wonderful, more divine, than a series of prophecies, all of them so clear, so exact, and so circumstantial; prophecies which go so far as to point out, that a prince should die without leaving a single successor from among his own family, and that four of his generals, will divide his empire between them?"—*Ancient History,* Book XV, Section VII, paragraph 21.

His amazement is understandable. The Biblical prophecies of Daniel turned the spotlight of the Scriptures on those world events two hundred years before they occurred. (The prophet Daniel completed his writing in 536 B.C.E., and Alexander the Great died in the year 323 B.C.E.) Even more amazing, we have seen how Daniel's inspired predictions are being fulfilled in our generation, over two thousand five hundred years from when they were written!

Understanding the News

If you have firm faith in the accuracy and dependability of Jehovah's inspired prophecies, current events will take on a different meaning to you. When you read in the newspapers of famines in Kenya, India, Rhodesia and China or a report that 60 percent of the world's population is on the verge of starvation, you will know that Bible prophecy is being fulfilled. When you learn of disasters such as floods in Brazil and Mozambique, a cyclone in Pakistan or an earthquake in Greece, you will understand that these very things were foretold.—Matt. 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:25.

When you hear that juvenile delinquency has reached such staggering proportions that representatives of over forty nations have had to come together to study the problem, you will be able to see the fulfillment of Bible prophecies. The increasing rate of divorce and heart disease will testify to the reliability of God's prophetic Word. You will be able to appreciate that all these things were foretold to occur in the time of the *end of this system of things.* (2 Tim. 3:1-5; Luke 21:11, 26) But the same sure prophecies tell us that those who have God's approval at this time can 'raise themselves erect and lift their heads up, because their deliverance is getting near.'—Luke 21:28.

However, since the Bible's prophetic spotlight on current events proves that we are living at the time of the end, how will you personally react to the inspired prophecies? Will you reject them? or accept them and guide your present life by them? Your future life will depend on the decision you make.

ANCIENT EGYPT Defies the GOD OF PROPHECY

THERE are powerful lessons we can learn, not only from current events, but also from the way nations and peoples have reacted in past times to God and his prophecies. Life or death, blessings or disaster, hung in the balance, as they do today.

An outstanding example from which to draw conclusions for our own benefit is that of ancient Egypt. In the year 1513 B.C.E. Egypt was ruled by a Pharaoh who, incidentally, was a religious man, having his state religion and its priests as counselors. But this Pharaoh hated the Israelites, who worshiped Jehovah. Under his direction "the Egyptians made the sons of Israel slave under tyranny."—Ex. 1:13.

This hostility on Pharaoh's part grew until he decided to take the most vicious course possible—genocide. The Bible records: "Finally Pharaoh commanded *all his people,* saying: 'Every new-born son [of Israel] you are to throw into the river Nile.' " (Ex. 1:22) Here was a plan to exterminate Israel! And most of the common people of Egypt went along with it.

Liberation Foretold in Prophecy

However, what they overlooked was the fact that the God of prophecy had foretold centuries before that Israel would be liberated from this bondage. To Abraham and his descendants God foretold: "Know for sure that your seed [Israel] will become an alien resident in a land [Egypt] not theirs, and they will have to serve them. . . . But the nation that they will serve I am judging, and after that *they will go out* with many goods."—*Gen.* 15:13, 14.

So God had clearly foretold what he was going to do for Abraham's descendants when they came into bondage: he was going to liberate them. Nothing on earth could turn back that prophecy, no, not even mighty Pharaoh and all of Egypt's power. It was inevitable that Israel would be freed.

True, Pharaoh may not have known about this prophecy, since it was given, not to Egyptians, but to forefathers of Israel. At this point one may conclude that Pharaoh could not be blamed since he did not know any better. However, that situation was to change. He would be notified. Hence, Jehovah raised up his servant Moses to inform Pharaoh that the course of action he was taking was in opposition to Jehovah God, the One who had made this prophetic promise.

Moses went to Pharaoh and said: "This is what Jehovah the God of Israel has said, 'Send my people away.' " (Ex. 5:1) Pharaoh was also told: "This is what Jehovah has said: 'Israel is my son, my firstborn. And I say to you: Send my son away that he may serve me. But should you refuse to send him away, here I am killing your son, your first-born.' " (Ex. 4:22, 23) The way was now open for Pharaoh to retreat honorably from his wrong course of action.

Did he? No! Instead, Pharaoh answered: "Who is Jehovah, so that I should obey his voice to send Israel away? I do not know Jehovah at all and, what is more, I am not going to send Israel away." (Ex.

5:2) In addition to that defiance of the God of prophecy Pharaoh placed a heavy work load on Israel.—Ex. 5:9.

Pharaoh regarded the words of the God of prophecy as false words! No more could he use the excuse that he did not know about Jehovah's will. He had been duly notified. His heart had hardened.

Now that Pharaoh had committed himself, *and all Egypt,* to this defiant course, the God of prophecy would bring to bear his mighty power in order to free Israel. Jehovah proceeded to bring ten devastating plagues upon the land and people. Before each one Pharaoh was warned; but he chose to defy the warnings. Yet each plague came as foretold, until the final one, the tenth, killed the firstborn of all Egypt, man and beast, including Pharaoh's own firstborn son, just as had been foretold by the God of prophecy! Finally, Pharaoh relented and let Israel go.

But then he quickly hardened his heart even more and pursued Israel so as to bring them back into slavery. At the Red Sea this defiant ruler of ancient Egypt and all his military hosts were brought to ruin. God buried them beneath the waters. "Not so much as one among them was let remain." (Ex. 14:28) Jehovah, the God of prophecy, had been patient, allowing time for Pharaoh to respond favorably to his prophetic word, but Pharaoh refused. So Egypt and its people suffered disastrously as a result. The people could not absolve themselves of responsibility, because they agreed to do injury to God's people.

Modern-Day Defiers of Prophecy

So too, in our day, rulers who oppose God and show it by opposing those who preach his prophetic word will be judged by their course of action. So will people who do the injurious bidding of such rulers in defiance of the God of prophecy.

God has clearly foretold in his Word the work that will be done in our time. Matthew 24:14 prophesies: "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 will come." That Kingdom preaching by God's servants *will be done.* It is a prophecy that must be fulfilled, as it is from the God of prophecy.

To fight against that prophecy by oppressing the proclaimers of God's kingdom is to fight against God. This is what an observant leader called to the attention of those who opposed God's servants in the first century of our Common Era. The man was Gamaliel, a law teacher highly esteemed by all the people. When the disciples of Jesus Christ had been brought before the Jewish high court and were told to stop teaching the message Jesus told them to teach, Gamaliel said: "I say to you [the members of the court], Do not meddle with these men, but let them alone; (because, if this scheme or this work is from men, it will be overthrown; but if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them;) otherwise, you may perhaps be found fighters actually against God." —Acts 5:38, 39.

What a terrible thing to be found fighting against God! Never would we want to be in that position! To the contrary, let us learn from past history and mold our lives to the requirements of the God of prophecy and be blessed. But if we defy the God of prophecy, as did Pharaoh and the people of ancient Egypt, only disaster can result. Instead of receiving the blessings God has in store for those who obey him, we would receive the curses such as came upon those ancient defiers of the God of prophecy.

History tells us of another people who disregarded the prophetic word. They were the Edomites. Did they fare any better than the Egyptians? Let us see.

Edom SHOWS DISREGARD FOR THE Prophetic Word

EDOM took its name from Esau, the brother of Jacob. However, unlike his brother Jacob, Esau showed disregard for sacred things. This disregard grew to the point where, for the price of a meal, Esau proceeded to "sell his right as first-born to Jacob."—Gen. 25:33.

This characteristic was to be maintained in his descendants, for the Edomite nation that sprang from Esau continually disregarded the prophecies of God and even fought against those upon whom it was being fulfilled, Israel.

When God freed the nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage and they were on their way to Canaan, their logical route at one point would have been through Edomite territory. Israel asked Edom for permission to pass, guaranteeing they would not take any free food or water.

Now, Edom was no doubt familiar with God's promises of blessings to the Israelite descendants of Abraham. They knew what Jehovah had done for Israel in releasing them from Egyptian captivity, since all the peoples in Canaan and its vicinity knew. (Josh. 2:10; 9:9) And, in addition, Israel had been instructed to maintain friendly relations with Edom. (Deut. 2: 5) The Edomites had no cause whatsoever for hostility.

Yet the Edomites refused to let Israel pass, threatening warfare. Then, even after Israel had settled down in Canaan, the Edomites continually harassed them, striking them down as opportunity afforded and carrying off captives and plunder. And when Israel would suffer defeat at the hands of other enemies, Edom was overjoyed.

Particularly was this true when, in 607 B.C.E, Babylonian armies destroyed Jerusalem and carried off Jews into captivity. The Edomites were in ecstasy! They participated in looting and even cut off Israelites trying to escape, handing them over to the Babylonians. —Obad. 10-14.

Edom's Doom Prophesied, Fulfilled

Edom's hatred of Israel and their complete disregard for the prophetic word of God brought them into direct conflict with the God of prophecy himself. (Ezek. 35:12, 13) No longer would Edom be left unmolested by God. Their disregard of his prophecies and their crimes against his people had mounted past the point of toleration.

However, the Edomites were not alarmed. They were arrogant, defiant, unrepentant, certain of their eaglelike perches high in the hills south of the Dead Sea. But God said to them: "The presumptuousness of your heart is what has deceived you, you who are residing in the retreats of the crag, the height where he dwells, saying in his heart, 'Who will bring me down to the earth?' If you should make your position high like the eagle, or if among the stars there were a placing of your nest, down from there I would bring you."—Obad. 3, 4.

That is exactly what happened! The Edomites came crashing down from their lofty perches! At whose hands? At the hands of the very ones they had encouraged when Jerusalem was destroyed, the Babylonians, whom God used as his executioners to fulfill his prophetic word.

But the Edomites did not learn from this. They continued to disregard prophecy and sought to rebuild their broken cities.

So God said: "Because Edom keeps saying, 'We have been shattered, but we shall return and build the devastated places, this is what Jehovah of armies has said, 'They, for their part, will build; but I, for my part, shall tear down.'"—Mal. 1:4.

Despite their efforts, the Edomites did not rebuild their fortresses. They could not turn back the prophecies of their doom. Soon a tribe of Arab peoples known as Nabataeans conquered them and drove the remnant of Edomites into the Negeb, south of Judea. Later, about 130 B.C.E., Jewish king John Hyrcanus absorbed them into his people. Then with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. by Rome, they disappeared from history. Thus ended the nation and people of Edom, just as had been prophesied centuries before: "A desolate waste is what you will become, O mountainous region of Seir, even all Edom, all of it."—Ezek. 35:15.

God's prophetic word never fails. This can be seen in the fact that Edom is indeed a desolate waste to this very day, and the Edomites are no more. Says *The New Funk & Wagnalls Encyclopedia:* "After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. . . . the name Idumaea [Edom] disappeared from history." Another observer writes concerning the great Edomite citadel of Petra: "Nothing can exceed the desolation of its present condition. . . . It was beyond the foresight of man to imagine that so wealthy and powerful a city should be deserted and desolate." The writer adds: "That a great city should be thus swept from the memory of man, and blotted out, for a long season, from the knowledge of the world, is a most striking manifestation of the truth of the prophetic record, and utterly exceeded all human foresight and sagacity."—*The Evidence of Prophecy,* A. Keith.

Modern-Day Lesson

Today, all nations and peoples of earth, especially those of Christendom, should take a lesson from Edom. They have access to God's prophetic Word in the form of the Bible. Religious leaders and people alike can read, for example, the prophecy of Matthew 24:14 in regard to the great preaching work to be done in our time. So plain has it become that Jehovah's witnesses are the ones fulfilling this prophecy by preaching this good news of the Kingdom that, when they call at the homes of people, they are usually recognized as soon as they start to speak!

Yet many persons fail to show these sincere ministers kindness. Many act as the Edomites did toward Israel. They speak harshly, slam the door in their faces, even call the police. In some lands religious leaders instigate the politicians to ban this society of ministers to try to stop their preaching work. Especially so is this true of the clergy of Christendom. These measures indeed imitate Edomite actions.

What this really means is that those who do these things disregard God's prophetic Word. As a result, instead of benefiting when Bible prophecy is fulfilled, they will find themselves in the position of the Edomites, having God's judgments turned against them.

Never put yourself in that position. Do not be one, as Hebrews 12:16 says, "not appreciating sacred things, like Esau, who in exchange for one meal gave away his rights as first-born." Do not be like his descendants, the ancient Edomites, who disregarded God's prophetic Word and fought against those upon whom it was fulfilled!

Neither should you ever want to be like another ancient people, the people of the city of Tyre, who tried to ignore the prophecies of God.

Tyre Tries to Ignore Prophecy

THE city of Tyre, located on the Mediterranean coast of Palestine, was the commercial giant of the ancient world about a thousand years before the time of Christ.

As centuries passed, Tyre's influence and prestige grew. She became famous for her sea trade, her wealth, her dazzling splendor. So prosperous did Tyre become that it was said of her: "With the abundance of your valuable things and your articles of exchange you made earth's kings rich."—Ezek. 27:33.

The future indeed looked bright for Tyre. Except for one thing: She tried to ignore prophecy!

Ignored Prophecy Concerning Nebuchadnezzar

Specifically Tyre ignored the prophecy concerning the rising world power, Babylon, and its king, Nebuchadnezzar, whom God was going to use in a special way. God told the prophet Jeremiah to give this warning to Tyre, as well as to other surrounding nations: "I myself [Jehovah] have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; . . . And all the nations must serve even him and his son and his grandson . . . And it must occur that the nation and the kingdom that will not serve him, . . . with the sword and with the famine and with the pestilence I shall turn my attention upon that nation . . . until I shall have finished them off by his hand."—Jer. 27:1-8.

Did Tyre listen to this prophecy Jehovah sent through Jeremiah? No! She chose to ignore it! She rebelled at being subject to Babylon. Because of this contemptuous attitude toward prophecy, God inspired another one of his servants, Ezekiel, to foretell that Nebuchadnezzar would indeed come against Tyre: "Your towers he will pull down, . . . With the hoofs of his horses he will trample down all your streets. Your people he will kill even with the sword, and to the earth your own pillars of strength will go down."—Ezek. 26:7-11.

True to God's prophetic Word, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre some time after he destroyed Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. For thirteen years the siege continued. Finally, haughty Tyre was brought low. Her walls and towers were torn down. She was razed to the ground, just as Jeremiah and Ezekiel had been inspired to prophesy.

However, during the siege a remnant of Tyre's inhabitants fled the city and moved offshore to a small island about half a mile from the mainland. With a water barrier between them and the enemy, they felt secure and began fortifying their city on the island.

Prophecy Fulfilled in Detail

One part of Ezekiel's prophecy against old Tyre on the mainland was not fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it, for Jehovah had foretold: "I will scrape her dust away from her and make her a shining, bare surface of a crag. A drying yard for dragnets is what she will become in the midst of the sea. . . . And your stones and your woodwork and your dust they will place in the very midst of the water. . . . the vast waters will have covered you." (Ezek. 26:4, 5, 12, 19) But this part of the prophecy would come to completion without fail.

The time for this to occur came during the reign of Alexander the Great of Macedonia. In the year 333 B.C.E. his Greek ar-

mies defeated the Persians at the battle of Issus. Alexander then turned his attention to the island city of Tyre and called for its surrender. When Tyre refused, he determined to take the city. But how? His armies were on the mainland while the city was on the offshore island.

Resourceful Alexander had the answer. He put his army to work building a causeway that would bridge the gap between the mainland and the island city. But where would he get all the material needed for such a causeway? Right there from the old land city of Tyre, the ruins of which still remained from when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it more than two centuries before!

Alexander had all the debris, the stones, woodwork, yes, the very dust scraped off old Tyre and dumped into the Mediterranean Sea to build his causeway. This fulfilled in exact detail Jehovah's prophecy that had declared: "I will scrape her dust away from her and make her a shining, bare surface of a crag. . . . your stones and your woodwork and your dust they will place in the very midst of the water." With the causeway finished, Greek siege engines battered the walls of the island city. Finally Tyre fell. Thousands were killed and tens of thousands sold into slavery.

Archaeology has confirmed that all this took place. The book *Lands of the Bible,* by J. W. McGarvey, states: "Of the original Tyre known to Solomon and the prophets of Israel, not a vestige remains . . . In the total disappearance of ancient Tyre the predictions contained in the 26th and 27th chapters of Ezekiel meet with as nearly a literal fulfillment as is possible with language so highly figurative." Another detail is noted by the *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary:* "Alexander was forced to build a causeway, and after long months of frustration and vast penetration, take the city by costly storming. Tyre was broken, and the causeway still remains, a place, as Ezekiel foretold, on which fishermen might dry their nets."

Lesson for Today

There is a lesson of the greatest import in this, one that applies particularly to our day. Shortly a king with far greater power than Nebuchadnezzar ever had, than Alexander ever dreamed of, will conquer, not just a city, but this entire system of things.

That king is Jesus Christ, now ruling from a heavenly throne, occupying a position of power secondary only to Jehovah God himself. With myriads of angels at the battle of Armageddon he will completely desolate this wicked system of things and those who insist upon remaining a part of it. Persons are now being urged to surrender to this ruler far greater than Nebuchadnezzar, Christ Jesus, to come under his protection so as to be spared. The Bible counsels: "Kiss the son [Jesus Christ], that He may not become incensed and you may not perish from the way, for his anger flares up easily. Happy are all those taking refuge in him." —Ps. 2:12.

As the anger of Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander flared up at the stubborn Tyrians, who ignored the prophecy of God, so the anger of the heavenly king Jesus Christ will flare up at senseless ones who ignore prophecy today.

Do you want to share the fate of this old order? Or do you want to come under the protection of Jehovah's Executioner Jesus Christ? If life is what you want, then by all means do not delay in learning what the requirements are for your submission to Christ. Learn them, do them, and be blessed. Ignore them, and without fail your fate will be as that of ancient Tyre when it ignored the prophecy of God and was brought to desolation.

MILITARY MIGHT Fails to Turn Back FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY

WHEN God utters a prophecy, it is certain of fulfillment. Not even the most powerful nations, at the peak of their military might, can turn it back. This was well illustrated by the powerful empires of Assyria and Babylon.

Assyria was the world power about eight centuries before our Common Era. One historian writes:

> "It rose to be the most powerful of nations; it reached out and gained the widest empire that had hitherto been seen; its capital, Nineveh, was for a few centuries the metropolis of the world."—*The Historians' History of the World*, Vol. I, p. 366.

What was Assyria's chief characteristic? Her military might. Nation after nation, city after city fell in the path of this monstrous world power. Then, in the year 732 B.C.E., triumphant Assyrian armies threatened Jerusalem. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, demanded that Jerusalem capitulate. He logically declared: "Who are there among all the gods of the lands that have delivered their land out of my hand?" (2 Ki. 18:35) The answer, as all Jerusalem knew, was that not one had been able to withstand Assyrian power. From a human standpoint the situation indeed looked hopeless.

However, Sennacherib did not realize that Jehovah, the God of prophecy, is the true and living God. Through Isaiah, God declared: "He will not come into this city nor will he shoot an arrow there nor confront it with a shield nor cast up a siege rampart against it." (2 Ki. 19:32) In fulfillment of this prophetic promise, "the angel of Jehovah proceeded to go out and strike down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians." Jerusalem was spared, mighty Assyria humiliated.—2 Ki. 19:35.

More was to come, for God decreed the end of this wicked nation. He inspired Zephaniah to write that He would "destroy Assyria. And he will make Nineveh a desolate waste, a waterless region like the wilderness." (Zeph. 2:13) The prophet Nahum also foretold that Nineveh would become "emptiness and voidness, and a city laid waste!" (Nahum 2:10) He noted that the city's gates along the Tigris River would be breached. These prophecies must have seemed fantastic in those days of Assyria's power. But what God foretells no amount of military might can prevent. —Nahum 2:5, 6.

Within a few years, in 633 B.C.E., combined armies of Medes and Babylonians came against Nineveh. A flood of the Tigris River undermined its walls, just as Nahum foretold, enabling the enemy to storm into the city. Nineveh's inhabitants were slain. It was put to the torch. It indeed became "a desolate waste," as history notes:

> "When Xenophon and the retreating Greek army passed in 401 BC it was already an unrecognizable mass of debris."—*The New Bible Dictionary*, J. D. Douglas, p. 889.
>
> "Alexander fought the battle of [Gaugamela] within sight of the mounds of Nineveh and saw no suggestions of a city there. Nine centuries later the battle which pre-

pared Western Asia to become Mohammedan was fought upon the site of Nineveh, and neither of the contending armies knew they were treading above the streets of a buried metropolis."—*Ancient Cities*, W. B. Wright, p. 34.

The tremendous military might of Assyria could not turn back the prophecies of God that foretold its destruction.

This was also the case with ancient Babylon. When it reached a zenith of power about six centuries before Christ, it surpassed even the might of Assyria. Note what a historian says of it:

"In splendor and opulence and power it far surpassed any other city of ancient times. . . . Over her palaces and temples the oriental sun rose in unclouded glory. In the might of her power and renown she saw her rivals one by one expire, and in her triumph she arrogated to herself the rank and title of mistress of the world." —*History of the World*, J. C. Ridpath, Vol. 1, p. 262.

However, two hundred years in advance, long before Babylon even became "mistress of the world," Jehovah's prophet foretold an end to Babylon! God knew that Babylon would become arrogant and would abuse the Jews, whom it would be allowed to take into captivity.

So of Babylon, God's prophet Isaiah declared: "To you these two things will come suddenly, in one day: loss of children and widowhood." (Isa. 47:9) Later, the prophet Jeremiah was inspired to declare that Babylon's mighty armies, armies that Habakkuk described as having the reputation of being "bitter and impetuous," whose cavalry forces were "swifter than leopards," "fiercer than evening wolves," would suddenly cease to fight and would become weak like women! Her supposedly impregnable capital would fall easily into the hands of a conqueror named Cyrus, whose very strategy was also foretold. —Hab. 1:6, 8; Jer. 51:30; Isa. 44:27–45:1.

For a certainty, though, the Babylonians would never believe all this as they arrogantly surveyed their mighty empire. Even when, in 539 B.C.E., the combined armies of Medes and Persians led by a man named Cyrus (as Isaiah had foretold!) invaded the area, the Babylonians were not overly concerned. They felt secure behind their towering massive walls and protective moat. They even blasphemed the God of heaven by misusing holy utensils that had previously been taken from the temple in Jerusalem.—Dan. 5:1-4.

Would the prophecies of her downfall be turned back? By no means! While the Babylonians were feasting, Cyrus' forces diverted the river Euphrates. Under cover of darkness his troops then marched up the riverbed and gained access to the city when the gates along the river had been left open by the overconfident Babylonians.

Swiftly Cyrus' troops burst into the city. Belshazzar was slain and his forces easily overcome, for the drunken Babylonian soldiers put up little resistance, just like terrified women, as Jeremiah had foretold!

God prophesied that Babylon would "become piles of stones," (Jer. 51:37) that it would "never be inhabited" again, that "their houses must be filled with eagle owls . . . And jackals must howl in her dwelling towers." (Isa. 13:20-22) What does history testify?

"Babylon . . . is today a rubbish heap, and until cleared of the dust of two-and-a-half thousand years was almost unrecognizable. . . . Owls flap out of her crevices, startled by the passer-by and at night the jackals howl."—*Through the Land of Babylonia*, L. T. Pearson, p. 30.

As with Assyria and Babylon, many nations today trust in their armed might Yet at God's war of Armageddon it will make no difference how much power nations have. As surely as Babylon and Assyria were crushed, so too nations that trust in armed might and not in God will come to their end.

Calamity Averted by Heeding Prophecy

NO MATTER how powerful a nation or people may be, calamity is certain to overtake them if they defy or ignore Bible prophecy. But calamity is not unavoidable. Prophecy can be acted upon, and calamity thereby averted.

This is illustrated by what happened to the capital city of Assyria, Nineveh, in the days of God's prophet Jonah. The Ninevites were extremely wicked. So bad were they that the true God, Jehovah, decided to overthrow the city, even as he had overthrown other wicked cities, such as Sodom and Gomorrah. But, first, God commanded his prophet Jonah to leave the land of Israel and go to Nineveh and prophesy against it. "Proclaim against her that their badness has come up before me."—Jonah 1:1, 2.

This was no easy assignment, to go among persons given to badness and violence and to tell them they were to be destroyed. Especially since Nineveh was a "great city," one of the greatest in human history! Its description as having "a walking distance of three days" fits well with ancient records of archaeological investigations that place its circumference at about sixty miles.* (Jonah 1:2; 3:3) However, after much hesitation, Jonah reached Nineveh and began proclaiming God's prophecy of impending calamity: "Only forty days more, and Nineveh will be overthrown."—Jonah 3:4.

In one of the most remarkable turns of events in history, the Ninevites of that time believed Jonah and showed sincere repentance. The king of Nineveh decreed that everyone should go on a fast and that they should call upon God and turn from their bad way. As the king said: "Who is there knowing whether the true God may turn back and actually feel regret and turn back from his burning anger, so that we may not perish?"—Jonah 3:5-9.

And that is exactly what happened! To show that God had no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but preferred, rather, that they repent and change their life according to his will and word, "God felt regret over the calamity that he had spoken of causing to them; and he did not cause it."—Jonah 3:10.

Calamity was averted by their heeding of divine prophecy! The city was permitted by God to survive. Thousands of lives were saved. Eventually, however, Nineveh once again turned to its bad ways. This brought further prophecies of destruction upon Nineveh, which were finally fulfilled many years later in 633 B.C.E.

But the Ninevites in the ninth century B.C.E., in Jonah's day, acted on prophecy and avoided calamity to themselves. So if individuals, or even large groups of people, should heed Bible prophecy today they also can avert calamity. Almighty God has decreed a destruction of this wicked system of things at Armageddon, and this cannot be avoided. But it is possible for you to avoid calamity. However, you must act. You must, as stated by God's prophet Zephaniah, "seek Jehovah . . . Seek righteousness, seek meekness." If you do, you "may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger."—Zeph. 2:3.

You, too, can avert calamity. Heed Bible prophecy. Imitate the ancient Ninevites. Jesus Christ recommended their repentant course and gave assurance that they will rise in the resurrection of the dead. (Matt. 12:41; Luke 11:32) However, to avert calamity today, it is vital to listen to the prophet greater than Jonah. Concerning that Messianic Liberator there are many remarkable Bible prophecies.

* *Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. IV, p. 703.

Coming of the Messianic Liberator FORETOLD

THE Bible, by reason of its prophecies, is a book of hope. It gives us assurance that, regardless of how powerful the forces of wickedness and oppression are, regardless of how great and widespread human suffering is, God has provided a Liberator who will set mankind free from all such affliction. Typical are the comforting words of the psalmist: "He will deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper. In his days the righteous one will sprout, and the abundance of peace until the moon is no more."—Ps. 72:12, 7.

It is just like Jehovah, the God of the Bible, who is a God of loving-kindness, to give mankind such prophecies. So that you and all other lovers of righteousness who have lived, who are now living or who yet will be born may have strong confidence in this Liberator, the Messiah, and in the blessings he will bring, God has caused to be recorded in his Word literally hundreds of prophecies.—Rom. 15:4.

The very first prophecy recorded in the Bible had the hope of the coming of mankind's Liberator implicit in it, and it was good news to those early lovers of righteousness such as Abel and Enoch, even though they could not have fully understood all its implications. Jehovah God gave that prophecy right after our first parents sinned and had been called to account by their Maker. In their hearing he said to the Serpent that had deceived Eve—not the snake, but the one behind the snake, "the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan"—: "I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel." That prophecy had implicit in it God's purpose to destroy the great Serpent and all his seed or offspring by means of a coming Liberator who would undo all the harm that the Serpent had done in causing sin and death to invade mankind. This would at the same time take away all the lying reproach that the Serpent had heaped upon God's name. Truly a ray of hope!—Rev. 12:9; Gen. 3:15; John 8:44.

Then, little by little, Jehovah God caused that ray of hope to shine more brightly by revealing further details concerning the Messianic Liberator. Thus some 2,000 years after God uttered his initial prophecy he began to give details regarding this coming Liberator of mankind, and that to his "friend," the patriarch Abraham: "I shall surely bless you and I shall surely multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens . . . ; and your seed will take possession of the gate of his enemies. And by means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves." From this prophetic promise you can see that it became certain, not only that the foretold Liberator would come through Abraham, but that all the nations of the earth would

be blessed by means of that one.—Gen. 22:17, 18.

About two hundred years later Jehovah caused Abraham's grandson, the patriarch Jacob, to utter a prophecy that gave further insight as to the line through which the Messianic Liberator was to come: "The scepter will not turn aside from Judah, neither the commander's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to him the obedience of the people will belong." Here we have a further revelation, that this Liberator would come through the tribe of Judah as well as that he would be a ruler.—Gen. 49:10.

After upward of 600 years had gone by, Jehovah God narrowed down the prospect of the Messianic Liberator to the family line of King David. Because of his faith in and his love for his God, Jehovah, he was told: "Your house and your kingdom will certainly be steadfast to time indefinite before you; your very throne will become one firmly established to time indefinite," that is, forever. Yes, the foretold Liberator not only was to be a royal personage but he was to rule forever!—2 Sam. 7:16.

Then some 350 years later Jehovah God caused his prophet Micah to foretell the very town in Israel where the promised Liberator would be born: "O Bethlehem Ephrathah, the one too little to get to be among the thousands of Judah, from you there will come out to me the one who is to become ruler in Israel, whose origin is from early times, from the days of time indefinite." How bright that prophecy made the hope of the Messianic Liberator! In addition to pinpointing his birthplace, it revealed that he would be no ordinary human, for his origin was in early times, from time indefinite.—Mic. 5:2.

The Very Year of His Coming Foretold

All through the years the believing Israelites doubtless wondered *when* this promised Messianic Liberator would come. Then about 200 years after Micah had uttered his prophecy, Jehovah God, by means of an angel, communicated to the prophet Daniel in Babylon the prophecy that told the very year that the Messianic Liberator would appear, and that almost six centuries in advance of that momentous event! Why not now open your Bible to Daniel 9:24-26, where this prophecy regarding the "seventy weeks" is recorded and where, among other things, it is stated: "There are seventy weeks that have been determined upon your people and upon your holy city . . . And you should know and have the insight that from the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Leader, there will be seven weeks, also sixty-two weeks."

Just how is this prophecy to be understood? When did the word go forth to restore and rebuild, not the temple, but Jerusalem, and by whom? The Bible tells us it was in the twentieth year of the reign of the Persian King Artaxerxes. When did his reign begin? According to such prominent scholars as Vitringa, Kruger, Ussher and especially Ernst W. Hengstenberg, this Artaxerxes began to rule in 474 B.C.E. The twentieth year of his rule would therefore be 455 B.C.E., from when the prophecy of the "seventy weeks" would begin to count.—Neh. 2:1-8.

But how long were these "seventy weeks" to be, you ask? Were they literally 70 weeks or 490 twenty-four-hour days? Hardly, for within a year and a half from 'the time the word went forth' the promised Messianic Liberator did not come. Then how long were those seventy weeks? They were seventy 'weeks of years' or a period of 490 years long, even as the facts show. This is in keeping with the rule repeatedly stated in the Bible, as at Ezekiel

4:6: "A day for a year, a day for a year, is what I have given you."—Num. 14:34.

The prophecy stated that the promised Messianic Liberator would come at the end of sixty-nine weeks. Did he? Yes, he did. From 455, 'when the word went forth,' to 1 B.C.E. was 454 years. From 1 B.C.E. to 1 C.E. was 1 year, and from 1 C.E. to 29 C.E., the year that Jesus came as the Messianic Liberator, was 28 years. Adding these three figures gives us 483 years or 69 weeks of years. But what proof is there that Jesus came as the Messiah in the year 29 C.E.?

It is found in the Gospel record of Luke, chapter 3. The events therein recorded and, in particular, the pinpointing of the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist in "the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar," leave no doubt that it was 29 C.E. when God's holy spirit came upon Jesus at the time of his baptism, thereby constituting him the "Anointed" one or the Messianic Liberator. The Messianic Liberator, therefore, did indeed come exactly 483 years after Nehemiah had rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, even as Daniel had foretold. Truly a most remarkable fulfillment of Bible prophecy, is it not?—Dan. 9:24-27.

In fact, it is quite likely that the Jews had some understanding of Daniel's prophecy of the "seventy weeks," and the coming of the Messiah. How so? Because we read that, when John the Baptist began his ministry in 29 C.E., "the people were in expectation and all were reasoning in their hearts about John: 'May he perhaps be the Christ?' "—Luke 3:15.

Thus there can be no question about it that the promised Messianic Liberator, the foretold Seed of promise, is Jesus of Nazareth. He came exactly at the foretold time, 29 C.E.; he was born at the foretold place, Bethlehem, and he was a descendant of David, of Judah and of Abraham, as likewise foretold in Bible prophecy and as recorded by the Gospels of both Matthew and Luke.—Matt. 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-38.

"All the Prophets" Foretold His Coming

However, while the Jews were correct as to the time of the Messiah's coming, they were mistaken in thinking that it would mean deliverance from the Roman political yoke at that time. (Acts 1:6) Because of this mistaken notion Jesus' disciples were greatly perplexed when he suddenly was seized, tried and put to death. Jesus met two of these on the morning of his resurrection. Among other things, he told them: "O senseless ones and slow in heart to believe on all the things the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?" Then "commencing at Moses and all the Prophets he interpreted to them things pertaining to himself in all the Scriptures."—Luke 24:13-27.

Among the many prophets that referred to the Messiah, in addition to those mentioned above, were Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Malachi. And in particular did the prophet Isaiah record ever so many prophecies regarding the Messiah's suffering and death, which Jesus no doubt called to the attention of those two disciples. Among other things, Isaiah foretold that Jesus would not be believed in but that he would be despised and avoided, that he would be wounded, afflicted, spit upon and pierced. Isaiah also foretold that Jesus would become an offering for sin and that he would be counted in among transgressors but would make his grave with the rich. —Isa. 50:6; 53:1-12.

Unquestionably on that occasion Jesus also called the attention of his disciples to the remarkable prophecies of Zechariah that had been fulfilled in him in the past few days. That prophet had foretold re-

garding Jesus: "Strike the shephard, and let those of the flock be scattered." And so it was, even as Jesus himself had forewarned them, that when the mob came to take him, "all the disciples abandoned him and fled." (Zech. 13:7; Matt. 26:56) Why, Zechariah foretold the very price the betrayer Judas would receive for his heinous deed: " 'Throw it to the treasury—the majestic value with which I have been valued from their standpoint.' Accordingly I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw it into the treasury at the house of Jehovah." —Zech. 11:13; Matt. 26:14-16; 27:3-10.

No wonder that afterward those two disciples said, "Were not our hearts burning as he was speaking to us on the road, as he was fully opening up the Scriptures to us?"—Luke 24:32.

Jesus Claimed and Proved to Be the Messiah

That Jesus Christ was indeed the foretold Messianic Liberator is apparent both from his own words and his deeds. Thus early in his ministry Jesus went to his hometown synagogue one sabbath and, being given the book of Isaiah to read, he read and applied to himself one of its Messianic prophecies: "Jehovah's spirit is upon me, because he anointed me to declare good news to the poor, he sent me forth to preach a release to the captives and a recovery of sight to the blind, to send the crushed ones away with a release, to preach Jehovah's acceptable year." And "then he started to say to them: 'Today this scripture that you just heard is fulfilled.' " By claiming to be the anointed one of Jehovah, he was claiming to be the Christ.—Luke 4:18-21; Isa. 61:1-3.

We also find him testifying to the same effect to a Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar. She had said to him: "I know that Messiah is coming, who is called Christ. Whenever that one arrives, he will declare all things to us openly." In reply Jesus said to her: "I who am speaking to you am he." Further, Jesus approved of the apostle Peter's saying to him: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And when on trial before the Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin, and asked if he was "the Christ the Son of the Blessed One," Jesus replied, "I am."—John 4:25, 26; Matt. 16:16, 17; Mark 14:61, 62.

Jesus also proved by his works that he was indeed the Messianic Liberator of humankind. For one thing, he set those who listened to him free from the false religious practices and oppressive traditions that the religious leaders of his day had fastened upon the common people. Said he to the lovers of righteousness: "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."—John 8:31, 32; Matt. 23:4.

More than that, Jesus also brought freedom for those who were heavily loaded down with sin and who hungered and thirsted for righteousness. On more than one occasion we read of his saying to such ones, "Your sins are forgiven." He could say this because he had come as the 'Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world,' 'to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many.'—Luke 7:48; 5:20; John 1:29; Matt. 20:28.

Jesus Christ the Messianic Liberator back there brought to countless suffering ones release from physical ills. As the apostle Matthew tells us: "He went around throughout the whole of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom and curing every sort of disease and every sort of infirmity among the people. And the report about him went out into all Syria; and they brought him all those faring badly, distressed with various diseases and torments, demon-possessed and epileptic and

paralyzed persons, and he cured them." —Matt. 4:23, 24.

Nor is that all. This foretold Messianic Liberator will yet bring about even greater deliverances, for 'all authority has been given him in heaven and on earth.' As the "Mighty God," more powerful than any human potentate, he will go forth with his heavenly armies to war against all the wicked nations of the earth, their rulers and their armies. Even as foretold, he will put them to rout in "the war of the great day of God the Almighty," Armageddon, now near at hand.—Matt. 28:18; Isa. 9:6; Rev. 16:14, 16; 19:11-21.

Is not such good news? More than that, we are given the assurance that this Son of David "must rule as king until God has put all enemies under his feet. As the last enemy, death is to be brought to nothing." Under his rule men will have 'every tear wiped from their eyes, death will be no more, neither mourning nor outcry nor pain will be any more.'—1 Cor. 15:25, 26; Rev. 21:4.

In fact, at that time it will not be necessary for you ever to go down into death; rather, loved ones that have gone down into death will be restored to life, even as this Messianic Liberator himself foretold: "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." Yes, 'the sea, death and Hades will give up their dead.'—John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:13.

And to crown all of his mighty achievements God will use this Liberator to destroy for all time the Devil and all his demons who have so cruelly oppressed mankind, not to say anything about their blinding and misleading all nations. —2 Cor. 4:4; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 20:2, 3, 10.

The foregoing are but representative of the many, many prophecies that God caused to be recorded relating to mankind's Liberator that either have already been fulfilled or are yet to be fulfilled. Surely all those already fulfilled could not have been fulfilled by Jesus Christ merely by chance. Nor can we intelligently dismiss them on the premise that he arranged things in his life so as to be sure to fit all these prophecies. True, he may have asked for the colt of an ass in order to fulfill Zechariah's prophecy that he would come to Jerusalem lowly, riding upon an ass. (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:1-11) But it is straining credulity to claim, as has been done, that Jesus arranged with Mary for her to anoint him with precious ointment in order to give him the occasion to say what he did about the poor so as to drive Judas to betray him, that Psalm 41:9 could be fulfilled, which foretold that "the man at peace with me, in whom I trusted, who was eating my bread, has magnified his heel against me." And he could no more have arrranged that his enemies would spit in his face, that he would be sold for thirty pieces of silver, that his side would be pierced with a spear and that soldiers would cast lots for his garments than he could have arranged the time and place of his birth—all of which were foretold! Jesus was no impostor; he is the Messianic Liberator sent by God. —Isa. 50:6; Zech. 12:10; Ps. 22:18.

Truly the way Jehovah God caused to have the coming of mankind's Liberator foretold is strong reason for you to take comfort and have hope, and that in spite of present world conditions. Rest assured that just as certainly as those prophecies relating to the past were fulfilled just that certainly those relating to the future will be; to the honor and vindication of Jehovah God as the God of prophecy and to the blessing of all lovers of righteousness.

YOUR FUTURE as Foretold in Prophecy

THE Holy Bible foretells a marvelous future for those of mankind who take heed to divine prophecy. The prospects are ones that warm the heart. This future can be yours. Take a look at it.

Prophecies of the Bible tell of the time, now near at hand, when the wicked will be gone and God's kingdom will rule all the earth: "Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give attention to his place, and he will not be." (Ps. 37:10) Think what the fulfillment of this prophecy can mean to you.

With the wicked gone, no longer will anyone have to contend with unjust administration of the law, influenced by the color of one's skin or one's economic circumstances. When families leave home for a trip, there will be no need to lock the door because of fear that someone might try to get in to steal. Women will be able to enjoy a quiet walk on a moonlit night without fear of assault.

The prophet Isaiah enlarges on this picture for us, saying of Jesus Christ, who will be ruler then: "With righteousness he must judge the lowly ones, and with uprightness he must give reproof in behalf of the meek ones of the earth. And he must strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the spirit of his lips he will put the wicked one to death." (Isa. 11:4) Just by reading those words you can sense the relief that will come to mankind as a result of the righteous, impartial rule of the Messianic Liberator of mankind.

Under his reign, Bible prophecies tell us, the earth will become a paradise. Do you remember what Jesus Christ told an evildoer who was impaled alongside him? "Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43) What a marvelous transformation when this earth is made into a paradise!

Never again will there be a shortage of the necessities of life. Droughts will never thwart a man's efforts to provide for his family. The Book of never-failing prophecies assures us: "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow." "The earth itself will certainly give its produce; God, our God, will bless us." (Ps. 72:16; 67:6) With loving consideration for humankind, the Creator promises: "The tree of the field must give its fruitage, and the land itself will give its yield, and they will actually prove to be on their soil in security." (Ezek. 34:27) How favored the people who will live under those conditions!

In that new system of God's making, people in every part of the earth will have a part in beating war implements into instruments of peace. They will learn war no more. God will make wars to cease. —Isa. 2:4; Ps. 46:9.

Because of changes that God himself will make, children will then be in no danger when they play with strange animals. No fear that a snake or a dog may bite! In fact, the lion will lie down with the lamb and little children will be able to lead them.—Isa. 11:6-9.

But there are other blessings that make the coming kingdom of God even more appealing. Instead of being dragged down by the aches and pains of ill health and old age, inhabitants of that paradise will find that day by day their health will improve, until they reach human perfection. "Death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be any more." (Rev. 21:4) Forever, those things will have passed away.

Not only will those then living be free from the grasp of death inherited from Adam, but billions who have already been claimed by death will return to life. "All those in the memorial tombs will hear [the voice of Christ] and come out." (John 5: 28, 29) What a joy it will be to welcome back one's loved ones from the dead! Even persons who went into the grave thousands of years ago will rise again. And it will be the privilege of those then living to tell them what has happened, and to instruct them in the divine requirements for life.

Does such a future appeal to you? Without fail it will come, because God himself has promised it, and you can have a part in it if you act now to bring your life into harmony with Bible prophecy.

Another Future

But these foretold blessings are not the future of all persons. The Bible also forecasts the end of this wicked system of things and those who are part of it. Small wonder, in view of the kind of persons who make it up. The apostle Paul in his inspired prophecy concerning these "last days" describes these people as "lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power." (2 Tim. 3:1-5) Many of these people may profess to be worshipers of God. They have "a form of godly devotion," but it is not a powerful influence in their lives. It makes them no different from the rest of the world.

In fact, they are very much a part of the world and crave the things that it has to offer. They give their support to its various organizations and institutions, both religious and political. They ignore the fact that God says: "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15-17) By throwing in their lot with this present system of things they align themselves against the kingdom of God and the authority of his Christ. They make themselves spiritual adulteresses, enemies of God. (Jas. 4:4) The result, as described in the nineteenth chapter of Revelation, is that they end up in destruction from which there is no hope of resurrection.

The Revelation describes further the kind of persons who will suffer destruction at God's hands. They include, not only "those who are disgusting in their filth and murderers and fornicators and those practicing spiritism and idolaters," but also those who have copied the world's pattern of dishonesty—yes, "all the liars." And "those without faith"—persons who do not really take God seriously enough to conform their lives to what he says in his Word.—Rev. 21:8.

Such a future, described in Bible prophecy, awaits the vast majority of persons now living, but it does not have to be your future. For that reason the Bible urges you to "turn away" from them and their way of life. (2 Tim. 3:5) It encourages you to "get out from among them and separate yourselves."—2 Cor. 6:17.

Activity of God's People Today

There are thousands of persons, in all parts of the earth, who are doing just that. They believe Bible prophecy; they know that God means what he says and that in his own appointed time he will bring about what he has foretold. As a result, they have taken careful note of what the Bible says, not only about events still in the future, but also about the type of activities in which persons who have God's approval would *now* be engaging. Their primary concern is being pleasing to God.

They find that the Bible makes it plain that God's people would be "no part of the world," that is, they would not be devoted to it and seeking to perpetuate it. (John 15:19; Jas. 1:27) By taking the Bible seriously and allowing it to mold their lives, they change their way of life from that of the world around them. They put on a "new personality." Lying, cheating, drunkenness and sexual immorality are cleaned out of their lives. They 'quit being fashioned after this system of things, but are transformed by making their minds over.'—Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:25–5:5; Col. 3:5-14.

ARTICLES IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Can the Stars Reveal Your Future?
- Does Your Minister Approve of Fornication?
- Solving the High Cost of Eating.
- A Speech Handicap That Can Be Reduced.

The Bible says that they would outstandingly be identified by their love for one another; so much so that they would stand out as different from the world around them. (John 13:34, 35) Furthermore, they would be outspoken advocates of God's kingdom. All of them—men, women and children—would share in making it known publicly and from house to house. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20; Acts 2:17, 18; 20:20) They would also make it a habit to assemble together with fellow believers, to encourage and upbuild one another from the Holy Bible. (Heb. 10:24, 25) It is such persons whom God promises to preserve into his new system of things.

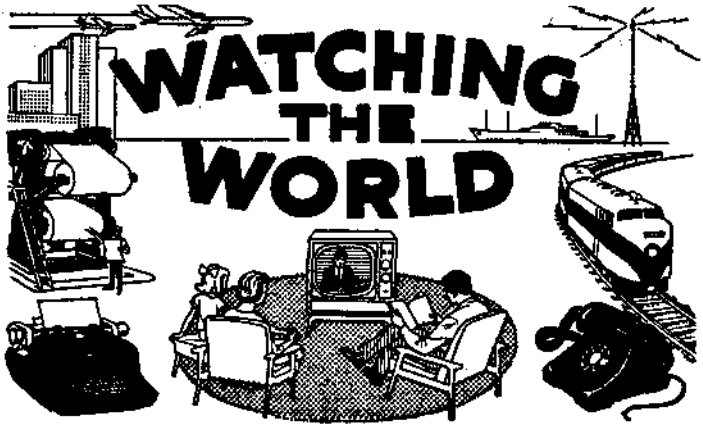
The facts show that Jehovah's witnesses conform to this description of people who have God's approval. You can too if you take action now to bring your life into harmony with the things set out in God's prophetic Word.

Act Wisely

Do not be like that mighty Greek ruler of ancient times, Alexander the Great, who devoted his energies to work that was in conflict with Bible prophecy. Whether he knew what God's prophet had recorded or not, his efforts to rebuild the ancient city of Babylon were bound to fail, because the complete and everlasting desolation of that city had been foretold by God. (Isa. 13:19, 20) History records that it was there at Babylon that Alexander died.

Neither be like that man who, centuries ago, decided to rebuild the city of Jericho. In spite of the fact that the Holy Scriptures warned that it would cost the life of his firstborn for him to lay the foundations of the city and the life of his youngest son to put up its doors, a man named Hiel, of the Israelite city of Bethel, chose to ignore the warning. Though recorded five hundred years before, that prophecy came true in every detail. (Josh. 6:26; 1 Ki. 16:34) What a frightful cost to pay for ignoring God's prophetic Word.

For the sake of yourself and your loved ones, pay attention to prophecy. Act now to bring your life into harmony with God's prophetic purpose. Then your life will be enriched with blessings from God both now and forever.



Violence in New Delhi

◈ Riots in India have erupted over many issues, religious, political and economic, but the one that spilled blood in New Delhi streets in mid-March was over language. Curfews were clamped on New Delhi and Amritsar, the Sikh holy city, as the authorities sought to stem the Hindu violence over a government decision to give the powerful Sikh community a Punjabi-speaking state of their own. Punjabi is the language of the Sikh. At present Punjabi is only a regional language in part of the Punjab, whose main official language is Hindi. Although some Hindus favor a Punjabi-speaking state, the most militant Hindus have violently opposed it. As 4,000 rock-throwing Hindus assaulted the Sikh temple, the Sikh guards, screaming religious war cries, counterattacked with spears and swords. The mob looted stores, burned shops, attacked the ruling Congress Party headquarters, smashed cable lines, telephone and power poles, ransacked post offices and burned Sikh schools.

A China Quake

◈ Recently earthquakes have been shocking our earth in one place after another. On March 8 seismographs around the world registered a powerful earthquake in China. Red China acknowledged on March 11 that a "strong earthquake" did hit the northern province of Hopeh, where Peking is situated. The report, however, failed to mention casualties or indicate how hard Peking itself may have been hit. Japanese correspondents in Peking said the quake rocked the city, leaving walls cracked and furniture toppled. The quake was recorded at the University of California as from 6 to 6.5 on the Richter scale. One of the worst earthquake devastations in modern history took place in China, when on December 16, 1920, some 180,000 persons died.

Rio's Revelry Ends

◈ Four days of carnival revelry in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, left the city's revelers in an exhausted state. A report stated that the police described the celebration as one of "the most orderly despite more than 5,000 injuries, nine murders, one suicide and more than 100 fire alarms."

Tranquilizer Abuse

◈ This generation with its anxieties is endeavoring to calm itself with tranquilizers and other drugs. Early in March, Dr. Carroll L. Witten of the University of Louisville said that "the peril and indeed the mortal danger that could arise from unrestricted use of the chemicals is great." He singled out as drugs that "have been abused to the point of a recognizable public hazard" meprobamate (Miltown, Equanil); glutethimide (Doridon); ethinamate (Valmid); ethchlorvynol (Placidyl); methprylon (Noludar), and chlordiazepoxide (Librium). "It would seem preferable," Dr. Witten said, "that we use these drugs only when truly needed and that we stop trying to place the entire populace in a tranquil state." Other doctors have pointed out that persons can become dependent on tranquilizers. Any drug that gratifies in some way through providing kicks, thrills, happiness, or relief from pain or insomnia can "hook" a person, doctors pointed out.

Clergymen Back Killing

◈ On March 10 clergymen of three different religious organizations sought to convince a group of Brooklyn students that it was entirely proper for them to participate in the Vietnam war, that the Biblical injunction against murder did not apply. The speakers were Roman Catholic R. J. McNamara, professor of sociology at Fordham University; Rabbi Isadore A. Aaron of Congregation Mt. Sinai and senior chaplain at LIU, and Col. Robert Mummey, the Christian Science counselor at the United States Military Academy, West Point. Roman Catholic McNamara said the American goal in Vietnam is "the unification and restoration of sovereignty to the people. It is a question of tactics, if what we're doing there is necessary to prevent oligarchy." Rabbi Aaron, quoting old Hebrew law, said war-time killing was justifiable. Mummey, a Christian Scientist, spoke about using the lesser evil to fight the greater evil. Then he made this statement: "Killing must be done with a pure heart, otherwise you have an im-

moral killing. If our soldiers were indoctrinated to hate the enemy, then to kill would be an immoral act." Mummey would have you believe that the North Vietnamese should regard the murdering of their sons and the destruction of their property as a loving gesture on the part of the Americans. Little wonder that the attempt to convince the students was somewhat less than successful. The fact is that the approach of these clergymen was a dishonor to God, whose will in such matters is clearly revealed in his Word the Bible.

Savage Blizzard

◈ The most savage blizzard in recorded American history, burying parts of the north-central United States, continued into March. The blizzard's death toll climbed to twenty. Snowplows and bulldozers scraping away at eaves-high snowdrifts continued to come upon frozen livestock. Hundreds of animals have reportedly been killed by the storm. Winds raged at fifty miles an hour, driving snow at blinding speeds, so that all travel ceased. Workers in Eagle's Nest, North Dakota, found a passenger train literally buried under a mountain of snow.

Priests Want Out

◈ A news release from Vatican City stated that "about 10,000 Roman Catholic priests over the past decade—an average of 1,000 a year—have asked the Vatican for release from their vows." Celibacy problems were behind most of the request, the report said. A variety of motives prompted other requests, including drinking problems and intellectual crises with a loss of vocation. Roman Catholicism over the past decade has had 420,000 priests. That means one priest in 42 has sought to leave the priesthood since 1956. The number who simply left and turned their backs on the church is believed to total several thousand.

Crime Rises

◈ Over the last decade crime has grown two to three times as fast as the population in West Germany. In 1964, 1,747,580 crimes were investigated by the West German police. A little more than half were solved. The biggest increases have been in theft and burglary and in sex crimes, including rape. Police voice concern because a growing number of teen-agers were taking part in crimes. Car thefts and prostitution are spreading rapidly.

According to President Johnson, crime in the United States is turning that nation into a country of captives. He noted that the "unrelenting pace of crime" rose last year by 5 percent nationally, while crime in suburbs jumped by 8 percent. A condition of continuing fear and uneasiness is creeping over the nation.

A Look at Taxes

◈ Every time the government says it will give to the people, it must first take it away from them, usually in taxes. According to analyst Henry J. Taylor, the Tax Foundation Inc. has found that this year the average American wage earner must work 2 hours and 19 minutes every working day for only his tax bills—federal, state and local. If you quit at 5 p.m. you have been working since 2:41 to pay your taxes. When you talk about the cost of living, he says, you are talking mostly about taxes. He states: "Nothing compares with their bite out of your day's work. But are you told this? Your second largest bite is housing and household operations. These are peanuts by comparison. They cost you only 1½ hours of work a day. You pay your food bill in one hour 16 minutes; you earn your transportation in 39 minutes, your clothes in 31, medical charges in 21, your recreation in another 21."

Adult Hypocrisy

◈ On March 7 adult morality was called hypocrisy, by so-called experts on the subject of sex education. They asserted that the cry that teen-age morals are allegedly breaking down is nothing but a smoke screen to protect the adult world from seeing that its entire moral code is nothing but a sham. About 2,000 persons at the 42d annual meeting of the Child Study Association of America heard Dr. Lester A. Kirkendall, professor of family life at Oregon State University, say: "The availability of information and devices to control conception and venereal disease have, in fact, created sexual freedom. . . . Therefore, the question is whether we can and will deal with youth as though they are free to choose whether or not to have premarital sexual relations." The fact is, Dr. Kirkendall asserted, that young people do make choices. The speakers were optimistic about the development of a new moral code, one that flings Bible principles out the window and allows debauched mankind to feed on lust, without a tinge of conscience.

Empty Pews

◈ Church attendance in the United States has reached its lowest point in a decade. In 1955, according to the Gallup Poll, 49 percent of the adult population attended church or synagogue during an average week. The average attendance slipped to 47 percent in 1959, 46 percent in 1962, 45 percent in 1964 and 44 percent in 1965. Studies show that it is the younger generation that is staying away from the churches. Since about half of America's population will be under 25 by 1970, what does this hold out for church attendance? In 1965 only 37 percent of the

young people said they went to church. Empty pews are an evidence of the prevailing spiritual famine. Who is at fault? The minister? The membership? The church message? Perhaps all three are. It is worth investigating.

Space Spectaculars

◈ A storybook double shot that led to a linkup with a target satellite ended in an unscheduled splashdown. American astronauts Neil Armstrong and David Scott in the Gemini 8 capsule blasted off perfectly into orbit on March 16, at 11:51 a.m. At 10 a.m. of the same day the Agena rocket was launched. Shortly after making the first docking in space history, the craft began to spin crazily. The astronauts were forced to pull away from the target Agena. The pilots were ordered to make an emergency landing, which they did. Splashdown was at 10:23 p.m. Both astronauts were described as in good condition on recovery.

The Russians had a space spectacular of their own. They orbited two space dogs for 23 days through a radiation belt and returned them safely to earth on March 16. Twice every 96 minutes the dogs traveled through the Van Allen belts. The space dogs were reported to be in good condition.

Incompetent MD's

◈ Dr. Robert C. Derbyshire of Santa Fe, New Mexico, president of the Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States, charged that "during the past five years, over a thousand disciplinary actions of state boards of medical examiners were reported." He said that "a large proportion of these were based on various forms of incompetence," mental, professional and physical incompetence. "Incompetence associated with drug addiction is such a widespread problem as almost to warrant separate consideration," he said.

Better Use for Rice

◈ Roman Catholics as well as some Protestants throw away literally tons of rice each year as a result of the superstitious practice of rice-throwing at weddings. In Mexico a Jesuit priest estimated that a ton of rice a day is used to pelt newlyweds in that country alone. Could not the rice be used in a better way, say, feeding the starving millions of India? Or are nominal Christians too superstitious to give up the practice for a charitable deed?

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