"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Literal towers in Bible times were elevated vantage points from which watchmen could observe happenings, warn of danger, or announce good news. Our magazine figuratively occupies such a vantage point, for it is founded on the very pinnacle of wisdom, God's Word. That elevates it above racial, national and political propagandas and prejudices, frees it from selfish bias. It is not bound by any traditional creed, but its message advances as the light on God's purposes and works increases.—Habakkuk 2:1-3.

It sees things Scripturally. When it observes this generation afflicted with greed, delinquency, hypocrisy, atheism, war, famine, pestilence, perplexity and fear, and persecution of unpopular minorities, it does not parrot the old fable about history repeating itself. Informed by Bible prophecy, it sees in these things the sign of the world's time of the end. But with bright hope it also sees opening up for us just beyond these woes the portals of a new world.

Thus viewed, "The Watchtower" stands as a watchman atop a tower, alert to what is going on, awake to note signs of danger, faithful to point out the way of escape. It announces Jehovah's kingdom established by Christ's enthronement in heaven, feeds his kingdom joint-heirs with spiritual food, cheers men of good will with glorious prospects of eternal life in a paradise earth, comforts us with the resurrection promise for the dead.

It is not dogmatic, but has a confident ring in its voice, because it is based on God's Word. It does not privately interpret prophecy, but calls attention to physical facts, sets them alongside prophecy, and you see for yourself how well the two match, how accurately Jehovah interprets his own prophecy. In the interests of our salvation, it keeps sharp and faithful focus on Bible truth, and views religious news generally.

'Be watchful in these perilous times,' God admonishes. So keep on the watch by regularly reading "The Watchtower".

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"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45, *NW*; Isaiah 54:13

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Abbreviations used in "The Watchtower" for the following Bible versions

AS – American Standard Version
AT – An American Translation
Da – J. N. Darby's version
Dy – Catholic Douay version
ED – The Emphatic Diaglott
Le – Isaac Leeser's version
LXX – The Septuagint Version
Mo – James Moffatt's version
NW – New World Translation
Ro – J. B. Rotherham's version
RS – Revised Standard Version
Yg – Robert Young's version

Unless otherwise indicated, the Bible used is the King James Version

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The WATCHTOWER
Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM
Vol. LXXVII April 15, 1956 Number 8

Why Examine THE BIBLE?

TODAY'S clergymen are fond of such statements as: "Now the way I see it is," "As I understand it," or "Well, that's your understanding." How different this is from Jesus' position! Never did he say: "Now as I see it, so-and-so is right," implying that someone else might see it a different way. With Jesus and the apostles doctrines were either right or wrong, true or false, there was no halfway ground, no gray, indefinite, in-between shade between truth and error.

Why is there this difference between the view of today's religious leaders and that of Jesus and his apostles? Well, Jesus and his apostles knew the truth. They were convinced of the genuineness of what they taught. They never considered the Bible as a fiddle on which just any old tune could be played, but they recognized that the Hebrew Scriptures, the part of the Bible that had thus far been written, was the genuine Word of God, to be followed explicitly. Yet many of today's clergymen take just the opposite view, seeming to be more concerned with other matters and far less convinced of the importance of their doctrine and the genuineness and clarity of the Bible as a sure guide.

Though Jesus was the Son of God he did not assume that he had the right to bypass the inspired writings. Rather, he set the outstanding example by basing his authority squarely upon those Scriptures. That Scriptural way is logical, for since the Bible was inspired by Jehovah God and since Jesus was his representative, certainly Jesus would be in harmony with that inspired writing.

Jesus did not repel the tempter, Satan, with "Well, that's *your* understanding." But he did repel him by three times referring to what had been written. Further, to prove that John's work was preliminary to his he referred to what was written; to explain his casting the money changers out of the temple he referred to what was written, and to explain his coming betrayal, death and even the confusion his followers would suffer at that time he again referred to what was written.—Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; 11:10; 21:13; 26:24, 31.

He condemned the self-righteous Pharisees by quoting words written by Isaiah. In the synagogue at Nazareth he read his commission to preach written in the same book of Isaiah. In answer to the question: "By doing what shall I inherit everlasting life?" he referred to what was written in the law of Moses. He explained from the inspired Writings that he would be rejected and killed. He said: "All the things written in the law of Moses and in the Prophets and Psalms about me must be fulfilled."

And he even pointed out how the written prophecies had foretold his resurrection on the third day.—Mark 7:6; Luke 4:17-21; 10:25, 26; 18:31-33; 24:44, 46, *NW*.

What an outstanding knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures! And what an outstanding example he set for us by basing his activity not upon human ideas, but upon God's written Word!

Jesus' disciples, too, were well acquainted with the Scriptures and recognized their importance as a reliable guide. They saw that Jesus fulfilled prophecies long ago written, and they called attention to this in their writings. Paul many times referred to the Hebrew Scriptures, showing that he too was familiar with them, relied upon them and recognized their importance. He wrote: "I believe all the things set forth in the Law and written in the Prophets." Yes, these early Christians proved conclusively that they did not lean to their own understanding, but that they did believe, accept, know and conform to the things already written in God's Word, the Holy Bible.—Acts 24:14; Luke 3:4; John 2:17; 12:14, 15; Acts 13:29, 33, *NW*.

Why is a right knowledge of the Bible's contents so vital? Because you cannot receive salvation and righteousness through your own power or in any other way than through the provision that Jehovah has made. And the Bible shows what that provision is and what you should do about it.

Paul said Jesus "became responsible for everlasting salvation to all those obeying him." But note those words: "To all those obeying him." To obey you must know his instructions. Where could you learn them except from the Holy Scriptures? The apostle told of no other place when he wrote to young Timothy: "From infancy you have known the holy writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through the faith in connection with Christ Jesus."—Heb. 5:9; 2 Tim. 3:15, *NW*.

Such sound faith is not blind, but is informed. It is based on facts, logic, understanding and trust. It is based on a knowledge of God and his purposes, of the reason for the ransom and of the result of it. And that knowledge leads you to exercise a sound faith in both Jehovah God and his Son Christ Jesus. The Bible, the book that builds this faith, is powerful. It can change your life, remold your goals, transform your personality.

But, if the Bible has such power, why are so many of today's religions so spiritually weak? Because their leaders are too fond of telling you the way they see it, of the philosophy they have developed. They are more concerned with their theories of the service the clergy should render than God's own instructions about what they should teach. And it is also because, all too often, even when they do refer to the Scriptures they make ridiculous applications of them to support their own preconceived notions rather than sticking to what the Bible really teaches.

There are those, however, who, like Jesus, the apostles and the rest of the first-century Christians, will conform their lives and their beliefs to what was written. Their faith is strong, their course is wise, and their knowledge, when acted upon properly, leads to salvation. Such faith and knowledge are within your grasp. They come from examining this book and obeying its instructions. Thus, there is every reason for you to gain an accurate knowledge of the Bible and its contents. Will you act upon these sound reasons and do so?

"They are without excuse"

Truth is available and there is no excuse for not knowing about the Creator.

WHO are without excuse? Let Scripture answer: "What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible [essence], namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse." (Rom. 1:19, 20, *RS*) Yes, "they are without excuse," those who deny the existence of the true and living God, Jehovah. Atheists are on the increase according to Gallup polls. False religion has repelled many people from coming to know God. But the truth is now available to all honest-hearted persons. So there is no excuse for not knowing the Creator and Supreme Sovereign of the universe, Jehovah God.

Why are they without excuse? Because creation testifies to God's existence: "His invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are understood by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship." Jehovah's prophet admonishes: "Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these." Does not what we see in the sky testify to Jehovah's power? Why, even a person with low intelligence who sees an automobile for the first time does not believe that all its parts just happened to put themselves together. There had to be intelligent supervision to produce such a complex creation; yet how much more complex is the least of God's creation that our eyes behold in the sky! —Rom. 1:20, *NW;* Isa. 40:26, *AS.*

So the heavens speak of God's glory: "The heavens [both the literal heavens and the "new heavens"] are telling the glory of God, and the sky shows forth the work of his hands. Day unto day pours forth speech, and night unto night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes forth through all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."—Ps. 19:1-4, *AT.*

Jehovah's power and other perfections may be known from the beauty, excellence, variety and immensity of his creation. And, indeed, the scale of perfections evident in the universe implies the existence of an absolute standard, a perfect Being. So as Christ's apostle said: "They are without excuse."—Rom. 1:20.

ORDER AND HARMONY IN NATURE

The order in the universe speaks of God's glory. Everything in nature is so definitely planned and has such a purposeful design that it shows intelligent planning. Why, it has taken the best minds of great scientists to discover only a few of the laws of nature. Are laws made by accident? What intelligent planning exists in regard to our earth! The sun's distance from the earth is just right. The moon's distance from the earth is just right. The earth is tilted on its axis just right. The mixture of gases is just right. The relationship between plants and animals is just right. What infinite wisdom is behind that cycle in nature! Animals take in oxygen, exhale it again combined in carbon dioxide while plants take in carbon dioxide and exhale oxygen. An accident? Unthinkable!

How obvious that the earth was prepared for man! Said one medical authority: "There are probably a thousand conditions which would have to be fulfilled before man could inhabit the earth. Not only must there be light, many kinds of food, water, proper atmosphere, appropriate temperature, the nitrogen cycle, etc., but there are hundreds of chemical reactions in the body which contribute to man's life processes. The chance that all conditions for life would have been fulfilled by pure chance is one in billions. It is very evident that the earth was prepared for man. This fact alone proves the existence of a conscious God."—*The Physician Examines the Bible,* p. 318.

A man who delved profoundly into the secrets of nature was Thomas A. Edison. He invented the phonograph and the electric light bulb and patented more than a thousand other inventions. Asked one day whether he believed in God, Edison replied: "After years of watching the processes of nature, I cannot doubt the existence of a Supreme Intelligence. The existence of such a God can, to my mind, almost be proved from chemistry."—*Reader's Digest,* April, 1954.

THE EXISTENCE OF LIFE AND INTELLIGENCE

The existence of living creatures whose nonexistence is possible implies the existence of a necessary Creator. Man cannot create life from the elements. Yet are we to think that the elements created man? We can take a lesson from the beasts, the birds and the fish. Said Job: "Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the birds of the heavens, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these, that the hand of Jehovah hath wrought this?"—Job 12:7-10, *AS.*

Yes, even the eye of an eagle can teach us a lesson, can direct us to the Author of life. So impressed with created things was Sir Isaac Newton, the English mathematician, physicist and astronomer who conceived the idea of universal gravitation, that he said: "Whence is it that nature does nothing in vain; and whence arises all that order and beauty which we see in the world? . . . How came the bodies of animals to be contrived with so much art and for what ends were their several parts? Was the eye contrived without skill in optics, or the ear without knowledge of sounds? . . . And these things being rightly despatched, does it not appear from phenomena that there is a being incorporeal, living, intelligent?"—*Optics,* by Sir Isaac Newton, Bk. III, Query 25.

The more that scientists study the universe, the more they must recognize a Supreme Intelligence behind it. Albert Einstein, the noted physicist, is said to have peered deeper into the secrets of the universe than any other man. The secrets he has fathomed made him no atheist, as he

admits: "It is enough for me to contemplate the mystery of conscious life perpetuating itself through all eternity; to reflect upon the marvelous structure of the universe, which we can dimly perceive, and to try humbly to comprehend even an infinitesimal part of the intelligence manifest in nature."

Another reason why those who refuse to recognize Jehovah as Creator are without excuse: intelligence exists. If man arose without intelligent guidance, why should he have intelligence? Can unintelligence create intelligence? Why, even men with the keenest intelligence cannot create intelligence that is superior to their own. Oh, they have made robot brains. In the mathematical field they are superb. Yet they are not more intelligent than man. A distinguished mathematician and logician of Princeton University, Alonzo Church, has carefully analyzed electronic calculators and mechanical brains. He said: "No machine can ever solve all problems solvable by a live mathematician." Yet atheists believe that intelligent man, though he cannot create life or even anything more intelligent than himself, was created by a force with no intelligence. Does it make sense?

To say that there is no Supreme Intelligence is to say that the universe has evolved something higher than itself, it has created intelligence. And to think that anything can create something it does not itself possess is the most vacuous kind of empty-headed reasoning.

INSTINCTIVE AWARENESS OF GOD

Man is endowed with an instinctive awareness of God, an awareness that should prompt all men to glorify Jehovah. Indeed, the mind is compelled by the law of its own being to conceive of some absolute and infinite Best. It is compelled to believe that every effect has a cause. So there must be an uncaused First Cause that possesses within himself the reason for his existence.

Nature abhors a vacuum; so does man the idea of a Godless universe. The urge to worship is a powerful instinct. An article in *Woman's Home Companion* for April, 1954, contained a subtitle that said: "We all feel an urge for God as powerful as our instinct for sex and hunger, says a daring new school of psychiatric thought." The instinctive demand by all for a Supreme Being argues that One exists.

Another aspect of the instinctive urge to worship is that it is universal. It exists among men of all races, all nationalities. Even atheists worship something, though it may be their own philosophical atheism. The urge to worship is so widespread that if there were no God it would be impossibly difficult to imagine why people should spontaneously reach the conclusion that there is one.

THE BIBLE AND FULFILLED PROPHECY

Still another reason why atheists are without excuse: They have the Bible, God's revealed Word. Its prophecies and fulfillments alone prove that this is a Book whose authorship could not be of men. Before the mighty empire of Babylon fell, the Bible foretold it. (Jer. 51:37) The Bible foretold the successive rise of Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and the Anglo-American empire. (Dan. 8:3-25; Rev. 17:10-14) One Bible scholar counted 332 distinct prophecies that were fulfilled in Christ. A mathematician figured out that the chance of one man's fulfilling all those things was one in eighty-four followed by ninety-seven zeros! These and other prophetic accuracies prove beyond any question that a superhuman Intelligence was behind the Bible. That Intelligence is the Author, Jehovah God.

The arguments of atheists show that they have not really studied the Bible.

Rather, they have listened to the clergy of Christendom who have taught lies concerning Jehovah God, such as the one that he is the proprietor of a roasting compartment for human creatures called "purgatory." This hell of literal fire and other false doctrines such as trinity and immortality of the soul have turned some people away from God even before they investigate his Word. The Bible does not teach such unreasonable doctrines. They are taught by false religion, not by true Christianity. The atheist has erred in that he has wrongly assumed that the false religions of Christendom are of God. Rather, they are of the Devil.—2 Cor. 4:4.

So it does no good for the atheist to point to the ghastly persecutions, inquisitions and wars for which the so-called Christian religion has been responsible. The Bible declares such religions false: "They publicly declare they know God, but they disown him by their works."–Titus 1:16, *NW*.

Many atheists claim that the world always existed, that it never started. But science has proved such reasoning wrong. The discovery of radioactivity has proved that there could be no past eternity of matter. And the confirmation by Palomar's 200-inch Hale telescope of the expanding universe also proves the atheists wrong. *Life* magazine in its issue of December 20, 1954, featured a major article on the expanding universe. It presented the latest scientific opinion: "All the clues of science point to a time of creation when the cosmic fires were ignited and the vast pageant of the present universe brought into being. And this time was five billion years ago."

In these "last days" of Satan's world there is a very special reason why atheists are without excuse: the Christ-foretold preaching of the good news of God's kingdom by Jehovah's witnesses and the demonstration by Jehovah's witnesses that true Christianity does exist. (Matt. 24:14) Christendom has not lived by Bible standards; this should be plain to the atheists. That Jehovah's witnesses do should be equally plain. Further, the news of Jehovah's new world and how it will end pain, sorrow, suffering and death shatters basic atheistic teaching.—Rev. 21:1-4.

Atheists boast of being men of reason and vision. So did the ancient philosophers. Today's atheists think in much the same foolish manner in which even the wisest of ancient philosophers discoursed about God, not excepting Socrates or Plato. Who can read their works without being struck with the empty-headedness of their reasonings, as well as with the stupidity of their nonsense when speaking about God? The Bible well says: "They did not glorify him as God nor did they thank him, but they became empty-headed in their reasonings and their unintelligent heart became darkened." So like the ancient philosophers of yesterday are the atheistic philosophers of today: "They are in darkness mentally, and alienated from the life that belongs to God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the insensibility of their hearts." Who says there is no God? "The fool said in his heart, 'There is no God.' " —Rom. 1:21; Eph. 4:18, *NW;* Ps. 14:1, *AT*.

Since there is compelling and overwhelming evidence that Jehovah is the true and living God, Creator and Supreme Sovereign of the universe, the plea of ignorance cannot be admitted in its full latitude except for idiots. The atheists cannot plead ignorance. The agnostics cannot plead ignorance. The evildoers cannot plead ignorance. The idolaters cannot plead ignorance. For if they are willing to exercise their faculties and employ their minds in diligent search, men have within their reach the means of coming to know Jehovah God. So God's decree is: "They are without excuse."

I Lived in Exile in SIBERIA

In November, 1955, being a German citizen, I was able to return to my native land after four and a half years in exile in Siberia. However, many of Jehovah's witnesses from Memel territory, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Bessarabia and the Ukraine, as well as other parts of Russia, who do not possess a German citizenship, still find themselves in that cold land. I was asked by many of them to make a report to Jehovah's witnesses in other parts of the world.

While Russian forces occupied different parts of Germany I was living in East Prussia, Memel. For being one of Jehovah's witnesses I had already spent over six years in different prisons and institutions under the Hitler regime. When Hitler ordered the evacuation of Memel [now Klaipeda] almost all of the inhabitants of this territory fled into Germany. I did not take part in this flight. I could not become reconciled to the idea of seeking refuge under the Hitler regime that had brought such indescribable sorrow to Jehovah's witnesses. I had also thought that the Communists would show a little leniency to Jehovah's witnesses who had suffered so much under Hitler's regime. How wrong I was! I am more convinced than ever that this world is directed and led by its invisible ruler Satan.

As for the persecution of Jehovah's witnesses the communistic form of government has revealed itself to be a true imitator of Hitler and his nationalist party. With the oncoming of the Russians the clergy and preachers fled and deserted their sheep behind them. At this time many of Jehovah's witnesses, seeing these people in distress, had the opportunity of preaching to them concerning God's kingdom. Often Jehovah's witnesses were asked to preach to them. The result was that a number of new congregations came into existence in this part of the land. Many persons dedicated themselves to Jehovah and were baptized in water. The few copies of *The Watchtower* that we had were studied at the regularly held meetings. There they were not only studied, but reprinted and distributed among the populace. All of this was not hidden from the eyes of the Russian security police. Many times we were taken into custody and released after long hearings dealing with the teachings and the organization of Jehovah's witnesses. We knew that the secret police sent spies into the congregation in order to find out what we were discussing. We had nothing to hide. We were preaching God's Word and looking to God's kingdom as the only hope of the world. As late as 1949 I was able to speak to nearly 300 persons in attendance at one meeting. Isaiah 25:6-8* was my

* Isaiah 25:6-8 (*AS*) reads: "And in this mountain will Jehovah of hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering that covereth all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He hath swallowed up death for ever; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of his people will he take away from off all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it."

scripture text. I pointed out from these texts how Jehovah would richly bless those who served him and that death would be swallowed up in victory and that Jehovah would wipe away tears from off the faces and the reproach of his people would be taken away from off the earth, for Jehovah had spoken it.

The next day I was arrested while walking down the street. I spent two days in police custody and was then set free again after many long hours of questioning. Several days later I had to reappear before the security police. There I was told to write up an accurate report of Jehovah's witnesses' organization. A report was made about the already established kingdom of Jehovah God, together with many other timely truths. It was also pointed out that Jehovah's witnesses had been horribly persecuted under the Hitler regime and that on October 7, 1934, telegrams from congregations of Jehovah's witnesses in many lands were sent to the Reich Chancellery in Berlin, all of which read the same, "Your ill-treatment of Jehovah's witnesses shocks all good people of earth and dishonors God's name. Refrain from further persecuting Jehovah's witnesses; otherwise God will destroy you and your national party."

There is no question in my mind that this report was sent to the headquarters of the security police in Moscow. The first severe blow came against Jehovah's witnesses in this part of Russia in September, 1950. One night all able-bodied brothers and several sisters were picked up by the security police and taken to the security ministry prisons in Vilna. Here they were held in custody for half a year, when sentences finally came through from Moscow for almost all of them to be imprisoned in the penitentiary for ten years. After six months of nerve-racking questioning and persecution the nerves of many were shocked. Many had suffered severely because of the harassment they underwent during investigation. Some of these were then taken from the penitentiary and placed in work camps. Many had to work underground in coal mines. Some were sent as far north as the infamous camp known as Vorkuta. There are still some of our brothers working in this place.

It is very cold there. There is no vegetation of any kind in this location, and the winters are long, the summers short. Many of the brothers became disabled invalids because of the superhuman requirements of the cruel communistic regime. Some of these were then sent to their families in Siberia.

At the end of March, 1951, the second wave of persecution came. The ones who had not heretofore been arrested, such as the old men, women, children and infants and others not gathered up, were taken into Russian custody. None were spared, but all were taken in trucks to freight trains headed for Siberia. Only a very few personal belongings could be taken with them, a little flour, a few clothes, and some were able to take their beds. Everything else fell into the hands of the police authorities. At this time all the baggage was carefully searched by the Communists, to see if there were any Bibles or Watch Tower literature in their midst.

From Vilna we saw two large freight trains, each of them being made up of about fifty cattle cars. It was in these that Jehovah's witnesses, out of all the territories, were taken away to a land to die, or to try to live. The cars were overcrowded. There was no place to sit. Food was strange and very inferior. Jehovah's witnesses gave thanks and praise to their heavenly Father during all of these difficult times. Encouragement from one to the other was given. By the discussion of Jeho-

vah's Word all were given comfort and courage to press on regardless of what happened. The words that they had brought to people to comfort them at the end of this world were now a great comfort to these Jehovah's witnesses packed in cattle cars. Loud was their singing of Kingdom songs, but later even this was forbidden by the Soviet soldiers.

After thirteen days all the witnesses of Jehovah reached their destination, traveling day and night in cattle cars. Then we were informed: "As enemies of the State you are exiled for life to Siberia. Give up any hope you may have of ever being able to return to your homeland."

Jehovah's witnesses were now scattered as work slaves to different collective farms between Tomsk and Irkutsk and some even beyond that location. It was only Jehovah's protection and help that gave us strength to face this situation. Ahead of us was a life haunted by hunger. Supplies that some of us brought along were soon used up. The collective farms were not exactly in good condition. The leaders of these Soviet agitation centers did not think to provide the undernourished sufferers with bread before the new harvest came in. Institutions for welfare work are not to be found in the "Soviet paradise."

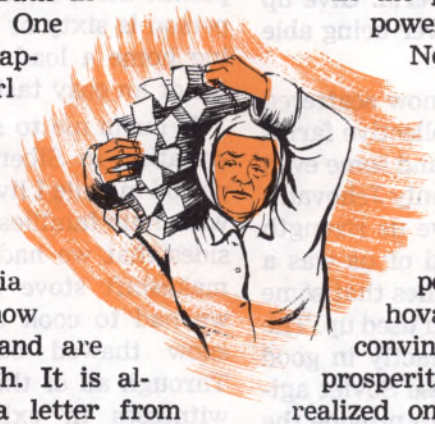
However, with Jehovah's witnesses brotherly love takes over. In this way even the poorest were helped with the scanty food we had. During the first two years a number of the banished ones died because of the heavy afflictions laid upon them. Very heavy work was placed especially upon the women. During the wintertime, with snow on the ground, they were sent into the forest to cut wood, because there was no time to do this work during the brief summer. The winters in Siberia last for seven months without letup. Spring and autumn are unknown. Added to that are cold spells, when the temperature sinks to 50 degrees below zero (Fahrenheit). Much fuel is necessary in this country, and this is one of the main problems for the exiles in Siberia. There are many large forests in Siberia, but to get the wood from the forest to your home is very difficult work. To gather firewood a person really needs a horse and sleigh, but these poor displaced persons must ask, yes, actually beg the one in charge for any assistance of this kind. To the elderly ones this life is almost unbearable. Their strength does not permit them to do farm work, and when a person is sixty or seventy years old carrying home a load of firewood on his back is not an easy task.

It hurts me to speak about the housing situation in Siberia. During most of my period in exile I lived in one room, together with four families, including children. Besides that we had a small kitchen with a makeshift stove made of tin, on which we had to cook our food. Whenever the snow thawed our house was flooded. Through all of these conditions Jehovah's witnesses in exile helped one another whenever they could. Some of them started to build their own little huts outside their working hours on the farms. Even though they were able to put up their own homes and to make them a little more livable there was still much to be desired.

While I was in one of these slave camps in Siberia the first two years the day's wages for a worker, male or female, on a collective farm were one-half to one kilo of grain, that is, one and one-tenth to two and one-fifth pounds. Since the death of Stalin the living standards have improved somewhat. The grain allotment has improved and a small amount of money has been given to the slave laborers so that now they do not have to go hungry or freeze as much as they had to heretofore. Amidst all of these conditions Jehovah's

witnesses still keep on studying the Word of God as they have the opportunity, and they depend greatly on their memories, talking to one another and comforting one another as they have the opportunity. Our plea still is: "If only we had Bibles and new *Watchtowers!*"

All of Jehovah's witnesses in these slave camps throughout Russia continually pray to Jehovah God and have full faith that some day they will be freed from these conditions. In these prison camps and outside, through all Russia, the Russian people are accepting the truth in even greater numbers. One sister reports: "I have approximately thirty girl students to look after who eagerly absorb every word I speak about the Kingdom." There are many people in Russia who today want to know about God's kingdom and are eager to hear the truth. It is always a joy to read a letter from other Kingdom publishers in Russia and to hear of their experiences in prison camps. By their being sentenced to prison they have been drawn much closer together and to Jehovah. Day by day each one is receiving a better understanding of Jehovah's theocratic organization, and all are more determined to present to the great Judge the proof of their faithfulness in preaching. By Jehovah's undeserved kindness they are determined to maintain their integrity and prove worthy of everlasting life.



I know that these displaced ones on collective farms are not hiding their light under a bushel basket. Rather, they are letting their light shine.

In November, 1954, the Moscow Russian newspaper *Pravda* reported a well-known Communist party leader as saying: "Communism has become so entrenched throughout the world today that the fight against the different religions can be discontinued. In the past after our ascension to power this fight was necessary. Now, however, since the youth particularly have been properly trained, everyone surely must come to the conclusion that Communism alone can bring true peace and prosperity to mankind." But Jehovah's witnesses are firmly convinced that true peace and prosperity for all mankind will be realized only through God's kingdom now at hand under their great Prince of Peace, Christ Jesus.

I will soon be seventy-seven years old. I was reached by the Society through their ministers a few months before the outbreak of the first world war in 1914. I have had the privilege of being one of God's ministers all of these years, and now that I have returned from Russia my only wish is to spend the rest of my earthly life in the service of Jehovah.

Happy are those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them. Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every kind of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and leap for joy, since your reward is great in the heavens; for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you.—Matt. 5:10-12, *NW*.

WAS JESUS A GOD-MAN?

INCARNATION is the teaching in Christendom that "God is Man and Man is God in the Person of Jesus Christ." This belief is called "the central doctrine of Christianity." Catholic and most Protestant churches thus teach that Jesus was a God-Man. But, like other doctrines taught by the clergy, this one, too, defies logic and reason. Indeed, theologians admit that no human philosophy can fully explain it. It is contradictory and it is confusing. But since the Bible says that "God is not the author of confusion," our interest is quickened by the questions: How did the incarnation teaching originate? Does the highest authority of all, God's Word, really teach that Jesus was Almighty God masquerading as a man? —1 Cor. 14:33.

The doctrine that Jesus was a God-Man did not crop up until long after Jesus' death. Then the teaching developed gradually. It was crystallized A.D. 325 at the Council of Nicaea. At this council a pagan emperor, Constantine, directed affairs. Merrill's *Essays in Early Christian History* says: "It is not likely that Constantine cared very much about what doctrine should come off victorious in the discussions and votes. He did not aspire, like Henry VIII of England, to be a theologian. But he wanted harmony in the Church for political reasons. . . . He doubtless hoped in advance that decisions might be reached acceptable to both sides."

One of America's noted theologians, Henry P. Van Dusen, further enlightens us as to what happened at Nicaea, in his book *World Christianity* (page 72): "The East was seething with more violent dispute over the correct theological interpretation of Christ's person. Hence Constantine summoned all the bishops of the Church to assemble at Nicaea in 325. The 318 bishops who responded represented only about a sixth of the bishops of the Empire. As in all ecumenical councils, they came predominately from the East. Constantine's principal ecclesiastical advisor, Bishop Hosius of Spain, presided, with the emperor at his right hand. The weight of imperial influence swayed the decisions. The early form of the Nicene Creed was the outcome." Thus pagan Constantine, concerned more with politics than with religion, "swayed the decisions" and determined what Christendom in general believes to this very day. So Christendom's acceptance of the theory of Jesus' being a God-Man rests on a pagan emperor.

Not until the Council of Chalcedon in 451 was the incarnation doctrine defined. What is eye-opening about that council, as well as the one at Nicaea, is that they solved matters by absorption. Some said Jesus was man. Some said Jesus was God. The council, made up of deflected Christians, decided Jesus was God-Man. So each of the embattled contestants could accept the formula with reasonable satisfaction by the simple device of underscoring that phrase which embraced his own interest. Dr. Van Dusen says in his *World Chris-*

tianity: "The upshot of three centuries of heated controversy in two successive phases was the Catholic Church's resolute refusal to choose—its return of a firm if somewhat befuddled 'both . . . and' to the disputants' insistent 'either . . . or.' Nicaea, Constantinople, Chalcedon are the successive landmarks on the tortuous route. . . . At Chalcedon a century and a half later than Nicaea the same method of solution was even more baldly employed—not 'either . . . or' but 'both . . . and,' a solution by inclusion rather than by rejection at whatever cost to logical coherence and rationality."

Has your understanding of Christ Jesus been influenced by the Council of Chalcedon? Most professed Christians do not even know that the council was responsible for defining the doctrine; and yet "the formula of Chalcedon," writes Dr. Van Dusen on page 75, "met its dilemma by affirming, side by side, the contradictory contentions of the two disputant parties, without serious attempt at reconciliation." Some way out of a dilemma! And so Chalcedon's definition of Christ's nature ("two natures, without confusion, without division, without separation, . . . not divided or separated into two persons but one") has been called with reason, as Dr. Van Dusen says, "to the logical mind, distilled nonsense."

"THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION BY GOD"

Regardless of what any council or man says about Jesus' nature, the only reliable authority is God's Word itself, of which Jesus said: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17, *NW*) This Word of God reveals that Jesus is the Son of God, not Jehovah God himself. Concerning his relationship to his Father, Jesus explained: "The Father is greater than I am." (John 14:28, *NW*) Jesus condemned hypocrisy; yet what glaring hypocrisy he himself would be guilty of if he had been Almighty God garbed in flesh! Jesus was not God himself, because even in his prehuman existence he was a created spirit called "the Word." The Word was a mighty spirit creature and as such may properly be called "a god" but not "the God." Hence an accurate translation of John 1:1 (*NW*) reads: "Originally the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god."

This scripture does not say that the Word always existed. Only Jehovah God is "from everlasting to everlasting." (Ps. 90:2) There was a time when the Word was created. Jesus gave true facts concerning himself at Revelation 3:14 (*NW*), where he said: "These are the things the Amen says, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation by God."

So Jesus, in his prehuman existence, was the very beginning of Jehovah's creation. Thereafter Jehovah used the Word in producing all other creations: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, because by means of him all other things were created." (Col. 1:15, 16, *NW*) When God's "firstborn" came to earth, the life force of the Word was transferred from heaven to the egg cell in the womb of Mary. This meant that the Word had to lay aside his heavenly glory, his spirit life. This he did: "Christ Jesus, who, although he was existing in God's form, gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God. No, but he emptied himself and took a slave's form and came to be in the likeness of men." —Phil. 2:5-7, *NW*.

"A LITTLE LOWER THAN ANGELS"

Since Jesus as the Word "emptied himself" of his heavenly glory, he was no mighty spirit in a baby's fleshly clothing just pretending to be ignorant like a newborn infant. Jesus was truly made flesh. His apostle John writes: "So the Word became flesh and resided among us." (John

1:14, *NW*) When the Word "became flesh" he was no longer a spirit creature. Indeed, he had to be a man in the real sense to fulfill this scripture: "We behold Jesus, who has been made a little lower than angels, crowned with glory and honor." If Jesus had been a God-Man, he could not have been really "lower than angels." Nor is it reasonable to think that the great Sovereign of the universe, of whom it is written that "at no time has anyone beheld God," would take up human form and be "lower than angels."—Heb. 2:9; 1 John 4:12, *NW*.

There were times when angels appeared as men, as when two angels appeared to Lot. (Gen. 19:1) Such would be a case of true incarnation. It is noteworthy that the angels visiting Lot materialized as full-grown men, not as babies. If Jesus had been a mere incarnation, then it would not have been necessary for God to transfer his life to an embryo in the virgin's womb and to have Jesus born as a helpless infant, subject to human parents; he could still have remained a spirit person and materialized a fully developed fleshly body just as the sons of God did in Noah's day and as the angel Gabriel did before Mary.

INCARNATION NULLIFIES THE RANSOM

One of the cardinal teachings of the Bible is the ransom. Sin and death came upon mankind when a perfect man, Adam, transgressed Jehovah's law. For obedient mankind to be released from the condemnation of sin and death, a ransom must be paid. It must be the exact equivalent of the perfect man Adam, for God's law requires exactness: "You must give soul for soul, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." So for Jesus to provide the ransom he must be a perfect man, no more, no less. Further, if Jesus had been a spirit garbed in flesh he could not really have died at man's hands; and if he did not really die, again we see that the ransom could not have been provided. But the Bible is clear that Jesus did provide the ransom and that he was a man, not God clothed in flesh: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all."—Ex. 21:23, 24; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6, *NW*.

But now what of 1 Timothy 3:16, which says in the *King James Version* that "God was manifest in the flesh"? This is not an accurate text. In fact, nearly all the ancient manuscripts and all the versions, including the Latin *Vulgate,* have in their text "He who" instead of "God." Most modern translations choose "He." Thus the *New World Translation* renders it properly: "He was made manifest in flesh," meaning the Word, who became the man Christ Jesus.

So what have we learned? This has become overwhelmingly clear: (1) The Council of Chalcedon, instead of rejecting the bad, mixed the error that Jesus was God with the truth that he was man, thus winding up with "distilled nonsense"; (2) Jesus in his prehuman existence was not God but God's Son, "the beginning of the creation by God"; (3) Jesus had to be a real man, not a God-Man, to be "lower than angels"; (4) if Jesus had been a spirit masquerading in human flesh, there would have been no need for him to be born a baby, and (5) to provide the ransom sacrifice Jesus had to die a perfect man, nothing more, nothing less.

The inevitable conclusion is that God's Word does not teach that Jesus was a God-Man. It teaches that on earth he was a perfect man, a perfect human organism. Those who teach that he was a God-Man teach false religion. They violate the rule set down by the apostle of Christ: "Do not go beyond the things that are written." —1 Cor. 4:6, *NW*.

Gilead's 26th Graduation a Happy Occasion

WHERE can you attend a graduation as happy and heart-warming as those held at the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead? No other place on this earth offers such a unique and rewarding experience. Here the students, relatives and friends bubble over with the joy of Jehovah. And this seemed to be especially true of the graduation of the twenty-sixth class. The 106 students who had come from eight different lands had been assigned to do missionary work in twenty-two different countries. About half the class was made up of district and circuit servants and their wives.

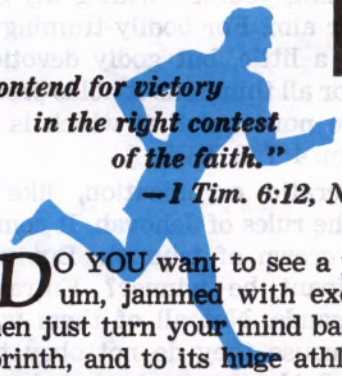
On graduation day, Sunday, February 12, 1956, the skies were gray and a heavy blanket of snow covered the campus. Long before the program began at nine o'clock every seat was taken and 2,796 persons had crowded the main auditorium, the classrooms, the dining room, the basement and library to hear, if not also to see, the program. After a song and a prayer and a few opening remarks by N. H. Knorr, president of the Watch Tower Society as well as of the Watchtower Bible School, he called on the Kingdom Farm servant and the four instructors to say a few farewell words to the class. Many encouraging telegrams were read. Then President Knorr spoke on "Christians Must Be Happy."

He appealed to the audience to exercise faith and trust in the great God Jehovah and to believe and to take Him at his Word. Christendom, he said, has the same Bible Jehovah's witnesses have, but her representatives lock themselves up in monasteries or walk about with long faces and wear mournful garb. Their parishioners are worried and troubled. They are sighing and crying. Jehovah's witnesses, on the other hand, say Christians must be happy. Why? Because we are serving the happy God Jehovah. We cannot imagine him as being happy and at the same time picture his angels in his heavenly courts sad and mournful, can we? Of course not. The Bible tells us that his angels are happy. Why, then, should not his people on earth be happy? They too shout for joy!

Christendom lacks faith, and lack of faith means lack of happiness. Jehovah's witnesses are established in their faith. And it is because of their faith in Jehovah that they can be happy. The doubting ones, liars, fornicators, all who violate God's laws, are not really happy. There is absolutely no reason to doubt Jehovah. He does not lie. He changes not. We have every reason to trust him and his Word. Once we do, then we shall be truly happy.

In conclusion the speaker urged his audience to keep conscious of their spiritual needs—to keep their minds stayed on Jehovah, who gives happiness. Each student then received an envelope containing a gift from the Society. Those graduating with merit received a diploma. A resolution, expressing the gratitude of the class to Jehovah, to the school's president and to all who made Gilead possible, was read and seconded and adopted by the student graduates. In the afternoon, beginning at two o'clock, students from the platform gave warm expressions of their appreciation and personal experiences. This was a lovely climax to the joyous occasion.

ACTIVITY AND LIFE VERSUS INACTIVITY AND DEATH



"Contend for victory in the right contest of the faith."
—1 Tim. 6:12, NW.

DO YOU want to see a packed stadium, jammed with excited people? Then just turn your mind back to ancient Corinth, and to its huge athletic stadium. Every two years that city—largest, richest and most festive of all Greece—was the scene of the nationally famous Isthmian athletic contest. For many days the contest held the spotlight for all Greece. The games were not mere sports. They had a religious background. Moreover, the people regarded athletes as symbols of military preparedness. Every soldier must be a highly trained athlete. Sports commanded national attention even more than today. During the games no more seats could be had; all standing room was crowded. Now the athletes march onto the field, about twice the size of the playing field at Yankee Stadium in New York city! The crowd is charged with excitement as it appraises the contestants. As the intensely contested events begin, every neck in the vast throng is stretched in order not to miss a single detail. Shouts of encouragement ring out for laboring champions. Mighty groans of despair betray losing favorites. Deafening applause greets the victor who finally prevails! Afterward the great throng floods the streets of Corinth, talking of nothing but these events for days. The winner is more highly honored than any other person on the entire isthmus. Idolized as a national hero, he possesses the crown of ivy leaves or, in later times, of pine leaves. Gifts are poured upon him and the city gives him a large pension for life. Cicero said that a Greek city celebrated its athletic winner more than Rome feted its greatest general on his return from conquering a nation.

[2] Knowing all about the games at Corinth, Paul compared the activity of the early Christians, Jehovah's people, to athletic contests. By referring to runners, wrestlers and boxers in athletic contests he sharply illustrated the rewards of activity and the danger of inactivity. The Christians to whom he wrote knew the games well. Some at one time or another had undoubtedly been among the shouting crowds at the stadium. They could not avoid knowing about the games, for they were the topic of conversation everywhere they went. The requirements of the contestants produced powerful examples which apply to Christians today. The modern Olympic games, named for the ancient Olympic contests of Greece, forcefully remind us of the applicability today of Paul's words about the ancient games.—1 Cor. 9:24-27; Phil. 3:13, 14.

[3] Paul saw each Christian as a contestant in a giant stadium, as a 'spectacle before men and angels.' Satan the Devil had challenged Almighty God that men on earth could not maintain integrity to Jehovah. Paul remembered that Jehovah had en-

1. How did the ancient Greeks regard and react to their athletic events and heroes?

2. Why was Paul's reference to the Greek games so apt?

3. In what ways did a victorious athlete's life cut out a fitting pattern for us, and in respect to what issue?

tered faithful Abel and many after him onto his side of the contest. He showed that Jehovah was the founder of the Christian team captained by Christ Jesus. (1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 11:4; 12:1, 2, *NW*) The Corinthian Christians knew well how aspiring athletes dedicated their whole lives to gaining the prize. Before they came to the stadium they regularly performed feats as difficult as those in the contest. They did not get their beauty of body, grace of performance, power and endurance from just a few weeks' preparation. For the athlete to be sufficiently prepared required years of hard work by his actually doing the things performed in the games. He was required to lead a very strict life, with proper habits. The carefree life of dissipation indulged in by many Corinthians must be avoided. In many ways, as all Corinthian Christians could understand, the life of the victorious athlete cut out an appropriate pattern for the Christian to follow.

4 The importance of keeping team rules and training rigorously had to be permanently impressed on the mind of the successful contestant. Each took a vow to adhere strictly to all rules and training requirements. His restricted life was devoted wholly to practice sessions and training. A criminal or spotted life disqualified one. The failure to obey rules kept one out of the contest. So too we must comply with all rules. An athlete might be first to reach the goal, yet if he had not complied with all the rules he would forfeit the prize. Even though we ran to the end we might lose the prize by not keeping the rules. Paul emphasized this when he said: "For fear that somehow I was running or had run in vain."—Gal. 2:2, *NW*.

5 Sworn judges enforced rules of the ancient contest. They lived with the contestants day and night, from beginning of training, to ensure against cheating. They enforced rigorous training. The requirements of training prompted Paul to use it to illustrate points in his letters. Could one participate in the event before he had faithfully trained? No! Such training for us Paul emphasized, saying: "On the other hand, be training yourself with godly devotion as your aim. For bodily training is beneficial for a little, but godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come."—1 Tim. 4:7, 8, *NW*.

6 The theocratic organization, like a team, keeps the rules of Jehovah. It comes off with the crown of triumph. But will every participant be winner? Entrants number thousands. Not all of them win. Some lose because they do not obey the rules. In the field of contest what do we see? Many disobey the rules by not training or not running. Can they win without following the rules? Paul answered: "Moreover, if anyone contends even in the games, he is not crowned unless he has contended according to the rules." (2 Tim. 2:5, *NW*) Disobedience by inactivity makes them quit the contest.—Matt. 10: 22, *NW*.

7 But you must know the rules before you can obey them. How can you qualify unless you know what the rules are? They are easy for all to know, because they are in your Bible. Jehovah's organization makes it easy for you to know the rules by publishing theocratic aids. The rules may be learned at congregation meetings, at service centers and in personal study.

RULES

8 First, one must enter his name on the list of contestants. The sponsor of the

4-6. How was the importance of keeping the rules shown back there, and how does this apply to Christians?

7. Before we can obey the rules we must first have what?

8. How does one get his name on Jehovah's list of contestants?

event, Jehovah God, must know him to be a contender. You must recognize our team leader, Jesus Christ. (John 6:44, *NW*) You must follow in Jesus' steps. What did Jesus first do? He dedicated himself to do his Father's will. He said: "I am come to do your will." (Heb. 10:7-9, *NW;* Ps. 40:8) So you must be dedicated, then be baptized. Are you? If not, you are not in the contest. So first get your name on the list of Jehovah's contestants!—Isa. 55:6, *AS.*

[9] The essential rules are: Get knowledge and wisdom and also obey them. Wisdom cannot be obtained without knowledge. Knowledge and wisdom are a defense. (Eccl. 7:12) This means study. You may not gain a perfect knowledge of all the finer details of many revealed truths. But you can and must understand, however, the main features of the truth to enter the contest. You must be able to preach the fundamentals of the truth at any time called upon and to act as a teacher of others. (1 Pet. 3:15; 2 Tim. 2:2, *NW*) Knowledge and wisdom will prevent your following your own way. "Trust in [Jehovah] with all your heart, and rely not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." (Prov. 3:5, 6, *AT*) Many fall out of the running path. They try to solve problems according to the wisdom of this world and lose out in the race. (1 Cor. 3:19) King Saul thought he was right when he did his own will. (Prov. 14:12; 16:25) Samuel reproved him for not relying on God: "To obey is better than a sacrifice." (1 Sam. 15:22, *NW*) So be obedient. Do Jehovah's work in Jehovah's way. It is the way Jehovah has marked out through his organization. That alone counts!

9. What are the essential rules, and what causes some to fall out?

[10] Another rule governs eating. Ancient contestants had to follow a strict diet. The theocratic contestant must eat only at Jehovah's table. (1 Cor. 10:21, *NW;* Mal. 1:12, *AS*) Meeting attendance must be regular. To be prepared one must eat Jehovah's "food at the proper time." (Matt. 24:45, *NW;* 2 Tim. 3:16, 17) He must fix his attention on what is said in God's Word. Participation in the study meetings is necessary to digest the food thoroughly. Without it one will not become strong for the contest, and he needs solid, not liquid, food. Paul said to immature Christians: "Although you ought to be teachers in view of the time, . . . you have become such as need milk, not solid food. . . . But solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong."—Heb. 5:12-14, *NW.*

[11] You need to eat the meat on the theocratic training table. Eat elsewhere or nowhere, and you have no power. The time may come when you will not have *The Watchtower* available. The Bible may be your only available weapon. Unless you have fed abundantly on *The Watchtower* you may not be able to wield the "sword of the spirit," therefore not able to win the contest. You may not be able to wield it because you failed to store up spiritual strength in your mind by studying *The Watchtower.* Do not wait until the final contest to get a tight grip on the "sword of the spirit." Paul said that if you get a tight grip you will "not run in vain or work hard in vain." (Phil. 2:16, *NW*) You should fill your mind with God's Word. You can then draw on Jehovah's strength to keep alive in the final contest. "For the word of God is alive."—Heb. 4:12, *NW.*

10, 11. (a) How do ancient diet rules apply to us? (b) Why should we abundantly feed on spiritual provisions now?

12 Jehovah has made no exception to this rule: Stick to training. No contestant—runner, wrestler or boxer—can avoid training and expect to win. Not only will he have sore muscles from lack of training but he will lose. Jehovah's team of righteous contenders started with Abel. The contest with the wicked spirit forces in heavenly places does not end until Armageddon. The theocratic team is like a modern Olympic team. It does not wind up at the end of the first contest. Many other contests follow year after year. Also, a football team trains and then has a contest, trains and then another contest, until the end of the season. Would it not be a tragedy for the team if, when the contest began, the players had no endurance and gave out at the start of the game from lack of training? So we must train until the end of the season at Armageddon. This we keep up by regularity in meeting attendance, by being out in the service several times each week or every day and by personal study.

13 Now let us get the picture clear. The theocratic organization does not meet just one event. But rather it is a continuous series of events. Mark you, it is only immediately before Armageddon that world pressure will be upon the whole, worldwide organization, everywhere at one time. Before then, however, pressure comes on the organization in one country, yet in another there is none. In each country there is a division of the theocratic team. When some divisions are, so to speak, running or hurling the discus, other divisions are in the boxing or wrestling contest. While some are under pressure, others are getting ready to meet it later. But all divisions of the team are always in a state of readiness for the contest. We are no sooner through one contest than we are getting ready for another. For Jehovah's organization in this world there is always a contest somewhere, and there is training going on in the organization in some part of the world.

14 Many triumphs there are in different parts of the world; for example, look at our brothers in concentration camps in Germany. They came through World War II victoriously. In the United States, Canada and elsewhere there have been jail sentences by the thousands, mob action, bans and proscriptions and, by Jehovah's undeserved kindness, his witnesses have come through victoriously. But triumph in one contest in one country does not mean that we have won out finally and the team is ready to disband.

DANGER

15 Many, successful in the contest during persecution years, have since violated the rule of continuous training. They are now out of the race and off the team. Many suffered loss of jobs and separation from families because they were willing to endure all things to win Jehovah's approval. In that contest some who went to prison or concentration camps thought the race was over when they were released. They left the field of contest and quit training. They ran, not the marathon race, but only the dash or sprint, and then dropped out. There is nothing more heart-rending than to see a runner fall out of a race because of lack of training. We have been warned through God's Word that trouble everywhere in the earth is near. Remember, we were told the attack will come from Gog and from "the north." Training is essential to endure beyond the crucial point of the race or contest.

12, 13. (a) Until when shall we need to train for and run in the race? (b) What tactics do Satan's agents use, and how does the theocratic organization counteract these?

14. What victories have been won, yet what does this not mean?

15, 16. What course by some highlights what Scriptural warning?

16 Formerly all of us looked for the return of the faithful witnesses of old as princes. Jehovah later revealed that those who are princes—servants of his organization—are now here among us. Some then lost their enthusiasm about seeing the resurrected "princes." Does not this show what Jesus said would happen, that the love of many "will cool off"? (Matt. 24:12, *NW*) Many contestants who went to prison during the hard time of persecution solemnly vowed to Jehovah that, when released, they would fight and run in the contest with all they had. But when they got free and were able to carry it out they forgot their solemn promise to give all to Jehovah God.

17 When a section or division of the theocratic organization has a great contest of persecution in a country there are proportionately more active participants on the team there than in time of training. The impetus of that division of the team increases. They bubble over with zeal. They throw everything they have, including life itself, into the contest. They see activity is what counts and so they are very active. The latest news of theocratic battle is anxiously awaited. There is no time for indifference, for negligence or for personal misunderstanding. The contest is on with them. Jobs and property hold none back. Every weight that makes the contest more difficult is shed. All are willing to do anything to win, even to live in tents and endure hard times. They brace up their minds for activity. (1 Pet. 1:13, *NW*) There are more volunteers for full-time service; Bethel service has a long waiting list. Then there are many entrants; they want to get into the contest and help win.

18 The danger to many is, not the contest of persecution, but the peacetime training. What does this contrast mean? Do we ask Jehovah to bring more persecution? Certainly not. This contrast is made to emphasize that always we must prepare for other contests ahead. At this time in some countries we have opportunity to get ready for a real contest. But many take it easy. They soft-pedal on training. With marvelous opportunities in the full-time service we see the team short of pioneers, a slowdown in congregation publishers and the Bethel service begging for volunteers! Few respond. Can we not see that this period of apparent peace in different countries is no time for such conduct? Why, it is suicide, is it not?

19 Know for sure, your peacetime training should be extremely severe. It must be as hard as the final contest itself. The harder the preparation the easier will be the victory. Look back at the training for the ancient games at Corinth. Runners put weights on their feet in training. Boxers wore heavy uniforms and practiced on sandbags. For the contest runners took the weights off and stripped themselves. Observing this Paul said we should "put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." (Heb. 12:1, *NW*) Train for future contests with trials, dangers and obstacles. You win or lose, depending on how you *train* for the contest. So peacetime training before persecution starts for you means greater activity for you, regularity in service, attendance at all meetings, thorough personal study. It is fatal to take it as a time to slacken your hands.—Zeph. 3:16.

20 Consider a recent modern race. A well-known British runner ran the mile race in less than four minutes. A world record! Do you think he could have done it had he not trained regularly, not sparing himself

17. What effect upon Christians does persecution often have?

18. What opportunities do peacetime conditions bring, but what course do many pursue?

19, 20. What should be the nature of peacetime training, why, and how was this illustrated?

but giving everything in practice for the contest? Of course not. Do you realize that many in that race did not make it? They lacked the endurance. One man collapsed on the track. If we win in the final contest we must thoroughly train now.

[21] Some shun training today by active and regular witnessing from door to door and regular group study because the world does not look with favor on such training. They dream of proving their integrity when the future test comes in prison or concentration camp. They will be beaten, defeated, because they did not train for the strenuous contest. Training now by studying and preaching regularly and building up one's ability in the ministry is a major part of the contest itself. Jehovah's witness work today is being done primarily outside prison. The time may come for the doing of the witness work everywhere underground or in prison. But this may be an immediate prelude to the end at Armageddon. (Isa. 43:10, 12, *AS;* Rev. 2:10, *NW*) Why wait until the dictator, the concentration camp or the prison bars of the Devil surround you? Can you wait until the witness work by his people is over to do it? No, a thousand times no! Get into the contest now before Jehovah's "strange act" at Armageddon!—Isa. 28:21, *AS*.

[22] A fixed rule of training is that the word of Jehovah must be preached. All the prophets of old did not put off preaching until tomorrow. Jeremiah said that the word of God was like a fire burning within his bones and he could not keep it in; he had to get it out—to preach! (Jer. 20:9) Jesus, who started this race for us, was anointed by Jehovah to preach. (Luke 4:18) We must follow in his footsteps and preach. Our main job, like his, should be the ministry. (1 Pet. 2:21) Paul said: "I am ruined if I do not preach." (1 Cor. 9:16, *AT*) Fail to preach now and the wicked ones' loss of life will be charged up against you. Preach now and you will not be responsible for their death. (Ezek. 33:8, 9) Once we enter, we cannot be absent at training time. And training time is now, brothers, not tomorrow. Inactivity means we are as good as dead. Quit training and quit the race and we are dead in God's sight. Do not be dead in the sin of inactivity. Be active now and live tomorrow, brothers!

21. Where and how can we train for severer future contests?
22. What is another fixed rule of training as shown by what words of Jeremiah, Jesus and others?

WHERE TO KEEP THE EYE FIXED

[23] Another rule was, keep the eye on the prize—the crown of ivy leaves. Today some Christians lose sight of the prize held out to them. It is not wrong to keep your eye on the crown of life. The reason is that it is God-given. Jehovah causes desire for the reward to spring into our hearts. Make it your own. The reward is worth running for. It is of no use to say: 'I am so glad to be in the truth and I shall serve Jehovah whether I get a reward or not.' Be careful; do not spurn God's goodness. He put the promise before your eyes for a reason. It is so that you will reach out and run to the end to get it. Make sure that you at all times see the reward. As an example of this, suppose an earthly father wants his son to pass his school examinations. He promises him a bicycle if he succeeds. That boy will extend himself. Every hour he can get will be used to gain knowledge to pass the examinations. He sees the prize while he studies. He dreams about it. He succeeds because he wants the bicycle. Jehovah has held out to us, his children, a far greater prize, everlasting life. It is proper for us to keep the prize before us as an incentive to run, because our race is very difficult. While we seek the prize, it is the

23, 24. (a) Upon what must we keep our eyes fixed, and why? (b) What is our goal, and why will some not reach it?

giver of the prize that we love and we want to please him.

[24] Why do so many fail? Because they do not pay attention to this goal of life eternal. Paul wrote: "Brothers, I do not yet consider myself as having laid hold on it; but there is one thing about it: . . . stretching forward to the things ahead, I am pursuing down toward the goal for the prize of the calling above and which God extends in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13, 14, *NW*) The "calling above" applies to those of the anointed class. But the call to the "other sheep" is also 'from above.' Life eternal on earth is to the "other sheep" just as much to be desired as life in heaven, "the crown of life," is desired by the anointed ones called of Jehovah. (Rev. 2:10, *NW*) What is the difference? One is a finer prize, but both bring eternal life, and it is life that we want. Some allow vision of Jehovah's purpose, his kingdom and his theocratic work to grow dim. They will not study privately and do not attend study meetings. They have no vision. Such will not successfully reach the goal. Where there is no vision the people perish. (Prov. 29:18) In the race have you lost sight of the prize? Keep the prize before your eyes and you will stay on the track and not get sidetracked by the Devil and lose life.

[25] Another rule of running is that the runner must not look back, nor look behind him as he runs. Some come into the race and run well for a while. But later they begin to feel that they have left something behind. They turn their heads and look behind to consider whether to go back to their earlier course of living. Pleasures, business, old-world friends, or other things, haunt their memories and cause them to fall out of the race of integrity keeping. For this sort of deflection Jehovah put Lot's wife out of the race. Do you look back at the things that are behind? If you do, you will stumble and fall out of the race. Do not let things behind hinder you from getting ahead.—Phil. 3:13.

25. Why may we not look back?

[26] Those who entered into the ancient wrestling contest or boxing bout had to keep their eyes on their adversary all the time. In the modern theocratic contest failure to do so entraps many today. In some divisions of Jehovah's team many look for an adversary to come in the form of dictators, security police or mobs. They fail to see in their own contest that the real adversary is invisible to human eyes. Have you become inactive? If so, you have failed to see that we are not fighting a blood-and-flesh enemy. Through the eyes of Paul we see our enemy. He said that "we have a fight, not against blood and flesh, but against . . . the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places."—Eph. 6:12, *NW*.

[27] Do you look for a blood-and-flesh adversary instead of an invisible foe? Then you show you have lost your spiritual eyesight. You have been ambushed by the invisible enemy. Brothers who are alert realize now that these days are more dangerous than when the Nazis controlled Germany and mobsters ruled in the United States, when persecution was rampant almost everywhere. Now as never before the Devil and the demons oppose Jehovah's work in democratic lands as well as in dictator nations. Like Paul, Peter also warns: "Keep your senses, be watchful. Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone." (1 Pet. 5:8, *NW*) A roaring lion throws the prey that he is stalking off guard by roaring with his head close to the ground, so the prey cannot determine the location of the roaring lion! Are you not deceived and do you keenly see the invisible beast-

26, 27. Who is our real enemy, and why is the present time especially dangerous?

ly adversary stalking you at your heels? If you see *him* you will put all the energy you have into running for the final contest; yes, more energy than you would if you saw merely the secret police at your heels or the mob at your doorstep!—Rev. 12:12.

Gaining the Prize of Life by Active Training Now

THOSE who are halfhearted are hated by Jehovah and by Christ Jesus. (Ps. 119:113, *AS;* Hos. 7:8) Oh, they want the prize of life all right. They like to be with the witnesses of Jehovah, but they are lukewarm about it. They want to feel the excitement. They like the celebrating. Yet they do not do anything to give cause for celebrating. Because they are neither hot nor cold, Christ Jesus will vomit them out of his mouth. (Rev. 3:14-16) They will lose the race.

[2] Those running in the ancient games at Corinth knew it meant they had to put every ounce of strength into the contest. One Greek runner anciently ran the twenty-four stadium lengths, enduring right to the end and coming in first. As the crown was being placed on his head he dropped dead. He had attained the goal. He had triumphed! But how about us? Do we put the race first in order to endure to the end? Jesus admonished us to seek first the Kingdom and Jehovah's righteousness. (Matt. 6:33) Only by doing this can we win. Do not let anything—family, business, pleasure, desires, or anything else—intervene in the contest. It will put in jeopardy your triumph.

[3] Unswervingly determine to stick in the contest until final victory. What good does it do a runner to have a strong body if he is weak-willed? He will run unwisely or, like a poor boxer in training, he will beat the air instead of the punching bag. (1 Cor. 9:26) He is sure to lose because he will have no endurance. He needs mental determination to have endurance. Your heart must be in the race and it must be strong, permanently fixed, trusting in Jehovah. (Ps. 112:7, *AS*) Wholehearted you must be for completing the contest. Yes, determine to overcome all obstacles! If you do, it is more than half the race. As a runner, you must know the pace required by the race. Is it a short race or a long one? Does it call for pacing or racing the limit? A champion boxer or wrestler must have a good mind. He cannot be a brute bull with no sense. So with us, it is not a matter of just strong legs and a weak mind. We cannot merely walk from door to door, but we have strong minds and in our sermons we hit the target with the Bible. Run wisely! Use knowledge of the Bible and intelligence to win the race or to get victory. Build yourself up and equip yourself with a knowledge of God's Word. "You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome Jehovah gave."—Jas. 5:11, *NW*.

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1. How do Jehovah and Jesus Christ view the halfhearted, and why?
2-4. What must we do and have, and what does it take to win?

[4] Jesus said that "he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved." (Matt. 10:22, *NW*) Will you keep enduring? If you do not, you will lose. Adopt Paul's words: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life nor angels nor governments nor things here nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creation will be able to separate us from God's love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. 8:38, 39, *NW*.

[5] Haphazard training means lost races. Do not publish spasmodically. You will run with uncertainty if you do. Paul did not. Be regular in training to be qualified. You cannot run in fits and starts. It is not just a burst of energy here and easing off there that wins. Do you think you can redeem your lagging behind by a spurt of activity for a while and then slip away and let no one see you for weeks? You cannot. "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." (Eccl. 9:11) The Assyrian Sennacherib had the superior army and the strength, but it was the surrounded King Hezekiah, who had faith in Jehovah, that won. Remember the old fable about the hare and the tortoise? True, the hare darted almost out of sight but the tortoise won the race. But wait! You know Jehovah's sure Word is better than any man-made fable. Why did Hezekiah win? Was he swift? Was he strong? He won because he submitted himself to Jehovah, in prayer. Hezekiah then accepted Jehovah's answer. Through his prophet Isaiah, Jehovah said to Hezekiah: "I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David." (Isa. 37:35, *RS*) That night Jehovah's angel slew the enemy—a hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians. (2 Kings 19) In our fight, too, it is not just one punch and the enemy is out. We must keep on striking many telling blows. So it cannot be just one set of scriptures or one sermon to use in the witness work. For them to be varied we must have many and versatile ones, and then keep on using them aright in offense and in defense of the good news.

[6] The rule is that to participate in the boxing match or test of combat the fighter must be fearless. Thus we must be fearless in witnessing, confident of our spiritual strength and of handling the word of truth aright. Fighting in a contest is mentioned by Paul in addition to frequent references to running. (1 Cor. 9:26; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7) Remember, preach and be opposed! When opposed, what will you do? Will you be afraid and quit? If so you will be disqualified and put out of the contest. Jehovah says: "The cowards and those without faith and . . . all the liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur . . . the second death." (Rev. 21:8, *NW*) Have fear of man and it will lead to a snare, the loss of the prize of life. (Prov. 29:25) "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom."—Ps. 111:10, *AS*.

[7] Ancient contests were won by a team or lost by a team, not by one participant. It took javelin throwers, discus hurlers, wrestlers, jumpers, boxers and runners to make up a team. The theocratic organization is a great team. Each of us is a small unit in it. One member cannot do without the others. "For the body, indeed, is not one member, but is many." (1 Cor. 12:14-26, *NW*) Let us think only of the team's accomplishments. When the race is won or victory comes, the team, not the individual, obtained it. Let honor come and credit go to the leader of the team, Christ Jesus. It takes the consideration of each for all, and of all for each. Then we have real team-

5. (a) Why will not haphazard and spasmodic training make us winners? (b) What caused Hezekiah to win?

6. Whom may we not fear? why? and whom must we fear?

7. Contests' being won or lost teamwise teaches us what lessons?

work. There are many parts to a vast machine. For it to operate without friction it must have lubrication. Jehovah's spirit and resultant unity are to our organization what oil is to the machine.

[8] Another rule of contest bans bad association. Old-world friends cling to some. Some foolishly cling to old-world friends. Paul admonished: "Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Cor. 15:33, *NW*) Even some in the organization have old-world habits. All are leaven. Leaven works its way into your whole life. If you do not separate from bad associations you will lose the race. (1 Cor. 5:9, 10; 6:9, 10) This is breaking training and leads to softening our spiritual muscles. It is not whether an associate is a 'good fellow.' A 'good fellow' may be good company. But is he theocratic company? If not, then shun him. Run only with those running the race. Remember the old proverb: "Birds of a feather flock together." You may also recall the old story of the farmer's swan that always swam among the cranes. The cranes were destroying the farmer's crops. So he determined to shoot them. He killed the cranes and with them also his beautiful swan, his prize bird. Do not be caught at Armageddon like this beautiful but unfortunate swan.

[9] Paul wrote that "every man taking part in a contest exercises self-control in all things. . . . [Accordingly] I browbeat my body and lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow." (1 Cor. 9:24-27, *NW*) The ancient contestants controlled their conduct, their lives, eating habits, associations, drinking and pleasures. They avoided any and all things that detracted from or neutralized their training. So too must we theocratic contestants individually control ourselves in order to be triumphant.

[10] Let us end our consideration of the rules and their effect with the greatest of all the rules, love. Paul said that if we do not have love we are (1) as 'sounding brass or clashing cymbal'; (2) as nothing, and (3) as "not profited at all." (1 Cor. 13:1-3, *NW*) Jesus laid down the rule when he said: " 'You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength.' . . . 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." —Mark 12:30, 31, *NW*.

[11] Realize that there is no time to waste. (Eph. 5:16; Rev. 10:6, *NW*) Learn well the rules and how to apply them. Practice these things. Keep the rules and you will achieve victory and avoid disaster. The final rule, then, as stated by Jesus, is that we keep all the rules of the race or contest. "If you love me, you will observe my commandments." (John 14:15, *NW*) All the rules must be complied with. Not one can be violated with impunity.

OUTSTANDING CONTENDERS WHO WON

[12] We cannot here leave this subject of participants in the theocratic contests without considering some of Jehovah's outstanding contenders for the faith, fearless fighters and runners who endured.

[13] The greatest contestant of all on Jehovah's team is our Leader, Jesus Christ. Since he is our pattern, let us first consider him. (1 Pet. 2:21) The first outstanding obstacle placed before him in his race was the opportunity to obtain all the kingdoms of this world. Steadfastly Jesus kept in the race by answering the Devil: "Go away, Satan! For it is written, 'It is Jeho-

8. Why are bad associations so very dangerous?
9. To avoid being disapproved what must we exercise?

10, 11. What is the greatest rule? the final rule? and how are these related to each other?
12-14. How did Jesus demonstrate himself an outstanding winning contender, gaining what reward?

vah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.'" (Matt. 4:10, *NW*) Another hurdle Satan placed in Jesus' race was Peter and his human, godless thinking. Peter took Jesus aside and raised strong objection about threatened injury to Jesus. Peter said: "Be kind to yourself, Master." Was Jesus slowed up by this? He answered: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumblingblock to me." (Matt. 16:22, 23, *NW*) Before Pilate also Jesus contended for the faith by telling him: "For this purpose I have been born and for this purpose I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth."—John 18:37, *NW*.

[14] Shortly afterward Jesus was entirely on his own, without companions. He was alone in the race to the end and was deserted by his associates, but he was faithful right to the last. He put everything he had into the race, life itself. He was stripped of his clothes, nailed to the stake, wearing on his head a crown of thorns. It appeared to all that Jehovah had completely abandoned him. In the eyes of Satan and his earthly agents Jesus died as a criminal. Speedily Jehovah reversed the scene, right before the eyes of Satan. Within three days Jehovah rewarded Jesus with a resurrection to life eternal, and a few weeks later Jesus ascended to the right hand of his God and Father.—Ps. 110:1, *AS;* John 20:17, *NW*.

[15] Jesus Christ's first follower known to have run his course faithfully after Jesus finished his was Stephen. He completed his contest in the clutches of his enemies. He preached even as they were stoning him to death. He ran and won the victory crown. Death did not cheat him of his reward. Another winner was Paul, who overcame many obstacles put in his path of the race. Consider his report at Second Corinthians eleven, verses 23 to 27 (*NW*). He said he was "in prisons more plentifully, in stripes to an excess, in near-deaths often. By Jews I five times received forty strokes less one, three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I experienced shipwreck, a night and a day I have spent in the deep; in travels often, in dangers from rivers, in dangers from highwaymen, in dangers from my own race, in dangers from the nations, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the wilderness, in dangers at sea, in dangers among false brothers, in labor and toil, in sleepless nights often, in hunger and thirst, in abstinence from food many times, in cold and nakedness." Later Paul added: "I have run the course to the finish, I have observed the faith."—2 Tim. 4:7, *NW*.

[16] Earlier examples of outstanding faith in Jehovah are Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. These three faithful Hebrews were commanded to bow down and worship the golden image erected in the plain of Dura. Would they refuse to do so at the cost of being cast into the fiery furnace? Having entered the race, they stayed in it, calmly reminding the king: "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up." Their bold defiance infuriated the king. He commanded that the furnace be heated seven times as hot as usual and the three men be cast into it. They flinched not, they refused to bow down and remained in the contest. They were thrown into the intensified roaring fire. As a reward from Jehovah, they came out of the flames unsinged and

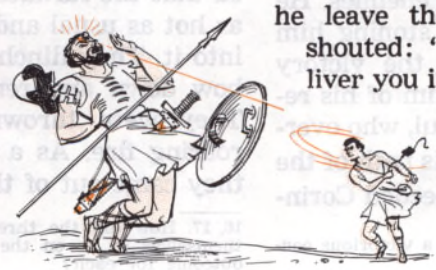
15. What example did Stephen give of a victorious contender? Paul?

16, 17. How did the three Hebrews and Samson show themselves to be on the winning "team"? with what outcome for each?

were triumphant through their faith and endurance.—Dan. 3:1-27, *RS*.

17 Let us not forget Samson. In the custody of his enemies till his hair had grown long again Samson was grinding in the prison house. He thought of the indignities committed against his God Jehovah and against himself as he was lashed by the jeers and taunts and cut by the whip of his Philistine enemies, who had bored out his eyes. His feelings worked up to their highest pitch and he was about to burst with determination to vindicate Jehovah's name. He knew his life was imperiled in his final contest. To vindicate Jehovah's name Samson put his whole heart and strength into the final fight in the temple of the Philistine celebrators of Dagon. He knew the contest would take his life. Yet he declared: " 'Lord Jehovah, remember me, please, and strengthen me, please, just this once, O God, and let me avenge myself upon the Philistines with vengeance for one of my two eyes.' With that Samson braced himself against the two middle pillars upon which the house was firmly established, and got a grasp on them, one with his right and the other with his left hand. And Samson proceeded to say: 'Let my soul die with the Philistines.' Then he bent himself with power and the house fell upon the axis lords and upon all the people that were in it, so that the dead that he put to death in his own death came to be more than those he had put to death during his lifetime."—Judg. 16:28-30, *NW*.

18 Another mighty contestant was David. Even in youth he personified fearlessness. He could not be frightened out of the contest. He was bold in Jehovah. Goliath had defied Almighty God and his people. Young David was overflowing with righteous indignation at this affront to his God, Jehovah. He angrily demanded: " 'Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?' . . . But David said to Saul, 'Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and smote him and delivered it out of his mouth; and if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him and killed him. Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.' " Fearless, David came forward to the contest. Although but a youth, he courageously met the bully, the giant Goliath. To that Philistine David declared: "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin; but I come to you in the name of [Jehovah] of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied." Note the contrast: a giant covered with armor, an expert man of war, opposed by a mere lad in his shepherd's togs, equipped only with a slingshot and stones! But did David desert the field of contest? Was he fearful of losing life? Did he leave the battle? Unquaveringly he shouted: "This day [Jehovah] will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down, and cut off your head; . . . that all the earth may know that there is a



18. In what particular contest did David prove to be a mighty contender?

God in Israel." (1 Sam. 17:26, 34-36, 45, 46, *RS*) At that David, sling in hand, unerringly aimed the stone at the giant's forehead! It hit the mark! Jehovah gave David the triumph. The giant fell dead. Because of his fearlessness and love of Jehovah, David is named as one of those who met Jehovah's approval. (Heb. 11:32-34) He is sure of his prize of triumph.

[19] Some of these triumphant contenders for the faith Paul listed among Jehovah's ancient witnesses to encourage us today to run continually in the triumphant manner that they did. For us Paul wrote: "So, then, because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, as we look intently at the leader and perfecter of our faith, Jesus."—Heb. 12:1, 2, *NW*.

[20] Now the question is: Will you be one of the active Christians running triumphantly toward the prize of life? Or will you be one of the inactive covenant-breakers or sluggards, drifting to your doom of everlasting death? (Rom. 1:28-32) Do not be an inactive sluggard, too lazy even to feed yourself, and die. (Prov. 19:24; 14:14, *RS*) Remember, if you are not actively for Jesus you are against him and must face the fate of his enemies. (Matt. 12:30) Have you wandered off the racecourse into the mire of inactivity? Take hold of yourself and swing back quickly! The most thrilling and final of all contests, Armageddon, is just ahead. By our activity let us all triumphantly "put up a hard fight for the faith."—Jude 3, *NW*.

[21] Under Jehovah's searching gaze, may all of us at seeing the triumphant kingdom established in the heavens determine to escape inactivity and death. Let us, instead, by activity, *win* the prize of triumph, LIFE in the new world under Jehovah's kingdom.

[22] Jehovah our God bless you as you "contend for victory in the right contest of the faith."—1 Tim. 6:12, *NW*.

19. Why did Paul list some of these triumphant contenders at Hebrews 11?
20-22. What course leads to death, and what course to winning the prize of life in God's new world?

● At Revelation 14:1, 3 (*NW*) we read: "And I saw, and look! the Lamb standing upon the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And they are singing as if a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the persons of advanced age; and no one was able to master that song but the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been purchased from the earth." Who are the persons of advanced age here mentioned?—C. F., United States.

We are still at agreement with what the book *Light*, Volumes I and II (published in 1930), had to say on the matter. Since these "elders" or "persons of advanced age" are part of a symbolic vision and are symbolic in their meaning, we can determine whom they picture only by noting features that mark them and by comparing these with scriptures that identify the ones who are to bear these features.

The first mention of them, at Revelation 4:4, 10, states that they are twenty-four in number, that they are in heaven and sit on thrones around God's throne, that they are dressed in white outer garments, and wear golden crowns on their heads, and that they worship God, falling down from their thrones before him and ascribing the source of rulership to him by casting their crowns before him.

These features argue that they picture the 144,000 followers of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God, although symbolically these persons of

advanced age are only twenty-four in number. This number is twice twelve, and, as illustrated in the twelve tribes of Israel, the number twelve stands for a completeness of nationhood and of organization theocratically. Twice that number, twenty-four, would stand for that same thing in twofold measure or in a higher degree. Revelation 21:14 speaks of the "twelve apostles of the Lamb," but there are twenty-four persons of advanced age and so there is no reason to confuse the two. In other words, although the twelve apostles were promised to sit with Christ in heaven on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28), the twenty-four persons of advanced age stand for more than the Lamb's twelve apostles. They include the twelve apostles and stand for the complete nation of spiritual Israel, under the King Jesus Christ, the complete theocratic government under the King of kings, Jesus Christ.

In the ancient typical nation of Israel there was a priesthood composed of the male descendants of its first high priest Aaron. These priests did not all serve together at the temple continuously, all the time, but only at the great national festivals appointed by God. Otherwise they served in divisions, each division a week at a time each half year. Now note that King David established twenty-four divisions of these priests to serve in their turn at the temple. John the Baptist's father Abijah belonged to the eighth division; the sons of Maaziah made up the twenty-fourth division. (1 Chron. 24:1-19, *NW;* Luke 1:5-24, 57-67, *NW*) The twenty-four divisions of the priests under Israel's high priest argues that the twenty-four persons of advanced age picture the 144,000, for these not only reign with Christ but will also be "priests of God and of the Christ." They form a "royal priesthood."—Rev. 20:6 and 1 Pet. 2:9, *NW*.

Like the twenty-four elderly persons they will sit on thrones in heaven before God, not merely the twelve apostles but all the 144,000 members of Christ's body. "And I saw thrones, and there were those who sat on them, and power of judging was given them. . . . And they came to life and ruled as kings with the Christ for a thousand years." Jesus Christ promised all the 144,000 followers who would overcome that they would sit with him in his throne as he sat with his heavenly Father in his throne. (Rev. 20:4; 3:21 and Luke 22:28-30, *NW*) As kings on thrones they would properly wear crowns on their heads as Jesus Christ does and just as the twenty-four elderly persons are pictured as doing. (Rev. 6:2; 14:14, 15; Ps. 21:1-3) The 144,000 while on earth are warned to hold fast what they have, that no one may take their crown. They are promised the crown of life, of glory and of righteousness for proving faithful to the end. (Rev. 3:11; 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4) We know of no others who are promised crowns in heaven; so the twenty-four elderly persons must as a symbol restrict itself to the 144,000 overcomers.

Since it is granted to the bride class of the Lamb of God to be "arrayed in bright, clean, fine linen, for the fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the holy ones," the twenty-four elderly persons well picture that fact by themselves being "dressed in white outer garments," to depict a righteous, holy group. (Rev. 19:7, 8, *NW*) In being elderly or persons of advanced age they are not older than the Lamb of God, for he is the oldest of God's creations and was used to create all other creatures, including the symbolic twenty-four persons of advanced age. But by becoming mature Christians and brothers of God's oldest creation they take on an outstanding eldership or advancement of age or special degree of maturity just like experienced judges and like senators in a lawmaking body.

According to Revelation 5:6-10 (*NW*), when the Lamb of God took the scroll out of the hand of God to open it and to cause remarkable revelations "the four living creatures and the twenty-four persons of advanced age fell down before the Lamb," and these elderly persons had each a harp and "golden bowls that were full of incense, and the incense means the prayers of the holy ones. And they sing a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, because you were slaughtered and with your blood you bought persons for God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and you made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will rule as kings over the earth.'"

In the Greek text the masculine gender of the participle used shows that the having of the harps and golden bowls applies to the persons of advanced age and not to the four living creatures (neuter). Revelation 14:1-3 shows that it is the 144,000 who, like the twenty-four elderly persons, sing a new song and accompany themselves on the harp. In Israel the twenty-four courses of priests offered up incense at the tem-

ple at the time of prayer; which fact identifies the twenty-four persons of advanced age with the 144,000 kings and priests, for their bowls are full of incense, which incense is the prayers of the 144,000 holy ones.

And who is it that, like the twenty-four elderly persons, sing the new song about the Lamb's death and his purchasing followers out of the earth to make them kings and priests more than the 144,000 themselves do? No one on earth can master that new song before the 144,000 royal priests do. They heartily agree with all faithful ones in heaven and earth in ascribing worthy things to the Lamb of God and they fall down and worship God in appreciation.—Rev. 5:13, 14.

After Jehovah God takes his rightful power to himself and the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Lord Jehovah and of his Christ the members of the 144,000 Christians do just the same as the twenty-four persons of advanced age are pictured as doing, fall down from their enthroned position and worship God and thank him for taking over his universal sovereignty and beginning to rule as king toward the earth and then declare his day of wrath against the wrathful nations and his day of judgment concerning the living and the dead.

Hence the prophetic picture of Revelation 11:15-18 concerning the twenty-four elderly persons is fulfilled in the members of Christ's body, his holy congregation, including the remnant of it yet on earth. They are promoting this proclamation of the message of God's kingdom by Christ and of his day of vengeance and of his time of judgment. The fact is that they, like Jesus Christ, have been anointed with Jehovah's spirit to proclaim this very message. —Isa. 60:1-3, *AS*.

It is one of these persons of advanced age or presbyters that comforted the apostle John with the assurance that the Lamb of God had conquered so as to open the scroll in God's hand and its seven seals. (Rev. 5:5, *NW*) It is also one of these twenty-four elderly persons or presbyters that informed John that the "great crowd" with palm branches ascribing their salvation to God and his Lamb were a growing class of the present "time of the end," namely, the "other sheep" of the lamblike Shepherd Jesus Christ.—Rev. 7:13, *NW*.

This informant elderly person or presbyter pictured in his action how the remnant on earth of the 144,000 were privileged in the year 1935 to disclose through the columns of *The Watchtower* that the long-misunderstood "great crowd" of Revelation 7:9, 10 are the "other sheep" with an earthly destiny, whom Jehovah's Right Shepherd must now begin to gather, bringing them to a oneness with the remnant of the spiritual "little flock." This disclosure in 1935 made the remnant rejoice very much and, like the twenty-four presbyters in Revelation 7:11, 12, the remnant fell down gratefully and worshiped God, agreeing with a hearty Amen to what the "great crowd" were ascribing to God and Christ.—Rev. 7:13-17, *NW*.

Finally, at the fall of Great Babylon, the twenty-four presbyters fall down with the four living creatures and worship the enthroned Jehovah God and take up the call to praise Jehovah and say: "Amen! Praise Jah, you people!" So they take up the great Hallelujah chorus that is sung by all holy creation represented by the four living creatures. (Rev. 19:4, *NW*) And the remnant of the 144,000, who were themselves once captive to Great Babylon, will also take up the Hallelujah chorus and will lead in it on earth when Jehovah executes his final judgments on that wicked organization of Satan the Devil.

So viewed from all the circumstances and actions of the twenty-four persons of advanced age in The Revelation, they must represent the 144,000 faithful members of Christ's body. A place was reserved for them in heaven from the Edenic time when Jehovah God spoke of the seed of his woman, which seed is to bruise the Serpent in his head. (Gen. 3:15) Jesus Christ told his disciples that he was to ascend to heaven to prepare that place up there for them. (John 14:1-3) So all these thousands of years there has been a reservation for them up there, although scripture and fact show none of the 144,000 began to take a position in that reserved place above until 1918.

Everything had to be done with that reservation for the 144,000 in mind. Whatever the 144,000 have done down here on this earth has been done in the face of that heavenly reservation, hence before the twenty-four persons of advanced age, as it were. Just as the two-horned beast (the British-American dual power) performed before the great sea beast with seven heads (Satan's visible organization under seven successive world powers, including the two-horned beast), so the 144,000 on earth have performed before their symbolic representation, the twenty-four persons of advanced age. (Rev.

13:1-14; 19:20, *NW*) But even while on earth, the 144,000 faithful members of Christ's body have been "seated . . . together in the heavenly places in union with Christ Jesus." There is where the remnant thereof finds itself today. —Eph. 2:4-7, *NW*.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

May 27: Activity and Life versus Inactivity and Death, ¶ 1-24. Page 241.

June 3: Activity and Life versus Inactivity and Death, ¶ 25-27, and Gaining the Prize of Life by Active Training Now. Page 247.

✓✓ CHECK YOUR MEMORY ✓✓

After reading this issue of "The Watchtower", do you remember—

- ✓ Why right knowledge of the Bible is so important? P. 228, ¶3.
- ✓ Why there is no excuse for being in doubt about the existence of God? P. 229, ¶2.
- ✓ How, in 1951, a great number of Jehovah's witnesses were forcibly transported across Russia to Siberian exile? P. 234, ¶5.
- ✓ Whether persecution has broken the faith of Jehovah's witnesses in Russia? P. 236, ¶1.
- ✓ How the idea that Jesus was a God-Man mixes truth and falsehood? P. 238, ¶1.
- ✓ Why real Christians are truly happy? P. 240, ¶3.
- ✓ How the Christian's race is like that of the athletes who compete in games? P. 241, ¶3.
- ✓ How long the Christian must continue training? P. 244, ¶12.
- ✓ How to endure in God's service? P. 248, ¶3.
- ✓ What the greatest rule for Christian victory is? P. 250, ¶10.
- ✓ Who the twenty-four persons of advanced age mentioned in Revelation are? P. 253, ¶8.