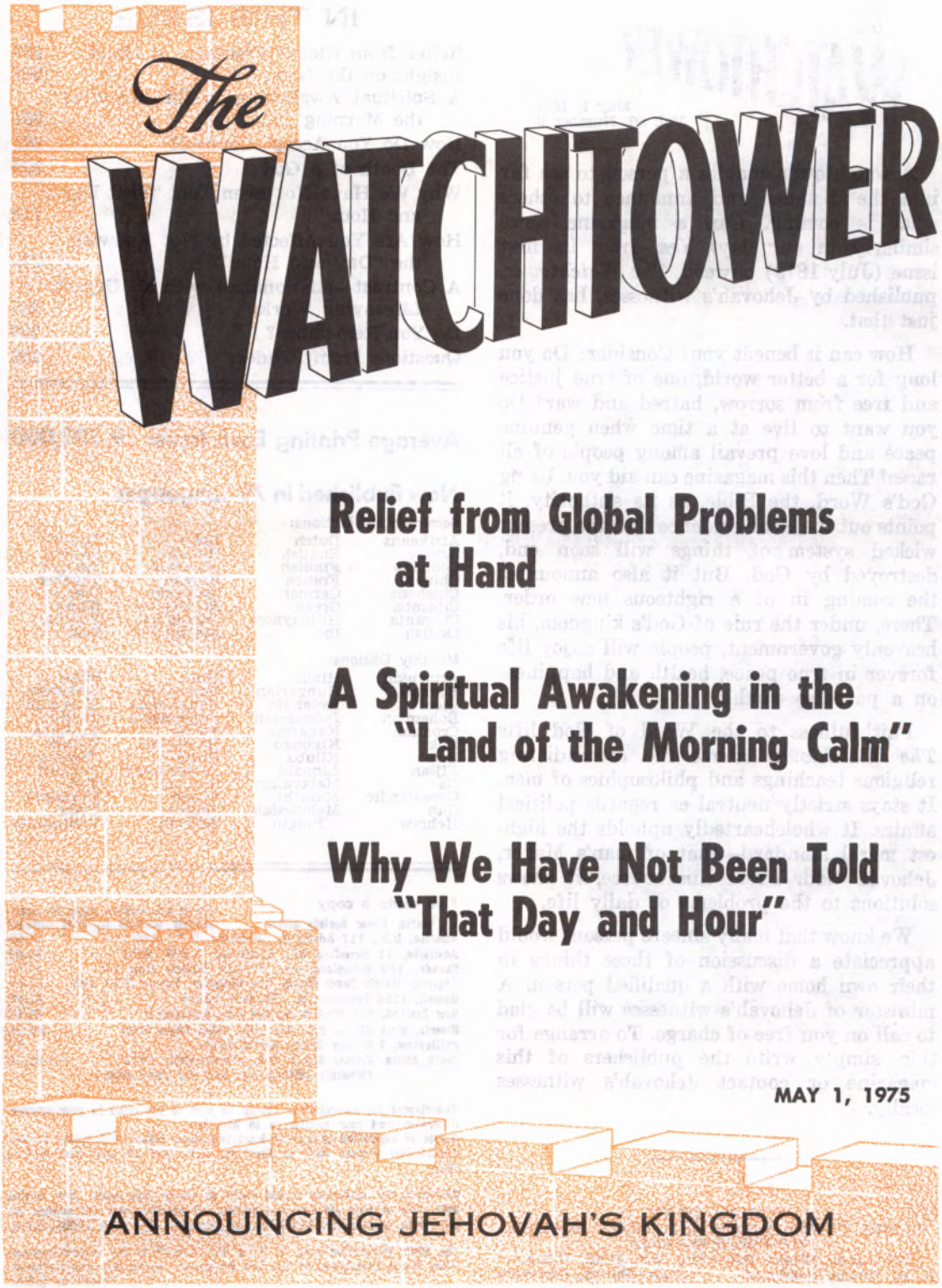

The WATCHTOWER

Relief from Global Problems at Hand

A Spiritual Awakening in the "Land of the Morning Calm"

Why We Have Not Been Told "That Day and Hour"

MAY 1, 1975

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

May 1, 1975
Vol. 96, Number 9

A watchtower enables a person to see far into the distance and announce to others what is coming. Can a magazine serve similarly in our day? Yes, from its first issue (July 1879) onward, *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's witnesses, has done just that.

How can it benefit you? Consider: Do you long for a better world, one of true justice and free from sorrow, hatred and war? Do you want to live at a time when genuine peace and love prevail among people of all races? Then this magazine can aid you. Using God's Word, the Bible, as its authority, it points out the clear evidence that the present wicked system of things will soon end, destroyed by God. But it also announces the coming in of a righteous new order. There, under the rule of God's kingdom, his heavenly government, people will enjoy life forever in true peace, health and happiness on a paradise earth.

Faithfulness to the Word of God lifts *The Watchtower* above the contradicting religious teachings and philosophies of men. It stays strictly neutral as regards political affairs. It wholeheartedly upholds the highest moral standard—that of man's Maker, Jehovah God. From this source, it shows solutions to the problems of daily life.

We know that many sincere persons would appreciate a discussion of these things in their own home with a qualified person. A minister of Jehovah's witnesses will be glad to call on you free of charge. To arrange for this, simply write the publishers of this magazine or contact Jehovah's witnesses locally.

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Relief from Global Problems at Hand

PROBLEMS are certainly not new. You, like everyone else, have your share of them. Also, you no doubt find that these problems have intensified in recent months.

Men in responsible positions actually fear global disaster. Daily their fears are screamed out in headlines such as:

"WHOLE WORLD SUFFERING FROM SURGE OF INFLATION"

"STREET CRIME BECOMES WORLDWIDE PROBLEM"

"WORLD STARVATION IS FEARED"

But there are other problems. Oil shortages and economic collapse threaten many nations. So serious are the problems that global and regional conferences have been held frequently, such as when 130 nations gathered in Rome last November on the global food problem. In fact, so many groups met in 1974 that it has been called 'the year of international conferences.'

Problems that in the past were on 'the other side of the globe' seem now to have closed in on everybody. As this takes place, the truth becomes more evident that all men are members of the same human family. And what affects one segment of that family affects all, sometimes "overnight."

It is clear, therefore, that the earthly system is a close-woven fabric. Yes, whether we like it or not, the nations are all interdependent. Yet this fact has not brought them into cooperation, even though they see the desperate need for this.

Why is it that the nations cannot work out their problems by cooperation?

WHY MEN CANNOT COPE WITH PROBLEMS

In particular, because they are divided in so many ways. They have different political ideologies, economic systems, social setups and religious beliefs. And people, as a result, often have deep-seated prejudices against those who hold views different from theirs.

All this breeds distrust. And this lack of trust is a major reason for man's inability to solve problems between nations and peoples. For example, consider one result: Though they see how unwise it is, nations nearly ruin their economies to spend billions of dollars on armaments that they hope they will never have to use. And yet, in view of the repeated breaking of peace treaties, nations can see no reason to trust one another, and hence believe

that there is no alternative to such arms races.

Thus a basic factor in the inability of men to solve global problems is human selfishness. It not only is prevalent in organizations and nations, but exists in the very roots of human society. Is it not true that nearly everyone thinks first of "me"? He usually seeks his own advantage without consideration for the other person. He may excuse his actions with the thought that the next person does the same, and will take advantage of him if he does not selfishly care for himself first. Nations do this on a massive scale.

No one should get the idea that the earth itself is responsible for man's problems—that it is, for example, incapable of growing enough food for everyone. The fact is, back in 1970 the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization estimated that the earth could feed many times as many people as the present world population. Humans simply have been mismanaging earth's food production, as well as the distribution of that food.

It is similar in connection with the world's so-called 'dwindling resources.' The earth is literally a bountiful storehouse of all the raw materials that humans need in order to enjoy a comfortable, happy life. But men have selfishly squandered and misused these things, and in such a way as to spread pollution earth wide. Yes, the problems that threaten the globe are of man's own making.

Furthermore, these problems are now too big for man to solve on just a local basis. People in every part of the globe must be taken into consideration. To accomplish this, what is needed?

NEEDED: A WORLD GOVERNMENT

In recent decades, more and more talk has centered on the need for a world government of some kind. Of course, God saw man's need for a world government long ago and spoke of such a global rule in his Word the Bible.—Dan. 7:13, 14, 27.

However, back in 1918, after World War I, men said that *their* method, the League of Nations, would solve the globe's problems. Even the churches backed it, wrongly looking to it as "an essentially Christian means of attaining international justice and peace."—The London *Times*, December 5, 1918.

Yet that League was not really Christian. Nor was it actually a world government. And it did not solve the problems. Now, the United Nations is in the limelight as never before in its twenty-nine-year history. But, honestly, which one of the many truly global problems plaguing mankind has the United Nations been able to solve?

Clearly, global problems are too difficult for man to cope with. Does this mean, then, that the situation is hopeless? No, there is a solution. Where?

SOURCE OF RELIEF

Well, consider: To whom would it be more reasonable to look for a solution than to man's own Creator? Who knows better than He the functioning of our earth and how to fill the needs of men upon it? And who is more interested in humans than their Creator?

But you may ask, 'If He were going to solve global problems, why has He not done so before now?'

Our Creator answers that question in a most satisfying way in his Word. The Bible explains that God has *permitted* wicked conditions for these many years in order to settle important issues that were raised at the time of man's rebellion against God, issues that affect our own enjoyment of life. But now the time is at hand when, as He has promised, God will destroy all who make a practice of wickedness, and then he will fulfill his own grand purpose to make the earth a paradise. Also,

God is patient with humankind, and desires that they have opportunity to gain salvation by learning about his purpose and living in accord with it. He has kindly allowed time for this.—2 Pet. 3:9, 15.

What is God's purpose?

WORLD GOVERNMENT BY GOD

His purpose is to bless humankind with a righteous government that will unite all peoples on earth. Jesus Christ devoted his earthly ministry to telling people about *this Kingdom* government. He urged his disciples to pray for it. You pray for that government when you say: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—Matt. 6:9, 10, *Authorized Version.*

But *how* will that kingdom come? Will it come by all present nations and peoples eventually submitting to the laws of God and unselfishly looking after the interests of one another? What do you think? Is there any indication that this will happen?

Some persons may point to food gifts of richer nations to poorer nations as evidence of these nations' unselfish interest in the welfare of others. But is this really unselfish interest? To the contrary, political strategists consider these gifts as "enlightened self-interest." George Wald of Harvard University explains: "Our food is promised where it can be used to secure a political advantage or where it can be sold at a good price."

No, if the 'coming' of God's kingdom were dependent upon development of unselfish, loving interest of present peoples and nations in one another, *then it would never come.* Instead, God's kingdom will come in another way, a very shocking way to most people on earth. How is that?

This is explained in Bible prophecy. Pointing forward to this very time for the complete settling of issues and the fulfilling of God's grand purposes, the Bible says: "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. *It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms,* and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Dan. 2:44.

Think what that means! When we pray for God's kingdom to come, it means that we are praying for it to come with destructive force to wipe from the earth all present human governments. This will mean the end of this unrighteous world, an event often spoken about in the Bible. (2 Pet. 3:5-7; 1 John 2:17) Of course, the *literal* earth will survive, and God will also preserve some of humankind to fulfill his grand purpose for our earth.

How will this government unite all peoples on earth, and bring relief from global problems?

WHAT GOD'S GOVERNMENT WILL BRING

The Bible says, "There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these *righteousness is to dwell.*" (2 Pet. 3:13) Now, the Bible here is not speaking of new literal star-filled heavens, or a new literal planet earth. There is nothing defective about these so that they need to be replaced. In fact, the Bible says the literal earth was established to last "forever."—Ps. 104:5.

What is needed, though, is a righteous government, one that is impartial toward all its subjects and so has their confidence. That is what God's kingdom is. Jesus repeatedly called it "the kingdom of the heavens." (Matt. 4:17; 10:7; 11:11) This heavenly rulership is the symbolic "new heavens." The "new earth" is a new earthly society of people who submit to the rule of God's kingdom. *Righteousness* will dwell in this new system. Why can we be sure?

First of all, because Jesus Christ is God's designated ruler of his heavenly government. And while on earth Jesus proved that he would make a good ruler; he lived a righteous life. He also taught others: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." (Matt. 7:12) Now, if everyone really lived in this way, what kind of "earth" do you think this would be?

It would truly be *new,* would it not? People would not be divided. They would not be distrustful of one another, nor have prejudices. All selfishness would be eliminated, and, instead, people would be genuinely concerned with helping one another. With Jesus Christ as ruler, we can be certain that he will see to it that all his earthly subjects conform to this righteous standard. They all will obey the Bible command to love one another. How grand that will be!—John 13:34.

What about other global problems, such as worldwide food shortages? How will these be relieved?

Think about it: With the power of the One who created the great galaxies of trillions of stars backing him up, will not Jesus Christ be able to handle such problems? Why, even on earth Jesus demonstrated control over the weather, upon which the growth of crops is dependent. (Mark 4:35-41) Also, he blessed five loaves and two fishes, and God miraculously increased this food so that it was sufficient to feed 5,000 men, besides women and children. With such power behind the throne, no one under God's kingdom will lack nourishing food to eat.—Matt. 14: 14-21.

Even problems that men cannot hope to solve, Christ will solve. When people brought him the sick and infirm, he demonstrated what he will do for his subjects earth wide. The Bible says: "He cured them; so that the crowd felt amazement as they saw the dumb speaking and the lame walking and the *blind* seeing."—Matt. 15:30, 31.

Jesus even raised the dead! Addressing himself to a dead girl, he said: "Maiden, I say to you, Get up!" And she did! "Immediately the maiden rose and began walking." How did the people react? The Bible says: "They were beside themselves with great ecstasy." (Mark 5:41, 42) Surely that will also be the reaction in God's "new earth" when the resurrection of the dead takes place.

As for the literal earth, it will undergo a delightful transformation. As Jesus was dying, a man being executed on a stake alongside him put faith in him, and asked: "Jesus, remember me when you get into your kingdom." Jesus replied: "Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in *Paradise.*" (Luke 23:42, 43) And that is what the whole earth will become under the rule of God's king, Christ Jesus—a beautiful garden or park, a true paradise.

WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT IT?

Some people may say, 'Why, all of that is too good to be true.' But one thing is sure, men have proved unable to solve global problems. There is no hope in their promises. At the same time, all of us will have to admit that the things that God promises are what we desire for ourselves and our loved ones. Yet God does not expect us to believe without evidence. That is why he has provided in his Word the Bible evidence that these things are true.

We encourage you to investigate. Attend the meetings, free of charge, at any Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. They will be glad to show you what the Bible says that we personally must do in order to benefit from the permanent solution to man's global problems.

Insight on the News

● Religious apathy has closed scores of old churches in England. Many have been sold and converted into community centers, theaters or just dwelling places. The Anglican Church is especially concerned about many of its big cathedrals—suffering from the corroding effects of pollution, the decay of old age and the high costs of spiraling inflation. Public appeals have raised millions of British pounds to repair cathedrals in York, Winchester and Canterbury. Salisbury's cathedral now charges a voluntary entrance fee to cover its expenses. But the situation remains critical. The head of the Church of England is considering asking the state for financial support.

Churches' Money Woes

In Nigeria, the "Sunday Times" reports that "many Roman Catholic parishes in East-Central State are broke." To cope with the situation, the "Daily Times" says, a bishop in the area "sharply raised fees for church services by between 300 to 400 per cent." Fees for weddings are up and adult baptisms now cost about double those of children.

The Vatican has had problems of another type: bad investments. Reporting on the crumbling empire of Italian financier Michele Sindona, "Business Week" magazine lists the Vatican as one of the "big losers." Of the Vatican's investments in two of Sindona's banks (one now bankrupt and the other closed by Swiss authorities), the magazine says that "the smart money in Rome puts the total Church loss between $40-million and $50-million." The "National Catholic Reporter" comments that if all the money given the Catholic Church were put in one bank account, "the Church of Rome, Inc. would undoubtedly be the world's largest multinational corporation." "And," it adds, "dollar for dollar, it would probably be among the worst run corporations in the world."

● Not long ago, men made glowing predictions of the part that computers would play in directing human affairs. A recent article in "Saturday Review" magazine says: "In the sober light of the mid-Seventies, it now appears that both futurists and popularizers have been premature in their assessment." Why? Because, though able to perform amazing computations, research has shown that "even the largest, most advanced computer cannot be made to understand sentences which a four-year-old child can comprehend without hesitation."

"In God's Image"

This more sober estimate enhances appreciation of something else. Not that computers are not remarkable inventions but, the article continues, "that human abilities are far more wonderful than we had dreamed. . . . the number of possible interactions within the brain alone is beyond the current skill of our best mathematicians to compute in a meaningful manner. The best way of expressing the total creative capacity of the human central nervous system . . . is that for all practical purposes it is infinite." Quoting the Genesis statement that "God created man in His own image," the article adds, "it is still clear that we are operating with only a tiny fraction of our true abilities. Studying nature, we find that systems are created to be used to the full. What is the purpose of all the unused human capability? What is its destination?" Only the Bible points to the answer: everlasting life in a righteous new order where human capacities will be used to the full with resulting happiness and delight.

● It is well known that many members of the Mafia are active church supporters. Also, over in Israel, where a Jewish criminal underworld has begun to develop, it seems that some persons view crime and religion as compatible. Criminologist Dr. Menahem Amir says that some Israeli criminals are religious Jews despite their activities in robbing, prostitution, narcotics, smuggling and gambling. He cites an example of a man belonging to a narcotics and prostitution ring who was shot and buried in an orange grove. A member of the gang that carried out the murder became concerned because this Jewish man had been buried without proper ritual. So he had the body moved to a cemetery—to his own undoing, as the move led to police investigation and arrest. As in the first century, people make God's word invalid while holding to man-made religious tradition. God's Son said such worship is in vain.—Matt. 15:7-9.

Pious Criminals

A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING IN THE "LAND OF THE MORNING CALM"

FOR many centuries Korea was called *Cho-sen,* meaning "morning calm." But there is little calm during mornings in Korea now. Instead, the noises of bulldozers, trucks and cranes pierce the air at numerous construction sites. A remarkable surge of economic activity has swept Korea in recent years.

The "Land of the Morning Calm" is awakening, however, not just materially, but also spiritually. How so? Recently there has been a pronounced shift in the attitude of many Koreans toward the Bible teaching work of Jehovah's witnesses. Typical of this change are the remarks of Mr. Kim, a successful businessman in Seoul, the capital:

"I made my fortune by hard work from the bottom up. I made all the money I thought my family needed. And now that we are comfortable for ourselves, I see the world falling apart around us." Gesturing with strong, weather-beaten hands, he continues: "For many years I was skeptical of my wife's being one of Jehovah's witnesses. But now I am beginning to realize that as the world system crumbles, Jehovah's witnesses are really teaching the truth." Mr. Kim thus made his decision to learn about the unfailing hope offered by the Bible.

Similarly, Mr. Choi Chang-Soo, a gardener from Chonju city, at first opposed his wife's house-to-house Bible teaching. But then things changed. "Though I had been a stubborn materialist," he says, "I suddenly felt the limitation of humans and the need we have of the natural laws of God, which can be explained only through the Bible." As a baptized Witness, he is now assisting others who feel this same need.

These expressions are typical of the many thousands who are now awakening spiritually in Korea. But twenty-six years ago the scene was quite different.

"SMALL BEGINNINGS"

In 1949, when Don and Earlene Steele arrived in Korea as the first missionaries from the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, they joined with less than twenty local Witnesses located in Seoul and Chonju. Most of these early Korean Witnesses had survived imprisonment and torture during the Japanese wartime occupation of Korea. Some are faithfully preaching even now.

"When we think of those days and the small beginnings," the Steeles say, "it would have been very hard then to foresee the 119 thriving congregations we now have in the capital or the 10 in Chonju, where there is now an active Witness for every 200 of the population."

In just five years, by 1954, the little group grew to 1,065. Ten years later, in 1964, over five times as many were preaching—5,538. And another ten years brought still another fivefold increase, to almost 28,000 active Witnesses at the end of 1974! Over 425 congregations throughout South Korea now serve every town and city of any size.

The Korean Bible has had a wide circulation, and even nonbelievers have respect for the Bible. Many are interested in its prophecies and their meanings. As a result, many thousands are finding the instructive meetings of Jehovah's witnesses spiritually satisfying. About 40,000 attended the four district assemblies they held last summer, and more than 55,000 were at the annual celebration of the Lord's Evening Meal on April 7, 1974. Their meeting places are usually full to overflowing on the three days they meet each week. The fact that most Kingdom Halls in Korea use straw floor mats rather than chairs helps, because more people can be seated in the available space on the mats.

"The thing that impresses us about the people here," remarks Milton Hamilton, who came to Korea twenty years ago with his wife Elizabeth, "is the zeal with which they take up studying the Bible and their ability to stick to it—often attending the Kingdom Hall right from the start and beginning a Christian way of life." The Korean Witnesses have developed into fine teachers of the Bible too.

"At first I thought they were not qualified enough to be out teaching," says Mr. Park, the assistant principal of a Korean primary school who devotes all his time to education. "But the method of preaching, house-to-house work, return visits and home Bible studies is, I think, excellent. Especially when I studied for a while with your Mr. Cho, I could see the effectiveness of your method." How effective was it? After having studied for just a short time, Mr. Park says, "Now I am no longer an atheist."

FINDING LIFE'S PURPOSE

You may have noted from the foregoing experiences that the Bible teaching work of Jehovah's witnesses is arousing the interest of Koreans from various walks of life. Honest-hearted people, from farmers to high government officials, are awakening spiritually.

One of many examples is Dr. Pyun Keun-Suk, a plastic surgeon. After becoming a surgeon, he opened his own hospital and sent his wife to medical school so that they could become a medical team. His life's goal was to accumulate wealth. Also, his ambitious personality and pride drove him to become proficient and well-read in many fields, including interior decorating, sculpturing and others.

In the meantime, Dr. Pyun found his former Buddhism to be unsatisfying and he finally joined the Presbyterian Church. Realizing the need to change his overly ambitious personality, he immersed himself in church activities, visiting nursing homes and orphanages and doing other charitable works, thinking this would help. But ten years as a Presbyterian brought no change. Finally another doctor told him about Jehovah's witnesses, and, though initially prejudiced, he eventually decided to find out more.

As Dr. Pyun began to recognize the unfolding of Bible prophecies and the Bible's solid hope for the future, his ambitions for material things and his pride began to fade. Putting these things behind, he was baptized as a Christian witness of Jehovah in 1974. Some of Dr. Pyun's non-Witness friends recently marveled at the fact that this prominent plastic surgeon willingly performed the "menial" task of directing traffic at a circuit assembly of Jehovah's witnesses. Now he and his wife take turns, alternating months between

spending one hundred hours teaching the Bible and caring for the hospital.

Can political position give life purpose and serve as a basis for helping humanity? In Namwon there is a former politician who thought so. He had been elected to the local assembly as a state representative at the early age of twenty-five. He tried hard to root out corruption by means of his position, but finally gave up in discouragement, realizing that such is impossible. He finally quit politics.

In the meantime, his wife had become one of Jehovah's witnesses, and, at her encouragement, he attended one of their large district assemblies. "I was jolted to my senses," he reflects. "I realized that these people had something real that I could learn." He accepted their free assistance to learn from the Bible what will truly help humanity. Now he spends his full time in teaching others about God's promised new system of things, rather than trying to change the old one.

SEEING THE DIFFERENCE

Often sincere Koreans awaken to the Bible's true value when they note the difference between those who adhere uncompromisingly to its principles and those who merely profess to do so.

A member of a socially prominent Catholic family, Mr. Pyo Hwi-Sung, was another who had spent time in political service. For six years he had been secretary to the then prime minister of Korea. During all his work in important government assignments and in the business world, he says, he continually felt the need to be closer to God, but his religion offered little help.

Mr. Pyo first learned of Jehovah's witnesses through his wife, who became gravely ill and was also pregnant. Due to her knowledge of the Bible, she refused an abortion even though her aunt, a nun of the Maryknoll order for over thirty years, and a priest encouraged her to go ahead with it. Mr. Pyo saw for himself in the Bible that God's law *opposes* abortion, yet these church representatives encouraged it.—Ex. 21:22-24.

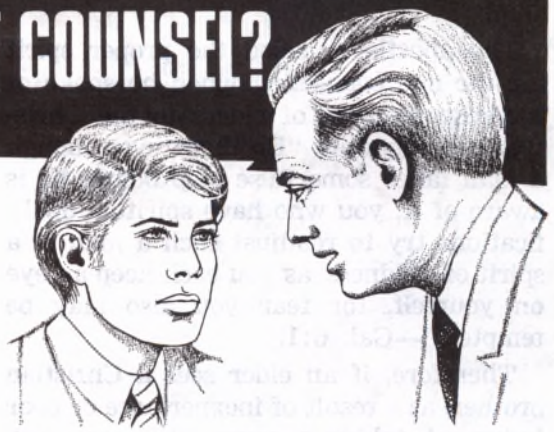
Further comparison of the Bible with teachings and practices of the Church amazed him, especially when these are compared with the way that the Witnesses stick to Bible principles under all circumstances. After delivering a healthy baby, Mr. Pyo's wife regained her health. Mr. Pyo is now a full-time teacher of Bible principles to others.

Another who observed a difference in the practices of true Christians was a well-known fortune-teller from the southern city of Masan. She noticed that, of all the different religions, only Jehovah's witnesses did not come to her for readings, and she wondered why. When her sister began to study the Bible, she had the chance to find out. This fortune-teller learned that Jehovah's witnesses do not worry about the future because they have confidence in Bible prophecy. She also learned that fortune-telling is contrary to the Word of God.—Deut. 18:10-12.

Immediately she stopped her occult business, though it was her means of livelihood. Instead, as people came to have their fortunes told, she would tell them about what she was learning from her Bible study and encourage them to study also. In this way she started fifteen Bible studies in just a short time!

Thus the Bible teaching work of Jehovah's witnesses is awakening *people in* every corner and island of the "Land of the Morning Calm." The great increase in the number of those responding to it both here and earth wide shows that many more sincere people realize that now is the time for spiritual awakening. "Look! Now is the especially acceptable time. Look! Now is the day of salvation."—2 Cor. 6: 1, 2.

How Do You ACCEPT COUNSEL?



WHAT is the purpose of counsel offered by one person to another? It is to give aid, direction or understanding as to how to do something. Only Jehovah God the Creator needs no one to counsel him, as the prophet said: "Who as his man of counsel can make him know anything? With whom did he consult together that one might make him understand, or who teaches him in the path of justice, or teaches him knowledge, or makes him know the very way of real understanding?"—Isa. 40:13, 14.

Even the perfect man Jesus Christ, with all his previous experience in the heavens, received and followed counsel from God. He said: "I do nothing of my own initiative; but just as the Father taught me I speak these things."—John 8:28; 5:19, 30.

THE NECESSITY OF HEEDING COUNSEL

Certainly, then, imperfect men sorely need counsel, to understand the right way and to apply God's Word in their lives. The apostle John emphasized the situation that is making counsel so needful when he said: "If we make the statement: 'We have no sin,' we are misleading ourselves and the truth is not in us."—1 John 1:8.

Because of inherent sin, it is the natural tendency of all of us to resent counsel, *especially if* that counsel points out a mistake or a weakness. Jehovah warns: "Do not make yourselves like a horse or mule without understanding, whose spiritedness is to be curbed even by bridle or halter before they will come near to you." (Ps. 32:9) A person who gives himself over to the spirit of resentment, repeatedly "making his neck hard," becoming unreasoning and unapproachable, will face sterner measures, restrictions and, finally, calamity. —Prov. 29:1.

On the other hand, persons who are humble, desirous of advancing in understanding, seek counsel. They are concerned, not with always being "right," but with doing things that please God and that will help others. They realize, therefore, that "there is salvation in the multitude of counselors." (Prov. 11:14) If they make a mistake they are glad to have it brought to their attention, even though at times it may be embarrassing. They want to avoid repeating a wrong or undesirable thing, to their shame. They follow God's counsel: "Buy truth itself and do not sell it—wisdom and discipline and understanding." —Prov. 23:23.

PROPER SPIRIT AND MOTIVE IN GIVING COUNSEL AND REPROOF

Counsel at times may include reproof. The Hebrew root word for "reprove" has the meaning: 'to decide matters, set matters straight.' Reproof, in the Bible sense, is in itself a kindly, straightforward proving of what is right and what is wrong in an issue. Depending on the circumstances and the attitude of the one reproved, it

may or may not be accompanied by rebuke.

The apostle revealed the proper spirit for the one counseling when he spoke of the responsibility of elders in the Christian congregation: "Brothers, even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness, as you each keep an eye on yourself, for fear you also may be tempted."—Gal. 6:1.

Therefore, if an elder sees a Christian brother, as a result of inexperience or poor judgment, taking a course that may well end up undesirably, he will not simply turn the other way and let his brother suffer the consequences. Nor will he give him a tongue-lashing. Rather, he is bound by love to point out to his brother the danger, unwisdom or wrong of his course or of his thinking, and to do so in a spirit of mildness.

Accordingly, the motive in giving reproof is to help the one reproved. Also the reprover is concerned with keeping peace and a healthy spirit in the congregation. The receiver of reproof, if he takes it properly, is saved from getting into trouble and losing favor in the eyes of God. He will change, be readjusted.

WHAT IF THE COUNSEL HURTS?

But what if you feel that certain counsel given to you is ill-advised, perhaps merely the opinion of the counselor? Before ignoring the counsel, consider your own attitude. Are you seeking to please yourself, or God? It may be that your course is not wrong in itself. But are you unconcerned as to what effect it may have on others? The apostle reminds us: "We . . . who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those not strong, and not to be pleasing ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor in what is good for his upbuilding."—Rom. 15:1, 2.

To guide our course in a manner pleasing to God, Paul also said: "All things are lawful; but not all things are advantageous. All things are lawful; but not all things build up." (1 Cor. 10:23) Within the framework of Christian law there is a wide latitude of action and the Christian has to decide many matters according to his Christian conscience. But he must consider also the consciences of others. Not all things build up either himself or others. Such things can well be sacrificed, especially where love and peace are at stake.

Sometimes counsel may be given, not with regard to wrongdoing, but for improvement, advancement. Say you are counseled as to the quality of your public reading. This may come as a shock, since you thought you read very well. What will you do? Why not find out just where your reading is weak and what will improve it? Certainly none of us are perfect readers—there is admittedly room for improvement. Practice reading. Before doing public reading, prepare by looking up pronunciation and meaning of words, consider sentence meanings and sense stress, and so forth. Your reading is bound to improve, and you will get more enjoyment out of it.

Or, you may be counseled to be more friendly with others. Perhaps in your own heart you think you have a friendly personality. But evidently it is not manifest to others. Well, accept the counsel as having some foundation; strive to take greater interest in others; be more outgoing, more expressive, more appreciative. Not only will you establish better friendships, but your own spirit will improve, and you will be happier.

Even if deeply hurt by counsel, remember David's example. He underwent much discipline, but God was training him for greater things. David said, from experience: "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me;

it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." (Ps. 141:5, *Authorized Version*) Even if the counsel of a brother is hard to take, it will not kill you, either physically or spiritually, but it can prove to be like soothing, refreshing oil. If you take it to heart, you will experience the fulfillment of the proverb: "The one keeping a reproof is the one that is glorified." —Prov. 13:18; Heb. 12:11.

THE DEATH OF A GOD

WHAT is a god? The word "god" means a "mighty one." The term has often been applied to anything worshiped as mighty or able to do good or bad toward its worshipers. The god could be an object, a person, a group of men or an organization.

The god here under discussion is a group or class of men. It is what the Bible calls "the man of lawlessness." The apostle Paul gave us a description of that god, as follows:

> "He is set in opposition [against Almighty God] and lifts himself up over everyone who is called 'god' or an object of reverence, so that he sits down in the temple of The God, publicly showing himself to be a god." —2 Thess. 2:3, 4.

Who fits this description of the "man of lawlessness"? We might answer by asking: Who have taken to themselves titles such as "Reverend," "Right Reverend," "Father," "Holy Father," and the like, directly in opposition to Jesus' words at Matthew 23:8-12? (Compare Job 32:21, 22.) Have not the clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, done so? Do they not lay claim to the "flock of God" as their flock, and in many places strenuously try to prevent others from speaking to the people in their parishes or communities about the Word of God, if what these people say disagrees with the clergy's teachings? (1 Pet. 5:2) This is exactly the attitude and action that the Jewish religious leaders took toward Jesus' preaching. (Luke 11:52) Compare also the course of the Jewish leaders of ancient times.—Ezek. 34:1-6; Mic. 3:5.

The clergy have used their influence to cause governments to ban or severely limit and oppress those trying to teach Bible truth to the people. Many of them have denied the inspiration of the Bible and call it "myth," "outdated" and inapplicable to modern living, thereby putting their word above God's and showing themselves to be lawless toward God.

While Christendom's clergy have sought to elevate themselves to a godlike position, many things that they have done are most ungodly. They have made themselves friends of the world, thereby making themselves enemies of the true God, as James, Jesus' half brother, wrote. (Jas. 4:4) They have been confidants of and counselors to worldly politicians and men of Big Business, and they have served as the handmaid of war makers and military elements. We find them serving as military chaplains, blessing the armies' deadly weapons, and praying for victory on both sides of wars between so-called "Christian" nations.

The clergy have thereby made themselves a powerful part of "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false religion. She is said symbolically to be "the great city that has a kingdom over the kings of the earth." (Rev. 17:18) She is the religious "great harlot," with whom the "kings of the earth committed fornication, whereas those who inhabit the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."—Rev. 17:1, 2.

TO BE JUDGED BY ALMIGHTY GOD

For holding himself up as a god, the "man of lawlessness" must be judged by Jehovah the Almighty God. Jesus Christ referred to the Psalms, which spoke of mighty men who were ranked as "gods." These men, who were leaders and judges, were unjust men, and the psalm, addressing them as "gods," goes ahead to say: "Surely you will die just as men do; and like any one of the princes you will fall!" —Ps. 82:1-7; John 10:34-36.

The clergy class, the "man of lawlessness," who 'publicly shows himself to be a god,' is not immortal, but will die like an ordinary man. He can be compared to the traitorous Judas Iscariot, who was called "the son of destruction." (John 17: 12; 2 Thess. 2:3) In spite of lifting himself up "over everyone who is called 'god' or an object of reverence," that princely "man of lawlessness" will fall, put to death by Jehovah's Messiah.

How does the "man of lawlessness" meet destruction? To answer that, let us consider the situation and destiny of "Babylon the Great," for the "man of lawlessness," being the chief part of this world empire of false religion, will share in its judgment. The Bible depicts "Babylon the Great" as riding the back of a scarlet-colored "wild beast." This beast symbolizes the world organization for peace and security now known as the United Nations. It is called an "eighth king," the Eighth World Power of Bible prophecy.—Rev. 17: 1-11.

The clergy of Christendom have spoken very favorably and commendably of that international organization for peace and security, even assigning to that unchristian organization a Messianic role. They called its predecessor, the League of Nations, "the political expression of the Kingdom of God on earth." The wish of the "man of lawlessness" is that such an international organization may save the world from a third global conflict, a nuclear war.

But the Bible foretells that the ten governmental "horns" of the symbolic "wild beast" will "hate the harlot and will make her devastated and naked, and will eat up her fleshy parts and will completely burn her with fire." (Rev. 17:16) When the duplicity, hypocrisy, greed, filth and lawlessness of "Babylon the Great" become disgusting to the world rulers, the "man of lawlessness" will share in the punishment meted out to her. The clergy class will be seen by all the people to have taught false doctrine, to have participated in worldly politics, in wars and revolutions, and the riches that their organizations have gained by exploiting the people will be taken from them.

To some it seems sacrilegious to say that the church buildings, in which the clergy sit and receive reverence as a god, will be reduced to ruins, and that the sanctimonious "men of the cloth" will be destroyed with "Babylon the Great." The religious Jews of the first century were likewise shocked at predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. Yet the destruction came in 70 C.E. (Matt. 24:1, 2) The book of Revelation shows that, similarly, there will be mourners over the final fall of "Babylon the Great," namely, those who got materialistic gain from their dealings with her.—Rev. 18:9-19.

This execution of judgment on the "man

of lawlessness," though it comes by the hand of the political rulers, is actually from God through his enthroned Son Jesus Christ. The Bible gives the credit to God for the destruction of "Babylon the Great" and calls for praise to him for bringing about her complete downfall.—Rev. 18:5, 8, 20; 19:1-3.

In this way the apostle Paul's words come true about the "man of lawlessness," "whom," Paul wrote, "the Lord Jesus will do away with by the spirit of his mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of his presence." (2 Thess. 2:8) Soon now the Lord Jesus Christ, whose invisible presence in Kingdom power began in 1914, will suddenly bring the destruction. Though earthly kings are the instruments used, it is the "spirit," the motivating force from his mouth, that decrees the destruction.

AVOID FOLLOWING "UNRIGHTEOUS DECEPTION"

There is a great danger impending over all who follow the clergy. The apostle said about this: "The lawless one's presence is . . . with every unrighteous deception for those who are perishing, as a retribution because they did not accept the love of the truth that they might be saved. So that is why God lets an operation of error go to them, that they may get to believing the lie, in order that they all may be judged because they did not believe the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness."—2 Thess. 2:9-12.

There is ample evidence now to identify the "man of lawlessness" unmistakably. In our day the apostasy has come to a climax. Its bad fruitage has come to full ripeness and is revealed and exposed as rotten, so that all who desire the truth can find it. Persons having "the love of the truth" need to investigate thoroughly to avoid following an "unrighteous deception." Finding and accepting truth is more important and more vital to anyone than clinging to a deception, even if we and our forefathers have been ensnared by it for generations. This can mean life or death, for God has let "an operation of error" go to those believing the lie, who look on the "man of lawlessness" as representing God, yes, even more, as being a "god," accepting his words as above those of Almighty God as recorded in the Bible.

God does not directly send this "operation of error," but lets it go to the deceived ones in order to prove that it is what they really want. (Compare Hebrews 4:12.) In this way all honest-hearted persons can see that God is just in his judgment. (Rev. 19:2; 2 Thess. 1:6-8) For not 'accepting the love of the truth' those who 'believe the lie' will find themselves among "those who are perishing" at the death of their "god," the "man of lawlessness."

For this reason a person is following a wise course if he now takes the time to look into the evidence that identifies and exposes the "man of lawlessness." He will be most happy to discover that there are glorious promises of God that have been obscured by the false teachings of Christendom's clergy. In 'sitting in the temple of The God, publicly showing himself to be a god,' the "man of lawlessness" has kept people from learning about and coming to know the true God Jehovah and his loving qualities and purposes toward mankind.

Furthermore, in looking beyond the mere identification of the "man of lawlessness," the sincere seeker for truth will find that God's fine purpose toward mankind is now nearing its realization. The destruction of those who have misrepresented God will be followed by a complete wiping out of the present system of things. There will be survival for those who "accept the love of the truth that they might be saved" and an opportunity for life on a cleansed earth. These matters will be discussed in the next issue of *The Watchtower*.—Rev. 19:19-21; 7:9-17; 21:1-4; Zeph. 2:3.

Why We Have Not Been Told

"THAT DAY AND HOUR"

"Keep on the watch . . . because you do not know on what day your Lord is coming."
—Matt. 24:42.

THE time is coming when all of earth's inhabitants will face an event that will mean either life or death for them. Jesus Christ foretold it when he said: "Then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again." This is the time when, as a result of feeling his destructive power, "all the tribes of the earth . . . will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," and they will beat themselves in selfish grief over what it means to them.—Matt. 24:21, 22, 30.

[2] But, while that will be true of "all the tribes" collectively, it will not be true of each individual, and it does not have to be your own experience. Why is that? Because, in this same prophecy, Jesus foretold the saving of some "flesh." Holding out a marvelous hope, he made known that some would be spared, with a prospect of "everlasting life" before them. (Matt. 24:22; 25:46) And, over sixty years after giving that prophecy, he revealed to the apostle John that, "out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues," there would be persons who would "come out of the great tribulation" as survivors. (Rev. 7:9-14) By taking appropriate action now, you may be one of those survivors.—Zeph. 2:2, 3.

1. (a) What will the coming "great tribulation" mean for all of earth's inhabitants? (b) When is it that, as foretold in Matthew 24:30, the 'Son of man comes on the clouds of heaven'?

2. How do we know that there will be survivors of that "great tribulation"?

WHEN WILL IT BE?

[3] With a view to personal safety and the safety of our loved ones, it is only natural to ask, When will this "great tribulation" come? Does the Bible tell us?

[4] The apostles of Jesus Christ asked a similar question: "When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" (Matt. 24:3; Mark 13:3, 4) What did they have in mind when asking that question? Were they inquiring about the time in which we live? The preceding verses in the Bible explain. These show that the apostles had just been with Jesus in the temple area in Jerusalem when he had said to the crowds: "You will by no means see me from henceforth until you say, 'Blessed is he that comes in Jehovah's name!' " And, as they had been leaving the temple area, he had said to his disciples with reference to the temple buildings: "By no means will a stone be left here upon a stone and not be thrown down." This obviously would mean the end of the

3, 4. What did the apostles of Jesus Christ have in mind when they asked the question that is recorded in Matthew 24:3?

Jewish system of things. (Matt. 23:38–24:2) It was with these things in mind that the apostles posed their question.

5 Jesus answered their inquiry, but his answer reached beyond what would affect merely the Jewish system of things. The language employed in Matthew 24:21, 22 indicates that he had in mind a "great tribulation" of such dimensions that nothing in human history would ever equal it. Furthermore, in verse 30 he showed that, not merely the Jews, but "all the tribes of the earth" would be involved. And in chapter 25, verse 32, he brought "all the nations" into the picture.

6 What is recorded in Matthew chapter 24, verses 4 through 22, all of it, had a fulfillment back there in the first century, between the years 33 and 70 C.E. But it also applies in our day, since the year 1914 C.E., which both the Bible and secular history identify as a marked date in world history. The events in fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy have been particularly in evidence in the lands making up the counterpart of ancient unfaithful Jerusalem, that is, in Christendom, which claims to be in covenant relationship with the God of the Bible.

5. (a) Did Jesus' answer discuss the end of the Jewish system of things? (b) How do we know that his answer also involved much more than that?

6. (a) How much of Matthew chapter 24 has more than one fulfillment? (b) In what part of the world in particular has the modern-day fulfillment taken place?

7 As Jesus foretold, since 1914 C.E. there have been impostors that have represented themselves as fulfilling a Messianic role, saying, in effect, "I am the Christ." (Matt. 24:4, 5; Mark 13:5, 6) Some of these have been religious leaders, such as the man who, in the 1930's, styled himself "Father Divine" and was called "King of kings and Lord of lords." Others have been politicians—for example, Nkrumah, a former ruler of Ghana, who rephrased the words of Jesus Christ and urged his people: "Seek ye first the political kingdom." Even Russian Communism has claimed that it would bring the Messianic blessing of "Paradise" to its people.

7. Since 1914, how has it been true that impostors have come saying, "I am the Christ"?

Jesus Christ described to his followers the events that would lead up to the end of the system of things

[8] During this same time period there have been "wars and reports of wars" because 'nation has risen against nation and kingdom against kingdom.' (Matt. 24:6-8; Mark 13:7, 8) Notably, there have been two world wars, unprecedented in human history. However, remember, Jesus' expression 'nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom' also had a first-century application, so it is not limited to world wars. With the wars have come severe food shortages and disease, even as foretold. Terrifying earthquakes "in one place after another" have also marked our day. You are acquainted with these facts, because they are the everyday news of our generation.

[9] Despite difficult conditions, including an upsurge of lawlessness, Jehovah's Christian witnesses have pushed the preaching of the "good news of the kingdom" into "all the inhabited earth," yes, into over two hundred lands. Millions of persons have heard them gladly, but they have also been "objects of hatred by all the nations" on account of the name of their Master. These things too were foretold. (Matt. 24:9-14; Mark 13:9-13) It is not merely the use of the name "Jesus" that has brought such hatred upon them; many who claim to believe in Jesus are not persecuted for doing so. But Jehovah's Christian witnesses point to Jesus as the One anointed by God to be earth's new King and the only one through whom men can acceptably approach God. (Luke 19:11-23; John 14:6; Acts 4:12) This is the "name," or what it implies or imports, that irritates men who selfishly seek to pursue their own schemes.

[10] In the first century, thirty-three years after Jesus gave his prophecy, an event occurred that was a signal for his followers to clear out of Jerusalem and its vicinity. Jerusalem itself was "surrounded by encamped armies," armies of the very nation whose emperor the Jews had chosen instead of Jesus Christ. (John 19:12-15) The foretold "disgusting thing that causes desolation," the Roman armies under Cestius Gallus, was "standing in a holy place," there at Jerusalem, the "holy city" of the Jews. That indicated that the time had come for those who believed the words of Jesus Christ to flee, not trying to salvage material possessions. "Great tribulation" was impending, something without precedent in the history of Jerusalem. Providentially the way was opened for flight when the Roman armies temporarily withdrew.—Matt. 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-22; Mark 13:14-20.

[11] This feature of the "sign," like the rest of it, has also had fulfillment in the twentieth century. It was in 1918 that the Federal Council of Churches hailed the League of Nations as the "political expression of the Kingdom of God on earth," showing that they really preferred human rule instead of submitting to the authority that God's Son Jesus Christ in heaven had been given over the nations. (Rev. 11:15; 12:10) How "disgusting" this was in the sight of Jehovah God! Similar "honors" have been heaped upon the League's successor, the United Nations, thus putting it in a place viewed by Christendom as "holy." But the Bible foretells that it will be this "disgusting thing," the United Nations, that will cause desolation to those who have trusted in it, first to Christen-

8. (a) Are the "wars and reports of wars" foretold by Jesus different from the 'nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom' of which he spoke? (b) Does "nation . . . against nation and kingdom against kingdom" necessarily refer to world wars?

9. (a) To what extent has the "good news of the kingdom" been preached in our day? (b) What is the "name" on account of which Jesus' followers have been objects of hatred by all the nations?

10. (a) In the first century, what was the signal for Jesus' followers to flee from Jerusalem? (b) What proved to be the "disgusting thing," and the "holy place" in which it stood?

11. (a) In the twentieth century, what has proved to be the "disgusting thing," and what is the "holy place"? (b) How will Christendom fare for having put her confidence in human rulership instead of the kingdom of God's Son?

dom (which receives principal attention in Jesus' great prophecy) and then to the rest of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. (Rev. 17:1-5, 16-18) This will be no small thing. In describing it, Jesus said that "then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again."

12 To avoid being cut off in that tribulation, it is urgent to flee now, to get out of Christendom, cutting all ties with her churches. Not merely by words but by actions, it is necessary to demonstrate to God that one is not in harmony with the hypocrisy of Christendom, which has claimed to believe in Christ but has failed to apply his teachings and has instead gotten involved in the political affairs of the world. To be among the survivors, one must "not be loving either the world or the things in the world"—any part of it —but must be a faithful follower of God's Son.—1 John 2:15-17.

13 Keep in mind that, as shown by the events that have taken place, that entire section of Jesus' prophecy, as recorded in verses 4 through 22 of Matthew chapter 24, has a double application. Its first fulfillment strengthened the conviction of true Christians that the remaining things would also take place.

AFTER THE TRIBULATION ON JERUSALEM

14 What is recorded in Matthew chapter 24, verses 23 through 28, touches on developments from and after 70 C.E. and on into the days of Christ's invisible presence (*parousia*). The warning against "false Christs" is not simply a repetition of verses 4 and 5. The later verses are describing a longer time period—a time when such men as the Jewish Bar Kokhba led a revolt against the Roman oppressors in 131-135 C.E., or when the much later leader of the Bahai religion claimed to be Christ returned, and when the leader of the Doukhobors in Canada professed to be Christ the Savior. But, here in his prophecy, Jesus had warned his followers not to be misled by the claims of human pretenders.

15 He told his disciples that his presence would not be simply a local affair, but, since he would be an invisible King directing his attention to earth from the heavens, his presence would be like the lightning that "comes out of eastern parts and shines over to western parts." So, he urged them to be farsighted like the eagles, and to appreciate that true spiritual food would be found only with Jesus Christ, to whom they should gather as the true Messiah at his invisible presence, which would be in effect from 1914 onward.—Matt. 24: 23-28; Mark 13:21-23; see *God's Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached*, pages 320-323.

FROM 1914 C.E. FORWARD

16 As a comparison of the Scriptures with the events of history indicates, from verse 29 in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew's account down to the end of chapter 25, the events described are ones that reach their climax during the time period since 1914 C.E. Some of these events, of course, had their beginning in the first century, but the finale to which they point is in the twentieth century. This is true of what is said about "the faithful and discreet slave," also the illustrations of the ten virgins and the talents.—Matt. 24:45-47; 25:1-30.

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12. To avoid destruction in that "great tribulation," what action must we individually take now?
13. How has the first fulfillment of Matthew 24:4-22 beneficially affected the expectations of true Christians?
14. (a) The things foretold in Matthew 24:23-28 take place during what period of history? (b) So what is the difference between the warning against "false Christs" as recorded in Matthew 24:24 and the warning found in verses 4 and 5?
15. How could appreciation of the fact that Jesus' presence would be invisible protect his disciples against being misled?
16. In what time period do the events described in Matthew 24:29-25:46 have fulfillment?

[17] When Matthew 24:29 refers to something that takes place "after the tribulation of those days," it is talking about events since 1914 C.E., and that is *after* the "great tribulation" that came upon Jerusalem in 70 C.E. It is true that, from the standpoint of man with his short lifespan, events of our day might not be viewed as coming "immediately after" what took place in 70 C.E. But God, for whom a thousand years are "but as yesterday when it is past," sees matters differently.—Ps. 90:4; compare "shortly" in Revelation 1:1.

[18] Since 1914 C.E. it has taken place, just as foretold: "The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken." Starting with the outbreak of World War I, mankind entered a gloomy period, indeed. There was no light for the future from the sources to which man was accustomed to look. It was also true that, historically, the literal heavens were viewed as the domain of the birds. But early in the twentieth century man succeeded in flying an airplane, which soon was employed for purposes of war. This led to development of death-dealing rockets, also to space probes that carried men to the moon, with the result that it came to be viewed as a potential military base for control of the earth. During this same time, what was being learned about the bombarding of the earth by cosmic rays from the sun and the stars added to man's fears. Not because the heavens themselves had changed, but as a result of what man himself was doing and because of his increased knowledge of extraterrestrial forces that he could not control, the physical heavens have come to have a foreboding appearance to many people in this generation.—Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24, 25.

[19] All of this is leading up to the end of this system of things, to the time when, as Matthew 24:30 says, "the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation." That time is now very near!—Mark 13:26.

[20] Not everyone will grieve, however, when 'the Son of man comes with power' to destroy this wicked system of things. By that time, all the "chosen ones," the 144,000 spirit-anointed followers of Jesus Christ will have been gathered, as Jesus foretold. (Matt. 24:31; Mark 13:27) Others, too, in great numbers are taking their stand alongside those anointed ones, sharing with them in giving a witness to all nations about God's Messianic kingdom. —Zech. 8:23.

[21] There is no doubt in their minds as to the certainty of the fulfillment of all the things that Jesus foretold. Jesus said: "Now learn from the fig tree as an illustration this point: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. Likewise also you, when you see all these things, know that he [the Son of man] is near at the doors." "All these things" that he foretold can now be seen with unmistakable clarity.—Matt. 24:32-34; Mark 13: 28, 29.

ASCERTAINING THE TIME

[22] When will it be, then, that the Son of man comes with destructive power to cleanse this earth of all who love the way of unrighteousness? Jesus himself answers: "Truly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away until all these

17. (a) What is the "tribulation" referred to in Matthew 24:29? (b) How can it be said that events starting with 1914 C.E. are "immediately after" what took place in 70 C.E.?
18. Explain the fulfillment of Matthew 24:29.
19. All of this leads up to what event described in Matthew 24:30?
20. Why will not everyone share in that "lamentation," and how does the following verse indicate that?
21. How can we be certain that the time for the "coming" of the Son of man is very near?
22. To which "generation" did Jesus refer as the one that would see his "coming" with destructive power?

things occur." (Matt. 24:34; Mark 13:30) Which "generation" is that? The one that has witnessed the events in fulfillment of prophecy since 1914 C.E. There is no doubt about the truthfulness of what Jesus said. Forcefully he added: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away."—Matt. 24:35; Mark 13:31; compare Matthew 5:18.

[23] Did Jesus give more details than this, telling his disciples the precise time for this to happen? To the contrary, he told them that the "day and hour" was not known to any creature, and he emphasized the point by saying it again and again—yes, five times. "Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father," he said.—Matt. 24:36–25:13.

[24] Keep in mind that in the first-century fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy concerning the "great tribulation," they were given no date in advance as to the time when they were to flee from Jerusalem. Instead, it was a sign for which they were to keep on the watch—'the disgusting thing, as spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in a holy place.' (Matt. 24:15, 16) It appeared in the year 66 C.E. Obediently Jesus' followers got out of the city and, according to the records of history, took up residence on the other side of the Jordan River in the mountainous region of Pella. Thereafter, however, a number of years elapsed before the "great tribulation" came upon Jerusalem in the year 70 C.E. There is no indication that Jesus' followers were told in advance just when that tribulation would strike. They were already in a place

After they had fled to safety, there was no need for Christians to know exactly when the "great tribulation" would strike Jerusalem

23. What did Jesus say as to anyone's having knowledge of the "day and hour" of that event?
24. In the first-century fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the "great tribulation," were Jesus' disciples told in advance just when the tribulation would strike?

of safety; there was really no reason why they needed to know.

25 But did not Jesus himself compare the days of Noah to the time of his presence? (Matt. 24:37-39) And was not Noah told in advance the exact day when the flood would start? Yes, but the reason for Noah's being told the "day" does not fit our situation. Noah and his family needed to know the time when the deluge would begin so they could get all the basic animal kinds safely inside the ark and then enter themselves before the floodwaters descended. This was something they could not have done many months in advance, for that would have resulted in their using up stored food supplies prematurely. So it was at just the right time that God said to Noah: "In just seven days more I am making it rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will wipe every existing thing that I have made off the surface of the ground."—Gen. 7:4.

26 We, however, do not need to know the "day and hour" when God's coming destructive act will begin. Survival of the animal creation has not been entrusted to us nor does the preservation of God-fearing persons—now found in over two hundred lands around the earth—depend on their all getting inside some physical structure in one location. The carrying out of God's purpose, including the preservation of his people, does not require their having advance notice of the "day and hour."

PROSPECTS FOR THE SURVIVORS

27 That there will be survivors of the coming "great tribulation" the Bible makes clear, and it shows what is required in order to be among those survivors. Revelation 7:14 describes the "great crowd" of tribulation survivors, saying: "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." This means that when the "great tribulation" strikes they will have a clean and acceptable appearance before Jehovah God. What will this have required of them? Exercising faith in Jesus' shed blood as the basis for having their sins forgiven, also continued exertion in the doing of God's will.—John 3:36; Jas. 2:26.

28 Marvelous indeed will be the prospects before the "great crowd" of survivors. The Lamb, Jesus Christ, "will guide them to fountains of waters of life." (Rev. 7:17) Freed from all oppressive systems that have contributed to making life on earth unpleasant, the "great crowd" will then be in an ideal situation to be rehabilitated from human weaknesses and imperfections. Jesus Christ will apply to them the full benefits of his atoning sacrifice. As they obediently respond to his aid, they will grow to perfection. In this way sickness, old age and death due to inherited sin and imperfection will finally be destroyed everlastingly. (Rev. 21:3-5) Even the injury caused by death will be undone as billions are raised from the dead. (John 5:28, 29) These resurrected ones will likewise have the opportunity to gain endless life.

29 Truly the "day and hour" for the tribulation to strike can spell either life or death for you. Would it not be the course of wisdom, then, for you to make sure that you are living now as if that "day and hour" will come tomorrow? We do not know the "day and hour" when the "great tribulation" will strike. But that does not change the fact that it is fast approaching.

25, 26. Why does the fact that Noah was given advance notice of the day when the flood would arrive not provide a basis for us to expect advance notice of the "day and hour" for the coming "great tribulation"?

27. To be among the survivors of the "great tribulation," what requirements must be met?

28. What grand prospects lie ahead for those who survive that "great tribulation"?

29. What is the wise thing for us individually to do now?

The general time period is clearly marked in God's Word. The "generation" that Jesus foretold would see not only the events of the year 1914 but also the "great tribulation" is now well up in years. That adds a note of urgency to the situation and should move us to consider carefully whether we personally are really living in full recognition of the fact that God's "day and hour" for judgment are at hand.

How Are You Affected BY NOT KNOWING THE "DAY AND HOUR"?

JEHOVAH GOD has had a purpose in not revealing the "day and hour" for the "great tribulation" to begin its wrecking work upon the present system of things. That purpose is closely linked with God's dominant quality—love. (1 John 4:8) Being a God of love, he wants as his servants only those who really do love him deeply. (Ps. 119:97; 1 John 5:3) It is not his desire to have intelligent creatures cringe before him in terror, serving because they are in dread of punishments that he might bring upon them. His dealings with people have always been such as to invite their love while, at the same time, allowing them to show what is really in their hearts.

[2] Expressing great undeserved kindness, Jehovah has permitted even thankless, unappreciative humans to benefit from the natural cycles that he put into operation to make life on earth possible. (Acts 14:16, 17; 17:24, 25) Then, too, over a period of sixteen centuries, he inspired some forty men to produce a written record that makes known just what kind of God he is and what he requires of those whom he approves. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) That record, contained in the Bible, provides sound guidelines that make it possible for us to get the very best from life even now despite problems and difficult circumstances. (Ps. 19:7-11) It also acquaints us with the extraordinary love that God displayed when he gave his only-begotten Son to lay down his life in our behalf. This opened up to mankind the opportunity to gain an approved relationship with the only true God and made possible the prospect of life free from sickness, the weakness of old age, and death.—John 3:16; Titus 3:4-7; Rev. 21:3, 4.

[3] But how can it be that such a God would also bring a tribulation that will be fear-inspiring in its destructiveness to humankind? Really, his being a God of love demands that he do so. This may sound strange to many people today. It also sounded strange to many Israelites when, some twenty-seven centuries ago, the Hebrew prophet Micah announced that Jehovah would bring calamity upon the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel and the two-tribe kingdom of Judah. In unbelief, they asked, "Has the spirit of Jehovah become discontented, or are these his dealings?" Jehovah's answer to this was, "Do not my own words do good in the case of the one walk-

1. What does God's dominant quality have to do with his not revealing the "day and hour" for the "great tribulation" to start?
2. How has Jehovah demonstrated his love for imperfect humans?
3. Why is Jehovah's bringing the "great tribulation" not inconsistent with his being a God of love?

ing uprightly?" (Mic. 2:7) Yes, his doing good for those walking uprightly requires that he take action against all who stubbornly refuse to conform to the ways of righteousness and who thereby contribute to the injustices, oppression and lawlessness that are today making life on earth more dangerous and unpleasant.

[4] Nevertheless, before the coming of his "day and hour" to act against the wicked, Jehovah warmly appeals to all to forsake their bad ways. (Compare Isaiah 55:6, 7; Jeremiah 18:7-10.) He is like a loving human father who takes no delight in having to punish disobedient children but finds pleasure in their doing what is right. Concerning how Jehovah felt about the terrible destruction he permitted to come upon Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E., the Bible says: "Not out of his own heart has he afflicted or does he grieve the sons of men." (Lam. 3:33) He prefers having people pursue a way of life that not only makes it unnecessary for him to take action against them but also brings them personal happiness and satisfaction, and contributes to the security and joy of their fellowmen. "He does not desire any to be destroyed," wrote the apostle Peter, "but desires all to attain to repentance."—2 Pet. 3:9.

[5] The fact that Jehovah God has not made known the "day and hour" when he will send his Son to execute judgment against the wicked system of things on this earth has definitely played a part in showing up what is in people's hearts. If they do not really love their Creator and appreciate the value of a fine relationship with him, they will pursue the things toward which their hearts incline—an abundance of material possessions, popularity with the world, a life centered around self. They may be inclined to think that, since God has not told us the "day and hour," it probably will not be in our day. At the same time God's not making known the "day and hour" has benefited those wanting to do his will. How so? Well, what Jehovah God has done rules out great displays of hypocritical piety just before his "day and hour" among those who merely pretend to be his servants. Sincere persons are therefore not confused about the identity of God's devoted people. They can clearly see the difference between those ignoring God's "day and hour" for judgment and those not doing so.

4. What is Jehovah's desire regarding all mankind?
5. (a) What does Jehovah's not revealing the "day and hour" cause individuals to manifest about themselves? (b) How does the fact that the "day and hour" have not been made known by God aid sincere persons in identifying true Christians?

IGNORING THAT "DAY AND HOUR" IS DANGEROUS

[6] When the Scriptural evidence about the nearness of the "great tribulation" is called to their attention, many people minimize and ridicule it. Their actions fit the Bible's description: "In the last days there will come ridiculers with their ridicule, proceeding according to their own desires and saying: 'Where is this promised presence of his? Why, from the day our forefathers fell asleep in death, all things are continuing exactly as from creation's beginning.'" Past executions of God's judgment, such as the flood of Noah's day, mean nothing to them. They simply do not want to believe that God is going to destroy wicked ones, as he did in the past. They do not want to change their way of life but want to continue giving in to their selfish desires. (2 Pet. 3:3-7) If they persist in this attitude and God's "day and hour" catch up with them, they will by no means escape calamity.

[7] Disregard of Jehovah's coming "day and hour" for executing his judgment can infect even those associating with the true Christian congregation today. A person

6. What attitude mentioned at 2 Peter 3:3-7 are many today displaying?
7. How might failure to take seriously the certainty of the coming "day and hour" for execution of judgment affect even some associated with the Christian congregation?

may know what the Bible says about the "great tribulation." He may have heard about it for years, perhaps even from dedicated Christian parents. But, seeing nothing really dramatic taking place, in his own mind he may begin to put into the distant future the coming of God's "day and hour." He may enjoy the wholesome association of those in the congregation, but he is not personally sharing with them whole-souled in doing the preaching and disciple-making work that Christ instructed his followers to do. The world and what it offers in the way of seeming material advantages may take on ever greater attractiveness. Soon he may find himself pursuing materialistic interests or he may stop making further efforts to give up ways and habits that are hindering him from having an approved relationship with Jehovah God. He may even reason that 'when things really start to happen' he will make changes in his life. As for now, he is not ready. Such a person lacks appreciation for the rightness of God's requirements and is in a position of grave danger.

[8] Many allow excesses to dull their senses to the certainty of the coming of the "great tribulation." Jesus Christ alerted his disciples to this danger, saying: "Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare." (Luke 21:34, 35) Manifestly, excesses in food and drink dull the senses and 'weigh down' the heart with feelings of guilt. At the same time such excesses crowd out good motivations. —Prov. 20:1; compare Isaiah 28:7.

[9] Similarly, undue concern about making a living can overburden the heart. If a person were to allow himself to lose sight of the comforting assurance that Jehovah God will care for his people, such a person's heart would soon motivate him to do everything possible to make his future financially secure. (Heb. 13:5, 6) In time the pursuit of spiritual interests would be pushed out of sight, leaving the individual spiritually bankrupt and in a disapproved state before Jehovah God.—1 Tim. 6:9, 10.

8. What effect can indulging in excesses of food and drink have on one's attitude about the "great tribulation"?
9. How can undue concern about making a living pose a danger?

LIVING IN HARMONY WITH FAITH

[10] Far better it is to live each day in recognition of the certainty of the coming of Jehovah's time to execute judgment. Not only will this prevent a person from being trapped in a divinely disapproved state when God's "day and hour" come, but it will also make his life more enjoyable even now. (1 Tim. 4:8) This is so because God's commands are based on love and serve to promote good. (Rom. 13:8-10) Obedience to them prevents one from pursuing a course that is mentally, physically or emotionally injurious.—Prov. 4:1-15; Eccl. 11: 9, 10.

[11] Long before the twentieth century there were persons who lived in a way that showed faith in God's purpose to bring an end to all wickedness and to have earth's affairs administered in righteousness. They knew that this would not happen within their lifetime. Nevertheless, the hope of sharing in what God had in mind for them upon their being resurrected from the dead was so strong that they built their whole life around doing his will.—Compare Hebrews 11:35-40.

[12] Consider the example of Abraham and Sarah. They were residents of the progressive city of Ur. Yet, Abraham, at God's invitation, willingly left his home city for a land about which he knew nothing. (Gen.

10. How should we endeavor to live each day, and why?
11. What enabled men and women in the past to build their whole life around doing God's will even though they knew that the end of the wicked system would not come in their lifetime?
12. How did Abraham and Sarah demonstrate their faith in the fulfillment of God's promise?

12:1-4) His wife Sarah cooperated fully with him in this. When finally in the land to which God had directed them, Abraham and Sarah did not attach themselves to some city and settle down in a comfortable home. They and their faithful descendants continued to dwell in tents. Since nothing really prevented them from returning to a more comfortable life in Ur, why did they not do so? The Bible answers: "Although they did not get the fulfillment of the promises, . . . they saw them afar off and welcomed them and publicly declared that they were strangers and temporary residents in the land. For those who say such things give evidence that they are earnestly seeking a place of their own. And yet, if they had indeed kept remembering that place from which they had gone forth, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they are reaching out for a better place, that is, one belonging to heaven."—Heb. 11:13-16.

13 Do you feel that Abraham and Sarah made a wise choice? Theirs was a life that indeed resulted in satisfaction. (Gen. 25:8) Abraham and Sarah received rich rewards for their course of action. Jehovah blessed the efforts of Abraham to provide for his household, so that he never lacked anything but always had an abundance. (Gen. 13:2; 14:14) Abraham enjoyed a very close relationship with God, even being privileged to speak with angels and to entertain them. (Gen. 18:1–19:1) Both he and his wife had their reproductive powers restored miraculously, enabling him to father Isaac by his beloved wife Sarah. And through his line God's own Son was born as a human. (Gen. 17:17; Heb. 11:11, 12; Luke 3:23-34) With reference to God's protection and care of Abraham and his faithful descendants, Psalm 105:14, 15 says: "He did not allow any human to defraud them, but on their account he reproved kings, saying: 'Do not you men touch my anointed ones, and to my prophets do nothing bad.' "—Gen. 12:17; 20:3, 7.

14 Had Abraham not responded to God's invitation to leave Ur, he would have missed out on grand opportunities. He would have been no different from any other prosperous resident of ancient Ur whose name has long been forgotten. But because he did respond, Jehovah fulfilled his promise to make Abraham's name great. (Gen. 12:1, 2) Few names of ancient times have become as great as Abraham's, especially as examples of outstanding faith. And Abraham came to be known as 'Jehovah's friend.' (Isa. 41:8) In God's due time, Abraham will be raised from the dead, with the prospect of eternal life before him. Regarding Abraham and his devoted offspring, Hebrews 11:16 says: "God is not ashamed of them, to be called upon as their God, for he has made a city [the Messianic kingdom] ready for them."

15 The fine sort of spirit displayed by Abraham and Sarah was in evidence also among the true followers of Jesus Christ in the first century C.E. They, too, knew that the ushering in of a righteous new order of new heavens and a new earth would not be fulfilled during their lifetime. The apostle Paul, writing under divine inspiration, pointed out to fellow believers that the "day of Jehovah" would not come until after an apostasy from true belief had firmly taken root.—2 Thess. 2:1-8; 2 Pet. 3:13.

16 Did first-century Christians therefore live in a way that ignored the coming of Jehovah's "day and hour"? Not those who

13, 14. What shows that Abraham and Sarah were wise in not letting undue concern over material possessions determine their course in life?

15. Did first-century Christians expect that God's righteous new order would come within their lifetime?

16. What attitude did those early Christians have concerning material possessions, and how was this beneficial?

valued their relationship with God as disciples of Jesus Christ. They willingly parted with material possessions so that others might share in their spiritual joys. (Luke 14:33; Phil. 3:7-9) Following the day of Pentecost of 33 C.E., for example, many believers sold their possessions and made funds available, to be used to help those needing such to remain in Jerusalem so as to continue benefiting from the teaching of the apostles.—Acts 2:41-47; 4:34, 35.

17 Faithful followers of Jesus Christ took seriously their commission to make disciples. (Matt. 28:19, 20) In less than thirty years, they succeeded in having the "good news" declared in widely scattered places in the Roman Empire and even beyond it. (Col. 1:23) They recognized the urgency of doing so. They knew that people could die before even learning about the prospect of gaining immortal life as associate rulers with Jesus Christ. Unselfishly they labored so that as many as possible might have the opportunity to share in that glorious prospect. Furthermore, the end of the Jewish system of things was to come within that generation. So Jews, regardless of where they were living, needed to be told about the prophecy of Jesus Christ concerning this, so that they could act on it and escape calamity.

18 As a body, Jehovah's Christian witnesses are today striving to do the same thing. They are convinced that heeding the counsel of God's Word is the best way to live. It enables one to enjoy life even now and gives one a solid hope for the future. (1 Tim. 6:17-19) They also recognize the importance of alerting people everywhere to the need of coming into an approved relationship with the Creator before the "great tribulation" strikes. (Compare Ezekiel 33:2-9; 1 Corinthians 9:16.) That is why they have been willing to put forth earnest efforts to help their fellowmen to gain accurate knowledge of the will of God.

19 To aid fellow humans to learn about Jehovah and his marvelous purpose for mankind, a considerable number have given up promising careers, divested themselves of lucrative business interests, sold material possessions that they felt were unnecessary, or in other ways adjusted their circumstances. For the same reason, many have moved to other parts of their own country or even to other lands. Then there are those who chose singleness or, as married people, decided to forgo the joy of having children in order to make themselves available for service that would otherwise have been difficult to accomplish.

20 Some of these men and women have become old and infirm. Are they disappointed that they have not as yet experienced deliverance from the present ungodly system? Do they regret not having pursued certain interests that in themselves would not have been wrong? Do they feel that the sacrifices they made were unnecessary? Those who made their decision on the basis of deep love for Jehovah God and an earnest desire to aid others have no regrets. They do not envy others, thinking that they would have been better off had they lived their life differently. Nor do they look down on those who chose to settle down in a certain area and there raised their children according to Bible principles. They have the satisfaction of having done what they knew to be right in their case and rejoice in having maintained a close relationship with Jehovah God.

17. Why did Christians away back in the first century view the preaching of the "good news" as an urgent matter?

18. How do Jehovah's Christian witnesses as a body in our day feel about the importance of applying Bible counsel in their lives as well as preaching the "good news" to others?

19, 20. (a) To what extent have many Witnesses been willing to go in order to aid others to gain a knowledge of God's purpose? (b) Is there any reason for them to regret not having pursued other interests?

21 It is only natural for us to want relief as soon as possible from the world's mounting problems, the day-to-day struggle of trying to make a living, as well as sickness, old age and death. But what if that relief were not to come as soon as you personally might expect? How would that affect your heart? Might you be tempted to forget about the importance of a proper relationship with Jehovah God and see what pleasures you might still find in the world? If you truly love Jehovah, your service to God is not limited by any date. You know that what true Christians possess is worth more than anything this world can offer. You are convinced that Jehovah God will not fail to fulfill all the things that he has promised his servants. As the inspired letter to the Hebrews says: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name."—Heb. 6:10.

22 Never should we conclude that what is here said means that the "great tribulation" is far off and allow ourselves to slip into a pattern of thinking like that of the world alienated from God. As long as people are still responding to God's warm appeal, this should encourage us. It is in harmony with Jehovah's desire that none be destroyed but that all attain to repentance. (2 Pet. 3:9) Our sharing God's viewpoint toward mankind will cause us to rejoice that the way is still open for others to take their stand on Jehovah's side, with the prospect of eternal life in view. And our continuing to see an obvious fulfillment of Jehovah's purpose that as many as possible gain an approved standing before him should certainly strengthen our conviction that his "day and hour" for executing judgment will come, for this, too, is part of his unchangeable purpose.

23 Jehovah's own reputation, his trueness, gives us the firm assurance that his promise to end injustice, oppression and pain is "panting" or eagerly moving forward to its fulfillment. (Ps. 117:2) From a human standpoint, it may, to some persons, appear that it has delayed. Nevertheless, it is just as was revealed to the Hebrew prophet Habakkuk: "The vision is yet for the appointed time, and it keeps panting on to the end, and it will not tell a lie. Even if it should delay, keep in expectation of it; for it will without fail come true. It will not be late." (Hab. 2:3) That being the case, are you right now striving to maintain an approved relationship with Jehovah God? Are you making it your determination to continue serving him regardless of what the future may hold? If you are rightly motivated by love for God and fellowmen, that will indeed be the case. And you can confidently look forward to the reward that God will bestow upon you and all others of mankind who love him intensely from the heart.

21. How should we feel if the "great tribulation" were not to come as soon as we personally might expect?
22. If we truly share Jehovah's viewpoint toward mankind, how will we view any remaining time period before the "great tribulation"?

23. (a) What makes us absolutely certain that God's purpose concerning the removal of the present wicked system and the incoming of his new order will be accomplished, and that it will take place at God's appointed time? (b) In view of this, what should we individually make it our determination to do?

IN COMING ISSUES

- **Applying Bible Principles in Business—Does It Pay?**
- **Mary—Blessed Among Women.**
- **'Eating and Drinking to God's Glory.'**

A Contrast—Missionaries with an Urgent, Lifesaving Work

UNDER the title "When Missionaries Are Expelled," the January 29, 1975, issue of *The Christian Century* pointed out that many of Christendom's "missionaries are coming under fire for criticizing local government." This is an outgrowth of their efforts at social reform, involving political activities and protest movements.

But are such missionaries copying the pattern that Jesus set? In one land, from which some of such missionaries were recently expelled, a college leader wrote to a prominent newspaper: "The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; . . . Yet *the Savior attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses* . . . [Why?] because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must *reach men individually,* and must *regenerate the heart.*" (Italics added)

In contrast to the missionaries of Christendom, there are today missionaries who *are* helping to reach the hearts of individuals with the Bible's lifesaving message. These are missionaries of Jehovah's witnesses. Twenty-five more of such were graduated from the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead on Sunday, March 2, 1975.

During the graduation program, held at an assembly hall of Jehovah's witnesses in New York, a number of speakers who addressed the graduating class made plain this contrast. The school's registrar, E. A. Dunlap, told them that during their schooling they "had been built up spiritually," even as Jesus' disciples had been by witnessing the transfiguration. (Matt. 17: 1-9; 2 Pet. 1:16-19) What was the objective? Now these missionaries were to go forth to thirteen distant lands "to build up others." This is their work, not social reform.

N. H. Knorr, president of the Watchtower Society, clearly showed that the missionaries were to preach "the kingdom of God that people have to accept and come in line with," just as did Jesus. People need to be helped to be "in God's image," manifesting his qualities. The speaker called attention to Ephesians 5:1, where Christians are urged to imitate God, the apostle Paul writing: "Try to be like him." (*New English Bible*) That means making changes in one's personality.—Eph. 5:2-8.

Could the missionaries expect to have success in reaching the hearts of persons? They were encouraged by an experience related by the speaker concerning a woman in Italy who was raised for fifteen years in a convent. Finally she left and took up prostitution. When, years later, she learned the Bible's message from Jehovah's witnesses, she quit the "profession," even though she now had three children to support. She studied the Bible and got baptized. Local Witnesses helped her financially until she got a job, and now she is actively helping other people "to be like him," Jehovah God.

Another speaker, F. W. Franz, the Society's vice-president, forcefully impressed on the audience the urgency of the Christian preaching work. He stressed that, according to dependable Bible chronology, 6,000 years of human history will end this coming September according to the lunar calendar. This coincides with a time when "the human species [is] about to starve itself to death," as well as its being faced with poisoning by pollution and destruction by nuclear weapons. Franz added: "There's no basis for believing that mankind, faced with what it now faces, can exist for the seventh thousand-year period" under the present system of things.

Does this mean that we know exactly when God will destroy this old system and establish a new one? Franz showed that we do not, for we do not know how short was the time interval between Adam's creation and the creation of Eve, at which point God's rest day of seven thousand years began. (Heb. 4:3, 4) But, he pointed out, "we should not think that this year of 1975 is of no significance to us," for the Bible proves that Jehovah is "the greatest chronologist" and "we have the anchor date, 1914, marking the end of the Gentile Times." So, he continued, "we are filled with anticipation for the near future, for our generation." —Matt. 24:34.

In the afternoon the students put on excellent Bible dramas, including one that emphasized the urgency of keeping one's senses in the remaining time. The drama involved the attitude of Noah and his family prior to the flood, as they preached and built the ark. According to Jesus' words at Luke 21:34, 35 and Matthew 24:37-42, Noah's experience should alert us to keep on the watch and to be active in the urgent, lifesaving work of preaching about God's kingdom and helping persons to be like Him.

Do You Remember?

Have you read the recent issues of *The Watchtower* carefully? If so, you will doubtless recall these points:

● How should we understand the words of Ephesians 1:9, 10 about God's purposing 'an administration to gather all things together in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth'?

This "administration" is God's managing, stewarding or particular way of handling matters with a view to unifying disciples destined for the heavens under Christ as Head and to bring the rest of mankind on the earth into harmony again with himself through Christ.—Pp. 616, 622.*

● What did Jesus Christ mean when he said, "There are many invited, but few chosen"?—Matt. 22:14.

The whole nation of Israel under the Law covenant constituted the "many" invited ones, but only "few" of these, a mere remnant of the Jews, were chosen as worthy of the "kingdom of the heavens."—P. 698.

● In modern times, what experience of God's servants has corresponded to the words of Psalm 91:7, "A thousand will fall at your very side and ten thousand at your right hand; to you it will not come near"?

God's servants have continued in their place of spiritual security, whereas the people of Christendom and Jewry have fallen in spiritual death, becoming victims to such things as materialism, nationalism, the idolizing of science, and the like.—Pp. 733, 734, 756-758.

* Only references to page numbers above 600 are to *The Watchtower* for 1974; all others are to *The Watchtower* for 1975.

● What feelings would show that a person has not necessarily gone to the point of committing the unforgivable sin?

If he has a sincere desire to repent and really wants to do what is right.—P. 39.

● Though men can kill the body, what is the "soul" that they cannot destroy?—Matt. 10:28.

They cannot destroy a person's God-given title to be a living being.—P. 53.

● Why was there no need in the early period of man's history for laws about marrying close relatives?

Being closer to perfection, humans faced little danger of thereby bringing forth children with marked deformities.—P. 75.

● What about "godly devotion" was a "sacred secret"?—1 Tim. 3:16.

After the rebellion of Adam, the question arose as to what man would be able to maintain godly devotion perfectly. Until Jesus Christ appeared on the earthly scene the answer to that question remained a secret known only to God.—Pp. 119, 120.

● Why is the Bible as a whole God's "word" or message?

Everything contained therein was recorded under the direction of God's spirit and therefore serves God's purpose and presents matters factually.—P. 146.

● "Who is Jehovah," so that all should worship him?

Jehovah is the God of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one into whose hands he has put the Messianic kingdom. So if we desire to benefit from the rule of that kingdom, we should worship the universal Sovereign, our Maker.—P. 240.

● My husband sometimes beats me. Should I get a legal separation or divorce because of it?

For either husband or wife to abuse the other mate is obviously wrong; God's Word condemns it. But the Bible also urges mates to remain together. Whether your home situation seems so extreme as to require a separation is something that you alone must decide.

Jehovah instituted marriage as a means of procreation and a source of happifying companionship. (Gen. 2:18-24) When the first couple rejected their Creator's guidance and chose to go their own way, strife and unhappiness were introduced into their marriage. Foreseeing that resistance to headship by imperfect women and abuse of headship by imperfect men would occur in many marriages, God told the woman:

"Your craving will be for your husband, and he will dominate you." (Gen. 3:16) It is sad but true that this domination has often involved cruelty, violence.

Because of the frequency of violent cruelty in marriage, authorities have formulated laws regarding the problem. For instance, *Corpus Juris* (Vol. 19, pp. 47, 48) says: "Continued acts of personal violence producing physical pain or bodily injury and a fear of future danger are recognized as sufficient cause for divorce in nearly all jurisdictions. It is not every slight violence committed . . . Actual violence to constitute ground for divorce must be attended with danger to life, limb, or health."

The matter is a complex one, however, for both the husband and the wife could be in the wrong and contributing to the problem. Sometimes when a wife says that her husband abuses her, he claims that he is merely defending himself or trying to chastise her. *American Jurisprudence* (Vol. 26, p. 641) observes: "Technically, any force other than that reasonably necessary to . . . coerce or control her in the governance of the family, as, for example, to control her in the exercise of unruly temper and make her behave herself, is an assault."

If your husband were a Christian, then you would have recourse to the judicial committee of elders in the local congregation. By reasoning with him on God's law they might aid him to appreciate the need to change his ways. The Bible says that strife, fits of anger and contentions are "works of the flesh" that can keep a person out of God's kingdom. (Gal. 5:19-21; Matt. 5:22) So, anyone claiming to be a Christian who repeatedly and unrepentantly gives in to violent fits of anger can be disfellowshiped.

But it seems that your husband is an unbeliever, so he may not be too concerned about God's view. Still, you can seek the help of the elders. Of course, they are not trying to inject themselves into your marriage. But if your husband, perhaps in the interest of improving home conditions and enjoying life more himself, is agreeable to speak with them, the elders might be able to aid both of you.

Using reason and the Scriptures, they could tactfully consider why calmness and patience are so valuable and why heated anger causes so much unhappiness to all involved. (Prov. 14:17, 29; 22:24, 25) They could describe Christ's pattern for husbands; it was one of loving concern, which obviously rules out wrathful abuse of one's wife. (Eph. 5:25-33) A husband who follows this pattern will make life more pleasant for both himself and his wife. Also, the elders might be able to help both of you to examine yourselves to see where you can improve. Does perhaps your husband's use of alcohol give rise to the violent abuse? (Prov. 23:29, 30) Is he possibly letting frustrations on his job carry over into the home? Are you, the wife, responsible? Do you nag or provoke him? "A leaking roof . . . and a contentious wife are comparable." (Prov. 27:15; 19:13; 21:9; 25:24) Do you fan the flames during arguments, instead of keeping calm? "Love . . . does not become provoked."—Ps. 139:23, 24; 1 Cor. 13:4, 5; compare Ephesians 4:26.

But what if, despite such aid, your husband still is violent? Does the Bible say that a wife must remain with her husband despite beatings and danger to her health and life? We read: "A woman who has an unbelieving husband, *and yet he is agreeable to dwelling with her,* let her not leave her husband." (1 Cor. 7:13) Sometimes a Christian wife might finally conclude that her violently abusive husband is not "agreeable to dwelling with her." Such a wife might feel that as a last resort she must get a legal separation or divorce for her own protection. In this connection, note the Bible's counsel: "A wife should not depart from her husband; but if she should actually depart, let her remain unmarried or else make up again with her husband."—1 Cor. 7:10, 11.

Since, in the final analysis, it is the wife faced with such a difficult marital situation who must decide personally what to do, here are some serious aspects to weigh: If you remain with him, might you in time be able to help him to become a Christian? (1 Pet. 3:1, 2) Will a divorce or separation limit your association with your children or hinder your teaching them about God? What of your own sexual need? A divorce obtained when there is no basis in immorality would not free you to remarry, so will passion be a problem? (Matt. 19:9) Will you be forced to get a secular job, thus exposing yourself to new pressures and problems? Would such a job consume time now used in spiritual activities? Yes, separation may solve some problems, but it usually brings on others.

Some of these aspects were involved in the

case of a woman in Wisconsin. A number of years after they were married, her husband began drinking heavily on weekends when he was not working as a lumberjack. Influenced by alcohol, he would often become enraged and violent. About that time she became one of Jehovah's witnesses and tried to be an exceptionally good wife, not argumentative or demanding. Still, many Fridays when she and the children returned from Christian meetings he slapped her, kicked her and punched her arms. At such times she was forced to flee the house. She and the children spent many nights in the barn's haymow, keeping the entrances barricaded with bales of hay until her husband was sober again.

"Why have you stayed with him?" the children asked. She said it was because she loved them and did not want to leave them, also because their father was providing for the family, which she could not do. Never did she tell them that she did not love their father, but explained that knowing the Bible's truth enabled her to endure and to be a happy Christian. The abuse continued for more than twenty years. Now she has the joy of seeing ten of her eleven children serving Jehovah, and her husband has quit drinking, has improved in controlling his temper and accompanies her to Christian meetings. True, such may not be the outcome in all cases. But this account illustrates aspects that you can consider in evaluating your situation.

The essence of the Bible's counsel, then, is that marriage mates should strive to remain together despite marital problems resulting from human imperfection. If, though, your circumstances appear to be so dangerous or severe that something must be done, then you must decide whether to seek protection through legal action or not.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

June 8: Why We Have Not Been Told "That Day and Hour." Page 272. Songs to Be Used: 43, 59.

June 15: How Are You Affected by Not Knowing the "Day and Hour"? Page 279. Songs to Be Used: 17, 40.