



The **WATCHTOWER**

Where Will You Put Your Trust?

Why Such a Costly Ransom Price?

**Applying God's Word in Our
Own Families**

JULY 15, 1975

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

July 15, 1975
Vol. 96, Number 14

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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WHERE WILL YOU

PUT YOUR TRUST?

POLITICAL and business leaders warn that a worldwide state of emergency is developing. Perhaps you have asked: 'What is the solution to such urgent world problems as the stockpiling of armaments, mass poverty, food shortage, inflation and unemployment? Can we trust world leaders to provide a solution?'

Such questions are now beginning to disturb persons as never before. *Vision*, the widely circulated European business magazine, recently observed that what is "worst about the current situation is that no one can see a way out of it." "There's something else that's gnawing at us," agrees economic historian Robert Heilbroner. "It's the suspicion that nobody is in charge, that nobody is equipped to deal with the problems that are rushing in on us."

Is that how you feel, that problems have become too complex, too big, for humans to solve? On the other hand, perhaps you feel that such pessimism is unwarranted. 'Brilliant statesmen will rise to the emergency and work problems out,' you may say. 'Have they not done so in the past?'

TESTIMONY OF HISTORY

That is what some persons believe. Since the human family is still here, they conclude that past civilizations must have worked out their major problems. But did they? The secretary of state for the United States, Henry Kissinger, a former Harvard University professor, noted:

"As a historian, you have to be conscious of the fact that every civilization that has ever existed has ultimately collapsed. History is a tale of efforts that failed, of aspirations that weren't realized, of wishes that

were fulfilled and then turned out to be different from what one expected. So, as a historian, one has to live with a sense of the inevitability of tragedy."

Yes, based on experience of the past, statesmen will not be able to work out today's threatening problems. In fact, according to Kissinger, the evidence points to the *inevitability of tragedy*. Nevertheless, he added: "As a statesman, one has to act on the assumption that problems must be solved."

But, really, is that not only a *wishful* assumption? Is it reasonable to believe that today's statesmen will be able to solve world problems that are much more complex than those that past leaders were unable to solve? What does the average person now think about the prospects? *Vision* noted:

"The man-in-the-street now feels that the men in power are incapable of coming up with effective solutions to the problems that directly confront him: inflation, unemployment, energy shortages, violence, and so on."—January 1975, p. 21.

Is that how you feel about it too? Where will you put your trust?

In view of the evidence, do you not agree

that the Bible provides good advice when it says: "Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man"? (Ps. 146:3) Surely it should be clear that we need guidance superior to what humans of themselves are capable of giving. But where can such guidance be found?

A RELIABLE SOURCE IN WHICH TO TRUST

Well, consider: Is it not reasonable to look to the Creator, the One who made humans and originally put them on the earth? Is He not the best equipped to work out world problems for our good? Trust in Him is not misplaced, even as the Bible says: "Happy is the one . . . whose hope is in Jehovah his God, the Maker of heaven and earth, of the sea, and of all that is in them, the One keeping trueness to time indefinite."—Ps. 146:5, 6.

Still you may wonder, if God is truly concerned about us, why has he not brought relief from human suffering? In his Word the Bible, God shows why.

When the first human pair rebelled against God, the Bible reveals, important issues were raised, including whether humans could, independently from God, govern their own affairs so as to bring themselves lasting benefits. God has permitted a full measure of time to settle this question—about 6,000 years. And has not the answer become clear? Is it not obvious now that humans are incapable of properly governing themselves independently of God?

Truly, humans need divine direction! And the Bible tells of the blessings that we can have by accepting God's direction. Right now we can enjoy the peace of mind that comes with understanding God's purposes, and soon we will actually experience the fulfillment of his Kingdom promises. Yes, under the rule of His kingdom, the Bible foretells, peace will replace rivalry and war; plenty will replace poverty and

hunger; and security will replace crime and violence. The causes of sorrow, pain and death will be completely erased.—Ps. 37:10, 11; 72:7, 16; Rev. 21:1-5.

Really, there is no valid reason to disbelieve these promises of God, for we have concrete evidence of his reliability. Joshua, a member of the nation of Israel with whom God had been dealing, reminded the people: "You well know with all your hearts and with all your souls *that not one word* out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed. *They have all come true for you.*"—Josh. 23:14.

Surely we have every reason to place our trust in such a reliable God. Do you?

PROOF OF YOUR TRUST

Merely saying that you trust in God is no proof that you really do. In the first century the Jews and their priests claimed to trust in God, but when they had opportunity to demonstrate their trust in his appointed King, Jesus Christ, the priests said: "We have no king but Caesar." (John 19:13-15) That choice proved disastrous, for, as a result, over a million of those people and their priests died in Jerusalem's destruction in 70 C.E. But Christians, who placed their trust in God and who had obeyed the divine warning to flee Jerusalem, survived.—Luke 21:20, 21.

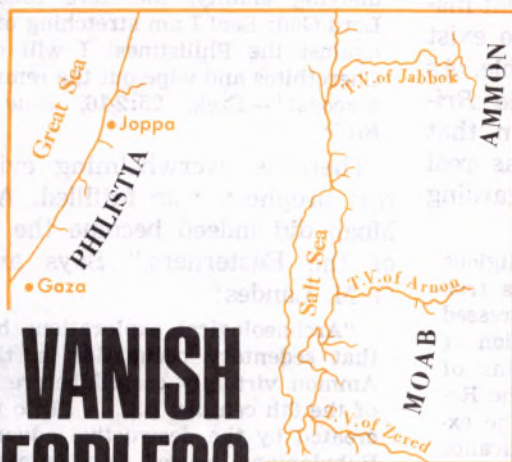
What are you doing today to prove that you are putting your trust in God? Simply reading his Word the Bible—although this is a fine thing—does not prove that you do. For you no doubt read newspapers or other literature as well, yet this in itself does not prove that you trust what these say, does it? But when we apply in our lives what we read, then we show that we believe and trust in that source.

Do your actions prove that you trust in God? Do you conform your life to the counsel of his Word the Bible? If so, you

will not be putting your trust in human leaders to solve world problems. Rather, you will place your trust in Jehovah God and his sure promises to wipe out this unrighteous system of things and to establish good conditions earth wide by means of his Kingdom government.

Jehovah's witnesses will be happy to help you to obtain the Bible information needed to develop a well-founded trust in God's promises. Contact them locally, or write the publishers of this magazine, and someone will be directed to visit you at no personal expense to you.

WHY DID THEY VANISH AS PEOPLES?



Philistines. During various periods of history the Philistines, Moabites and Ammonites made things very difficult for the Israelites.

In the early part of the reign of King Saul, the Philistines had garrisons in Israelite territory. They were strong enough to prevent the Israelites from having their own smiths, thereby keeping the nation totally disarmed. (1 Sam. 10:5; 13:1-3, 19-22) So great was the foreign oppression that many Israelites selfishly sided with the Philistines against their own countrymen. (1 Sam.

PERHAPS you have met Persians, Greeks or Egyptians—all peoples with a very ancient heritage. But have you ever met a Moabite, an Ammonite or a Philistine? "No," you say. That is not surprising, for they completely vanished as distinct peoples many centuries ago.

14:21) However, especially after David became king, the power of the Philistines was broken, but they nevertheless continued to exist as a distinct people for many centuries thereafter.

At one time, however, the Moabites, Ammonites and Philistines were neighbors of the ancient Israelites. Along the eastern bank of the Dead Sea, the territory of Moab extended from the river Arnon in the north to the torrent valley of Zered in the south. The Ammonites occupied the region extending eastward from the upper reaches of the curving river Jabbok toward the desert. The land of the Mediterranean coast between Gaza and a point near Joppa was the home of the

As for the Ammonites and Moabites, they cooperated with the Babylonians in the latter part of the seventh century B.C.E. to bring about the ruin of the land of Judah. (2 Ki. 24:2) Not long thereafter the Ammonites and the Moabites were themselves deprived of their land. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, King Nebuchadnezzar carried on a military campaign against Ammon and Moab in the fifth year after his desolating Jerusalem. Archaeological evidence confirms that the area occupied by Ammon and Moab was largely depopulated before the middle of

the sixth century B.C.E. By the third century C.E., the Ammonites had evidently disappeared completely. The Moabites, too, vanished from the scene. Such Moabite cities as Nebo, Heshbon and Aroer are today just ruins. Many other cities cannot even be identified.

The only explanation for the disappearance of the Moabites, Ammonites and Philistines is to be found in an ancient historical record that has continued to exist to this day. That record is the Bible. As acknowledged in *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, no explanation other than that supplied by the Bible prophets has real validity. For example, we read regarding Moab:

"Israel remained a great power in religious history while Moab disappeared. It is true that Moab was continuously hard pressed by desert hordes; the exposed condition of the land is emphasized by the chains of ruined forts and castles which even the Romans were compelled to construct. The explanation of the comparative insignificance of Moab, however, is not to be found in purely topographical considerations. Nor can it be sought in political history, since Israel and Judah suffered as much from external movements as Moab itself. The explanation is to be found within Israel itself, in factors . . . to be found in the work of the prophets."—11th ed., Vol. XVIII, p. 632.

Yes, the real reason for the vanishing of the Moabites, Ammonites and Philistines is that God's judgment was against them. To his prophet Ezekiel, Jehovah declared:

"Son of man, turn toward the Ammonites and prophesy against them. Say to the Ammonites: . . . Because you cried out your joy over the desecration of my sanctuary, the devastation of the land of Israel, and the exile of the house of Judah, therefore I will deliver you into the possession of the Easterners. They shall set up their encampments among you and pitch their tents; they shall eat your fruits and drink your milk. I will make Rabbah a pasture for camels, and the villages of the Ammonites a resting place for flocks. . . ."

"Because Moab said, 'See! the house of Judah is like all other nations,' therefore I will clear the shoulder of Moab totally of its cities, the jewels of the land: Beth-jesimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiriathaim. I will hand her over, along with the Ammonites, into the possession of the Easterners, that she may not be remembered among the peoples. . . ."

"Because the Philistines have acted revengefully, and have taken vengeance with destructive malice in their hearts, with an undying enmity, therefore thus says the Lord God: See! I am stretching out my hand against the Philistines; I will cut off the Cherethites and wipe out the remnant on the seacoast."—Ezek. 25:2-16, *New American Bible*.

There is overwhelming evidence that this prophecy was fulfilled. Ammon and Moab did indeed become the "possession of the Easterners." Says archaeologist G. M. Landes:

"Archaeological explorations have shown that sedentary occupation in the land of Ammon virtually ceased before the middle of the 6th century B.C. . . . Into the vacuum created by the destructive advances of the Babylonians poured once again . . . the 'sons of the East,' the bedouin hordes from the desert, who now destroyed all formally organized political activity in this area, and brought to an end the semi-autonomous Ammonite state."—*The Biblical Archaeologist Reader*, Vol. II, pp. 87, 88.

Regarding Moab, scholar A. H. Van Zyl writes:

"The fate of Moab was severe. When the power of the state had once been broken by the Babylonians, the children of the east could encroach upon the cultivated land, for the former inhabitants of the line of fortresses, who had so boldly defended their country during the past centuries, had been abducted. The only service that these fortresses and the pottery remains in their vicinity still render is to tell the story of the downfall of the Moabite Kingdom and civilization in the first quarter of the 6th century B.C. After this depopulation of the country, we still have some references to individuals of Moabite origin, but there can be no reference to the Moabite nation or state after the first 2 decades of the 6th century B.C."—*The Moabites*, pp. 157, 158.

Of the calamity that befell the Philistines, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* observes:

"Nebuchadnezzar put out any remaining sparks of Philistine independence. He deported both rulers and people, as the mention of the kings of Gaza and Ashdod and the princes of Ashkelon in the lists published by Unger and Weidner has shown."—Vol. 3, p. 795.

How forcefully the end of Ammon, Moab and Philistia testifies to the accurate fulfillment of Bible prophecy! The judgment of Jehovah God was indeed carried out

against these hard-set enemies of his ancient covenant people, the Israelites. Truly the prophetic Word of God can be depended upon. As we read at Isaiah 55:11: "My word . . . will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it." So if we want to share in the blessings that Jehovah God has in store for those who love him, we do well to inform ourselves about his will and then live in harmony therewith.

STEADFAST

MY WIFE and I between us have spent more than forty years in concentration camps and pris-

ons. Why? Not because of wrongdoing or political involvement but because of our steadfast faith in God.

The clergy, as well as the Nazis and Communists, have opposed my participation in the work of preaching God's kingdom. Yet, over the years, I have kept steadfast in my desire to be faithful in my service to God.

MY EARLY LIFE

Even as a youth I wanted to be a minister of God. One day when I mentioned this to my mother, she replied: "For that we are just too poor." I was sad about that, but resigned myself to the idea that I could never become a minister. Instead, I would become a pharmacist.

Right after World War I ended in 1918, I began an apprenticeship in a pharmacy in Silesia, Germany. Due to the hardships

Despite Persecution by the Clergy, Nazis and Communists

AS TOLD BY ERNST SELIGER

I had to endure, I often contemplated ending my life. But a few months after my apprenticeship ended, a placard caught my eye. It announced the showing of the Photo-Drama of Creation, a slide and movie program put on by the Bible Students, or Jehovah's witnesses.

I said to myself: "People who are sincerely studying the Bible are what I'm looking for." The Photo-Drama lifted a veil from my eyes. I began to understand God's purpose. I promptly ordered the seven volumes of the *Studies in the Scriptures*, published by the Watch Tower Society, and accepted invitations to attend Bible lectures. After making progress in learning Bible truth, I dedicated my life to God and was baptized in February 1923. A servant of God at last!



CLERGY PRESSURE

That same year a Catholic priest began to stir up trouble for us. He announced that he would give a talk against the Bible Students in the town of Gottesberg. The Catholic business manager of my Protestant employer was determined that I should go. I was only eighteen years old at the time and I discussed the matter with my Christian brothers. We decided that I should go and take notes and say something about the Bible's truth if I had the opportunity.

Upon arrival, the business manager took me into a hall where some 250 Catholics were assembled. He took me up to the back balcony. I later learned from my employer that the manager and his accomplices planned to throw me down from the balcony. But without knowledge of their evil intent, I decided to go down into the main hall and stand behind the back row. At 8 p.m. the priest, along with other clergymen, entered the hall. During his talk I took notes, and this evidently made him so nervous that he often had to wipe perspiration from his brow.

After an intermission, the priest opened the meeting for questions. No one said anything. I prayed to Jehovah and then raised my hand. I mentioned that I had been invited to come and was not there to disturb. But certain things said about the Bible Students were not true. For about ten minutes everyone listened as I explained certain truths with the help of the Bible.

Then, suddenly, someone from behind tore the Bible and my notes out of my hand. A mob fell upon me, dragging me to a back entrance, all the time hitting and kicking me. Two Catholic policemen encouraged the mob to throw me down the spiral staircase. I clung desperately to the railing, praying to Jehovah for help. Finally someone in the hall told them to let

me go without further molestation. I was determined to be steadfast for God's truth despite any clergy-inspired pressure to stop me.

THE FULL-TIME SERVICE

In 1924, I quit my job at the pharmacy and entered the full-time service, preaching God's Word under the direction of the Watch Tower Society. How happy I was!

What wonderful experiences I had in this preaching work! For example, at one home the woman told me: "Young man, I want to tell you something. My husband and I pray to God each morning and each evening on our knees. But hoping to understand his purposes better, we asked him last night to send someone to us with literature to explain the Bible. I was convinced that God would hear our prayer. Therefore, this morning I baked a cake with the full expectation that a messenger from God would come. As you see, the coffee is ready too. Please say a prayer for the food and let us sit down together to enjoy it. Oh! My husband will certainly be astonished this evening when I tell him." This woman took all the Bible literature that I had.

STEADFAST DESPITE NAZI PERSECUTION

In 1925, I was invited to do work at the Watch Tower Society's branch in Magdeburg. After my marriage in 1931, I continued to serve there. My wife and I had a very harmonious marriage until the Nazi persecution of Jehovah's witnesses began. Suddenly, out of fear of persecution, she gave me an ultimatum: Either give up the Bible's truth or her. My decision was to remain loyal to Jehovah, and so I lost her and my son.

Nazi persecution intensified. Twice I was arrested for being a Witness. When, after six months' imprisonment, I still refused to stop associating with the Witnesses, I was taken to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in July 1937.

Because I was steadfast in my refusal to sign a military induction slip in July 1940, I was told by a major: "You realize that within four to six weeks you'll be shot?" My answer was: "Yes, Major, but my decision remains!" But it turned out otherwise. There had been a change in the law, so that anyone who had been in prison before World War II began did not come under the military conscription law. So, then, I would not be executed.

It was different, however, with my younger brother Martin, who learned God's truth from me just nine months before my arrest. He was called to military service, refused to take up arms and was sentenced to death. In February 1943 he was executed on the guillotine in the prison of Brandenburg.

In the concentration camp, Brother Schurstein encouraged us by providing a daily Bible text with comments. Just before he was sent to the concentration camp in Dachau and put in the gas chamber there, he said to me: "Brother Seliger, continue what I have started here and strengthen the brothers, just as you have already tried to do." I considered that an honorable assignment from Jehovah. And since I was assigned to work in the hospital, I managed to find time to write up daily Bible texts for an entire month at a time. These were passed on to the other Witnesses in the camp.

STEADFAST DESPITE COMMUNIST PERSECUTION

Following the war and my release from the camp, I had the privilege of helping to reorganize the preaching work of Jehovah's witnesses in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). After marrying Hildegard Mesch, I was given the privilege of serving as circuit overseer, to encourage and build up congregations of Jehovah's witnesses. But just a few years later our

preaching work was banned again—this time by the Communists. We were both arrested in November 1950 as we were on our way to the train station in Torgau to travel to the next congregation. In July 1951, a Communist court in Leipzig sentenced me to fifteen years' imprisonment. My wife, who had spent many years in Nazi concentration camps, was sentenced to ten years in prison. Some of the other imprisoned Witnesses who had been with me in the Nazi concentration camp asked me once again to help to provide spiritual food. Despite rigid controls in the penitentiary, for a time it was possible for us to have a daily *Watchtower* study and other meetings to build up our faith.

Although my wife and I were in the same prison at first, we were not allowed to see or speak with each other. But my wife also managed to get spiritual food and to share it with others. She relates:

"In February 1952, I was transferred to the Waldheim prison. Jehovah was very kind to me, for, unexpectedly, while in detention earlier, I received a Bible, which I read through six or seven times. I was able to share with my Christian sisters many things out of the Bible that I still remembered. Each day we discussed a day's text, which was smuggled through all the cells where Witnesses were. Then reports from the Bible followed and finally thoughts from *Watchtower* articles. We even smuggled a Bible into the prison; then we dissected it and distributed the parts to various cells. Each week these various parts of the Bible were exchanged. When sudden raids were made on the cells, parts of the Bible or written day's texts sometimes fell into the hands of the Communist warders.

"Because of such raids I spent one year in solitary confinement; for three months I was deprived of all privileges, and for three weeks I was kept in 'dark arrest'—

a cell used for a mad person. But as soon as I was back, I again had Bible literature and shared it with others.

"In 1954, all women were transferred to Halle. Prison officials classified me as being especially dangerous, because, as one woman guard said, I spoke about the Bible all day long. So I was put in a basement cell along with other Witnesses who were not allowed to work. Here we really did talk about the Bible all day long and also about the *Watchtower* articles that we still had in mind. Then on November 1, 1960, I was freed—after ten years in prison."

Three years after my wife's release I was released from prison and allowed to

join my wife in West Berlin. As soon as I recuperated somewhat from my very poor health, I again entered the full-time preaching work, and, thanks to the undeserved kindness of Jehovah, my wife and I are still serving in this capacity.

One thing is certain: I had no idea back there in 1922 when I learned God's truth that my second wife and I would spend over forty years in concentration camps and prisons. But, with the apostle Paul, we can say that "in prison . . . , in blows to an excess, in near-deaths often . . . in labor and toil," we are determined to be steadfast as "ministers of Christ."—2 Cor. 11: 23-27.



SPIRITUAL UNCLEANNES

OF HIS disciples, Jesus Christ said: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:14) Does this mean that true Christians are to be recluses, or to avoid having anything to do with people? No, for if that were the case they would have to get out of the world. (1 Cor. 5:10) They are "no part of the world" in that they do not join the world in its search for power, riches, unrestrained pleasures and wrong practices. (Matt. 6: 31, 32; 1 Pet. 4:3) They have, for the most part, the same kind of jobs, wear similar clothing and enjoy many similar ways of relaxation. But they do not participate in the world's strife and its political and religious schemes to perpetuate the failing system of things with its disappointing hopes.

If Christians should engage in the immoral, deceptive, self-seeking ways of the world, they would be unclean, contaminated in God's eyes. They would be unusable in pure worship as 'vessels' for Jehovah's use.—2 Cor. 6:17; 2 Tim. 2:21, 22.

Similarly, a Christian cannot "hang around the fringes" of the world's ways, walking on the border line of Christian living, and remain clean. Such a person is double-minded, not wholly devoted to God. He will become increasingly negligent toward spiritual things and unsteady in devotion.—Jas. 1:6-8.

A BIBLE HISTORICAL EXAMPLE

Even close association with such neglectful persons can adversely affect the

spirituality of others. God, through his prophet Haggai, drove this point home to the Israelites who had returned from exile in Babylon. Jehovah had kindly released them and had protected the small remnant of them who had returned in a long, hazardous journey across a desert land. At that time their hearts were set to restore Jehovah's worship by rebuilding God's temple. They arrived at Jerusalem, then a desolated place. Jehovah continued to bless their activity as they laid the temple foundation. The land came under cultivation and they built homes for themselves.

Nevertheless, though they had experienced such blessings when faithful, many persons among this small repatriated group forgot the very thing for which God had brought them back. They became indifferent toward completing the temple—toward exalting God's name in true worship. They were more concerned with decorating their own homes than with Jehovah's house. But Jehovah brought them back to their senses. He convicted them of their bad spiritual state out of the mouth of their priests, who knew the Law. He asked them: "If a man carries holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and he actually touches with his skirt bread or stew or wine or oil or any sort of food, will it become holy?" The priests answered: "No!"—Hag. 2:10-12.

"Holy flesh" was the flesh of an animal that had been offered to Jehovah in sacrifice. The portion that the priests received was to be eaten in a "holy" or "clean" place. (Lev. 10:14, 17) But even though a man carried holy flesh in his garment, *that garment* in touching some other food could not, in turn, impart holiness to that food.

Then "Haggai went on to say: 'If someone unclean by a deceased soul touches any of these things, will it become unclean?' In turn the priests answered and said: 'It will become unclean.'" (Hag. 2:

13; compare Numbers 19:11-13.) Here the priests acknowledged that anything unclean imparted uncleanness to that which it happened to touch.

Since the Israelites were negligent toward God's worship because of being so busy carrying out their own selfish desires, they were unclean. And their uncleanness was, in effect, transmitted to everything they touched. God said: "'That is how this people is, and that is how this nation is before me,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and that is how all the work of their hands is, and whatever they present there [at the temporary altar they had erected]. It is unclean.'" (Hag. 2:14) Their planting of crops, therefore, was not accompanied by God's blessing on the produce of their fields and on the work of their hands. Instead, it suffered mildew and drought.—Hag. 2:15-19.

Jehovah could not bless them until they 'returned' to him by cleansing themselves from their indifference. They still offered sacrifices, yes, but Jehovah counts obedience and wholehearted devotion as more important than mere sacrifices, or than a mere show of worshipful devotion.—1 Sam. 15:22.

Happily, Bible history shows that the Israelites listened to the counsel of Haggai and Zechariah and that they finished the temple building. The Bible also indicates that Israel did enjoy prosperity, as God had promised at Deuteronomy 28:1-14.—Hag. 2:18, 19.

INSTRUCTION FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY

What Jehovah said and did in connection with the nation of Israel back there was not merely for *their* benefit. It revealed His way of thinking and dealing. By considering these things, *we* can keep our lives ordered properly. The apostle Paul wrote: "Now these things went on befalling them as examples, and they were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the

systems of things have arrived.”—1 Cor. 10:11.

With Paul's words in mind, we can consider Haggai's conversation with the priests regarding cleanness and uncleanness to determine wherein it provides a warning for us. We find there the principle that a person who, as a "vessel" of Jehovah, is bearing something holy cannot pass on holiness to another person automatically or easily, without effort. For example, true Christians have the truth 'present in them' and God's spirit 'dwelling in them,' making them clean or holy in God's sight. (2 Pet. 1:12; Rom. 8:9) But it takes effort on their part to speak the truth and to live the truth, to keep their vessels "in sanctification and honor." (1 Thess. 4:4) And persons of the unclean world who merely come in contact with Christians do not automatically become holy or clean. Even if they accept the truth of the good news, it takes time and effort to teach them and to show them the proper example, and diligence on their own part to listen, to learn and to clean up their lives.

On the other hand, a Christian may easily be contaminated by association with those who do not have appreciation for the truth or for Bible principles. As the Christian apostle Paul pointed out: "Do you not know that a little leaven ferments the whole lump?" (1 Cor. 5:6) Consequently, Christians must keep a very careful watch on their associations, for therein lies a great peril. Sadly, however, in the face of this truth, some associated with the congregations of Jehovah's witnesses may feel that there is nothing dangerous about having close social fellowship with those that are not baptized, devoted servants of Jehovah. This can be a trap.

Of course, there are persons with whom you may be studying, and some of these are very fine people, making progress, loving association with you and the members of the congregation. These need your

association to the extent necessary to encourage and to help them. But there are those who have no interest in what the Bible has to say, or who do not particularly care to listen to the good news. Some of these persons may be upright, respectable people according to the world's standards. But close association with them is bad, for the reason that *all persons* who are not devoted Christians engage in things not pleasing to God and can be a contaminating influence. They can take the Christian's time, his mind and heart away from true worship. At Ephesians 2:3 the apostle reminds Christians: "Yes, among them *we all at one time* conducted ourselves in harmony with the desires of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and the thoughts, and we were naturally children of wrath even as the rest."

Likewise, if a person in the Christian congregation is indifferent toward pure worship and the service of God, such carelessness and negligence could act like spiritual leaven and infect others in the congregation. Therefore, if you are a Christian, watch yourself. You may become unclean by becoming neglectful of true worship. You may develop slackness in regard to association with Jehovah's people at meetings, field service, gatherings at assemblies. Your love for the brothers may cool off. You may even suffer loss of faith, "the sin that easily entangles us." (Heb. 12:1) Then you yourself can actually become a contaminating influence to others. By close social association with persons of the world, or even with Christians who are halfhearted, cool, fearful or indifferent toward pure worship, you could lose out on spiritual blessings and even on life itself.

SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY TO CLEAN ONES

Those who keep themselves clean, maintaining strong faith and concern for pure worship and for fellow Christians, do not

expect great material prosperity. It is *spiritual* blessings and prosperity they seek. At the same time they are assured that they will receive the material things that they really need. (Matt. 6:31-34) The evidence is strong that Jehovah has poured out great spiritual prosperity upon his Christian witnesses in this time. They have exerted every effort to get the good news of the Kingdom preached to the widest possible extent. Their preaching has expanded to more than 200 lands, and the remarkable increase of hundreds of thousands of persons joining them each year

in pure worship testifies to Jehovah's blessing. These are facts of historical record, and can be found in the columns of *The Watchtower** and in the annual *Yearbook* of Jehovah's witnesses.

Jehovah is very loving toward his people and will help those who love him to succeed. And if we keep on the watch we can enjoy the outcome confidently expressed by the Bible writer: "Now we are not the sort that shrink back to destruction, but the sort that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul."—Heb. 10:39.

* See the January 1 issue of each year.

Why Such a

COSTLY RANSOM PRICE?

DURING the course of history there have been people who sacrificed their lives so that fellow humans might continue living a few more years. What these persons did has been viewed as noble and praiseworthy. Among those laying down their lives was one whose death accomplished far more than that of all the others combined. This one was Jesus Christ. His sacrificial death on an executorial stake laid the basis for humans to gain, not just a few additional years of life, but unending life.

That Jesus Christ's death accomplished so much has not been easy for most persons to understand. In other cases, as when people's lives are threatened by fire, floods and the like, the need for action and the benefits resulting therefrom can be readily seen. But it has proved to be an entirely different matter with Jesus' laying down his life. Many have allowed his sacrificial death on an executorial stake to be an obstacle to their embracing Christian

truth. Over nineteen centuries ago, the apostle Paul wrote: "The speech about the torture stake is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is God's power. . . . We preach Christ impaled, to the Jews a cause for stumbling but to the nations foolishness." —1 Cor. 1:18, 23.

The apostle Paul's words indicate that there is a grave danger in viewing Jesus' death and what it accomplished as "foolishness" or in allowing oneself to be stumbled thereby. As he says, this is the effect it has upon "those who are perishing." It is wisdom on our part, therefore, to consider just why Jesus Christ's ransoming of humankind could be done only by the laying down of his life in sacrifice.

HEBREW-SCRIPTURE USE OF RANSOM

An examination of the way the Hebrew Scriptures use the word "ransom" can help



us in this regard. At Exodus 21:29-31 the term "ransom" is first used in connection with the law involving a goring bull. We read: "If a bull was formerly in the habit of goring and warning was served on its owner but he would not keep it under guard, and it did put a man or a woman to death, the bull is to be stoned and also its owner is to be put to death. If a ransom should be imposed upon him, then he must give the redemption price for his soul according to all that may be imposed upon him. Whether it gored a son or gored a daughter, it is to be done to him according to this judicial decision."

From this law we can see that a ransom involves a *balancing* of matters. By killing a person, the bull forfeited its life. Likewise, the owner, in allowing a dangerous animal to run loose, shared responsibility in the death of the one whom his bull gored. That is why the owner might have to pay for the life of the killed person with his own life. One life, one human soul, would thus have been counterbalanced with another human soul.

However, the owner of the dangerous bull did not in all cases have to be put to death. In view of extenuating circumstances, a ransom might be imposed upon him. So that his life could be spared, the owner had to comply with the terms of the law and pay the redemption price for his own soul or life.

The law also said: "If it was a slave man or a slave girl that the bull gored, he will give the price of thirty shekels to that one's master, and the bull will be stoned." (Ex. 21:32) Was that really a balancing of matters? Yes, from the standpoint of the then-existing society and its allowance of slavery. The slave was considered to be private property. As a soul, he was owned by his master and therefore had a legally fixed commercial value—thirty shekels. Hence, the owner of the goring bull had to pay thirty shekels so

that he himself could continue living. The master of the killed slave could then buy another slave for thirty shekels, thus replacing the lost slave-life with another slave-life. In this way an equalizing of matters was brought about.

Against this background and the principles involved, we can better appreciate why the human race needed to be ransomed and how Jesus Christ could accomplish this. Consider:

THE NEED FOR A RANSOM

At the time that the first man Adam transgressed God's law he forfeited perfect human life with its rights and prospects. As an imperfect man, he could now father only imperfect offspring, men and women who would be incapable of measuring up to the Creator's perfect standards. All of Adam's offspring thus came to be in a dying condition from birth onward. By reason of their being sinful humans, they were under the condemnation of death. As the Bible puts it: "One man's fall brought condemnation on everyone."—Rom. 5:18, *Jerusalem Bible*.

So the position of humankind as a whole is comparable to that of the Israelite owner of a dangerous bull that gored a human to death. How so? In that, like such an Israelite, they are under condemnation. Unless the Israelite's case was judged as one that could be handled by payment of a ransom, nothing could shield him from having the full penalty of the law—death—enforced upon him. Similarly, in the case of humankind, there can be no release from the condemnation of death without a ransom that would meet God's perfect standard of justice.

As is evident from the Mosaic law, such a ransom for humankind must result in a balancing—on the scales of justice—of what was forfeited. Adam lost perfect human life. Hence, the ransom price for the human race would have to be a perfect

IN COMING ISSUES

- **What Does the Future Hold for Your Child?**
- **Why Are Some Sins Not Forgivable?**
- **Who Qualifies to Be an Elder?**

human life. Only a perfect human life could balance the scale of perfect justice. Not one of the descendants of Adam could provide such a precious price for himself or for anyone else. The incapability of mankind is well described in the Bible: "Not one of them can by any means redeem even a brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; (and the redemption price of their soul is so precious that it has ceased to time indefinite) that he should still live forever and not see the pit."—Ps. 49:7-9.

HOW GOD PROVIDED THE NEEDED RANSOM

Accordingly, the condemned human race was in the helpless position of one who could not pay the required redemption price. There was no hope of ever escaping death. In his boundless mercy, Jehovah God, however, arranged that this precious price be paid. How? By means of his holy spirit, God transferred the life of his only-begotten Son to the womb of a Jewish virgin named Mary. This made it possible for His Son, Jesus, to be born "holy," without sin. The angel Gabriel explained this to Mary, saying: "Holy spirit will come upon you, and power of the Most High will overshadow you. For that reason also what is born will be called holy, God's Son."—Luke 1:35.

As the perfect Son of God, Jesus could lay down his perfect human life in sacri-

fice, thereby furnishing the valuable price needed for ransoming the human race. Jesus Christ voluntarily stepped in and accepted the penalty that was meant for us. Calling attention to this, the apostle Peter wrote: "He himself bore our sins in his own body upon the stake, in order that we might be done with sins and live to righteousness. And 'by his stripes you were healed.'" (1 Pet. 2:24) In thus 'giving his soul a ransom in exchange for many,' Jesus Christ bought the human race.—Matt. 20:28.

After his death, resurrection to spirit life and ascension to heaven, Jesus Christ presented the merit of his precious sacrifice to Jehovah God. His Father accepted that price as counterbalancing what had been forfeited for the entire human race by the first man Adam.

Now that the costly price for ransoming the human race has been paid, there is a basis for shielding us from the condemnation of death. As the Israelite whose dangerous bull killed a man had to accept the redemption price decided upon by the judges, we can gain from Christ's ransom only if we accept the benefits resulting therefrom on God's terms.

BENEFITS

On the basis of the precious ransom price, Jehovah God can declare humans meeting his requirements righteous and, by spirit begetting, adopt them as his sons, with a view to their being joint heirs with Jesus Christ in the heavenly kingdom. With reference to this, the apostle Paul wrote: "God makes all his works cooperate together for the good of those who love God, those who are the ones called according to his purpose; because those whom he gave his first recognition he also foreordained to be patterned after the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brothers. Moreover, those whom he foreordained are the ones

he also called; and those whom he called are the ones he also declared to be righteous. Finally those whom he declared righteous are the ones he also glorified. . . . Who will file accusation against God's chosen ones? God is the One who declares them righteous. Who is he that will condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died, yes, rather the one who was raised up from the dead, who is on the right hand of God, who also pleads for us."—Rom. 8:28-34.

Besides those given the "first recognition," that is, those receiving a heavenly calling as joint heirs of Christ, many others of humankind, including billions now dead, are in need of having the ransom benefits applied in their behalf. For this very reason, Jehovah God has purposed that his Son along with those called to be Jesus' "brothers" serve as heavenly kings and priests for a thousand years. Of this, Revelation 20:6 tells us: "Happy and holy is anyone having part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of the Christ, and will rule as kings with him for the thousand years." Like ancient Israel's priests who offered sacrifices to atone for sins, these king-priests will be applying the sin-atoning benefits of Jesus' sacrifice. Toward whom?

Along with Jesus Christ, they will aid humans on earth, including those raised from the dead, to overcome their weaknesses and imperfections, finally to stand

before God as perfect humans free from all condemnation. Then by choosing God's sovereignty they can become members of God's family. Based on what was revealed to him in a vision, the apostle John described the pure means for bringing life and healing to mankind as being like a crystal-clear river with fruit-bearing trees along its banks. We read: "He showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of [the city's] broad way. And on this side of the river and on that side there were trees of life producing twelve crops of fruit, yielding their fruits each month. And the leaves of the trees were for the curing of the nations." (Rev. 22:1, 2; *An American Translation; Moffatt*) Accordingly, for one to be completely healed from sin and its effects, it will require obedient response to Jesus Christ and his king-priests. Only then will a person be partaking fully from Jehovah God's provisions for life.

Thanks be to God for his boundless mercy in providing the ransom price needed for counterbalancing what was lost for us through Adam's sin. Only the precious life of the perfect man Jesus could meet the requirements of perfect justice. May what Jehovah God has done for humankind move us to want to measure up to his requirements for having the sin-atoning benefits of his Son's sacrifice applied in our behalf, with eternal life in view.

Sheep Respond to Shepherd's Voice

◆ In one of his illustrations, Jesus Christ showed that sheep learn to recognize the voice of the shepherd and to respond to his voice only: "The sheep listen to his voice, . . . the sheep follow him, because they know his voice." (John 10:3, 4) A traveler to the Holy Land recently experienced the accuracy of those words. He reports: "We wanted to film some sheep and tried to make them come near. But they did not follow us because they did not know our voices. Then a small shepherd boy came along; hardly had he called them when they followed along. We recorded the shepherd's voice on a tape recorder and afterward played it. To our great surprise, now the sheep followed even us!"

MANY people talk about the problems in the world, the crime, the rising cost of living, the pollution. But then they say, "There is nothing we can do about it, is there?" Some feel the same regarding their own families, saying, "We just can't get the children to listen. We don't seem to understand one another. They insist on having their own way, so what can we do?"

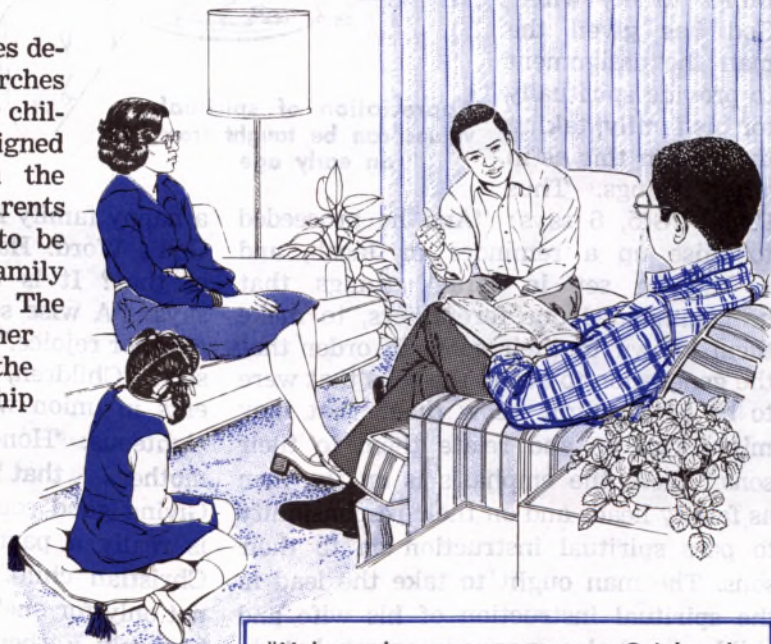
² Since the Bible shows that God's kingdom offers a realistic solution to the problems confronting mankind today, should we not also expect to find in the Bible the solution to family problems and some guidelines to bring families closer together? Accepting God's will is not just a matter of looking to the Kingdom to solve the big problems in the earth, but it also includes applying Bible principles in our homes and with our families. If we are to pray sincerely for God's kingdom to come and his will to be done on earth, then we should ask, What am I doing about seeing that his will is done on earth now, in my own home? Each one can contribute to this: the father, the mother and the children, for each one has a place in God's arrangement.

FAMILY TRAINING

³ Although many families depend on the schools or churches to instruct and train their children, the basic God-assigned responsibility rests with the parents. Certainly the parents are in the best position to be effective in developing family attitudes and conduct. The Scriptures counsel the father to take the lead in the family, supplying headship and direction in all things. Is that the way it is with your family? Do you fathers really supervise and direct fam-

1, 2. (a) What attitude do many people have toward problems that confront them? (b) How can we make a personal application of the Bible's solution?

3. Who has the basic responsibility for family instruction, and how should it be exercised?



"Make me know your own ways, O Jehovah; teach me your own paths."—Ps. 25:4.

Applying God's Word in *Our Own Families*

ily activities? Of course, this headship should not be arbitrary or oppressive, but should be administered with love, in harmony with 1 Corinthians 11:3, which shows that "the head of every man is the Christ." Thus the father who properly applies God's Word recognizes that his headship must be administered in a way that would be pleasing to Christ and in harmony with his teachings. This would include following Jesus' advice to put Kingdom interests or spiritual matters first.

*In our modern world the man in the family may be busily engaged in providing necessary material things for his family. But he is making a mistake if he says, as many do, "Oh, I leave religious things to my wife." God has given the man the assignment to provide spiritually for his family, taking the lead in this as in other things. Thus

Psalm 78:5, 6 says: "And he proceeded to raise up a reminder in Jacob, and a law he set in Israel, things that he commanded our forefathers, to make them known to their sons; in order that the generation to come, the sons that were to be born, might know them, that they might rise up and relate them to their sons." Here the emphasis is on the men as family heads and on their responsibility to pass spiritual instruction on to their sons. The man ought to take the lead in the spiritual instruction of his wife and children and also engage in personal study

for his own spiritual health. His responsibilities toward his family include teaching them the Bible, training the children in how to do things, disciplining them when it is necessary, providing material needs, and arranging appropriate recreation. —Phil. 4:8, 9.

° A Christian wife can take a supporting role in the family, making a valuable contribution as a helper to her husband when he gives the proper lead. She should show love and respect for her husband, regardless of his religious outlook. She also has the responsibility to see that the home is well cared for, following the fine example of the good wife of Proverbs 31:10-31. She should be concerned with applying God's

Word in her life, as well as helping her children to do so. A Christian mother will find special joy in assisting in the instruction of her young children in an appreciation of the Creator and the many things he has provided.

° Children too can contribute greatly to

a happy family life by their application of God's Word. Have you children thought of that? It is true, for Proverbs 15:20 says: "A wise son is the one that makes a father rejoice." As Ephesians 6:1-3 counsels: "Children, be obedient to your parents in union with the Lord, for this is righteous: 'Honor your father and your mother . . . that it may go well with you.'" Giving good cooperation to one's parents is really a part of the assignment of a Christian child. Doing so shows respect not only for one's parents, but also for the heavenly Father, Jehovah.



Appreciation of spiritual values can be taught from an early age

4. (a) How do the Scriptures emphasize that the father should take the lead in spiritual matters? (b) What do his responsibilities include?

5. What are some ways in which a wife can contribute to family happiness?

6. How can children honor their father and mother?

⁷ Since children start learning from the moment they are born, their instruction should start with infancy, as 2 Timothy 3:15 shows. In view of this it seems strange that some religious teachers of Christendom do not encourage early religious training. For example, the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* reported an interview with a nun who said, "Don't try to teach your child too much about God too soon." She advised, "Between the two extremes of too much religious training and no religious training, no religious training would be better." She felt that parents did well just to wait, as far as religious instruction is concerned, until the child is about nine years old.

⁸ How different the suggestion of this nun is from Jesus' attitude toward young children. During his ministry when young children were brought to him, his disciples tried to turn them aside, apparently feeling that the children were too young for him to bother with. But Jesus reprimanded them, saying: "Let the young children alone, and stop hindering them from coming to me, for the kingdom of the heavens belongs to suchlike ones." (Matt. 19:13, 14) Perhaps he remembered his own experience in the temple at the age of twelve years as he talked with the teachers, listening and questioning them. Obviously he had a love for spiritual things during his youth. How wise God's instruction to Israel was that they should regularly "congregate the people, the men and the women and the little ones . . . in order that

they may listen and in order that they may learn"! (Deut. 31:12) Later scriptures use such phrases as "believing children" and "obedient children," indicating that the early Christians also saw the need to instruct their children in the way of Jehovah.—Titus 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:14.

⁹ Secular educators today stress the importance of early training. In 1964 a University of Chicago educator advanced the idea that at least half of all human intelligence is developed by the age of four. This is supported by an article in *Newsweek* magazine headlined

"Never Too Young to Learn." It stated: "The notion that the human mind is mostly formed by nursery-school age has gained wide acceptance—and is being rapidly translated into educational practice." At first a child learns by taste, smell and touch, but from two to seven years of age he is able to learn a complex language, even learning to read and to do mathematics.



Doing things together strengthens family ties

¹⁰ The article quotes an educator who has studied mother-child relationships as contending, "The second year can make or break a child's intellect." Whether a child is loved or rejected, encouraged or discouraged can greatly affect its attitude and intellectual progress. It has also been noted that the person closest to the children, whether a parent, grandparent or someone else, may have the greatest impact on the child's learning process, as children naturally become attached to and imitate those who are closest to them. So,

7. How does 2 Timothy 3:15 contradict certain religious advice on child training?

8. Do the Scriptures encourage teaching spiritual matters to children? Explain.

9. What do secular educators say about giving early instruction to children?

10. Why is it wise for parents to spend time with young children?

mothers, do you devote sufficient time to your children from infancy? Have you asked Jehovah to help to direct you in the instruction of your child as Manoah did? —Judg. 13:8.

¹¹ Women today not only have many things to do in their homes, but often find it necessary to help to provide support for their families. This makes it especially important for them to find time for the spiritual interests of the family, not letting other things crowd these out. This difficulty in getting a good balance between the necessary physical things of life and the spiritual matters came up on an occasion when Jesus visited the home of the sisters of Lazarus. Martha was distracted with attending to the household duties and wanted her sister Mary to help her, but Jesus said: "Mary chose the good portion [concentrating on spiritual things], and it will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:38-42) Which do you consider as most important in your home?

¹² While there is a time and a place for everything, the common tendency is to neglect spiritual matters. However, even a little time scheduled regularly for personal study or instruction of children can be most beneficial. Parents can also take good advantage of their opportunities to teach their children how to work and to gain skills that will be helpful to them later. Even the simplest thing done in company with a parent helps the child to build a fine relationship and respect for the family arrangement. But, most of all, when parents make an earnest effort to instill in their children the love of Jehovah and his Word, a lasting impression will be made that will serve as a true guide for later life.—Deut. 6:5-9.

11. How can the example of Lazarus' sister Mary be helpful to women today?

12. How can a fine relationship be established between parents and children?

A PRIMARY GOAL OF FAMILY TRAINING—REAL CHRISTIANS

¹³ For either parents or children to apply God's Word in their lives, they have to know it first. Just as the congregations have a program for Bible study, so each family should have a program with the goal in view of helping each one to be a real Christian. Many families, though loving and close-knit, lack this essential goal. True Christians should be interested in training their families with everlasting life in view. As 1 Timothy 4:8 says, this spiritual training is what is truly beneficial, "as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." If children are to be trained up to Christian maturity, the parents must see to it that they are thoroughly convinced of the wisdom of the Bible, rather than letting their minds be filled with the viewpoint of this present system of things.—1 John 2:15-17.

¹⁴ In any study *regularity* is important. In view of Jesus' observation that "man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth," it follows that it is vital that we partake just as regularly of spiritual food as we do of physical food. (Matt. 4:4) Parents who have such a program to provide spiritually for their families have observed that it is good to keep such a family study *flexible* and *adaptable* to the current needs and interests of the family, and this depends, in part, on the age of the children involved. Usually the first thing on the list is a schedule of Bible reading. This could be especially selected to hold the interest of the children. It is good not just to read to cover material, but also to get comments to be sure the children understand it and can apply it.

¹⁵ Most families find it good to adapt the

13. What program should a Christian family have? Why?
14, 15. (a) What does Matthew 4:4 show about the need for spiritual food? (b) As to the arrangements for a family study, what will be helpful in teaching children? (c) What are some things that might be considered in a family study?

length of the study time according to the age of the children, as it is difficult to hold the attention of little ones effectively for any long period of time without a change of pace. The *time* for such family study depends on what is convenient and best for the family—some enjoy doing it in the morning when they are fresh, others in the evening when all are at home. Many parents have noted the importance of getting the Bible viewpoint across to their children at an early age and repeating it to impress it indelibly on the minds of their children. A varied study program can be helpful too, offering help in preparing talks or for the field service, discussing questions that arise and forearming the children for problems that they will face.

¹⁶ It is always important for parents to know what their children are thinking about. It does little good to study about the resurrection or the "Trinity" if the minds of the children are focused on clothing styles, dancing or dating. For older children, subjects such as improper use of drugs, what constitutes right Christian conduct, how to keep a good conscience or the effects of clothing fads have been found very helpful when discussed as a family, which enables all to get the Scriptural as well as the parental viewpoint.

¹⁷ A big responsibility for parents is to set the *right goals* before their children. With modern society geared to a materialistic outlook, the children can quickly become enflamed with a love for money and material things unless the parents give them a balanced view on what is really important. But if parents are always drawing attention to material possessions, perhaps themselves expressing a craving for a car or a stereo set, as though these were

the big things in life, the children will be affected accordingly. Yet, knowing and following the Bible and putting Kingdom interests first can bring more happiness than material possessions ever could.

PROBLEMS IN SPIRITUALLY DIVIDED FAMILIES

¹⁸ While it is especially difficult to achieve an effective application of God's Word in a family that is divided religiously, it can often be done. It should be remembered that neither Jehovah nor his Word changes despite our personal circumstances. (Jas. 1:17) Thus family headship remains with the man whether he accepts the headship of Christ or not. However, the children may lose the rich spiritual benefits that could come to them from a father who would bring them up "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah," unless their mother can help them in this regard. (Eph. 6:4) But what can a believing wife do if her husband instructs her not to take their children to Christian meetings? The woman in this situation faces a number of obligations—obligations to Jehovah God, to her husbandly head, and to her beloved children. How can she reconcile Acts 5:29 (to obey God rather than men) with 1 Corinthians 11:3 (that the head of the woman is the man)? She must make the final decision. Her husband's viewpoint may change. Tactful reasoning over a period of time may help as she shows him the importance of helping their children to follow the fine Scriptural guide rather than the example of many of today's youths.

¹⁹ Certainly she should pray about the matter and try to help her children to know Jehovah. She can do much both by word and by example to provide them with fine home training. Even if a formal Bible

16. (a) How can the thinking of a child help parents to decide what to study with them? (b) What are some subjects that parents do well to discuss with their children?

17. How can parents help their children to get the right viewpoint on the really important things in life?

18. (a) What principles need to be remembered in a family where the husband is not a believer? (b) What obligations does his wife have to reconcile?

19. What might a believing wife do to help her children spiritually?

study may not be possible, yet by daily conversation she can inculcate a strong love for Jehovah and faith in his Word. In the case of young Timothy, the training given by his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois got him going on the way to life. (2 Tim. 1:5) According to what he says, it seems also that ancient King Lemuel gained much of his faith and instruction from his mother, for Proverbs 31:1 refers to "the weighty message that his mother gave to him in correction." Furthermore, a discreet mother in a divided home can give much encouragement to her children spiritually by inviting other Witness friends of the family to visit, with a view to helping those who are unbelieving.

²⁰ However, regardless of the circumstances in the family, the application of God's Word should have a positive, up-building effect, even in a divided family. As 2 Timothy 2:24-26 shows, our attitude toward the unbeliever should be loving and patient, not antagonistic, as "a slave of the Lord does not need to fight, but needs to be gentle toward all . . . instructing with mildness those not favorably disposed," that perhaps they will come to an accurate knowledge of the truth. Tactful conversations on the truth, sharing experiences and information from meetings and publications can be helpful in turning a divided household into a united family. (1 Cor. 7:12, 16; 1 Pet. 3:1-4) Even though Jesus foresaw that the good news would cause divisions in many families, it should never be due to the attitude or conduct of the faithful believer.—Matt. 10:35, 36.

²¹ Even though only one parent applies God's Word in his life, this may well be decisive in aiding the children to follow Jehovah's way. And where both parents carefully follow what the Bible teaches,

nothing will better convince the children of the importance of Bible principles. The challenge is great for each of us to apply God's Word in our lives, whether we are young or old, especially in the face of increasing pressure and opposition from this present world system. (Rev. 12:17; Matt. 24:9) By not only studying but actually applying God's Word in our families, we will be showing our desire to follow the wise counsel of Proverbs 4:10-13, as it says: "Hear, my son, and accept my sayings. Then for you the years of life will become many. I will instruct you even in the way of wisdom; I will cause you to tread in the tracks of uprightness. When you walk, your pace will not be cramped; and if you run, you will not stumble. Take hold on discipline; do not let go. Safeguard it, for it itself is your life."

²² Families who diligently and sincerely try to apply God's Word in their lives will find that they receive a rich blessing for doing things in His way. They will enjoy greater spirituality due to a study of His Word and find greater joy and satisfaction from their activities in the field service and in the congregation of Jehovah's people due to their being better prepared for such privileges. (Gal. 6:7) They will also enjoy greater happiness and unity within the family arrangement due to the application of the fruits of God's spirit in their family life and the fine lead set by the parents and older members of the family. The result will be greater cooperation from the children. They will develop a mental attitude that safeguards them from the perils of this old system, and, as they grow older, they will have theocratic goals in view. If this is what you want for your family, then keep applying God's Word on every occasion. That it really works, we will see in the true-life experiences in the following article.

20. How can the application of God's Word help a divided family?

21. How especially can parents help their children to see the importance of Bible counsel?

22. In what ways does the application of God's Word bring benefits?

We Appreciate

THE YOUNG ONES

WHO ARE

WALKING IN JEHOVAH'S WAY

"You are my hope, O Sovereign
Lord Jehovah, my confidence
from my youth."—Ps. 71:5.

HOW happy parents are when their young child begins to learn to walk! How proud it makes them to see his first few steps! But, as time passes, in which way will his steps lead him? Will he learn to follow the way that Jehovah directs? Will his parents help to direct him in this way? Will he learn to know the "path of life" and the "path of uprightness"? Or will he turn aside to the path of the wicked, following the pathway of those forgetting God? Much depends on the child's early training and the instruction given him by his parents.—Ps. 16:11; 27:11; Prov. 4:14, 18.

² The fact that many children turn aside from the right course was admitted in a recent article by James Michener. Although titled "What's Good About Today's Youth," it spotlighted current youth problems, speaking of the "turbulent youth revolt of recent years," the "generation and cultural gap," "the drug culture" and the trend toward violence. His article reported: "In Philadelphia, for example, in recent years, there have been among school-children—many of them on their way to school or home from school, around four dozen murders a year. Now, this isn't a modest change; this is a revolution of extraordinary dimensions. I find in all levels of young people a wildness of attitude, a lack of response to discipline and, most

conspicuously, a complete change in attitude toward vocabulary, where the most profane language is now accepted as standard."

³ The same problem with youth is manifest all over the world. An article in the London *Daily Mail* reported: "Children as young as 10 are increasingly responsible for muggings and violent crime. A startling rise in the number of youngsters involved is disclosed in a Scotland Yard study." A report from Brazil spoke of the "beginning of a crackdown in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro against the fast-spreading plague of youth crime. Police estimate that juvenile delinquency will increase at least 12 per cent this year. 'Some parents even teach their sons the tricks,' one police agent said." In Los Angeles last year more juveniles (104 in all) than adults were tried for murder. In Ireland a trooper died when a group of children stoned his scout car, causing a fatal crash. In New York city a girl, thirteen years old, was seized in a savings-office holdup. It has been reported that in the United States the average age for runaway youths is now fifteen years, and it is not uncommon for children of that age to be using drugs. So it is clear that children can become involved in serious trouble even at a young age. Can you help your children to avoid such difficulties?

⁴ While some families who make an ef-

1. What is even more important to parents than seeing their child take his first steps?

2. What trend is noted by a well-known author?

3. How serious is the problem of juvenile delinquency?

4. In the light of the Bible, should this problem surprise us, and what is often helpful to the children?

fort to apply the Bible in their lives still find that their children are unresponsive or rebellious, this is not entirely surprising if we examine the case of Jacob and Esau, two sons of the same family who followed opposite courses in life, or consider the fact that Bible prophecy indicates that the "last days" would be marked by children "disobedient to parents." (2 Tim. 3:1, 2) However, such problems arise far oftener in families where the children are not given Scriptural guidelines to direct them.

⁵ Parents with believing children are certainly to be commended for the effort they have made to teach their family God's Word and purposes. The children too are deserving of commendation, particularly when we consider the pressures that many are subjected to from unbelieving companions and even from schoolteachers who may deride the Bible viewpoint. Additionally, many youths have come to appreciate the wisdom of God's Word even though discouraged or opposed by their parents or others in the family. From their study of the Bible they have come to say as did the psalmist: "Your word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my roadway."—Ps. 119:105.

OVERCOMING OPPOSITION

⁶ A young lad who studied the Scriptures in Trinidad found much opposition from his family, particularly from his aunt. On one occasion she tore his trousers off to prevent him from going to a meeting. At another time she went to the Kingdom Hall to create a scene to discourage him from attending. His mother used to beat him. When he was scheduled to give his first public Bible talk his shoes were hidden, so he had to borrow a pair from a neighbor. Yet now he is in full-time Christian service and has been able to help oth-

ers in his family spiritually. In effect, he has said as does Psalm 119:57-61: "Jehovah is my share; I have promised to keep your words. I have softened your face with all my heart. Show me favor according to your saying. I have considered my ways, that I may turn back my feet to your reminders. I hurried up, and I did not delay to keep your commandments. The very ropes of the wicked ones surrounded me. Your law I did not forget."

⁷ In another family the daughter relates that it was her brother who learned the truth first and began to interest her in it, but for some reason their mother immediately objected. To keep on studying they had to do it secretly, studying under the table to keep from getting caught, but soon their mother put a stop to it and they were forbidden even to mention the name of Jehovah in the house. Later the daughter was sent to a girls' school and was forced to go to church, although she begged the minister to let one of Jehovah's witnesses come and study with her. The teachers at the school were very sarcastic about her beliefs and many of her classmates ridiculed her and tried to pick fights. Later, when she was left at the foster home of a Lutheran couple, she did not give up although they were very much opposed to her faith and finally put her out on the street. In high school she took the opportunity to speak to her science class on the subject "Did Man Get Here by Evolution or by Creation?" She then placed twenty-four books with them and started a Bible study. One of the young people she studied with is now a dedicated witness of Jehovah, and this young sister has been a regular pioneer for over three years. Experiences such as this show that youngsters can walk in Jehovah's way despite what opposition may come, saying, in effect: "I have trusted in your word . . . and I will

5. Why can many parents and children be commended?
6. (a) What opposition did a young brother in Trinidad encounter? (b) What Scriptural counsel did he follow?

7. What blessings, despite opposition, did a young girl enjoy due to trusting Jehovah's Word?

keep your law constantly, to time indefinite, even forever.”—Ps. 119:42-44; Eccl. 12:1.

⁸ Congregations with children who face such family opposition do well to give all possible encouragement to these young ones. Elders in the congregations should give help and encouragement not only to family groups, but especially to young people from homes that are divided religiously, talking to them at the Kingdom Hall, visiting them at their homes, if it is convenient, and inviting them to share the spiritual association, as well as recreation, of the elder's own family when it is appropriate. These young Witnesses should know that others in the congregation are very much interested in them, and it is good to talk to them about what they are doing, their goals in life, giving fatherly and Scriptural counsel when it seems appropriate. This is all part of the work of being a congregation elder and is another indication that he appreciates these young ones who are endeavoring to walk in Jehovah's way despite hindrances that are put in their paths. By such encouragement on the part of their associates in the congregation, the young will be encouraged to say: “A partner I am of all those who do fear you, and of those keeping your orders. Your loving-kindness, O Jehovah, has filled the earth. Teach me your own regulations.”—Ps. 119:63, 64.

TAKING A FIRM STAND

⁹ The integrity and neutrality of Christian youths are being challenged in many ways, particularly during their school years. An issue often arises in connection with national or school anthems and the flag salute, as countries are desirous of instilling nationalism in their students. Young Christian witnesses of Jehovah

have, as a group, stood firm against such pressures, thereby maintaining their Christian neutrality even though, for some, it has meant expulsion from school. However, those having in mind the Scriptural principle of Exodus 20:4, 5 (“You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything . . . you must not bow down to them nor be induced to serve them”) and the example of the three faithful Hebrews, recorded at Daniel chapter 3, who refrained from image worship, have been strengthened to endure these trials, and they have thereby given an excellent witness to school and government officials.—Prov. 20:11.

¹⁰ An eleven-year-old schoolgirl in California was approached by a schoolmate who asked if she was one of Jehovah's witnesses; she felt that must be the reason why she did not stand for and sing the national anthem. The girl who inquired had had her interest in the truth aroused by her grandparents and wanted to have a Bible study, although her parents were not interested. Others soon showed interest in the study, so that at one time eleven were studying together during free time at school. This position taken by a young girl for what she believes resulted in a fine witness to others.

¹¹ Even if the issue of nationalism is not strong, other pressures may arise. A good student is urged to pursue “higher education” or may be lured with material advantages through secular employment. (1 Tim. 6:17, 20, 21) In school many are faced with pressures to conform in regard to dress and hairstyles. But young Witnesses have refused to dress like worldly youths, avoiding the adoption of dress standards that may be immodest and perhaps lead to immorality or cause them to

8. How can elders strengthen young people who are facing opposition to their efforts to follow Jehovah's way?

9. What scriptures have helped many young persons to give a fine witness for Christian neutrality?

10. How did the firm stand of a young schoolgirl result in a blessing?

11. (a) What other issues do young Witnesses face? (b) What pressures to compromise Bible principles have young ones faced, and how have these been overcome?

be classified with a rebel group. One young sister was teased about being an "untouchable" due to her modest dress, but she simply explained that, as one of Jehovah's witnesses, this was the standard she kept. The father of a family of seven children reported that they have had no problem with immodest clothing or extreme hairstyles, because the parents insisted on a certain length of hair and modesty in clothing style. This has actually worked for a protection to his family, as the dress of other children in the neighborhood appears weird to them now and they do not desire to associate with them.

¹² Similarly, these parents have been able to guide their children in the matter of entertainment by setting standards that are compatible with Bible principles in regard to music, reading and television. Such training is very helpful later on, when children are of an age when they choose their own entertainment, the kind of movies they will see, the songs they will sing, the things in which they will interest themselves.

¹³ Fear to displease Jehovah will also help to ward off pressures in school—the dares to do this or that, including the use of drugs. (Ps. 111:10) Many young Witnesses have found that their best protection against getting into difficulty or having bad associates is to share with others what they believe. If one is known as a witness of Jehovah, because of one's talking the truth from the Bible as one has opportunity, it will repel those who do not have a good heart or high standards, while it attracts those who do.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

¹⁴ Many young Witnesses have taken advantage of opportunities to share the good news at school, witnessing to teachers and

classmates. Some have based their school reports or comments in class discussion on the Bible or material from the Watch Tower Society's publications. They enjoy taking advantage of favorable opportunities to witness at school, sometimes presenting special magazines of interest or copies of the *Evolution* book, thousands of copies of which have been placed in this way. They have found the words of the psalmist true: "More insight than all my teachers I have come to have, because your reminders are a concern to me." —Ps. 119:99.

¹⁵ In the state of Arkansas, a Witness girl remembered an *Awake!* article on sewing that would be appropriate to her home-economics class, so she brought it to her teacher, who read it to the whole class. Later, she took other publications, and a study was started with the teacher. In Germany, a Witness youth did some studying on the subject of drugs, with a view to giving a witness during class discussion following a film showing on that subject. When the teacher asked for his observations as one of Jehovah's witnesses, he did such a fine job that he was permitted to speak to two classes for over a period of two hours, using the Scriptures and the publications he had brought. Later, he was invited to speak to sixteen classes for a period of four hours. All together, the audience included 691 students, and hundreds of magazines were placed.

¹⁶ In Cyprus, a nine-year-old Christian boy had the opportunity to give a fine witness when a question on what Jehovah's witnesses believe came up in class. After a few remarks by others he said that, since he was a Witness himself, he would be in the best position to answer the question and then proceeded to give an extemporaneous talk showing that Jehovah's

12, 13. How can Bible standards serve as a protection?
14. What have many young Witnesses done to share the truth at school? Include local experiences.

15. Relate an example of a witness given at school by an alert youngster.

16. How have others shared the truth with their classmates?

witnesses are Christians who worship Jehovah, since He is both the Creator and the Father of Jesus. He answered one objection by pointing out that not getting involved in armed conflict is in harmony with the angels' expression at Jesus' birth: "upon earth peace among men of goodwill." (Luke 2:13, 14; compare Matthew 11:25.) Another who took advantage of an opportunity to give a witness was a young Christian girl in California who was selected to speak as valedictorian for her graduating class. This witness of Jehovah spoke to 800 on the subject "My Hope for the Future," giving a wonderful witness about Bible promises. But, as she said, "I couldn't have done it without Jehovah's help."

¹⁷ Have you taken advantage of such opportunities to give a witness? You may have a wonderful privilege such as that enjoyed by a thirteen-year-old publisher of God's kingdom in Chile. Her teacher was telling the class that the Bible is a myth and that evolution is true, and so the publisher gave some comments to explain why she could not agree. Before long some of the students asked her to teach them the Bible, and soon she had a group of twenty-seven that she was instructing twice a week. She prepared carefully and even gave them written reviews. At the end of the year the school director agreed that these examination grades should be considered as a part of their regular schoolwork. Now three children from this group are coming to meetings. —Ps. 119:46-48.

¹⁸ Others have taken advantage of holiday seasons and school vacations to use their free time for the field service, and many who are baptized have shared in the temporary pioneer work. This serves to

build up their own spirituality, as well as to direct others to the congregation. Often this temporary pioneer service leads to full-time preaching service. As one young Christian girl who has enjoyed such full-time work for four years wrote recently: "I wish I could convey to all young brothers and sisters the joy there is to be had in serving Jehovah in your youth. Many young ones may feel that they will be tied down too much by taking up the full-time preaching work, but really it is quite to the contrary. You feel as though you have more freedom, for you know that you are doing what you should be doing, and when you do have time for yourself you can enjoy it with such a peace of mind and clear conscience."

¹⁹ The goals held before young ones by both their family and the congregation help them to walk in Jehovah's way. What goals do you have? Are you thinking about the full-time field service and doing Jehovah's will? Or are your goals simply directed toward personal interests, toward getting a job, buying a car, looking forward to marriage? While there is nothing wrong with such goals, in themselves alone they lack an important element that brings joy to life—the service of our Creator. They are similar to the desires of the people of Noah's day who "took no note" of Noah's warning "until the flood came and swept them all away." (Matt. 24:38-42) When children are given family encouragement to put Kingdom service first in their lives, they are happy to respond. This has been true for a family with five girls who were always encouraged to make pioneering their goal after finishing high school. Now three are sharing in this activity and their younger sisters have enjoyed temporary pioneering along with their parents.

17. (a) What part would desire and effort play in making possible such a fine experience as that of the young Witness in Chile? (b) How do young publishers giving a witness apply the thought of Psalm 119:46-48?

18. How have many enjoyed serving Jehovah during youth, and with what benefits?

19. What should be considered in setting our goals in life, and how can young ones be assisted in this regard?

²⁰ Regardless of whether one gets into the full-time preaching work or not, all can contribute upbuilding comments during meetings and have a share in the Theocratic Ministry School program at the Kingdom Hall. The efforts of the young ones to share in such ways are greatly appreciated by all. Others are happy to have a share in keeping the hall clean and presentable. Many youths have worked with older ones in the congregation on Kingdom Hall building projects, not only learning something about construction, but also enjoying upbuilding spiritual association with their brothers. And later there are opportunities to share in caring for the lawn and grounds or to help with things that need to be done on the inside, arranging the stage, handling the microphones, helping with cleaning or other duties. Many comment with appreciation on the fine conduct of young publishers at the Kingdom Hall. How pleasant it is to have young brothers and sisters greet visitors and introduce themselves or to have them express appreciation to a speaker for his talk! And since so many young children come to meetings, the fine example of those who have learned to conduct themselves courteously and pay attention during the program is very helpful in giving new or younger ones an example to imitate.

²¹ Many parents have testified to the happiness that it has brought them to see

20. What can young Witnesses do to help the congregation in ways that are much appreciated?

21. What privileges are before those walking in Jehovah's way?

their children progress spiritually, overcoming worldly pressures and reaching out for privileges of service, some becoming pioneers or missionaries, some taking up the circuit or district overseer's work, others becoming members of the Bethel family, and many being ministerial servants and elders in the congregations. Much of this progress can be attributed to the fine foundation that was laid when they were young. By cooperating in such family and congregational arrangements, youths can expect Jehovah to bless and reward them.—Prov. 22:6.

²² It is not easy to maintain integrity when one is under pressure from this system of things, but those who are determined to walk in Jehovah's way will have his blessing and backing. As Exodus 20:12 counsels: "Honor your father and your mother in order that your days may prove long upon the ground that Jehovah your God is giving you." These words were given to Israel before entering the Promised Land and therefore have special significance now as we approach the end of this system of things and see the new order of righteousness rapidly approaching. It is important for the young to respect and honor not only their father and mother, but also the heavenly Father, Jehovah, and his wifelike organization. (Prov. 1:8, 9) By doing so they may look forward with confidence to a place in that new system that Jehovah has promised. Yes, we do appreciate the young ones who are walking in Jehovah's way.—Prov. 3:1-7.

22. What modern application does Exodus 20:12 have?

Teaching a Teacher

● A thirteen-year-old girl in the Netherlands, while calling on people at their homes to share Bible truth with them, met her biology teacher and left with him the book *Did Man Get Here by Evolution or by Creation?* Thereafter, once a week, she studied this publication with him in a quiet corner of the school cafeteria during the lunch break. As a result, the fifty-year-old biology teacher ceased to be an upholder of the evolution theory.

Insight on the News

● Selling their blood for money is a way of life with thousands of people today. In Karachi, Pakistan, Dr. Fauzia Qureshi of Jinnah Hospital

"Liquid Russian Roulette"

says that 90 percent of the blood donors there are professionals—unemployed, infirm, often addicted to drugs, generally in bad health. Japan's drug companies rely on bought blood for half their supply, and "The Daily Yomiuri" of Tokyo says that "this may very well account for the fact that the incidence of serum hepatitis is still at the same level" as it was ten years ago.

The situation in the United States is similar. An article in "New York" magazine tells of professional donors who sell a pint of their blood as many as 444 times in a period of only four years. But whether it is bought or not, blood is potentially dangerous. "We estimate that 5,000 patients a year die from complications related to blood transfusions," Dr. Clive O. Callender, transplant director of Howard University Medical College, is quoted as saying. "The most lethal complication is hepatitis. We believe that 1,500 to 3,000 patients die each year from hepatitis related to blood transfusions." ("National Enquirer," May 6, 1975) For long it was thought that freezing serum for as much as a year would kill the hepatitis virus. Then, last year, a laboratory technician at Walter Reed Army Hospital thawed out a blood sample taken back in 1941. He found that it contained large quantities of hepatitis virus—still alive after thirty-three years. No wonder the article in "New York" magazine reporting on this calls blood transfusions "liquid Russian roulette."

● In view of the above, it is interesting to read of some developments in bloodless surgery reported on by the

Surgery Without Blood

"Arkansas Gazette." Dr. Carl L. Nelson, of the University of Arkansas Medical Center, has developed anesthetic techniques for performing joint-replacement operations (as of a hip joint) without blood transfusion. His methods are the results of his handling

cases of Jehovah's witnesses, who refuse blood transfusion on Scriptural grounds.—Acts 15:20, 28, 29.

One of his methods involves the use of sodium nitroprusside. It affects the minute muscles controlling the size of the veins and arteries. Whereas standard operating methods of replacing a hip joint may cause the loss of three or four units of blood, this method has reduced the loss to less than one unit, a situation that can be easily remedied by use of a nonblood "plasma expander," with no danger of serum hepatitis. Dr. Nelson has performed thirty such operations on Jehovah's witnesses in the past two years with no blood transfusions.

● With the close of the Vietnam conflict, the Los Angeles "Herald-Examiner" ran an article entitled "A Warless World," saying: "The world for the first time in about 45 years

World Without War?

is without a conflict that can be said to rank as a war." "But," it added, "real peace remains elusive and threats to it are plentiful."

The threats to peace are indeed multiple. Little more than a state of suspended beligerency prevails in the Middle East, including Cyprus, and the same is basically true of Korea. Guerrilla activity troubles Thailand. The Philippines still faces a smoldering Moslem rebellion. Guerrilla wars in Africa brought independence to a number of lands, but the liberation fighters have often become involved in power struggles among themselves. Latin America rarely sees a week pass without bloodspilling in guerrilla activities.

Perhaps the land most graphically illustrating the lack of true peace is Ireland. Hardly a block of the capital city of Belfast is not pockmarked by bombings in the six-year-old Catholic-Protestant conflict. Alongside City Hall, the Methodist church has a large sign popularly known as the "Scoreboard." It now lists more than 1,200 killed since 1969. Nine thousand others have been wounded or maimed, and property destruction runs into the millions of dollars.

Yes, as 1975 wears on, it becomes evident that mankind needs the rule of the "Prince of Peace" more than ever.—Isa. 9:6, 7.

GETTING BIBLE EVENTS IN ORDER

WITH the exception of information about creation, the Bible basically spans some 4,000 years of human history. Since so much time is covered, how can a person get in their proper order the events narrated? Try to relate the various happenings to such major events as the creation of Adam, the Flood, Israel's deliverance from Egypt, and the life of Christ.

Bible chronology places Adam's creation in the year 4026 B.C.E. From that time until the flood in 2370 B.C.E. there were three outstanding men of faith—Abel, Enoch and Noah. Because he was righteous, Abel was murdered by his brother Cain, Adam's first son. (1 John 3:12) Enoch, who was a contemporary of Adam for 308 years, prophesied about God's coming judgment against all the wicked. His great-grandson Noah was born about 126 years after Adam's death.—Gen. 5:3-29; Jude 14, 15.

In Noah's time many angels forsook their proper dwelling place in the heavens, materialized, lived as husbands with women, and fathered hybrid offspring, the Nephilim. (Gen. 6:1-4; 1 Pet. 3:19, 20; Jude 6) In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, the flood brought an end to the ungodly world of mankind. As the waters overwhelmed the earth, Noah, his wife, his three sons (Shem, Ham and Japheth) and their wives were safe inside the ark that had been built at God's direction.—Gen. 7:11, 17-21.

It was not long after the Flood that Ham's grandson Nimrod started a rebellion against God. Nimrod set himself up as the first king and evidently instigated the building of Babel and its tower. Jehovah God frustrated Nimrod's project by confusing the language of the builders of Babel. (Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1-4) This happened in the days of Peleg, sometime between 2269 B.C.E. and 2030 B.C.E. (Gen. 10:25) Noah was still alive, as he lived for 350 years after the flood.—Gen. 9:28.

About seventy-seven years after Noah's death, Abraham, at the age of seventy-five,

entered Canaan, the land that Jehovah God promised to give to Abraham's descendants. (Gen. 12:4-7) At that time, in 1943 B.C.E., Jehovah's covenant promise to Abraham took effect.

Abraham, at the age of one hundred, became the father to Isaac by his beloved wife Sarah. (Gen. 21:5) About ten years after Noah's son Shem died, Isaac, at the age of sixty, became father to twin boys, Esau and Jacob. (Gen. 11:10, 11; 25:26) Jacob fathered twelve sons. One of these, Joseph, through unusual circumstances, became food administrator in Egypt. Due to famine conditions in Canaan, Jacob's entire household became alien residents in Egypt. Finally, Jacob's descendants, the Israelites, were enslaved, but Jehovah God, by means of Moses, led them out of Egypt to Mount Sinai, where they received the Law covenant 430 years after the special covenant was made with their forefather Abraham.—Gen. 45:26; 47:1, 2; Ex. 1:8-11; 13:19-21; 19:1; Gal. 3:17.

After wandering in the wilderness for forty years, the Israelites, under Joshua's leadership, entered Canaan in 1473 B.C.E. (Deut. 29:5; 31:1-3; Josh. 5:6, 7) The major conquest of the land occupied some six years. (Josh. 14:10-12) For about 350 years thereafter judges chosen by God administered Israel's affairs. During the lifetime of Samuel, the last of these judges, Saul of the tribe of Benjamin, began his reign as king. With the end of his forty-year rule, David started to reign at Hebron over the tribe of Judah, while Saul's son Ish-bosheth ruled from Mahanaim over the rest of Israel. (2 Sam. 2:2, 3, 8-10; Acts 13:20-22) Seven and a half years after David began ruling over Judah he became king over all Israel. His total years of rulership amounted to forty. David's son Solomon succeeded him and likewise reigned for forty years.—2 Sam. 2:11; 1 Ki. 2:11; 11:42.

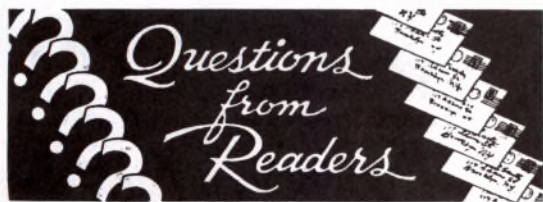
During the reign of Solomon's son Rehoboam, in 997 B.C.E., ten tribes revolted and made Jeroboam their king. However, the tribes of

Benjamin and Judah, as well as the Levites, stuck with the royal house of David. The ten-tribe kingdom got off to a bad start when King Jeroboam introduced calf worship. During all the years that passed until the fall to the Assyrians of the ten-tribe kingdom in 740 B.C.E., this plunge into idolatry was never reversed. (1 Ki. 12:16-24, 28-30; 2 Ki. 17:1-6) About 133 years later, in 607 B.C.E., the Babylonians conquered the two-tribe kingdom.—2 Ki. 25:1-9.

In 537 B.C.E., after a seventy-year Babylonian exile, a remnant of Jews returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. But it was not until 455 B.C.E., under the direction of Nehemiah, that the wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt. The writing of the Hebrew Scriptures came to a conclusion after 443 B.C.E., when the prophet Malachi committed his prophecy to writing. That prophecy pointed forward to the coming of God's messenger to prepare a people for the "messenger of the covenant," the Messiah.—Mal. 3:1.

With the announcements about the births of both messengers, the Christian Greek Scriptures pick up the thread of sacred history. In the spring of 2 B.C.E., John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah or Christ, was born. Six months later, Mary gave birth to the foretold Christ, Jesus. The three-and-a-half-year earthly ministry of Jesus extended from the fall of 29 C.E. and culminated with his death in the spring of 33 C.E. After his resurrection and ascension to heaven, his disciples continued the work he had started. Finally, about 98 C.E., the last surviving apostle, John, finished the Bible writing. In that year he probably wrote First, Second and Third John as well as his Gospel account. About two years earlier he had penned the book of Revelation.

The above illustrates how one can get Bible events in order. As you read the Bible, try to determine the relationship in time of one event to another. This can make the history of the Holy Scriptures more meaningful to you.



● What viewpoint does God's Word indicate that Christians should have toward suicide?

Jehovah as the source of life has decreed that human life is precious, sacred. (Gen. 9:5; Ps. 36:9) Hence, suicide, which means the taking of one's own life, or killing oneself, is condemned by the Bible. Such intentional act is self-murder. (Ex. 20:13; 1 John 3:15) The few suicides mentioned in the Bible are of those who were unfaithful to Jehovah and who failed to consider that their lives really belonged to God.—1 Sam. 31:4; 2 Sam. 17:5-14, 23; 1 Ki. 16:18; Matt. 27:5.

One who intentionally takes his own life does so in utter disregard for the sacredness of life; he becomes bloodguilty. When one commits suicide while in possession of one's mental faculties, this shows one to be void of morality, lacking faith, having no fear of God. It is a

cowardly act, where one refuses to face up to the problems and responsibilities of life. If the person claimed to be a true Christian, the act would violently break his relationship with Jehovah. Suicide may be the giving in to pressures from demons who encourage self-destruction. (Matt. 17:14-18) This extremely self-centered act of murder manifests no love for one's surviving family members, no love for one's congregation and friends, and no love even for the surrounding community, as it brings shame and distress of mind upon all associates.—Mark 12:31.

In most countries it must be a public officer, sometimes called a coroner, who officially reports the cause of death. While a report of suicide may be submitted by the officer, yet it may not be in harmony with the facts. For example, in one such report of suicide, three weeks later clear evidence came to light that the death was due to a freak accident. So, circumstances must always be taken into consideration. Was there mental illness involved? Was the person in his right mind? Was he culpable or blameworthy? In many instances it is difficult to get to know all the facts.

What, then, should be the attitude of members of a Christian congregation as to attend-

ing funerals of reported suicides who may have been associated with the congregation? What about an elder who has received a request to conduct such a funeral? Where death appears to have been accidental, even though it was reported as a suicide or may have involved mental illness, the consciences of some members of the congregation may permit them to attend the funeral to comfort the bereaved ones. Also, it is left up to the personal decision of an elder whether he will conduct such a funeral upon request. However, the congregation may prefer not to sponsor such a funeral publicly or to have it in the Kingdom Hall because of the effect it may have on the uninformed community.

On the other hand, where it is a clearly established suicide, members of the congregation and elders may desire not to become involved in the funeral. In such cases arrangements would be left to the family itself for a private funeral where some member of the household might say a few words for the sake

of the relatives. Furthermore, some may not desire to attend a funeral of one who is believed to have committed suicide where the funeral is conducted by someone other than a member of the congregation or by the funeral director himself at the request of the family.

As lovers of righteousness we leave the matter in the hands of a merciful, all-wise God as to any possible future for some of those driven to suicide. We who are lovers of life, holding every day of life sacred, endeavor to conduct our daily affairs and associations in a way that will merit the approval of the One who gave life to humankind.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

August 17: Applying God's Word in Our Own Families. Page 433. Songs to Be Used: 60, 115.

August 24: We Appreciate the Young Ones Who Are Walking in Jehovah's Way. Page 439. Songs to Be Used: 73, 116.

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