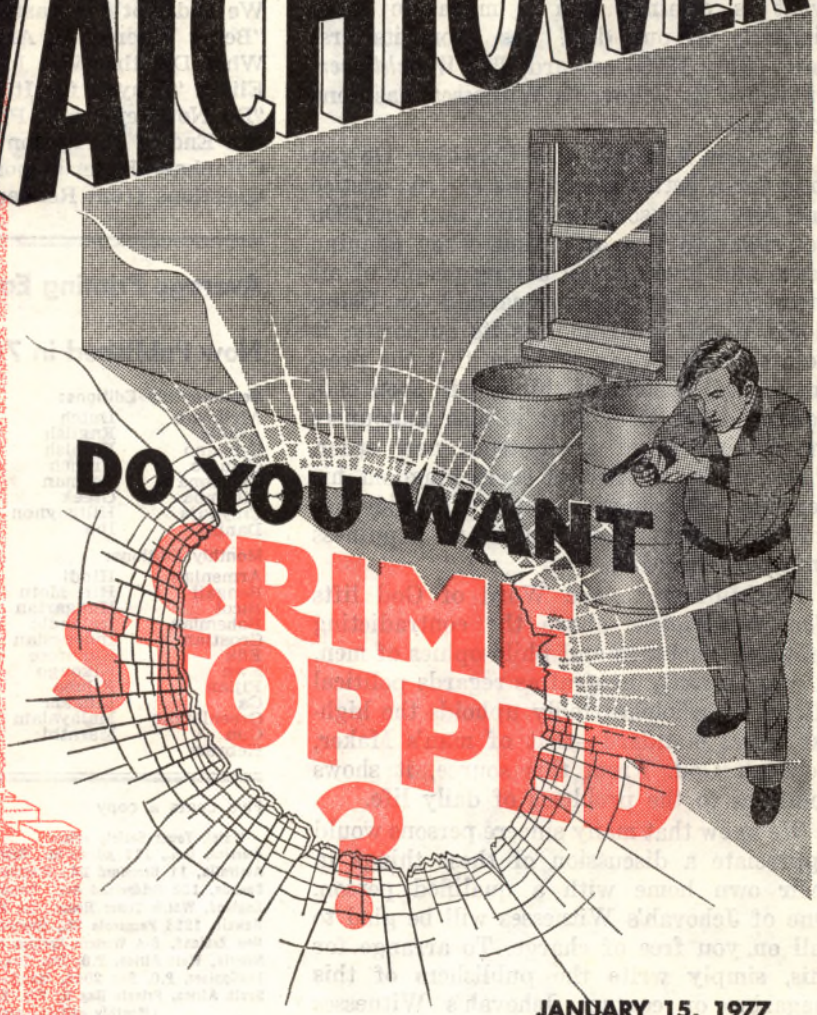
The WATCHTOWER



DO YOU WANT CRIME STOPPED?

JANUARY 15, 1977

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

January 15, 1977
Vol. 98, Number 2

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. One 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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DO YOU WANT CRIME STOPPED?

ALL decent people will answer YES to that question. They certainly do want to see an end to crime.

So did an elderly couple in a large American city. They were in their late seventies, retired, had enough materially. But then—they committed suicide!

Why? The note left behind explained: "We don't want to live in fear anymore." They had been assaulted and robbed a few weeks earlier. Even before that, they had been the victims of crime. Feeling too old to move and not wanting to live in fear, they took their own lives.

That is an extreme reaction to the fear of crime, true. But it does show what has happened in recent years. Crime and violence have increased enormously nearly everywhere in the world. As an example, in the United States over eleven million *major* crimes are committed each year. Millions more go unreported.

What is the answer? Some people feel that better laws could help. Yet, there are thousands of good laws already on the books, in all countries, and newer laws are enacted every year. But crime and violence keep spreading.

Other people feel that more police, judges and jails are the answer. But while these agencies have increased in size, so has crime. Indeed, crime has infiltrated even these agencies. Corrupt officials in them often make it difficult for honest law-enforcement agents to do their work.

Could some new methods of detecting crimes be an answer? The sad fact is that for every new method introduced, the criminal mind goes to work to devise ways of circumventing it.

Will ending poverty stop crime? If poverty were the main cause, why would the highest crime rates be found in the wealthiest nations? Crime often increases faster in wealthier suburbs than in poorer cities. People at all levels of society commit crimes, not just the poor.

Consider this: If human agencies could have stopped crime, would they not have done so by this time? Is it realistic to look to humans for the answers?

God's inspired Word, the Bible, wisely counsels: "Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs." (Ps. 146:3) In whom, then? That same Word of God answers: "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding."—Prov. 3:5.

But how can trusting God have anything to do with stopping crime? For one thing, God's Word helps us to understand

clearly why there is this upsurge of crime and violence in our time. The Bible tells us: "But know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here." Yes, all the evidence in fulfillment of Bible prophecies shows that we live at the end of an era. We live at the time foretold when more and more people would be lawbreakers, lacking self-control, fierce, headstrong, lovers of money, ungodly, when children would be disobedient to parents, when, as prophecy says, "wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse."—2 Tim. 3:1-13.

What we see taking place in our time is the clear evidence that this world is in the foretold stage of moral breakdown that would immediately precede its end. World conditions shout out that this present system of things is nearing its finish.

However, the Bible also tells us that there is more to the increase of crime in our day than just human involvement. If only humans were involved, they might reasonably have more success in stopping crime. But God's Word tells us that there are also superhuman forces at work. Who? Satan the Devil and his demons.

The Devil? Demons? True, many people do not believe that they exist, because these forces cannot be seen. But such persons do believe in unseen forces such as wind, electricity, gravity, heat, cold, love, hate. We know that these exist because we can see their effects.

So, too, we know that wicked spirit forces exist because we see the effects of their activity. The vast increase of crime and violence everywhere is a direct result of their bad influence on the human family. So vast is that influence that the Bible calls Satan "the god of this system of things."—2 Cor. 4:4.

Besides, who is in the best position to tell us about the existence of such unseen powers? Who has more knowledge of Satan's activity—humans, or the Almighty Creator of the universe?

But why has demonic influence increased so much in *our* day? Because the time limit that God has allowed for wickedness draws near to its end. Satan and the demons know that they are in their "last days." That is why the Bible says of our generation: "Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time."—Rev. 12:12.

However, the Bible does much more than inform us about why crime spreads. It also tells us how it will be stopped. Soon God's time limit for permitting wickedness will end, and he will demonstrate his power and love for what is right, by cleansing the entire earth of crime. "As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it." Also, the main instigator of crime, Satan the Devil, will be removed: "The God who gives peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly."—Prov. 2:22; Rom. 16:20.

"My people must dwell in a peaceful abiding place and in residences of full confidence and in undisturbed resting-places." —Isa. 32:18.

With all criminal elements taken out of the way, a new order of total peace and security will be ushered in. And when this comes to pass, what will life be *like*? "They will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble," says God's promise.—Mic. 4:4.

So, do you want crime stopped? It will be, in God's way—and soon. Do you want to benefit? Then you need to find out what to do to meet God's requirements for life in his incoming crime-free new order.

JEHOVAH —A Lover of Justice

THE Most High loves justice and righteousness. (Ps. 33:5) His servant Elihu declared: "As for the Almighty, we have not found him out; he is exalted in power, and justice and abundance of righteousness he will not belittle."—Job 37:23.

Because of having the highest regard for justice, Jehovah God does not overlook oppression. Oppressors cannot escape the outworking of God's unchangeable law: "Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap." (Gal. 6:7) At times Jehovah has maneuvered matters in such a way that practicers of injustice experienced calamity. So that they would know for a certainty that the judgment was from him, the Almighty announced it beforehand through his prophets.

That was the case with Eliakim of the seventh century B.C.E. His father, King Josiah, died in battle while trying to stop the Egyptian armies under Pharaoh Nechoh from passing through Samaria on the way to fight the Babylonian conqueror of Assyria. The people of Judah then made Eliakim's younger brother, Jehoahaz, king. About three months later Pharaoh Nechoh took Jehoahaz as a captive to Egypt and made twenty-five-year-old Eliakim *king*, changing his name to Jehoiakim. Besides this, Nechoh imposed a heavy fine on the kingdom of Judah. Jehoiakim exacted this from his subjects by taxation.—2 Ki. 23:34-36; 2 Chron. 36:1-5.

Instead of at least giving some consideration to the heavy burden under which his subjects were laboring, Jehoiakim made plans to build a new, luxurious palace. Doubtless to keep down the cost, he oppressively withheld the workers' wages. Jehoiakim's high-handed action did not escape the notice of Jehovah God. He sent Jeremiah the prophet to the house of the king. The record of this is found in Jeremiah chapter 22.

Though Jehoiakim deserved to be punished, mercifully Jehovah God provided the king with an opportunity to correct matters. Jeremiah was instructed to say: "This is what Jehovah has said: 'Render justice and righteousness, and deliver the one that is being robbed out of the hand of the defrauder; and do not maltreat any alien resident, fatherless boy or widow. Do them no violence. And do not shed any innocent blood in this place. For if you will by all means perform this word, there will also certainly come in through the gates of this house the kings sitting for David upon his throne, riding in chariots and on horses, he with his servants and his people.' " (Jer. 22:3, 4) So, by changing his course of action, Jehoiakim could contribute toward the continuance of rulership by men in the royal house of David.

"But," the prophetic word to Jehoiakim continued, " 'if you will not obey these words, by myself I do swear,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'that this house will become a mere devastated place.' For this is what Jehovah has said concerning the house of the king of Judah, 'You are as Gilead to me, the head of Lebanon. Assuredly I shall make you a wilderness; as for the cities, not one will be inhabited.' " —Jer. 22:5, 6.

By pursuing a disobedient course, Jehoiakim was, therefore, sure to bring ruin to himself as well as to his kingdom. To

Jehovah God, the "house of the king of Judah," evidently the palace complex, was 'like Gilead,' "the head of Lebanon." Situated on a height, the palace had a lofty and magnificent location. It was like mountainous Lebanon, with its proud cedars. Besides, cedarwood was used extensively in the construction of royal edifices. (1 Ki. 7:2-12) Jehoiakim himself had used cedar paneling for his palace. So the palace area was like a magnificent forest of cedar buildings—like heavily wooded Gilead and Lebanon. Yet that magnificent palace complex was to come to nothingness. In fact, all the cities of Judah were to become a desolate waste. Did it happen? Did Jehoiakim's injustices catch up with him?

Yes, the Chaldeans came against Jerusalem. As for Jehoiakim, the prophetic word was: "With the burial of a he-ass he will be buried, with a dragging about and a throwing away, out beyond the gates of Jerusalem." (Jer. 22:19) Ancient tradition (recorded by the first-century Jewish historian Josephus) has it that Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, killed Jehoiakim and commanded that his dead body be thrown outside Jerusalem's walls. Whether this tradition is correct or not, Jehoiakim did not survive the Babylonian siege. He did not receive a decent burial. His corpse lay unattended outside the gates of Jerusalem, exposed to the heat by day and the cold at night. His son Jehoiachin ruled for about three months after his death; he finally capitulated to the siege and was himself taken into Babylonian exile.—2 Ki. 24:11, 12.

Thereafter Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah, ruled from Jerusalem as a vassal of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. Eventually, Zedekiah revolted, and the Babylonian armies came back to Jerusalem. (2 Ki. 24:20; 25:1) As had been foretold, Jerusalem and the entire land of Judah were desolated. Archaeological findings confirm the fulfillment of the prophetic word through Jeremiah. Says W. F. Albright in *The Bible After Twenty Years of Archaeology:* "Excavation and surface exploration in Judah have proved that the towns of Judah were not only completely destroyed by the Chaldeans in their two invasions, but were not reoccupied for generations —often never again in history."—P. 546.

So the shameful record of injustice caught up with Jehoiakim and his subjects. Fulfilled were the words: "O you who are dwelling in Lebanon [designating Jerusalem, with its lofty location and cedarwood buildings] being nested in the cedars, how you will certainly sigh when there come to you birth pangs, the labor pains like those of a woman giving birth!" (Jer. 22:23) From a very lofty position the inhabitants of Jerusalem were indeed brought low. Their beautiful capital city was destroyed and many of the survivors were taken into Babylonian exile.

Truly Jehovah God had not overlooked the injustices that had been committed in the kingdom of Judah. He being a God of unchanging moral standards, we can rest assured that he will not indefinitely tolerate the lawlessness of today. In fact, Bible prophecy points to our time as the "last days" for the ungodly world. (2 Tim. 3: 1-5) So we need to exercise care not to follow the practices of this world and become disapproved from the standpoint of Jehovah, the God who loves justice.

IN COMING ISSUES

- **Do You Appreciate God's Patience Toward You?**
- **"Have Tender Affection for One Another."**
- **Justice for All —How? When?**

Insight on the News

Evolution 'Curbs Thinking'

● A New York educator recently wrote to "Science News" magazine of his frustration because graduate zoology students would not think about the "why" of evolution. "Though I spent nearly an hour trying, in various ways, to get them to consider the content of the question," he writes, "they refused unanimously to answer it, saying that the word 'why' brought in teleology [the study of evidences of design (implying God) in nature]."

Though this instructor himself believes in evolution, he complains: "The word 'why' had simply evoked the concept of teleology in a manner which prevented further thinking about the matter. I question the value of scientific schooling that produces such rigid associations between terms and concepts. Is it really necessary? May it not do more harm than good by curbing creative thought on scientific problems?"

Hence, students of science are often taught to close their minds tightly on this fundamental issue. Their thinking becomes as futile as that of ancient pagans described in the Bible: "Ever since the creation of the world [God's] invisible nature . . . has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; . . . they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened."—Rom. 1:20, 21, "Revised Standard Version."

What Is True Loyalty?

● A columnist for the Caribbean's Barbados "Advocate-News" questioned the nationalistic actions of certain African rulers against Jehovah's Witnesses: "My loyalty to the country is demonstrated not in singing and shouting and saluting," he declared, "but by being diligent and upright in the performance of my civic duties and work, thus contributing to the strength of the nation. In fact, it may well be that wider diffusion of the values by which the Jehovah's Witnesses live throughout Africa could well be an inspiration to the countries therein."

Similarly, not long after Argentina's 35,000 Jehovah's Witnesses were banned from practicing their religion, a Buenos Aires "Herald" columnist observed that such ban is "certain to darken the government's image both at home and abroad." He noted that by its action the government had overturned a "wise [favorable] ruling by a local judge and earn[ed] itself a name for religious bigotry." Witness "beliefs are only offensive to those who think patriotism is chiefly a matter of flag-waving and anthem-singing, not a matter of the heart," he wrote.

The "Herald" also said of the Witnesses: "Hitler and Stalin found them indigestible, and treated them abominably. Lots of other dictators yearning for conformity have tried to suppress them. And failed. They will be with us when the members of this government are stone monuments."

Splitting "What God Has Yoked"

● "Dearly beloved," begins a new Methodist ritual for divorced couples, "we are gathered here to solemnize the end of one time in [the couple's] lives and the beginning of another." With the recent publication of a book of church rituals, "the United Methodist Church [became] the first Christian denomination to advocate such ceremonies to ease the pain of a marriage breakup," reports the Los Angeles "Times."

The ritual book suggests that after noting the general reason for this couple's divorce, the clergyman could go on to say: "They have resolved, therefore, to sever the ties of their marriage, though not of their mutual love and honor." Wedding rings are transferred to the right hand to symbolize "freedom."

Whether the divorce was obtained merely to gain such "freedom" or to dissolve the marriage on Biblically authorized grounds (adultery), does not such a ritual actually constitute a religious blessing on adultery, past or future? The new ritual book claims that Methodists are merely recognizing the reality of divorce. But have they faced the true "reality"—their failure to help church members to apply Bible principles that can keep marriages together? Instead, they openly flout Jesus' command: "What God has yoked together let no man put apart."—Matt. 19:6.

FACING THE "GREAT TRIBULATION" WITH CONFIDENCE

"Jehovah himself will prove to be, in effect, your confidence."—Prov. 3:26.

ALL mankind are very much interested in the future. To be concerned about what has not yet occurred is a natural, human trait. People may be working hard in their day-to-day activity, but so often it is with the future in view. They are constantly laying plans for the future. Their longings and desires, their expectations and hopes are in large measure based on what they believe the future will bring with it. To be happy, they need to have confidence about the future.

[2] This human desire to know about coming events before they occur causes many people to consult those claiming to know the future—the spirit mediums, soothsayers and astrologers. More and more persons are consulting their horoscopes and Ouija boards in an effort to learn what the demon-inspired oracles say will happen.

Should you consult a fortune-teller to learn the future . . .

[3] There is one very great difference, however, between those who serve Jehovah and those who do not, when it comes to this inborn desire to know the future. Never do God's people go to the fortune-tellers, stargazers or spiritistic prognosticators to learn of coming events. Neither do they consult other demonic sources in an effort to know the future. There is a very good reason why they do not.

[4] It was in the ninth century before this Common Era that the following truth was recorded in the Bible by the prophet Amos, in chapter 3, verse 7: "The Sovereign Lord Jehovah will not do a thing unless he has revealed his confidential matter to his servants the prophets." These prophets, in turn, relate to Jehovah's people in general what to expect in the future, and this is the basis for the confidence of Jehovah's people.

[5] Consider the situation in the city of Jerusalem in the first cen-

. . . or should you study the Bible, the Word of God?

1, 2. What interest do all people have, and how do many display it?
3. In respect to the future, how do Jehovah's Witnesses differ from other people? (Deut. 18:10-12)
4. What is the basis for the great confidence Jehovah's people have when viewing the future?
5, 6. (a) Describe the situation in Jerusalem in the first century C.E. (b) But why did Christians of that time not entertain the same viewpoint as that of others?

tury of our Common Era. The people in general and their leaders acknowledged that conditions were far from satisfactory. Yet, what were the wise men and leaders of the people predicting about the future? Some were quite satisfied with the *status quo* and would be happy for it to continue, with little change. Others advocated revolt and revolution against the rule of Rome and its taxations, claiming that such a road would lead to greater freedom, peace and prosperity. None, however, of that city's wise men, advisers and counselors were foretelling that Jerusalem would be completely destroyed in a great tribulation —and within that generation. Any such eventuality was farthest from their thoughts!—Acts 5:36, 37.

[6] Did first-century Christians put their trust and confidence in those worldly-wise men and their predictions? No, not at all. Jehovah had revealed ahead of time to his Great Prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ, something altogether different, something that He had determined would shortly occur within that generation. That true prophet of God sounded the warning, saying: "The days will come upon you [Jerusalem] when your enemies will build around you a fortification with pointed stakes and will encircle you and distress you from every side, . . . and they will not leave a stone upon a stone in you." Indeed, "there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again." —Luke 19:41-44; Matt. 23:36-38; 24:2, 21.

[7] In the face of such a coming tribulation, did Christians living in and around Jerusalem have any reason to face that foretold disaster with confidence? They certainly did. For God's true Prophet also told them how they would know when it was about to occur and what action they should take to ensure their safety. He said: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then . . . let those in Judea begin fleeing."—Luke 21:20, 21.

7. How were Christians living in the vicinity of Jerusalem able to face the future with confidence?

PARALLEL SITUATION TODAY

[8] Today there is a parallel situation in Christendom's religions—forming a hypocritical organization that corresponds to the unfaithful city of Jerusalem. People of the modern world consult their political soothsayers, economic advisers, religious prophets, as well as their wise men of science, and they get back in answer all kinds of predictions as to what the future will bring with it. While these advisers are generally quick to acknowledge that the present state of affairs is deplorable, at the same time they predict that some day, somehow, in some way "better times are coming."

[9] However, do *you* put your faith and confidence in the speculations of these human advisers? Not if you are a firm believer in the Bible and its prophecies. And why not? Because these opinions of men are not what Jehovah has revealed by the mouth of his prophets concerning the near future.

[10] For years Jehovah's Christian witnesses have been most active in telling others what the Bible says about inescapable coming events. From the "housetops," so to speak, God's people have proclaimed to all the world what Jehovah has revealed concerning the coming "great tribulation," which climaxes in the "war of the great day of God the Almighty," at the place "called in Hebrew Har–Magedon."—Matt. 10:26, 27; Rev. 7:14; 16:14, 16.

[11] Make no mistake about this war at the place called Har–Magedon. This will

8. What parallel conditions exist in Christendom today?
9. Do *you* put your confidence in the predictions of world leaders?
10. How have Jehovah's Witnesses shown their confidence in the Bible's predicted future?
11. What erroneous opinion of the future catastrophic destruction do many have?

not be an all-out nuclear war among the nations in which they attempt to deploy their present stockpile of nuclear bombs —said to be large enough to kill off the world's population of around 4,000,000,000 many times over! Such a nuclear war is not the "great tribulation" of the future that Jehovah warns us about.

12 Well, does this fact reduce the danger threatening mankind in general? As in any war, this depends entirely on which side we stand, the winning side or the losing side. To be sure, the world of mankind, alienated as they are from Jehovah, have every reason to fear the war at Har–Magedon. This is because they have willingly or unwillingly aligned themselves with "the kings of the entire inhabited earth" and are therefore being gathered along with such kings to the "war of the great day of God the Almighty."

13 But not so Jehovah's faithful people! As individuals they have taken their stand solidly, uncompromisingly on the winning side, God's side. They are therefore able to face the foretold "great tribulation" with full confidence and trust in Jehovah.

THE GREATEST OF ALL TRIBULATIONS

14 How great will this coming unparalleled tribulation of the future be? Using the tribulation upon Jerusalem in the year 70 C.E. as a prophetic illustration, Jesus said it would be one "such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now," and then, lest we minimize it, he added for emphasis, "nor will occur again." Well, that means a tribulation greater than World Wars I and II in which tens of millions of people lost their lives. Yes, greater than the globe-enveloping deluge of Noah's day that wiped out an entire world system!

12, 13. How does the popular opinion of most people contrast with that of Jehovah's Witnesses, and why?
14. According to Matthew 24:21, how great is the "tribulation" that is coming upon the world in the near future?

THE BIBLE'S SCHEDULE OF COMING EVENTS

1. **Destruction of "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false religion.—Rev. 18:4-8.**
2. **'Crushing of all human kingdoms.'—Dan. 2:44.**
3. **Binding and abyssing of Satan and his demons.—Rev. 20:1, 2.**
4. **Incoming of God's new order, with true happiness for mankind.—Rev. 21:4, 5.**

15 What magnitude, then, will this coming "great tribulation" have that will make it surpass all other tribulations of human history? First of all, it will have the capability of destroying the whole world empire of false religion, both Christendom's and heathendom's religious organizations, called in the Bible mystic "Babylon the Great"! (Rev. 17:5) This certainly will be shocking beyond comprehension to earth's inhabitants who have supported this "mother of the harlots," Babylon the Great.

16 But that humiliation and destruction of the world empire of false religion is only Part I of the "great tribulation." As Part II, the "kings of the earth who committed fornication with [Babylon the Great] and lived [with her] in shameless luxury" will be dealt with next, and they shall not escape destruction. (Rev. 18:9; 16:14) Further, the prophecy of Revela-

15. What is a particularly shocking aspect of the "great tribulation," and why so?
16. What other feature of the coming "tribulation" does Revelation 19:19-21 foretell?

tion chapter 19, verses 19-21, says: "The wild beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage the war with the one seated on the horse [the glorified Lord Jesus Christ] and with his army. . . . While still alive, they . . . were hurled into the fiery lake that burns with sulphur." Chapter 20, verse 14, explains that "this means the second death, the lake of fire."

17 Yes, it will be on a scale even vaster than that described by another prophet of Jehovah, Jeremiah, who wrote of a tribulation then approaching: "Those slain by Jehovah will certainly come to be in that day from one end of the earth clear to the other end of the earth. They will not be bewailed, neither will they be gathered up or be buried. As manure on the surface of the ground they will become." —Jer. 25:33.

18 But there is still something else to follow that "great tribulation," something that did not even occur after the first world, 'the world of Noah's day,' was destroyed. This will be the seizing and binding of Satan and his demons with a "great chain," and the hurling of them into an abyss.—Rev. 20:1-3.

19 Well, now, do you believe Jehovah and what he has said by the mouth of these prophets concerning this "great tribulation" that all mankind is facing? If so, do you face this inescapable tribulation with strong assurance and a complete confidence? It is one thing to say that you do; it is quite another matter to prove it by your actions.

20 Consider briefly some of the examples of those who had complete trust in Jehovah in the past, and notice particularly how these individuals demonstrated their confidence.

17. How does Jeremiah 25:31-33 give a sample idea of what will come in this greatest of all tribulations?
18. What will follow this "tribulation," making it far different from any of the past?
19, 20. (a) How are you facing the greatest of all tribulations? (b) In what way may you really show a confident attitude?

PAST DISPLAYS OF CONFIDENCE

21 Noah proved that he had complete reliance on Jehovah's warning by the way he lived day by day. He did not physically isolate himself, although he remained politically and socially separate from the system. At the same time he worked hard at his God-given assignment of constructing the ark, and in preaching to others and warning them of impending destruction. And all the time he demonstrated that he had absolute trust and confidence in the ability of his God, Jehovah, to protect and deliver him during this greatest time of trouble ever experienced until then.—Gen. 6:9; Heb. 11:7; 2 Pet. 2:5.

22 There was also Lot. Warned ahead of time to leave Sodom, and at the urging of angelic forces, four of that household left the city, but only three of them lived to tell about it. Why only three instead of four? Jesus answered: "Remember the wife of Lot." Contrary to instructions, when in flight out of Sodom she looked back, evidently for some selfish reason. —Gen. 19:1-26; Luke 17:32; 2 Pet. 2:7, 8.

23 In those instances only a few persons survived. But Jehovah can just as easily deliver a great multitude of persons to a place of safety. This was demonstrated in the case of the nation of Israel, and their companions, at the Red Sea. *"By faith* they passed through the Red Sea as on dry land," the apostle Paul says. Their faith and confidence were demonstrated by their obedience, as we read: "So all the sons of Israel did just as Jehovah had commanded Moses and Aaron. They did just so."—Heb. 11:29; Ex. 12:37, 38, 50.

21. Describe how Noah and his family demonstrated confidence in Jehovah's word.
22. What important lessons can we learn from those who left wicked Sodom before it was destroyed?
23. What was necessary on the part of the Israelites and their companions at the Red Sea and that resulted in their deliverance?

SOME ESCAPED "TRIBULATION" ON JERUSALEM

[24] Faithful Christians in the sixties of the first century had to have similar confidence in Jehovah and his prophet, the Greater Moses, the Lord Jesus Christ. They had to act also on faith and show that they really believed what they had been told ahead of time about the coming destruction of Jerusalem. The warning was that, when they saw a "disgusting thing that causes desolation standing where it ought not," then they were to waste no time in getting out of Jerusalem and the surrounding province of Judea.—Mark 13:14.

[25] In time, this "sign" became so plain to the discerning ones! There it was, the "disgusting" Roman army under General Cestius Gallus surrounding the holy city of Jerusalem, "standing where it ought not," and it even began to undermine the very walls of the temple area itself!—Matt. 24:15.

[26] So as soon as those Roman forces temporarily withdrew from their siege —suddenly, unexpectedly and with no apparent military reason—believing Christians made haste to get out before the Romans returned. Those without faith and confidence in Jesus' prophetic warning hung on until the invading armies under General Titus again laid siege to the city, bringing death to the great majority, and slavery to the few that survived.

[27] Faith no less than that of first-century Christians is shown today by those having implicit confidence in the written Word of God. They saw how the churches of Christendom hailed the League of Nations as "the political expression of the kingdom of God on earth," and now they see the United Nations being idolized as man's 'last hope of peace.' They see radical elements of the U.N. teaming up in readiness to invade Christendom's realm of operation and supposed rights, *her* "holy place." There it is, the United Nations, acting in defiance of the Prince of Peace, earth's rightful Ruler, the Lord Jesus Christ, and poised also to stand in the place that Christendom considers "holy"! (Rev. 11:15; 12:10) Yes, indeed, the United Nations is the modern-day "disgusting thing that causes desolation" to Christendom in the coming "great tribulation."—Matt. 24:15, 21.

Christians made haste to get out of Jerusalem, confident in Jesus' warning

[28] Seeing this persistent obvious "sign," those with confidence in Jehovah's Word have gotten out of Babylon the Great, the principal part of which is Christendom.—Rev. 18:4, 5.

24-26. (a) What was required of Christians living in Jerusalem in the sixties of the first century C.E.? (b) Relate the succession of events showing that those whose confidence was in the divine warning were not disappointed.

27, 28. In a parallel situation today, how are followers of the King, Christ Jesus, exercising complete confidence in Jehovah?

[29] If you are one of the more than 2,000,000 who have already fled Babylon the Great before her destruction and have become one of Jehovah's clean worshipers, then you are in a position similar to that of Noah's family who entered the ark, like that of Lot and his two daughters who fled Sodom, like that of the Israelites who left Egypt under the command of Moses. Yes, you are like the first-century Christians who escaped from Jerusalem before its destruction.

29. With deliverance from impending destruction in mind, what steps have more than 2,000,000 persons taken?

[30] But finding yourself in such a favorable position at present, how will you face the future? Will you remain in the ark-like spiritual paradise into which you have entered? Having left the world empire of false religion, do you look forward to the destruction of Babylon the Great in the coming "great tribulation" with eager anticipation and with total confidence? As you ponder these questions, please consider the following article.

30. What questions is it appropriate to ask yourself?

BUILD UP YOUR CONFIDENCE NOW FOR THE FUTURE

WE ARE now deep in the twentieth century, with every indication that the present system of things will pass away with this fading generation. Men alienated from God have suffered an increase in fear with the passing of each succeeding decade of this century. This is just as the great prophet Jesus Christ said it would be. In reply to the question: "When will these things actually be, and what will be the sign when these things are destined to occur?" he answered, saying among other things, "There will be . . . on the earth anguish of nations, not knowing the way out . . . while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth." —Luke 21:7, 25, 26.

[2] It is therefore not surprising that the majority of the world of mankind, who have no faith or confidence in Jehovah or his Word, the Bible, are languishing in a mental state of fear of what the future will bring. In contrast, and as pointed out in the previous article, there are more than 2,000,000 persons around the world today who are facing the future with great optimism. They are very confident that this present wicked system of things will shortly be replaced by a new and righteous order—God's kingdom for which Jesus taught Christians to pray.—Matt. 6: 9, 10.

[3] At the moment you may be one of these persons, and you may feel quite confident of your position and of what you are facing in this time of the end. But the apostle's warning is: "Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does

1, 2. (a) In what condition, in general, is the world of mankind? and why? (b) But, in contrast, what confidence is displayed by many?

3. What appropriate warning does the apostle Paul give?

not fall." (1 Cor. 10:12) If we heed this counsel, there are a number of things that we can do now to strengthen our state of confidence.

[4] First of all, we should remember what the Proverbs say, that one's confidence in Jehovah must be based on knowledge of him and his past dealings with mankind, as well as knowledge of his present and future purposes.—Prov. 14:26; 22:19.

[5] This emphasizes the importance of personal study and group study in the congregation. Learn all you can about this Grand Creator, not only from his Word, the Bible, but also by observation of the material creation around you. The apostle Paul said to the people of Lystra: "Indeed, [Jehovah] did not leave himself without witness in that he did good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer." (Acts 14:17) And to the Roman Christians, Paul wrote: "For [God's] invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship."—Rom. 1:20.

[6] In addition to observing the created things here on the earth, we should turn our attention toward the physical heavens. In answer to the question: "Who has created these things?" Isaiah 40:26 says: "It is the One who is bringing forth the army of them even by number, all of whom he calls even by name. Due to the abundance of dynamic energy, he also being vigorous in power, not one of them is missing." What a vast and impressive witness the cosmic bodies of the heavens present—countless billions of stars all testifying to the eternal greatness of Jehovah! David expressed it beautifully when he said: "The heavens are declaring the glory of God; and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling."—Ps. 19:1.

[7] Then there are the invisible angelic creatures, numbering into the myriads. (Heb. 12:22; Jude 14, 15) Recall how the ancient worshiper of Jehovah, King Hezekiah, was taunted by the Assyrians: "What is this confidence in which you have trusted? . . . in whom have you put your trust, that you have rebelled against me [Sennacherib]?" But soon those pagan ridiculers were to learn why faithful King Hezekiah had put his trust and confidence in Jehovah and His angelic forces, for, as the record says, "It came about on that night that the angel of Jehovah proceeded to go out and strike down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians."—2 Ki. 18:19, 20; 19:35; compare Isaiah 36:1 to 37:38.

[8] Well, such a historical account as this should certainly give the one fearing Jehovah today great confidence. It is written: "The angel of Jehovah is camping all around those fearing him, and he rescues them."—Ps. 34:7; compare Psalm 91:11, 12.

[9] If a single angel of Jehovah is so powerful that he can wipe out 185,000 men, we should certainly put our complete confidence in this same Jehovah and his angelic forces under the direct command of the Lord Jesus Christ today. And let us remember—this Lord Jesus Christ is no longer the 'babe in the Bethlehem manger.' This is the one who is now the mighty "King of kings and Lord of lords," the one who is able to say, "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth," the one who is riding at the head of the armies of heaven, a force composed of no less than 100,000,000 angels!—Matt. 28:18; Rev. 5:11; 19:14-16.

4, 5. How may we strengthen our confidence in the future?

6. How does study and observation of the physical universe build up one's faith and confidence in its Creator?

7-9. (a) What occurred in Hezekiah's day that demonstrated the power of angelic creatures? (b) How does this strengthen our confidence in the future?

MODERN EVIDENCE BUILDS UP CONFIDENCE

10 It is with such divine encouragement and angelic backing that a small "remnant" of Christ Jesus' anointed followers in the year 1919 set out and undertook to preach "this good news of the kingdom . . . in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations." (Matt. 24:14) Over the intervening years since that work began, a "great crowd" of persons "out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" have responded. They are described as "the ones that come out of the great tribulation."—Rev. 7:9, 10, 14.

11 Now today as this faithful "remnant" look back over the years they can say, as Psalm 71:5 expresses it: "For you are my hope, O Sovereign Lord Jehovah, my confidence from my youth." One only has to read the history of Jehovah's Witnesses for the past sixty years to see why this "remnant" and the "great crowd" have such confidence in Jehovah. It seems that Satan the Devil and his demons put every device and obstacle in the way to hinder and impede their work. They were made the special target of various political and religious organizations in many nations around the world. Dictatorships proscribed their work and banned their preaching activity. Even in the so-called "free nations" religious and patriotic zealots 'framed trouble by decree' and resorted to mob action and boycotts, all in an effort to silence God's people.* (Ps. 94:20) Evolutionists, critics of the Bible and that "man of lawlessness," the clergy of apostate Christendom, attempted to interfere with the disciple-making work of God's faithful witnesses.

12 Such past experiences have impressed upon Jehovah's Christian witnesses the truthfulness of Isaiah 54:17, which says: "'Any weapon whatever that will be formed against you will have no success, and any tongue at all that will rise up against you in the judgment you will condemn. This is the hereditary possession of the servants of Jehovah, and their righteousness is from me,' is the utterance of Jehovah."

13 Look, too, at the worldwide growth and spiritual prosperity enjoyed by God's people in spite of all the demon-inspired opposition! Certainly the tremendous expansion of this preaching work could not have been accomplished except by Jehovah's protection, blessing and spirit upon his people. This too strengthens the confidence in God's people for the future.

WHY FREEDOM FROM FEAR IS POSSIBLE

14 But, really, if the "great tribulation" will be as devastating and destructive as the Scriptures indicate, is it possible for those serving God to look forward to its coming without fear and trepidation? We must keep in mind that there is a vast difference between the "great tribulation" that Jehovah God himself will bring upon Satan's beastly organization and all those clinging to it, and the tribulation that Satan now brings upon Jehovah's faithful witnesses in the form of persecution, bans, mob action and similar overt acts of violence.

15 This latter type of trouble originates with Satan and cannot be escaped if one serves Jehovah, for it is written: "All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted." "In fact, the hour is coming when everyone that kills you will imagine he has rendered a sacred service to God."—2 Tim. 3:12; John 16:2.

* See the book *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose.*

10. What did the anointed remnant of Christ's followers set out to do in the year 1919, and with what backing?
11. What has occurred in the past sixty years to give the remnant and the "great crowd" confidence in Jehovah?
12. What assurance does Isaiah 54:17 give?
13. What additional facts are faith-strengthening?
14, 15. What distinction must we not overlook when considering possible survival of the "great tribulation"?

16 Now, such personal suffering at the hands of misinformed and deluded persons certainly is not a pleasant experience that is longed for, hoped for and enjoyed when it comes. Jehovah's people have no desire to be victims of persecution. Even Jesus prayed three times to his Father that, if it were possible, he might be spared having to drink the "cup" of being made to appear as a blasphemer of God and a violator of his Law by being impaled on a torture stake. Yet, 'not my will be done but God's will,' he said. (Matt. 26:39-44) However, when the storm of affliction has passed over and one has endured under persecution, one can rejoice because one has proved faithful like Job and other godly men and women of old when under trial. In the end, you recall, Job was richly rewarded for his suffering. (Job 42:10-17) This was also the experience of the apostles when they were severely beaten at the order of the religious court. Afterward they "went their way from before the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name."—Acts 5:40, 41.

17 So, even when facing trials and tribulations at the hand of the Devil, we should have confidence in Jehovah's willingness and ability to bring us through completely victorious. (Rom. 8:37) Remember the encouraging words at 1 Corinthians 10:13: "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it." Otherwise stated, "we are persecuted, but not left in the lurch; we are thrown down, but not destroyed. Always we endure everywhere in our body the death-dealing treatment given to Jesus."—2 Cor. 4:8-10.

16. Examples of past Satanic persecutions are of what encouragement to God's people today?
17. When faced with such trials from Satan, what should we not forget?

18 The "great tribulation," foretold in Matthew 24:21, 22, *is, on the other hand,* something altogether different from the trouble and persecution engineered and inflicted, both in the past and in the present, by the Devil upon God's servants. The "great tribulation" is a tribulation *from God* that will befall the Devil's entire crowd in vindication of Jehovah and all those on God's side. Just as it is written at 2 Thessalonians 1:6: "It is righteous on God's part to repay tribulation to those who make tribulation for you."

19 For these reasons God's people have a deeper love and appreciation for Jehovah, and this, in turn, gives them a confidence free from any weakening or morbid fear. Awesome as the "great tribulation" may prove to be, these lovers of Jehovah are looking forward with eager anticipation to being eyewitnesses at that grand execution of divine judgment. (Ps. 89:7; Hab. 3:16, 18) And so they continually pray for God's kingdom to come and for his will and purpose to be accomplished—a prayer they offer 'in full confidence through faith.' "This is the confidence that we have toward him," the apostle John says, "that, no matter what it is that we ask according to his will, he hears us."—1 John 5:14; Eph. 3:12; Matt. 6:9, 10.

NEVER MISPLACE YOUR CONFIDENCE

20 With the "great tribulation" coming on apace, now is no time to be overconfident or self-reliant. We must never lean on our own understanding or that of other men, be they political statesmen, economic advisers, social counselors or religious prophets. (Prov. 3:5, 6; Ps. 146:3) The person misplacing his confidence 'in earthling man and actually making flesh his

18, 19. (a) How does the "great tribulation" differ from the persecutions suffered by God's servants? (b) So for what do God's servants pray, and with what assurance?
20. With a buildup in confidence, what pitfall must be avoided, and how?

arm' is "cursed," according to the book of Jeremiah. In contrast, it is written there in Jeremiah 17:5-8: "Blessed is the able-bodied man who puts his trust in Jehovah, and whose confidence Jehovah has become."

[21] The person whose confidence is placed in Jehovah puts God's kingdom first in his life, and thus avoids many of the anxieties caused by the economic squeeze. (Matt. 6:25-34) He does not forget what Jesus also said, that "even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses." (Luke 12:15) How foolish, then, to hoard up material provisions and trust them to see one through the fury of the "great tribulation"! Says Proverbs 11:4, 28: "Valuable things will be of no benefit on the day of fury. . . . The one trusting in his riches —he himself will fall." Faithful Job was careful not to misplace his confidence in material possessions, saying: "If I have put gold as my confidence, or to gold I have said, 'You are my trust!' . . . I should have denied the true God above."—Job 31:24, 28.

[22] Stock markets and prices may fall and heads of governments may topple, but these are not barometers that determine or measure the closeness of the storm of the "great tribulation." Keep in mind that when world powers of the past were destroyed by Jehovah, they did not collapse because of internal weakness or from corruption within their own framework. They were going concerns at the apparent height of their power when God deposed them by external forces.

[23] While *individuals* among the Lord's people may be killed between now and then (and the Scriptures indicate that some will be [Matt. 10:21; 24:9]), yet Jehovah's people *as a class* will survive the "great tribulation." Even if you personally should prove to be one who suffers great hardships and calamities—such as the collapse of your health, a death in your family, loss of children or material possessions, or economic disasters—yet, in spite of what occurs, you should never suffer the loss of your faith and confidence in Jehovah. Never doubt the promises of your God. Never grow fearful and run in a cowardly way for cover; never deny your God or compromise your integrity. And never allow your vision to become dim as regards angelic backing of those holding to their dedication to Jehovah. —2 Ki. 6:14-17; Hab. 3:17, 18.

[24] There is no question about it: "Happy is the one who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in Jehovah his God." (Ps. 146:5) So rejoice in Jehovah and in the help, guidance, protection and spiritual prosperity that he has granted and is bestowing upon his faithful witnesses in this time of the end!—Luke 21: 28; 2 Tim. 1:7.

[25] As Jehovah's publicity agents, let us be fearless and bold, and keep on warning people of the day of God's vengeance. (Ezek. 3:17) Let us keep on praying for God's kingdom to come in all its fury against Satan's wicked system, that it may be smashed to pieces and ground to powder. (Matt. 6:9, 10; Dan. 2:44; Mal. 4:3) As Jehovah's Witnesses face the destruction of the Devil's entire organization, oh, how encouraging do they find God's promise at Proverbs 3:25, 26: "You will not need to be afraid of any sudden dreadful thing, nor of the storm upon the wicked ones, because it is coming. For Jehovah himself will prove to be, in effect, YOUR CONFIDENCE"!

21. How does the Bible warn against misplacing one's confidence in material possessions?
22. Will the "great tribulation" come on this system of things due to its internal structural weaknesses?
23. Faced with various calamities, even death, how can we individually look to the future with confidence?
24. With the "great tribulation" coming on apace, what mental attitude will Jehovah's people have, as indicated by the Scriptures?
25. For whom are the promises of Proverbs 3:25, 26 of special comfort and encouragement?

Are You WILLING TO LISTEN?

"BE SWIFT about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath" is good counsel, which, if followed, would save many persons from grief. —Jas. 1:19.

This admonition to hear or listen came from one who knew what it meant both to listen and not to listen. He was a half brother of Jesus Christ. During his early life he undoubtedly grew up with Jesus and knew of his fine qualities, his love, his humility and understanding. One might think that James and his brother Jude (who wrote the Bible book of Jude) would have been among the first to become followers and apostles of Jesus. But this was not the case.

The apostle John has recorded for us what happened about six months before Jesus' death. He wrote:

> "[Jesus'] brothers said to him: 'Pass on over from here and go into Judea, in order that your disciples also may behold the works you do. For nobody does anything in secret while himself seeking to be known publicly. If you do these things, manifest yourself to the world.' His brothers were, in fact, not exercising faith in him."—John 7:3-5.

It appears that it was not until after Jesus' death and resurrection that these half brothers of his reviewed the things that they had heard but to which they had not listened, and now came to the conclusion that he was indeed the Messiah. But their not listening during his lifetime cost them the opportunity and joy of serving with and being taught directly by Jesus during the three and a half years of his preaching the good news. It was only because of the undeserved kindness of Jehovah and of Jesus himself that they finally had their eyes opened and were accepted as followers of Christ and made his spiritual brothers.

How do you listen, particularly when God speaks to you through his Word? Or when one of his representatives, an overseer or another faithful brother, speaks? Do you take the information to heart, getting the sense of it and applying it to yourself? The proverb says: "Listen to counsel and accept discipline, in order that you may become wise in your future." (Prov. 19:20) And King David, who underwent strong discipline, wrote: "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head."—Ps. 141:5, *Authorized Version.*

OVERSEERS SHOULD LISTEN

Perhaps you are one in a position of oversight. How do you listen to others? It may be that you are an overseer in the Christian congregation or perhaps a supervisor or foreman of a work project. When someone under your oversight comes to you with a suggestion, a prob-

lem or a request, are you 'too busy' to listen? Or, do you brush the person off as though what he is saying is unworthy of your consideration? Maybe you even 'laugh off' his request, belittling it. Or perhaps it is your policy to meet his request first with a brusquely expressed "No" rather than being open to discussion.

If you do these things you are not really qualified as an overseer. You are not approachable. You are acting in a self-willed way, contrary to the requirement set forth for overseers at Titus 1:7: "An overseer must be free from accusation as God's steward, *not self-willed.*"

It is also required of an overseer that he hold "firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching." (Titus 1:9) But, if the person approaching you is wrong in his suggestion, problem or request, your turning him away without listening and reasoning pro and con on the matter has certainly not *taught* him. In fact, you may have made him more convinced that he is right. He is likely to be very downcast in spirit and reluctant to appeal to you later on other matters. He may even tell fellow workers about the inconsiderate treatment he received from you, thus turning them away also from approaching you in the future.

One who has supervisory responsibilities should realize that "there is salvation in the multitude of counselors." (Prov. 11:14) This can often prevent one from making a serious mistake. Jehovah God the Creator is the only person who does not need someone to counsel him. (Isa. 40:13, 14; Rom. 11:33-36) As an overseer you may be very much helped by a discussion with someone else. You may get fresh ideas. Also, you may be kept 'in touch' with what is going on and with the feelings of those working with you. By listening to a problem or request, looking into it thoroughly from all sides, you may be able to avoid much bigger problems later on.

Moses was the God-appointed leader of some three million people. Yet he did not consider it below his dignity to listen to his father-in-law Jethro. At Jethro's suggestion, Moses appointed men as chieftains in order that he himself might not have to bear the entire burden of making all decisions and judging all disputes.—Ex. 18:13-26.

Even Jehovah God listened to Abraham's earnest request. Here it was not a matter of Abraham's giving counsel, or adding to Jehovah's knowledge. Jehovah was listening to Abraham's plea in behalf of any righteous persons that might be in Sodom. Of course, it was entirely in harmony with Jehovah's merciful disposition that no righteous persons be killed along with the wicked. But it may be noted that here, as in many other cases, Jehovah accorded his servant dignity as a friend and coworker by listening patiently and granting Abraham's request, though the evidence later showed that there were not even ten righteous men in Sodom.—Gen. 18:20-33; 15:5; compare Joshua 10:12-14.

Husbands, though you are heads of your households, you should listen to your wives as 'junior partners.' What they say should be given respectful consideration. For a happy marriage, conversations should be freely engaged in. Similarly with children, their questions and problems should be heard with the same attention that is given to those of grown-ups. This will build confidence and close-knit family groups. —1 Pet. 3:7; Eph. 6:4.

WEIGH THE WORDS OF OTHERS WITH DISCERNMENT

It is important, also, to be discerning when listening and acting on the advice or appeal of another. Adam was the head of his household, but he failed to exercise proper headship. He should have demon-

strated unbreakable loyalty first to God, to whom he owed everything. But, as Jehovah later said to Adam: *"Because you listened to your wife's voice* and took to eating from the tree concerning which I gave you this command, 'You must not eat from it,' . . . in the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken." —Gen. 3:17-19.

Being careful about whom you listen to for guidance is essential. In the Christian congregation it is good to seek out those who are experienced and who have a strong background of service to Jehovah God. The Bible injunction is: "Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith."—Heb. 13:7.

Listening to the wrong persons can cause one's death, or can even bring about the defeat of a nation. King Jehoash of Judah did well as long as he listened to wise and faithful high priest Jehoiada, but after Jehoiada's death, Jehoash, instead of following this good counsel, turned to the princes of Judah, who were idolaters. His listening to their bad counsel, contrary to God's word, brought Jehoash under responsibility for murder, caused ignominious defeat for the nation of Judah and, finally, diseases and assassination for Jehoash himself.—2 Chron. 24:17-25.

Earlier, Solomon's son Rehoboam, king over the twelve tribes of Israel, lost ten of the tribes from his dominion because, instead of listening to the older men who had been wise counselors of his father Solomon, he listened to young men with whom he had grown up. They advised the king to refuse to entertain the plea of the people, but, rather, to become more harsh, oppressive and unapproachable. By following this advice, Rehoboam caused a division of this nation that was never healed, and that was a factor in the ten tribes' plunge into idolatry.—1 Ki. 12:1-20.

You can put yourself into real danger of following a wrong course when you listen only to those closely related to you by family or friendship ties, or to those who refrain from correcting you because of some advantage they might gain from you. Whoever these may be, there is no excuse, if you are a Christian, for departing from the Source of wisdom, Jehovah.—Prov. 2:6-9.

If anyone, either slyly or openly, tries to induce you to deviate from Jehovah's Word or from the Christian congregation, which is "a pillar and support of the truth," you should immediately repel that one. (1 Tim. 3:15) The rule is stated by the apostle Paul: "Even if we or an angel out of heaven were to declare to you as good news something beyond what we declared to you as good news, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8) Before Israel entered the Promised Land, Moses told the assembled people: "In case your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter or your cherished wife or your companion who is like your own soul, should try to allure you in secrecy, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' . . . you must not accede to his wish or listen to him, nor should your eye feel sorry for him, nor must you feel compassion, nor cover him protectively . . . because he has sought to turn you away from Jehovah your God."—Deut. 13:6-10.

But toward those who come to you in sincerity, whether to ask something from you or to correct you, you should never fail to exercise Jehovah's fine qualities of mercy and consideration. You should also be humble, with a wholehearted desire to please Jehovah above all things. (John 8:29) In doing so, you will truly be following the apostle Paul's counsel: "In showing honor to one another take the lead." —Rom. 12:10.

We Did Not Procrastinate

As told by Leon Pettitt

"HE THAT is watching the wind will not sow seed; and he that is looking at the clouds will not reap." (Eccl. 11:4) Keeping this in mind has helped my wife, Daphne, and myself to enter full-time "pioneer" service to Jehovah, go to Gilead and on to a foreign missionary assignment—and also to stay here while raising a family. In England I gave up an apprenticeship after two years to become a "pioneer" Witness, devoting all my time to telling others about God's kingdom. My wife, for the same reason, left college when she had two more years to go. We had not yet met each other in those days. In 1951, I graduated from the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead in New York and came to Japan. Daphne came four years later, and we married in the summer of 1957. We did not start having a family until 1968. The elder of our two boys goes to a local Japanese school.

During the period that we were both able to devote most of our time to the missionary service, we made ourselves available so that the Watch Tower Society could assign us as they thought necessary. We accepted these assignments, whatever they were, and have enjoyed many rich blessings as a result.

IN JAPAN'S FRIGID NORTH

After we married, our first assignment, with four other missionaries, was to open up the work in Hokkaido. Cold winters were nothing new to us, but the continuous sub-zero temperatures, howling blizzards and deep snow of that first winter were something different. However, we soon discovered that these long winters, during which the people had relatively little to do, opened the way for many Bible studies in their homes. With the coming of spring a number of our students were ready to join us in our house-to-house service with the Bible.

I started a study with a university student whose main desire was to become a schoolteacher in some out-of-the-way place where teachers were often reluctant to go. Just six months before his graduation I arranged to study with him every day. Within a short period of time he accepted the truth and decided to teach the Bible full time instead of becoming a schoolteacher. Like ourselves, he did not procrastinate. He shoveled snow, pruned trees, did janitorial work and a variety of part-time jobs to support himself until

he was finally invited to "special pioneer" privileges. Today, he too has a family and continues to serve faithfully as an elder in one of Japan's 866 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Already nineteen years have passed since we came to Hokkaido, to form the first congregation in Sapporo. Now in this northern territory there are seventy-five congregations. Later, we were assigned south again, to visit Japanese congregations in a circuit. After our three years in the north, winters in Tokyo felt like spring.

A VISIT THAT BORE FRUIT

While witnessing with one of the Tokyo congregations my wife called at a small restaurant about two minutes to twelve. To her surprise, the busy proprietor subscribed for *The Watchtower* after receiving only a very brief explanation. Learning that the restaurant owner had a slack period in the afternoon, she returned the same week with a local Witness and arranged a Bible study with him. It happened that this man had a strong desire to do something for the benefit of other people, and learning the truth has certainly helped him to do that. He came to the meeting that same week in his white overalls, and each four months, as we visited that congregation again, he had made some new progress. At one visit he provided accommodations for us. For many years now he and his wife have served Jehovah God full time. We still see him in his white overalls at large assemblies, as he oversees the food-service organization, supervising the preparation of meals in cafeterias that serve tens of thousands of conventioners. His wife and children are happy that he did not procrastinate when my wife first met him.

Later, we were assigned to "district" work. This meant that I would be organizing and speaking at large assemblies of Jehovah's Witnesses every other week. Needless to say, we were by now quite fluent in using the Japanese language. Our district took in more than half of Japan and included Okinawa.

SERVICE IN OKINAWA

The pace of life was much slower in Okinawa. In many areas, before we could even begin to explain why we were there, we sat on the mat offered by a hospitable householder while green tea and chunks of brown sugar were served. The warm hospitality of the Okinawans, and the love of our brothers there, will always remain with us as happy memories.

Before Okinawa was again made part of Japan, one of our spiritual sisters there almost lost her job as a schoolteacher over the flag-salute issue. This was because several children at her school who were studying the Bible with her conscientiously refused to salute the Japanese flag. Her husband, a high-school teacher himself and an unbeliever at the time, fought her case successfully before the school authorities, and then became one of Jehovah's Witnesses as a result of the thorough investigation he had had to make. It was a real inspiration to work with him in the house-to-house activity. Later, he became an elder and spearheaded the building of a fine Kingdom Hall in Koza City.

JAPANESE ASSEMBLIES MARK PROGRESS

Attending assemblies helps one to feel the spirit and growth among God's people. In the early days when just a few hundred attended national assemblies, when we slept on beds too short for foreigners with long legs, and when we ate raw eggs poured over cold rice for breakfast, we never imagined that Jehovah's work would grow the way it has in Japan. Assemblies themselves have doubtless contributed much to this increase.

A large number of unbelieving husbands attend assemblies. Often they are surprised to see so many workingmen with families—like themselves—in attendance. Japanese men are usually dedicated to their work. Demands of the company must be given precedence over one's family and personal activities. Many feel that if they study the Bible, go to meetings, quit gambling and smoking and make other adjustments, they will finally be forced to give up their jobs too. At assemblies they meet men who have made these adjustments without changing their employment.

I overheard one unbeliever asking a Japanese Witness, "But what would you do if the company asked you to represent it at a Buddhist funeral?" The brother explained that this had actually happened to him. Instead of going to the funeral and embarrassing the family by not sharing in the worship, he had gone to the home the night before, left his name card and the company's obituary gift and explained that he was unable to attend the funeral the following day. Through such contacts with the Witnesses, unbelievers come to realize that they can follow Bible principles without necessarily having to change their secular occupation.

PRE-ASSEMBLY WORK BLESSED

During assembly preparation work in one city, a wife asked her unbelieving husband to deliver a noon meal to the workers at convention headquarters. Nearby congregations were taking turns in doing this. The workers invited him to eat with them, and he soon became interested in the conversation. The problem being discussed was how to put legs on scaffolding planks to make benches for 10,000 people. Someone suggested using piping, whereupon the stranger explained that he was a dealer in piping and would be glad to contribute some for this purpose. This chance encounter with the assembly workers solved their problem and was a turning point in his own life. He is now one of Jehovah's Witnesses himself.

It was at this same international assembly that a "pioneer" sister wrote to the president of Osaka's leading electrical manufacturing company about the seating problem due to the local school authorities' refusal to lend chairs to a religious organization. The president was moved to order one of the company's officials to look into the matter, with the result that several thousand chairs were loaned to the assembly free of charge. The letter had reached this president the day before he retired.

This sort of thing made us wonder whether the angels work much harder for us at our assemblies than we may think.

For example, there was the time when hardworking Witnesses had just finished cleaning up the Expo '70 grounds, in Osaka, for a national assembly. Then came news that a pop-music festival had been arranged there, for the evening before our assembly. We felt that Satan was already 'laughing up his sleeve' at the prospect of the grounds' being messed up again. Then came a typhoon warning over the radio. The storm was heading straight for Osaka. It would hit the exposition grounds just when the music fans would be 'doing their thing.' The festival was abruptly canceled. The typhoon? Suddenly, it veered course and stayed out there in the Pacific.

OUR FAMILY LIFE IN JAPAN

Coming back to our personal problems, it was a big change for us to have to settle down and raise a family. I had no trade and my wife was apprehensive about having her first baby in Japan. A brother in England kindly offered me a job if we went back. What should we do? A Canadian brother with a Japanese wife had done very well here by teaching English. Maybe I could do the same. Also, at the

time, Daphne's younger brother and his family were in Uganda serving where the need was great. We could do this, too, by just staying where we were. We decided to give it a try.

The Watch Tower Society suggested that we could be useful in one of the congregations in Nagoya. The brothers were very kind in helping us to move. With many gifts, including secondhand furniture and a new mattress, we settled in a small two-room house that we rented from a "pioneer" sister. As we did not have so much as a knife and fork to start out with, we were deeply moved by the generosity and warm love of our Japanese brothers.

By raising a family of our own we began to understand the problems faced by the local brothers and their children. Education is a main preoccupation with most Japanese families. Our neighbors seemed concerned about our child's not going to a kindergarten, considered to be the first rung on the climb to a university. We began to feel the subtle pressure to conform. This interest of our neighbors in our private affairs gave my wife many opportunities to witness.

She would explain about the meetings, how children learn to be with a group and to sit quietly for two hours, how they put their hands up and answer questions (in our congregation they have to answer clearly into a microphone), how they learn to sing with a group from a songbook written in the Japanese phonetic syllabary, which is not usually taught until the first year of school. Children who receive this advance education at the Kingdom Hall, absolutely free of charge, are also protected from learning bad things from some of the children who go to kindergartens. A young mother of three small children has just begun attending meetings as a result of such informal witnessing in the children's playground facing our house. Another neighbor housewife is already our spiritual sister and is conducting studies of her own.

PROBLEMS IN JAPANESE SCHOOLING

Later, we decided to put our boy, Ivan, into the local Japanese primary school, where he can get a good education, especially in Japanese. The other boys seem to have accepted him now, although at first his blue eyes and fair hair were a novelty to them. His teacher, too, seems to have resigned herself to the fact that there are some things that his Bible-trained conscience will not allow him to do.

The first problem he faced was the whale meat, usually not Scripturally bled, that is served in the school lunches, and which he refused. (Acts 15:28, 29) Then came the boys' festival on the fifth day of the fifth month. On this day it is customary for homes with boys to fly large cloth or plastic representations of carp fish from a high pole. The children at school were asked to make paper carps, which they would tie to a stick and take home. Ivan said that he did not want to make them, and his mother was summarily called to the school for an explanation.

The school agreed that the origin of this festival was in Shinto purification rites but insisted that nowadays it had no religious significance. It was claimed that the carp, famous for its ability to swim up a waterfall, was merely a symbol of the parents' desire that their boys grow up to be strong. They balked at classifying this as a superstition, but finally agreed that Ivan could use the time to draw and cut out something else.

When Christmas time arrived, the teacher was in for another surprise. Christmas has become firmly entrenched among Japanese Buddhists, along with birthday

parties, Valentine's Day, Easter bunnies and other Western customs that lend themselves to exploitation by big business. When the children in his class were asked to draw a picture for Christmas, Ivan, the only Christian boy there, asked to be allowed to draw something else. He could have explained why Christmas has nothing to do with Jesus Christ, but his teacher did not bother to ask him for an explanation.

She had noticed that Ivan did not join with the other children in singing the Japanese national anthem and thought that this must be because he was a foreigner. She learned later that he did not sing even the British national anthem. It gave my wife an opportunity to explain about the worldwide neutrality and unity of Jehovah's Christian witnesses. As Ivan gets older he will have other problems to face such as learning martial arts—judo and swordsmanship—taught under the guise of sports. We are confident that he will make right decisions on these matters, as he has done on others.

In this, we feel that the book *Listening to the Great Teacher* has been a big help to him. The method employed in this book of learning a principle and then applying it to problems that children actually face is extremely practical. We are very grateful to Jehovah's organization for this timely provision.

A REWARDING LIFE

Homesickness has been one of Daphne's problems. She knows that we can do a lot of good by staying out here, but it has been a constant fight, nonetheless. After many years of searching for a solution, at last we seem to have found one. Added to the already enjoyable work of helping others to learn Bible truth, Daphne decided to spend one morning a week learning Japanese painting. This regular change in tempo, and getting absorbed in something very enjoyable for just a short time, has minimized the problem tremendously.

Meanwhile, as an elder in one of Nagoya's fourteen congregations, as circuit assembly overseer and as a breadwinner, I have plenty of satisfying work to do. I enjoy the Bible studies that I have with unbelieving husbands, whose problems I understand much better now that I have to rub shoulders with men of all kinds in the same business world. How happy we are that we have seized and made the most of each new opportunity of rendering sacred service to Jehovah! To others, also, we say, Do not procrastinate. For who knows what blessings tomorrow will bring?

"Being Where You Are Supposed to Be"

ON THE afternoon of July 15, 1976, Jehovah's Witnesses were attending a special program for young people at their "Sacred Service" District Assembly in Oakland, California. At that very time a busload of twenty-six summer-school students and their driver were kidnapped in one of the most bizarre cases to come to public attention in years.

Two of the children attending the assembly would have been on that bus if they had not taken off from school to attend the assembly. The boys' father said: "I'm sure grateful we were at the assembly. Being where you are supposed to be is the right thing."

What Did The Wise Man Mean?

Pursuing Pleasure and Culture Brings Limited Rewards

King Solomon found that the acquisition of worldly wisdom and knowledge was not a satisfying goal. For this reason he explored other areas of life, including pleasure and culture.

Did Solomon find real satisfaction in pleasure, rejoicing and laughter? He wrote: *"I said, even I, in my heart: 'Do come now, let me try you out with rejoicing. Also, see good.' And, look! that too was vanity. I said to laughter: 'Insanity!' and to rejoicing: 'What is this doing?'"* —Eccl. 2:1, 2.

It was in vain that Solomon looked to merriment and laughter for something worth while. In itself the pursuit of pleasure brings no real and lasting happiness. Laughter and rejoicing may temporarily contribute to one's forgetting one's problems. But the problems will not go away and, after the merriment is over, they may, by contrast, loom up to an even greater degree. Rightly Solomon could speak of laughter as "insanity," for thoughtless laughter beclouds sound judgment. It may cause a person to take very serious matters lightly and thereby offend or irritate others. Merriment or the kind of rejoicing associated with the words and actions of a court jester does not really amount to anything. It cannot be pointed to as producing something tangible and meaningful.

Not pleased with the results of pleasure, merriment and laughter, Solomon tested out the effect of wine. He continues: *"I explored with my heart by cheering my flesh even with wine, while I was leading my heart with wisdom, even to lay hold on folly until I could see what good there was to the sons of mankind in what they did under the heavens for the number of the days of their life."* (Eccl. 2:3) In his use of wine, Solomon was guided by wisdom, good sense. He did not become a drunkard but maintained self-control. His 'laying hold on folly,' therefore, did not mean that he cast moderation to the wind. Rather, in his investigation of the lighter side of life he controlled himself and so did not become a dissipated pleasure-seeker. Because Solomon retained full possession of his senses, he could properly evaluate his findings.

Describing his further activities, he states: "I engaged in greater works. I built houses for myself; I planted vineyards for myself. I made gardens and parks for myself, and I planted in them fruit trees of all sorts. I made pools of water for myself, to irrigate with them the forest, springing up with trees. I acquired menservants and maidservants, and I came to have sons of the household. Also, livestock, cattle and flocks in great quantity I came to have, more so than all those who happened to be before me in Jerusalem. I accumulated also silver and gold for myself, and property peculiar to kings and the jurisdictional districts. I made male singers and female singers for myself and the exquisite delights of the sons of mankind, a lady, even ladies. And I became greater and increased more than

anyone that happened to be before me in Jerusalem. Moreover, my own wisdom remained mine. And anything that my eyes asked for I did not keep away from them. I did not hold back my heart from any sort of rejoicing, for my heart was joyful because of all my hard work, and this came to be my portion from all my hard work."—Eccl. 2:4-10.

In the position of king, Solomon had within his reach the assets that enabled him to do anything that he wanted. Yet he did not abandon wisdom in the pursuit of proper works and culture—architecture, gardening, landscaping and music. Hence, Solomon did not deplete his financial resources but kept on accumulating more gold and silver. His 'wisdom remained his,' guiding his numerous activities. He also found a certain pleasure in what he was able to accomplish. But did Solomon really discover in these varied pursuits what was of lasting value in life? His answer: *"I, even I, turned toward all the works of mine that my hands had done and toward the hard work that I had worked hard to accomplish, and, look! everything was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing of advantage under the sun."* (Eccl. 2:11) Yes, even in what may be considered worthwhile pursuits, Solomon sensed a feeling of emptiness, vanity. He realized that death would overtake him and there was no way of knowing what would become of all his hard work.—Eccl. 2:17-19.

Truly the pursuit of pleasure and culture does not in itself secure one a happy, contented life. Actually, the one whose life centers around this may eventually come to realize that his life is very empty and that he is in need of spiritual food.

Elijah "Prayed for It Not to Rain"

THE prayer of a righteous person, one having an approved standing with Jehovah God, has force. It brings results. (Jas. 5:16) This is the point that the disciple James illustrated when he wrote: "Elijah was a man with feelings like ours, and yet in prayer he prayed for it not to rain; and it did not rain upon the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the land put forth its fruit."—Jas. 5:17, 18.

Though a prophet, Elijah, as a man, was no different from any other righteous human. He had the same feelings, infirmities and imperfections. Yet Jehovah God answered his prayers. He will certainly do no less for his servants when they make supplications in harmony with his will.

It may be noted that the Hebrew Scriptures do not specifically state that Elijah "prayed" regarding the matters mentioned by James. However, there is evidence that he must have done so. Regarding what Elijah did just before the long drought ended, we read: "He went up to the top of Carmel and began crouching to the earth and keeping his face put between his knees." (1 Ki. 18:42) Yes, Elijah assumed a position that would seem to indicate an approach to God in prayer. Logically, then, he prayed and also must have made supplication in connection with the declaration earlier made to Ahab: "As Jehovah the God of Israel before whom I do stand is living, there will occur during these years neither dew nor rain, except at the order of my word!"—1 Ki. 17:1.

Of course, the disciple James wrote under inspiration and so could set forth facts not specifically mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures but, nevertheless, in full harmony with those Scriptures. And Elijah's praying is an example of this.

What James wrote about Elijah should encourage us to persevere in prayer. We can rest assured that we will receive whatever we ask for, provided that it is in harmony with God's will.—John 14:13, 14.

"Do Not Rejoice, O Philistia"

AMONG ancient writings the Bible stands out as a book of prophecy. Hundreds upon hundreds of events were foretold, and the fulfillments can be confirmed by the facts of history.

One of these prophecies was directed against Philistia in the year that Judean King Ahaz died. The prophet Isaiah was divinely inspired to declare: "Do not rejoice, O Philistia, any one of you, just because the staff of the one striking you has been broken. For out of the root of the serpent there will come forth a poisonous snake, and its fruit will be a flying fiery snake."—Isa. 14:28, 29.

During the reign of King Ahaz the power of Judah had been weakened considerably. In but one day the armies of the opposing ten-tribe kingdom of Israel killed 120,000 warriors in the kingdom of Judah. The Edomites invaded Judah from the southeast and carried off captives. And the Philistines raided western cities and towns in Judah. (2 Chron. 28:5, 6, 17, 18) Finally, to protect himself against the threat of Israel and Syria, Ahaz appealed to Assyria for help. Eventually this brought, not relief, but "distress" under the heavy Assyrian yoke. (2 Chron. 28:16, 20) As far as the Philistines were concerned, the kingdom of Judah was no danger to them as it had been in the past. The "staff" that had been striking them was broken.

Things had been far different when Uzziah, the father of Ahaz, ruled as king. The Bible reports: "He proceeded to go out and fight against the Philistines and break through the wall of Gath and the wall of Jabneh and the wall of Ashdod, after which he built cities in Ashdod territory and among the Philistines. And the true God continued to help him against the Philistines and against the Arabians that were dwelling in Gurbaal and the Meunim. And the Ammonites began to give tribute to Uzziah. Eventually his fame went even as far as Egypt, for he displayed strength to an extraordinary degree."—2 Chron. 26:6-8.

Due to gross disregard for God's commands, Ahaz, on the other hand, experienced reverses. Now, with the death of Ahaz and a new, inexperienced king's coming to the throne, the Philistines were not to rejoice, thinking that they could make further inroads on the kingdom of Judah. There was going to be a change. King Uzziah, by gaining victories over the Philistines, had been like a serpent. But the Philistines were to face a more deadly foe in one springing from the "root" of Uzziah. This one would be like a "poisonous snake," a "flying fiery snake." A "flying fiery snake" would be rapid in darting and lightninglike in striking and would produce a burning effect through the venom injected into a victim. In fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, the "flying fiery snake" proved to be Hezekiah, the grandson of Uzziah. The Bible tells us: "It was he that struck down the Philistines clear to Gaza and also its territories."—2 Ki. 18:8.

The annals of Assyrian King Sennacherib reveal that the Philistines submitted to Hezekiah. Regarding what happened to Padi, king of the Philistine city of Ekron, these annals state that 'the officials, the patricians and the common people of Ekron had thrown Padi, their king, into fetters' and "had handed him over to Hezekiah, the Jew," who "held him in prison."

In view of such developments during the reign of Hezekiah, the prophetic command for the Philistines not to rejoice was most appropriate. What they experienced at the hands of Hezekiah was truly like the injury that a "flying fiery snake" can produce upon its victims. The prophecy at Isaiah 14:29 was unmistakably fulfilled.

'An End of Perfection'

● The psalmist declared: "To all perfection I have seen an end. Your commandment is very broad." (Ps. 119:96) Whatever may be perfect from a human standpoint still has its limitations. The commandment of Jehovah, however, does not have such limits but provides sound guidance for all aspects of life. *The Jerusalem Bible* renders the words of the psalmist as follows: "I have noticed limitations to all perfection, but your commandment has no limits at all."

CAIAPHAS
—Bitter Opposer Of True Worship

"THE lips of a priest are the ones that should keep knowledge, and the law is what people should seek from his mouth." (Mal. 2:7) These inspired words indicate that Israel's priests should have been champions of true worship. Especially should this have been true of Israel's high priest. Yet Caiaphas, a high priest in the first century C.E., did not live up to this expectation. He was one of the foremost enemies of truth.

Valerius Gratus, predecessor of Roman Governor Pontius Pilate, appointed Caiaphas to the office of high priest about 18 C.E. (or, perhaps as late as 26 C.E.). A desire to maintain his office at all costs was a major factor in Caiaphas' fierce opposition to loyal servants of Jehovah God.

The publicly known resurrection of Lazarus prompted Caiaphas and most of the other members of the Jewish supreme court, the Sanhedrin, to seek the death of Jesus Christ. (John 11:43-53) That miracle was a powerful blow to the sect of the Sadducees, to which the priestly family, including Caiaphas, evidently belonged. (Acts 5:17) This was so because the Sadducees denied the Scriptural teaching of the resurrection.—Acts 23:8.

However, when the miracle of Lazarus' resurrection was considered by the Sanhedrin, the religious view of the Sadducees was not brought into the discussion. The main consideration was fear for position. The Bible record reports: "The chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the Sanhedrin together and began to say: 'What are we to do, because this man performs many signs? If we let him alone this way, they will all put faith in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.' But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them: 'You do not know anything at all, and you do not reason out that it is to your benefit for one man to die in behalf of the people and not for the whole nation to be destroyed.' This, though, he did not say of his own originality; but because he was high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was destined to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but in order that the children of God who are scattered about he might also gather together in one. Therefore from that day on they took counsel to kill him."—John 11:47-53.

Like the majority of the members of the Sanhedrin, Caiaphas was bent on killing Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, in view of his sacred office, Caiaphas was used by Jehovah God to prophesy about Jesus. This somewhat resembled what Jehovah

did in causing the diviner Balaam, who wanted to curse Israel for a reward, to bless the Israelites and utter true prophecies concerning them.—Num. 23:1–24:24; 2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11.

Thereafter, Caiaphas and his father-in-law Annas were doubtless the chief priests who plotted to kill Lazarus. They wanted to put an end to the powerful effect that the miracle of Lazarus' resurrection had in moving many people to put faith in Jesus Christ.—John 12:10, 11.

WILLFUL PERVERSION OF GOD'S LAW

Later, Caiaphas and Annas became deeply involved in bringing about the actual death of Jesus Christ. Shortly before the Passover of 33 C.E., Caiaphas and other members of the Sanhedrin 'took counsel to seize Jesus by crafty device and kill him.' (Matt. 26:3, 4) With the cooperation of Judas Iscariot, whom they bribed, they succeeded in their scheme. (Luke 22:2-6, 47-53) After seizing Jesus under the cover of darkness in the garden of Gethsemane, an armed crowd brought him first to the house of Annas. (John 18:13) Next, Jesus was led bound to Caiaphas, at which time false witnesses presented conflicting testimony. Finally, Caiaphas put Jesus under oath, demanding that he tell them whether he was the Christ the Son of God. On hearing Jesus' affirmative reply, Caiaphas ripped his garments apart and called upon the court to condemn him as a blasphemer. This the court did, sentencing Jesus to death. —Matt. 26:59-66.

After this illegal night trial, the Sanhedrin met early the next morning to confirm their judgment. (Mark 15:1) Doubtless Caiaphas was among those who then brought Jesus before Pilate, accusing him of 'forbidding the payment of taxes and of claiming to be Christ a king.' (Luke 23:2) Then, when Pilate sought to release Jesus, Caiaphas was no doubt one of the "chief priests" who shouted: "Impale him! Impale him!" (John 19:6, 11) Evidently he used his influence to persuade the crowd to ask for the release of Barabbas, a murderer, seditionist and robber, instead of Jesus. (Matt. 27:20, 21; Mark 15:11) Caiaphas likely also must have cried out: "We have no king but Caesar." —John 19:15.

Having achieved their goal in getting Jesus sentenced to death, the chief priests were still not pleased with the charge that was to be posted on the executional stake. They protested, saying to Pilate: "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that he said, 'I am King of the Jews.' " But Pilate did not cooperate with them in this.—John 19:21, 22.

Caiaphas did indeed fail in his responsibility to uphold the Law that he was under obligation to obey and teach as high priest. He cooperated in violating the laws on bribery (Deut. 16:19), conspiracy and perversion of justice (Ex. 23:1, 6, 7), false testimony (Ex. 20:16), releasing a murderer (Num. 35:31-34), mob action (Ex. 23:2), following the statutes of other nations (Lev. 18:3-5), accepting as king one not of their own nation (Deut. 17:14, 15) and murder.—Ex. 20:13.

POST-RESURRECTION OPPOSITION TO TRUE WORSHIP

After Jesus was dead, Caiaphas and other priests requested that Pilate do something about guarding the tomb. But Pilate replied: "You have a guard. Go make it as secure as you know how." (Matt. 27:62-65) When Jesus was resurrected and some of the guard reported this to the chief priests, Caiaphas and the others were not moved to repentance. Instead, they bribed the soldiers and in-

structed them: "Say, 'His disciples came in the night and stole him while we were sleeping.' And if this gets to the governor's ears, we will persuade him and will set you free from worry."—Matt. 28:11-14.

Caiaphas thereafter tried desperately to put a stop to the preaching and teaching of Jesus' disciples. In connection with the healing of a man lame from birth, Peter and John were jailed and the next day haled before Caiaphas and the rest of the Sanhedrin. On that occasion the Sanhedrin demanded that they stop speaking on the basis of Jesus' name. But Peter and John were determined to keep on declaring the truth, Caiaphas notwithstanding. (Acts 4:1-20) At another time Caiaphas questioned all the apostles and called attention to the Sanhedrin's order for them to stop preaching on the basis of Jesus' name. But the apostles declared their firm resolve to continue obeying "God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:27-29.

It was Caiaphas who sometime later shared in causing God's faithful servant Stephen to be stoned to death. (Acts 6:11–7:60) He also gave authorization to Saul (Paul, who later became a faithful apostle of Jesus Christ) to seize Christ's disciples in Damascus and bring them bound to Jerusalem for judgment.—Acts 9:1, 2.

Soon, however, Caiaphas had his career cut short. In 36 or 37 C.E. Vitellius, a Roman official, removed him from office. Humiliated and unable to bear the reproach, he reportedly committed suicide.

Truly Caiaphas' efforts against true worship were to no avail. The very thing that he was most concerned about—his position, and the power, authority and prestige it brought—he lost. Though he was a high priest who could have used his influence for good, he died as a fighter against God.—Acts 5:39.

● May a Christian raise or lower a flag at his place of work?

When such a job assignment is not part of a flag ceremony the individual Christian is free to decide what to do, taking into consideration the local circumstances and his conscience.

It is well known that many persons view their national flag as a symbol meriting reverence. *The Encyclopedia Americana* states: "The flag, like the cross, is sacred. . . . The rules and regulations relative to human attitude toward national standards use strong, expressive words, as, 'Service to the Flag,' . . . 'Reverence for the Flag,' 'Devotion to the Flag.'" Special ceremonies are often held, with the flag being the object of special "devotion."

Each person is free to determine if he will share in such ceremonies. Jehovah's Witnesses feel convinced, though, that what the Bible says about refraining from giving devotion to material, inanimate objects has a bearing on the matter. (Ex. 20:4, 5; 1 John 5:21) So, while respecting the rights of others to do what they want, Jehovah's Witnesses do not share in flag ceremonies. Still, they are exemplary citizens who daily uphold the laws of the land.—Rom. 13:1.

Often the national flag is displayed at public buildings and assembly places, such as firehouses, municipal offices and schools. In view of their respect for the government and what is used to represent it, Jehovah's Witnesses have no objection to being in or working at buildings where the national flag is on display. Similarly, a flag might appear on postage stamps, automobile plates or other government-produced items. Yet that does not mean that a person of the public who uses such is necessarily partici-

pating in devotional acts toward the flag. What is significant is not the presence of a flag but how a person acts toward it, what he does.

Sometimes an employee at a public building is assigned to put up the flag in the morning and to take it down at the end of the day. This might be part of a special ceremony, with persons standing at attention or saluting the flag. In that case it is understandable that a person who does not share in flag-saluting ceremonies would have conscientious reasons for not raising or lowering the flag, for to do so would be to share in the ceremony. It would be contributing to a ceremony, just as musicians in a band might be expected to contribute by playing patriotic music.

However, in many cases no ceremony accompanies the daily raising or lowering of the flag over a public building. Putting it up, for instance, may simply be part of preparing the building for use, as with unlocking the doors, opening the windows, and so forth. In such instances the flag is simply viewed as an emblem representing the government of the land in which that building is located.

When this is the case, a Christian employee who is asked to handle this duty among other routine tasks is free to decide what to do. The conscience of one person in this situation might move him to ask his supervisor to have some other employee put up and take down the flag. But another Christian might feel that his conscience will permit him to handle the flag as long as no ceremony is involved. Each person faced with such a request on his job should analyze the local circumstances as well as the proddings of his Bible-trained conscience. Then he should make a decision that will leave him with a clear conscience.—1 Pet. 3:16.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

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February 27: Build Up Your Confidence Now for the Future. Page 45. Songs to Be Used: 21, 40.