The WATCHTOWER

THE "TREE" Whose Fall SHOCKS THE WORLD

MAY 15, 1977

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

May 15, 1977
Vol. 98, Number 10

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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A Book of MATCHLESS IMPACT

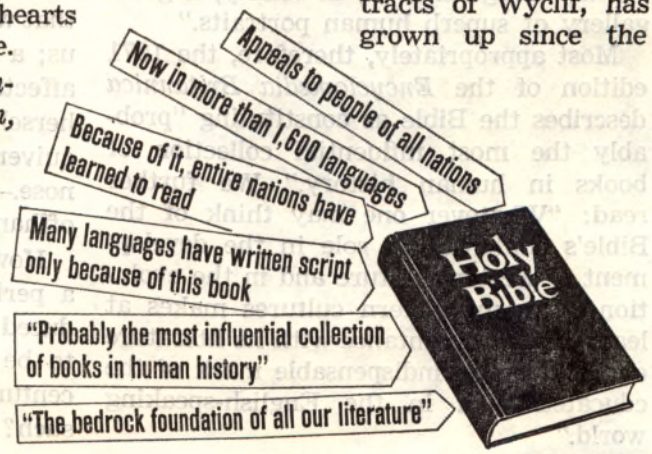
THERE is a book with an Eastern setting, written by Orientals, that doubtless has had a greater impact on humankind than any other book. It has been translated, the whole or a part thereof, into more than 1,600 languages. And here is a most remarkable fact: It is because of this book that many individuals and even entire nations have learned to read! Previously unwritten languages now have scripts only because this book was translated into these particular tongues. This unique book is the Bible.

It is simply amazing that the Bible has found acceptance among many millions of every race and nation. Here we are living in the twentieth century, removed by many hundreds of years from the events narrated in the Holy Scriptures. For the majority of readers, the Bible's setting is also far removed geographically. Yet the Scriptures have appealed to people's hearts in a way that no other writings have.

Charles D. Eldridge, in *Christianity's Contributions to Civilization,* made the following observation on this point: "Books written in one land seldom become popular in other lands; they are like trees which cannot stand the strain of transplanting; though published with acceptance under favorable conditions in one nation, they rarely survive the changed conditions of social, educational, political, and religious life in other nations. Not so the Bible: it has been transplanted to every soil under the sun without serious loss of vigor and charm."

A basic reason for the Bible's appeal to all tribes, nations and races is that it realistically depicts life, with its joys and its sorrows, its triumphs and its failures, its advances and its setbacks, its love and its hate. T. H. Darlow, in the introduction to *The Greatest Book in the World,* expressed this as follows: "There is one Book, and only one, which embraces all the heights and depths of human nature. The Bible belongs to those elemental things—like the sky and the wind and the sea, like bread and wine, like the kisses of little children and tears shed beside the grave—which can never grow stale or out of date, because they are the common heritage of mankind."

The impact that the Bible has had on learning and literature staggers the imagination. Take the English-speaking world, which includes some 358 million people. Writes John R. Green, in *A Short History of the English People:* "The whole prose literature of England, save the forgotten tracts of Wyclif, has grown up since the



translation of the Scriptures by Tyndale and Coverdale. So far as the nation at large was concerned, no history, no romance, hardly any poetry, save the little-known verse of Chaucer, existed in the English tongue when the Bible was ordered to be set up in churches." English dramatist and poet William Shakespeare got much of the inspiration for his works from the Bible. It has been said that "no writer has assimilated the thoughts and reproduced the words of Holy Scripture more copiously than Shakespeare." Similarly, for the English poet Shelley, the Bible was the foremost book in his limited library.

In more recent years, English novelist Hall Caine admitted: "Whatever strong situations I have in my books are not my creation, but are taken from the Bible. 'The Deemster' is a story of the Prodigal Son, 'The Bondman' is the story of Esau and Jacob, 'The Scapegoat' is the story of Eli and his sons, . . . and 'The Manxman' is the story of David and Uriah."

American humorist and editor Thomas L. Masson said of the Bible's impact on literature: "It is the bedrock foundation of all our literature and, therefore, if you want to know anything, the Bible is where you must find it. . . . It is too big for systems, it comprehends man himself and all his thoughts. It is, in reality, a great gallery of superb human portraits."

Most appropriately, therefore, the 1971 edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* describes the Bible as constituting "probably the most influential collection of books in human history." We further read: "Whatever one may think of the Bible's contents, its role in the development of western culture and in the evolution of many eastern cultures makes at least some acquaintance with its literature and history an indispensable mark of the educated man in the English-speaking world."

Not only have major literary works in the English language been influenced by the Bible, but so have the major writings in most other Western countries. A case in point is German literature. German lyric poet and literary critic Heinrich Heine was moved to say: "All expressions and idioms to be found in the Luther Bible are German. The writer must go on using them. And as this book is in the possession of the poorest people, they need not be exceptionally erudite to be able to express themselves in literary form." Many German proverbs are drawn from the Bible, and Luther's translation of the Scriptures provided the basis for literary German.

The comments of two famous German literary figures, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Heinrich Heine, regarding the effect of the Bible upon their work, are especially noteworthy. Goethe said of his career: "It is belief in the Bible, the fruit of deep meditation, which has served me as the guide of my moral and literary life. —I have found it a capital safely invested, and richly productive of interest." Commenting in a similar vein, Heine stated: "I owe my enlightenment quite simply to the reading of a book.—A book? Yes, and it is an old simple book, modest as nature itself, and as natural; a book that appears as efficacious and unpretentious as the sun that warms us, as the bread that nourishes us; a book that looks at us as sadly and affectionately as an old grandmother, who herself reads the book daily, with loving, quivering lips, and her spectacles on her nose.—And the name of this book is quite offhandishly the book, the Bible."

How could some forty men living over a period of about 1,600 years have produced such a book, a work that continued to be a source of inspiration for many centuries after its completion and remains such? None of its writers took credit to

themselves. Their purpose was to convey, not their own message, but that of Jehovah God, the Source of their inspiration. The psalmist David declared: "The spirit of Jehovah it was that spoke by me, and his word was upon my tongue." (2 Sam. 23:2) Does not the outstanding nature of the Bible support this expression? So, then, does not this book merit our very best attention?

DO NOT DESPISE

The Man of Little Means

HOW would you react if a friend, an average worker of modest means, returned from a vacation driving a $20,000 luxury automobile? West Germany's auto club wanted to know how people would respond to such a sudden showy display by someone really unable to afford a very expensive car. So, for three weeks it furnished an auto of this type for a middle-income computer programmer who had been driving a small station wagon. He lived in a lower-middle-class neighborhood of Munich and initially gave no explanation to neighbors, relatives and fellow employees.

Some of the man's acquaintances became annoyed. Others were suspicious. But there were other reactions too. For instance, a resort hotel that was 'booked up,' according to a telephone inquiry, strangely located a room for these people when they drove up in the high-priced car. Also, a doorman who formerly had motioned their little auto away from a loading zone outside a luxury hotel raised no objection at all when they parked the expensive, showy automobile there.

Yes, people reacted in varying ways during this experiment. There is no question, however, that some were influenced by seeming wealth. They were ready to give special consideration to persons thought to be rich.

ESTIMATING A PERSON'S VALUE

But, please think about your own attitude. How do you estimate an individual's value? Do you feel that you can assess a man's worth by what he possesses? Before you answer, put yourself in this position: Suppose you were part of the privileged generation living in the Roman province of Judea during the first century of our Common Era. They had the opportunity to identify the Messiah sent by Jehovah God for the redemption of mankind. (John 3:16) Those Judeans had the Messiah in their midst, and their hope of attaining everlasting life depended upon their being able to discern the superior qualities that clearly distinguished him from all other men.

Likely, most of the Jews thought that the Messiah could be only a man of great wealth and power. How they despised Jesus, that "nobody" from Nazareth! They knew him only as the son of a lowly carpenter, Joseph, who had to struggle as a common laborer just to provide necessities for his family. (Matt. 13:55) Yet Jesus

was anointed with God's holy spirit at his baptism when thirty years of age. (Matt. 3:13-17) And those accepting Jesus as the Messiah, God's anointed, had to put their confidence in a man of little means. In fact, rather than possessing riches, land and houses, he had "nowhere to lay down his head."—Luke 9:58.

Despite overwhelming evidence, even *miracles,* proving that Jesus was the Messiah, his contemporaries largely found no good in him and condemned him to a disgraceful death with common criminals. (John 12:37) That was a final expression of contempt for a man they regarded as having nothing of value for the benefit of others. If you were there, would you have scoffed at Jesus, as did the majority? Or, would you have discerned his worth and come to be counted among his disciples?

Clearly, it is not wise to estimate a person's worth on the basis of his possessions. The acquisition of wealth does not automatically mean that a man has acquired skill, sound judgment or ability to take the lead. Many rich people simply inherited their wealth. Hence, it tells nothing about their abilities or experience. And how many times have you heard about unethical or dishonest business schemes used by certain rich persons to increase their wealth? Indeed, how often flagrant violation of the law goes unpunished when wealth is used to tip the scales of justice! So, to assume that a rich person is to be respected and honored simply because of his wealth leads to a distorted, unrealistic view of others.

The converse also is true. A man's lack of wealth does not mean that he is a failure. He may prefer to live modestly. It may be his choice to avoid the anxiety and frustration accompanying the pursuit of material things. Or, he may be in poor health, limiting his earning power. Perhaps he is unjustly discriminated against because of race or nationality. His modest income in business might reflect his unwillingness to use shrewd or questionable practices to beat the competition. He may place a premium on the well-being of his family, preferring to spend time *with* them rather than making more money to spend *on* them. So, a man's lack of wealth does not prove that he lacks competence or ability.

Why, then, are most people inclined to give preference and honor to the wealthy, even as some did during the automobile experiment cited earlier? Well, being sinners, humans are inclined toward selfishness. A Bible proverb says: "One who is of little means is an object of hatred, but many are the friends of the rich person." (Prov. 14:20) The wealthy man is able to bestow gifts and favors. So there are always those who will seek his company and address him with flattering words, even though they are insincere. But what happens if his wealth suddenly disappears? Most of his "friends" soon disappear too. When his money is gone, who seeks his friendship? Hence, if we find ourselves inclined to cater to those with great material means, remember the age-old tendency to flatter the rich for selfish advantage. Using "flattering speech" or "a false front for covetousness" cannot be harmonized with godliness.—1 Thess. 2:5.

WHAT IS GOD'S VIEWPOINT?

Does wealth make a difference in Jehovah God's eyes? Can we offer him anything of value that he does not already possess? Absolutely not! Since he "made the world and all the things in it," he rightly claims ownership of all wealth that exists. (Ps. 50:7-12; Acts 17:24) Any attempt to buy God's favor without honest-hearted, godly works is nothing more than a bribe. But "with Jehovah our God there is no unrighteousness or partiality or taking of a bribe." (2 Chron. 19:7) Wealth gives no advantage in judgment by God.

At the same time, poverty is no hin-

drance. The poor need not fear that their lowly status disqualifies them for God's goodwill. Psalm 69:33 assures that "Jehovah is listening to the poor ones." In God's sight, there is nothing that preferentially distinguishes the rich from the poor. "The rich one and the one of little means have met each other. The Maker of them all is Jehovah." (Prov. 22:2) In rendering judgment, Jehovah does not examine pocketbooks. He is "searching the heart . . . to give to each one according to his ways." —Jer. 17:10.

Jesus Christ views matters exactly as his Father does. Christ invited all to come to him for spiritual refreshment, whether rich or poor, young or old, bond or free. (Matt. 11:28) Both rich and poor benefited from his teaching and miracles. The richest received no more or no less than the poorest. All were given opportunity to hear and to respond to the good news, and Jesus taught them to love their neighbors as themselves.—Matt. 22:39.

Since most of the wealthy ignored Jesus, the poor and lowly benefited most from his time and attention. He condemned the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees because they greedily demanded the best for themselves. (Matt. 23:2-7) Also, he would tolerate no attempt by any of his disciples to gain prominence over the others.

SHOWING HONOR TO ONE ANOTHER

If we are to be judged favorably by Jehovah God, we must deal fairly and impartially with others. "He that is holding the one of little means in derision has reproached his Maker," whereas "the one showing favor to the poor one is glorifying Him." (Prov. 17:5; 14:31) Jehovah rewards those showing consideration for others in need, and "he that is giving to the one of little means will have no want." (Prov. 28:27) Our worship can have little meaning if we make "partial distinctions" that downgrade others.—Jas. 3:17.

Consequently, Christians happily share the good news of God's kingdom with all who will listen. They are just as willing to visit humble homes in the poorest neighborhood as they are to go to the imposing residences of the well-to-do. Each individual is viewed as one among the many for whom Jesus gave his life. (Matt. 20:28) Any who demonstrate sheeplike qualities are entitled to all the spiritual provisions made by the Christian congregation.

Inside the congregation, there is no place for acts of favoritism. In the first century C.E., those showing favoritism to the rich were soundly denounced as practicing something sinful. (Jas. 2:1-9) Both the lowly and the rich should receive spiritual attention and care without partiality. —Lev. 19:15.

Those of little means are an integral part of the congregation. Hence, they should not be made to feel that they are 'left out' because some clique exists among certain ones. "Poor people" were among those whom Jesus recommended inviting to a feast as a demonstration of genuine hospitality. (Luke 14:12-14) And naturally, if some Christians have acquired material things that certain fellow believers cannot afford, the affluent ones will not make 'a showy display of their means of life.'—1 John 2:16.

So, how do you estimate a man's worth? Look closely at what he is and not at what he has. Measure him by his success in cultivating Christian qualities. Is he a man who fears Jehovah? (Ps. 111:10) Does he have strong faith? (Heb. 10:38, 39) Is he hospitable? (Rom. 12:13) Does he show kindness and willingness to forgive others? (Eph. 4:32) Is he known for truthful, wholesome speech? (Eph. 4:29; Titus 2:6-8) Does the person display the love that was to identify Christ's disciples? (John 13:35) Surely, this is the kind of person you should want as your *friend!*

From STREET BRAWLER to CHRISTIAN MINISTER

As told by Harry S. Yoshikawa

OUR neighbors in the small community where I grew up in Hawaii nearly fifty years ago were gamblers, fighters and thieves. My father was a rough and rugged fisherman—an expert in the martial arts.

Dad taught my brother and me at an early age how to defend ourselves. We entered martial arts contests, and usually either won or placed second. When I was thirteen we went to Japan for six months, where we received further training in the martial arts. I also learned boxing skills from a former middleweight champion of Hawaii.

Brawling became my weekly activity. Tiny the Bruiser was my nickname, and I *wasn't* tiny. Friends would pick me up at midnight just to fight someone in Honolulu or Waikiki.

In 1944 I joined the army and was sent to Europe. The second world war was being fought, and it was terrible to see. After it was over, I formed a musical group called the "Beach Combers," and also a Hawaiian boxing team. We traveled *through* Europe entertaining both troops and civilians. We made some recordings, as well as doing radio broadcasts.

TWO YOUTHS I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER

It was during the war in Belgium, early in 1945, that I first heard something that, at the time, didn't mean too much to me. I was a first sergeant, and every week a youth about eighteen years old would come to my office. He would tell me how God will establish a government that will bring peace to the earth. When I asked him why he wasn't enlisted, he said that he was already in an army—Christ's. It was a puzzling answer to me.

After returning from the European theater of war in 1946, another teen-ager spoke to me about the Bible. At first I thought he did so because of the kind of life I was living—always fighting, getting drunk and doing other mischievous things. I recalled what the Belgian youth had said, and I was surprised because the message was the same.

This young man would distribute religious magazines on the street next to a theater. Since I felt sorry and ashamed for him, I offered to buy all his magazines so he could go home or go to the movies with me. But he always refused. I thought he was unusual for a boy of his age.

MARRIAGE DIDN'T CHANGE ME

Occasionally I took time off from brawling to court the girls, and eventually I got married. But marriage didn't end my weekly fighting.

Sometimes when I got home there was a different kind of fight. My wife would be angry at me for leaving her and the children at home. Once, feeling great after winning a street fight, I got home at 6 a.m., and my wife was waiting up for me. I tried to sneak in through the basement, pretending to be drunk, but I didn't fool her. She was waiting, and hit me with a *geta,* a wooden clog.

HOW I STARTED TO CHANGE

The year 1954 marked a turning point in my life. A fellow worker at the bus company gave me two booklets, *Basis for Belief in a New World* and *After Armageddon—God's New World.* I took them and stayed up all night reading and rereading them. I could see that this religion was certainly different, not like others I had come to know.

I was told that there was a family of these people somewhere in the same block where we lived. So I went from house to house looking for them. It was a Tuesday evening, and a Bible study was in progress at this home when I called there. When I inquired if they were Jehovah's Witnesses, they hesitated to reply, perhaps because I spoke in a gruff, rough way, and I was dressed in old work clothes. They may have thought that I had come to cause trouble.

However, I was invited in and treated in an extremely kind and hospitable manner, which made me feel completely at home. As a consequence, all my characteristic attitudes began to disappear. I felt ashamed of my conduct and speech. The people took the time to explain to me many points from the Bible, and encouraged me to have my own personal Bible study and to attend all their Bible meetings. I left there feeling that these people must have the truth.

It was suggested that I study with a fellow worker at the bus company where I worked; he was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Wouldn't you know—he was a person that I wanted to beat up at one time because I just didn't like his appearance! But I wanted to learn, so I humbled myself and determined to ask him to study the Bible with me.

As I approached his home, he saw me coming. He thought for sure that I had come over to cause trouble. His wife greeted me, and she showed me extraordinary Christian kindness. Her husband's fears soon vanished, and a Bible study was started. Within two months I began telling my friends and relatives things that I was learning, but in an untactful way.

I bluntly let my wife know that we were no longer Buddhists, and that we would not be celebrating Christmas or any other pagan holidays. I told her that she must accept this decision or else. Believing that I had gone totally insane, she pleaded with my parents for advice as to what she should do, because 'their son' was acting very strange. My mother was most reassuring, telling her: "Don't worry, my son never is interested in one thing too long. Give him three months and he'll forget all about this crazy religion and Jehovah."

PUBLIC WITNESSING

This time, though, mother was wrong. Soon I was joining others in witnessing publicly. The first time was memorable, almost disastrous. The presiding overseer took me with him to distribute Bible magazines on the street.

I was calling out to passersby, "Read the *Awake!*" One person in a nasty way responded: "I'm wide awake so I don't need that trashy magazine." Instantly my old personality returned.

"You're wide awake, huh?! Well, you won't be for long. You'll be sleeping shortly." I swung at him and chased him two blocks. In the meantime the horrified overseer caught up with me and said how glad he was that I hadn't caught the fellow yet. He explained that if I did beat him up it would bring reproach on God's name. I told him that had the police apprehended me, I wouldn't tell them that I was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, but that I was a Pentecostal.

Patiently the overseer corrected me, explaining that that would be lying. Thereafter he stood right next to me. I felt really ashamed, and when I went home I prayed to Jehovah to forgive me, for I never meant to bring reproach on his name.

My first experience of calling on people in their homes was another story. At the first door I met a lady who was quite nice. She listened to my sermon, asking questions, but her inquiries were not about the Bible. She asked, "Are you married? How many children do you have? Who does your cooking?"

Her husband, wondering who was speaking to her, came out. He told me that I was wasting my time, for she was a mental case, totally out of her right mind. But she kept asking me questions, and I gave my entire Bible sermon. This gave me confidence to go on to the next house. Lo and behold, at the next house an interested householder accepted three Bible study aids from me! By the end of the day I had placed seven more.

Contrary to Oriental custom, I began helping my wife with household chores

RADICAL CHANGES MADE

I had been so much under the influence of nicotine that once when I ran out of cigarettes I woke my wife up and made her go ask the neighbors for a couple of cigarettes. But from my study of God's Word I learned that smoking has no place in the life of a Christian. So three months after I started to study I gave up smoking.

I decided to symbolize my dedication to Jehovah by water baptism, and was baptized July 17, 1954. My big desire now was that my family would join me in true worship.

The Oriental custom is that the wife does all the household duties without the assistance of the husband. I had been a firm believer in this custom. But since my desire to have my wife study the Bible was greater, I soon found myself washing dishes, rinsing dirty diapers, helping with the cooking and with the children.

Once when having a picnic with our friends at the beach, instead of enjoying the surf or having our usual conversation, I started reading the Bible to them. They decided to take a walk to get away from my persistent preaching. But to their dismay I was right behind them with the Bible in hand. Finally, my wife, our friend and his wife consented to have a regular Bible study.

My mother could see that I hadn't lost interest in serving Jehovah, as she thought I would. It became clear to her that the new personality that I was developing wasn't a temporary fad. So she, too, agreed to study the Bible to find out what it was that had made me a different person.

June 25, 1955, was one of the happiest days of my life. It was the day for baptism at an assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses, and who do you think was sitting up front as baptismal candidates? My wife, my mother, our friend and his wife—all four of them ready to symbolize their dedication to Jehovah.

I have since had the joy of seeing a number of my fellow bus drivers accept Bible truths and become Jehovah's Witnesses. Among them was a driver whom I once pinned against the wall threatening to beat him up. He is now a traveling overseer.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

The year following my baptism I began to be used in various capacities within the congregation. Then in 1958 I was appointed to be presiding overseer, and also city overseer for Honolulu.

Due to family obligations, full-time preaching service as a "pioneer" seemed out of the question for me. My four children were still of school age. But, as a family, we shared in temporary pioneering whenever we could. Then in 1963 my wife became a regular pioneer.

Our congregation was pioneer-minded. During some months more than half the congregation temporary pioneered; once seventy-two of us did. With this many pioneering in one congregation there had to be good scheduling, and a lot of mutual help. Baby-sitting, transportation and territory arrangements were made carefully. What a joyful month we had together!

In 1967 I was invited to share in the circuit work, visiting a number of congregations in the Hawaiian islands and giving spiritual encouragement to them. This was a cherished opportunity, but one that I couldn't accept without first speaking with my family, since three of our children were still in school.

My wonderful children were willing to do part-time work and help in any way possible so that I could take on this new assignment. One daughter said: "Dad, you always encourage us to pioneer, but what about you? Here's your opportunity to devote yourself full time to Jehovah."

While in the circuit work we encountered many different, and sometimes amusing situations. One stands out in my mind. Two neighbors were on very bad terms, as one had cut his neighbor's mango tree that was hanging over part of his yard. There had been harsh words and threats. When I called at the door of the man who had cut the tree, he thought I was a detective investigating the case, so he invited me in.

Once I started talking the man thought, 'What a strange approach this detective is using, trying to discipline me with the Bible!' After a few minutes, however, he discovered that I was a Witness, and informed me that he had never let Jehovah's Witnesses in his home before. He agreed to a home Bible study, and his whole family joined in and made good progress. In time, ten of his relatives and friends became Witnesses.

Our children are all grown now. One son served for four years at Brooklyn Bethel, the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses. He, with his wife, is now serving as district and circuit overseer in American Samoa. Two daughters are special pioneers, and our other son and his wife, with a baby girl now, are also active preachers of the good news. And my wife and I are still doing circuit work.

My reputation as a street brawler is remembered by only a few persons today. In fact, some find my past hard to believe. For now I'm known widely in the islands as a peaceful Christian minister, and what a joy it is thus to represent our great God, Jehovah!

THE "TREE" Whose Fall SHOCKS THE WORLD

"At the sound of its downfall I shall certainly cause nations to rock when I bring it down to She'ol with those going down into the pit, and in the land down below all the trees of Eden, the choicest and the best of Lebanon, all those drinking water, will be comforted."—Ezek. 31:16.

WE HUMANS can develop an affection for a tree. Stirred by such sentimental feeling for a mere tree, the poet addressed his words of protest to a man armed with an ax and said: "Woodman, spare that tree! Touch not a single bough! In youth it sheltered me, and I'll protect it now." A stately tree, grown to the magnificence of its full stature, can call forth the admiration of many beholders. The beauty of trees awakened the soul of the poet to burst forth with the words: "I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree. . . . Poems are made by fools like me, but only God can make a tree." Because of heartfelt attachment to such a handiwork of God, the cutting down of a particular tree can produce feelings of sorrow.

[2] The worship of trees is not uncommon throughout the earth. The insistence of religious celebrators that a gaudily decorated, brilliantly lit evergreen tree must mark the occasion on December 25 of each year smacks of such tree worship. For thousands of years there has been a "tree" that has captured the attention and admiration of the whole world of mankind. Their attitude and actions toward it prove them to be worshipers of this "tree" of worldwide prominence. Cold disbelief and eager curiosity may move us to ask, What is that "tree"? Do I worship it?

1. Why can the cutting down of a particular tree produce feelings of sadness?
2. With regard to worship of trees, what questions is it good to ask ourselves?

[3] It is an old "tree," now more than 4,200 years old. So it could be described and talked about more than two and a half millenniums ago. From writings of that long ago we can pick a fine description of this tree, which has entrenched itself so long and has become so deeply rooted in our earth that mankind thinks that it will never fall by any means. Here is the description:

[4] "A cedar in Lebanon, pretty in bough, with a woody thicket offering shadow, and high in stature, so that among the clouds its treetop proved to be. Waters were what made it get big; the watery deep caused it to grow high. With its streams it [the watery deep] was going all around its planting place; and its channels it [the watery deep] sent forth to all the trees of the field. That is why it grew higher in its stature than all the other trees of the field.

[5] "And its boughs kept multiplying, and its branches continued getting longer because of much water in its watercourses. On its boughs all the flying creatures of the heavens made their nests, and under its branches all the wild beasts of the field gave birth, and in its shade all the populous nations would dwell. And it came to be pretty in its greatness, in the length of its foliage, for its root system proved to be over many waters. Other cedars were no

3. Why does mankind think that this "tree" will never fall?
4, 5. According to Ezekiel 31:3-9, what contributes to the matchless prettiness of this "tree"?

match for it in the garden of God. As for juniper trees, they bore no resemblance as respects its boughs. And plane trees themselves did not prove to be like it in branches. No other tree in the garden of God resembled it in its prettiness. Pretty is the way that I made it in the abundance of its foliage, and all the other trees of Eden that were in the garden of the true God kept envying it."—Ezek. 31:3-9.

6 The Republic of Lebanon has been much in the world news in recent years, but the cedars on the mountains of Lebanon have been famous for millenniums. (Note Judges 9:15.) No man planted those tall wide-spreading cedars there. Cedar trees were already on site before the confusion of the human language at the Tower of Babel scattered the builders in all directions from ancient Babylon on the Euphrates River, in the second century after the global flood. The Creator of heaven and earth takes the credit for planting those cedars. So Psalm 80:10 speaks of them as "the cedars of God," and Psalm 104:16 calls them "the cedars of Lebanon that he [Jehovah] planted."

7 The fact that these cedars, together with the juniper and plane trees, were said to be in Eden and in "the garden of God" does not mean that the garden of Eden was restored after the deluge of Noah's day, 2370 B.C.E. Rather, the location of this particular cedar was so pleasant, so Edenic, so like man's original home, that it was like "the garden of God." The Hebrew word for "garden" (*gan*) means, basically, a "fenced-in or enclosed place"; and we remember that the original "garden of Eden" had a passageway "at the east of the garden" through which the disobedient Adam and Eve were driven out and where God stationed the cherubs "to guard the way to the tree of life."—Gen. 3:24.

8 In the days of the prophecy of Ezekiel the cedar-famed land of Lebanon was so beautiful that Ezekiel was inspired to say to the king of Tyre (a seaport of Lebanon): "In Eden, the garden of God, you proved to be. . . . You are the anointed cherub that is covering, and I have set you. On the holy mountain of God you proved to be." (Ezek. 28:11-14) Quite appropriately, then, in the seventh century B.C.E. this specially "pretty" cedar of Lebanon was spoken of as being in Eden, in "the garden of God." It was therefore in a highly favored location, with fine possibilities.

ITS MEANING IN 1977 C.E.

9 We, of modern times, are concerned, not so much with things of more than 2,500 years ago, but especially with those of our day, things having a connection with us and that affect us. So does this "pretty" tree, this "cedar in Lebanon," picture anything on the modern scene? How are we going to determine this correctly? Well, for one thing, the prophecy says that, not only did the birds lodge on its far-reaching branches and the wild beasts give birth to their young beneath it, but "in its shade all the populous nations would dwell." Also: "At the sound of its downfall I [Jehovah] shall certainly cause nations to rock." (Ezek. 31:6, 16) Those words carry political overtones. They indicate that this upstanding "cedar in Lebanon" pictures something political. It does!

6. Why can man take no credit for planting the cedars of Lebanon?
7. How did God talk about the location of the cedar tree, and did this mean that Paradise had been restored to earth?
8. Where did Ezekiel 28:11-14 say that the king of the Lebanon seaport of Tyre was located, and why?
9. According to what is said to dwell under the shade of that "pretty" cedar of Lebanon, what sort of thing does it picture?

10 Even the ancient application of Ezekiel's prophecy makes certain that the "cedar in Lebanon" pictures something political. Back there, to whom was the prophecy addressed? Ezekiel tells us, saying: "And it occurred further that in the eleventh year [607 B.C.E.], in the third month [the spring month of Sivan], on the first day of the month [five days before the feast of Pentecost], the word of Jehovah occurred to me, saying: 'Son of man, say to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to his crowd, "Whom have you come to resemble in your greatness? Look! An Assyrian, a cedar in Lebanon, pretty in bough, with a woody thicket offering shadow, and high in stature, so that among the clouds its treetop proved to be."'" —Ezek. 31:1-3.

11 Ah! Here we have it! "Pharaoh the king of Egypt and . . . his crowd" were likened to the unusually tall, long-boughed cedar on a mountain of Lebanon. They are also said to resemble "an Assyrian," but the bulk of the prophecy is given to the "cedar in Lebanon" and what happens to it rather than to the "Assyrian." The comparison of them to "an Assyrian" would convey the idea of great military and political strength. Down to twenty-five years before Ezekiel's prophecy, the Assyrian Empire had been the world power of the day and had eclipsed the Egyptian Empire, the previous world power of Bible prophecy. It had even occupied part of Egyptian territory. But now, in the prophet Ezekiel's day, Egypt was the chief contender against the Babylonian Empire, the new world power, the Third World Power. So the comparison of Pharaoh and his crowd to "an Assyrian" indicates that even then Egypt was a political factor that still had to be taken into account, by Babylon.

12 Even in Ezekiel's time the Jewish government of Jerusalem had appealed to Egypt for military aid against the expanding empire of Babylon. (Ezek. 17:7-17) There is no questioning that Egypt still held international influence. (Jer. 37:5-7) Thus Pharaoh the king of Egypt and his crowd were still like a tall political, military structure that reached up higher than cedars of Lebanon that can grow to the height of a hundred feet (30 meters) or more. Like a cedar of Lebanon that extends out its lower branches so far that they make the tallest cedar look squat, Egypt of that time even challenged Babylon and offered shade to nations that chose to ally themselves to the land of the Nile and to come under the protection of its wide-spreading branches of military aid. Egypt still looked "pretty in bough" to distressed nations back there, who preferred alliance with Egypt to submission to Babylon, which power Jehovah God was then using as his instrument for executing divine wrath.

13 That was all very interesting and exciting for two and a half millenniums ago, but what about today? Certainly the prophecy of the "cedar in Lebanon" cannot be fitted to Egypt of our modern day, which is now occupied by the Arab Republic of Egypt under Moslem control. We agree that the prophecy cannot, today, be applied that way. Especially because the inspired Bible does not apply it that way. So what is this magnificently "pretty" cedar of Lebanon of today? What or whom do Pharaoh the king of Egypt and his crowd resemble now, in our twentieth

10. In harmony with its political significance, to whom is the prophecy about the "cedar in Lebanon" addressed?
11. What was indicated by the comparison of Pharaoh and his crowd to "an Assyrian"?
12. How was Egypt, even in Ezekiel's day, still like that tall, overshadowing "cedar in Lebanon"?
13, 14. Today, does the "cedar in Lebanon" picture the Egypt of our time, or what, and on what Scriptural basis?

century? What today is the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon," the fall of which will shortly shock the world?

[14] The doomed "tree" symbolizes something that is not generally recognized today. What? A spiritual Egypt! If, now, we turn to the last book of the Sacred Bible, there, in Revelation 11:8, the inspired apostle John writes: "And their corpses will be on the broad way of the great city which is in a spiritual sense called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was also impaled." The one called "their Lord" is the Lord Jesus Christ, and the ones whose corpses lay exposed in the city's broad way are the faithful followers or disciples of Christ. In Revelation 11:3, those disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ are called "my two witnesses," and they get killed for preaching a gloomy, unpopular message to the nations.

[15] In what "great city" were these modern-day "witnesses" killed and their corpses left lying exposed to public shame? Not in the capital city of modern Egypt. Certainly Jesus Christ, the "Lord" of these witnesses, was not impaled down in first-century Egypt, for Revelation 11:8 says that the Lord's "witnesses" were killed and exposed in the same place in which he was impaled in the year 33 of our Common Era. We are helped to understand when we note that the "great city" is symbolic and it "is in a spiritual sense called Sodom and Egypt." So this would exclude the literal city of Sodom, which was then out of existence, and also the literal land of Egypt, which was then subject to the Roman Empire. In a spiritual sense, then, where was the Lord Jesus Christ impaled and his true disciples killed and exposed?

15. What objection is there to applying the term "Egypt" in Revelation 11:8 to the literal land of Egypt?

[16] Well, a "city" is a political organization, and a "great city" would be a great political organization, a great system of government. Ancient Sodom was once a political organization, and ancient Egypt was a land with a mighty political system that made it for centuries the First World Power of Bible prophecy. Consequently, what is called Egypt "in a spiritual sense" must be the worldwide system of political rulership, the political structure of man rule by man-made governments. In the midst of such a "great city" the Lord Jesus Christ was "impaled" back in 33 C.E., outside the city of Jerusalem. The world of mankind is part and parcel of this system of things. So where Jesus Christ was impaled was in this world that upholds this system of things. Accordingly, he said to his disciples:

[17] "As long as I am in the world, I am the world's light." (John 9:5) "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were part of the world, the world would be fond of what is its own. Now because *you* are no part of the world, but *I* have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you."—John 15:18, 19.

[18] Not in literal Egypt, out of which he was once brought as a child, but in what is called Egypt "in a spiritual sense" Jesus Christ was sacrificed as "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." (Matt. 2:13-21; John 1:29, 36) Not by mere chance was the Lord Jesus Christ sacrificed as the Lamb of God on Passover Day of 33 C.E. Why not? Because he had been foreshadowed by the lamb that was sacrificed by the Israelites on that first Passover Day of the year 1513 B.C.E. down in ancient Egypt. The Egyp-

16, 17. So, in what symbolic "great city" was it that the Lord Jesus Christ was impaled?

18. How did Jesus' death as a sacrificial lamb on a certain day harmonize with the idea of his being impaled in spiritual Egypt?

tians who did not sacrifice a Passover lamb and sprinkle its blood upon their doorways lost their firstborn ones of man and beast. This led to Pharaoh's releasing the Israelites from slavery that they might go out a free, liberated people.

[19] In that ancient deliverance of Jehovah's chosen people, what did the land of Egypt picture? Also, what did Pharaoh and his crowd picture? The plague-stricken land of Egypt pictured this worldly system of things, and Pharaoh and his crowd pictured the ruling factors of this system. In this "spiritual Egypt" it was that "Christ our passover has been sacrificed. Consequently let us [Christ's disciples] keep the festival." (1 Cor. 5:7, 8) In full accord with this truth, the Egypt from which the faithful disciples of the Lamb Jesus Christ are delivered is this worldly system of things. That is why Christ's disciples are told, in Galatians 1:3, 4: "May you have undeserved kindness and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. He gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from the present wicked system of things."

[20] From this, what do we rightly conclude? That the "cedar in Lebanon," which in the prophet Ezekiel's day pictured "Pharaoh the king of Egypt and . . . his crowd," pictures something larger today. It pictures the world system of things in which the political ruling factors govern all the earthly nations. Although it is likened to the cedar that was the envy of all the other trees in the Edenic land of Lebanon, this system of things was not planted by Jehovah God, who planted those evergreen trees in the literal land of Lebanon, which was then like "the garden of God." As far as the Planter's record, the Sacred Bible, shows, the symbolic political "cedar in Lebanon" had its beginning on earth in the days of the mighty hunter, Nimrod, the founder of the first Babylonian empire, in the second century after the deluge of Noah's day. Just as Nimrod, the great-grandson of Noah, rebelled against the universal sovereignty of Noah's God, Jehovah, so too, the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon" does not recognize the sovereignty of the Most High God but defies it.—Gen. 10:8-12; 1 Chron. 1:8-10.

[21] Drawing upon the human resources at its disposal like a watery deep, it has tried to exalt itself above Jehovah God, as it were, sticking its treetop into the clouds. It has multiplied its boughs and extended its branches so as to exercise domination over all of God's "footstool," the earth. (Isa. 66:1; Matt. 5:35) Under its sturdy structure all the man-made governments, even "all the populous nations," have taken up their dwelling down till this day. (Ezek. 31:4-6) In course of time, even the nation of Israel, whom Jehovah God planted in the Promised Land of Palestine, was tempted to follow the course of these worldly nations, to its great hurt. But in the taking of this popular course there has been one exception. What is this exception? Do we want to belong to it, and gain everlasting benefit, or imitate the course of "all the populous nations"? We now need help to make the right choice!

9. So from what is it that Christ's disciples are delivered in correspondency with Israel's deliverance from ancient Egypt?

). What, then, does the "cedar in Lebanon" picture in our day, and when did this have its beginning?

21. What popular course have the nations of the world taken toward the "cedar in Lebanon"?

IN COMING ISSUES

- **Are You Walking as in God's Presence?**
- **A College-bred Newshound Finds the Best News.**
- **Will "Getting Ahead" Bring You Happiness?**

GET OUT From Under That "PRETTY" TREE!

LIKE the "cedar in Lebanon" that Jehovah described in Ezekiel's prophecy, chapter thirty-one, the man-made political structure of this system of things looks prettier than anything else. As Jehovah said, in Ezekiel 31:8, 9, "no other tree in the garden of God resembled it in its prettiness. Pretty is the way that I made it [the literal cedar that is used as an illustration] in the abundance of its foliage, and all the other trees of Eden that were in the garden of the true God kept envying it." This worldwide political system of things has produced many boughs to carry its abundance of shade-giving foliage, so as to cover and protect the political needs of all worldly nations. Each treelike nation would like to be a world power to dominate all else, thus being an enviable organization.

[2] All people who believe in man's ability to rule himself independently of Jehovah God admire that symbolic "cedar in Lebanon," thinking it to be the acme of prettiness. To appreciate this fact, a sober-minded person merely has to note the worldwide rage for nationalism and national sovereignties. Coupled with this is the great power-struggle on the part of great blocs of nations for world domination. Worship of the State is what is taking place on a global scale. It is being demanded of all the inhabitants of the earth. This form of envious admiration of the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon" compares with the adoring admiration that is foretold in the last book of the Bible, at Revelation 13:3, 4, 15, where we read:

[3] "All the earth followed the wild beast with admiration. And they worshiped the dragon because it gave the authority to the wild beast, and they worshiped the wild beast with the words: 'Who is like the wild beast, and who can do battle with it?' And there was granted it to give breath to the image of the wild beast, so that the image of the wild beast should both speak and cause to be killed all those who would not in any way worship the image of the wild beast."

[4] In that prophetic description of the things to come, we note how widespread the enforced worship was to become, earth-wide, and the extreme to which the worship would go, to mankind's adoring, not God Jehovah, but an earthly creature and its idolatrous "image." So, now, what about it? Could such creature worship be participated in by the worshipers of the one living and true God, the Creator, who requires exclusive devotion for *himself? No* (Ex. 20:1-6) Speaking for himself, the Creator says, according to the words of the American Standard Version of the Bible: "I am Jehovah, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, nei

1. In what way have the treelike nations envied the "cedar in Lebanon"?
2. How does the world of mankind show that it considers the "cedar in Lebanon" prettier than anything else?
3. How was worship of the political State pictured in Revelation 13:3, 4, 15?
4. Why could worshipers of the one living and true God not take part in such worship?

ther my praise unto graven images." —Isa. 42:8.

5 In today's nationalistically minded world, are we personally going to take those words seriously, even though they were uttered more than 2,700 years ago? In this respect there is one man whose example above all we can safely follow, and that is Jesus Christ. When Satan the Devil, the symbolic Dragon, offered him world rule in exchange for one act of Devil worship, Jesus replied: "It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service."—Matt. 4:8-10.

6 Jesus' rebuff to Satan showed that the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon" did not look "pretty" to him. Neither has that man-made political structure of this system of things looked alluringly "pretty" and worshipful to Christ's true disciples to this day. True, Jehovah God describes the "prettiness" of the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon" from the world's standpoint, but to Him the thing symbolized by that "cedar in Lebanon" (Pharaoh the king of Egypt and his crowd) does not look "pretty." It is wicked; for which reason he says: "According to its wickedness I will drive it out." (Ezek. 31:11) Do we today view the symbolic "cedar" as Jehovah God does, and do we believe that the final fulfillment of His words will shortly take place without fail? Our conviction in this matter will decide for us the question: Shall we go along with the nations and dwell under the symbolic "cedar," or shall we get out from under it without delay?

THE FALL OF THE "TREE" CERTAIN

7 There is real urgency about making the right decision in this matter. The crashing fall of the symbolic "cedar" (Pharaoh and his crowd's counterpart today) is certain. It is the divine determination that this event of worldwide importance shall take place. After describing the enviable "prettiness" of the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon," the prophecy given through Ezekiel goes on to say:

8 "This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said, 'For the reason that you became high in stature, so that it put its treetop even among the clouds and its heart became exalted because of its height, I shall also give it into the hand of the despot of the nations. Without fail he will act against it. According to its wickedness I will drive it out. And strangers, the tyrants of the nations, will cut it down, and people will abandon it upon the mountains; and in all the valleys its foliage will certainly fall, and its branches will be broken among all the stream beds of the earth. And out from its shade all the peoples of the earth will come down [from the mountain] and abandon it. Upon its fallen trunk all the flying creatures of the heavens will reside, and upon its branches there will certainly come to be all the wild beasts of the field; to the end that none of the watered trees may become high in their stature, or put their treetops even among the clouds, and that none drinking water may stand up against them in their height, for they will certainly all of them be given to death, to the land down below, in the midst of the sons of mankind, to those going down into the pit.' "—Ezek. 31:10-14.

9 The skyscraping "cedar in Lebanon" high up on the mountainside was to be cut down by a team of woodchoppers. 'Impossible!' the "populous nations" dwelling under its shade might say, but Jehovah God would see to it that his words are carried out. He would send against this

. With respect to those divine words, who is the man /hose example we can safely follow today? Why?
. How does God view the "cedar in Lebanon" and, herefore, what courses do we have to choose between /ithout delay?
. 8. Urgent action on our part is necessary because of hat determination of Jehovah regarding the "cedar n Lebanon"?

9. How does Jehovah designate those who will cut down the "cedar in Lebanon," and should mention of them have affected nations sheltered under it?

symbolical "tree" what he calls "the despot of the nations." This composite "despot" would be made up of foreign nations not dwelling under the symbolic "cedar," namely, "strangers, the tyrants of the nations." All the "populous nations" dwelling under the "cedar" would not be able to prevent these international terrors from cutting down the sheltering structure over them. Since those tree fellers are said to be "the despot of the nations," "the tyrants of the nations," the bare mention of them should have struck terror into the hearts of those dwelling under the tall, long-branched "cedar."

10 God Almighty, who does not lie, fulfilled his prophecy upon that symbolic cedar of ancient times. He sent against "Pharaoh the king of Egypt and . . . his crowd" the newly risen world power, the Babylonian Empire. This "despot of the nations" was no friend of Pharaoh and his crowd, but was made up of "strangers" to them. Such hostile ones acted toward the Egyptian "cedar" like "the tyrants of the nations." These were out to dominate the world, tyrannically, and Jehovah used them as the executional ax in His hand. When Pharaoh the king of Egypt and his military crowd tried to come to the aid of beleaguered Jerusalem at the appeal of King Zedekiah, they were beaten back by the tyrannical Babylonians. So, in the year 607 B.C.E. Pharaoh and his forces witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and its sacred temple. Some sixteen years later Jehovah gave the land of Egypt to King Nebuchadnezzar as a compensation for his service as an executioner in divine hands. (Ezek. 29:17-20) Then, indeed, the strong arms of Pharaoh were broken beyond repair and never again offered the threat of world domination.—Ezek. 30:20-26.

10. Who was the "despot of the nations" used by Jehovah as his executional ax, and finally what threat did the "cedar" cease to offer?

11 However, that is all history of more than two and a half millenniums ago. What interests us today is, Who is the modern "despot of the nations," and who are the "strangers, the tyrants of the nations"? They are the fear-inspiring Communist bloc of nations, are they not?

12 To this we flatly answer, No! For the Communist nations dwell under the spreading boughs of the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon" as much as the liberal, democratic nations do. They are a part of this world and operate according to the man-made political structure of this system of things. They are nationalistic and worship the political State and are bent on dominating all the earth with their political ideology and methods. Hence, we could not expect them to cut down the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon," the modern counterpart of ancient Pharaoh of Egypt and his crowd. They will never put themselves out of business! Daniel 11:40 through 12:1 indicates that they will be caught with all others in the "time of distress such as has not been made to occur since there came to be a nation until that time."

13 So, then, for cutting down the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon" that still dominates the earth, who will be Jehovah's instrument that will do a work like that of the "despot of the nations," or the "strangers, the tyrants of the nations," back in the prophet Ezekiel's day? It will not be Jehovah's Christian witnesses, who today number just some two million scattered among 210 lands around the globe. They are not despotic, not tyrannical, and strike no terror in people's hearts, for which reason they are openly persecuted as a helpless, defenseless religious minority. Not a puny earthly instrument, but a mighty

11, 12. What fear-inspiring bloc of nations comes to mind, but why is it not the modern "despot of the nations" used by God?

13. Why are Jehovah's Christian witnesses not the ones whom he will use to accomplish a work like that of the "despot," or "tyrants," of the nations?

heavenly instrument is what Jehovah will use.

14 Jehovah's instrument is the glorified Jesus Christ and his armies of heavenly angels. Hardheaded politicians of today may laugh at such a thought. But the ancient King Sennacherib of Assyria could likewise have laughed at the idea that in one night the angel of Jehovah would kill off 185,000 of his crack troops. (2 Ki. 19:35, 36) So, in his prophecy on the "conclusion of the system of things," Jesus Christ said:

15 "The powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send forth his angels with a great trumpet sound."—Matt. 24:29-31.

16 The entire "system of things," together with all the worldly nations that have taken refuge under it, Jehovah has given into the hands of his Son, Jesus Christ, the "Lord of lords and King of kings." He, with his heavenly angels, will cut down the pretty-looking "cedar in Lebanon." (Rev. 11:15; 17:14; 19:11-16) As a memento of his victory at Har-Magedon in the "war of the great day of God the Almighty," there will lie on the ground the "fallen trunk" of the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon," the modern counterparts of "Pharaoh the king of Egypt and . . . his crowd." (Rev. 16:13-16) These will be like those who go down in death into "the land down below," yes, "into the pit" of burial. (Ezek. 31:14) The question is, Do we, who live in the midst of this "system of things," want to go down there with them? Certainly if we do not want this to happen, we shall have to get out from any place of shelter and refuge under that doomed "tree"! Let not its fall mean our destruction also!

14, 15. Whom, then, will Jehovah use, as indicated by Jesus in Matthew 24:29-31?

15. Into whose hands has God given the "cedar" and all those taking shelter under it, and what must we do in order not to perish with it?

MOURNING AT THE FALL OF THE "TREE"

17 Shortly there is going to be a day of worldwide mourning. It will be over the downfall of something more significant than a pretty "cedar in Lebanon" that has won the admiration of a world of tourists. It will be over the downfall of the worldwide system of things and its operators, the modern-day "Pharaoh the king of Egypt and . . . his crowd." There should be no uncertainty on our part about this, for the divine prophecy goes on to say:

18 "This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said, 'On the day of its going down to She'ol I shall certainly cause a mourning. On its account I will cover the watery deep [the abyss, *LXX*], that I may hold back its streams and that the many waters may be restrained; and on its account I shall darken Lebanon, and on its account the trees of the field will all swoon away. At the sound of its downfall I shall certainly cause nations to rock when I bring it down to She'ol with those going down into the pit, and in the land down below all the trees of Eden, the choicest and the best of Lebanon, all those [trees] drinking water, will be comforted. With him they themselves also have gone down to She'ol, to those slain by the sword, and to those who as his seed have dwelt in his shadow in the midst of nations.' "—Ezek. 31:15-17.

19 In the spirit of those words of Jehovah God, the Lord Jesus Christ was correct in saying that at the "sign" in heaven of his coming as Jehovah's instrument to execute divine vengeance upon the wicked

17, 18. According to Ezekiel 31:15-17, why will there shortly be worldwide mourning?

19. What did Jesus say that all the tribes of the earth would do at seeing the "sign" of his coming, and what fact then shocks them?

ones, all the tribes of the earth would beat themselves in lamentation. (Matt. 24:30) By indications that will speak more loudly than the worldwide preaching by Jehovah's Christian witnesses, all the earthly tribes will discern that this system of things is doomed to early destruction. They will finally be convinced that, despite all their efforts to keep the system going, they cannot prevent its downfall. They will suffer shock at realizing that the destruction comes from the hand of the Creator of heaven and earth. They will grieve that what they have admired as so "pretty" in its majestic structure faces imminent destruction. The impending loss of it pains them sorely.

[20] The tribes, the peoples of the nations, have been like waters to the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon," like a "watery deep" or an abyss, the waters of which have been channeled to the roots of this worldwide system of things. The roots of this system of things have drawn heavily upon what the people can contribute to keep the system flourishing. In this respect this symbolic "cedar in Lebanon" has been a heavy 'water drinker.' It resembles the world empire of false religion, Babylon the Great, which is said to 'sit on many waters.' Not literal waters, but "the waters that you [the Christian apostle John] saw, where the harlot is sitting, mean peoples and crowds and nations and tongues." (Rev. 17:1, 15) Today the peoples, the world population, have expanded to more than four thousand million. So the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon" has a tremendous "watery deep" on which to draw for support.

[21] Will the earth's greatest population be able to keep the cedarlike "system of things" going by sheer force of numbers? By so-called "proletarian" rule, by rule on the part of the masses? Jehovah, whose sovereignty is over all heaven and earth, says, No! He says that he will "hold back its streams" and that the "many waters" will be "restrained." (Ezek. 31:15) How will that be? By his having the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon" cut down in spite of all the popular protest.

[22] Nevertheless, when a tree is cut down, of what good is it to the "fallen trunk" that there is a "watery deep" below it? Its streams are held back from the prone tree trunk that is cut off from its root system. The many waters are restrained from the fallen arboreal giant. Jehovah's will, not the people's will, prevails! The Roman saying, *Vox populi, vox Dei* (The voice of the people [is] the voice of God) is not true.

[23] The crash of this "present wicked system of things" because of its being cut down by Jehovah's instrumentality will produce worldwide consternation, because all nations, peoples and tribes and languages will be involved. And why not? When the whole system goes down under God's deathblow to it, how could any minor structure that has been built into the global system expect to continue on, to stand? (Gal. 1:4) If the biggest and prettiest tree of all is not allowed to keep standing and dominating all the earth, how could all the other trees count on standing without the protection of the cedarlike system? They will "swoon," lose their senses, experience heart failure. What may be expected of them is nicely pictured by Jehovah's words: "On its account the trees of the field will all swoon away." —Ezek. 31:15.

20. How has the symbolic "cedar" been a heavy 'water drinker'?
21. How will Jehovah hold back the symbolic streams and restrain the many waters from the symbolic "cedar"?
22. Of what benefit will the "watery deep" down below be to the fallen tree trunk?
23. Why will Jehovah's cutting down of the "cedar" cause consternation to all minor structures built into the system of things?

[24] Having in mind that the "cedar in Lebanon" pictures "Pharaoh the king of Egypt and . . . his crowd," Jehovah goes on to say: "At the sound of its downfall I shall certainly cause nations to rock when I bring it down to She'ol with those going down into the pit." (Ezek. 31:16) As it were, the downfall of the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon" causes so great a thud as to make the earth quiver and the shock waves reach all the nations. The rocking of the nations that have preferred the sovereignty of the "present wicked system of things" will mean their downfall also, their being laid low in ruins and being removed. Thus territorial claims would be wiped out. National sovereignties would disappear. (Heb. 12:26, 27; Hag. 2:6, 7) In this way there will be a forced abandonment of the pretentious "cedar in Lebanon."—Ezek. 31:12.

[25] When will this occur? During a time of war, not a third world war with nuclear weapons between rival blocs of militarized nations, but "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" at the battlefield of Har–Magedon. Warfare is symbolized by "the sword." The symbolic "cedar in Lebanon" will be made a bed partner with the nations and world powers that have perished by the sword. This is called to our attention by Jehovah's statement: 'And in the land down below all the trees of Eden, the choicest and the best of Lebanon, all those [trees] drinking water, will be comforted. With him [the symbolic cedar] they themselves also have gone down to She'ol, to those slain by the sword, and those who as his seed have dwelt in his shadow in the midst of nations."—Ezek. 31:16, 17, *NW;* Greek *Septuagint* (*LXX*); Syriac Version; *Rotherham.*

1. The rocking of the nations at the downfall of the cedar in Lebanon" will mean what respecting them?
5. When will this abandonment of the "cedar in Lebanon" by the nations occur?

[26] "His seed," who have dwelt under the shadow of the "cedar in Lebanon" in the midst of the nations, would represent those political, military national organizations that developed from the "present wicked system of things," as an offspring or posterity of it. Naturally they have grown or built themselves up under the sponsorship of the worldly system of things. Many of these national organizations have already perished, going down in death to the land down below, the realm of the dead, to become extinct.

[27] So they have ceased to be as symbolic trees, although the overall system of things continues to go on, ever drawing closer to its own destruction. When it itself is cut down and suffers its permanent downfall, this will be a great comfort to all the other symbolic trees in the land down below, the general "pit," She'ol or realm of the dead. We all know that "misery loves company," and these symbolic "trees" that have already been cut down by the "sword" of violence will be very glad to have the company of the magnificent "cedar in Lebanon" with them in the death state. They will be comforted in seeing how this world-dominating system of things proves to be just as weak as they were before Jehovah's "sword" of execution.—Compare Isaiah 14:9-12.

[28] So the system of things will prove to be no stronger than its supporters that take refuge under its protective shadow. Jehovah does not want this symbolic "cedar in Lebanon" to overshadow his real, literal "garden of God" that will be restored to the earth after his fight at Har–Magedon and the binding and abyssing of

26. In what sense can those nations who have dwelt in the shadow of the "cedar in Lebanon" be spoken of as "his seed"?
27. How will the national organizations already in the land down below be comforted at the downfall of the "cedar in Lebanon"?
28. Thus the "cedar in Lebanon" will not be allowed to overshadow what future "garden of God"?

Satan the Devil, "the god of this system of things."—2 Cor. 4:4.

"PRETTINESS" IN HUMAN EYES WILL NOT SAVE IT

29 Humans are prone to idolizing creatures. They have yielded to worshiping the pretty symbolic "tree," the figurative "cedar in Lebanon." This worldly system of things views itself as prettier and more desirable than the kingdom of God in the hands of his Messiah, Jesus the Son of God. O yes, to human eyes, this "present wicked system of things" resembles in prettiness the towering "cedar in Lebanon." Yet, what difference does that make to the Planter of the literal cedars of Lebanon? Says he to this globe-encircling system of things:

30 " 'Whom have you come to resemble thus in glory and greatness among the trees of Eden? [In spite of that, what?] But you will certainly be brought down with the trees of Eden to the land down below. In the midst of the uncircumcised ones you will lie down with those slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his crowd,' is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah."—Ezek. 31:18.

31 In ancient times "Pharaoh and all his crowd" may have practiced circumcision and therefore have thought themselves to be a clean people and righteous, as much so as the Israelites, the descendants of Abraham the Hebrew. "Pharaoh and all his crowd" may have thought that they would never share the fate and be buried with the uncircumcised nations and world powers of the earth. But their self-righteousness did not count with Jehovah God. So, in due time, the Hamitic rulership of the land of the Nile, ancient Egypt, would cease. Thus the circumcision of "Pharaoh and all his crowd" and the worldly beauty of their man-made organization would not save them from the fate of all other lesser organizations.

32 Jehovah the Sovereign Lord decreed that "Pharaoh and all his crowd" should be executed by his instrument and should take their place with all the rest of the unclean human dead. Theirs was a bad political organization, and, said Jehovah, "according to its wickedness I will drive it out." (Ezek. 31:11) Likewise with the "Pharaoh and all his crowd" of modern times. The system of things that Pharaoh and his crowd represented was disapproved by Jehovah God. He detects the wickedness in it regardless of how "pretty" it may seem to the adoring world of mankind. It deserved to be treated like the outstandingly pretty "cedar in Lebanon," namely, to be cut down by the "sword" of the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har–Magedon. (Rev. 16:13-16) At its downfall all the nations of the earth will rock, knowing that they cannot exist any more than the whole world "system of things" can exist. For its stubbornly standing in the way of God's Messianic kingdom it will be cut down.

RIGHT ACTION URGENT NOW!

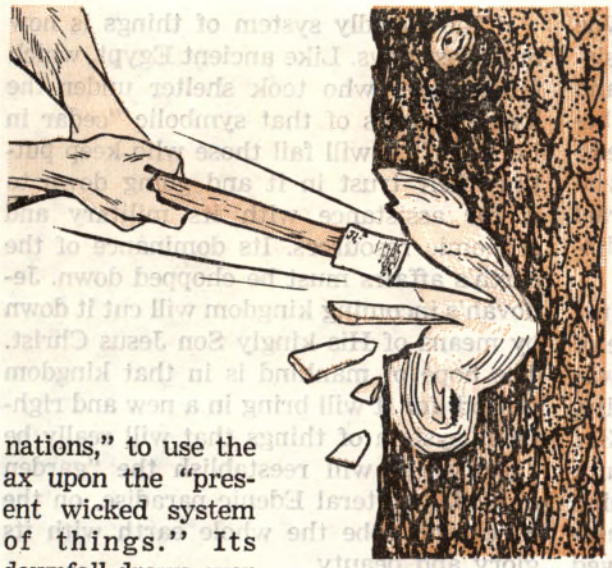
33 As John the Baptist said concerning the Jewish system of things of his day, "Already the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree, then, that does not produce fine fruit is to be cut down," so it is with the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon." (Matt. 3:10) Jehovah's time is close at hand for the "strangers, the tyrants of the

29, 30. Where does Jehovah inform this "wicked system of things" that it will finally be, although it resembles the prettiest cedar in Lebanon?

31. Would the self-righteousness of "Pharaoh and all his crowd" count with God, and so whose fate would they also share?

32. How will this "pretty" system of things undergo an experience like that of "Pharaoh and all his crowd," and why?

33. In what sense is the ax now "lying at the root" of the pretty "cedar in Lebanon"?



nations," to use the ax upon the "present wicked system of things." Its downfall draws ever closer. Despite all its "prettiness" in the eyes of this world of mankind, it is not the planting of Jehovah and it is no part of Jehovah's organization. It is the visible part of Satan the Devil's organization. "According to its wickedness I will drive it out," says Jehovah.—Ezek. 31:11, 12.

[34] In this wicked system of things the modern counterparts of "Pharaoh the king of Egypt and . . . his crowd" have functioned now for more than four thousand years since the founding of ancient Babylon of Nimrod's day. These worldly governing elements have not been put in office by the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. They are not the "seed" or offspring of the heavenly Father; they are not the "seed" of God's "woman," about which He made a hope-inspiring promise in the original "garden of Eden." They are, rather, the "seed" of the Great Serpent, that is to say, the Seed of Satan the Devil. (Gen. 3:15) This may sound like hard language, but it is thoroughly in line with Jesus' words to opposing men of his day: "You are from your father the Devil, and you wish to do the desires of your father. That one was a manslayer when he began, and he did not stand fast in the truth, because truth is not in him." (John 8:44) This modern-day "seed" of God's great Adversary is no more serving God than ancient Pharaoh and his crowd did. As a spiritual "Egypt," it resembles them. —Rev. 11:8.

[35] In the light of these revealed facts and in the face of the impending fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy about the "cedar in Lebanon," what is it incumbent upon us to do? What is it in our interest to do? What should we do in this ominous time? This: Get out from under that symbolic "tree." We do not want to suffer eternally from its crash. So we need to abandon the "present wicked system of things," the antitypical "Pharaoh the king of Egypt and . . . his crowd." We need to put ourselves on the side of Jehovah's organization. We have been lifeless toward that organization as long as we have been a part of this world of sinners. We have been "dead in [our] trespasses and sins, in which [we] at one time walked according to the system of things of this world, according to the ruler [Satan the Devil] of the authority of the air." (Eph. 2:1, 2) We should cease to walk "according to the system of things of this world." We must discontinue dwelling under the protective shadow of what was prefigured by "Pharaoh and all his crowd."

[36] Once we have got out from under the visible organization of God's great Adversary, we should not again resort to it for aid and protection. It is the course of common sense and of divine wisdom for us to

34. Whose "seed" are the functionaries of this "present wicked system of things"?

35. In the light of the foregoing revealed facts, what should we do in this ominous time, and how can we do so?

36. Once having got out from under Satan's visible organization, how should we heed the counsel of Isaiah 31:1?

give heed to the inspired words: "Woe to those going down to Egypt for assistance, those who rely on mere horses, and who put their trust in war chariots, because they are numerous, and in steeds, because they are very mighty, but who have not looked to the Holy One of Israel and have not searched for Jehovah himself."—Isa. 31:1.

[37] We have a warning example against this resorting to Egypt for help in spite of its being doomed. Ezekiel's prophecy was given in the eleventh year of his captivity, the third month, the first day. (Ezek. 31:1) On the ninth day of the fourth month (Tamuz 9, 607 B.C.E.) the Babylonian "despot of the nations" captured Jerusalem. In the following month they destroyed it, and deported most of the survivors to Babylon. In the seventh month (Tishri, 607 B.C.E.) the governor over these left behind was assassinated.

[38] In fear of what the Babylonians might now do, this remnant of Jews decided to abandon the land of Judah and flee down to Egypt for refuge under the symbolic "cedar in Lebanon." The prophet Jeremiah counseled against this. He warned that the king of Babylon would conquer Egypt and would thus get them under his power anyhow. Heedless of Jeremiah's warning, the Jewish remnant fled down to Egypt, taking Jehovah's prophet with them. But Egypt failed them, for some years later the king of Babylon did add the land of Egypt to his empire. Again, as in the past, Egypt failed the faithless Jews, but God's Word did not fail.—2 Ki. 25:1-26; Ezek. 29:17-20; Jer. 40:7 through 43:13.

37, 38. What warning example of this do we have in the remnant of Jews who were left behind after Jerusalem's desolation?

[39] The worldly system of things is now in its last days. Like ancient Egypt, which failed those who took shelter under the long branches of that symbolic "cedar in Lebanon," it will fail those who keep putting their trust in it and going down to it for assistance with its military and economic resources. Its dominance of the earth's affairs must be chopped down. Jehovah's incoming kingdom will cut it down by means of His kingly Son Jesus Christ. The hope of mankind is in that kingdom of God, for it will bring in a new and righteous system of things that will really be "pretty." It will reestablish the "garden of God," a literal Edenic paradise, on the earth and robe the whole earth with its glory and beauty.

[40] Partnership with this doomed world of ungodly people and its system of things is not the thing for us to hold on to in this desperate state of world affairs. If we desire to share in the everlasting blessings that the King Jesus Christ has to bestow on his subjects, we must be just as *he* said that he and his apostles were: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:14, 16) Being thus apart from it, we shall not share the destruction of this "world of ungodly people." (2 Pet. 2:5; 3:6) We shall be preserved for enjoying an everlasting dwelling beneath the righteous new system of things, in which, not Pharaoh and his crowd, but Jesus Christ and his glorified joint heirs will serve as kings and priests of God for mankind's blessing.—Rev. 20:4, 6.

39. What, then, is the hope of mankind, and why so?
40. Why is partnership with this world not the thing for us, but what will our being like Jesus and his apostles mean for us?

Insight on the News

Compensating Crime Victims

● According to a United Press International dispatch of March 7, 1977, during 1976 crime victims in Colorado, U.S.A., received $658,717 from persons who had assaulted or robbed them. The New York "Times" stated: "The restitution programs were imposed by courts as a condition for probation or deferred prosecution. The money went for unrecovered stolen items, damage to property and hospital bills."

This method of dealing with wrongdoers may seem to be quite an innovation. However, in God's law to ancient Israel, compensation was required in cases of injury or loss. For instance, if a person injured someone by striking him during a quarrel, the assailant had to make compensation to that person for time lost from work until the individual completely recovered. (Ex. 21:18, 19) A thief was to make double compensation if he was caught with a stolen animal, money or other things. But if he had slaughtered or sold the stolen animal, heavier compensation was required. For a stolen bull he had to compensate with five of the herd, and for a sheep, four of the flock. (Ex. 22:1, 3, 4, 7) The Law deterred crime and recompensed the victim. It required that the thief work to pay for his wrongdoing, rather than sitting in prison as an economic burden to the community while the victim was left uncompensated for his loss.

Deep Regard for the Bible

● The Swedish periodical "Sökaren" ("The Seeker") recently published an interview with Bertil Persson, a clergyman, author, editor and teacher of religion. He remarked that "the faith of Jehovah's Witnesses is castigated in the most diversified ways," and that their Scandinavian critics range from religious historians and Bible scholars to ordinary people. However, Persson stated: "Behind the faith being preached by Jehovah's Witnesses there is an amazing high-class and internationally oriented Bible science." He then referred to the 1,700-page reference work "Aid to Bible Understanding," prepared by Jehovah's Witnesses and published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

"Only a few months ago," remarked Persson, "I had some Christian and Jewish Bible scholars in the Middle East examine its presentation of facts that concern Oriental Bible science, and they are compelled, against any negative reports they may have heard, to acknowledge the enormous correctness with regard to the facts presented by Jehovah's Witnesses. They say that there is nothing corresponding to this fact certainty in the Bible dictionaries of the West."

There is an underlying reason for this unparalleled "fact certainty." Jehovah's Witnesses have deep regard for the Bible and a sincere desire to learn and apply its message. Whereas present-day scholars generally view the Bible as a mere literary work, or consider much of it to be allegorical, the Witnesses have the same respect for it as did the apostle Paul, who declared: "All Scripture is inspired of God."—2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 1 Thess. 2:13.

'Abstain from Blood'

● The Brazilian newspaper "Folha de S. Paulo" reports: "Various infections can be transmitted through transfusions of blood and plasma. . . . Virus hepatitis, syphilis, malaria and Chagas' disease are the most common. Chagas' disease caused by blood transfusion is not an exception but is regularly reported in medical journals. . . . many cases of this nature are not communicated for various reasons, such as indifference, cover-up, lack of diagnosis. However, the subject is now getting emphatic attention, at least in São Paulo, since there is ample evidence that infection through blood transfusion occurs in a significant number of persons."

When the parasite causing Chagas' disease settles in the muscular fiber of the heart, it may cause a fatal inflammation of the myocardium. Death may be sudden, but, if it is not, the infected person seldom lives beyond fifty years of age.

True Christians do not abstain from blood principally for medical reasons. They do so because of divine command. (Gen. 9:3, 4) Nevertheless, there is the associated benefit of protecting one's health by obeying God's law to "keep abstaining from . . . blood." —Acts 15:28, 29.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT and Bible Symbolism

THE Bible is rich in symbolism, especially in its prophetic parts. Such symbolism quickly conveys information to readers and listeners. Also, vivid pictorial representations can usually be remembered better than a mere listing of facts. Another benefit of symbols is that much information can be set forth in simple terms.

A case in point is the book of Daniel, which abounds in symbolism. There, for example, the Grecian or Greco-Macedonian World Power is depicted as a male goat and as a four-headed winged leopard. A careful consideration of this symbolism reveals how appropriate it is. At the same time one is impressed with the amazing way in which Bible prophecy has been fulfilled.

Cast in the role of a goat, the World Power of Greece is described as follows: "Look! there was a male of the goats coming from the sunset upon the surface of the whole earth, and it was not touching the earth. And as regards the he-goat, there was a conspicuous horn between its eyes. And it kept coming all the way to the ram [representing Medo-Persia, as is evident from Daniel 8:20] possessing the two horns, which I had seen standing before the watercourse; and it came running toward it in its powerful rage. And I saw it coming into close touch with the ram, and it began showing bitterness toward it, and it proceeded to strike down the ram and to break its two horns, and there proved to be no power in the ram to stand before it. So it threw it to the earth and trampled it down, and the ram proved to have no deliverer out of its hand. And the male of the goats, for its part, put on great airs to an extreme; but as soon as it became mighty, the great horn was broken, and there proceeded to come up conspicuously four instead of it, toward the four winds of the heavens."—Dan. 8:5-8.

In relation to the Medo-Persian Empire, Greece lay to the west. So it was from the west or "sunset" that the Grecian goat pushed eastward. With lightning speed, as if 'not touching the ground,' the Greco-Macedonian Empire expanded. It took Alexander the Great only about seven years of fighting to extend his dominion over Asia Minor, Egypt, Syria, the vast Medo-Persian Empire and even parts of India. Little wonder that the Greco-Macedonian Empire is also *portrayed in* Scripture as a winged leopard. (Dan. 7:6) The mighty Medo-Persian "ram" stood helpless before the assaulting Grecian goat.

The description of the "conspicuous" or "great horn" well fits Alexander the Great. He was the aggressive spearhead of the tremendous territorial conquests. Not long after his death in the thirty-third year o

life, four 'horns' or rulers gained control of portions of Alexander's vast dominions.

About twenty-two years after the "great horn" Alexander was "broken" in death, four of his generals were fully established in power. Seleucus Nicator ruled Mesopotamia and Syria. Cassander had control over Macedonia and Greece. Egypt and Palestine made up the domain of Ptolemy Lagus. Lysimachus had dominion over Thrace and Asia Minor. Thus the mighty empire that had been built up by Alexander the Great took on the appearance of a four-headed leopard, as described at Daniel 7:6: "After this I kept on beholding, and, see there! another beast, one like a leopard, but it had four wings of a flying creature on its back. And the beast had four heads, and there was given to it rulership indeed."

Truly Daniel's prophecy concerning the Grecian Empire, especially in connection with Alexander the Great, had a remarkable fulfillment. This has long been recognized. The first-century Jewish historian Josephus reports that Alexander was at Jerusalem and had Daniel's prophecy shown to him. As to the conqueror's reaction, Josephus writes: "When the book of Daniel was shown to him, in which he had declared that one of the Greeks would destroy the empire of the Persians, he believed himself to be the one indicated." While many today doubt that this occurred, the fact that Josephus mentions this tradition confirms that Alexander the Great was viewed as having fulfilled prophecy.

The Bible is indeed accurate in depicting developments in the Grecian Empire under the figure of a goat and a winged four-headed leopard. This is but one of numerous examples illustrating the way in which the Scriptures use symbols. A study of such prophetic symbolism can be both rewarding and faith-strengthening. If you would like help in this, Jehovah's Witnesses in your area would be pleased to assist you in a study of the Bible.

The Vanity of Pursuing Riches

Wise King Solomon noted that the piling up of material possessions brings no real satisfaction. He wrote: "A mere lover of silver will not be satisfied with silver, neither any lover of wealth with income. This too is vanity. When good things become many, those eating them certainly become many. And what advantage is there to the grand owner of them, except looking at them with his eyes?"—Eccl. 5:10, 11.

The person who has much is not satisfied but wants still more. As his "good

things" or riches increase, more hired men and servants are needed to care for everything, and these receive compensation for their services. Because his wealth is great, the owner, however, cannot benefit from all his wealth personally. For example, he can wear only one outfit of clothing at a time and enjoy only a certain amount of food and drink. So, in the final analysis, the reward the owner has is to look upon his amassed wealth and boast that it is his. If he is a greedy person, he may even feel displeasure at having to part with some of his riches in providing for servants and hirelings.

Furthermore, the rich person may become very anxious about what he owns. Unlike the ordinary workman who has no extensive holdings to worry about, the rich man's concern about his possessions may prevent him from lying down for a peaceful night's rest. Solomon observed: "Sweet is the sleep of the one serving, regardless of whether it is little or much that he eats; but the plenty belonging to the rich one is not permitting him to sleep."—Eccl. 5:12.

Because of life's uncertainties, the person who continues to amass riches may experience the shock of plunging into poverty at a time when he is least likely to be able to cope with it. Solomon pointed to this when he wrote: "There exists a grave calamity that I have seen under the sun: riches being kept for their grand owner to his calamity. And those riches have perished because of a calamitous occupation, and he has become father to a son when there is nothing at all in his hand."—Eccl. 5:13, 14.

Just think about the great tragedy here described. A man works hard and becomes wealthy. But, instead of getting some enjoyment from his labor, he just hoards his riches. This he does to his hurt, for he deprives himself of normal comforts that he could afford. Additionally, he worries and frets about maintaining and increasing his fortune. Then, through some adversity, a "calamitous occupation," perhaps a disastrous business venture, all is lost. So, while he had his wealth, he had no enjoyment from it and, then, when he finally becomes father to an heir, there is not even an inheritance for his son to enjoy.

Next Solomon calls attention to yet another aspect that makes the accumulating of great wealth vain, empty. We read: "Just as one has come forth from his mother's belly, naked will one go away again, just as one came; and nothing at all can one carry away for his hard work, which he can take along with his hand. And this too is a grave calamity: exactly as one has come, so one will go away; and what profit is there to the one who keeps working hard for the wind?" (Eccl. 5:15, 16) Yes, at death all the toil involved in piling up riches will mean absolutely nothing. When on his deathbed, the hoarder of riches does not even have the satisfaction of knowing that he has contributed toward others' happiness.

What a price the miserly person pays for his insatiable greed for money! Solomon continues: "All his days he eats in darkness itself, with a great deal of vexation, with sickness on his part and cause for indignation." (Eccl. 5:17) Such a man has no happiness. All his days are gloomy. He acts as if he begrudges the fact that he has to eat and thereby put a small dent into his wealth. His mental outlook is sick, and this may contribute to a loss of physical health. When he is ill, he is anxious over the fact that he has to rest and cannot devote himself to his labors. He is worried and disturbed about anything that might interfere with his becoming still wealthier.

Truly, such a materialistic way of life is unrewarding and empty. That is why Solomon recommends getting enjoymen

from one's labor, saying: "Look! The best thing that I myself have seen, which is pretty, is that one should eat and drink and see good for all his hard work with which he works hard under the sun for the number of the days of his life that the true God has given him, for that is his portion."—Eccl. 5:18.

Commenting on the good effect this has upon the individual, Solomon states: "Also every man to whom the true God has given riches and material possessions, he has even empowered him to eat from it and to carry off his portion and to rejoice in his hard work. This is the gift of God. For not often will he remember the days of his life, because the true God is preoccupying him with the rejoicing of his heart." —Eccl. 5:19, 20.

The man who recognizes his prosperity as a gift from God will not hoard riches but will use them to bring joy to others. Such a man has a balanced view of his possessions because of allowing himself to be guided by godly wisdom. Therefore, he gets personal enjoyment from what he has. Jehovah God has empowered him to find pleasure in food and drink in the sense that he grants the individual the wisdom to use material things properly. At the same time such an individual is not unduly concerning himself with the brevity of life and its problems and uncertainties. No, he is getting so much enjoyment from doing good in his life that the negative aspects do not dominate his thinking. He is joyful at heart.

Surely one's striving to get wholesome enjoyment in life is the wise course. It shields one from the disappointment experienced by those whose life is fully occupied by materialistic pursuits.

● In John 1:1 the term "god" is applied to both the Father and the Son, the Word. But in the Greek text the word for "god" (*theos*) is written differently in these two instances. Why? What does it mean?

To a person unfamiliar with the Greek language it might seem that there is a significance indicated by the fact that first the word is spelled *theon* and next *theos*. But the difference is simply a matter of complying with the Greek grammatical case used.

John 1:1 reads: "In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God [τὸν θεὸν, literally, the god], and the Word was a god [θεὸς]."

Greek has five cases—nominative, genitive, dative, accusative and vocative. How a word is spelled can vary depending on the case in which it is used. Take, as an example, the definite article "the." In the masculine gender "the" is respectively written in the first four of these cases: ὁ, τοῦ, τῷ, τὸν, in the singular number.

Similarly, in John 1:1 the word *theos* is spelled in accord with the particular case being employed. In the first instance ("the Word was with God") it is in the accusative case and thus is spelled θεὸν. But in the second occurrence it is in the nominative case, and so it is spelled θεὸς. The spelling of *theos* does not of itself indicate the person or position of the one designated, as 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6 illustrates. In verse four Satan is identified as θεὸς, "the god of this system of things," and in verse six the Creator is designated θεὸς. The spelling is *theos* in both verses, for the nominative case is used in each. So the fact that *theos* is spelled differently in its two occurrences in John 1:1 does not show any difference in meaning; "god" is the meaning in both instances.

What is interesting is that in John 1:1 the definite article ὁ [*ho*] is not used in front of *theos* when applied to the Son, the Word. Re-

garding this point the noted Bible translator William Barclay writes:

"Now normally, except for special reasons, Greek nouns always have the definite article in front of them, . . . When a Greek noun has not got the article in front of it, it becomes rather a description than an identification, and has the character of an adjective rather than of a noun. We can see exactly the same in English. If I say: 'James is *the* man', then I identify James with some definite man whom I have in mind; but, if I say: 'James is man', then I am simply describing James as human, and the word man has become a description and not an identification. If John had said *ho theos ēn ho logos,* using a definite article in front of both nouns, then he would definitely have identified the *logos* [the Word] with God, but because he has no definite article in front of *theos* it becomes a description, and more of an adjective than a noun. The translation then becomes, to put it rather clumsily, 'The Word was in the same class as God, belonged to the same order of being as God'. . . . John is not here identifying the Word with God. To put it very simply, he does not say that Jesus was God." —*Many Witnesses, One Lord* (1963), pages 23, 24.

Hence, in both their translations Dr. Edgar J. Goodspeed and Dr. James Moffatt render the phrase as, "the Word [or Logos] was divine." This reflects the fine distinction in wording that the apostle John used, a distinction that accords with the fact that Jesus was not equal in power and eternity with the Father but was the created Son of the Father. (1 Cor. 11:3) The *New World Translation* accurately renders the verse: "In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god."

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

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