

SEPTEMBER 15, 1979

THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

"FIGS"

THAT
GIVE PLEASURE
EVEN TO GOD



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smooth words that cause harm

COMMENDATION for a job well done warms the heart of a diligent worker. However, there is a type of speech that, while sounding similar to commendation and often mistaken for it, always causes harm.

At Proverbs 28:23 we read: "He that is reproofing a man will afterward find more favor than he will that is flattering with his tongue." This is a warning, not against commendation, but against *flattery*.

According to a dictionary, the words "to flatter" mean to praise too much, untruly or insincerely. The expression also refers to efforts at gaining the favor of someone by praise and attention. Different from commendation based upon a correct appraisal of hard work, flattery is grounded upon untruth.

THE FOLLY OF EXCESSIVE PRAISE

Flattering speech always bears bad fruitage. For instance, it contributes to haughtiness, which Jesus listed among the "injurious reasonings" that issue forth from the heart. (Mark 7:21, 22) The Bible counsels the worshiper of God "not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think; but to think so as to have a sound mind." (Rom. 12:3) The exaggerated self-image promoted by flattery works against such Christian soundness of mind.

Persons who love flattery react adversely to criticism. They prefer hearing only laudatory remarks about themselves. Of that type were Israelites who complained to the prophets of God: "You must not envision for us any straightforward things.

Speak to us smooth things ["flattering things," *The Jerusalem Bible*]; envision deceptive things." (Isa. 30:10) However, craving for smooth words of flattery rather than for corrective counsel from God led to ruin for the nation of Israel.

In Jesus' day lovers of flattery included especially the scribes and Pharisees. Concerning them, the Son of God said: "All the works they do they do to be viewed by men; for they broaden the scripture-containing cases that they wear as safeguards, and enlarge the fringes of their garments. They like the most prominent place at evening meals and the front seats in the synagogues, and the greetings in the marketplaces and to be called Rabbi by men." (Matt. 23:5-7) But this led to their ruination. Because of "accepting glory from one another" they failed to exercise faith in the promised Messiah and lost out on the blessings of becoming part of God's kingdom. (John 5:44; 12:43; Matt. 21:42, 43) Moreover, their rejection of Jesus Christ led to the destruction of the Jewish nation by the Romans in 70 C.E.

FLATTERY TO GAIN ADVANTAGE

Pride and haughtiness are only part of the bad fruitage caused by flattery. Often the flatterer uses smooth words as a tool to take advantage of others. The Scriptures speak of certain ones getting into the Christian congregation who were "mischief-makers, grumblers governed only by their own desires, with mouths full of boastful talk, *ready with flattery* for other people when they see some advantage in it." (Jude 16, *JB*) With similar

ones in mind, the psalmist cried out: "Do save me, O Jehovah, for the loyal one has come to an end; for faithful people have vanished from the sons of men. Untruth they keep speaking one to the other; with a smooth lip ["flattering lips," *JB*] they keep speaking even with a double heart."—Ps. 12:1, 2.

One with "a double heart" uses smooth words of flattery to conceal selfish motives. By means of such speech he appeals to the vanity of his hearers and 'gets into their good graces.' Then the flatterer uses his victims to advance selfish interests. True indeed is the Scriptural statement: "An able-bodied man that is flattering his companion is spreading out a mere net for his steps."—Prov. 29:5.

Wisely Jesus counseled his disciples: "Do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, whereas all you are brothers. Moreover, do not call anyone your father on earth, for one is your Father, the heavenly One. Neither be called 'leaders,' for your Leader is one, the Christ. But the greatest one among you must be your minister. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." (Matt. 23:8-12) Persons who wish to imitate Christ do not seek exaltation by humans through flattering speech such as by using high-sounding religious titles. The exaltation that really counts comes from God, and is only for humble ones. "Before a crash the heart of a man is lofty, and before glory there is humility."—Prov. 18:12.

Christians will shun flattery as a means of inflating their own ego or that of others. They will avoid it also as a way of taking advantage of their fellowman. The example of the apostle Paul is a fine one: "At no time have we turned up either with flattering speech, (just as you know) or with a false front for covetousness, God is witness!"—1 Thess. 2:5.

STRIVE FOR BALANCE

This is not to say that all flattering speech is wrongly motivated. By nature some individuals are easily overawed with abilities that they see in their friends or acquaintances. Certain persons are inclined to make a habit of telling others how "brilliant" they are or otherwise of showering them with compliments. Generally, however, such expressions tend toward exaggeration and add up to nothing more than flattery. Since all humans are sinful, no individual is so gifted that he must constantly be told about it.—Rom. 3:23.

On the other hand, it is important to avoid the opposite extreme of never giving commendation. Instead, one must be mindful of the fact that Jesus was ready to commend even when about to administer reproof. For instance, the Son of God said to the Christian congregation in Ephesus: "I know your deeds, and your labor and endurance, and that you cannot bear bad men, and that you put those to the test who say they are apostles, but they are not, and you found them liars. You are also showing endurance, and you have borne up for my name's sake and have not grown weary. Nevertheless, I hold this against you, that you have left the love you had at first." (Rev. 2:1-4) Likely that commendation encouraged those Ephesian Christians and prompted them all the more readily to correct the one thing that Jesus 'held against' them.

While commendation brings benefits, God's Word makes it plain that the smooth words of a flatterer result in harm. Both the one using flattery and those 'taken in' by it will find the inspired statement true: "A flattering mouth causes an overthrow." (Prov. 26:28) Jesus Christ refused to be flattered. (Mark 10:17, 18) He is an example for his followers.

your view of money can affect your life



HOW important is money in your life? Or, rather, how prominent is money in your thinking? For many, it comes first both in their life and in their thinking. They may devote themselves fully to efforts to amass money. Some work themselves into an early grave for it. To obtain money, others will rob, cheat, lie or even commit murder.

What is the Christian view? The Bible shows that money does have a certain value in this system of things, protecting a person from poverty and its sad consequences. As King Solomon stated, "money is for a protection." (Eccl. 7:12) Moreover, material assets can be used to help persons in need.—Acts 4:34, 35; Eph. 4:28.

A Christian, however, wisely watches that money does not become so important to him that his sense of values is distorted. Money should never be allowed to become the prime thing in our life. Certainly it

would be foolish to sacrifice the prospect of eternal life for the sake of possessions.

A PROBLEM FOR RICH AND POOR

The danger of attaching undue importance to money is illustrated in the case of a rich young man living in the first century C.E. On asking Jesus what he must do to gain everlasting life, he was told: "Sell all the things you have and distribute to poor people, and you will have treasure in the heavens." What was the man's reaction? "He became deeply grieved, for he was very rich." Yes, the young man wanted eternal life, but his money was more important to him. Jesus went on to show that this was not an unusual situation. He explained that, as a general rule, "it is easier, in fact, for a camel to get through the eye of a sewing needle than for a rich man to get into the kingdom of God."—Luke 18:18-25.

Of course, there are rich persons who will inherit God's kingdom. But this will be because of their availing themselves of the divine means for salvation. (Luke 18:27) For them to do so requires that they no longer trust in their wealth and influence but use their possessions wisely, to God's glory. Thus they 'store up treasure in heaven,' since the Most High will richly reward their fine deeds.—Matt. 6: 19-21; Luke 16:9.

A poor person also may find it difficult to maintain a proper view of money. If he has the opportunity to improve his financial situation at the expense of his Christian principles, this can be a real test for him. For example, he may be offered a well-paying job involving work that violates his conscience. Or, the employment may regularly keep him from associating with his fellow believers. Initially, the extra money that would become available might seem like an answer to his prayers. At last, he thinks, some of life's burdens are being lifted.

But call to mind the man Achan. From the spoil in Jericho, he seized what did not belong to him, bringing death to himself and his whole family. (Josh. chap. 7) Similarly, snatching at opportunities to gain materially at the expense of one's Christian conscience may result in serious spiritual harm. (1 Tim. 6:9) Mere money can never benefit us in the way that faithful service to God does.

Therefore, Christians in developing countries are wise to keep a balanced view of money. For instance, in one land the daughter of one of Jehovah's Witnesses was offered a scholarship to study in the United States. In her country, such a scholarship was viewed as a most valuable prize. But the family decided to reject the offer. Accepting the scholarship would have taken the girl too far away from home during her formative years. It could have exposed her to many problems that

she might have been too inexperienced to handle. For these reasons the family decided that working at maintaining a good relationship with God was more valuable than the possible material benefits that an education abroad could bring.

But how can a person have the right perspective when life is very difficult? There are parts of the world where large numbers of people live in deep poverty. To make a living, men may have to work 12 or 16 hours a day, six or seven days a week. Under this kind of pressure, it may appear that money is life. God's Word, however, can help a person to avoid becoming unbalanced under these circumstances. By following the Bible's guidelines, the individual comes under God's loving care in a more direct way. This gives him security.

Jesus Christ made this very clear. On one occasion, he addressed a large crowd, many of whom doubtless were familiar with poverty. He encouraged them to 'stop being anxious about their souls as to what they would eat or drink, or about their bodies as to what they would wear.' How could a poor person do that? Jesus referred to the birds, pointing out that there was a loving Creator who provided all the necessities for these creatures. Why, this Creator even clothed, so to speak, the flowers with beauty. With reference to the birds, the Son of God raised the question: "Are you not worth more than they are?"—Matt. 6:25-32.

Of course, people are more valuable than birds or flowers. So Jehovah God will care for people, especially if they act on Jesus' further words: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." Yes, a person can feel confident in relying on Jehovah for help, *provided* he puts Kingdom interests first.—Matt. 6:33.

WHY TRUE WORSHIP HELPS

That is why the message of true Christianity is something that the poor truly need. It provides unfailing help in dealing with their problem. Surely there is real comfort in knowing that the Creator will aid them to care for their families if they continue serving him.

This does not mean that they can rely on other people to look after their families. That is still their responsibility. (1 Tim. 5:8) Nor does it mean that they are going to become rich. No, they will probably still have to work very hard to make a living. But they can go to bed at night with calm hearts, confident that the next day Jehovah will again open the way for them to feed their families.—Ps. 4:8.

They will be like David. Before becoming king, he experienced many hardships. Yet, toward the end of his life, he could say: "A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread." (Ps. 37:25) Many Christians can testify to the fact that Jehovah is looking after his servants today in the same wonderful way. Consider, for example, the statement of one materially poor Christian woman who describes herself as "indigent, but rich in children." At one time she had to live as

a refugee because of terrorist activity in her country. In spite of the hardships, she and her children never forsook true worship. She says: "We are content with our condition because of the richness of our spiritual life. Yes, godly devotion with contentment is great gain."—1 Tim. 6:6-8.

Truly, all—including poor people—can enjoy great blessings when they seek God's kingdom first. By applying the Bible's counsel, they can improve their family life, avoid money-wasting vices—gambling, smoking, heavy drinking—and learn to make the best possible use of their resources. They can gain the needed wisdom to deal with problems successfully. Most of all, they can look with confidence to the time when poverty, along with all other human ills, will be abolished.—Isa. 25:6-8.

So whether we have little or much in the way of possessions, a right view of money can contribute toward the enjoyment of life. Whatever our situation may be, the important thing is to put God's kingdom first, and to keep doing what is right in his eyes. This may require endurance on our part, but it will bring great blessings both now and in the future. Hence, as the apostle Paul encouraged the Galatians: "Let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out."—Gal. 6:9.

'Ten Women Baking Bread in One Oven'

ONE of the calamities to come upon Israel for unfaithfulness is set forth at Leviticus 26:26 in these words: "Ten women will then actually bake your bread in but one oven." Under normal conditions, each woman would need an oven for doing the necessary baking. However, the words of Leviticus 26:26 pointed to the time when there would be so little food available that one oven would be sufficient to handle all the baking that 10 women could do.



W E MAORIS were the inhabitants of New Zealand when the first Europeans stepped ashore in 1769. My great-grandfather, Chief Tareha te Moananui, was one of the signers of the famous Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. It provided for Maoris to become subjects of the British Queen Victoria, and for Britain to protect all Maori rights, including property rights.

After the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi—when there were only about 2,000 whites in



As told by Charles Tareha

Chief Tareha te Moananui



New Zealand—Europeans came in ever-increasing numbers. For a time there was peace. But then tensions mounted as whites wanted to buy land, but Maoris didn't want to sell. Wars—called the Maori Wars—resulted with off and on fighting continuing from 1860 to 1872.

The Maoris were defeated and taken advantage of, as Dr. Grenfell Price, of the University of Adelaide, noted: "Maori leaders were dead or discredited. Maori lands were confiscated. The speculator and the publican found the native an easy prey." My people had dwindled from 200,000 or more to only about 40,000. Maoris felt deprived of their rights, and it seemed their very existence as a race was threatened.

WOULD I GET INVOLVED?

Near the turn of the century, my father had gone to Te Aute College and a number of his Maori friends, including Sir Apirana Turupa Ngata and Te Rangi Hiroa (Dr. Peter Buck), pursued careers in government designed to help the Maori people. However, my father became a farmer. He had a fine, large home ideally located on the terrace of a four-acre section. Near-

by we had hundreds of acres of excellent farming land, and, as I was growing up, we milked as many as 70 cows in peak season. Dad was an expert mechanic, plumber and electrician. We had our own large electrical power plant, which provided our farm with electricity decades before it was common in our rural area near Napier. We even had European hired hands.

So I must say, while growing up I never felt that we were inferior to whites. And the facts didn't indicate that we were. True, at the arrival of Europeans in 1769, the Maoris had no written language. Yet not long afterward one was developed, and by 1827 the Bible was translated into Maori. As our people became avid readers, some 60,000 "New Testaments" alone were produced from 1841 to 1845. About that time a larger proportion of Maoris than of whites could read and write.

Yet, largely due to the Maori-White wars, the Maoris came to suffer severe problems. There was pressure on many of us to get involved in righting the wrongs that so many were saying had been committed against the Maoris. I remember a Mr. McDonnell, a European, who often visited dad and would discuss these matters, encouraging our doing more to help our people.

But somehow I was not motivated to become involved in such efforts. Perhaps it was because I was so disappointed in human rulers. From what I had learned in school, many of the kings and queens of England were very immoral and evil. And the history of the Maoris was little better.

LEARNING THE MAORI PAST

Although no written Maori records exist prior to the early 1800's, Maoris would commit to memory details of hundreds of years of history. Often my grandfather and aunts would relate information about

our ancestors, as well as their many relatives, all the way back 20 generations or so to when our forefathers arrived in New Zealand in a fleet of canoes. In fact, conversations and happenings on the canoes were at times told as though they had occurred the previous week. Was this oral history reliable?

No doubt accounts were embellished with retelling, but many of the details have been corroborated. "The Maoris' own accounts," concludes one historian, "of the Fleet of A.D. 1350 are so convincingly corroborated by external evidence that they possess the dignity of authenticated history."

Often the oral historical accounts that granddad related to us had to do with tribal wars, and "who ate whom." Yes, Maoris once were cannibals. But for what purpose? To satisfy their appetite? This was never how it was related to us, and researchers agree. T. E. Donne, in his book *The Maori Past and Present*, wrote: "The available information appears to indicate that the Maori cannibalism was initiated more as a ritual than in satisfaction of appetite."

You see, it was the Maoris' tradition not to let an insult pass without retaliation. Moreover, Maoris never forgave defeats, and they cherished visions of revenge. Thus, when retaliating successfully for some insult, or when achieving revenge, the victorious warrior chief ate the heart of the defeated one. This was the greatest insult one could impose upon another tribe.

In turn, however, the relatives of the defeated one needed to get revenge to restore family or tribal "honor." At intertribal gatherings, as a youngster I remember how orators would get up and, recalling ancient history, would discuss what tribal chief had "eaten" another, and when. They remembered the details of these victories and defeats all the way back to the time when the canoes arrived.

REARED WITH RESPECT FOR GOD

Frankly, as I said before, this history didn't appeal to me; it didn't seem very honorable. My feelings, I believe, were due to another influence in my life. At night, before bedtime, my grandmother used to read to us children from the Maori Bible, which she loved. The instructions therein—"to do unto others as you would have them do to you," "turn the other cheek," "return evil for evil to no one"—are so contrary to the way humankind has lived. As I grew older, I began to appreciate the wisdom of the Scriptures.—Matt. 7:12; 5:39; Rom. 12:17.

My great-grandfather, Tareha te Moananui, was also favorably impressed by what he read in the Maori Bible. Since he obtained his copy of the Bible from an Anglican clergyman, my great-grandfather became an Anglican. He donated a large section of land adjoining our homestead as a *marae*, or, meeting place, and had a church built on it only about 100 feet (30 m) from our home. My father, too, appreciated the wisdom in the Bible and became an Anglican lay preacher.

Dad really did his best to rear the 10 of us youngsters in harmony with what he had learned from the Scriptures. I was the fourth, and the eldest son, yet our home was large enough to accommodate all of us comfortably. At mealtimes we would all gather around the gigantic dining table made from finest kauri hardwood timber, and there was even room for visitors, which we frequently had.

Dad was a firm believer in the Bible proverb that says: "The one holding back his rod is hating his son, but the one loving him is he that does look for him with discipline." (Prov. 13:24) Since the literal rod was not always available, he would often use his open palm or boot, as the occasion demanded, planting it in just the right place to get his point across. I'm convinced that if parents today would ac-

cept and apply such Bible counsel this would greatly reduce, if not eliminate, juvenile delinquency.

Mother, too, played a vital part in creating a happy home, which contributed to our fine upbringing. When I read the qualities of a capable wife listed in Proverbs 31:10-31, I must say that she indeed possessed them. Although dad clearly was head of the house, mum had a sphere of responsibility in which she exercised real initiative and demonstrated good management.

Along with my brothers and sisters, I shared in the work around the farm. At the same time, I attended a technical school and, accompanied with the experience I received working with dad, I became proficient as a mechanic and an electrician. But what would I do with my life? My father's mechanical ability had a lot to do with my decision.

A NEW PATTERN OF BIBLE STUDY

My mother's sisters had an accident in their almost new Buick at Wairoa, a town about 70 miles (113 km) north of us. So dad went to Wairoa for a few days to repair my aunts' car. He found their life pattern similar to ours, except in regard to their religion.

Each morning they read a scripture from the Bible, followed by a free discussion, a putting of meaning into it. One morning the scripture for discussion was Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10, which reads: "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing . . . Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."—*Authorized Version*.

At a recent funeral service father recalled that a Maori *tohunga* (priest) said that the soul of the deceased was not dead, but had departed to be with his ancestors.

This, of course, was very similar to the Anglican belief, namely, that some souls go to heaven and the less favored go to hell.

Another illuminating breakfast table discussion centered on the fact that Jesus is a lesser one than his Father, and that his Father has a personal name. (John 14:28; Ps. 83:18) This was simple for dad to grasp, because the name for God, *Ihowa* (English, Jehovah), appears in the Maori Bible more than 6,000 times.

A CHANGE OF RELIGION

By the time dad returned home he possessed a library of seven books published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society entitled "Studies in the Scriptures." Immediately he began a regular weekly family Bible study, which close relatives and friends joined. When the clergyman became aware of these studies, he expressed strong disapproval. Yet, when he was asked to give Scriptural support for the Church doctrines of immortality of the soul and the Trinity, the only reply he gave was, "Be loyal to the Church."

This convinced dad that what he was learning from the Bible was the truth. So, recalling the words at 2 Corinthians 6:14-17, "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers," and "get out from among them," dad sent in a written resignation from the Anglican Church for the entire family. I was 19 at the time, and was in total agreement with dad's action. He concluded his letter with the words: "As for me and my household, we shall serve Jehovah."—Josh. 24:15.

This caused a commotion in the Anglican hierarchy, due to dad's prominence in Maori society. They immediately requested a special meeting for the purpose of getting him to withdraw his resignation. Dad agreed to the meeting—not in the church—but on our property where a huge platform was erected for the oc-

casation. A number of clergymen, including F. Bennett, the Anglican bishop of New Zealand, along with a large crowd of about 400 others, were on hand.

THE MEETING

The Maori spokesman for the Church seemed purposely to avoid using the Bible. Rather, he appealed to the emotions. "Our ancestors believed that the soul continued on after death," he reminded, "and yet you have chosen to adopt a religion that denies the existence of the soul." Then dad proceeded to show from the Bible that the person himself is a soul, and, therefore, when the person dies, the soul dies. Dad also explained that God can resurrect the person as a living soul once more.

When it became apparent that the Anglican clergyman was not presenting a convincing case, then, making an impatient gesture toward the nearby church my great-grandfather had built, in an emotion-packed voice he exclaimed: "I make one last appeal to you not to abandon this sacred heritage handed down to you by your illustrious ancestors."

After that dad stood up, thanked all for coming, and explained that he was more convinced than ever that he now had the truth. He informed everyone of the day and time of our regular Bible study, inviting them all to attend. Many did.

CHOOSING MY LIFE COURSE

That meeting made a deep impression on me. As we continued our Bible studies, a desire grew in my heart to serve the true God, Jehovah. I began to see that his Kingdom is the only government that can solve man's problems, including the ones of the Maoris. But it was not clear just how to carry on the Kingdom preaching as described in the Bible.—Matt. 24:14.

About that time, Clifford and Edna

Keoghan, pioneers, full-time workers of Jehovah's Witnesses, came to our area, and we provided a small house for their use. They invited us to join them in the preaching work, and I was one of those who did. The more I shared in this activity, the more I realized how ignorant people were of God's kingdom. My mind was made up: My career was to be pioneering, following in the footsteps of Christ Jesus himself and the apostle Paul. With dad's approval, I began pioneering early in 1931. I moved to Wanganui, a town on the west coast of the north island to join my pioneer partner, Frank Dewar.

PIONEER EXPERIENCES

With Wanganui as our base, we also worked in the rural areas. Once I selected a route that was a newly formed road along the Wanganui River that led to a cluster of villages with Biblical names, such as Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and so forth. By starting at daybreak, I figured I could make it to Jerusalem by some time in the late afternoon.

It was late fall and the rains had already begun. The clay road became so sloshy that it was almost impossible to push my loaded cycle through the mud. Darkness fell. I lost all sense of time and distance. I was covered with mud from head to foot. But I pressed on, and, shortly, in the distance I saw a faint light. I made a beeline for it, and soon the barking of dogs was music to my ears.

A door opened and a man appeared with a bright lamp. When he drew close enough to see me, with sheer amazement he asked: "Where on earth have you come from?" When I said, "Wanganui," his only answer was a guttural, "No!"

Telling me to leave my muddy clothes outside, he directed me to the bathroom. After a bath and getting into clean pajamas, and while enjoying the pancakes and hot tea provided, I was finally asked:

"Now tell me, why have you come?" Late into the night we talked, discussing the relative position of Jehovah, Jesus and the importance of the Kingdom. He was a bachelor, a shepherd, and a great believer in the Bible. He happily accepted the Bible literature I had.

The next morning when I awoke he was already gone, as he said he would be. I continued on to Jerusalem, placing much literature there and in nearby villages. Many years later I attended an assembly in Napier and a woman approached with a broad smile, asking: "Do you remember me?" I had to confess I didn't. She continued: "You placed a set of books with me 15 years ago when I was in Jerusalem." She was now a Witness also.

TO AUSTRALIA AND HOME AGAIN

In March 1932, I went to Sydney, Australia, for an assembly, and ended up staying about 15 years. Following the assembly, I was invited to join the Bethel family to proofread Maori translations of the book *The Harp of God*, as well as other literature, and assist with the maintenance of the Bethel cars.

In the meantime, my parents were growing old, and so, after the second world war, they requested that I return home and help in managing the estate. Although I was no longer in full-time service, I maintained the pioneer spirit, helping to build up the congregations, first in Hastings, then in Napier.

Around this time the Maori family Wharerau in Waima, north of Auckland, began accepting the truth. Eventually about 100 members became Jehovah's Witnesses! In 1950 the first Kingdom Hall in New Zealand was built by the Maori brothers in Waima.

In December 1953, Queen Elizabeth and the duke of Edinburgh began a month-long visit to New Zealand. The Wellington, New Zealand, *Dominion* reported: "Mr. and

Mrs. Tuiri Tareha [dad and mum] were two among the 74 people presented to the Royal visitors. Instead of shaking the Queen's hand Mrs. Tareha passed to Her Majesty a small, neatly-wrapped brown-paper parcel." The package contained the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*, and the book "*New Heavens and a New Earth*." Dad explained: "The Queen once said that she wished that she had the wisdom of Solomon so that she could rule her people with equity and justice. We were confident that these books would help her."

TO NEW YORK AND MISSIONARY WORK

I began to pioneer again in 1956, and shortly thereafter was invited to the circuit work. Then, in 1958, I had the privilege of attending the "Divine Will" assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York. Afterward, I was invited to remain and attend the 33rd class of Gilead missionary school. My parents were still living, but they were pleased to have me devote my life in this way to Jehovah's service.

My missionary assignment? Ceylon, now called Sri Lanka, in the Indian Ocean. I spent about 18 years on this beautiful tropical island, far from my homeland, where my beloved parents died in my absence. How different witnessing was here—and challenging!

The first person you meet in a day may be a Buddhist, who would probably tell you that there is no God and that salvation is wholly dependent upon himself. The next person may be a Moslem, who believes in only one God, Allah; the third, a Roman Catholic who has been taught to believe in a triune God; and the fourth, a Hindu who believes in millions of gods. However, the fact that the people are so hospitable affords them the opportunity

to hear and recognize the ring of Bible truth.

The Pullenayegem family was a good example. I started a Bible study with William and his wife Olive, along with their three sons and two daughters. All, with the exception of one son, became zealous Witnesses. One son, Vasant, is now a member of the branch committee in Sri Lanka, Mohandas is an elder and the two daughters, Viranjani and Vynodini, are married to elders. William has since died, but Olive maintains the pioneer spirit, auxiliary pioneering as she is able.

In April 1977, being unable to renew my visa, I returned to New Zealand. Here I have the privilege of being a member of the Bethel family and a branch committee member for the country.

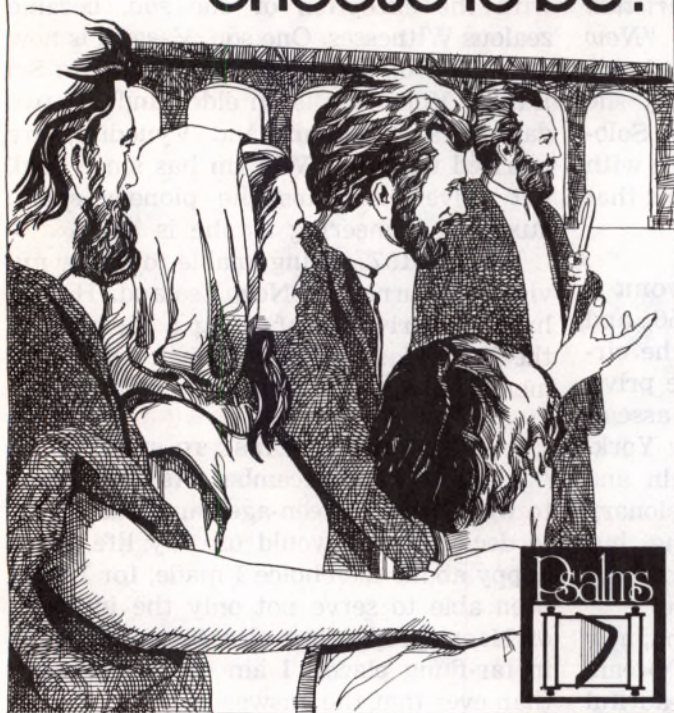
A SATISFYING CAUSE TO SERVE

I will be 70 in December. As I look back to when I was a teen-ager and was forced to decide how I would use my life, I am happy about the choice I made, for I have been able to serve not only the interests of Maori people, but also those of people in far-flung places. I am convinced more than ever that the answer to the desperate needs of people, wherever they may live, is not the schemes of men but only the solution offered by God's kingdom.

It brings joy to my heart to see so many of my own people recognize this. For in New Zealand, out of the some 6,500 Witnesses in the country, about 1,000 are Maoris. Scores of these are Christian elders, many are pioneers, three have served as circuit overseers, and five have gone to Gilead and off to serve their fellow humans in other places. Oh, how grand it will be when, through the administration of God's kingdom, all humankind is united as one!



where do you choose to be?



DEVOTED servants of Jehovah God very much appreciate being able to enjoy fellowship with persons of like precious faith. Among the Israelites, this appreciation manifested itself in a sincere desire to go to the sanctuary. Do you likewise find great delight in sharing with others in worship?

The writer of Psalm 84, a Levite who descended from Korah, set a fine example in wanting to be among God's faithful servants. He said: "How lovely your grand tabernacle is, O Jehovah of armies! My soul has yearned and also pined away for the courtyards of Jehovah. My own heart and my very flesh cry out joyfully to the living God. Even the bird itself has found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she has put her young ones—your grand altar, O Jehovah of armies, my

King and my God!"—Ps. 84:1-3.

To the psalmist, the sanctuary was "lovely," beautiful, yes, most attractive because of its being Jehovah's place of worship. The intensity with which this Levite expressed himself about longing to be in the courtyards of Jehovah's tabernacle reminds us that the tens of thousands of Levites during the time of the kingdom lived in the 48 cities that were assigned to the Levites throughout the land of Israel. Only once every half year one of the courses or divisions of the nonpriestly Levites served an entire week at the temple. Consequently, the major portion of the year they would spend at their personal homes with their families in the Levite cities. On the other hand, small birds may have found a more permanent place to live at the temple.

The Korahite Levite cannot help but think about the happy lot of those who regularly go to the sanctuary at stated seasons. He continues: "Happy are those dwelling in your house! They still keep on praising you. . . . Happy are the men whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways. Passing along through the low plain of the Baca bushes, they turn it into a spring itself; even with blessings the instructor enwraps himself. They will walk on from vital energy to vital energy; each one appears to God in Zion."—Ps. 84:4-7.

By reason of their duties, the priests and Levites regularly took up their temporary dwelling at Jehovah's house and were

able to praise the Most High there directly. What a happy lot was theirs on such occasions! Happy, too, were other Israelites who drew their strength from God when they needed comfort and help. Such Israelites had their hearts on the "highways," that is, on the roads leading to the sanctuary. Because of their interest in true worship, even the dry area of the Baca bushes, through which they traveled to Jerusalem, took on the attractive appearance of a well-watered region where a spring flows. It was Jehovah whom faithful Israelites regarded as their "Instructor." (Isa. 30:20) Since they would bless or praise him, it might be said that the 'instructor enwrapped himself' with such blessings as with a garment. While the journey may have been long, devoted worshipers did not wear themselves out. The prospect of reaching the sanctuary gave them renewed energy.

Next, the psalmist appeals to Jehovah, saying: "O Jehovah God of armies, do hear my prayer; do give ear, O God of Jacob. . . . O shield of ours, see, O God, and look upon the face of your anointed one." (Ps. 84:8, 9) Thus, not only does the Levite seek Jehovah's favorable attention for himself but also for the anointed one, likely the Judean king. This Levite appreciates that the Most High is a protective shield to Israel and, therefore, prays to him for aid.

In view of the psalmist's great desire to be at the sanctuary, he says: "For a day in your courtyards is better than a thousand elsewhere. I have chosen to stand at the threshold in the house of my God rather than to move around in the tents of wickedness." (Ps. 84:10) What outstanding appreciation! To the psalmist, just one day in the courtyards of Jehovah's sanctuary was more valuable, better, than a thousand days spent at some other place. He preferred standing in service at the threshold, yes, at the entrance of Jehovah's

house rather than to be in the tents of wicked men, no matter how luxurious their dwellings might be.

Why did he have this high evaluation of the house of God? Note his words: "For Jehovah God is a sun and a shield; favor and glory are what he gives. Jehovah himself will not hold back anything good from those walking in faultlessness. O Jehovah of armies, happy is the man that is trusting in you." (Ps. 84:11, 12) Yes, the psalmist appreciated the kind of God that Jehovah is. The Most High is a sun to his people, providing enlightenment. He also provides protection like a shield. Expressions of favor and blessing emanate from him, and he bestows glory and honor on those whom he approves. Never will Jehovah withhold good from those seeking to walk in an upright way. He will bless them richly, and those who put their confidence in the Almighty will not be disappointed but will continue to enjoy real happiness.

Does your recognizing Jehovah as a Protector and the Source of all good gifts prompt you to be regular in assembling with his people? Is a fine standing with God the source of your greatest joy? Surely we should want to harmonize our actions with the thoughts expressed by the psalmist and thus continue to experience the happiness that comes from having Jehovah as our God.

In Coming Issues

- "The Keys of the Kingdom" and the "Great Crowd"
- Take Courage!—The Millennium Is at Hand
- Christian Neutrality as God's War Approaches



“FIGS” THAT GIVE PLEASURE EVEN TO GOD

“This is what Jehovah the God of Israel has said, ‘Like these good figs, so I shall regard the exiles of Judah, whom I will send away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans, in a good way.’”

—Jer. 24:5.

THE FIG TREE was to be found in the first garden ever planted on our earth. Our first human parents started us off in eating this delicious fruit, the fig. Was the fig tree also allowed to grow outside that first garden? Yes, and for this we can be glad. Thus we today can also have the pleasure of eating this little bundle of sweetness. Quite out of the ordinary, the first clothing that our first parents, Adam and Eve, wore for a short time to cover their loins was made from fig leaves, sewn together. This was just before they were exiled from their Paradise of Pleasure for having rebelled against the Planter and Owner of this garden of Eden.—Gen. 2:8; 3:1-7.

² In an illustration told long afterward by Jotham the son of Judge Gideon he had the fig tree speak. It asked: “Must I give up my sweetness and my good produce, and must I go to wave over the other

trees?” (Judg. 9:11) In Jotham’s illustration the fig tree refused to leave its good properties. In actuality today, the fig tree still has its goodness and sweetness inherent in it. In this it yet serves God’s kindly purpose.

³ Jotham used the fig tree to illustrate an individual, a faithful Israelite who would refuse to be put at the head of the government by the democratic vote of a national election. Much later, Jesus Christ used the fig tree to picture the nation of Israel. In a parable, he said:

“A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it, but found none. Then he said to the vinedresser, ‘Here it is three years that I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, but have found none. Cut it down! Why really should it keep the ground useless?’ In reply he said to him, ‘Master, let it alone also this year, until I dig around it and put on manure; and if then it produces fruit in the future, well and good; but if not, you shall cut it down.’”—Luke 13:6-9.

1. How did the fig come into our life’s experience?

2. In his illustration, how did Jotham use the fig tree with a happy meaning for us?

3. What did Jotham use the fig tree to picture, but what did Jesus Christ use it to picture, and in what parable?

⁴ Jesus gave that parable sometime after the Jews celebrated the autumn festival of tabernacles (Succoth) in 32 C.E., hence, three years after he began his public ministry in the land of Israel. He was now in the fourth year of his evangelizing work. So in less than six months the nation of Israel would reject him and have him put to death on a stake outside the walls of Jerusalem. In return for three-and-a-half years' work among the Israelites, he had only a few hundred disciples as fruitage of his labors. His heavenly Father, Jehovah God, had planted that symbolic tree of Israel. Rightfully, after three years and a half of special care and attention by his Son and representative on earth, he looked for fruit. But, comparatively speaking, he found none in the way of followers of his Son, the Messiah. Like the "vinedresser" of the parable, his Son had kept 'digging' around the symbolic fig tree halfway through the fourth year of his ministry. But to no avail.

4. After three and a half years of ministry by his representative on earth, in what way did the Planter find no fruit on the symbolic fig tree?

⁵ At almost the middle of this fourth year Jesus indicated that the fruitless national "fig tree" was to be cut down. On Monday, Nisan 10, 33 C.E., on his way to Jerusalem Jesus came up to a fig tree. Though it had leaves, it bore no fruit. At this Jesus cursed the fig tree, saying: "Let no one eat fruit from you anymore forever." What happened? We read: "When they were passing by early in the morning, they saw the fig tree already withered up from the roots. So Peter, remembering it, said to him: 'Rabbi, see! the fig tree that you cursed has withered up.'"—Mark 11:12-21.

⁶ Well, now, was Jesus taking spite out on an unintelligent tree? No, but he was using that barren fig tree as an illustration. That fig tree pictured the nation of Israel to which Jehovah had sent his Son to gather fruitage in the form of sup-

porters of the true Messiah or Christ. When, under the leadership of its high priest and other religious guides, the nation rejected Jesus as the representative of God's kingdom, the several hundred individuals that did accept him were as nothing. Like a taxable tree cumbering the ground, that symbolic fig tree deserved to be cut down, for it came under God's curse. (Compare Deuteronomy 28:15-68.) Fifty-one days after Jesus Christ was killed as though a false Messiah, the Israelite

5, 6. (a) By use of a real fig tree, how did Jesus indicate that the symbolic fig tree would be cut down? (b) When was that symbolic fig tree cut down, as indicated by what development?



"fig tree" was cut down, for God then brought forth a new nation, Christian Israel, spiritual Israel, to produce Kingdom fruitage. (Matt. 21:43; 1 Pet. 2:9; Gal. 6:16; Jas. 1:1) The cut-down "fig tree" was consigned to the fire at Jerusalem's destruction in 70 C.E.

THE TWO BASKETS OF FIGS

⁷ Once before Jerusalem had been destroyed, by the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar back in 607 B.C.E. However, 10 years before that national disaster, or in 617 B.C.E., God used the fig tree to symbolize the Jewish nation. This was when he gave to his prophet Jeremiah a portentous vision, about which Jeremiah tells us the following:

"And Jehovah showed me, and, look! two baskets of figs set before the temple of Jehovah, after Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried into exile Jeconiah [or, Jehoiachin] the son of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, and the princes of Judah and the craftsmen and the builders of bulwarks, from Jerusalem that he might bring them to Babylon. As for the one basket, the figs were very good, like early figs; and as for the other basket, the figs were very bad, so that they could not be eaten for badness."—Jer. 24:1, 2.

⁸ When asked what he saw in vision, Jeremiah described accurately what he saw. (Jer. 24:3) But what did those figs picture? Why, Israelites who were meant to be deported to Babylon. Regarding this, we read:

"This is what Jehovah the God of Israel has said, 'Like these good figs, so I shall regard the exiles of Judah, whom I will send away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans, in a good way. And I will set my eye upon them in a good way, and I shall certainly cause them to return to this land. And I will build them up, and I shall not tear down; and I will plant them, and I shall not uproot. And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am Jehovah; and they must become my people, and I myself

shall become their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.'"—Jer. 24:5-7.

⁹ Those symbolic "figs" came from some symbolic tree. From which "tree"? From the nation of Israel, of which Jehoiachin the son of Jehoiakim was king for just three months and 10 days. (2 Chron. 36:9, 10; Matt. 1:11, 12) Among those whom the king of Babylon then carried into exile were Daniel, his three Hebrew companions Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, and Ezekiel. (Dan. 1:11-17; Ezek. 1:1-3) Thus, away back in Jeremiah's time, Jehovah used the fig tree to picture the nation of his chosen people. By the time of that exile, Jeremiah had prophesied 30 years.

¹⁰ By what Jehovah said in connection with the vision of the good figs he indicated better times. He told of good things that he would do to the faithful remnant of his covenant people. This would be at the end of the "seventy years" that he had foretold just seven years earlier. (Jer. 25:11, 12) Jehovah is the God of truth, and historical records show that, in 537 B.C.E., he lived up to his declared purpose. He used the Persian Cyrus the Great to overthrow Babylon in 539 B.C.E., and then moved him to restore the symbolic "good figs" back to the land where the symbolic tree from which they had come had first been planted. There they rebuilt Jerusalem and erected a new temple for Jehovah's worship. By doing all of this, they displayed the "sweetness" like that of very good figs to their God, the Planter of their treelike nation.

¹¹ Does this have any meaning for our day? Yes, in our own 20th century the final fulfillment of Jehovah's prophecy by

7. In 617 B.C.E., how did Jehovah refer to a symbolic fig tree in a vision to Jeremiah?

8. How did Jehovah explain what the basket of good figs meant?

9. Those "figs" came from what symbolic tree, and whom did they include?

10. How did Jehovah live up to his declared purpose regarding the "good figs," and how did they display "sweetness" to him?

11, 12. (a) Whose name do the "good figs" of today have called upon them? (b) What was political Babylon of ancient times, and what is Babylon the Great?

Jeremiah has taken place and on a grander scale. This means that there are yet with us Christians who correspond to the "good figs." Jeremiah's God has regarded these also "in a good way." He has delivered them from Babylon the Great. Not without precedent God's own name is called upon them now. Back in Jeremiah's time the symbolic "good figs" were Israelites called by the name of his God. Even the prophet's name, Jeremiah, incorporated the divine name, for it means "Jehovah Loosens (the Womb)." In Jeremiah's day, Babylon became the dominant world power as a political organization. It held sway more than 90 years and so enhanced the false religion that stems from the Babylon of Nimrod's day. This *religious* feature is brought to the fore in the last book of the Bible that speaks of Babylon the Great and makes it the sexual handmaid of the political powers. As Babylon of antiquity represented an empire, so does Babylon the Great represent an empire, the world empire of false religion.

¹² Ancient *political* Babylon fell and finally passed out of existence, but *religious* Babylon the Great continued on. So it is still the world empire of false religion. —Rev. 14:8; 17:1-8.

¹³ However, will Babylon the Great also fall to destruction? Yes, the last book of the Bible has foretold this. Hence, in Revelation 18:4, 5, the following command is given to God's exiled people, the Christian congregation: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues. For her sins have massed together clear up to heaven, and God has called her acts of injustice to mind." In spelling out part of her sins, Revelation 17:6 pictures this harlotrous

religious empire as being "drunk with the blood of the holy ones and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus." She became guilty of shedding the blood of Jehovah's dedicated people during World War I (of 1914-1918) and took many captive in order to stop their preaching of God's kingdom.

¹⁴ Those oppressed captives of Babylon the Great were like the "good figs" of Jeremiah's vision. After World War I ended, Jehovah broke the power of Babylon the Great and, in 1919, he opened the way for them to act upon his command: "Get out of her, my people." The spiritual Israelites who responded by breaking free from any partnership with Babylon the Great (including Christendom) were restored to Jehovah's favor and were put to work in his Kingdom service. They readily spearheaded the worldwide preaching of "this good news of the kingdom," as Jesus had foretold in Matthew 24:14 and Mark 13:10. To this day Jehovah has not seen good to let them be uprooted from their paradisaic spiritual es-

14. For responding to God's command, how have the symbolic "good figs" fared, and who have joined them in their spiritual estate?

Christendom, like "bad figs," faces the same calamitous end as ancient Jerusalem



13. What command is given to God's people as regards Babylon the Great, and how did she become "drunk" with the blood of witnesses?

tate into which he has brought them. To the contrary, more than 2,000,000 persons who are not spiritual Israelites have responded to the Kingdom preaching and have chosen to associate with Jehovah's restored people in their spiritual estate. Thus they have taken up living under a figurative fig tree with its goodness and sweetness in more than 200 lands.

"BAD FIGS"

¹⁵ Among those who were counted in as the class of "good figs" of Jeremiah's day was King Jehoiachin (or, Jeconiah) of Judah. Jesus Christ became an adoptive descendant of King Jehoiachin through his noted descendant Zerubbabel, who was like a 'good fig.' (1 Chron. 3:17-19; Matt. 1:12; Luke 3:23-27) In 617 B.C.E., after King Jehoiachin surrendered Jerusalem to the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah, the uncle of Jehoiachin, the new king of Judah, under an oath before Jehovah to be a loyal vassal of Babylon. But King Zedekiah turned out to be a 'bad fig,' as it were. So the God by whom he had sworn, Jehovah, likened him to an uneatable fig, saying:

¹⁶ "And like the bad figs that cannot be eaten for badness, this in fact is what Jehovah has said: 'So I shall give Zedekiah the king of Judah and his princes and the remnant of Jerusalem who are remaining over in this land [after the exile of Jehoiachin] and those who are dwelling in the land of Egypt [to which Jews fled in fear of the Babylonians]—I will also give them over for quaking, for calamity, in all the kingdoms of the earth, for reproach and for a proverbial saying, for a taunt and for a malediction, in all the places to which I shall disperse them. And I will send against them the sword, the famine and

the pestilence, until they come to their finish off the ground that I gave to them and to their forefathers.'"—Jer. 24:8-10.

¹⁷ Certainly Jehovah found no pleasure in those symbolic "bad figs," which he determined to bring to such a calamitous finish, under international reproach and contempt. How bad King Zedekiah turned out to be! He broke his sworn oath and rebelled against Babylon and, under pressure by his princes, he had Jeremiah put in detention like a national danger. Besides the "sword" of the Babylonian besiegers and the pestilence among the besieged Jews, it took gnawing famine to break down the resistance of Jerusalem's defenders after 18 months of siege. The conquering king had prominent officials, political and priestly, killed. Captive Zedekiah saw his own sons killed, was then blinded and was dragged off to prison in Babylon, where he died in disgrace.

¹⁸ Do we today shudder at the horrible outcome to those symbolic "bad figs"? May they be a warning example to us not to imitate their course of action. If spiritual Israelites of today do not live up to the new covenant, if they do not uphold Jehovah's universal sovereignty, if they do not support the Messianic kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ, they will have an outcome like that of those ancient "bad figs," in the coming "great tribulation." (Matt. 24:21, 22) Then, also, the religious population of Christendom, who pretend to be spiritual Israelites, will come to their calamitous finish like "bad figs." Truly, it now behooves us to be like Jeremiah and his secretary Baruch and his few devoted friends, men faithful to Jehovah who survived Jerusalem's destruction.—1 Cor. 10:11.

15, 16. (a) Who were counted in among the symbolic "good figs" in Jeremiah's time? (b) What kind of 'fig' did King Zedekiah prove to be, and what did Jehovah foretell about the "bad figs"?

17. How bad a 'fig' did Zedekiah turn out to be, and with what consequences?

18. In view of such a warning example, what does it now behoove us to do in order to survive the coming "great tribulation"?

THE "CUP" THAT ALL NATIONS MUST DRINK AT GOD'S HAND

WHAT a foreboding appearance the state of world affairs has taken on in our generation! According to what informed persons are saying about the trend of world affairs, the so-called "destiny of the nations" is nothing pleasant to contemplate. It is certain to be a bitter potion for humankind to drink. In the face of continual failure of desperate human efforts to stave off world catastrophe,

1. In view of the foreboding future, what question are we driven to ask about the potion held out to mankind to drink?

we feel driven to ask, Does some Higher Intelligence, yes, God, have a hand in the matter?

² Here the significant statement in an old song comes to mind. According to the heading of the song, it was to be sung to the melody entitled "Do Not Bring to Ruin." The nation of Israel to which the song composer belonged did not go down to permanent ruin along with neighboring nations, but, under Divine Providence, it arose again. Thus we have a song well suited for our times, the seventh and eighth verses of which now interest us, because they say: "For

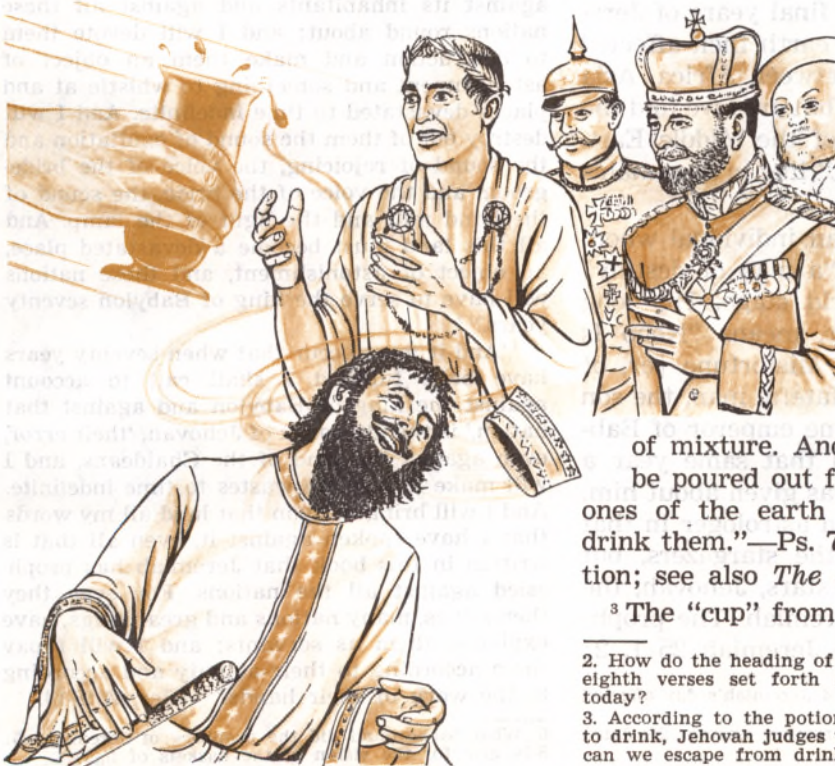
God is the judge. This one he abases, and that one he exalts. For there is a cup in the hand of Jehovah, and the wine is foaming, it is full

of mixture. And surely its dregs will be poured out from it; all the wicked ones of the earth will drain them out, drink them."—Ps. 75:7, 8 and superscription; see also *The Jerusalem Bible*.

³ The "cup" from which all the nations

2. How do the heading of Psalm 75 and its seventh and eighth verses set forth something significant for us today?

3. According to the potion that the nations are forced to drink, Jehovah judges them as being what, and how can we escape from drinking along with them?



will drink in the oncoming future contains the bitterest potion that they will ever have drunk. The lessons that we can draw from history ancient and modern indicate that. The fact that all the nations are bound to drink such a gagging potion makes it certain that God, the "King of the nations," judges them to be "wicked." (Ps. 75:8; Jer. 10:7) So, at his hand, they will be forced to drink the very dregs out of the "cup" of the foaming, heavily spiced wine. But what about us who hope for a future that turns out happy? How can we escape from drinking along with the doomed nations that death-dealing potion out of the "cup"? Logically, we need to listen to whatever counsel is given by the One who will hold out that "cup" to the nations at his due time and then act promptly in line with that counsel. Will we do so?

⁴ The world situation today resembles that in which more than 20 nations found themselves during the final years of Jeremiah. The part of the earth then affected was the land bridge between Africa, Asia and Europe. Today in that area we find the oil-producing nations of the Middle East. This is still a "hot spot" like in Jeremiah's time.

⁵ Away back there an individual whom the world might call "a man of destiny" stepped onto the world stage. His long name, Nebuchadnezzar, means "Nebo Is the Protector Against Misfortune [or, of the boundary]." This fateful man, the son of Nabopolassar, became emperor of Babylon in 625 B.C.E. In that same year a portentous prophecy was given about him. It was given, not by an astrologer in that ancient homeland of the stargazers, but by the Creator of the stars, Jehovah, the God of the prophet Jeremiah. The prophecy is dated for us in Jeremiah 25:1, 2:

4. The threatening situation of Jeremiah's day affected what land area?

5. How is the prophecy of Jeremiah, chapter 25, dated for us?

"The word that occurred to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, that is, the first year of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon; which Jeremiah the prophet spoke concerning all the people of Judah and concerning all the inhabitants of Jerusalem." The fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign fell in 625 B.C.E.

⁶ This prophecy was really eight years ahead of Jeremiah's vision of the baskets of figs at the temple in Jerusalem. (Jer. 24:1-3) What background did this prior prophecy give to that vision, and what did it say?

"Therefore this is what Jehovah of armies has said, "For the reason that you did not obey my words, here I am sending and I will take all the families of the north," is the utterance of Jehovah, "even sending to Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and against its inhabitants and against all these nations round about; and I will devote them to destruction and make them an object of astonishment and something to whistle at and places devastated to time indefinite. And I will destroy out of them the sound of exultation and the sound of rejoicing, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the hand mill and the light of the lamp. And all this land must become a devastated place, an object of astonishment, and these nations will have to serve the king of Babylon seventy years."

"And it must occur that when seventy years have been fulfilled I shall call to account against the king of Babylon and against that nation," is the utterance of Jehovah, "their error, even against the land of the Chaldeans, and I will make it desolate wastes to time indefinite. And I will bring in upon that land all my words that I have spoken against it, even all that is written in this book that Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations. For even they themselves, many nations and great kings, have exploited them as servants; and I will repay them according to their activity and according to the work of their hands."—Jer. 25:8-14.

6. What background did the prophecy of Jeremiah 25: 8-14 give for the vision of the baskets of figs?

**"NEBUCHADREZZAR THE KING OF BABYLON,
MY SERVANT"**

⁷ Today is the name of any man feared by all the nations just as the name Nebuchadnezzar was feared internationally back there, from and after the 23rd year of Jeremiah's prophesying? (Jer. 25:3) No! No man of this 20th century will go down in modern history as being like ancient King Nebuchadnezzar. True, in Romans 13:1, 6, the apostle Paul says that law-abiding Christians pay their taxes to the "superior authorities" because these "are God's public servants [Greek, *leitourgoi*] constantly serving this very purpose." But no single politician today could be prophetically called by Jehovah God "my servant." (Jer. 25:9; 27:6) The only person that can be called "servant" in fulfillment of this prophecy through Jeremiah is Jehovah's greatest servant in all the universe. This one is his now highly exalted Son, Jesus Christ, to whom he has given a name higher than that of any other creature in heaven and on earth. (Isa. 42:1; Phil. 2:5-11) Although worldly rulers do not today fear him like Nebuchadnezzar, they will do so in the coming "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon.—Rev. 16:13-16.

⁸ Why did Jehovah call King Nebuchadnezzar "my servant"? Because He used him to punish the people of Judah for their refusal to listen to His prophets. Punishment through this king of Babylon also extended to the neighboring countries that maliciously exploited Jehovah's people out of contempt for Him. This does not mean, however, that Nebuchadnezzar was a type of Jesus Christ, who worshiped Jehovah alone as God. Rather, it is the executional work that Nebuchadnezzar performed for Jehovah upon the guilty

nations that is typical. It prefigures the world-conquering work that Jesus Christ as Jehovah's Chief Executional Officer carries out during the approaching "great tribulation," in which all the enemy nations will be reduced to dust under the feet of Jehovah's topmost Servant. Thus these nations (including those of Christendom) are the modern counterpart of those ancient nations that fell before the Babylonian World Power. That is why the matter is of most serious concern to us today.

⁹ The Babylonian military steamroller brought about the desolation of the land of the kingdom of Judah for 70 years. (Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10; Dan. 9:1, 2; 2 Chron. 36:17-21) That complete desolation of the land of Judah and Jerusalem for seven decades began in the autumn month of Tishri of 607 B.C.E. With that tragic event the far more tragic year of 1914 C.E. is connected. How so? Because in the autumn of that year the "seven times" of the Gentile nations that began with Judah's desolation in 607 B.C.E. terminated their run of 2,520 years. (Luke 21:24; Dan. 4:16, 23, 25, 32) Those "appointed times of the [Gentile] nations," or Gentile Times, spanned the time period during which the Universal Sovereign Jehovah permitted the Gentile nations to exercise world domination on earth without interference by his Messianic kingdom. After Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E., the typical kingdom of God on earth was never restored to earthly Jerusalem, in the hands of David's royal family, so as not to break up complete domination of the earth by Gentile world powers.

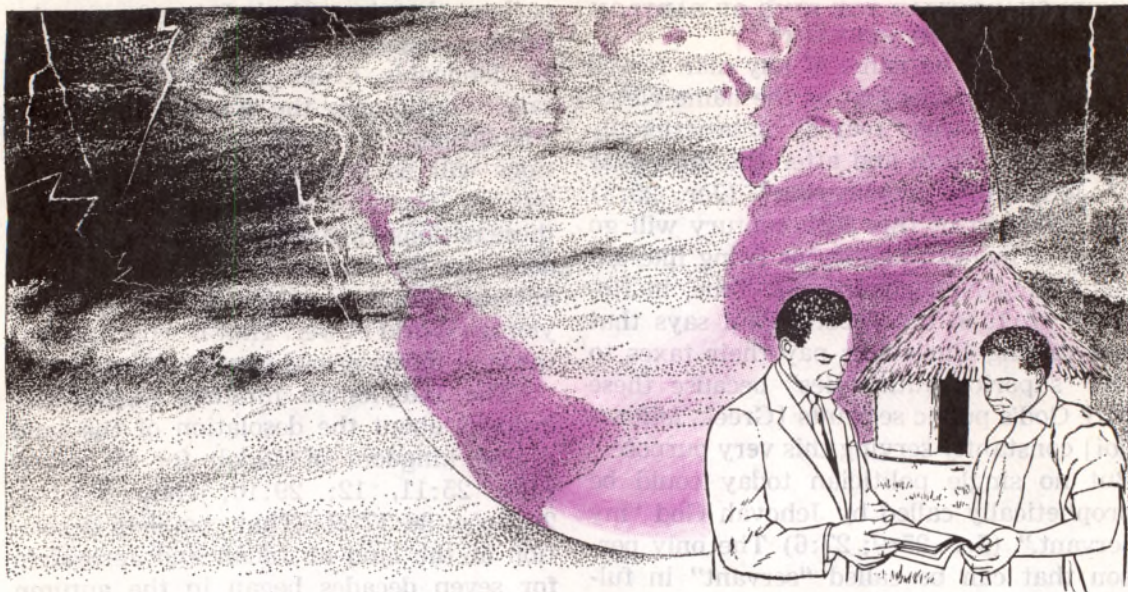
¹⁰ The Persian conqueror of Babylon, Cyrus the Great, did not restore the kingdom of the family of David to Jerusalem.

7. Whose name deserves to be feared today like that of Nebuchadnezzar, and when will the nations fear it?

8. Why did Jehovah call Nebuchadnezzar "my servant," and what in connection with him is to be regarded as a type that concerns us today?

9. What other time period began with the start of the "seventy years" of complete desolation of Judah, and how was that time period never broken up?

10. Although Cyrus overthrew the dynasty of Nebuchadnezzar in 539 B.C.E., how did Judah and the other nations serve the king of Babylon 70 years?



**Through the modern Jeremiah class,
Jehovah mercifully warns of the
coming global "tempest"**

It is true that he conquered Gentile Babylon in 539 B.C.E., or about two years before the "seventy years" of desolation of the land of Judah ran out. He proclaimed himself "king of Babylon" and at first did not alter the policy of the Babylonian dynasty of King Nebuchadnezzar. Thus the nations subjugated by Nebuchadnezzar continued to serve "the king of Babylon" 70 years. First in the 70th year of the desolation of Judah did Cyrus the Great release the exiled Jews from their direct servitude to the king of Babylon and let them return home to rebuild their desolated country and their national capital Jerusalem and its temple. (Ezra 1:1 through 3:2) In this way Jehovah called to the account of the Babylonians "their error" that they had committed against the God of Israel.—Jer. 25:12.

HANDING OUT THE "CUP" INTERNATIONALLY

¹¹ Now that the Gentile Times ended in 1914, we know that the day for Jehovah to hold an accounting with the Gentile

nations for "their error" must be very near. Never has the world been the same since 1914. Secular historians cannot explain the reason for this. But the reason simply is that about October 4/5, 1914, or 2,520 years from the desolating of Judah and Jerusalem after the Babylonian conquest, the Gentile Times of uninterrupted world domination ended. Jehovah God did not then set up at earthly Jerusalem "Jehovah's throne" for an earthly heir of King David to occupy it, thus reviving the typical earthly kingdom of God. (1 Chron. 29:23) Instead, since the "kingdom of the world" had now become the kingdom of the Lord God, Jehovah caused the birth of his kingdom from his heavenly organization and seated his Son, Jesus Christ the Heir of David, at his right hand on the celestial throne. (Rev. 11:15; 12:1-5) Since then this royal descendant of King David has joined Jehovah God in world rule amidst his enemies before he tramples them to death.

¹¹ Because of what developments in the heavens have things here on earth not been the same since 1914 C.E.?

¹² In consequence of this, there remains a "cup" for the Gentile nations to drink at God's hand. Especially since the year 1919 the Jeremiah class has been calling the attention of the nations to this "cup." By giving the nations such advance notice, the Jeremiah class has been figuratively handing out Jehovah's cup to the nations. This was prophetically pictured in Jeremiah, chapter 25. There the prophet said:

"For this is what Jehovah the God of Israel said to me: 'Take this cup of the wine of rage out of my hand, and you must make all the nations to whom I am sending you drink it. And they must drink and shake back and forth and act like crazed men because of the sword that I am sending among them.'

"And I proceeded to take the cup out of the hand of Jehovah and to make all the nations drink to whom Jehovah had sent me: namely, Jerusalem and the cities of Judah and her kings, her princes, to make them [the cities] a devastated place, an object of astonishment, something to whistle at and a malediction, just as at this day."—Jer. 25:15-18.

¹³ What was the "sword" that Jehovah was to send among all the nations that are listed in Jeremiah 25:18-26? It was the war of conquest that he permitted his "servant," Nebuchadnezzar, to wage against all those nations.

¹⁴ The symbolic "sword" struck first at Jehovah's typical kingdom in the land of Judah. (Jer. 25:29) The "kings" of Jerusalem who felt the "sword" strokes were (1) Jehoiakim the son of Josiah; (2) Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) the son of Jehoiakim; and (3) Zedekiah the son of Josiah and uncle of Jehoiachin. The first stroke, inflicted upon King Jehoiakim in 620 B.C.E., four years after Jeremiah's prophecy about the "sword" and the "cup," made him a sworn vassal king under Nebuchadnezzar. The second sword stroke was in-

flicted in 617 B.C.E. and removed young Jehoiachin from his kingship over Jerusalem and put him in exile in Babylon. The third and final stroke destroyed Jerusalem and its temple in 607 B.C.E. and deported the oath-breaking King Zedekiah to Babylon to die there as a sightless, sonless prisoner. By the middle of the lunar month Tishri of 607 B.C.E., Jerusalem and the cities of Judah became desolate.

¹⁵ Jerusalem was not to be alone in drinking a bitter potion from God. In Jeremiah 25:19-26 the prophet names more than 20 kings or kingdoms to which he hands Jehovah's "cup of the wine of rage." He starts with Pharaoh of Egypt and his servants and goes down the list of national rulers and ends up by saying: "And the king of Sheshach himself will drink after them." Students regard "Sheshach" as the cryptic name for Babel (Babylon). Its doomed king proved to be the last one of Nebuchadnezzar's dynasty, namely, Nabonidus, along with his coregent son Belshazzar. This Belshazzar was made to drink Jehovah's "cup" in 539 B.C.E., when he was killed after Babylon's fall to Cyrus the Persian. By using the cryptogram Sheshach, Jeremiah avoided mentioning Babylon directly at that time.

¹⁶ Some of the kingdoms mentioned may have put up a resistance to the aggressive Nebuchadnezzar in order to keep Jehovah's decree from being carried out. But for their instruction the prophet Jeremiah was told to say: "This is what Jehovah of armies has said: 'You will drink without fail. For, look! it is upon the city [Jerusalem] upon which my name is called that I am starting off in bringing calamity, and should you yourselves in any way go free of punishment?'" Answering his own question, Jehovah says:

12. How has the Jeremiah class been handing out the "cup" to the nations?

13. What was the "sword" that Jehovah was to send among all the nations?

14. At what did the "sword" strike first, and what kings did this affect, and how?

15. Who also were to drink the "cup" at Jehovah's hand, and who last of all of these?

16. How might some refuse to drink the "cup," but what was Jeremiah to say?

"'You will not go free of punishment, for there is a sword [of Babylonian military conquest] that I am calling against all the inhabitants of the earth,' is the utterance of Jehovah of armies."—Jer. 25:28, 29.

¹⁷ Since the year 1919 C.E. nations have refused to drink the symbolic "cup" of Jehovah's message of divine rage at the hand of the Jeremiah class. So they have taken action against Jehovah's Witnesses, both the Jeremiah class and a "great crowd" of cooperating companions, even banning them and the free distribution of their printed Bible messages. But all of this in vain! Moved by Jehovah's spirit, his obedient witnesses carry on their meetings and Kingdom preaching underground. They thus obey God rather than men who resist God. (Acts 4:19; 5:29) In the not distant future such political resisters will learn that driving Jehovah's Witnesses underground will never prevent worldly rulers from drinking the "cup" at God's own hand in "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" at the place symbolically called Har-Magedon.—Rev. 16:13-16.

¹⁸ That day will be "great" for Jehovah. It will be a joyful occasion for him, because then he will fight for the cause of his universal sovereignty. As Commander-in-Chief, he will send his own world-conquering Son Jesus Christ into battle, to gain a victory that far exceeds any victory won by ancient King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. (Rev. 19:11-21) This will give Jehovah cause for shouting more exultingly than the joyful treaders of the winepress do as they prepare the wine that will gladden the heart of both God and man. (Rev. 19:11-15; Judg. 9:12, 13) The Jeremiah class are certain about Jehovah's victory at Har-Magedon. So they refuse to keep still about this coming vindication

17. How have the nations shown their refusal to drink the "cup," but how effective has this been?

18. For whom will that day be a "great" one, and so what do the Jeremiah class refuse to do?

of Jehovah's sovereignty, even though the rulers of worldly nations are displeased at such a bitter potion.

¹⁹ Courageously the Jeremiah class of today obey the command given to the prophet back there in the first year of the reign of Emperor Nebuchadnezzar over Babylon: "And as for you [Jeremiah], you will prophesy to them all these words, and you must say to them, 'From on high Jehovah himself will roar, and from his holy dwelling he will give forth his voice. Without fail he will roar upon his abiding place. A shout like that of those treading the winepress he will sing out against all the inhabitants of the earth.'"—Jer. 25:30.

THE POTION THAT MAKES NATIONS ACT "LIKE CRAZED MEN"

²⁰ Jehovah's victory shout will resound throughout heaven and earth. The Jeremiah class and their companions keep pointing ahead to this, although victory for Jehovah means calamity for all nations. Should the Jeremiah class therefore be called 'mere calamity howlers'? No! Otherwise, Jehovah God, who gives them their message, should also be called a calamity howler. In merciful warning he says: "This is what Jehovah of armies has said, 'Look! A calamity is going forth from nation to nation, and a great tempest itself will be roused up from the remotest parts of the earth. And those slain by Jehovah will certainly come to be in that day from one end of the earth clear to the other end of the earth. They will not be bewailed, neither will they be gathered up or be buried. As manure on the surface of the ground they will become.'"—Jer. 25:32, 33.

²¹ In such language Jehovah foretold

19. Courageously the Jeremiah class publish how much of what Jehovah tells them?

20. Should the Jeremiah class be called 'mere calamity howlers' because of what Jehovah's victory will mean for the nations?

21. Why could Jehovah rightly take the responsibility for those slain because of Nebuchadnezzar's expansion of the empire?

Nebuchadnezzar's march to victory over the nations that were to be absorbed into the Babylonian Empire. So he would let Nebuchadnezzar sweep from nation to nation, putting down all resistance by the executorial sword that Jehovah put in his hand. On this account Jehovah took the responsibility for those slain by the Babylonian conquerors. He himself called these victims of Babylonian aggression "those slain by Jehovah." He was the One who made the nations drink from the "cup" the potion that made them act "like crazed men." Whether men credit it to Jehovah God or not, secular history exists in abundance to show that King Nebuchadnezzar expanded the Babylonian Empire over an area greater than that of previous world powers. Jehovah must have had something to do with that, for, in the very first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, He foretold such an expansion of the Babylonian Empire.—Jer. 25:1, 2; 32:1, 2; 52:29; 2 Ki. 25:8; Jer. 52:12; Dan. 2:37, 38; 4:20-25.

²² What, now, about "those slain by Jehovah" in the approaching "great tribulation" that will culminate in the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon? Do we want to be among them? No! For to be slain by him then would mean the judicial execution of us by him.

²³ At the outbreak of the "great tribulation" all the doomed nations will be lined up against the God of the Jeremiah class. That lineup will include the nations of Christendom, for they are among the opposers and persecutors of Jehovah's Witnesses. Christendom will be the first part of this system of things to go down, for she is the modern-day counterpart of the apostate kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem.

22. Why should we not want to be among those slain by Jehovah in the coming "great tribulation"?

23. How was it typically shown which section of this system of things would go down first in the "great tribulation," and why it first?

To typify that, the kingdom of Judah was made the first to drink the "cup" that contained "the wine of rage." Jehovah said that it was with "the city upon which [his] name is called" that he would start off in bringing the international calamity. (Jer. 25:29) Unchristlike Christendom is the most accountable religious section before God and Christ, and so from her the world calamity would go, as in a chain reaction. It will be a symbolic "tempest" that no seed-sowing of the clouds from airplanes can dissolve.

²⁴ "From the remotest parts of the earth" this symbolic "tempest" is to come, for it will be roused up from outside the realm of the doomed nations. (Jer. 6:22) In the modern fulfillment, this means, really, from an invisible, heavenly Source, so that it will be indeed "an act of God." Sweeping around the whole globe, just as the deluge of Noah's day flooded the whole earth, it will, without fail, pile up the "tempest" victims from one end of the earth to the other. How could the surviving Jeremiah class and the "great crowd" of their companions ever bury them all? Jehovah will need to use his powers to dispose of the carcasses.—Rev. 19:11-21.

²⁵ In that "day of vengeance on the part of our God," it will be better to have been among those whom ridiculers called "calamity howlers" than among those who will howl because of the "great tribulation." (Isa. 61:2; Rev. 7:14, 15; Matt. 24:21-30) "Howl, you shepherds, and cry out!" says Jehovah through Jeremiah. "And wallow about, you majestic ones of the flock, because your days for slaughtering and for your scatterings have been fulfilled, and you must fall like a desirable vessel! And a place to flee to has perished from the shepherds, and a means of escape

24. The tempest's being roused up "from the remotest parts of the earth" indicates what, and how many victims will there be?

25. In view of Jeremiah 25:34-38, what kind of "howlers" is it better to be?

from the majestic ones of the flock. Listen! The outcry of the shepherds, and the howling of the majestic ones of the flock, for Jehovah is despoiling their pasturage. And the peaceful abiding places have been rendered lifeless because of the burning anger of Jehovah. He has left his covert just like a maned young lion, for their land has become an object of astonishment because of the maltreating sword and because of his burning anger.”—Jer. 25:34-38.

²⁶ Does that prophecy make us think of clergymen who have been called pastors or spiritual shepherds and of their church congregations who have been called “flocks”? Likely so, but Jehovah is not here addressing himself to the religious leaders of the nations. In the Hebrew Scriptures the governmental rulers are spoken of as shepherds and their peoples or subjects are called their flocks. So “the majestic ones of the flock” would be the princes or the royally favored ones of the national flock. This must be the case in Jeremiah 25:34-38, for where in the whole chapter is there any mention of priests and Levites? Those to whom Jeremiah is ordered to hand Jehovah’s “cup” are described as “kings,” “princes,” and “kingdoms.” (Jer. 25:18-26) The approaching world “calamity” and “tempest” will strike, not just the clergy and other religious leaders, but also, finally, the political governmental elements of this system of things.

²⁷ So it is “the king of Sheshach” who will drink the “cup” after them all. The prophecy set out in Jeremiah 51:41 speaks of this as though already accomplished, saying: “O how Sheshach has been captured, and how the Praise of the whole earth gets to be seized! How Babylon has become a mere object of astonishment among the nations!”—Jer. 25:26; 27:7.

26. In that prophecy, who are the “shepherds” and the “majestic ones of the flock”?

27. What representative of Sheshach is to drink the “cup” last of all?

²⁸ For mere selfish reasons those political “shepherds” and “majestic ones” will “howl,” yes, roll about on the ground. As the Sovereign Lord Jehovah calls them to account during the “great tribulation,” they will grimly realize that the day has come for them to be slaughtered and scattered. If there was a way of escape or a place of refuge to which to flee, they might not feel so disposed to “howl.” They do not care so much about what happens to the national “flock,” but are more concerned about being executed themselves. Their fat-paying jobs and high position must go! Their “pasturage,” the system of things by means of which they exploited their national flocks, gets despoiled, ruined. What was previously so “peaceful” an abiding place for them to enjoy living with profit to themselves—it has been rendered lifeless. The silence of death settles down over the enclosures for their “flocks.”

²⁹ To produce such a worldwide “object of astonishment” Jehovah’s anger must be burning very hotly. Never could he be then like a river-valley lion forced out of his lair by the flooding waters of the Jordan River. No, but “Jehovah of armies” must then be like a bold lion leaving his “covert” on the offensive despite the shepherders of the pasturelands. By means of his Son-Servant, Jesus Christ, he wields the “sword” of the “war of the great day of God the Almighty.” (Jer. 25:30, 38) From the lethal blows of his “maltreating sword” worldly shepherds and majestic ones will never recover!

³⁰ Listen! With the ear of faith in Jehovah’s prophecy, do you hear it growing louder and louder? Down through the sound-collecting corridors of this “time of

28. For whom are the “shepherds” and the “majestic ones” more concerned, and how is their pasturage despoiled?

29. How will Jehovah then be like a maned young lion, and to what effect will the “sword” be wielded?

30. By reason of what we hear by the ear of faith in Jehovah’s prophecy, what should we do now?

the end" we hear coming, from the foretold future, the howling of all the national "shepherds," along with the pained outcries of "the majestic ones" of the flock of sheeplike humans. What, then, shall we listeners do? This: While the way of escape is still open and while there is still one place of refuge to which to flee, let

us act! Let us find our haven of security and preservation in Jehovah's kingdom by his appointed Shepherd, Jesus Christ. —Ezek. 34:23, 24; Jer. 23:5, 6.

(This series of articles on Jeremiah's prophecy will be resumed in the November 1 issue of *The Watchtower*.)

"TREMBLING AT MEN is what lays a snare"

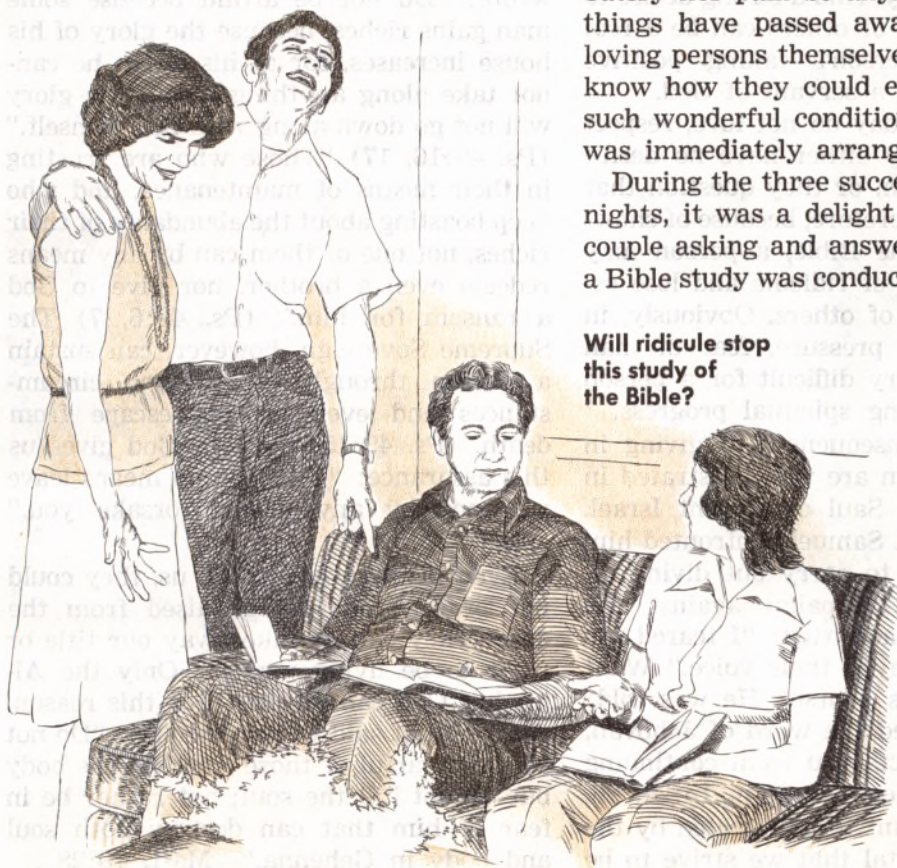
JOHN and Helen followed with interest the information presented by the Witness talking at their door on a Sunday morning. They were thrilled to read these

words of Revelation 21:4 from their own Bible: "He [Jehovah God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." Being peace-loving persons themselves, they wanted to know how they could enjoy living under such wonderful conditions. A Bible study was immediately arranged.

During the three succeeding Wednesday nights, it was a delight to see the young couple asking and answering questions as a Bible study was conducted in their home.

**Will ridicule stop
this study of
the Bible?**

Alas, this happiness lasted just three weeks! The fourth week, their door did not open to the knock of the Witness. John and Helen had decided to stop their Bible study. Why? Was it because they had lost faith in the power of God? Had they start-



ed doubting the Bible's authenticity and truthfulness? Were they no longer interested in living under better conditions? No. These were not the reasons. They stopped their study because of trembling at men. Yes, they were ensnared by fear. Many centuries ago, the inspired wise man warned against that fear, saying: "Trembling at men is what lays a snare."—Prov. 29:25.

True, all of us have a natural desire to be liked by others, to be spoken well of by our neighbors, friends and acquaintances. However, for us to let the standards of others influence the most important decisions in our life is very dangerous. If a person feels that he must live up to the expectations and standards of his community in all respects, he will become a slave to conformity. And a strong desire to gain the approval of others can be a real obstacle to a person's taking positive steps in becoming a servant of God.

Many people today do not love, respect or fear God. They either have no desire to learn about him, or they question that he even exists. Therefore, because of showing interest in the Bible, a person may become an object of ridicule and lose esteem in the eyes of others. Obviously, in the face of such pressure, fear of man would make it very difficult for a person to continue making spiritual progress.

The serious consequences of giving in to the fear of man are well illustrated in the case of King Saul of ancient Israel. When the prophet Samuel confronted him about his failure to carry out divine instructions in a campaign against the Amalekites, Saul admitted: "I feared the people and so obeyed their voice." What resulted from this course? He was told: "You have rejected the word of Jehovah, and Jehovah rejects you from continuing as king over Israel."—1 Sam. 15:24, 26.

If we do not want to be rejected by the Almighty, it is vital that we strive to be

more concerned about our standing with him than with men. The Bible says: "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom." (Ps. 111:10) Such a fear is wholesome and stems from a heartfelt desire not to displease the Most High. It is comparable to the attitude of an obedient son toward a loving father. The son does not want to do anything that might make his father unhappy or that might bring reproach on his good name. Rightly, then, fear of God includes hating what he hates, and loving what he loves.—Prov. 8:13.

To have a proper fear of God, a person needs to keep in mind that no human can give him everlasting life and care for him at all times and under all conditions. The inspired psalmist put this matter in the right perspective when he wrote: "Do not be afraid because some man gains riches, because the glory of his house increases, for at his death he cannot take along anything at all; his glory will not go down along with him himself." (Ps. 49:16, 17) "Those who are trusting in their means of maintenance, and who keep boasting about the abundance of their riches, not one of them can by any means redeem even a brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." (Ps. 49:6, 7) The Supreme Sovereign, however, can sustain a person through very trying circumstances and even provide escape from death. (Ps. 49:15) In fact, God gives us this assurance: "I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you."—Heb. 13:5.

Even if men were to kill us, they could not prevent our being raised from the dead. They cannot take away our title or right to be living persons. Only the Almighty God can do that. For this reason, Jesus Christ said to his disciples: "Do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be in fear of him that can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna."—Matt. 10:28.

Surely, then, we have even less reason to fear the reproaches or ridicule of mortal humans. Jehovah's word through Isaiah provides strong encouragement to this end. We read: "Listen to me, you the ones knowing righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law. Do not be afraid of the reproach of mortal men, and do not be struck with terror just because of their abusive words. For the moth will eat them up just as if a garment, and the clothes moth will eat them up just as if wool."—Isa. 51:7, 8.

When we consider the greatness of the Creator and contrast this with man's littleness, we are aided to break free from the fear of men. In the eyes of Jehovah God, all the nations are but a tiny drop of water in a bucket or a thin film of dust on the scales. (Isa. 40:11-15) How unreasonable it would be to fear a minute particle of water or of dust more than the Maker of the awesome universe!

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

● When Walter Imbierski, a former Roman Catholic priest, died recently in Chicago, he was denied a funeral Mass by hierarchy officials. Why? What was his "sin"? The "National Catholic Reporter" explained: "He had left the priesthood in 1975 and married."

Marriage a Sin?

God ordained marriage. (Gen. 2:18-25) So his Word speaks of those who "will forbid marriage" as having departed "from the faith, giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies hypocritically," as the "Catholic Confraternity" version puts it. (1 Tim. 4:1-3) How inappropriate, then, to disapprove of marriage, a lawful act in God's sight!

We can also draw encouragement from the fact that others have successfully resisted succumbing to the fear of man. The Christian apostle Peter reminded fellow believers that "the same things in the way of sufferings are being accomplished in the entire association of your brothers in the world." (1 Pet. 5:9) Yes, we are not alone in standing firm for Jehovah God in the face of pressure from men.

It would indeed be a great folly to tremble at men, to try to please men while displeasing the Almighty Creator. Because John and Helen did not trust in Jehovah, they lost their happiness. We hope that one day before the coming "great tribulation" they and others like them will gain strong confidence in the Most High and express themselves like the psalmist, who said: "Jehovah is my light and my salvation. Of whom shall I be in fear? Jehovah is the stronghold of my life. Of whom shall I be in dread?"—Ps. 27:1.

● In many places the increase of rudeness is being described as "an epidemic." "U.S.

Rudeness Increasing —Why?

News & World Report" comments: "In stores, in offices, even in the White House, ordinary courtesy seems to be going out of style." A Texas resident noted: "It's gotten to the point that if people weren't rude, I wouldn't know what to think." J. Ponder, an official at a Los Angeles hospital that runs a tension-control program, acknowledges "a definite decline in courtesy over the last five to 10 years." He says that people "are more self-centered. They're asking, 'What can I get?' instead of asking, 'What can I give?'"

One area where this is proving very costly is driving. Professor J. Freedman of New York's Columbia University said: "Many people are driving incredibly rudely, . . . It's almost a battleground on the highways." The Royal Bank of Canada "Monthly Letter" speaks of "the relentless carnage on the roads" in that country as being "another manifestation of

When asked why there is this huge increase in uncivil behavior, psychologist Freedman answered: "We don't really know." But long ago, God's prophetic Word foretold that this would be an evidence of the "last days," declaring: "For men will be lovers of themselves, . . . self-assuming, haughty, . . . unthankful, . . . having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, . . . without self-control, fierce."—2 Tim. 3:1-4.

● The president of the American Lutheran Church, clergyman David Preus, says that there does not need to be unity among Christians. Asserting that the Bible supports this view, he pointed to the Sadducees, Pharisees and scribes with their different teachings and stated: "They differed with each other but maintained the unity of the family."

However, true Christianity is not just a matter of family unity, since even atheists can attain that. And the example of the Sadducees, Pharisees and scribes, far from supporting disunity, condemns it, for Jesus said to them: "Why is it you also overstep the commandment of God because of your tradition? . . . You have made the word of God invalid because of your tradition." Thus, Jesus rejected their form of worship, declaring: "It is in vain that they keep worshipping [God], because they teach commands of men as doctrines."—Matt. 15:3-9.

The apostle Paul clearly showed that true Christians "should all speak in agreement, and that there should not be divisions among you." —1 Cor. 1:10.

October 28: "Figs" That Give Pleasure Even to God, ¶1-18, and The "Cup" That All Nations Must Drink at God's Hand, ¶1-6. Page 16. Songs to Be Used: 24, 59.

November 4: The "Cup" That All Nations
Must Drink at God's Hand, ¶7-30. Page
23. Songs to Be Used: 90, 66.