

OCTOBER 15, 1979

THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



TAKE COURAGE!

The Millennium Is at Hand

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A WATCHTOWER enables a person to look far into the distance and announce to others what is seen. Likewise, this magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, aids the reader to see what the future holds. Since it began publication in 1879, "The Watchtower" has held faithfully to God's Word as its authority. It stays clear of all political involvement. It points to the Bible prophecies showing that Jesus Christ is God's means for restoring peace and harmony to this globe. It shows that this Son of God, on the basis of his shed blood, will release mankind from sin and death to enjoy eternal life in happiness on a paradise earth. Because Jehovah God will accomplish all this soon through his kingdom by Jesus Christ, "The Watchtower" announces that kingdom as the real hope for mankind.

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Ten cents a copy

Watch Tower Society offices	Yearly subscription rates for semi-monthly editions in local currency
America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201	\$2.50
Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135	A\$2.50
Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6A 1Z5	\$3.00
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	£2.30
Hawaii, 1228 Pensacola St., Honolulu 96814	\$2.50
New Zealand, 6-A Western Springs Rd., Auckland 3	NZ\$3.00
Nigeria, West Africa, P.O. Box 194, Yaba, Lagos State	₦2.40
Philippines, P.O. Box 2044, Manila 2800	₱17.50
South Africa, Private Bag 2, Elandsfontein, 1406	R2.20

(Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to 117 Adams Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201.

Printed in U.S.A.

NOW PUBLISHED IN 82 LANGUAGES

SEMIMONTHLY EDITIONS

Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Cibemba, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hiligaynon, Ibo, Iloko, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Malagasy, Norwegian, Portuguese, Sesotho, Shona, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Thai, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

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The Bible translation used in "The Watchtower" is the modern-language "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated.

Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). Write Watchtower, R.D. 1, Box 300, Wallkill, New York 12589, U.S.A.

POSTMASTER: Send Form 3579 to Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087), Wallkill, N.Y. 12589.

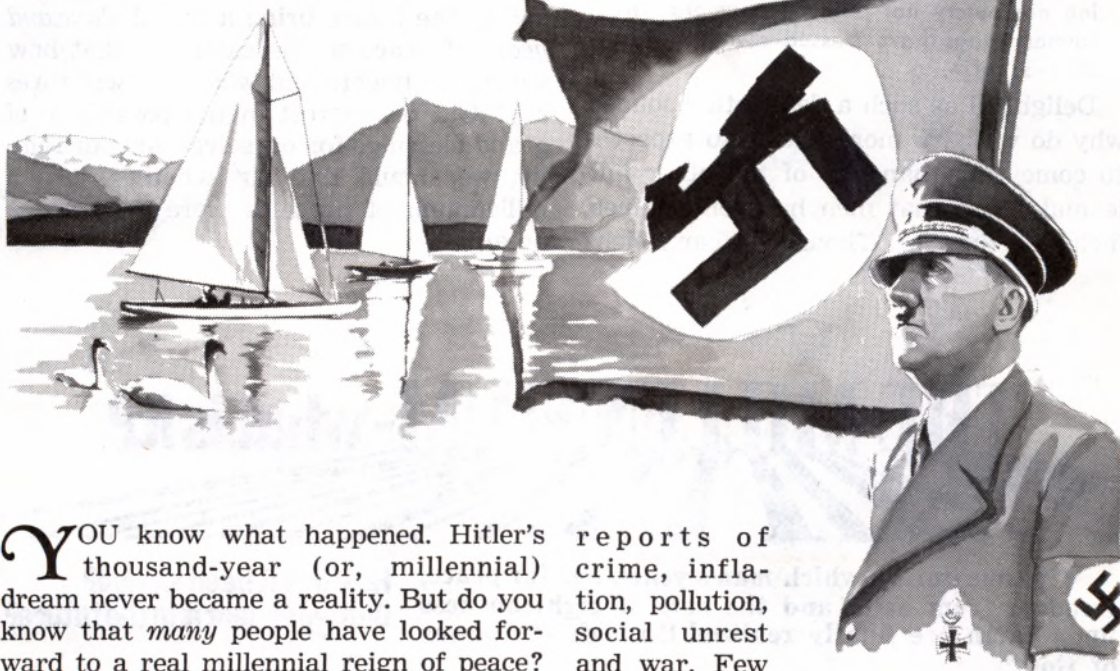
**Average Printing Each Issue:
9,200,000**

Published by
Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
of Pennsylvania

117 Adams Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.
Frederick W. Franz, Pres. Grant Suiter, Secy.

Is a millennium of peace just a dream?

"The Third Reich which was born on January 30, 1933, Hitler boasted, would endure for a thousand years, and in Nazi parlance it was often referred to as the 'Thousand-Year Reich.'"—*The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, by W. Shirer.



YOU know what happened. Hitler's thousand-year (or, millennial) dream never became a reality. But do you know that *many* people have looked forward to a real millennial reign of peace? Dr. W. Lee of the University of Dublin observed: "Worldly as well as religious speculation has its Millennial dream."

Often that "dream" has included belief in a past Golden Age that will be restored in the future. For example, if you visit Iran you could hear of an ancient "Golden Age of innocence, without disease or death." Bushmen in southern Africa speak of a past time when humans and animals lived at peace with one another. Reporting on these beliefs, *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* says that the idea of a "Golden Age in the past, lost through man's fault," often was tied in with "hope that things will be better in the future," such as in a future millennium of peace.

But are such hopes just wishful thinking? Reflect on what assails you daily—

reports of crime, inflation, pollution, social unrest and war. Few persons would see in these things any basis for believing in a coming era of peace and prosperity. A September 1976 report on the International Institute for Strategic Studies meeting in Baden, Austria, stated: "The people who spend their time studying the hard facts that lead to war no longer [have] even theoretical solutions for achieving what was once promised as a generation of peace."

However, you can read something in the Bible that gives serious reason to think that a millennium of peace is not to be dismissed as just a dream. More than that, it offers promise of things that, if realized, would make our lives vastly richer and more pleasant. Near the end of the Bible you will find this:

"And [an angel] seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years . . . that he might not mislead the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. . . . And [God] will wipe out every tear from [mankind's] eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."—Rev. 20:1-3; 21:4.

Delightful as such a description sounds, why do we have more reason to expect it to come true than any of the other millennial hopes that men have entertained, including the Nazi Thousand-Year Reich?

There is one impelling reason. This millennium of peace is promised by Jehovah God. Once, when a man told Jesus that a certain matter seemed impossible, God's Son replied: "The things impossible with men are possible with God."—Luke 18:27.

But does the Bible really say that God *will* in the *future* bring a literal *thousand years* of peace to the earth? Is that how we should understand what the Scriptures say? Out of interest in the possibility of grand blessings for ourselves and our family, we should find out whether such a millennium of peace is more than just a dream.

THE MILLENNIUM—what is it?

"A time during which man's yearnings for peace, freedom from evil, and the rule of righteousness upon earth are finally realized through the power of God."

**How has it been viewed?
Can we expect it in the future?**

THAT is how the *Encyclopædia Britannica* describes the Bible teaching of the "1,000-year period, known as the millennium."

Do you not agree that we would like such a description to become a reality? Certainly we would like to enjoy 'peace, freedom from evil and righteousness upon earth.' But is that prospect part of your belief concerning the millennium?

For many persons it is not, for they know little or nothing about the millennium. That is true even of millions who have attended church, because many religions leave the subject virtually unmentioned. It is almost as if it is something that God included in the Bible but that is no longer of interest or importance.

Yet, as we have seen, God's Word links the millennium with a description of his wiping away sorrow, tears and death. So we have good reason to want to understand what Jehovah God says and means regarding the millennium. Our future and that of our family may well be involved.

You can open your Bible to Revelation chapter 20 to find the most of what the Bible says about the thousand-year reign of Christ. The apostle John shares with us what he was privileged to see:

"I saw an angel coming down out of heaven with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. And he hurled him into the

abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, that he might not mislead the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. . . .

"And I saw thrones, and there were those who sat down on them. . . . Yes, I saw the souls of those executed with the ax for the witness they bore to Jesus. . . . And they came to life and ruled as kings with Christ for a thousand years. . . .

"Now as soon as the thousand years have been ended, Satan will be let loose out of his prison, and he will go out to mislead those nations in the four corners of the earth. . . . But fire came down out of heaven and devoured them. And the Devil who was misleading them was hurled into the lake of fire. . . .

"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. . . . Furthermore, whoever was not found written in the book of life was hurled into the lake of fire [the second death]."—Rev. 20:1-15.

So, according to the Bible, the millennium is a period when Satan will not be free to mislead humans, the dead will be raised and judged, and mankind will be ruled righteously by Jesus Christ and his joint heirs.

You may rightly wonder, though, why so little is heard about this in the churches or in religious circles. The fact is that if you inquired, you would find that some religions hold that the millennium is not a literal 1,000-year period during which Christ will rule. Another common teaching is that the millennium is but a symbol of Christ's reign starting almost 2,000 years ago and still continuing. Just what are you to believe? We can be greatly helped in understanding this important matter by considering what the apostle John and his fellow apostles believed and also what developed after Jesus' faithful apostles died by the end of the first century.

KINGDOM TRUTHS TWISTED

When we today read the Bible, it is easy to appreciate that the *heavenly* kingdom

of God was one of the principal things that Jesus taught his disciples. In fact, he commenced with the message: "Repent, you people, for the *kingdom of the heavens* has drawn near." (Matt. 4:17; John 18:36) He told his apostles that he had to die but would be resurrected and that he would prepare a place for them in heaven. (Matt. 16:21; Luke 22:28-30; John 14:2, 3) At first, the apostles did not understand him, for they imagined that the Kingdom would be established on earth. (John 20:9; Acts 1:6, 7) But after they received holy spirit, they realized that the Kingdom would be in heaven. Thus, the apostle Paul wrote: "As for us, our citizenship exists in the heavens." To attain heavenly life, they would have to die and be resurrected as spirit creatures, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom."—Phil. 3:20; 1 Cor. 15:50.

However, these clear Biblical truths became clouded over after the death of Jesus' apostles. How did that happen? Paul said: "After my going away . . . men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves." (Acts 20:29, 30) Yes, during the first century the apostles exercised a restraining influence that helped to keep Christian doctrine pure. But after they all died an apostasy set in. (2 Thess. 2:3-8; 1 Tim. 4:1-4) This had a definite influence on what was taught regarding the millennium. We are not in the dark about this, for surviving second- and third-century writings help us to trace what occurred.

SECTARIAN VIEWS OF THE MILLENNIUM

In the century after the death of the apostle John, the view developed that for the millennium *Christ would rule on earth*, perhaps from rebuilt Jerusalem. Historian J. Mosheim suggests that this idea may have come from a merging of the Christian hope of "our Saviour's kingdom of heav-

en" with a prevailing Jewish hope of "an *earthly* kingdom of the Messiah." The sect of the Montanists sprang up in Asia Minor, teaching that Jesus would reign there from Phrygia. They, and others, taught that many fantastic things were going to happen when Christ and his joint heirs were ruling on earth during the millennium. For example, such rulers supposedly would enjoy sensual pleasures of all sorts, including those between the sexes. And they would have material bodies 'more excellent and ethereal than ours.' Such extreme views came to be thought of as typical of those believing in the millennium. As a result, 'the whole doctrine of the millennium lost its reputation,' reports Dr. A. Neander.

A second view developed that added to the confusion. According to it, the "*thousand years*" were merely symbolic. Probably the most influential teacher in this regard was Catholic theologian Augustine. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* tells us:

"After his conversion to Christianity, Augustine, a former *bon vivant*, consistently favoured a world-denying and ascetic style of life. In fact, his disillusionment with worldly values was more thorough than that of the millenarians [or Chiliasts], for he rejected as carnal any expectations of a renewed and purified world that the believers could expect to enjoy."

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* reports that Augustine "advanced the theory that the millennium had actually begun with Christ's nativity." The fact that you may not have heard much about the millennium likely is related to this development, for the Catholic Church now holds that the "1,000 year reign of Jesus [is] a symbol for the entire life span of the Church . . . The chaining of Satan during this same period signifies that the influence of Satan has been notably reduced."

These conflicting sectarian views have contributed to the discouraging of interest in the millennium. But since our own fu-

ture may be involved, let us examine these two views about the millennium and determine what we should believe based on God's Word the Bible.

WHERE AND WHEN?

Many churches teach that Christ will return in the flesh, even as in the second century the idea developed that Jesus and his associate king-priests would reign in the flesh on earth during the millennium. However, Jesus himself said: "A little longer and the world will behold me no more, but you [for whom he was going to prepare a place in heaven] will behold me, because I live and you will live." (John 14:2, 3, 18, 19) Hence, Jesus indicated that he would reign in heaven. Is that what we are to understand when we read Revelation chapter 20? Yes, for the Bible does not contradict itself.

Arguing against a millennial reign in the flesh on earth, Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* explains:

"In this account [Revelation 20] the new feature is the 1000 years' reign of the martyrs with Christ, . . . This reign is not said to be on earth, nor is the first resurrection said to be a bodily one . . . If the martyrs restored to life are the saints dwelling in Jerusalem who are attacked by Gog and Magog, it is curious that Christ (with whom they reign) does not attack those enemies. Their destruction comes from heaven."—Vol. V, p. 387.

That agrees, does it not, with what we already saw from the Bible about Jesus and his joint heirs reigning in the *heavenly* kingdom? The Bible does not say that such "partakers of the heavenly calling" will ever, even for the 1,000 years, receive human bodies. (Heb. 3:1) Instead, it clearly shows that spirit-anointed Christians will be "raised up a spiritual body," as was Jesus Christ, in order to enter into heaven itself.—1 Cor. 15:42-49; Heb. 9:24.

Since those inheriting the Kingdom go to heaven, all the sectarian fantasies about Jesus and the "saints" ruling in the flesh

from earthly Jerusalem or Phrygia and indulging in the sensual pleasures of the flesh simply are unfounded.

Such views appear to be a distorting of two teachings that the Bible does present: (1) The Kingdom is a heavenly government composed of Jesus, the apostles and others raised to heaven in the "first resurrection." (Rev. 20:6) (2) Under that heavenly government the earth, cleansed of wicked ones, will be restored to peaceful paradise conditions to be enjoyed by God's *human* servants.—Luke 23:43; Rev. 19:11-20:3; 22:1, 2, 17.

You can see that the second of those developments has not yet occurred. That would suggest, would it not, that the millennium is yet future?

As we have noted, some say that the millennium is not an actual period of 1,000 years, but is just a long, *indefinite* period that may have started centuries ago. Can that be correct? It is true that certain numbers or time periods in the book of Revelation are figurative, for the message of the book was presented in many "signs." (Rev. 1:1, 4; 2:10) However, is there reason to believe that the "thousand years" is not a symbol?

In Revelation chapter seven the apostle makes a contrast between the set number who reign with Christ (144,000) and the indefinitely larger number who survive the "great tribulation." How does John do so? He terms the latter group the "great crowd, which no man was able to number." (Rev. 7:4, 9) Later on, he refers again to the definite number, "*the* hundred and forty-four thousand." (Rev. 14:3) Similarly, in Revelation 20:8, John says that the indefinitely large number of persons rebelling at the end of the millennium "is as the sand of the sea." Nor does the apostle John, in Revelation chapter 20, employ the plural "thousands," which is sometimes used elsewhere to indicate a large and perhaps indefinite number. (Rev. 5:11;

Dan. 7:10; 1 Sam. 18:7; Ps. 68:17; 119:72) So there seems to be no good reason to conclude that the expression "thousand years" of chapter 20 refers to a long but indefinite period. Rather, John uses the term in a way that indicates a period of set length—"the thousand years."—Rev. 20:6.

Can we be sure, though, of the length of that fixed period? Viewing Revelation as dealing with the Jews around the end of the first century, J. J. Wettstein claimed that the millennium was the 50 years from Emperor Domitian's death (96 C.E.) to the Jewish war during Hadrian's reign. Another idea was that a day stood for a year. According to this view, with 360 days in a lunar year, the millennium would be 360,000 years long (360 x 1,000). As to such interpretations, Professor A. T. Robertson wrote: "All sorts of theories are proposed, none of which fully satisfy one."

The most direct approach is to accept John's words for what they actually say—1,000 years. Many have seen in this an appropriate reign for Jesus Christ, whom the Bible calls the "Lord of the sabbath." (Matt. 12:8) It would be like a sabbath rest day after some 6,000 years during which human imperfection dominated the earthly scene.—2 Pet. 3:8.

John himself shows that the millennium follows Christ's successful war against all his earthly enemies. (Rev. 19:11-21) Since that has not yet occurred, we can be sure that the millennium is yet to come. The fulfillment of Bible prophecy in our time gives evidence that soon Christ will war against and destroy God's earthly enemies, as described by Jesus' own prophetic words.—Matt. 24:3-22.

All the Biblical and historical evidence indicating that we are in the last days of this wicked system of things gives us a firm basis for expecting the millennium of peace to begin in the near future. (2 Tim. 3:1-5) What will the earth then be like?

What blessings on earth during the millennium?

What will it be like when 'God's will is done on earth'?

Have you offered the famous model prayer that Jesus taught? He said: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth."—Matt. 6:10.

THOUGH millions of persons have repeated such words, do you think that many have seriously considered what it will be like on earth when God fully answers that prayer? Have you yourself wondered what things you and your family will be able to enjoy if privileged to live when God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven?

The book of Revelation can help us here. In its 19th chapter we read of the coming war in which Jesus Christ will destroy all of God's enemies on earth. The 20th chapter tells us that then the Devil, who has been behind wickedness, will be abysed for 1,000 years. During that millennium, Christ will rule from heaven, to the blessing of God's human servants, including those resurrected. The wicked elements having been removed, there will be "new heavens and a new earth" in which righteousness will dwell.—Rev. 20:11; 21:1; 2 Pet. 3:13.

Are you interested in a more detailed picture of the earthly blessings during the millennium? Well, Revelation goes on to give some description of what it will be like when Jehovah God turns his attention to the new earthly society of true worshipers. We read:

"He 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."—Rev. 21:4.

Does not the fact that there will be no more tears show that mankind will not

continue to be plagued by cruelties such as child or wife abuse, rape, robbery, assault, terrorism and war? Further, God assures us that pain and death—which now often are companions of disease and accidents—will not exist to cause sorrow.

The Bible also gives us basis for expecting other blessings on earth during the millennium. In this regard, we need not resort to fantasy or exaggeration, as some did in the second and third centuries.

EARLY VIEWS ABOUT EARTHLY CONDITIONS

As the previous article mentioned, a falling away from pure Christianity occurred after the apostles died, and some began to teach distorted things. This, in part, was because they mistakenly believed that Jesus and his joint heirs would rule on earth. (John 14:19; 2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Pet. 1:3, 4) Evidently it was reasoned that such supernatural rulers would produce incredible earthly conditions.

We find an example of such unbelievable descriptions in the quoted writings of Papias, a second-century prelate from Phrygia. He imagined that during the millennium this would happen:

"Vines will be produced, each one having a thousand branches, . . . and on each shoot ten thousand clusters, and in each cluster ten thousand grapes . . . Similarly a grain of wheat will produce ten thousand ears, and each ear will have ten thousand grains, and each grain [will yield] ten pounds of clear pure flour."

Yet, other early writers pointed to the



**During the millennium
God will reverse
desolated conditions on earth,
eliminate disease and bring about
peaceful balance in the animal kingdom**

delightful descriptions in Isaiah, believing that these gave indication of what Christ's 1,000-year reign would do.

For example, second-century writers Justin Martyr and Irenaeus quoted from the prophecies in Isaiah 65:17-25 and 11:6-9. The first of these passages states:

"They will certainly build houses and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating. For like the days of a tree will the days of my people be. . . . The wolf and the lamb themselves will feed as one, and the lion will eat straw just like the bull They will do no harm nor cause any ruin in all my holy mountain,' Jehovah has said."

Isaiah chapter 11 also speaks of the animals living together in peace, with the lion eating straw just like the bull. And it says that a small boy will lead them.

Irenaeus recognized that these words are a fitting description of how God's truth can make personality changes in "savage men, both of different nations and various habits, who come to believe, and when they have believed, act in harmony with the righteous." But he also reasoned that in the millennium these changes in men, from viciousness to peaceableness, logically would be reflected in animal creation. He wrote:

"When the created order is renewed, then the

animals ought to be subject to man, and return to the food which God gave them at the first, the fruit of the earth, as they were subject and obedient to Adam."—*Against Heresies* V, 33, 4.

As we today read those passages from Isaiah in their context, we can appreciate that Isaiah was prophesying first about the restoration of his people from captivity in Babylon in a miniature or typical way, and, second, about the restoration of spiritual Israelites from Babylon the Great in the "last days" in an antitypical or complete sense. The miniature fulfillment came about in 537 B.C.E. With a new rulership over the land, the restored Israelites could apply themselves to cultivating their land and reestablishing its productivity, beauty and peace. (Isa. 35:1, 2) Jehovah helped them to put away vicious, animalistic qualities and to reflect in their attitudes and ways the peaceableness that is fitting among true worshipers.—Mic. 6:8; see *Man's Salvation out of World Distress at Hand!*, pp. 320-322, ¶15-19; also "*New Heavens and a New Earth*," pp. 324-333, ¶18-29.

Since such peaceableness developed among the restored Israelites then, and it is in evidence among true worshipers today, can we not be confident of such on an even grander scale during the millennium? However, such passages give us more to think about.

INDICATIONS FROM EDEN

In pointing forward to the new conditions that the restored Israelites would enjoy, Isaiah drew upon the example of man's original home, the paradise called the garden of Eden. He wrote:

"For Jehovah will certainly comfort Zion. He will for certain comfort all her devastated places, and he will make her wilderness like Eden and her desert plain like the garden of Jehovah."—Isa. 51:3.

Other Bible writers, too, pointed to the garden of Eden as exemplifying fruitful and blessed conditions under which men

would like to live.—Ezek. 36:35; Joel 2:3; Gen. 13:10; compare Hosea 2:18-21.

So, in thinking about the earthly blessings of the millennium, we can call to mind what Jehovah God provided for the human family at the outset, in the garden of Eden.

The Genesis account tells us that God put Adam and Eve in a "garden" or "paradise." (Gen. 2:8, *Septuagint Version*) It was far more than a flower garden. We read: "Jehovah God made to grow out of the ground every tree desirable to one's sight and good for food." While there was an abundance of healthful food, the garden of Eden was also a place for rewarding work. Adam and Eve were to cultivate and care for the garden, which would add to their satisfaction in eating its varied produce.—Gen. 2:9, 15, 16; compare Ecclesiastes 2:24; 5:12.

As Adam and Eve lived in that delightful garden, did they have to fear the wild animals? Was their peace marred by animals ferociously preying on one another? What Isaiah wrote in chapters 11 and 65 suggests not. We also have this historical information from Genesis:

"God went on to say [to Adam and Eve]: 'Here I have given to you all vegetation bearing seed which is on the surface of the whole earth and every tree on which there is the fruit of a tree bearing seed. To you let it serve as food. And to every wild beast of the earth and to every flying creature of the heavens and to everything moving upon the earth in which there is life as a soul I have given all green vegetation for food.' And it came to be so."—Gen. 1:29, 30.

As you may know, many persons today, including some of the clergy, do not accept what the Bible says about the garden of Eden and the conditions that prevailed there. Some claim that the account about Adam and Eve is just a myth or an allegory. They thus put themselves in conflict with Jesus Christ, for he accepted the Scriptural account as being factual, ac-

tually quoting from it. (Matt. 19:4, 5) Also, many of the clergy do not believe what God's Word says about the animals in the garden of Eden. Perhaps their view has been affected by the theory of evolution—that what we see in animal life now is an extension of what has always been and that “survival of the fittest” has always ruled among animals and humans.

But with faith in God's power, and with willingness to accept what the Bible says, we can trust that in Eden the first humans were not sinful, warring persons and that the animals in paradise were at peace. Based on our own experience in observing animals in zoos, on wildlife television programs or on farms, can we not be sure that man's having in subjection the peaceful animals in paradise must have added to the delight of living?—Gen. 1:26.

LOOKING FORWARD CONFIDENTLY

We can see, then, that God provided a basis for anticipating earthly blessings: The promise at Revelation 21:4 means that we can look forward to the end of sorrow, pain and death. And, logically, that would mean the end of present conditions that produce such things. Also, we have the limited details about the garden of Eden. These give us reason to expect a restored earthly paradise with rewarding work, satisfying and healthful food and man's once again having animal creation in peaceful subjection.—Luke 23:43; Ps. 72:16.

These conditions will not be restricted to a garden in one locality. Rather, God will fulfill his original purpose, the subduing and beautifying of the entire globe. His purposes never fail.—Isa. 45:18; Gen. 1:28; compare Isaiah 14:24.

The material blessings are by no means the only ones that will make the thousand-year reign a delight. Jehovah assures us of things that are even more important for a truly satisfying life—spiritual things. Recall what Jesus told the tempter: “Man

must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth.” (Matt. 4:4) Hence, we can be confident that the millennium will be marked by abundant feeding on spiritual things founded on the Scriptures. Righteousness and trueness will abound, contributing to lasting peace.—Ps. 72:1, 5-7, 17; Isa. 9:6, 7; 32:1, 16-18; compare Isaiah 26:7-9.

FAITH NOW

For us to enjoy the blessings of the millennium, or even to live until that time, we need faith. God, in his wisdom, did not give us complete details about earthly conditions during the millennium. He did not describe *how* he will accomplish what may at present seem almost impossible—reversing the desolated conditions now covering vast areas of the earth, eliminating the diseased and crippled state of human bodies and bringing about a peaceful balance in the animal kingdom. But he has included sufficient information in his Word to prove that he has the superhuman ability to accomplish such miracles, and even to resurrect the dead. (Acts 10:37, 38; Luke 7:14-16; 19:37, 38; Gen. 7:6-16) Still, one's serving God requires faith, believing that he will provide spiritual and earthly blessings.—Heb. 11:1, 6.

With such faith Jehovah's Witnesses are carrying on an earth-wide educational work. They are helping persons to study the Bible, gain firm faith and develop confidence that soon God, through Christ, will take final action to eliminate wickedness. (Matt. 24:14) Many of those who now exercise faith will survive to see the beginning of Christ's millennial reign and will enjoy the earthly blessings that we have discussed. We invite you to accept the Bible study help that Jehovah's Witnesses offer so that you, too, can confidently look forward to blessings during the millennium.



Sustained by the MILLENNIAL HOPE

"IN THE age of the hydrogen bomb, there is no longer any meaningful distinction between global war and global suicide." Thus spoke the president of the United States as he returned from signing the SALT Treaty with the Soviet Union. He indicated also that the world has been living in a "twilight peace," faced always with the gloomy prospect of "a catastrophic nuclear war, a war that in horror and destruction and death would dwarf all the combined wars of man's long and bloody history."

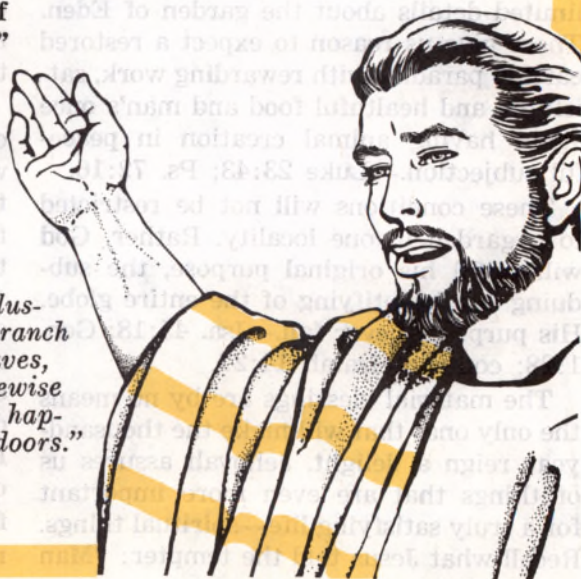
But will it come to global suicide? Let us examine what "the

1, 2. (a) What did a world leader say about war and peace? (b) But what hope did Jesus hold out? (Compare Luke 21: 29-31.)

*"Now from the fig tree learn the illustration: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. Likewise also you, when you see these things happening, know that he is near, at the doors."
—Mark 13:28, 29.*

Son of man," Jesus Christ, answers, according to the book of Mark.

² In foretelling events, the "things happening" in our 20th century, Jesus Christ compared them to the fig tree when "its young branch grows tender and puts forth its leaves"—a proof that summer is at hand. (Mark 13:28, 29) This corresponds with Jesus' coming to execute judgment. Then will follow "the thousand years," during which the Devil



will not mislead the nations anymore.—Rev. 20:2, 3.

³ However, the “things happening” have not been pleasant. In prophesying about them, Jesus encourages us in these words: “When you hear of wars and reports of wars, do not be terrified; these things must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, there will be earthquakes in one place after another, there will be food shortages. These are a beginning of pangs of distress.” (Mark 13:4, 7, 8) So Jesus’ disciples have not been unduly perturbed about the fearsome happenings on earth since “the appointed times of the nations” ran out in 1914. (Luke 21:24-28) These are all an indication that Christ Jesus, the Son of man, “is near, at the doors,” and that his resurrected footstep followers will shortly reign as kings with him “for the thousand years.”—Matt. 24:33; Rev. 20:4.

“LOOK OUT FOR YOURSELVES”

⁴ Along with many others of mankind, Jehovah’s Witnesses have suffered from these “pangs of distress.” At times they have been called upon to endure even more than others, for this is the period of time when the Devil is especially wrathful with those “who observe the commandments of God.” (Rev. 12:12, 17) Jesus speaks of this, saying: “As for you, look out for yourselves; people will deliver you up to local courts, and you will be beaten in synagogues and be put on the stand before governors and kings for my sake, for a witness to them.”—Mark 13:9.

⁵ In the era following 1914, how true this has proved to be! Conscientious Bible students were hounded and persecuted by

most nations participating in World War I. Waves of persecution engulfed, but failed to destroy, the German witnesses of Jehovah during the 1930’s and on into the 1940’s. During World War II, most nations of earth joined in a campaign of hate against Jehovah’s Witnesses. But despite their sufferings, the bright hope of the blessed millennial rule lay always before these Christians; and toward the happiness of that time they have continued to move forward.—Rev. 20:6.

⁶ To this day, Jehovah’s people are having to appear before judges and rulers in many lands, as “a witness to them.” This is because God’s servants give their primary allegiance to Christ’s kingdom, which Jesus himself described as being “no part of this world.” (John 18:36) It is also because they share zealously in the fulfillment of the following words of Jesus’ prophecy: “Also, in all the nations the good news has to be preached first.” (Mark 13:10) Has this been accomplished since 1914? Certainly it has! Not in mere human strength, but by the power of God’s spirit, Jehovah’s Witnesses have covered the earth with a campaign of preaching and disciple-making. Today more than two million Witnesses are proclaiming the millennial hope “to the extremities of the inhabited earth.”—Zech. 4:6; Rom. 10:18.

⁷ By his dynamic energy God is sustaining his people wonderfully as they continue to meet up with the situations that Jesus further describes, saying: “But when they are leading you along to deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand about what to speak; but whatever is given you in that hour, speak this, for you are not the ones speaking, but the holy spirit is. Furthermore, brother will deliver brother

3. (a) How has mankind been affected by the “things happening” referred to by Jesus? (b) How should Jesus’ disciples regard these events?

4. Why have Jehovah’s Witnesses often suffered more than others, and what does Mark 13:9 say of this?

5. In moving toward the millennial goal, what has been the experience of Jehovah’s Witnesses since 1914?

6. (a) What “witness” have Jehovah’s people been required to give? (b) To what extent has Mark 13:10 been fulfilled in modern times?

7. In what ways are Jehovah’s Witnesses experiencing the help of God’s dynamic energy? (Isa. 40:28-31)

over to death, and a father a child, and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death; and you will be objects of hatred by all people on account of my name.”—Mark 13:11-13.

⁸ In these days of the fulfillment of Jesus’ “sign,” there have been many instances of Jehovah’s providing “holy spirit” and guidance when it has been most needed. (Mark 13:4) One of Jehovah’s Witnesses, a faithful traveling overseer, was recently arrested for preaching the “good news,” and his captors prepared to execute him. However, he protested that they must first give him a fair trial. When a trial was granted, he requested a court recorder. With the help of Jehovah’s spirit, the overseer gave a fine testimony concerning the Kingdom, quoting many scriptures. All of this was written into the court record. However, he was sentenced to death. But next he informed the court that the law granted him the right of appeal. So he was allowed to appeal his case on the basis of the written court record. The higher court reversed the decision, and set the traveling overseer free to continue his preaching of God’s kingdom. Holy spirit had helped him to gain the victory!—Compare Acts 4:13, 31; 5:32.

⁹ As Jesus foretold, unbelieving family members have risen up as persecutors. Betrayal of the Witnesses by their own rebellious children has taken place occasionally, as happened in a refugee camp in Africa. Also, in comparatively peaceful lands, Jehovah’s Witnesses have at times had to contend with bitter opposition from marriage mates or other family members. As they witness tactfully and try lovingly to help such opposers, all such Witnesses are sustained by the assurance that “he that has endured to the end is the one that

will be saved.”—Mark 13:13; compare Mark 10:28-30; 1 Peter 3:1-4.

DISCERNING THE “DISGUSTING THING”

¹⁰ All persons who yearn for the oncoming millennium are deeply involved in the fulfillment of Jesus’ next words: “However, when you catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation standing where it ought not (let the reader use discernment), then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains.” (Mark 13:14) What is this “disgusting thing”?

¹¹ The “disgusting thing” stands in contrast to the “kingdom of our Lord [Jehovah God] and of his Christ,” which was born in the heavens in 1914. (Rev. 11:15-12:12) That kingdom is described prophetically as “pretty for loftiness” and “the perfection of prettiness.” (Ps. 48:2; 50:2) But the nations immediately began to rage against the Kingdom. (Ps. 2:1-6) Very soon they brought forth the League of Nations, later to reappear as the United Nations. In the Bible book of Revelation this international body is depicted as something truly “disgusting”—“a scarlet-colored wild beast . . . full of blasphemous names and [having] seven heads and ten horns.” (Rev. 17:3, 8) How “disgusting” it is from Jehovah’s viewpoint! For it has been lauded as the agency to bring in “peace and security”—something that only Christ’s glorious Kingdom rule can accomplish for mankind.—Isa. 9:6, 7; compare 1 Thessalonians 5:3.

¹² Who have made such boastful claims for this human agency? Outstandingly, the clergy of Christendom! In December 1918, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America extolled the then-proposed League of Nations as “the political expression of the Kingdom of God

8. How has “holy spirit” often aided God’s people when under stress?

9. What problems have been met and overcome with regard to family members?

10. What question arises with regard to Mark 13:14?

11. (a) How have God’s kingdom and the “disgusting thing” appeared in opposition? (b) Why is the United Nations “disgusting” from Jehovah’s viewpoint?

12. How has Babylon the Great come into God’s disfavor, and what will be the result to her?

on earth." More recently, in 1965, Pope Paul VI proclaimed the United Nations to be "the last hope of concord and peace." Down to this year 1979, popes and prelates continue to woo favors from the U.N. But where do these clergymen belong? They are tied in with a religious "harlot," described in Revelation as "Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and of the disgusting things of the earth." (Rev. 17:1, 3-6) As the world empire of false religion, this harlotrous "woman" plies her trade with the nations' political leaders, as she declares her faith in the U.N. "beast," assuming even to 'sit as a queen' atop that "beast" in giving it direction. (Rev. 18:7) But just as she appears to be

'sitting pretty' with her political "lovers," the radical "ten horns" of that U.N. will come to 'hate the harlot and make her devastated and naked,' and desolate her completely.—Rev. 17:16.

¹³ With the discerning eye of faith, Christians can even now see that "disgusting thing"—the U.N.—"standing where it ought not," with "horns" threatening the so-called 'holy realm' of Christendom. (Mark 13:14; Matt. 24:15) The desolating of false religion draws near! She has miscalculated in placing her trust in this "disgusting" beast! As the reader discerns

13, 14. (a) Why should we now make sure that our 'flight to the mountains' is complete? (b) What evidence is there that many are still obeying the command at Revelation 18:4?



"Pangs of distress" for mankind started in 1914 and have intensified until now

these things, what should he do? Jesus answers: "Begin fleeing to the mountains."

¹⁴ Happily, "those in Judea" have not delayed their flight to Jehovah's protective "mountains" outside that realm. Consequently, today, in 205 lands and territories around the globe, Jehovah's Witnesses are warning of the early end of this system of things. They have heeded the voice out of heaven that says: "Get out of [Babylon the Great], 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." (Rev. 18:4, 5) Jehovah's people have made themselves "no part of the world." (John 15:19) Thousands continue to flee, as shown by the total of 416,167 baptized in the three years following 1975.

AN URGENT SITUATION

¹⁵ Underlining the urgency at the "conclusion" of the system of things, Jesus goes on to say: "Let the man on the housetop not come down, nor go inside to take anything out of his house; and let the man in the field not return to the things behind to pick up his outer garment." (Mark 13:15, 16) In Bible times, when disaster threatened, it would have been foolhardy for a man to descend the outer stairs from his roof chamber and enter the house to retrieve his possessions. Often his quickest way of escape would be across adjoining roofs. Also, a farmer, stripped down to work in his field, would jeopardize his chances of escape if he returned to pick up a fine outer garment. Likewise today, salvation is to be found in fleeing to God's kingdom and continually placing Kingdom interests first—not in trying to salvage material things from a doomed world.

15. How may we apply the counsel of Mark 13:15, 16 in our own lives?

—Compare Luke 9:62; 12:22-31; 17:31, 32.

¹⁶ Jesus next says: "Woe to the pregnant women and those suckling a baby in those days!" (Mark 13:17) It was hard—very hard—for such persons when the imperial army of Rome desolated Jerusalem in the year 70 C.E. And it will be a hard time for families that have ignored Jehovah's provision for escape, when the final "tribulation" is on the earth. Happily, God-fearing parents who are striving to raise their little ones "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah," can expect that obedient minors will come under family merit, which can mean salvation for them. (Eph. 6:4; compare 1 Corinthians 7:14.) But the way of survival will not be easy, as Jesus' further words indicate:

¹⁷ "Keep praying that [your flight] may not occur in wintertime; for those days will be days of a tribulation such as has not occurred from the beginning of the creation which God created until that time, and will not occur again. In fact, unless Jehovah had cut short the days, no flesh would be saved. But on account of the chosen ones whom he has chosen he has cut short the days." (Mark 13:18-20) We, individually, may fail to "make it" if we delay flight during a favorable season like summer until the wintertime of "tribulation." In these abnormal times, no one can expect to keep on living a normal life. The course of wisdom today is to flee to the side of God's kingdom, and to stay there, expending oneself in a life of self-sacrifice on behalf of Kingdom interests. (Mark 8:34-36; Matt. 6:33) As we face up to the greatest of all tribulations, we can be thankful for Jesus' assurance that Jehovah will "cut short the days" in order

16. (a) Who will find it very hard when the final "tribulation" strikes? (b) In contrast, what comforting expectation may God-fearing parents have?

17. (a) What may we expect of the "wintertime" of "tribulation"? (b) How may we act wisely now, and with what hope for the future? (Isa. 26:20, 21)

to save "flesh" devoted to him—that of the "chosen ones" who will later rule with Christ and that of the "great crowd" who form a nucleus of those who will live on earth during the millennium.—Rev. 5:9, 10; 7:4, 9-17.

¹⁸ After warning of "false Christs and false prophets," many of whom have appeared in these final days, Jesus refers to fearsome sights in the heavens and to the "great power and glory" of his coming as the "Son of man," when he executes judgment and gathers his own for salvation. (Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:26) No doubt, with food, fuel and other supplies failing, and the continued stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction, there will be intensification of the "anguish of nations, not knowing the way out . . . , while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth." (Luke 21:25, 26) Whether those nations will attempt the suicidal course of all-out nuclear warfare remains to be seen. But they can not, and will not, wipe mankind from the face of the earth! For the "chosen ones" and their companions there is the firm promise of deliverance.—Luke 21:28; Matt. 24:21, 22.

¹⁹ Truly, the "pangs of distress" have brought much sorrow to mankind since 'nation began to rise against nation' in world war. (Mark 13:8) Yet Jesus assures us that, just as the approach of summer is to be recognized by the young leaves that the fig tree puts forth, so "these things happening" must soon reach their culmination with Christ's coming to execute judgment. He says: "Truly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things happen. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." (Mark 13:21-27, 30, 31) Moreover, the Revelation that

Jesus gave, later, to the apostle John, assures us that 1,000 years of God's kingdom by Christ will follow the passing away of the Devil and all his works.—Rev. 20: 2, 3; 1 John 3:8.

"KEEP ON THE WATCH"

²⁰ The closing words of Jesus' great prophecy contain a strong warning for all of us. Some may have been lulled into drowsiness, or even into sleep, because the "Son of man" did not come to reckon with the nations at an expected date. How dangerous! Jesus counsels: "Concerning that day or the hour nobody knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but the Father. Keep looking, keep awake, for you do not know when the appointed time is." Our not knowing that time provides strong reason for keeping wide-awake. Further, loyalty to our Master, demonstrated by our zealously preaching the "good news" concerning his arrival, requires constant wakefulness. "It is like a man traveling abroad that left his house and gave the authority to his slaves, to each one his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to keep on the watch. Therefore keep on the watch, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming."—Mark 13: 32-35.

²¹ When the "Son of man" arrives "suddenly," therefore, to execute judgment, may he find us not sleeping but very active in doing our Father's will. For we will be blessed if we have heeded Jesus' words: "What I say to you I say to all, Keep on the watch." (Mark 13:37) May we be sustained by Jehovah's precious promises, on through the "tribulation" and into the splendid peace that will last for 1,000 years under God's kingdom by Christ!—Rev. 20: 1-6; 21:1-5.

20. (a) Why is it dangerous to grow drowsy at this time? (b) In line with Mark 13:34, 35, how may we show loyalty to our Master?

21. In view of what promises should we "keep on the watch"?

18. How may we expect the "anguish of nations" to culminate? (Isa. 45:18)

19. What may we expect to see in the near future?



TAKE COURAGE!

The Millennium Is at Hand

"In the world you are having tribulation, but take courage! I have conquered the world."—John 16:33.

THESE were Jesus' parting words of counsel to his disciples, spoken on the eve of his own arrest and execution. He himself displayed that quality of courage to a remarkable degree, and he wanted his devoted followers to do likewise. They would need to be very courageous, for Jesus had just told them: "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were part of

the world, the world would be fond of what is its own. Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you. Bear in mind the word I said to you, A slave is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also; if they have observed my word, they will observe yours also. But they will do all these things against you on account of my name, because they do not know him that sent me."—John 15:18-21.

² However, what is embraced in Christ-

1. Why would Jesus' disciples need to be very courageous?

2. What is embraced in Christlike courage? (Compare Psalms 27:13, 14; 31:24.)

like courage? Does it mean “foxhole” bravery, as shown by soldiers in the heat of battle? No, it means much more than that. Christian courage calls for the display of exemplary moral strength at all times. It demands unswerving support for God’s kingdom under any and all circumstances. It requires steadfastness, endurance and a sustained loyalty to right principles. True courage includes resoluteness and a positive determination to press onward and to succeed, even in the face of seemingly overwhelming opposition and difficulty. It embraces the resolve that the apostle Paul expressed, saying: “There is one thing about it: Forgetting the things behind and stretching forward to the things ahead, I am pursuing down toward the goal.”—Phil. 3:13, 14.

DANIEL’S EXAMPLE OF COURAGE

³ God’s Word abounds with accounts of great courage displayed in the face of faith-testing trials. One who displayed such courage on a number of occasions was God’s prophet Daniel. As a young man enslaved in Babylon, he “determined in his heart that he would not pollute himself with the delicacies of the king and with his drinking wine,” and in this he was joined by Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. (Dan. 1:8-19) This took courage, similar to the courage that has been required on the part of young witnesses of Jehovah in some lands today, for example in refusing school lunches that contain blood products.—Acts 15:28, 29.

⁴ Later, when those same three companions of Daniel took a firm stand on the issue of idolatry, Daniel no doubt loyally approved of their stand. Under inspiration he recorded that event in great detail, for

3. What exemplary courage did Daniel and his companions show with regard to food and drink?

4. What fine example have many young people today found in Daniel chapter 3? (Romans 15:4)

our admonition in these critical days.—Dan. chap. 3.

⁵ It took courage for Daniel to stand before mighty Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and to make known the interpretations of that ruler’s dreams—especially since Daniel’s prophesying indicated the eventual crushing of the Babylonian Empire, as well as humiliation for the king. (Dan. 2:36-38, 44, 45; 4:24, 25, 33) Also, at the time of Belshazzar’s idolatrous feasting, when handwriting from Jehovah appeared on the wall of the king’s palace, Daniel was required to be very courageous in informing the king and his grandees that great Babylon was finished and would be given to Medo-Persia. (Dan. 5:1-6, 17-28) Similarly, it has required courage on the part of many of Jehovah’s Witnesses today to speak out boldly concerning God’s judgments against Babylon the Great and other doomed systems of this world.—Rev. 16:12-16, 19.

IN THE LIONS’ PIT

⁶ In their trialsome experiences, Daniel and his companions had relied heavily on Jehovah in prayer. (Dan. 2:17, 18) And it was in connection with prayer that Daniel was again called upon to show unswerving courage. Babylon had fallen, and now Darius ruled over Medo-Persia, the fourth world power of Bible record. Because of the “extraordinary spirit” granted him by his God, the aged Daniel came to be more distinguished than all the other officials of the kingdom. These notable men, being jealous of Daniel’s wisdom and position, sought some way to bring about his destruction. But they well knew that they

5. (a) Why did it take courage for Daniel to speak before Nebuchadnezzar, and later Belshazzar? (b) How is similar courage required of Jehovah’s Witnesses today?

6, 7. (a) Why did Daniel come into prominence during Darius’ reign? (b) How only could his enemies find occasion against him? (c) What similar situations have arisen in our time?

could find no pretext, unless they did so in connection with "the law of his God."

—Dan. 6:1-5.

⁷ Being aware of Daniel's custom of praying and offering praise to his God three times each day, the conspirators caused the king to sign an edict that anyone who made a petition to any god or man for 30 days, except it be to the king, must be thrown into the lions' pit. The edict became the unchangeable law of the Medes and the Persians. (Dan. 6:6-9) This is similar to the situation today in many lands where petty officials or clergymen, stung by the refusal of Jehovah's Witnesses to become part of the world or to soft-pedal their Kingdom activity, and jealous of God's blessing on their work, try to "get" the Witnesses and put them out of action. These opposers know well that Jehovah's people are usually the most law-abiding and honest persons in the community. So they trump up issues involving idolatrous ceremonies and salutes, and the shouting of partisan or patriotic slogans, such as "Heil Hitler," "Viva Franco," and others.

⁸ What a glowing example Daniel left as to facing such issues! The record tells us: "But Daniel, as soon as he knew that the writing had been signed, entered into his house, and, the windows in his roof chamber being open for him toward Jerusalem, even three times in a day he was kneeling on his knees and praying and offering praise before his God, as he had been regularly doing prior to this." (Dan. 6:10) He did not cease his customary worship of Jehovah. In similar fashion, faithful witnesses of modern times do not stop their worship of God because some dictator bans or restricts their Christian activity. They may need to feel their way discreetly, such as by the staggering of

house-to-house activity, or by witnessing with the Bible alone, or even by placing the emphasis on informal preaching. But worship they must! They 'cannot stop speaking about the things they have seen and heard.'—Acts 4:20.

⁹ Because of his integrity-keeping course, Daniel was thrown into the lions' pit. But did that mean that his God had deserted him? Why, never! Nor does Jehovah forsake his witnesses when they are thrown into filthy prisons today. Daniel had not even been abandoned by King Darius, who "spent the night fasting"—likely praying to Daniel's God. Surely, Jehovah's protection proved to be more powerful than the unchangeable edict of Medo-Persian law. Next morning, when the king hurried to the lions' pit and inquired of Daniel whether his God whom he was "serving with constancy" had been able to rescue him, Daniel could reply: "My own God sent his angel and shut the mouth of the lions, and they have not brought me to ruin, forasmuch as before him innocence itself was found in me; and also before you, O king, no hurtful act have I done."—Dan. 6:18-22.

¹⁰ Prayer to Jehovah is as important today as in Daniel's time, and how effective it can be! Though Jehovah's Witnesses may not nowadays be thrown into literal lions' pits, they live in a world where their "adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone." What must Christians do, then, when they come face to face with persecutions and other trials? They must be courageous. They must humbly submit to the trying circumstances and pray, being confident also that their brothers everywhere are praying fervently in their behalf. The

8. How have faithful witnesses today followed Daniel's uncompromising example?

9. How did Daniel come to find protection, and of what encouragement is this today?

10. How may Jehovah's people thwart the devices of that "roaring lion," the Devil?

apostle Peter gives fine advice: "Throw all your anxiety upon [God], because he cares for you. Keep your senses, be watchful. . . . take your stand against [the Devil], solid in the faith, knowing that the same things in the way of sufferings are being accomplished in the entire association of your brothers in the world. But, after you have suffered a little while, the God of all undeserved kindness . . . will himself finish your training, he will make you firm, he will make you strong. To him be the might forever."—1 Pet. 5:6-11.

¹¹ There have been many modern-day

11. What modern-day examples are there of Jehovah's Witnesses surviving 'a lions' pit'?

examples of Jehovah's Witnesses' being thrown into a "lions' pit," as it were. Lion-like emissaries of that "roaring lion," the Devil, are seeking continually to devour God's people. However, his Witnesses persevere in prayer, throwing their anxiety on Jehovah, and take their stand "solid in the faith." For example, there was a young girl in Rhodesia who had been well taught by her parents as regards Bible principles. She was captured by guerrilla soldiers. Her parents feared for her, since the guerrillas were in the habit of violating or indoctrinating teen-age girls. All that the parents could do was pray for her safety. After several days, she returned un-



As Jehovah protected Daniel, so he protects witnesses from modern-day "lions"

harm. "What happened to you?" asked her parents. "I just kept witnessing to them," explained the girl. So her captors sent her home. Later, the guerrilla leader came to the village and sought out her parents. He told them that he just wanted to meet the parents of such a well-trained little girl.

¹² How true it is that Jehovah cares for and stands by his prayerful servants! With confidence, we can always pray as did David: "O Jehovah my God, in you I have taken refuge. Save me from all those persecuting me and deliver me, that no one may tear my soul to pieces as a lion does, snatching me away when there is no deliverer." Yes, we may feel at times that our "soul is in the middle of lions," that we are among "devourers, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and whose tongue is a sharp sword." But our fervent prayers to Jehovah, and our taking refuge in the shadow of his wings, will bring us through these trials as integrity-keepers. (Ps. 7:1, 2; 57:1-4) As Daniel "through faith . . . stopped the mouths of lions," so may we.—Heb. 11:33.

IN "A TIME OF DISTRESS"

¹³ Later, during the reign of King Cyrus, an angel appeared to Daniel in a vision and strengthened him, saying: "Do not be afraid, O very desirable man. May you have peace. Be strong, yes, be strong." (Dan. 10:1-19) It required courage on Daniel's part to receive and record the powerful prophecy that was next given him by the angel, and which we find in Daniel chapters 11 and 12. And it has taken courage for Jehovah's Witnesses to remain "no part of the world" during the fulfillment of the final part of this proph-

12. What fervent prayer may we always offer to Jehovah, and with what confidence?

13. (a) In the reign of Cyrus, why did Daniel require strengthening? (b) What similar courage have Jehovah's Witnesses needed today?

ecy, as it describes the confrontation between the Communistic "king of the north" and the capitalistic "king of the south" in this nuclear age.

¹⁴ Several times the book of Daniel mentions Michael, whose name means "Who Is Like God?" (Dan. 10:13, 21) Thus this

In Coming Issues

- We Did Not Give Up!
- Benefiting from "One Mediator Between God and Men"
- When Was Jesus Born?

great prince is identified as the Lord Jesus Christ, who contends for the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty. In speaking of this "time of the end," the angel tells Daniel: "And during that time Michael will stand up, the great prince who is standing in behalf of the sons of your people. And there will certainly occur a time of distress such as has not been made to occur since there came to be a nation until that time. And during that time your people will escape, every one who is found written down in the book." (Dan. 12:1, 4) May we be very courageous to do all that Daniel's God requires of us, until that "time of distress" sweeps away Satan's wicked world. For then, the glorious day of Jesus' millennial reign will dawn. "Many of those asleep in the ground of dust . . . will wake up" with prospects of everlasting life on earth. The courageous Daniel, too, "will stand up for [his] lot at the end of the days."—Dan. 12:2, 9, 13.

14. (a) What identifies Michael as the Lord Jesus Christ? (b) How may we draw courage from the record in Daniel chapter 12?

"BE COURAGEOUS AND STRONG"

¹⁵ Today, God's people stand at the very portals of the millennium. The situation resembles that of Daniel's people, Israel, at a much earlier period of their history. This was when they were encamped at the brink of the Jordan River, ready to cross into the Promised Land. The goal was in sight. But trials and difficulties still lay ahead. Courage was needed. Therefore, another famous prophet of Jehovah, the aged Moses, spoke these words to Israel: "Be courageous and strong. Do not be afraid or suffer a shock before [your enemies], because Jehovah your God is the one marching with you. He will neither desert you nor leave you entirely." And to his own designated successor, Joshua, Moses gave similar admonition: "Be courageous and strong."—Deut. 31:1-8.

¹⁶ Indeed, all the people would need to be very courageous; and, hence, Moses instructed the priests, the Levites and the older men of Israel in connection with what was to take place every seven years at the festival of booths that all would be required to keep: "Congregate the people, the men and the women and the little ones and your alien resident who is within your gates, in order that they may listen and in order that they may learn, as they must fear Jehovah your God and take care to carry out all the words of this law." (Deut. 31:9-12) Listening to, learning and obeying the law of Jehovah was essential to the success of that nation, and this is also necessary today if God's people are to be supplied with courage that will enable them to survive the world's end.

¹⁷ At that critical time in Israel, it was necessary for the older man Joshua to show exemplary courage, even as this is needful for Christian elders in the congrega-

tion today. Hence, Jehovah's words spoken directly to Joshua, and fortifying those previously spoken by Moses, should have our close attention: "Be courageous and strong. . . . Only be courageous and very strong. . . . Be courageous and strong. Do not suffer shock or be terrified, for Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go." (Josh. 1:6, 7, 9) Jehovah told Joshua what was required to be "courageous and strong," and to act wisely in every situation. And what is that? Let the scripture answer:

¹⁸ "This book of [Jehovah's] law should not depart from your mouth, and you must in an undertone read in it day and night, in order that you may take care to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way successful and then you will act wisely."—Josh. 1:8.

¹⁹ What finally resulted from the wise action of Joshua, together with the courageous obedience of the people? After all obstacles had been surmounted, after Jehovah had given Israel victory over all their enemies and when the people had at last settled in that "land flowing with milk and honey," Joshua was able to encourage them by saying: "You well know with all your hearts and with all your souls that not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed. They have all come true for you. Not one word of them has failed."—Josh. 5:6; 23:14.

²⁰ When Jehovah's courageous people of modern times have at last come out of the catastrophic "time of distress" to enter the millennium of Christ's peaceful reign, they will experience the fulfillment of Jehovah's promises on a far grander, yes, on a permanent scale. May we all "be courageous and very strong" to survive into that millennium now at hand!

15, 16. (a) In what earlier situation of Daniel's people Israel was courage required? (b) As in Israel, how may the courage of God's people today be strengthened? 17, 18. What is required to become "courageous and strong," and why should Christian elders pay particular attention to this?

19, 20. What will be the final outcome of our being "courageous and strong"?

WHEN THE WORST HAPPENS

The story of a young girl's stirring faith



OUR daughter Elise was born in 1962 in Helsinki, Finland. Her coming brought much joy to us and her older brother, Esa. Elise was eager to learn, and my husband and I taught her to read before she went to school. Also, she had musical inclinations, as have the rest of our family.

At three we enrolled Elise in a musical kindergarten. By the age of eight she was accomplished enough on the violin to play Vivaldi's Concerto in A-minor at weddings. We formed a family orchestra. My husband played the viola, Esa the cello and Elise the violin. It looked as though Elise would become an exceptionally talented musician.

Interested as we are in music, we laid even greater stress on our daughter's spiritual development, studying the Bible with her from infancy. Thus, by the time she was five, on

The sun seemed to darken when a doctor said: "Your little girl has cancer."

her own she would go from house to house and offer the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. One of our neighbors was a little irritated, for she did not think it right for such a young person to be doing this work.

The lady said to Elise: "The idea of a small girl like you coming to talk to me about the Bible! Why, you can't even read those magazines yourself!"

"Oh, yes I can," replied Elise, and proceeded to read and explain a paragraph from the magazine that she was offering. It delighted us when we heard about this. We were also happy to note her response when the congregation was planning to build a new Kingdom Hall. She drew her whole savings of 15 marks (\$3.75, U.S.) out of the bank and donated it for this purpose.

A FRIGHTENING DISCOVERY

One day in the summer of 1972, when Elise was 10, we were returning home from a trip. I noticed a strange lump on her nose. It was quite small, but it began to grow. So I took her to the Medical Center in Puotinharju. A specialist told me that he had never seen a lump like this on a nose before, and advised us to go to the University Ear Clinic. A few days later we were relieved to hear the diagnosis: *Not malignant*.

Drugs were prescribed, with the assurance that the growth would soon disappear. But it did not. After two weeks without improvement, we again took Elise to the doctor. This time she was admitted to the hospital, and on September 24, she underwent surgery. It was then that we were given the painful news: "Your little girl has cancer."

COURAGEOUS FIGHT FOR LIFE

It was suspected that the cancer had spread to Elise's tonsils. So they were removed. Over the following months, as the cancer continued to spread, further operations were performed to try to stop its progress. Elise kept a diary, which we still have. She wrote in the fall of 1973:

"After having three operations I was waiting for a place in the plastic surgery department. I was soon admitted and it was miserable being in the hospital again. But there was one good pal, Ritva, who had an eye operation. We often played hide and seek with Pekka and Tiina. I gave Ritva three books, *Listening to the Great Teacher*, *Is the Bible Really the Word of God?* and *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. Ritva read them all. In my opinion this autumn has been the most miserable autumn in my life."

You can imagine the distress that these repeated disfiguring operations caused all of us. Elise's diary reflects her suffering and pain. Yet, at the same time, showing through is her strong faith and lack of fear. Her diary continues:

"In January [1974] I had my fourth op-

eration and quite a large cut was made on my cheek. For a few days my whole head, ears as well, was bandaged. There were fewer bandages on my left ear, and so I had to put the telephone receiver to that ear. When the bandages were removed I looked pretty terrible, and when the stitches were taken out near my eye I was afraid that my eye would be put out. I got out of the hospital on January 19. It was a happy day."

All during this time our Christian brothers and sisters, including her fellow musicians in the convention orchestra, kept in touch and were encouraging. Also, her schoolmates and teachers were very friendly and helpful. They sent her many gifts, and did what they could to make her feel accepted and wanted. But Elise often did more to comfort her friends than they did to comfort her.

She would tell these ones that even though she might die, she would only be "sleeping" as for a moment and then would wake up in paradise. "The new world will begin as soon as I die, because no one knows anything about the passing of time when they sleep," she would say. It was hard for her friends to control their emotions when they saw our daughter's suffering, and yet heard her speak calmly and with such confidence regarding God's promise of the resurrection.

We did not give up hope that the cancer might somehow be arrested. Treatment with cobalt rays was begun in March of 1974, followed by treatment with drugs. Elise also spoke about this in her diary:

"Due to ray treatment I became very weak. This continued for three weeks. The worst, however, has still not been told. The day before school broke up in May I was given drugs that made me so weak that in the whole of June there did not seem to be the slightest ray of hope. I hardly ate anything for three weeks and hardly had the strength to get out of bed. I lost five kilograms [11 pounds] and all my hair fell out. But there was the playhouse; it was really great when Daddy built it.

"Fortunately in July I was somewhat bet-

ter and was able to attend the district convention. I felt well during the assembly and from that time on my spirits were quite good. In August I had another week of medication, but I did not get so sick this time. My medical treatment is planned to last for two years."

However, all these efforts had only limited success, and Elise's condition worsened. As she realized that she would soon die, she parceled out her playthings to her friends. She reminded them that she would see them again when she was resurrected. She kept her violin, however, because she hoped that she would be able to play in our family orchestra again in the new system.

Also, throughout this period Elise did a lot of witnessing to her teachers, schoolmates, doctors and nurses. She left 12 copies of the book *Is This Life All There Is?*, inscribed with her own signature. After her death, she wanted them to be given to medical personnel who had a part in treating her. Elise's case became widely known in Helsinki. But finally she died, while not yet 14, on January 4, 1976.

A SURPRISE MEETING

A year and a half later my husband and I were attending the district assembly at the Ice Stadium in Helsinki, when a person approached us, asking: "Do you remember me?" We were at first puzzled, but then recognized the man as a doctor who, at one stage, administered treatment to Elise. He looked different without his white doctor's coat, and he had shaved off his beard. What had happened?

Elise had spoken to him, as she had to all the other doctors, and he was very friendly and seemed to show some interest in the Bible. So we, too, gave him a witness. We had taught Elise to pray for her friends and those she liked, and in our evening prayers she often mentioned this doctor, praying that he might learn the truth about God's purposes. Well, now this doctor was telling us how the faith of our daughter during her terminal illness had made a deep impression on him.

"She gave me the book *True Peace and Security*," he explained, "but I was busy and put it on the bookshelf. At the time, my marital affairs were not going along very well, and in an effort to improve matters, I decided to make a break away from my heavy responsibilities at the X-ray clinic in Helsinki. So we moved to Åland, where I took up general practice at the Health Center.

"The move did not in itself improve our family relations, but soon a local Witness called on my wife, and she accepted some literature. Then she remembered that we had the book that Elise had given me, and she got it down from the bookshelf and read it through. She was at once convinced that this was the truth, and the local Witness began a Bible study with her. At first, she was a little afraid to tell me about it, thinking that I would refuse to let her study. But I said: 'Anything that will help our family relations is good.' I wanted to meet the Witness, and soon this was arranged. The result was that I eventually joined in the study too. Bible principles improved our family affairs and gave us a new outlook on life's values. In 1976 we were baptized and my wife is now a regular pioneer. Three of our four children are publishers of the 'good news,' and the youngest, aged seven, accompanies us regularly in the field service."

You can just imagine how encouraged we were to hear this! Our daughter's prayer seemed to have received the best possible answer. If only Elise knew of it! When the resurrection takes place, there will be very pleasant things to tell her.

Although the darkest day of my life was when the doctor said, "Your little girl has cancer," Elise's fight to live nonetheless was encouraging. It was heartwarming to see how firm faith in Jehovah God and his Bible promises can so strongly govern even a young child's life. I will never forget Elise's saying: "I will only be sleeping as though for one night, and I will wake up in the new world."

—Contributed.

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

● In reviewing two recent biographies of evangelist Billy Graham, the "New York Review of Books" makes some observations about his "once saved, always saved" style of evangelism: "Current evangelism is as far as one can go in the pursuit of faith

One-Stop Salvation

without works. Graham has brought to perfection the notion of a global parish, that is, no parish at all. He is relieved of the need to make private visits, to gather boxes of old clothes in the church basement, to perform weddings, bury the dead . . . Not only is he relieved, but the saved are also, if they like, outside the demands of works in community with others. With their salvation kits, they are like patients making a single visit to a clinic and who are thereby recorded in the cure statistics. The commitment does not require one to attend Mass or to go about ringing doorbells, selling the 'Watch Tower,' refusing blood transfusions and military service." —August 16, 1979, page 4.

The evidence is that Graham's superficial approach to salvation has little lasting effect in the lives of most of the people he "saves." No doubt this is because they are looking for the quick cure that Graham "sells" so well, rather than heeding the Bible's clear declaration: "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." —Jas. 2:17, 26, "Authorized Version."

● Dr. Tom Dooley, a man highly acclaimed for his hospital work in the jungles of Southeast Asia in the late 1950's, is being investigated for canonization as a Roman Catholic "saint." But documents obtained through the U.S. Freedom of Information Act reveal that Dooley was working for the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during this period. "He'd give information about troops being moved, ammunition coming in, attitudes of people," explains Maynard Kegler, a priest who is promoting Dooley as a "saint," adding: "This is not going to hurt his cause for sainthood at all."

However, "Notre Dame Magazine" writer

Jim Winters, who wrote of the CIA findings, says that Dooley "practiced a highly political form of medicine," extolling "the joys of capitalism" to thousands. "He was not just handing out pills, he was 'doing a little public relations for America,'" observes Winters. "If he had stayed out of politics . . . he might still be a hero today. But he chose to politicize his books, his speeches, his medicine."

Do such actions reflect the conduct of a person rightly called a "saint" in the Biblical sense? Not likely, in view of what Jesus said about his apostles and disciples who were saints or "holy ones" in the true sense: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Can you imagine any of them "doing a little public relations" for the Roman Empire?—John 17:16, "Catholic Confraternity" Version.

● The recently published "Encyclopedia of American Religions" lists a staggering 1,187

"primary" religious denominations in the United States. Methodist minister J. Gordon Melton spent 15 years researching his compendium of American religions, conducting

hundreds of interviews to establish the facts. Prior to his "Encyclopedia," the largest listing may have been "Profiles in Belief," with 735 North American religions included.

Such a proliferation of religious sects based on the ideas of different men is to be expected, as the apostle Paul predicted concerning those who profess Christianity: "The time is sure to come when, far from being content with sound teaching, people will be avid for the latest novelty and collect themselves a whole series of teachers according to their own tastes." —2 Tim. 4:3, "The Jerusalem Bible."

Already in the first century, there were those who said: "I belong to Paul," "But I to Apollos," "But I to Cephas," "But I to Christ." Yet Paul declared that "there should not be divisions among you," and explained that such were a trait of "fleshly men," who were only feeding on the "milk" of God's Word and not the strong spiritual food necessary to make them a united body of "spiritual men." —1 Cor. 1:10-12; 3:1-4.

"SERVE JEHOVAH WITH REJOICING"



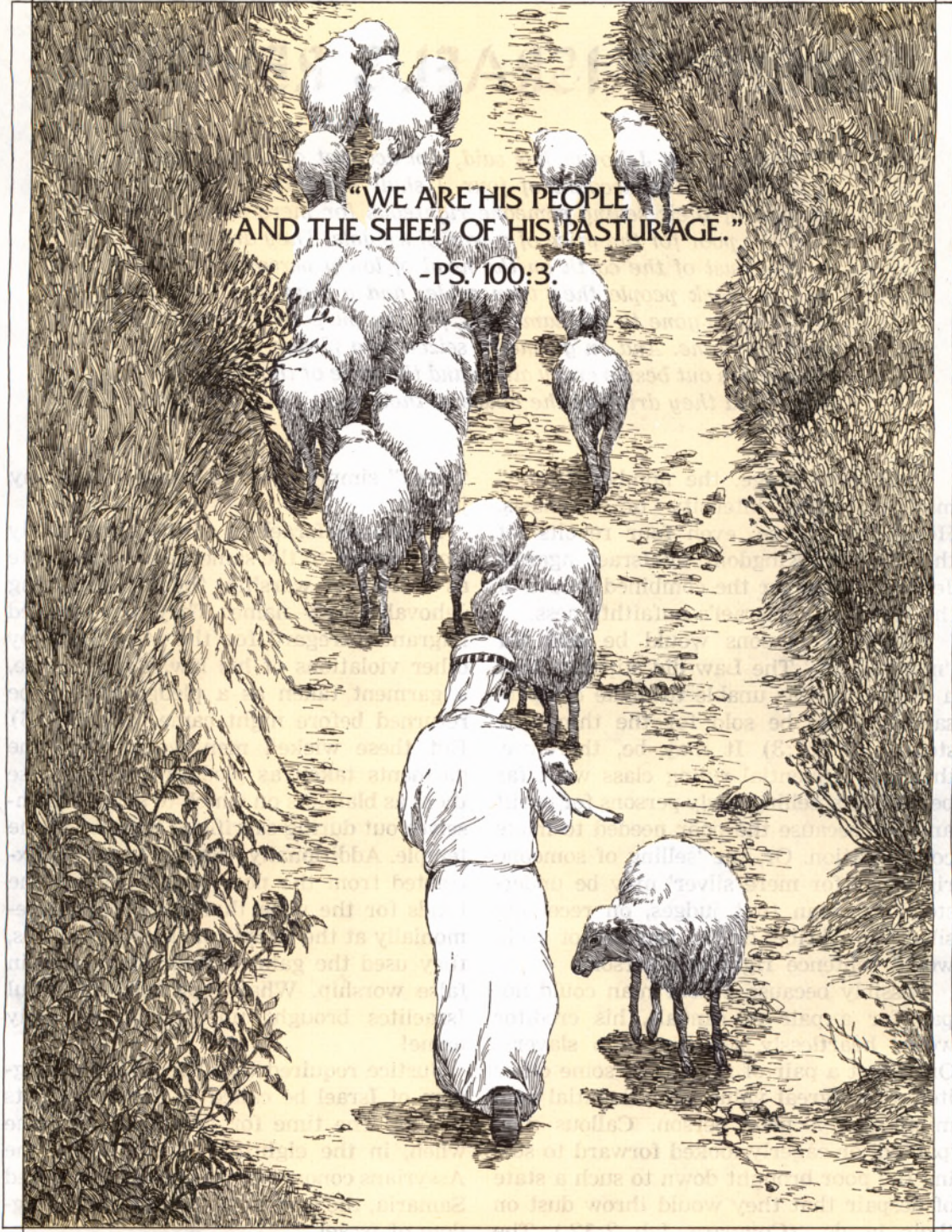
OUR Maker, Jehovah, is a "happy God" and wants his servants to find delight in faithfully carrying out his commands. (1 Tim. 1:11; Jas. 1:25; Rev. 1:3) These commands are rooted in love, for "love does not work evil to one's neighbor." (Rom. 13:8-10) That is why obedience to the Creator contributes to the happiness of others and also ensures one's enjoying a happy, contented life.

So, then, should not people of all nations exult in Jehovah? That is what the inspired psalmist encouraged, saying: "Shout in triumph to Jehovah, all you people of the earth. Serve Jehovah with rejoicing. Come in before him with a joyful cry." (Ps. 100:1, 2) In agreement with this admonition, our expressions of praise should not be weak but strong and forceful, comparable to the 'triumphant shout' of an army that has gained a decisive victory. The position of God's servants is not that of fearful, cringing slaves. Service to God is not burdensome and oppressive, causing one to become unduly serious and gloomy. (1 John 5:3) That service is refreshing, invigorating, and should rightly be accompanied by rejoicing. For this reason the psalmist urged people to come into God's presence "with a joyful cry."

Basic to one's wanting to render sacred service is that Jehovah is God and man's Maker. The psalmist declared: "Know

[recognize, acknowledge] that Jehovah is God. It is he that has made us, and not we ourselves. We are his people and the sheep of his pasturage." (Ps. 100:3) By reason of his being the Creator, he owns us, as a shepherd owns his sheep. Besides Jehovah's Godship and his Creatorship, the kind of God that he is provides strong incentive for people of all nations to enter the courtyards of his sanctuary, there to offer up thanksgiving and praise. Moreover, we should bless his name, that is, speak well of the Most High, the One represented by the name. The psalmist urges: "Come into his gates with thanksgiving, into his courtyards with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. For Jehovah is good; his loving-kindness is to time indefinite, and his faithfulness to generation after generation."—Ps. 100:4, 5.

Jehovah's qualities should certainly move one to praise him. He is good through and through, without even the slightest taint of badness. His loving-kindness or compassionate regard for his servants can always be relied upon; it continues to time indefinite. "Generation after generation" Jehovah is faithful, unswerving in the expression of his love toward those wanting to do his will. (Rom. 8:38, 39) Do we not, then, have good reason to "serve Jehovah with rejoicing"?



"WE ARE HIS PEOPLE
AND THE SHEEP OF HIS PASTURAGE."
-PS. 100:3.

ANCIENT ISRAEL'S REVOLTS

"This is what Jehovah has said, 'On account of three revolts of Israel, and on account of four, I shall not turn it back, on account of their selling someone righteous for mere silver, and someone poor for the price of a pair of sandals. They are panting for the dust of the earth on the head of lowly persons; and the way of meek people they turn aside; and a man and his own father have gone to the same girl, for the purpose of profaning my holy name. And on garments seized as a pledge they stretch themselves out beside every altar; and the wine of those who have been fined they drink at the house of their gods.'"—Amos 2:6-8.

In Biblical usage, the number "three" may represent intensity or emphasis. Hence, the 'three, even four revolts' of the 10-tribe Kingdom of Israel against Jehovah stand for the combined record of the Kingdom of Israel's unfaithfulness.

Righteous persons would be sold for "mere silver." The Law did stipulate that a thief who was unable to make compensation should be sold for the things he stole. (Ex. 22:3) It may be, therefore, that the influential ruling class went far beyond this, selling lowly persons for profit and not because the poor needed to make compensation. Or, the 'selling of someone righteous for mere silver' may be understood to mean that judges, on receiving silver as a bribe, or the promise of such, would sentence righteous persons.

Possibly because a poor man could not pay for a pair of sandals, his creditor would heartlessly sell him into slavery. Or, to get a pair of sandals or some other item of no great value, an influential man might sell a poor person. Callous men 'panted' or eagerly looked forward to seeing the poor brought down to such a state of despair that they would throw dust on their heads. (Compare Job 2:12.) The

"meek" simply could not hope to get any justice.

Idolatrous Israelites of the same family would resort to the same temple prostitute as a form of worship, thereby profaning Jehovah's holy name. They also showed flagrant disregard for the Most High by other violations of his law. For example, a garment taken as a pledge was to be returned before night came. (Ex. 22:26) But these wicked men would keep the garments taken as pledges and then use them as blankets on which to sprawl themselves out during sacrificial feasting at the temple. Additionally, the fines unjustly extracted from the poor would provide the funds for the wine that they drank ceremonially at the temple of their gods. Thus, they used the gain of their oppression in false worship. What reproach unfaithful Israelites brought upon Jehovah's holy name!

Justice required that the 10-tribe Kingdom of Israel be called to account for its revolts. The time for judgment did come when, in the eighth century B.C.E., the Assyrians conquered the land and captured Samaria, the capital of the northern Kingdom of Israel.

QUESTIONS from READERS

● Would it ever be in order to pray regarding someone who has been disfellowshipped from the Christian congregation?

In the past it has been held that such prayers would not be proper. And there are good Scriptural reasons for restraint. But relevant Bible counsel recommends considering the individual situation rather than taking a categorical position.

Particularly does 1 John 5:16, 17 help us to get God's view. There it is stated: "If any one sees his brother committing a sin that is not deadly, he must ask and God will give him life for those who are committing sin that is not deadly. There is sin that is deadly. I do not say that he should pray in behalf of that. All unrighteousness is sin, and [yet] there is sin that is not deadly."—*The Riverside New Testament*.

The apostle John first mentions "sin that is not deadly," or, as the *New World Translation* renders it, "sin that does not incur death." Since all of us are imperfect and unrighteous, we are all guilty of sin. (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 3:4) One who sins needs to repent and pray for God's abundant mercy. (1 John 1:8-10) As John shows, others also can pray for him.

Next, John refers to 'deadly sin,' or "sin that does incur death." What is that? It is sin for which one cannot be forgiven; it is "deadly" for it leads to the "second death," or eternal death. (Rev. 21:8) Earlier, Jesus explained that a person could carry sin to the point of sinning against the holy spirit, for which there is no forgiveness. (Matt. 12:31; Luke 12:10) Similarly, the apostle Paul showed that if one who knew God's truth practiced sin willfully, repentance and forgiveness would no longer be possible.—Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26, 27.

John tells us not to pray for one who committed such "deadly" sin. This brings to mind God's words concerning the Israelites who were so given to wickedness that He was going to let the Babylonians take them into captivity. God told Jeremiah: "Do not pray in behalf of this people, neither raise in their behalf an

entreating cry or a prayer nor beseech me." —Jer. 7:16-20; 14:11, 12.

God, not we on earth, determines if someone has sinned against the holy spirit. Yet, we can appreciate from John's inspired words that we should not pray in behalf of a person who gives evidence of practicing sin deliberately. John also wrote in 2 John 9-11 about persons who spread unchristian views. Prayers in their behalf would be offensive to God.

Should we conclude, then, that a person who is disfellowshipped because of unrepentant sin likely has committed a "sin that does incur death," about which we should not pray? Not necessarily. Recall that in the first-century Corinthian congregation a man fell into immorality. For a while he was unrepentant and so had to be disfellowshipped. (1 Cor. 5:1, 9-13) It seems, however, that in time he repented and was reinstated. (2 Cor. 2:5-10) That would indicate that, even though he had been disfellowshipped, he had not committed the sin that incurs death, about which Christians are not to pray. The same can be true today.

When a person is disfellowshipped, it may not then be clear whether the sin will 'incur death' or not. But in time evidence of repentance and turning around may begin to appear. (Compare Acts 2:36-38; 3:19.) That might first be observed by someone close, such as a husband's detecting it in his disfellowshipped wife's attitude and conduct. So he may conclude that it seems she has not committed 'deadly sin' and he may be moved to pray for her. He might pray that if Jehovah—who reads hearts—finds a basis for pardoning her error, may God's will be done. Also, he might express to God his hope that she draw strength from the Bible so as to overcome her weakness.

While someone personally may feel that he can approach God regarding a disfellowshipped person, it would not be fitting to do so in public or congregational prayers. It should be appreciated that others hearing such prayers may not yet know of the evidence indicating repentance. Or they may not yet be convinced that the person has not committed a "sin that does incur death."

Consequently, in instances where a Christian believes it is proper to pray regarding a disfellowshipped person, he should do so in private prayers only. And all of us can strive to guide our thinking in this connection by the inspired counsel of Jehovah's Word.

An Aid for Students and Educators

A Bible-based publication especially designed to aid young persons has enjoyed wide acceptance among students and educators in Australia. For instance, in one letter received by the Watch Tower Society's branch office in that country, 200 copies of the book "Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It" were ordered.

The letter was signed by a priest from a Catholic college. When 200 copies of the book were delivered, some reference was made to the priest's obtaining of approval from his superiors before distributing the publications to his students. His reply was that this would pose no problem since he was the head teacher of the college. The priest originally had obtained a copy of the "Youth" book while visiting patients in a hospital. He had come to the bed of a young Kingdom publisher who had taken

advantage of the opportunity thus afforded to give the priest a witness.

In one Australian city, four Christian witnesses of Jehovah listed 20 public, private and religious schools in their territory. These women first approached the principal or head teacher and offered a copy of the "Youth" book for the school library. None were refused. One teacher obtained 20 copies for use in study groups. In visiting the first 10 schools, these Kingdom proclaimers placed more than 300 copies of the "Youth" book.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

November 25: Sustained by the Millennial Hope. Page 12. Songs to Be Used: 14, 43.
December 2: Take Courage!—The Millennium Is at Hand. Page 18. Songs to Be Used: 29, 21.