

April 1, 1982

# The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



## THE FIRST LIE

### -How It Has Affected You

# The Watchtower<sup>®</sup>

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

April 1, 1982  
Vol. 103, No. 7

## IN THIS ISSUE

|                                                               |           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>The First Lie—Who Told It?</b>                             | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>The First Lie<br/>—How It Has Affected You</b>             | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>The First Lie<br/>—Removing Its Effects</b>                | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Letting Light Shine in the<br/>Heart of Africa</b>         | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Insight on the News</b>                                    | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Inherent Immortality or<br/>Resurrection—Which?</b>        | <b>14</b> |
| <b>Resurrection, Judgment Day<br/>and Apostasy</b>            | <b>16</b> |
| <b>The Kingdom and the<br/>Resurrection Hope</b>              | <b>20</b> |
| <b>Survival or Destruction at the<br/>“Great Tribulation”</b> | <b>26</b> |
| <b>Questions from Readers</b>                                 | <b>31</b> |
| <b>Will You Remember?</b>                                     | <b>32</b> |

THE PURPOSE OF “THE WATCHTOWER” is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning king, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. “The Watchtower,” published by Jehovah's Witnesses since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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# The First Lie —Who Told It?

**I**N A town in southern Africa two men in a car drove through an intersection. The traffic lights were green, but they were stopped by a traffic officer who asked: "Why did you drive through the red lights?" Both men denied that they had. But the officer said: "Are you telling me that I can't see?" And he began to write out a ticket. The driver answered quietly: "There is Someone up above who knows what you are doing." The officer hesitated . . . and walked away.

Yes, the policeman was telling a lie. Is that surprising? Hardly. Lying is deeply rooted in human society. As it has often been said: "Tell a lie often enough and the people will believe it." Many politicians appear to agree with this, and, in the minds of many, politics is closely associated with lying.

People tell lies for all kinds of reasons. A sincere Christian who had been out of work for some time applied to a commercial firm for a job. But the manager warned him: "To sell my products you must be able to lie better than the next man!" The Christian refused the job.

Even religious persons, if not hold-



ing to godly standards, resort to lying. Do you remember the reaction of the Jewish religious leaders on hearing that the executed Jesus of Nazareth had been resurrected? They bribed the soldiers guarding Jesus' tomb to say: "His disciples came in the night and stole him while we

were sleeping."—Matthew 28:12-15.

Yet it appears that lying is not natural to humans. Dr. Lewis Thomas wrote: "As I understand it, a human being cannot tell a lie, even a small one, without setting off a kind of smoke alarm somewhere deep in a dark lobule of the brain, resulting in the sudden discharge of nerve impulses, or a sudden outpouring of neurohormones of some sort . . . Lying, then, is stressful, even when we do it for protection, or relief, or escape, or profit." (*Discover*, December 1980) These physical reactions are what trigger a lie detector.

Since lying is so stressful, how did it get started?

## Who Told the First Lie?

Jesus Christ identified the first liar, and he showed that it was not a hu-

man. He said: "When he [Satan] speaks the lie, he speaks according to his own disposition, because he is a liar and the father of the lie." (John 8:44) So the first liar was Satan the Devil. When did he start telling lies? According to the Bible, it was shortly after the beginning of the history of the human race.

The event is recorded in the Bible book of Genesis, and the lie was a matter of life or death for mankind. God indicated to the first man, Adam, that his continued life depended on obedience. He gave Adam a simple law to keep

and said that if he failed to keep that law he would "positively die." But Satan maliciously lied and said: "You positively will not die." That was the first of the billions of lies that have been heard on this planet Earth.—Genesis 2:17; 3:4.

Many today do not believe that account in the Bible. But Jesus, the most truthful man who ever lived, confirmed that the record in Genesis is not myth but true history. (Matthew 19:4, 5) Certainly, the results of that lie are still with us. It spelled disaster for the human race.

# The First Lie

## —How It Has Affected You

**I**N India, in 1981, a train was approaching a bridge when the engineer suddenly noticed a cow on the line. He braked violently. The train was derailed and seven crowded coaches plunged into the river below. More than 800 lives were lost. Thus a small event—a cow on the railway line—led to a major tragedy. Something similar happened in Eden, the garden of God.

Eden must have been a delightful place. It had trees, flowers, animals and birds in great variety. There was harmony and tranquillity. It was truly paradise. Adam and Eve must have delighted in God's handiwork. And they had a thrilling prospect. God told them: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature

that is moving upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28) Additionally, they had a sublimely simple religion: to do God's will.

Even the angels took a keen interest in this happy beginning of the human race. But one angel was different. His interest was colored by selfishness. He coveted the worship of man for himself and plotted to become the "god," or ruler, of the world. He thus became Satan, which name means "adversary."—See Luke 4:5-8; 2 Corinthians 4:4.

Jehovah God told Adam not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree. This was a simple test. By meeting it, Adam and his wife could show that they really wanted to serve God. Moreover, Jehovah warned: "In the day you eat [the forbidden fruit] from it you will positively die." (Genesis 2:17) The gift of everlasting life was not to be for disobedient rebels.

Satan saw his opportunity here. Through a snake he tempted Eve to take the forbidden fruit, saying: "You positively will not die." Then he said regarding that tree: "For God knows that in the very day of your eating from it your eyes are bound to be opened and you are bound to be like God, knowing good and bad." (Genesis 3:4, 5) What a dazzling offer—to be like God! But Satan lied. Eve, however, believed what he said and disobediently ate of the forbidden fruit. Later, she offered it to Adam, who joined her in sinning. What was the result?

That crucial act "derailed" the whole human race and led to tragedy. The first couple immediately lost paradise. In time, they also lost their lives and re-

turned to the dust from which they had been formed. (Genesis 3:19) Sadly, all their children—the human race—were thus born outside paradise, and into sin and death.—Romans 5:12.

Seemingly, Satan had won. He was now a "god," and the human race was following him instead of the Creator. But he had not really won. He had merely struck the opening blow in a conflict that continues even today. Jehovah immediately moved to counteract the results of Satan's lie. He said to Satan: "I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel."—Genesis 3:15.

In this, the first prophecy in the Bible,



Like this train, the whole human race has been "derailed."  
Do you know how?

final defeat is foretold for Satan, coming by means of a certain "seed." Who is that seed? That remained a secret for a long time.

### **The God of This World**

With few exceptions, the descendants of Adam and Eve chose to imitate their parents and disobey God. They preferred the independence offered by Satan. Eventually, opposition to God came to be concentrated in a region known as Mesopotamia, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

The human leader of that opposition was a man named Nimrod. He is identified in the Bible as the first king and empire builder. All his activities were in opposition to God; hence, the Bible says: "He displayed himself a mighty hunter in opposition to Jehovah." The beginning of his empire was Babel, later centered in the city of Babylon.—Genesis 10:9, 10.

So it was from Babel that political oppression and cruelty spread. Novel religious theories were also promoted there. The first lie—that sinful Eve would not

really die—had been exposed, since Eve did die. Now an embellishment of that lie was taught. An immortal part of man was said to survive death and live on in an unseen world. This doctrine led to a belief in hellfire, spiritism, ancestor worship and a host of other untrue teachings.

The religious theories originating in ancient Babel, or Babylon, spread all around the world. One authority, noting the widespread similarities between most of the world's religions, said that they "must have all derived their religious ideas from a common source." (*The Worship of the Dead*, by Colonel J. Garnier) That source was ancient Babylon. This worldwide religious system derived from Babylon is referred to in the Bible as "Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and of the disgusting things of the earth."—Revelation 17:5.

Hence, Satan's first lie led to widespread political oppression and false religion. But what was developing with regard to the "seed" that God prophesied would bring Satan and his schemes to nothing?

## **The First Lie —Removing Its Effects**

**N**OT everyone followed Satan or accepted his religious innovations. Abraham, for example, continued to worship the true God. He believed that ultimately life depended on obedience to God. Hence, Jehovah blessed him, saying:

"By means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves." (Genesis 22:18) What did this mean? Clearly, that the "seed" promised long before in Eden was to appear among the children of Abraham.—Galatians 3:16.

Later, other details about the "seed" were revealed to faithful ones. He was to be born in the tribe of Judah, to be a descendant of King David. He would be born of a virgin, in the town of Bethlehem. (Genesis 49:10; 2 Samuel 7:16; Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2) When the due time arrived, the promised "seed" was born in exactly the right place to exactly the right family. It was Jesus, who was later called the Christ.—Luke 2:8-11.

Satan's world at the time of Jesus' birth was in deep religious darkness. Under the rule of Rome, the mightiest empire up to that time, many variants of Babylonish religion flourished. Many of faithful Abraham's descendants, the Israelites, had strayed from true worship. Their religious leaders were self-righteous and proud. Some had succumbed to Babylonish teachings. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, the Pharisees (a prominent religious sect) believed that "souls have an immortal vigour in them" and "that souls of bad men are subject to eternal punishment."

Jesus was able to restore many to pure worship. He taught his followers to be "no part" of Satan's system of things, either religiously or politically. (John 15:19) He healed the sick, raised the dead and showed great compassion for the humble ones. These loved Jesus, but many of the priests hated him because he exposed their oppressive ways and false teachings. Hence, they finally had him killed.

Jesus' death must have seemed like a triumph to Satan, but, if so, it was short-lived. God soon raised Jesus from the dead to spirit life. And by Jesus' death and resurrection, God took a big step toward removing the worst effects of Satan's lie. He made it possible for those who wished to follow the way of truth to regain the life that Adam, by his disobedience, had lost. "As in Adam

all are dying," said the apostle Paul, "so also in the Christ all will be made alive." —1 Corinthians 15:22-26.

### **Christianity and Apostasy**

It was now possible for man to gain salvation from sin and death. Paradise would be restored by means of God's kingdom, the ruler of which would be the resurrected Jesus Christ. Some humans would even have the privilege of sharing in that Kingdom rule. This dynamic message, proclaimed in the first century of our Common Era, stirred the hearts of many people. A congregation of followers of Christ—later called Christians—was formed in Jerusalem, and it quickly grew to number thousands.

Enraged, Satan attacked. Soon, Christians were dying in Jerusalem for their faith. Persecution drove many away from the city, but they carried the "good news" with them. Samaritans, and then Gentiles, were baptized as Christians. In a few decades the message had spread throughout the then-known world. Those were eventful times!—Acts 17:6; Colossians 1:23.

Finally, in the days of the sadistic Emperor Nero, the might of the Roman Empire was unleashed against Christianity. Burning bodies of Christians served as torches at Roman feasts. Wild beasts were set upon them in the arenas. Nevertheless, Christianity continued to spread. But Satan had other tactics.

### **Corruption Within**

The apostle Paul had warned the Colossian Christians: "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy." (Colossians 2:8, *New International Version*) He had told Ephesian elders: "I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the

flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves." (Acts 20:29, 30) His warning now started to be fulfilled. Deceptive elements infiltrated the congregations and, with clever, specious arguments, slowly undermined the zeal of many members.

After a few centuries a popularized version of Christianity had developed that was thoroughly corrupted with unscriptural teachings. The Babylonish doctrine of the immortality of the soul was entrenched. A trinity was worshiped, similar to the triads of gods once worshiped in Babylon. The doctrines of hellfire and, later, purgatory were taught. Prayers were offered to the "Mother of God." In the days of Roman Emperor Constantine, this apostatized form of Christianity, far from keeping separate from the world, became the state religion of the empire.

Jesus had prophesied that after the death of the apostles a seed of false Christianity would be introduced into the world, and that until the "harvest" false and true Christians would exist side by side. (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43) This was now happening. As the false Christianity became strong, it turned viciously against those who would not follow its way. Some professed Christians were burned alive for their faith, but this time their burning bodies illuminated the faces of onlooking monks and priests.

For centuries, light from the Bible shone only dimly. God's Word was enshrined in Latin, a dying language, and translators of it into the common tongues were ruthlessly persecuted. But the Bible survived. And so did true Christianity, as Jesus said it would. They both still exist today.

## Paradise Restored

That one lie told thousands of years ago in the garden of Eden was indeed calamitous for the human family. It led to untold suffering. Happily, mankind will not have to endure its bad consequences much longer.

The "seed" that was to bring Satan and his schemes to nothing appeared in the person of Jesus. After Jesus' death he was raised to spirit life and ascended to heaven, "awaiting until his enemies should be placed as a stool for his feet." (Hebrews 10:13) The evidence is that this waiting period is now over. Prophecies and Bible chronology point to the year 1914 as the time when Jesus 'arrived in his glory' to reign as a heavenly king.—See Matthew 24, 25; Mark 13; Luke 21.

This means that Satan, the inventor of the lie, has just a short time left. (Revelation 12:12) The worldwide convulsions that mankind has experienced since 1914 are evidence of his great anger over this fact. Soon he, along with the oppressive political and religious systems that developed from his lie, will be destroyed forever.—Daniel 2:44; Revelation 18:4-8.

What a relief that will be for mankind! The peace, beauty and happiness of the original garden of God will finally be restored, and paradise will be expanded earth wide. (Revelation 21:3, 4) Would you like to see that? God's will is "that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:4) Why not take advantage of Jehovah God's kindness extended toward you? Shun Satan's lies and seek the truth from God's Word, the Bible. Then you will witness the final and complete reversal of the tragic consequences of that demonic first lie.

# Letting Light Shine in the Heart of Africa

**S**TRADDLING the equator like a giant horseman, the Republic of Zaire covers the heart of Africa. Previously known as the Congo, Zaire's huge jungle and savanna areas provide a home for lions, gorillas, leopards, monkeys, elephants, okapis and many other wild animals. Rich in mineral resources, it has long been the object of international interest and has often been the site of invasions or civil wars. Far from being warlike, however, most of its 26,000,000 inhabitants are humble, kind-hearted, peace-loving people who, while extremely influenced by ancestral customs, have respect for the Bible.

Religious life in the past was characterized most of all by superstition and belief in spirits of the dead. People lived in fear of the unknown and they sought help by the use of fetishes, such as amulets and talismans. This belief has kept these people in great darkness.

## Early Problems

It was in the late 1940's that the publications of Jehovah's Witnesses began to circulate in the Congo, but there were no real Witnesses to direct their use. Native groups called them-



selves "Watchtower" members, but they twisted Bible teachings and mixed such with their superstitious customs and immoral way of life. They often refused to pay taxes and otherwise resisted the government. It is no surprise that the Belgian government outlawed these movements of "Kitawala," as they were

called. But they wrongly identified Jehovah's Witnesses with these false "Watchtower movement" practitioners and refused to admit any genuine missionaries of Jehovah's Witnesses who could have helped to clear up the matter.

Nevertheless, there was a small group who, though outlawed by the authorities, diligently shared Bible truths with others. Their upright, honest conduct marked them as entirely different from the trouble-making Kitawala.

With the approach of Congolese Independence in 1960, it became somewhat easier for them to make the truth known. Yet, keeping neutral in political affairs required keen insight and strong faith on their part. Independence brought increased tolerance and by the end of 1960 the number of those letting Kingdom light shine rose to almost a thousand.

### **Progress by Improved Organization**

Finally, in 1961, the first missionaries of Jehovah's Witnesses gained entry into the country. A branch office was set up in the capital, Leopoldville, now named Kinshasa, resulting in better direction. Things started to move ahead rapidly. But there were still many things to overcome, such as problems of language barriers, polygamy, tribalism, and superstition and spiritism. Poor communication made it difficult to contact groups of interested persons around the country. Traveling overseers had to sort out those who were really interested in following Bible truths and those who were false Kitawala movement members. This work was not easy.

### **Bible Truth Changes Lives**

Honest-hearted people made enormous changes in their lives. One man wrote:

"Before learning of the Christian way of life, I was a real sports enthusiast, practicing the traditional wrestling and boxing. For me fighting was a way of life, and hand-to-hand combat was a great pleasure. I loved weight lifting too. In 1963 I won the championship in wrestling for the Congo and that same year I came out first in weight lifting, putting up 85 kg [187 pounds] with one hand and 150 [330 pounds] with two. All the time I looked to my fetish charms for strength and endurance. This was all the more true when they wanted to send me to Japan to represent my country.

"Once again I chased my wife away so as to concentrate on my sports activities. She took up living with a lieutenant. I would still see her from time to time, and one day I found a book entitled 'From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained,' which this lieutenant had bought for her. I was impressed with this book and borrowed it for two weeks. I was particularly struck by the title on page 203, 'How

This World Comes to Its End.' I read the book carefully and when I thought about it, it made me afraid. I decided to write to the publishers for other books, and at the same time I moved my fetishes out of my room into my father's. My family was rather astonished at this.

"The same day that I wrote my letter, a knock came on my door. There were two of Jehovah's Witnesses who wanted to share with me the good news from the Bible. At first I thought they had come to see my father who was an acting pastor. I said my father was not there, but they tactfully showed me that their message was for me too. When I saw another *Paradise* book in their opened book bag I reached my hand right into the case to grab it. I showed them the *Paradise* book I had and also the letter I had just written. I was much impressed with the answers these Witnesses gave and, in the end, I took a copy of every book they had in their bag. They told me the address of the little Kingdom Hall where they met.

"In spite of opposition and threats from my father, I continued to receive help from the Witnesses and I did not miss a meeting. I destroyed every last one of my fetishes and on November 8, 1964, I officially married my wife with whom I was again living. Then I dedicated my life to Jehovah and symbolized my dedication by water baptism."

Now this Witness is a special pioneer (full-time minister) and an elder in a congregation in northern Zaire. He is but one example of thousands who have come out of darkness and who are now letting their spiritual light shine.

### **Religious Freedom —Gained and Restricted**

By 1966 the number of Jehovah's Witnesses in Zaire had risen to almost 4,000.

**From just a handful of Kingdom proclaimers in the Congo in the late 1940's, the number of active preachers of the "good news" in Zaire reached a peak of 25,649 in April of 1981**

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On June 9 of that year the organization was officially registered with the government. From then on Jehovah's Witnesses could preach publicly, meet together freely and organize assemblies for Christian fellowship and instruction. Missionaries could enter the country and give a hand with the work. Bible study aids were translated into the six major languages used in the country.

But this increased liberty was short-lived. On December 31, 1971, a law was passed requiring all but the three largest religious denominations to reintroduce their request for legal status. Any not legally recognized within three months were to be dissolved. Any persons practicing an unauthorized religion could be liable to heavy fines and from five to ten years in prison. Jehovah's Witnesses reintroduced their request but the deadline date of March 31 came and no reply of recognition was received.

This restriction of religious freedom brought increased difficulties. No more could larger public gatherings be held. No longer could new missionaries freely enter the country. And in some places where the local authorities were misinformed by the religious leaders, the Witnesses suffered much persecution.

Around Moba, Shaba, more than 200 Witnesses were imprisoned in 1973. They were forced to do extremely hard work of clearing fields, planting crops, repairing bridges and building houses, all by hand and while being fed very little food. But Jehovah's Witnesses went about their Christian way of living quietly, looking

to Jehovah for strength and direction, and the light of Bible truth kept shining brighter.

### **Problems to Be Overcome**

The sheer vastness of the territory and the lack of good roads makes the spreading of the "good news" very difficult. One sometimes has to wait for weeks in order to take a boat over one of the numerous waterways throughout the country. Or a person may have to travel for days on the back of a truck heavily loaded with sacks of maize or manioc. And for those who cannot afford the expensive fares, the only recourse is to walk.

One Witness from the Bulungu Congregation learned that a circuit assembly was to be held in Kikwit, 108 km (67 miles) from her home. She had often heard of such assemblies but had never been able to attend one and wanted to learn how they were organized. Having no money to pay the fare, she decided to walk the entire distance along with her 13-year-old child. They spent two days en route, arriving in Kikwit on the third day, tired and hungry. There she told the brothers: "In spite of the distance I walked with my son, it didn't seem like all that far. Jehovah helped me."

Traveling overseers particularly have to show great courage and faith in order to visit their brothers with spiritual encouragement. Distances are often long between congregations and there are frequently tsetse-fly-infested areas to cross, forests with wild animals, or raging rivers in flood. It is farther from Kinshasa

to the second-largest city, Lubumbashi, than it is from London to Rome.

One circuit overseer recently wrote to the branch the following in apology for his reports arriving late:

"The delay is due to circumstances that I set out below. April 12 was the day the train was to leave Kisangani for Ubundu. The train departs at 8 a.m., but, since seating space is so limited, people have to be there at 3 a.m. in order to get a seat. We were staying on the opposite side of the river and decided it best for my wife and me and our little son, Moza, to cross the river the night before and sleep there.

"It is the middle of the rainy season and the river was at flood stage. At 7:30 p.m. we took a taxi bus to the river with the intention of getting a dugout with a little outboard motor to cross the river. When we got into the boat we quickly saw that there were far too many people. We urged the conductor to have some people get out of the dugout or at least let us get out. But, being money-hungry as he was, he answered back, 'Likambo te!'—'It's nothing, don't worry,' and he started up the little outboard motor. No sooner had we gotten 15 meters [50 feet] or so from the shore than the boat struck a big rock under water, giving it a terrible jolt that almost turned it right over. Into the river went 30 people, yelling, screaming, flailing.

"Imagine, dear brothers, the spectacle in the Zaire River. Into the water went all our baggage, including my files, my forms, the projector and all the slides. I shouted to my wife to keep calm, and to hold tight to the child until I could get to them. Happily my wife and child were the only ones that weren't knocked out of the dugout, which was now rapidly taking in water and about half submerged. Fortunately, in the end everybody was pulled out of the water

safe and sound, except that our baggage was lost, including the projector."

### **Good Prospects for the Future**

On April 30, 1980, the president of the Republic of Zaire signed into law Decree No. 124 according legal recognition once again to the Association of Jehovah's Witnesses. Since then the greater freedom of action has resulted in greater increases in the Kingdom work than were experienced in the past.

There was only a handful of Kingdom proclaimers actively letting their light shine in the Congo in the late 1940's. But the number of active preachers of the good news of God's kingdom in Zaire reached a peak of 25,753 in 1981. There are well over 2,200 full-time pioneer ministers, including some 450 special pioneers who concentrate on opening up new territories. Each month more than 36,000 individuals and families are studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. And judging from the 107,766 persons who attended the Memorial of Christ's death in the 838 congregations throughout Zaire on April 19, 1981, there are yet many more people who would like to benefit from the light of truth now shining in this country. More than 200 tribes speaking some 300 languages or dialects are receiving a witness concerning the Kingdom.

There are still many problems to overcome, such as language barriers, tribalism, polygamy, superstition, spiritism and lack of transport and communications, to name only a few. And the worldwide economic problems with skyrocketing inflation have also affected Zaire. But this is causing many people to search for a solid hope for the future. Jehovah's Witnesses are offering them that hope—God's new order under his kingdom by Christ Jesus!

# Insight on the News

## “Doing It Right”

A recent editorial in the *Sun* of Gainesville, Florida, contrasted the so-called Moral Majority with Jehovah's Witnesses in their approach to morality. “[The Witness] publication, *The Watchtower*, provides the instructions—most of them reassertions of long established principles,” noted the *Sun*. And “the offender who resists ‘loving concern’ is apt to be ‘disfellowshipped,’ which means dismissal from the congregation. . . . The discipline may offend some Americans, but it is entirely proper for Witnesses to enforce their own fellowship rules. It is a voluntary association, and the exit is easy for anybody who wants out.”

The editorial observed that, in contrast, the religious Moral Majority politically “seeks to enforce its doctrine not only upon its members—but wants to enact its beliefs as national policy.” In the opinion of the *Sun*, this mixing of religion and politics is unconstitutional, and therefore the Moral Majority is “doing it wrong and the Jehovah's Witnesses are doing it right.”

Jesus Christ set the example in keeping his moral teaching out of the political arena. For example, when a “moral majority” in his time wanted to politicize Jesus as king in a move to improve government, he would have none of it. “Jesus, knowing they were about to come and seize him to make him king, withdrew again

into the mountain.”—John 6:15; compare Luke 12:13,14.

## Atomic Stockpiling “Legitimate”?

In his annual letter to Catholic military chaplains, New York's Cardinal Terence Cooke wrote concerning the morality of the American nuclear weapons buildup. As published in the *National Catholic Reporter*, the cardinal declared: “A strategy of nuclear deterrence can be morally tolerable if a nation is sincerely trying to come up with a rational alternative. . . . The church has traditionally taught and continues to teach that a government has both the right and the duty to protect its people against unjust aggression. This means that it is legitimate to develop and maintain weapons systems to try to prevent war by ‘detering’ another nation from attacking.”

Cooke also said that nations are obligated to rid themselves of nuclear weapons altogether, “but the church points out that this must be done gradually, with all nations cooperating, and with prudence. . . . Under no circumstances,” the cardinal cautioned, “may a nation start a war.” How does this traditional rationalization affect the Catholic flock in practical terms? The record of history reveals that tens of millions of Roman Catholics and their clerical shepherds gave their all in support of the German military machines that ‘started’ two world wars.

## ‘Evil in Our Century’

An interview with the noted British author Anthony Burgess about his best-selling book *Earthly Powers* appeared in the French newsmagazine *L'Express*. “The book deals with the manifestations of evil, its emergence in our century, and our inability to fight it,” explained Burgess. “Politicians encourage it, artists look the other way, and even great churchmen like the Pope condone it. That is the image of our world since World War I.”

The author observed that evil since that time is different: “No historian has ever interpreted [terrible periods in history] as eruptions of evil”—merely “blunders” in attempting “to build a better world.” Now, though, says Burgess, “we begin to believe in a supernatural force with which man made a compact for destruction, or which he allowed to take control of him.”

Right on the Bible's prophetic schedule, that “supernatural force” produced on earth the “manifestations of evil” noted by author Burgess. Events since 1914 in fulfillment of Bible prophecy indicate that “the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth . . . has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time.”—Revelation 12:7-12.

# Inherent Immortality or Resurrection —Which?

We invite you to examine carefully the series of four articles beginning on this page. They present the Bible's viewpoint on what happens to the soul at death, the resurrection, God's day of judgment and the final tribulation, tying these in with the Kingdom theme of God's Word.

**E**ACH March or April over a quarter of the inhabitants of the earth celebrate Easter, which is called the "feast of Christ's resurrection." This means, therefore, that the millions who commemorate Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday are actually expressing hope in their eventually being raised from the dead. Yet, strange to say, most of these people do not believe that life after death depends on the resurrection, but, rather, on the survival of their "immortal soul."

Hundreds of millions of other people, who do not celebrate Easter, also believe that their hope of life after death depends, not on a resurrection, but on the survival of their "soul." All these people, both inside and outside Christendom, obviously feel that there must be something after their short span of life on earth. They would feel frustrated to think that man lives and dies like an animal. Their desire for a future life is quite natural. Perhaps you share that desire. But how is life after death possible?

## Life After Death—How?

The "sacred books" of various religions in most cases offer two solutions to this problem. Some such books tell of the automatic survival of the "soul," or the "spirit," of a dead person. On the other hand, the Bible teaches that the dead are brought back to life by means of a resurrection.—Hebrews 11:17-19; Luke 20:37, 38; John 5:28, 29; 11:24.

That Oriental religions should teach the automatic survival of the "soul," or the "spirit," is not surprising, for reliable history shows this belief to be of Eastern origin. The ancient Babylonians believed in an underworld peopled by the souls of the dead under the god Nergal and the goddess Eresh-kigal. The ancient Egyptians also believed in the immortality of the soul, and had their own "underworld." They worshiped Osiris as "god of the dead." Like the Egyptians, the ancient Persians believed in a "weighing of souls" after death. Many ancient Greek philosophers adopted this Eastern

concept of an immortal soul, it being finally defined by Plato in the fourth century B.C.E.

What is surprising is that Judaism and the religions of Christendom should have adopted the idea that future life is dependent upon having an immortal soul. This simply is not a Bible teaching, as *The Concise Jewish Encyclopedia* (1980) reveals: "The Bible does not state a doctrine of the immortality of the soul, nor does this clearly emerge in early [Jewish] rabbinical literature. . . . Eventually the belief that some part of the human personality is eternal and indestructible became part of the rabbinical creed and was almost universally accepted in later Judaism."

Christendom's theologians followed the example of the Jewish rabbis in adopting the Babylonian, Egyptian, Persian and Greek concept of man's possessing an immortal soul. Yet, because Christendom's churches claim to accept the Bible, they created a dilemma for themselves by adopting this non-Christian teaching. The dilemma is this: How can the churches hold to the Bible teaching of the resurrection and, at the same time, teach that a person survives death by means of an immortal soul?

How do Christendom's churches wriggle out of this dilemma? The *Catholic Encyclopedia* tells us how, saying: "The Fourth Lateran Council teaches that all men, whether elect or reprobate, 'will rise again with their own bodies which they now bear about with them.' In the language of the creeds and professions of faith this return to life is called *resurrection of the body*." (Italics ours) In other words, the claim is thereby made that the resurrection of the dead is merely the reclothing of a deathless soul with a fleshly body. But that is not what the Bible teaches.

### The True Resurrection Hope

Many Bible scholars admit that the doctrines of inherent immortality and the "resurrection of the body" are not taught in the Bible. Georges Auzou, French Catholic professor of Sacred Scripture, writes: "The concept of 'soul,' meaning a purely spiritual, immaterial reality, separate from the 'body,' . . . does not exist in the Bible." "The New Testament never speaks of the 'resurrection of the flesh,' but of the 'resurrection of the dead.'"

Similarly, in his book *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?*, French Protestant Professor Oscar Cull-

The picture of the soul hovering above a dead body shows that the ancient Egyptians believed that the soul survived death



mann writes: "There is a radical difference between the Christian expectation of the resurrection of the dead and the Greek belief in the immortality of the soul. . . . Although Christianity later established a link between these two beliefs, and today the average Christian confuses them completely, I see no reason to hide what I and the majority of scholars consider to be the truth. . . . the life and thought of the New Testament are entirely dominated by faith in the resurrection. . . . the whole man, who is

really dead, is brought back to life by a new creative act of God."—(Translated from the original French edition.)

Yes, the true Biblical hope for a future life rests on the resurrection, or the "rising again from the dead," not on the automatic survival of an immortal soul. The Bible states quite clearly: "There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." (Acts 24:15) Just how so much religious confusion on the hereafter came about will be considered in the following article.

# Resurrection, Judgment Day and Apostasy

**T**HE Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches have turned their backs on the clear Bible truths regarding the condition of the dead and the hope for life after death. They prefer the ancient unscriptural belief in an immortal soul. As we have seen, this belief originated in Babylonia and was streamlined by Greek philosopher Plato in the fourth century B.C.E.

Christendom's theologians claim that every man, woman and child that has ever lived has a soul that leaves the body when the person dies. To accommodate this teaching, they have invent-

ed such places as limbo, purgatory and a fiery hell. Here the disembodied souls that are unfit for "paradise," which they say is in heaven, are supposed to go.

The churches also say that the dead are not really dead. Rather, they claim, the soul continues to live. They cannot therefore teach the true Bible doctrine of the resurrection, defined as "a coming back to life." So their theologians invented the so-called resurrection of the body, claiming that on Judgment Day the bodies of the righteous and the wicked will be reunited with their respective souls to share in heavenly bliss or hellfire dam-

## What the Bible Says About the Soul, Death, Resurrection and Final Judgment

Man does not possess a soul; he IS a soul.—1 Corinthians 15:45.

The soul, or whole person, dies.—Ezekiel 18:4.

Death is an enemy, not a friend.—1 Corinthians 15:26.

Life after death can come only through a resurrection.—John 5:28, 29.

The reward for faithfulness is everlasting life.—John 10:27, 28.

The judgment for willful sin is everlasting death, not eternal torment.  
—Romans 6:23.

nation. And since they believe that such "souls" do not have to await Judgment Day to be assigned to "heaven," "hell" or such 'waiting rooms' as "limbo" or "purgatory," Christendom's theologians also invented the teaching of two judgments. The first of these is called Particular Judgment, which is when the "soul" is supposed to leave the body at death. The second is called General Judgment, which is when bodies are "resurrected" and are said to rejoin the "souls" on Judgment Day.

### Resurrection and Apostasy

All the aforementioned theological inventions came about because the Roman Catholic Church, followed in certain fundamental respects by the Orthodox and Protestant churches, did not stick to the clear Bible teachings on the resurrection and its related subjects of death, the human soul and final judgment.

Apostasy in this regard started very early in the history of Christianity. Only a little over 20 years after Christ's death and resurrection, the apostle Paul wrote from Ephesus to the young Christian congregation in Corinth, Greece: "Now if Christ is being preached that he has been raised up from the dead, how is

it some *among you* [anointed Christians] say there is no resurrection of the dead?" —1 Corinthians 15:12.

It may be that some of the Christians to whom Paul was writing in Corinth were still under the influence of Greek philosophy. A few years previously Paul had declared "the good news of Jesus and the resurrection" to Greek philosophers in Athens. But "when they heard of a resurrection of the dead, some began to mock." (Acts 17:18, 32) The Epicureans and the Stoics had their own theories about what happened to the soul after death. Other Greek philosophers, who followed Socrates and Plato, believed in the immortality of the soul. None of them believed in the resurrection, as taught in the Bible.

It could also be that some Corinthian Christians already held the apostate views about the resurrection that the apostle Paul condemned 10 years later. Recall that when Paul wrote to Timothy, who was probably at Ephesus at that time, he warned: "Shun empty speeches that violate what is holy; for they will advance to more and more ungodliness, and their word will spread like gangrene. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of that number. These very men have

## An Official Teaching of Christendom's Churches

The Athanasian Creed, which is officially accepted by the Roman Catholic, Anglican and other Protestant churches, states: "He [Jesus] ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty. From whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire."

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deviated from the truth, saying that *the resurrection has already occurred*; and they are subverting the faith of some." —2 Timothy 2:16-18.

By saying that "the resurrection has already occurred," these apostates were not claiming that deceased Christians had already been raised from the dead. They apparently believed that living Christians had already been resurrected, the resurrection being of a merely symbolic, spiritual kind. They denied any future resurrection from the dead. Such ideas were "subverting the faith" of some, so that the apostle Paul issued a strong warning against those apostate teachers.

### The Apostasy 'Spreads like Gangrene'

This Hymenaeus was doubtless the same as the one mentioned by Paul in his first letter to Timothy. This man had been disfellowshipped from the Christian congregation, together with a certain Alexander, because they had "experienced shipwreck concerning their faith." Paul counseled Timothy to "go on waging the fine warfare" against such apostates. —1 Timothy 1:18-20.

While the apostles were still alive, they set the example in combating apostasy. But once they were no longer present to 'act as a restraint,' Paul's fears were confirmed, and the "word" of apostates

'spread like gangrene.'—2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; Acts 20:29, 30.

Ideas of a purely symbolic resurrection, such as those taught by Hymenaeus and Philetus in Ephesus, were later developed by the Gnostics. During the second and early third centuries C.E., the Gnostics (from the Greek word *gnō'sis*, "knowledge") combined apostate Christianity with Greek philosophy and Oriental mysticism. They claimed that all matter is evil and stressed that salvation came through mystical "knowledge" (*gnō'sis*) rather than through faith in Christ as redeemer.

But Gnosticism was not the only form of apostasy that 'spread like gangrene.' By the fourth century true Christianity as taught by Christ and his faithful apostles and disciples had become corrupted by other men who had "deviated from the truth." The scholarly *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* admits that during the "further course of church history many extra-biblical motifs, pictures and ideas were absorbed into the conception of paradise." This Bible dictionary goes on to speak of "the fact that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul came in to take the place of N[ew] T[estament] eschatology [study of the ultimate destiny of mankind and the world] with its hope of the resurrection of the dead."

## A Church View of Resurrection

"The general resurrection can hardly be proved from reason, though we may show its congruity [fitness]. (a) As the soul has a natural propensity to the body, its perpetual separation from the body *would seem* unnatural. (b) As the body is the partner of the soul's crimes, and the companion of her virtues, the justice of God *seems* to demand that the body be the sharer in the soul's punishment and reward. (c) As the soul separated from the body is naturally imperfect, the consummation of its happiness, replete with every good, *seems* to demand the resurrection of the body."—*Catholic Encyclopedia* (Italics ours).

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As we have seen above and in the previous article, the denial of the reality of death and the acceptance of the pagan idea of the automatic survival of an immortal soul led the Catholic and Orthodox churches farther and farther away from the clear Bible teachings on the resurrection and judgment. It led to the God-dishonoring dogma of hellfire and purgatory and to the nonsensical idea of fleshly bodies being resurrected to float around in heaven or to be eternally tormented in "hell."

The "gangrene" did not stop there. In later centuries Protestant reformers added their own non-Biblical theories on death, resurrection and final judgment. For the most part, they followed Catholic dogma on the inherent immortality of the soul, which obliged them also to accept the doctrine of the "resurrection of the body." Many Protestant churches also teach hellfire. But Protestant theologians also have proved their inventiveness by concocting other doctrines not taught in the Bible. Some Calvinist Reformed churches, for example, teach that God predestines certain souls to salvation and others to eternal damnation. Other Protestants believe in universal salvation, that is, in the ultimate salvation of all souls, even those of the wicked.

## Holding to Bible Truth

After warning against the apostasy of Hymanaeus and Philetus concerning the resurrection, Paul added: "For all that, the solid foundation of God stays standing, having this seal: 'Jehovah knows those who belong to him.'"—2 Timothy 2:19.

Having reviewed the historical development of apostate ideas concerning the soul, death, resurrection and final judgment, and having seen the confusion of present-day beliefs on these vital subjects, what will you do? The sincere Christian will be more convinced than ever of the need to stick to "the solid foundation of God" on these matters, as outlined in His Word, the Bible.

However, while accepting the clear Bible teaching on the human soul, death and resurrection, for emotional reasons some Christians may have ideas about final judgment that seemingly exalt Jehovah's loving-kindness but that, in fact, cast doubts upon his justice and his right to destroy the wicked. With a view to clearing up such questions, the following articles will examine what the Bible says about the true resurrection hope as related to God's kingdom and to God's day of judgment. We invite you to read on.

# The Kingdom and the Resurrection Hope

"I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is destined to judge the living and the dead, and by his manifestation and his kingdom."—2 Timothy 4:1.

**T**HERE are estimates of how many humans have ever lived on earth that vary from 14 billion to 20 billion. Whatever the correct figure may be, two facts are certain: (1) Jehovah God knows the exact number of people who have ever lived, and he has the power to bring back to life whomever he chooses; (2) the present unprecedented world population of some 4.4 billion persons apparently is only a small fraction of the total number of humans who have ever lived. The conclusion is inescapable: by far the greater number of humans are dead and depend on the resurrection for any hope of future life. But why did they die? And what hope is there of their ever living again?

<sup>2</sup> In the year 36 C.E. the apostle Peter stated: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him. . . . God raised this One [Jesus Christ] up on the third day and granted him to become manifest, not to all the people, but to

witnesses appointed beforehand by God, to us, who ate and drank with him after his rising from the dead. Also, he ordered us to preach to the people and to give a thorough witness that this is the One decreed by God to be *judge of the living and the dead*. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone putting faith in him gets forgiveness of sins through his name."—Acts 10:34-43.

<sup>3</sup> Yes, the reason for the accumulation of billions of dead humans in the grave is sin, inherited from the first man Adam. "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men. . . . By the trespass of the one man death ruled as king." (Romans 5:12, 17) But Christ died and was "made alive in the spirit." (1 Peter 3:18) Through faith in his shed blood, "everyone," from among "the living and the dead," can get "forgiveness of sins" and be delivered from the tyrannical rule of King Death. For this, most of mankind will need a resurrection. So Paul writes: "Since death is through a man [Adam], resurrection of the dead is also through a man [Jesus]." (1 Corinthians

1. Considering the number of humans who have ever lived, why is the resurrection hope so important, but what questions come to mind?

2. What did Peter state concerning Christ's resurrection and His connection with the resurrection hope?

3. (a) Why have so many billions of people died? (b) Explain how Christ's death and resurrection are the basis for the resurrection hope.

15:21) Christ confirmed this, stating to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life." (John 11:25) Christ's death and resurrection are the basis for the resurrection hope.

### **The "First Resurrection"**

<sup>4</sup> The Bible shows that Christ will not be alone to judge "the living and the dead." Describing an inspired vision, the apostle John wrote: "And I saw thrones, and there were those who sat down on them, and power of judging was given them. Yes, I saw the souls of those executed with the ax for the witness they bore to Jesus and for speaking about God, and those who had worshiped neither the wild beast [Satan's political organization] nor its image and who had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand. And they came to life and ruled as kings with the Christ for a thousand years. Happy and holy is anyone having part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of the Christ, and will rule as kings with him for the thousand years."—Revelation 20:4, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Among the first of these future kings and judges who died as faithful witnesses of Jesus and his Father, Jehovah, were the 11 loyal apostles. At Luke 22:28-30,

4, 5. (a) What did John write about the "first resurrection," and what power and office is given to those who share in this resurrection? (b) What did Jesus say to the 11 faithful apostles about their future office?

Jesus describes these as sitting on thrones with him in his kingdom, "to judge the twelve tribes of Israel [nonpriestly, representing the rest of humanity]."

<sup>6</sup> Other scriptures show that this unique privilege of being associate kings and judges with Christ in his kingdom is limited to a "little flock" of 144,000 faithful Christians "bought from the earth," "bought from among mankind." (Luke 12:32; Revelation 14:1-4) These give up the normal and natural hope of living forever on earth in order to "be united with him [Christ] in the likeness of his resurrection." (Romans 6:5) Of such ones, Paul also wrote: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised up in incorruption. . . . It is sown a physical body, it is raised up a spiritual body. . . . Flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom . . . This which is mortal must put on immortality."—1 Corinthians 15:42-53.

<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* gives the lie to the unscriptural idea of everyone's having an immortal soul, stating: "Immortality is not a present possession of all men but a future acquisition of Christians. According to 1 Cor. 15:42, 52 ff., it is only after the resurrection transformation that believers 'put on' the

6. How many associate judges will assist Christ when he judges the living and the dead, and what transformation do they undergo when they are resurrected?

7. What does a dictionary state concerning immortality, and what did Paul and Peter write about the heavenly hope?

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**"Immortality is not a present possession of all men but a future acquisition of Christians. . . . there can be no immortality without prior resurrection."—*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology***

garment of immortality. . . . there can be no immortality without prior resurrection." Actually, the prize of immortality is granted, not to all Christians, but to those only who share in "the earlier resurrection from the dead." For these, "an incorruptible and undefiled and unfading . . . inheritance is reserved in the heavens."—See Romans 8:20-22; Philipians 3:10, 11; 1 Peter 1:3, 4.

### Time of the "First Resurrection"

<sup>8</sup> The Scriptures link this "first resurrection" with Christ's "presence [Greek, *parousia*]." (1 Corinthians 15:23) The apostle Paul writes: "The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a commanding call, with an archangel's voice and with God's trumpet, and those who are dead in union with Christ [starting from the first century and up to Christ's coming to the spiritual temple in 1918] will rise first." Paul then goes on to say that the anointed Christians "who survive to the presence [*parousia*] of the Lord," and who therefore die during the *parousia*, will be immediately resurrected and "caught away in clouds to meet the Lord in the air." (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17) They do not have to "sleep" in the grave, awaiting the resurrection. At death they are "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."—1 Corinthians 15:51, 52, *Revised Standard Version*.

<sup>9</sup> Events in fulfillment of Bible prophecies indicate that Christ's presence, or *parousia*, began in the momentous year 1914. (Matthew 24:3, 7-14) Then "the kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord [Jehovah] and of his Christ."

8. (a) According to the Scriptures, when was the "first resurrection" due to occur? (b) Explain the meaning of 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52.

9. (a) When did Christ's invisible presence begin? (b) What was due to occur during his presence, and why can anointed Christians who die during Christ's presence be considered "happy"?

After this world-shaking event "the appointed time for the dead to be judged" came. This judging and the rewarding of those worthy began with those sharing in the "first resurrection" from Christ's coming to the temple onward. (Revelation 11:15-18) Those anointed Christians who die faithful after the setting up of God's kingdom are called "happy." Why so? Because theirs is an instantaneous resurrection, allowing them immediately to take up their new duties with Christ Jesus in heaven.—Revelation 14:13.

<sup>10</sup> The resurrection of the entire number of 144,000 anointed Christians called to reign with Christ in heaven is appropriately called the "first resurrection." This is so because it precedes in time the resurrection to life on earth of mankind in general, the 144,000 becoming "firstfruits to God and to the Lamb." (Revelation 14:1, 4; James 1:18) This puts them in a position of importance, since no other humans can "be made perfect apart from" these 144,000 priests, kings and judges. (Hebrews 11:40b; Revelation 22:1, 2) Furthermore, it is superior to any earthly resurrection, the 144,000 being raised "in the likeness of his [Christ's] resurrection" to incorruptible, immortal life as spirit sons of God.—Romans 6:5.

### The Earthly Resurrection

<sup>11</sup> If there is a "first resurrection," there must logically be a later resurrection. Describing what will occur during the millennial judgment day mentioned earlier in the same chapter, the apostle John wrote:

"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. But another scroll was opened; it

10. For what reasons is the resurrection of the 144,000 termed the "first resurrection"?

11. What further resurrection is mentioned in Revelation, chapter 20?

is the scroll of life. And the dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds.”—Revelation 20:12.

<sup>12</sup> These “dead” are the same as “the rest of the dead” mentioned in verse five of the same chapter, and of whom it is stated that they “did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.” This cannot mean that they are not resurrected until after the millennial judgment.

12, 13. (a) Why is it illogical to say that the rest of the dead will not be resurrected until after the millennium? (b) What, then, is the meaning of the expression “come to life” used in Revelation 20:5? (c) How will it be determined whose names are finally recorded in “the scroll of life”?

ment day, because those who share in the “first resurrection” are given “power of judging” and will be “priests” and “rule as kings” with Christ “for the thousand years.” (Revelation 20:4-6) Whom will they judge and rule over as kings, and on behalf of whom will they act as priests, if “the rest of the dead” are not resurrected until the end of the millennium?

<sup>13</sup> Consequently, the expression “come to life” must refer to the situation at the end of the 1,000-year-long Judgment Day. It means that these persons “come to life” in that they finally attain human perfection. They will be in the same per-



The Bible shows that there will be a resurrection of many to life on earth

fect condition as were Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. How will Jehovah then determine whose names are to be written in "the scroll of life," or "book of life"? It will be by means of a final test upon humankind. (Revelation 20:7-10, 12, 15) Those who prove faithful to God through the final test will be 'declared righteous' by Jehovah himself and enter into "the glorious freedom of the children of God" on earth. (Romans 8:21, 33) They will receive the divine guarantee of life everlasting, unlike Adam, who failed under test and so was debarred from access to the "tree of life" by God-sent cherubs.—Genesis 2:9; 3:22-24.

<sup>14</sup> Since all "the rest of the dead" that are resurrected during Christ's 1,000-year reign will thus have the opportunity of proving themselves worthy of having their names inscribed permanently in Jehovah's "scroll of life" and of living forever under God's kingdom, their resurrection is one to better opportunities than that of those few people resurrected in Bible times but who died again. (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:17-37; 13:20, 21; Matthew 9:18, 23-26; Luke 7:11-15; John 11:38-44; Acts 9:36-41; 20:7-12) It was in order to attain a "better resurrection" under the kingdom, or "city," of the Messiah that men and women of old remained faithful to Jehovah until death.—Hebrews 11:10, 13, 14, 35.

### **Resurrection and Judgment**

<sup>15</sup> We have seen that "the rest of the dead" are resurrected during the millennium in order to be "judged . . . according to their deeds" then. (Revelation

14. In what respects will the resurrection of people on earth during the millennium be one to better opportunities?

15, 16. (a) Is Judgment Day something to fear? Explain. (b) Who will do the judging, and on what basis?

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

☐ In what way is Christ "the resurrection and the life"?

☐ Who share in the "first resurrection," and in what activities will they assist the King Jesus Christ?

☐ Why is the term "first resurrection" appropriate?

☐ In what way do "the rest of the dead" "come to life" after the millennium, and in what respect is theirs a resurrection superior to that of persons raised in Bible times to life on earth?

☐ On what basis will the resurrected dead be judged, and what will they need to be delivered from sin and death?

20:12) The gruesome idea of a doomsday when everyone who has ever lived will have to answer for his past sins is not Bible based. The context shows that divine "scrolls," or law books, will be opened and that the risen dead will be judged "out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds," that is, according to their obedience or disobedience to such divine instructions.

<sup>16</sup> Who will do the judging? The apostle Paul wrote that Christ Jesus "is destined to judge the living and the dead," and at the same time he spoke of Christ's "manifestation and his kingdom." (2 Timothy 4:1) Seated on "thrones" with Christ during his millennial kingdom will be 144,000 associate judges. (Luke 22:28-30; Revelation 20:4, 6) Paul wrote: "Do you not know that the holy ones will judge the world?"—1 Corinthians 6:2.

<sup>17</sup> Referring to what will occur during his millennial reign, which is also a 1,000-year Judgment Day, Jesus stated: "For the Father judges no one at all, but he has committed all the judging to the Son. . . . Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment."—John 5:22-29.

<sup>18</sup> Does this contradict Revelation 20:12, where we read that the dead will be "judged out of those things written in the scrolls," which scrolls will not be "opened" until during the millennium? Not at all. Jesus' words in John chapter five must be understood in the light of his later revelation to John. (Revelation 1:1) Both "those who did good things" and "those who practiced vile things" will be among "those dead" who will be "judged individually according to their deeds" performed *after* their resurrection. (Revelation 20:13) When contrasting "resurrection of life" with "resurrection of judgment" [Greek, *a·na'sta-sis kri'seos*], Jesus was referring to the end result of such resurrections. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* defines *a·na'sta-sis kri'seos* as resurrection "followed by condemnation." The person is not resurrected in order to be condemned automatically, but his resurrection will be followed by condemnatory judgment if he refuses to follow the "things written in the scrolls" and thus fails to have his name "written in the book of life." He would then die "the second death," with no future hope of a resurrection.—Revelation 20:14, 15; 21:8.

17, 18. (a) Is there any contradiction between John 5:29 and Revelation 20:12? Explain. (b) In what sense will some "come out . . . to a resurrection of judgment"?

<sup>19</sup> It is interesting to note that the French *Ecumenical Translation* (published by a group of both Catholic and Protestant scholars) renders John 5:29: "Those who have done good will come out for the resurrection that leads to life; those who have practiced evil, for the resurrection that leads to judgment." Only when the end result of a person's resurrection becomes clear will it be known whether his resurrection was a "resurrection of life" or a "resurrection of judgment."\*

<sup>20</sup> Both the resurrected dead and the "great crowd" who survive the "great tribulation" that is just ahead will need to drink the "water of life," that is, gratefully accept Christ's ransom sacrifice and all the other provisions Jehovah makes to deliver mankind from sin and death. (Revelation 7:9, 10, 14, 17; 22:1, 2) These provisions will be administered by Christ and his 144,000 associate priestly judges during the millennial Kingdom. But will *all* the dead come back to be judged, including the victims of the approaching "great tribulation"? The next article will go into that.

\* Those who are raised to a "resurrection of life" or a "resurrection of judgment" should not be considered to be identical with the "righteous" and the "unrighteous" mentioned by Paul in Acts 24:15. Paul is speaking of the standing of persons *when they are resurrected*, based on their conduct before death. The "righteous" will have to continue their righteous course of action by obedience to the things written in the "scrolls." Otherwise their resurrection could turn out to be one "of judgment." Conversely, if any "unrighteous" persons repent, accept Christ's ransom sacrifice and obey the things written in the "scrolls," their resurrection could prove to be one "of life."

19 and footnote. (a) How does a French Bible translation render John 5:29, and when only will it become apparent that a resurrection was one "of life" or "of judgment"? (b) Do the "righteous" and the "unrighteous" mentioned in Acts 24:15 come forth respectively to a "resurrection of life" and a "resurrection of judgment"? Explain.

20. (a) Who will need to drink the "water of life," and why? (b) What question will be examined in the following article?

# Survival or Destruction at the “Great Tribulation”

“These will depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the righteous ones into everlasting life.”—Matthew 25:46.

**T**HE idea of certain ones being destroyed everlastingly is repulsive to some. This is true of universalists, who believe that eventually everyone will be saved. Away back in the third century C.E., the religious writer Origen toyed with the idea of ultimate salvation for all. Without going that far, some today who claim to be Christians express the opinion that perhaps all humans will be resurrected, including all future victims of the “great tribulation.”—Matthew 24:21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Unwittingly, those who entertain this idea are getting dangerously near to Christendom’s doctrine of a “general resurrection.” The mainstream churches teach that the dead bodies of ALL the deceased will be raised to join their respective souls in heaven or in “hell.” However, the Bible does not teach such a “general resurrection” as understood by Christendom, nor that ALL the dead, even the wicked, will be resurrected or brought back to life.

1, 2. What opinion have some expressed, and why is this dangerous and to be avoided?

## Not All the Dead Will Be Resurrected

<sup>3</sup> Jesus indicated that not everyone would be resurrected. He was replying to a sly question put to him by the Sadducees, who believed that nobody would be resurrected. He spoke of “those who have been counted worthy of gaining that system of things and the resurrection from the dead.” (Luke 20:35) His words imply that not all will have proved worthy of being resurrected in God’s promised new system of things.

<sup>4</sup> In Revelation chapter 20, which deals with the resurrection of the “rest of the dead” who do not share in the “first resurrection,” the Bible says that the “sea” and “Hades” give up the dead in them. It does not say that the dead come forth from the “lake of fire,” or “second death,” elsewhere called “Gehenna” (*Ge’i Hinnom*, Hebrew). (Luke 12:5) Just as the word “sea” designates the collective watery grave of those who died in the depths and whose bodies were never re-

3. How did Jesus indicate that not all would be resurrected?

4. According to Revelation chapter 20, from where will the dead come forth, but what symbolic place does not give up its dead?

covered for an earthly burial, the Greek word *ha'des* does not refer to any individual tomb but, rather, to the common earthly grave of mankind. It corresponds with the word "Sheol" found in the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus states: "I became dead, but, look! I am living forever and ever, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." (Revelation 1:18) During his millennial reign he will use these "keys" to free from death those "counted worthy of gaining that system of things and the resurrection from the dead."

<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, nowhere do the Scriptures state that Christ has the keys of Gehenna. He spoke of Gehenna, saying: "Do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be in fear of him [Jehovah] that can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." (Matthew 10:28) Commenting on this passage in his book *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?* (French), Professor Oscar Cullmann writes: "*psy·khe* [soul] here does not mean the Greek concept of soul but should rather be translated 'life'. . . . W. G. Kümmel . . . also writes with good reason: Matt. 10:28 'does not seek to highlight the immortality of the soul, but underlines the fact that God alone can destroy not only earthly life but also heavenly life.'" Yes, Gehenna represents utter destruction from which no resurrection is possible. *The New Bible Commentary* (Second Edition, page 786) defines Gehenna as "a description of 'the second death.'"—Revelation 21:8.

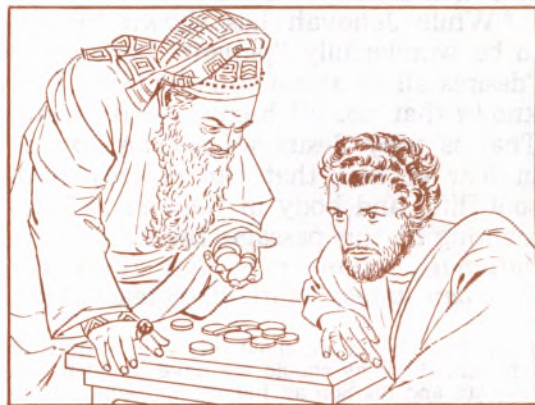
<sup>6</sup> Now, the Bible definitely shows that some end up in the symbolic Gehenna before the 1,000-year Judgment Day begins. Jesus told the unrepentant scribes and Pharisees that they and their Gentile

proselytes were 'subjects for Gehenna' or, literally, 'sons of Gehenna.' (Matthew 23:15, 33-35; see also John 9:39-41; 15:22-24.) If even a proselyte of the Pharisees became a subject for Gehenna 'twice as much so as themselves,' how much more so Judas Iscariot, who made a heinous deal with them to betray God's Son! Jesus implied this when he called Judas "the son of destruction." (John 17:12) Similarly, unrepentant apostates go, at death, not to Sheol, or Hades, but to Gehenna. (Hebrews 6:4-8; 2 Peter 2:1) The same is true of dedicated Christians who persist in willful sin or those who "shrink back." (Hebrews 10:26-31, 38, 39) These are merely examples to show that some, even in "this system of things," have committed the sin for which there is no forgiveness, not even in the system of things "to come." (Matthew 12:31, 32; compare 1 John 5:16.) They will, therefore, not be resurrected.

### The Finality of Jehovah's Judgments

<sup>7</sup> The very fact that Jesus stated that "blasphemy against the spirit" would be

7. What further proves that Jehovah pronounces final judgment against some even during the present system of things?



Judas, "the son of destruction," will be among those not resurrected

5. What is symbolized by "Gehenna"?

6. Show from the Bible that some go to Gehenna before the 1,000-year Judgment Day and therefore have no hope of being resurrected.

forgiven neither "in this system of things nor in that to come" should convince any who have doubts on the subject that Jehovah pronounces final judgment against some even during "this system." Such become "guilty of everlasting sin." They will have "no forgiveness forever." (Mark 3:28, 29) Why, then, should they be resurrected?

<sup>8</sup> Naturally, as dignified witnesses of our God Jehovah, we do not go around threatening people with destruction. We share Jehovah's viewpoint on things. Of him, it is said that he is "patient," because "he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9) On the other hand, we should avoid becoming overly emotional and, perhaps unwittingly, criticizing Jehovah's way of handling matters. Jehovah is a perfect Judge. (Deuteronomy 32:4) The same is true of Christ Jesus. (John 5:30) When a case is brought before imperfect human judges and goes through the entire judicial process, from the lowest court right through to the highest court of the land, men consider that justice has been done, and no further appeal can be made. Why, then, should we doubt Jehovah's judgments and their finality?—Psalm 119:75.

<sup>9</sup> While Jehovah has shown himself to be wonderfully "patient" because he "desires all to attain to repentance," he knows that not all humans will repent. That is why Jesus warned us to "be in fear of him that can destroy both soul [life] and body in Gehenna." Commenting on this passage, the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* states: "Matt. 10:28 teaches not

the potential immortality of the soul but the irreversibility of divine judgment on the unrepentant."

<sup>10</sup> In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus stated: "Go in through the narrow gate; because broad and spacious is the road leading off into destruction [Greek, *apoleia*], and many are the ones going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it." (Matthew 7:13, 14) Greek lexicons define *apoleia* as meaning "annihilation," "eternal destruction" (Arndt & Gingrich) or "definitive destruction, not merely in the sense of the extinction of physical existence." (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*) There is, therefore, no Biblical foundation for sentimentally believing that people living today, who face the greatest "tribulation" since the world began, have any other choice but "life" or "destruction."—Matthew 24:21, 22.

### Survival or Destruction

<sup>11</sup> "The great day of Jehovah is near." (Zephaniah 1:14) Never have those words been more ominous. True, there have been other special periods in history when Jehovah executed his judgment and glorified his holy name, and each of these was a miniature "day of Jehovah." Unfaithful Jerusalem, Babylon and Egypt experienced such 'days.' (Isaiah 2:1, 6-17; 13:1-6; Jeremiah 46:1-10) But the greatest "day of Jehovah" is still ahead. It is the "day" when Jehovah's judgment will be executed upon Christendom, the rest of Satan's world empire of false religion and his entire wicked system. It is "a day of fury, a day of distress and of anguish, a day of storm and of desolation." The

8. (a) How should we show the same attitude as Jehovah? (b) Why should we have confidence in Jehovah and his Son as Judges, and what example can be cited to illustrate the finality of divine judgment?

9. How does Matthew 10:28 indicate the finality of Jehovah's judgments?

10. What did Jesus state concerning the "many" and the "few," and what is the meaning of the Greek word translated "destruction"?

11. (a) What is meant by the expression "day of Jehovah"? (b) What "great day of Jehovah" is still ahead, and what will then occur?

prophecy continues: "'And I will cause distress to mankind, . . . it is against Jehovah that they have sinned. . . . Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them in the day of Jehovah's fury; but by the fire of his zeal the whole earth will be devoured, because he will make an extermination, indeed a terrible one, of all the inhabitants of the earth.' . . . Before there comes upon you people the burning anger of Jehovah, before there comes upon you the day of Jehovah's anger, seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth, who have practiced His own judicial decision. Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger."—Zephaniah 1:15-2:3.

<sup>12</sup> Even many of Christendom's Bible researchers recognize that this prophecy did not apply just to Judah but foretold "a universal judgment upon the whole world" (Keil-Delitzsch), "the end of an age of sin" (French *Ecumenical Bible*), "the 'day' when universal judgment will be visited upon all wickedness and the wrath of God be poured out upon all who know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."—*New Bible Commentary*, Second Edition.

<sup>13</sup> The apostle Paul associated the "day of Jehovah" with the "presence of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2) After having spoken of the "apostasy" that eventually produced "the man of lawlessness,"—the apostate clergy class of Christendom's churches—Paul adds: "Then, indeed, the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will do away with by the spirit of his mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of his presence." (2 Thessalonians

12. Does Zephaniah's prophecy refer only to Judah, or is it broader in its application?

13. (a) According to Paul, when is the "day of Jehovah" due to occur? (b) What is "the man of lawlessness," and what judgment awaits that symbolic "man"?

2:3, 8) The apostate clergy will be 'done away with' or 'brought to nothing' at the very beginning of the "great tribulation." (Revelation 17:1-5, 16, 17) That class is also termed "the son of destruction [*apoleia*]," which means they are heading for "eternal destruction" in Gehenna, like their counterpart in Jesus' day. —2 Thessalonians 2:3; Matthew 23:33.

<sup>14</sup> But what about all the people who have followed the clergy and their "unrighteous deception"? The apostle Paul speaks of these as "perishing [literally: "destroying themselves"], as a retribution because they did not accept the love of the truth that they might be saved. So that is why God lets an operation of error go to them, that they may get to believing the lie, in order that they *all may be judged* because they did not believe the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12) Today, the world has become a sink of wickedness, immorality and corruption. The majority of mankind 'take pleasure in unrighteousness' and do "not accept the love of the truth that they might be saved." (Compare Ezekiel 9:4-7.) Therefore, they will be "judged" and will perish "as a retribution." At the coming "great

14. Why will many others "perish," so what choice is before all mankind?

## In Coming Issues

■ "Speak Consolingly to the Depressed Souls"

■ How Should John's Gospel Affect You?

■ The Signs of the Times—What Do They Mean to You?

tribulation" the choice is quite clear. It is either survival or destruction.

### Flight to the Kingdom for Survival

<sup>15</sup> Yes, "the great day of Jehovah is near. It is near, and there is a hurrying of it very much." (Zephaniah 1:14) We are living in a time of judgment when "all the nations" are gathered before Christ Jesus. The people of all those nations are being separated into two classes, the "sheep" and the "goats." The end result is plainly stated: "everlasting life" for the "sheep," and "everlasting cutting-off" for the "goats."—Matthew 25:31-33, 46.

<sup>16</sup> Again showing the finality of Jehovah's judgment, Paul writes: "It is righteous on God's part to repay tribulation to those who make tribulation for you, but, to you who suffer tribulation, relief along with us at the revelation [*apokalypsis*] of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels in a flaming fire, as he brings vengeance upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus. These very ones will undergo the judicial punishment of everlasting destruction."—2 Thessalonians 1:6-9.

<sup>17</sup> Notice that the "judicial punishment of everlasting destruction" is executed not only upon "those who make tribulation" for God's people but also upon "those who do not know God" and "those who do not obey the good news." In his letter to the Romans, Paul explains why "those who do not know God" are "inexcusable" and why they will be judged. (Romans 1:18-20; 2:5-16) The "angel flying in midheaven," spoken of in Revelation chapter 14, summons all

15. How does the parable of the "sheep" and the "goats" state the choice for all nations of mankind?  
16, 17. (a) How does 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 show the finality of Jehovah's judgment executed at the "great tribulation"? (b) In addition to the persecutors of God's people, who will be destroyed, and why?

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

- ☐ What do Christendom's churches mean by the "general resurrection" of the dead, but is this doctrine Biblical?
- ☐ What scriptures indicate that not all the dead will be resurrected?
- ☐ What is "Gehenna"?
- ☐ What shows that Jehovah pronounces final judgment against some even during the present system of things?
- ☐ What will happen in the "day of Jehovah," and will those executed be resurrected?
- ☐ What must be done for survival, so what work is more urgent than ever?

"who dwell on the earth" to "fear God and give him glory, because the hour of the judgment by him has arrived." Therefore people are urged to "worship the One who made the heaven and the earth and sea." Those who fail to do so, and all those who put faith in Satan's political "wild beast" rather than in God's Messianic kingdom, will be destroyed with that "beast" in "the great winepress of the anger of God."—Revelation 14:6, 7, 9, 10, 14-20; 19:11-21.

<sup>18</sup> Any who hope to be "concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger" must "seek righteousness, seek meekness" and "practice Jehovah's own judicial decision," rather than criticize it. (Zephaniah 2:2, 3) Any who hope to be considered by Jehovah's appointed Judge as "sheep" to be spared at the "great tribulation" must prove

18. (a) What must any who hope to survive now do? (b) Whom does the Bible mention as surviving the "great tribulation," and what prospect lies ahead of them?

themselves to be "righteous ones," actively aiding and supporting Christ's anointed "brothers," who form the "faithful and discreet slave" class. (Matthew 25:33, 40, 46; 24:45-47) The only ones to whom the Bible extends hope of surviving the "great tribulation" are Christ's "brothers," or "chosen ones," and the "great crowd" of "sheep" who 'render God sacred service' without letup, constantly

saying for all to hear: "Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb." As baptized disciples drawn from "people of all the nations," this "great crowd" is shepherded by the Lamb, Christ Jesus, who guides them to "fountains of waters of life" that will never fail. "And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes."—Matthew 24:21, 22; 25:34; 28:19, 20; Revelation 7:9-17.

## Questions from Readers

■ Even as a baby, Jesus was perfect; so why does Luke 2:22-24 speak of Mary's taking him to Jerusalem 'when the days for purifying them according to the law came to the full'?

Jesus did not need to be purified for he was born as a perfect human son of God. (Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 1:19; 2:22) He thus would not be included in the "them" in Luke 2:22-24, which reads: "When the days for purifying them according to the law of Moses came to the full, they brought him [young Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to Jehovah, just as it is written in Jehovah's law: 'Every male opening a womb must be called holy to Jehovah,' and to offer sacrifice according to what is said in the law of Jehovah: 'A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.'"

Joseph and Mary rightly wanted to conform to what the law required in connection with the birth of a child. One requirement was that a firstborn son be presented to God at the temple and redeemed by a payment; Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem to do this. (Numbers 18:15, 16) Another requirement, which emphasized that mankind

was sinful and passed on imperfection through childbirth, called for the purification of a woman after she gave birth. If her child was a male, she was unclean for 40 days, and 80 days in the case of a female child. Cleansing sacrifices were offered at the end of the purification period. (Leviticus 12:1-8) On Mary and Joseph's trip to Jerusalem, they, too, would comply with this requirement.

However, Luke 2:22 has raised questions because it speaks of "the days for purifying them." Who are the "them"? Some manuscripts have the Greek word for "her," as if the text were speaking of a purification for Mary only. Evidently this textual variation was introduced by copyists who were perplexed by the reading "them." Now, though, "them" is accepted as the correct reading, for it is supported by the best ancient manuscripts. To whom, then, does "them" refer?

As noted, it could not have included Jesus, for he did not need cleansing. However, some scholars hold that Jesus was included on the basis that he was "redeemed" on the same trip to the temple. This claim is weak, however, because the 'purification' and the 'redemption' were two different requirements of the Law. More likely, Joseph was included in the "them."

For one thing, the verse goes on to say that "they brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem." That meant Joseph and Mary. And while the purification rite applied strictly only to the mother, Joseph arranged for the trip and as family head he was responsible to see that the sacrifice was offered. For such reasons Luke may have included Mary's husband (Jesus' stepfather) in the "them." Luke 2:22 could thus be understood to mean: 'Upon the completion of the purification days Mary and her husband, who was obliged to see that the Law was carried out, brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to Jehovah.'

# Will You Remember?

It was Nisan 14 of the year 33 C.E. Jesus was sharing a cup of wine and a loaf of unleavened bread with his apostles. His instruction? "Keep doing this in remembrance of me."—Luke 22:19.

So once a year Jehovah's Witnesses around the world gather to memorialize Jesus' death in the way he instructed on the night he made that statement. This year Nisan 14 falls on April 8. You are cordially invited to join us in this remembrance meeting. Please check with Jehovah's Witnesses locally for the exact time and place.

APRIL 8, 1982