

April 15, 1983

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



FAMINE
What Does It Mean?

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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 continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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The Black Horse of Famine



“LOOK! a black horse; and the one seated upon it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice as if in the midst of the four living creatures say: ‘A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the olive oil and the wine.’”—Revelation 6:5, 6.

With these grim words, the apostle John describes the third of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, the one riding the black horse of famine.* Did you ever wonder when his wild ride takes

place? You should. It heralds the greatest change this world will ever see.

Some feel that this horseman has always been riding among mankind. And it is true that history is full of accounts of famine from away back in the days of Abraham and Joseph up to the greatest recorded famine of all time, the one that struck

China between 1878 and 1879. (Genesis 12:10; 41:54) Estimates of the number of Chinese who died in that famine vary from 9 to 13 million.

However, the black horse and its rider are not related to *all* the food shortages of history. Why not? Because in his vision John saw going ahead of the black horse the red horse of war, as well as a rider wearing a crown on a white horse. This

* For a discussion of all four horsemen and their prophetic meaning, please see our issue of May 15, 1983.

rider is Jesus Christ, newly appointed as King and going forth "conquering and to complete his conquest." (Revelation 6:1, 2) Hence, the galloping black horse and its rider picture the food shortages that afflict the earth when Jesus is appointed King of God's Kingdom.

The vision of the horsemen of the Apocalypse parallels a prophecy that Jesus himself uttered. On one occasion he foretold in great detail the conditions on earth that would mark his presence as invisible heavenly King. Part of that prophecy said: "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be *food shortages* and earthquakes in one place after another." —Matthew 24:3, 7.

When is this sign fulfilled? When, particularly, does the famine-bearing horseman ride through the earth? For many years Jehovah's Witnesses have made known that it is the generation that saw the year 1914 that has witnessed the results of the horseman's passing. Is their understanding correct?

'Of course not,' some may say. 'Why,

the earth produces far more food than it ever did, thanks to modern agriculture. There are agencies associated with the United Nations, such as the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), that try to make sure everyone gets enough to eat. Besides, living standards have increased amazingly in some areas. Nations such as England, where famine used to be common, rarely see food shortages now. Many lands today enjoy the highest standard of living ever recorded. How can we say that this generation above all others is the one to suffer the effects of the black horse of famine?'

That is an interesting question. It is true that mankind throughout history has endured food shortages. Both the apostle John and Jesus himself knew that. Yet they foretold a time when famine would affect the earth in a noteworthy way. How would these food shortages be noteworthy? And, in view of the material prosperity of much of the modern world, is there any reason to believe that the generation now alive is witnessing food shortages?

FAMINE

What Does It Mean?

WHILE it is true that agriculture has made a lot of progress in recent years, it is also true that since 1914 mankind has witnessed numerous food shortages. Let us examine some of these to see if they could possibly fulfill the prophecy of Jesus and the vision of the apostle John on the subject. If they do seem to match up, then we will look

further and see whether there is anything about 20th-century food shortages that marks them as different from those experienced previously in world history.

Famine Amid Plenty

Some may feel that because there is so much wealth today, it is not logical to say that this is the time when the black

horse of famine is abroad in the earth. But the Bible does not say that *everyone* would be starving at that time. In fact, the voice in the vision that announced a very high price for staple foods* also said: "Do not harm the olive oil and *the wine*." (Revelation 6:6) Olive oil and wine were luxuries. Hence, Revelation indicates that some would be enjoying luxury while others suffered famine.

Jesus, too, while he prophesied food shortages, warned: "Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare." (Luke 21:34, 35) While some were suffering food shortages, others would be in danger of eating too much. Is that the situation today?

Yes. In fact, reports tell us that the

* "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius." (Revelation 6:6) A denarius was a day's wage in John's time.—Matthew 20:2.



raising of the living standards of some people is causing others to go hungry. "The improvement in living standards and the growing demand for food around the world have put pressure on food prices [causing food to be more expensive] making it harder for the poorest countries to import their food needs." (*The New York Times*, August 16, 1981) In other words, the "overeating" by some is making the "food shortages" of others worse.

"In One Place After Another"

Jesus warned that there would be "food shortages . . . in one place after another." (Matthew 24:7) Has that happened since 1914? Yes. To mention just a few: In 1921, famine brought death to some 5 million people in the U.S.S.R. In 1929, famine caused an estimated 3 million deaths in China. In the 1930's, 5 million died of hunger in the U.S.S.R. Just a few years ago prolonged drought in countries bordering the Sahara Desert

resulted in countless refugees and up to 100,000 deaths.

Remember, though, that in the apostle John's vision the black horse of famine followed the red horse of war. Correspondingly, many of the food shortages of our day have been a direct result of war. (Revelation 6:3, 4) For example, the Spanish civil war brought famine to that land in the 1930's. World War II brought starvation to Greece, Poland, Russia, Holland and other places. More than 1,500,000 died in Bengal, India, during the years 1943-44 in a famine due partly to that same war.

More recently, in the 1960's, people died of starvation in the Congo (now Zaire) and Nigeria because of civil war. Starving Kampuchean children stared at us from our newspapers during the fighting in that land. Recently, we read that more than a million refugees are threatened with famine in Somalia, where they have fled from drought and fighting in Ethiopia. News sources claim that more than 9 million refugees are close to starvation in Thailand, the Sudan, Zaire, Nicaragua, Honduras and Pakistan. So the sad tale goes on.

Historically, famines have been caused by war, drought, insect plague or some other catastrophe. Have we seen more such food shortages than have previous generations? We cannot say for certain because statistics are incomplete. But this century has had its share of natural calamities and has suffered more from war than any other generation in history.* Hence, it may be that overall there have been more food shortages than ever before. Certainly, we have seen famine amid plenty, famine caused by war and food shortages "in one place after another," just as was prophesied.

* See the article "World War I and the Beginning of Sorrows," in *The Watchtower*, issue of April 1, 1983.

There is even a new kind of food shortage now developing that marks our time as different.

"Unique in Human History"

In his foreword to the book *The Dimensions of World Food Problems*, the editor, E. R. Duncan, explains that until recently food supplies had generally increased with population increases. True, disasters resulted in scattered famines. But the populations recovered. Starting in the 1940's, however, a new factor entered the picture: a rapidly increasing world population that strains the world's long-term capacity to feed itself. "This situation," he says, "is unique in human history."

India furnishes an example. India has experienced severe famines throughout her history, but today it is different. "It was not until this past century, and to a significant degree not until in this the twentieth century, that conditions became unbearable [in India]. This fact cannot be sufficiently underlined to repudiate glib talk about hunger and history as inseparable companions." So says Georg Borgstrom, a leading international authority on world nutrition.

He goes on to explain: "When England first came to this rich subcontinent, about two hundred years ago, there were about sixty million people living within the area of present-day India. Of these, about ten million were on a starvation level. Since then, the population has increased sevenfold and now the situation is reversed, with the number of adequately fed amounting to approximately ten million."—*The Hungry Planet*, by Georg Borgstrom.

A similar situation is developing in other lands. True, in the world as a whole there is still enough food produced to feed everyone, in theory. But if the population keeps expanding, that

will soon no longer be so. Even now, many poor countries that once produced enough food for their needs no longer do so, and because they are poor they cannot afford to buy enough food to feed their population. Sometimes, even within a country that has enough food overall, a large group of the population is so poor that the people cannot afford to buy the food. So they suffer food shortages.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported last year: "The food shortage in Africa has deteriorated in the last six months and 28 countries are suffering from famine."

The *Vancouver Sun* stated: "Today, at the close of a 'normal' year, the FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization] estimates there are 450 million people hungry to the point of starvation, up to a billion who do not have enough to eat."

A report from the United Nations Children's Fund estimates that 17 million of the world's children died from hunger and disease in 1981. That is more than the estimated deaths during the terrible Chinese famine of the years 1878-79.

Is there any solution? *The New York Times* reports: "World Bank calculations indicate that an investment of \$600 billion in developing countries . . . will be required over the next 10 years just to maintain food supplies at present levels of hunger. No one is sure where that vast sum will be coming from." So, there is no realistic solution in sight.

The Good News

The sheer scope of the problem of hunger today and the fact that it is likely to get worse makes it unprecedented. There is something else unusual about it. It is accompanied by many other difficulties that are seemingly insoluble.

In the vision of the apostle John, the black horse of famine was accompanied

by the red horse of war and the pale horse of disease. And Jesus, when he foretold food shortages "in one place after another," said that these would be accompanied by significant earthquake activity, pestilences, wars and many other afflictions. (Matthew 24:7-14; Luke 21:10-28) The fact that all these things are happening today marks this as the noteworthy time that Jesus and the apostle John were foretelling.

The ride of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse was to be an indication that the newly crowned Jesus was going forth "conquering and to complete his conquest." (Revelation 6:1-8) The detailed description of world events that Jesus gave was in response to his followers' question: "When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?"—Matthew 24:3.

We are living in important days. Jesus is now ruling invisibly as King. He will soon "complete his conquest" by removing wicked men and incapacitating the prime cause of wickedness, Satan the Devil. (Psalm 37:9-11; Revelation 20:1-3) That is why Jesus went on to say: "When you see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near."—Luke 21:31.

That is the *good* news behind the calamities we read about in our newspapers. Soon the ride of the black horse of famine will end and God's Kingdom will bring righteous government to the earth. (Psalm 72:1, 16) This will be the greatest change for good in the whole history of mankind. Why not learn about it for yourself in your own Bible? Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to give you any help you need. Thus you can discern the real meaning of the disastrous course of the black horse of famine.

What Is God's Kingdom?

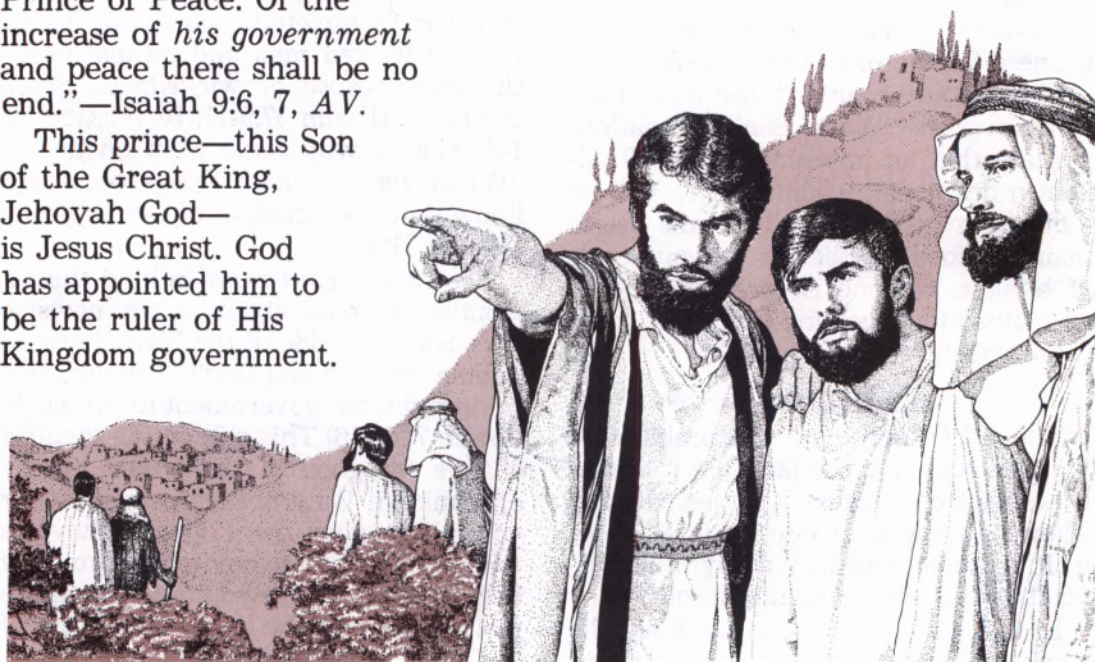
WHEN Jesus Christ was on the earth his main work was to preach and teach about God's Kingdom. "I must declare the good news of the kingdom of God," he once explained, "because for this I was sent forth." (Luke 4:43) As you can see here, Jesus sent out his followers to do this same Kingdom preaching. (Matthew 10:1, 7) He even taught his followers to pray to God: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—Matthew 6:10, *Authorized Version*.

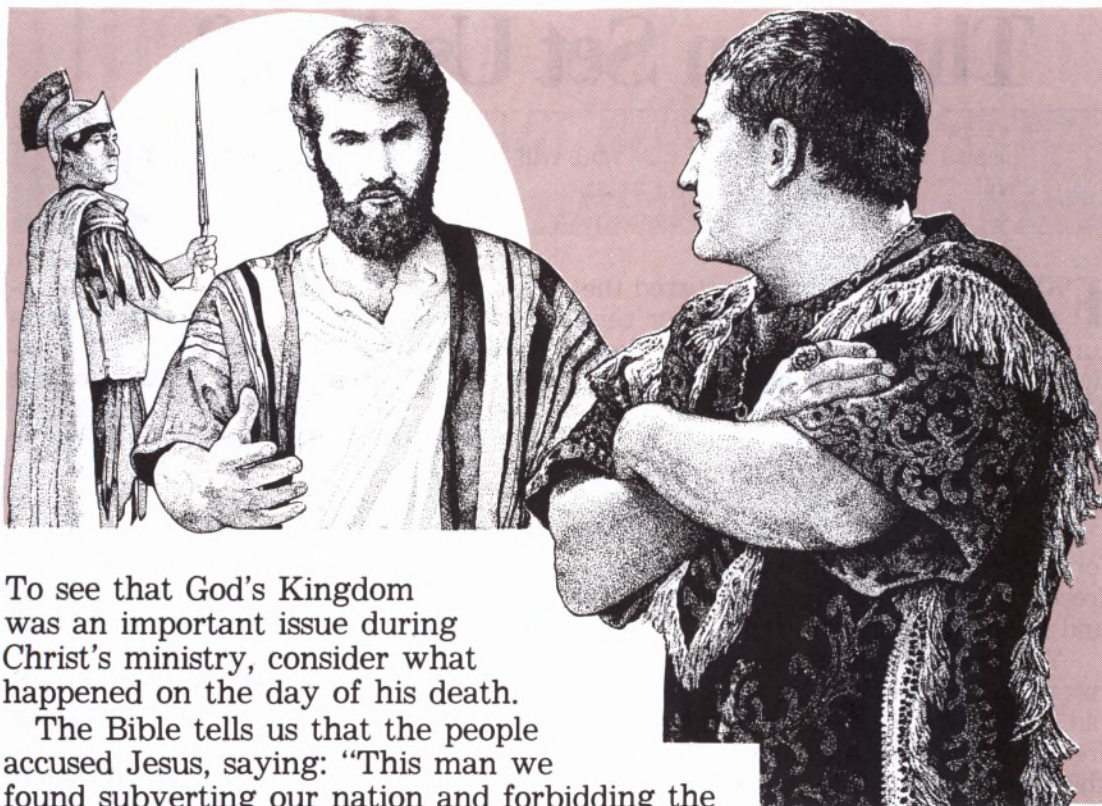
What is this Kingdom of God, and why is it so important?

Well, you know what a king is. He is the ruler of a country or territory. Because he is a king, his government is called a kingdom. God's Kingdom is also a government. The Bible tells about it in these words: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and *the government shall be upon his shoulder*: and his name shall be called . . . The

Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *his government* and peace there shall be no end."—Isaiah 9:6, 7, *AV*.

This prince—this Son of the Great King, Jehovah God—is Jesus Christ. God has appointed him to be the ruler of His Kingdom government.





To see that God's Kingdom was an important issue during Christ's ministry, consider what happened on the day of his death.

The Bible tells us that the people accused Jesus, saying: "This man we found subverting our nation and forbidding the paying of taxes to Caesar and saying he himself is Christ a king." On hearing these things, the Roman governor Pontius Pilate asked Jesus: "Are you the king of the Jews?"—Luke 23:1-3.

Jesus did not answer Pilate's question directly but said: "My kingdom is no part of this world." (John 18:36) Jesus answered this way because his Kingdom was not to be an earthly one involving human politics. As God's King, he was to rule from heaven, not as a man from some throne on earth.

Did you notice from Isaiah what God's government will cause to increase so that there is no end to it? Yes, *peace*. So can you see now why that government is so important? No human government can bring lasting peace; only God's Kingdom can do so. Jesus spent his life on earth telling people the wonderful truths about God's Kingdom government. It was his main message. The Kingdom is still the most important issue today.

Where Is the Truth That Can Set Us Free?

"Jesus went on to say . . . 'You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.' "—JOHN 8:31, 32.

FREEDOM! That word has stirred the minds and hearts of people for centuries! Wars have been fought for freedom. Millions of people have died for it. Many have felt as did American statesman Patrick Henry over 200 years ago when he declared: "Give me liberty or give me death." During World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called for "four freedoms": freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

² Yet, in a deeper sense, real freedom has to include more than that. For example, can any of those freedoms bring us freedom from human imperfection? Can they bring us freedom from sickness? Furthermore, no matter what measure of health a person may have, he is faced with the hard fact that sooner or later people grow old and die. What can a person enjoy in the grave? The Bible answers: "As for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." That is why it also says: "A live dog is better off than a dead lion."—Ecclesiastes 9:4, 5.

³ For us to be free in the fullest sense of the word, we have to be rid of the bondage of imperfection, sickness and death. And, yes, along with that we need to be rid of poverty, oppression, crime

and war, awful things with which history has been filled. But who can give us freedoms like that? Can any doctor guarantee a cure for cancer, heart trouble and all other illnesses? Can any scientist keep us from getting old and dying or bring us back to life after we die? Can any political leader guarantee peace on earth and freedom from war forever? Is there any mayor or police chief in any city of the world who can bring about total freedom from crime? What economic system can produce freedom from poverty, unemployment or inflation, and deliver real prosperity for everyone—permanently?

⁴ If there is any hope that the many bad conditions now engulfing mankind can be eliminated, the answer has to be based on the truth. Real freedom cannot be based on deceptions or lies. Thus, if anyone, whether a world leader, a scientist, an economist or a clergyman, gives an opinion on what will bring longed-for freedoms, the question must be asked: Is he telling the truth? And mankind has had a long, long time to see whether the opinions, promises and efforts of humans have conformed to the truth.

Hopes Not Based on Truth

⁵ For instance, some decades ago many

1. What are some of the freedoms people in this world have desired?

2, 3. What must real freedom include?

4. On what must real freedom be based?

5. To what extent has the hope for freedom from sickness been realized?



Mankind desperately needs to be freed from many distressing conditions

people felt that with medical enlightenment mankind would be freed from disease. While there have been many medical advancements, have these brought freedom from sickness? No, for scourges such as cancer and heart trouble have reached epidemic proportions. At one time, too, it was thought that venereal disease would be conquered by new wonder drugs. Yet the respected British medical publication *The Lancet* reports: "The World Health Organisation concludes that throughout the world there are something of the order of 250 million new cases of gonorrhoea and 50 million new cases of syphilis annually. Other sexually communicable conditions may be even more common."—Compare Proverbs 7:10, 21-23.

⁶ What, too, of the great hopes stirred by science and industry a century or two ago? As just one example, the automobile was hailed as a great advancement, and in some ways it was. But it has helped choke cities with congestion, noise and pollution. Throughout the world over 200,000 people are killed in vehicle accidents, and millions are injured every year! The disappointing results of technology were noted by Orville Wright, one of the inventors of the airplane. During World War II he wrote the following to Henry Ford: "Wilbur and I thought the plane would hasten world peace. So far it seems to have done the reverse. I suspect when you introduced mass pro-

6. Why can it be said that science and industry have been disappointing?

duction—one of the great inventions of the ages—you little thought it would be used . . . in building tanks for world destruction. It seems that no beneficial thing can be introduced without some one finding a vicious use for it.”

⁷ Have all the centuries of experimenting with various economic systems produced one that is stable and brings permanent prosperity for all? No, for economic instability now is the order of the day. As Jack Weldon, a professor of economics at Montreal’s McGill University, declared: “Any economist who is competent and honest will admit that we really don’t know how to deal with the major problems that now confront most of the big industrialized nations.” The situation in the less developed nations is even worse. In one such country, reports *Time* magazine, there “live more than 2 million children who have been abandoned by their destitute parents and another 14 million who live in such poverty that abandonment almost seems preferable.” In another part of the world, the *Philippine Daily Express* stated: “Close to half a billion [500 million] Asians are estimated to be in the category of the ‘absolutely poor’ and their number is projected to increase further.”

⁸ During World War I it was said that the war was being fought to “make the world safe for democracy.” Today, few countries are democracies. Even where it is said to prevail, how safe are the citizens? In the United States one out of every three families is victimized by some sort of crime. Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger declared: “We are approaching the status of an impotent society—a society whose capability of maintaining elementary security on the

streets, in schools, and in the homes of our people is in doubt.” He added: “For the last 10 years, many of our national leaders and those of other countries have spoken of international terrorism. But our rate of routine, day-to-day terrorism in almost any large city of the United States exceeds the casualties of all the reported ‘international terrorists’ in any given year.”—Compare Ecclesiastes 8:11.

⁹ World War I also was described as “the war to end the wars.” The *Encyclopedia Americana* notes: “During the war politicians and publicists spoke of the great days to come, when there would be no more wars, no more armaments, no more clashes between nations.” But the truth proved to be just the opposite. A South African publication, *The Natal Mercury*, said recently: “President Woodrow Wilson described World War I as ‘the war to end the wars.’ His prediction would have been far more accurate if it had [been called] ‘the war to end peace.’” The article added: “Since 1914 the world has probably seen more violence and turmoil than ever since history came to be recorded.” World military spending now is well over \$500 billion annually. Today the nations have enough nuclear weapons to wipe out more than a million large cities, far more cities than exist.

¹⁰ No, the truth is that whatever progress has been made in various fields, it has not set mankind free from exploitation, suffering, poverty, crime, war, fear, sickness and death. Thus, the claims, promises and opinions of this world’s leaders have not been based on the truth, as the evidence of centuries of time clearly shows. It is just as the Bible says at 2 Peter 2:19: “While they are promising

7. Can any of this world’s economic systems bring prosperity for all?

8. To what degree has democracy brought personal safety to citizens?

9. In this century, what happened to the predictions that war would end?

10. What is the truth regarding any progress made in various fields of human endeavor?

them freedom, they themselves are existing as slaves of corruption."

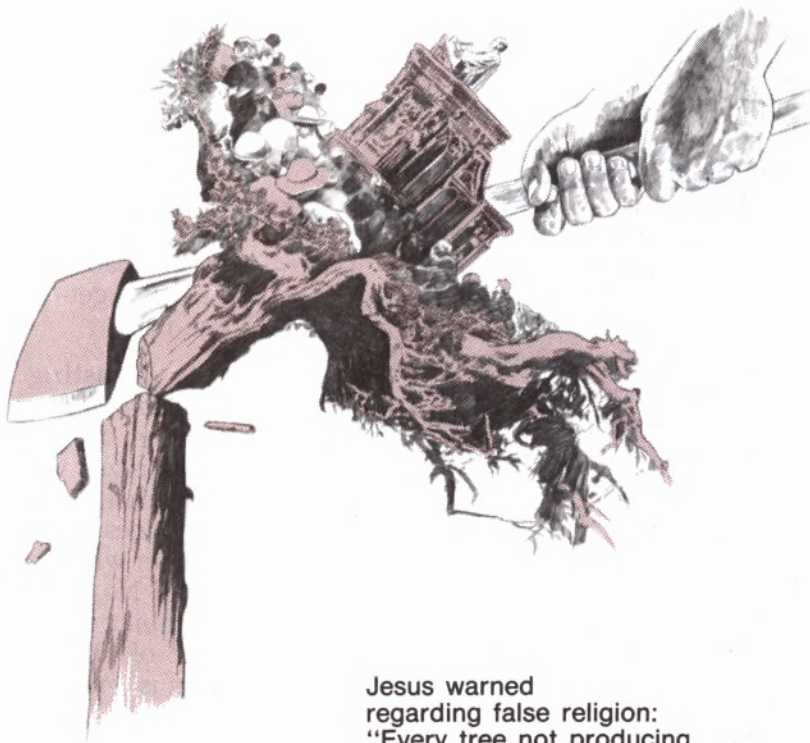
Testing Religious "Truth"

¹¹Not only do we need freedom from the distressing conditions so common today but we need to be free from the mental bondage that comes from false religious teachings. Yet the religions of Christendom and of the rest of this world contend that their beliefs constitute truth. That is easy to claim, but what do the facts show? Remember, God's Word states: "Faith without works is dead." (James 2:26) Further, Jesus declared: "Be on the watch for the false prophets that come to you in sheep's covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves. *By their fruits you will recognize them.*" Yes, systems of religion can be recognized as true or false not just by what they *claim* but by what they *produce*. Of the false, Jesus warned: "Every tree not producing fine fruit gets cut down and thrown into the fire."—Matthew 7:15-20.

¹²If a religion represents the truth, surely the very least fruitage it should bear is that of being a uniting force for those who follow it. Jesus said that those

11. What test can be applied to claims of religious truth?

12. What does the condition of this world's religions reveal?



Jesus warned regarding false religion: "Every tree not producing fine fruit gets cut down and thrown into the fire"



who had the truth should “all be one.” (John 17:21) God’s Word also says: “You should all speak in agreement.” “There should not be divisions among you.” “Be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought.” (1 Corinthians 1:10) This must be the case for those who truly represent God, for “God is a God, not of disorder, but of peace.” (1 Corinthians 14:33) Yet the religions of this world are divided into thousands of sects and cults, with conflicting teachings and practices carried on not only between different religions but often within the same religion. Such confusion and error could not originate with God. *Leaders’ Vision*, a church magazine in Australia, admitted: ‘To live in a state of disunity is to exist in a state of biblical sin. We constitute a visible denial of the work of the Holy Spirit.’

¹³ Further proof that such religions cannot represent the truth, and that they cannot be from God, comes in what results from their disunity. If a religion teaches the truth, it is certainly elementary that its members should at least not kill one another. Otherwise, what kind of truth, what kind of brotherhood would that be? Yet history shows that people of the same religions of this world have regularly slaughtered one another in time of war, by the millions, just because they lived in different countries. At times, people of the same religion slaughter one another inside the same country, in civil uprisings or revolutions. The Bible says, at 1 John 3:10-12, that it is “the children of the Devil” who slaughter their ‘brothers.’ (Compare Genesis 4:8.) The children of God do not do so, but, instead, they have unbreakable love for one another. Jesus plainly said: “By this all will know

that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves.”—John 13:35.

¹⁴ Thus, by their bad fruitage, their disunity, their warring, as well as the rampant immorality and hypocrisy so prevalent in this world’s religions, they stand exposed as not representing the truth—not representing God. They are indeed bad trees, producing rotten crops, ready to get “cut down and thrown into the fire.”

Trusting the God of Truth

¹⁵ The inability of humans to bring true freedom in the important things of life emphasizes what is said in the Bible at Jeremiah 10:23: “To earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step.” No, God did not create man with the ability or prerogative to be independent of His direction and be successful. This is one reason why God has allowed so many thousands of years of human rule independent from him, to demonstrate once and for all time that such rule cannot bring true freedom and happiness. Hence, Psalm 146:3 wisely counsels: “Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs.” Then whom can we trust? The Bible answers: “*Trust in Jehovah with all your heart* and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight.”—Proverbs 3:5, 6.

¹⁶ Why can we put such complete confidence in Jehovah? Because, as Psalm 31:5 says, ‘Jehovah is the God of truth.’ If we really want the truth about all the important issues of life and the answers to questions that perplex even

13. (a) In what has the disunity of false religion resulted? (b) Where, then, does such false religion originate?

14. Applying Jesus’ rule of “by their fruits,” what is the truth about worldly religion?

15. In whom should we put our full trust, and why?

16. What confidence can we have in Jehovah?

world leaders, God has them. Since "it is impossible for God to lie," what he says is what will be. "Jehovah of armies has sworn, saying: 'Surely just as I have figured, so it must occur; and just as I have counseled, that is what will come true.'"—Hebrews 6:18; Isaiah 14:24.

¹⁷ God would certainly make his truths known to sincere truth seekers, for, at John 8:32, Jesus said: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." In prayer to God he also said: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) Where is God's "word," his truth, set forth? The apostle Paul answers: "*All Scripture* is inspired of God." (2 Timothy 3:16) The almighty Creator of the universe thus claims to have authored the Bible. By means of his powerful active force, or holy spirit, he moved faithful men to write down his thoughts. So when we read the Scriptures, it is as though God is speaking to us.—1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

¹⁸ Some claim that God did not author the Bible. Yet humans can author books, and God created humans. Should the far superior Creator of humans be unable to do what vastly inferior humans can do? Scientists, by means of electronic equipment, send instructions to satellites in space, directing them in their course. A radio announcer speaks into a microphone, and his message is heard thousands of miles away. Even from the moon, television pictures of events have been transmitted into our home. But Jehovah made the ear, the eye, electricity and sound. Could he not, by means of his "dynamic energy" project his thoughts to his faithful servants on earth? Surely, the Creator of this magnificent universe could create a book!—Isaiah 40:26.

17. How has Jehovah provided a source of truth for sincere truth lovers?

18. Why is it unreasonable to think that God did not author the Bible?

¹⁹ 'But,' others say, 'the Bible is hard to understand.' Yes, some of it is. (2 Peter 3:16) Why did God author the Bible that way? Because then he is the One who determines who gets the truth. The apostle Paul said of God's truths: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept making it grow." (1 Corinthians 3:6) Paul also stated about God's wisdom and sacred secret: "It is *to us* God has revealed them through his spirit." (1 Corinthians 2:10) God thus reserves the right to reveal his truths only to those who really want them and who are willing to live by them and serve him faithfully: "The Sovereign Lord Jehovah will not do a thing unless he has revealed his confidential matter to *his servants*."—Amos 3:7; Daniel 2:28, 47.

²⁰ Yes, there is a God of truth. His truths are found in his inspired Word, the Holy Bible. He reveals the understanding of the sacred Scriptures to his humble, unified servants. Now, then, what vital truths contained in his Word does God reveal to truth seekers, especially in our time? The next article will examine some of them.

19. Why did God author the Bible with some of it hard to understand?

20. Where is the truth that can set us free?

Do you recall these points?

- ☐ What freedom does mankind really need?
- ☐ How have the hopes of this world proved disappointing? Why?
- ☐ How can we distinguish true religion from false?
- ☐ What reasons are there for fully trusting in Jehovah?
- ☐ To whom does Jehovah reveal his truths?

True Freedom Under Kingdom Rule

"The creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God."—ROMANS 8:21.

MANKIND desperately needs to be freed from the many distressing conditions that have prevailed for so long. But, as history has shown, it is beyond human ability to bring such freedoms. "Many are the plans in the heart of a man, but the counsel of Jehovah is what will stand." (Proverbs 19:21) That "counsel" of Jehovah promises that "he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore." (Revelation 21:4) What an inspiring outlook! How well it fits the description of the real freedom that the Bible says will come from Jehovah: "The creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God"! —Romans 8:21.

²The agency that will bring about such marvelous freedoms is the government originated by Jehovah to rule the entire earth, the heavenly Kingdom of God. By means of it God's will is going to take place "as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matthew 6:10) It is that same Kingdom that very shortly "will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms

[existing today], and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Daniel 2:44.

³No, God is not going to reform this corrupt world. It is far beyond recovery. So if anyone says that if some particular human scheme were to be followed, then the world would solve its problems, do not believe it. God's Word truthfully shows, instead, that the miserable experiment of some 6,000 years of human rule independent from God is now deep into its "last days."—2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13.

One Government

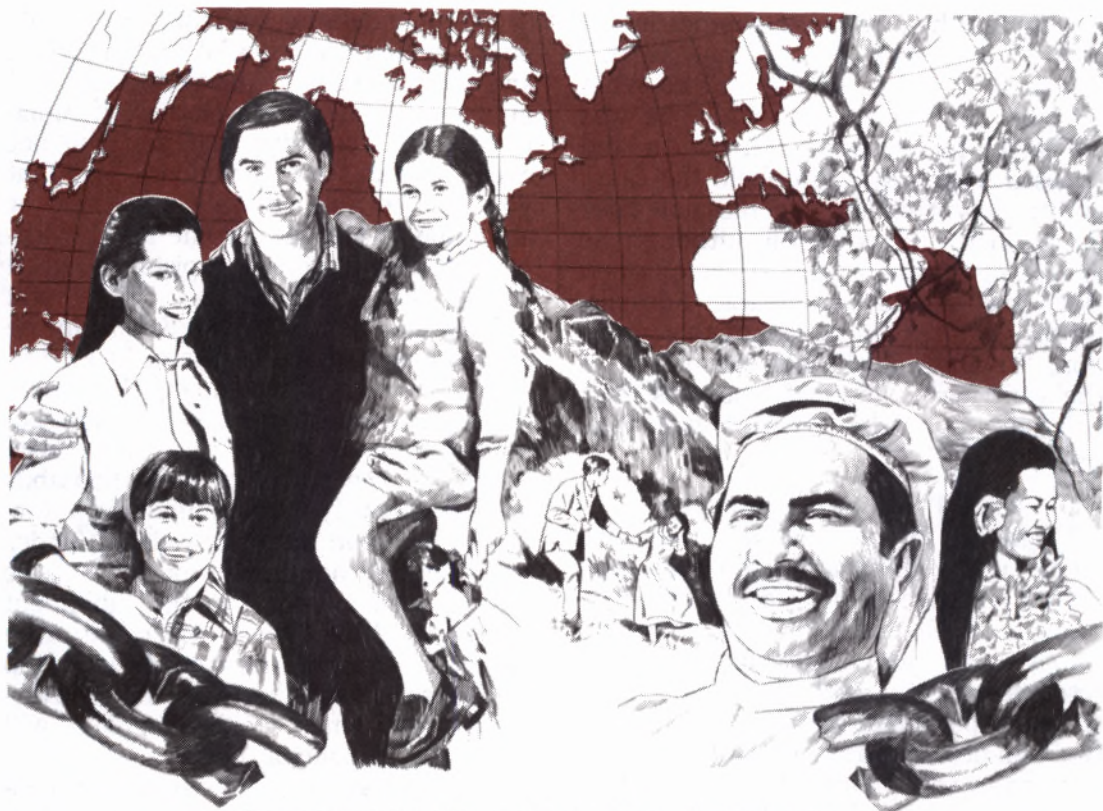
⁴The rule of God's heavenly Kingdom will mean having only one government for all the earth. Its chief Administrator will be Jesus Christ, and with him a relatively small group of other faithful servants of God taken from the earth to serve as associate rulers. Think of what one government, ruled by God's laws and principles, will mean for the earth! All boundary lines that now divide nations into hostile factions will fall. People will be united into one grand human family, free to move about the entire earth without hindrance. No more passports,

1. Who only can provide the freedoms mankind desperately needs, and why?

2. What is the agency Jehovah uses to bring such freedoms?

3. Why should we not be deceived by human schemes to solve this world's problems?

4. What will the one Kingdom government mean for mankind?



Those surviving this system's end will already have
'beaten their swords into plowshares'

visas or border guards.—Philippians 2:9, 10; Revelation 14:4; 20:6.

⁵ Some have long recognized the need for one government. In the *Bulletin Today*, a publication in the Philippines, columnist Gwynne Dyer relates: "A. J. P. Taylor, one of the leading historians of our age, told me recently that he believed the only hope of avoiding a catastrophic world war which would end civilization was for somebody to create a world empire. . . . Somehow or other we must get from our present condition of living in [over 150] separate sovereign states—all armed to the teeth, and all

5. How has the need for only one government for all the earth been recognized?

equally vulnerable to destruction—to a single world authority . . . And we must do so quickly. The pathetically weak and chronically divided state of the United Nations is a measure of how far we have to go. . . . The old slogan of the 1950s is still relevant: one world, or none."

⁶ It will be one world, under one government of God. What a blessing it will be to have an administration that will deal with everybody with kindness, justice and impartiality! Speaking of the heavenly King, Jesus Christ, the Bible prophetically says: "With righteousness he must judge the lowly ones, and with

6. What type of administration will the Kingdom be?

uprightness he must give reproof in behalf of the meek ones of the earth." (Isaiah 11:3, 4) Yes, Christ will do what is right. He proved that while he was on earth, for he spoke the truth and exposed hypocrisy. He upheld the cause of the downtrodden and did not cater to the rich and powerful, although he did not discriminate against them either. With such a proved, capable Administrator working under Jehovah's direction, "trueness itself will sprout out of the very earth, and righteousness itself will look down from the very heavens." —Psalm 85:11, 12.

True Peace and Prosperity

⁷ What a joy it will be to live no longer under divided human rule committed to huge armed forces and constant wars! No more wasting of earth's resources for destruction. Instead, those resources will be used for peaceful, constructive purposes. In fact, those whom God will preserve alive through the coming end of this present system of things will already have fulfilled the prophecy of Micah 4:3: "They will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. They will not lift up sword, nation against nation, neither will they learn war anymore." Who, today, among all of earth's peoples *already* fulfill that prophecy? The record of modern history shows that it is Jehovah's Witnesses. They are living testimony to the fact that earth-wide peace under God's rule is going to be a reality because earth-wide peace already is a reality among them now!

⁸ In God's New Order peace will be extended to every part of the earth. Isaiah 32:17, 18 speaks of "quietness and securi-

ty to time indefinite," adding: "My people must dwell in a peaceful abiding place and in residences of full confidence and in undisturbed resting-places." Imagine having such security that you will not even have to lock your doors, and that you will be able to walk anywhere at any time of the day or the night without fear of muggers or rapists. For good reason does the Bible say: "They will indeed find their *exquisite delight* in the abundance of peace." —Psalm 37:11.

⁹ Prosperity will accompany that peace, instead of millions dying each year from malnutrition as is the case now. Since Jesus had the power to feed thousands by miraculously increasing only a few loaves of bread and a few fishes, under his Kingdom administration he will be able to lead mankind in the fulfillment of Psalm 72:16: "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow." And since God's Kingdom will eliminate all political barriers, as well as commercial greed and wasteful competition, earth's bountiful produce will flow freely for the benefit of all mankind, not just a few. Thus, gone for all time will be the awful specter of children with spindly arms and legs and with bellies swollen from hunger.

Fruitful, Enjoyable Work

¹⁰ Today many people are unhappy because of the type of work they have to do for a living. Millions of others have no work at all, being unemployed. But in God's New Order people will find great pleasure in work. And they will be in no danger of seeing their efforts come to nothing because of bad economic conditions, some catastrophe or war. "They will certainly build houses and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant

7. Those who will be preserved alive into God's New Order will already have done what?

8, 9. What will be the extent of peace and prosperity under Kingdom rule?

10. How will work in the New Order differ from that of today?

vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating. . . . the work of their own hands my chosen ones will use to the full. They will not toil for nothing.” —Isaiah 65:21-23.

¹¹ With such uplifting working conditions, and with people having genuine love of neighbor, the subjects of the Kingdom will accomplish, for the betterment of this earth and life on it, things a thousand times more wonderful than anything this world has ever seen. That is why Jesus could point forward to a coming Paradise. (Luke 23:43) As Isaiah foretells: “The desert will sing and shout for joy; it will be as beautiful as the Lebanon Mountains and as fertile as the fields of Carmel and Sharon. . . . Streams of water will flow through the desert; the burning sand will become a lake, and dry land will be filled with springs. . . . They will be happy forever, forever free from sorrow and grief.” —Isaiah 35: 2, 6, 7, 10, *Today’s English Version*.

No More Sickness and Death

¹² Yet, it would be distressing to have all of that and then lose it because of getting sick, growing old and dying. But what doctors and scientists cannot now do, God will do under Kingdom rule. God created man’s body, mind and emotions. He knows what will make him well, perfect. When on earth Jesus demonstrated the healing power that he has been given by God and will use in the New Order: “Then great crowds approached him, having along with them people that were lame, maimed, blind, dumb, and many otherwise, and they fairly threw them at his feet, and he cured them; so

11. What will the subjects of God’s Kingdom accomplish toward this earth and life on it?

12. How did Jesus demonstrate the grand healing program that he will administer in Kingdom power?



In God’s New Order, people will find great pleasure in the uplifting working conditions

that the crowd felt amazement as they saw the dumb speaking and the lame walking and the blind seeing.” (Matthew 15:30, 31) In addition, with mankind being raised to human perfection under Kingdom rule, ‘death will be swallowed up forever.’ (Isaiah 25:8) Jehovah’s love will extend, too, even to those long dead, for they will get the opportunity to live in God’s New Order by being brought back to life in the resurrection. The joy then will be repeated countless times, reminding of when Jesus resurrected a

young girl and the eyewitnesses "were beside themselves *with great ecstasy*." —Mark 5:41, 42; John 5:28, 29.

¹³ Think what you could do in a righteous New Order of peace and prosperity with a perfect mind and body—and never dying! How many things you have wanted to do, but you could not take the time or could not afford it! Think of exploring and enjoying the majestic mountains, the refreshing forests, the flower-decked fields and gardens, the fascinating animal life, the sparkling streams and lakes free from pollution, the delicious foods of different peoples. Consider the talents that men and women will develop in craftsmanship, architecture, landscaping, home decorating, artistry and music. Without a doubt, mankind will be stimulated to new heights of expression and beauty. Think, too, of getting better acquainted with the One who makes all of that possible, Jehovah God. Increased knowledge of his awesome universe with its galaxies, stars and planets will also prove fascinating. Yes, indeed, "the creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God." —Romans 8:21.

Accepting the Truth

¹⁴ Can you really believe all these promises of God? Yes, you can. You can feel as did God-fearing Joshua when he said: "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." (Joshua 23:14) Really, *you can stake your life* on God's promises because what he says is the truth and will, without fail, come to pass.—Isaiah 46:9-11.

13. What things might people choose to do in the New Order?

14. Why can we have full confidence in all of Jehovah's promises?

¹⁵ The Bible clearly shows that there is truth, what it is, where it is and who has it. The question for each one is this: Do you *really want* the truth? 'Well,' some may say, 'don't most people want the truth?' No, for Jesus said that the road to eternal life is narrow and relatively few are on it. (Matthew 7:13, 14) The vast majority of mankind today feels the way that the Bible describes at Job 21:14-16: "They say to the true God, 'Turn away from us! And in the knowledge of your ways we have found no delight. What does the Almighty amount to, that we should serve him, and how do we benefit ourselves in that we have come in touch with him?'" But Job says, "The very counsel of wicked ones has kept far from me." Their way of thinking is not based on the truth but is based on Satan's lie that humans would be better off independent from God.

¹⁶ Any person who sincerely wants the truth, and who asks God to help him find it, will certainly be led to it. It does not matter where he lives or under what circumstances. Why not? Because while Jehovah uses his faithful servants on earth to preach the good news of the Kingdom before the end comes, the work of searching out truth lovers is not merely a human work. The heavenly King Jesus Christ and multitudes of his powerful heavenly forces are behind the message that is going forth throughout the world with ever-increasing power. —Matthew 25:31, 32; Revelation 14:6, 7.

¹⁷ An entire system of things is about to come to its finish. If you really want the truth and want to keep living, you need to demonstrate this to God and man.

15. What attitude of this world do God's servants reject?

16. Why can we be certain that anyone who sincerely wants the truth will find it?

17. If a person really wants the truth, what must he do?

Take in accurate knowledge of God's Word. Assemble with his people. "Keep on, then, seeking *first* the kingdom and his righteousness."—Matthew 6:33; John 17:3; Hebrews 10:24, 25.

¹⁸ As you do, you will reap many benefits even now. Those who learn the truth and live by it find enormous freedom mentally and emotionally, since they know why times are so bad and what the future holds. They are also freed from the futile way of life of people in this world who strive after material gain only, but who will lose it all when this system ends. (1 John 2:15-17) There is tremendous relief, too, in being freed from religious error.

¹⁹ Do you really have a love for the truth? Then you will love the God of truth. You will love the wonderful truths he reveals about his Kingdom rule. You

18. What benefits are reaped even now by those who live the truth?

19. What will you do if you have a love for the truth?

will love his visible organization on earth, made up of the people he is now gathering together for survival. (Isaiah 2:2-4) You will let nothing in heaven or on earth stop you from faithfully serving the God of truth who can set you free by his truth.—John 8:31, 32.

Can you answer these questions?

- ☐ How will Jehovah bring true freedom to mankind?
- ☐ What will one world government mean for people?
- ☐ What living proof is there that true peace will be a reality under Kingdom rule?
- ☐ What contrast will there be between work in this system and that in the New Order?
- ☐ Why can we be certain that sincere truth seekers will be led to it?

Christian Love in Action

THE Philippines is a country that is repeatedly struck by typhoons and heavy monsoon rains, which, from time to time, result in heavy flooding. At such times what is truly appreciated is Christian love in action, as the following experience illustrates.

In the southern municipality of Carmen, Davao del Norte, Jehovah's Witnesses in the Mabuhay Congregation were not severely affected by a flood. However, they responded at once to the needs of their Christian brothers in the town proper who were seriously affected. Rice and other foodstuffs were gathered together and taken there. When the needs of the brothers in the affected area had been met, there was so much left over that the remaining supplies were given to the town officials for distribution to other needy individuals.

Such loving concern prompted the town of-

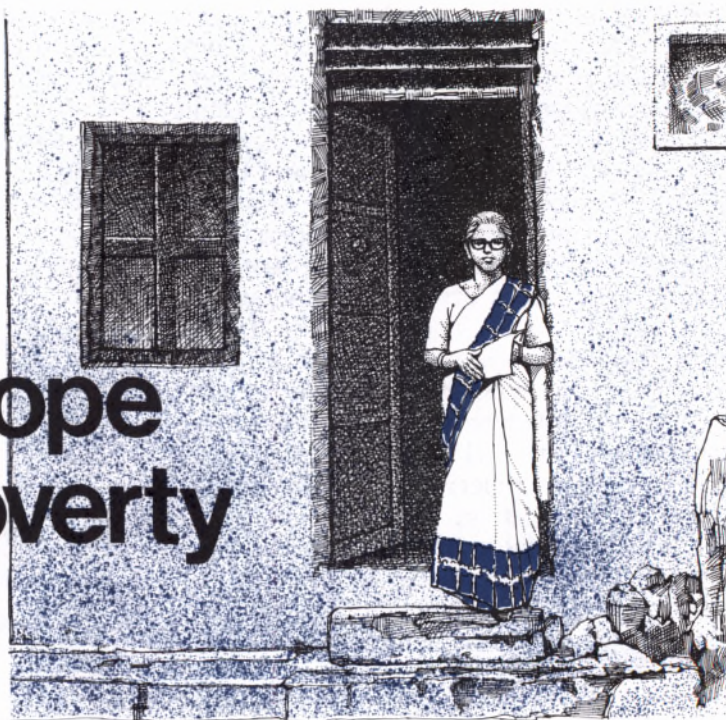
ficials to make a resolution of commendation to Jehovah's Witnesses, which reads, in part, as follows:

"WHEREAS, the Jehovah's Witnesses of Mabuhay, . . . upon knowing the plight of the flood victims of this municipality, . . . immediately extended food assistance in order to alleviate them from their hardship and miseries;

"BE IT RESOLVED, . . . to pass a Resolution expressing the highest degree of thanks and gratitude to the Jehovah's Witnesses of Mabuhay . . . for the food assistance they have extended to the flood victims."

How heartwarming it is to hear of genuine Christians who, in times of need, respond with not "words and talk" but with "true love, which shows itself in action"!—1 John 3:18, *Today's English Version*.

How I Cope With Poverty



ARE you a widow? So am I. Perhaps like me, you were left with children to care for and with no immediate source of income. My husband died in 1973, leaving me with three sons, aged 20, 16 and 14. His death came as a jarring shock and a deep loss in my life. Then, shortly after his death, there was another blow—two of my sons, the oldest and the youngest, decided to leave home. Why? Let me explain.

My husband and I had been Hindus, and we had raised our children to worship as Hindus also. However, some 10 years prior to my husband's death, Jehovah's Witnesses had contacted me through their systematic preaching activity. Their Bible message of salvation by means of God's Kingdom appealed to *me*. After some months of serious Bible discussions and study, I was convinced

that Jehovah is the true God and that Jesus Christ is God's appointed Savior of mankind. (Psalm 83:18; Acts 4:12) So, much against my family's wishes and in the face of my husband's open displeasure, I became a Christian witness of Jehovah and was baptized.

In the Hindu community, Christianity bears an unforgivable stigma, which my husband could not tolerate. He opposed my Christian worship up to the day he died. Both my oldest and youngest sons followed their father's will and pursued the Hindu way of life. They took the death of their father as an opportunity to leave home and thus be rid of the stigma of having a Christian mother. However, I had been able to convince my second son, Jayasimman, of the truthfulness and reasonableness of the Bible and its lifesaving contents. Now I was

left alone with Jayasimman. How would we cope with the poverty in which we found ourselves?

Being Practical and Economical

Recovering from the first stages of deep shock and realizing that my ricewinner was now gone, I had to sit down and take stock of my situation. There were no state grants or government provisions for social security available to me. I was left to fend for myself. In fact, until recently a widow in my community was considered the lowest rung on the social ladder. Her lot was so bad that sometimes a widow preferred to throw herself on her husband's funeral pyre to die.

But we do have a modest three-room home of our own here in Madras, India. So at least we have a roof over our heads. I decided to rent out one of the rooms and soon had a small but regular monthly income of 60 rupees (about \$7, U.S.). I also have a treadle sewing machine; hence, I set about making ladies' garments, particularly petticoats that are worn by ladies underneath their saris. In time I acquired a few regular customers and increased my total monthly income to 144 rupees (about \$16, U.S.).

Even so, we have to live simply. My home has electricity and running water, yet we have almost no furniture. But that poses no difficulty; millions of my fellow countryfolk live without furniture. We are accustomed to sleeping on a thin mattress stretched out on the floor. As long as the floor is clean, we find it comfortable to sit cross-legged on the floor to eat our meals. I use a kerosenewick stove to cook with, and that is no problem either as it is more convenient than using wood on an open fire. What do we eat?

Jayasimman and I have fairly good meals. For breakfast one of our favorite

food items is what we call *idli*. This is a small cake of rice flour blended with ground pulse, cooked in steam and served with chutney, which is a mixture of ground coconut, herbs and spices. Here in India, two or three *idlis*, a banana and a cup of coffee is considered a fairly substantial breakfast.

Our midday and evening meals consist of rice and curry, our staple diet. For the sake of economy I frequently prepare vegetable curries, creating variety by using different types of vegetables from day to day.

At one point, to cope with our financial difficulties, I converted one of the rooms of our home into a small eating house. Arising at 4 a.m. every morning, I prepared *idlis*, chutney and coffee, and provided breakfasts for regular customers. With a little home sewing and home cooking plus income from a room tenant, we were able to earn sufficient for our daily requirements. However, something in addition to being practical and economical has been a great aid to me in coping with poverty.

A Greater Source of Help

It is the help that I have received from God's Word, the Bible. In what way has the Bible helped me to cope with poverty? Well, for one thing, there is the fine example of faithful men and women of Bible times, such as the patriarch Job who, for a time, endured a pauper's life along with humiliations and harassment. Reflecting on such examples has helped to sustain me in my trials.—Job 1:13-19; 2:7-9; 21:7.

Then, too, the faith I have gained from the Bible has greatly encouraged me. Although I live near the poverty line, I am not resentful or bitter. Bible truth fills me with a positive outlook. I have learned that if I put God's Kingdom in-

terests first in my life and am willing to work and earn money in an honest way, Jehovah God will provide for me the necessities of life, even as Jesus Christ assured: "So never be anxious and say, 'What are we to eat?' or, 'What are we to drink?' or, 'What are we to put on?' For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:31-33) How thankful I am that this has been my personal experience!

My faith in such Bible promises has helped me to be content with my lot in life, and I often reflect on the scripture at 1 Timothy 6:8, which says: "So, having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things."

Bible truth has helped me in other ways, too. When I was a Hindu living in a Hindu society, I was accustomed to a life with a great measure of protection and shelter by my husband. Thus I assumed a withdrawn and nervous attitude toward being around other people in public. Now, however, what I have learned from the Bible has motivated me to visit and meet people in their home and tell them about God's purpos-

es, including his promise to establish a righteous New Order in which poverty will be a thing of the past. (Psalm 72:12-14) I attribute this marvelous change in my disposition to the divine wisdom contained in the Bible. As Psalm 19:7 says: "The law of Jehovah is perfect, bringing back the soul. The reminder of Jehovah is trustworthy, making the inexperienced one wise."

In appreciation, I have so adjusted my life that I am now a full-time evangelizer of God's Kingdom message. It means that I no longer have time to operate my small eating house. But I am now renting out two of my rooms for a total monthly income of 120 rupees (about \$13, U.S.), and I continue to do home sewing as time permits. Jayasimman also earns a little money every month from various small jobs, and he willingly contributes 75 percent of his earnings for living expenses. We accommodate our life's needs and expenditures to our total monthly income. This permits me to spend time every day visiting people in their home, comforting those who mourn even as I have been comforted from God's Word, the Bible.—Matthew 5:4; 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.

Oh, there have been times when I have met with financial difficulties—sudden and unexpected expenditures—and wondered just how I was going to manage. Yet I have sensed that Jehovah has somehow provided. There was always a timely occurrence that helped me to cope. Perhaps some money came in the mail from one of my other sons, who have not entirely forgotten me. Or I received an unexpected order for a lady's garment. So, although over the years I have sometimes been in need, with my willingness to work hard and be resourceful in putting to use whatever few assets existed within my reach, I have never been left in the lurch.—*Contributed.*

In Our Next Issue

- **Disease—A Sign of the Last Days?**
- **Drinking Problems—What Can the Elders Do?**
- **Happy Though Persecuted!**
- **"Keep Yourselves Clean"!**

DRINKING



HE WAS a baptized Christian. Upon being questioned by the elders in his congregation, who were concerned about his drinking, he admitted he had had some beers and a few shots of whiskey. "But I was not drunk," he said.

This young man felt that as long as you do not get drunk, it does not matter how much you drink. Do you agree? Sad to say, reports show that such thinking exists among some of God's people. But is it Scriptural? Just what does the Bible say about drinking?

Alcoholic beverages are indeed among the many gifts we have received from our Creator, Jehovah God. Thus, the Bible tells us that God gives wine that "makes the heart of mortal man rejoice"; that wine "makes God and men rejoice"; that it puts the heart in "a merry mood." (Psalm 104:15; Judges 9:13; Esther 1:10) A supply of wine, symbolized by the "vine," is used in the Scriptures to de-

-Do You Share the Bible's View?

note prosperity and security.—Micah 4:4; Zechariah 3:10.

However, a gift can be used or *mis-used*. The Bible contains many warnings regarding the misuse of alcohol.

Immoderate Drinking

What about the view, 'As long as you do not get drunk, it does not matter how much you drink'? Certainly the Bible does condemn drunkenness, telling us that drunkards will not "inherit God's kingdom." (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) But is it only *drunkenness* that we are warned against? What about drinking heavily without actually getting intoxicated?

At 1 Timothy 3:2, 3, we read that an overseer not only should avoid 'drunken brawling' but should also be "*moderate in habits*." That means in all habits. Yet the Greek word translated "moderate in habits" (*ne·pha·li·on*) literally means "*sober, temperate; abstaining from wine, either entirely or at least from its immoderate use*." (Italics ours.) —*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.

In enumerating the qualifications of ministerial servants, or deacons, Paul further says that they should "not [be] giving themselves to a lot of wine ["not drink too much wine," *Today's English Version*; be "moderate in the amount of wine they drink," *The Jerusalem Bible*]."—1 Timothy 3:8.

Yes, to be recommended or to continue serving as an overseer or a ministerial

servant, a Christian must be an example of one who is habitually temperate in the use of alcoholic beverages. Several years ago, in a Latin-American country, a wedding reception lasted until the wee hours of the morning with drinking all night long. That resulted in the removal of the entire body of elders and the ministerial servants of one congregation!

But is moderation required only of overseers and ministerial servants? Not at all, for at Titus 2:2, aged men are counseled to be "*moderate in habits.*" Women in the congregation are given similar counsel to be "serious, not slanderous, *moderate in habits.*" (1 Timothy 3:11) And aged women are told to "be reverent in behavior, not slanderous, neither enslaved to a lot of wine."—Titus 2:3.

Clearly, then, Christians should be careful to avoid not only drunkenness—the end result of overconsumption—but also any immoderate use of alcohol.

What Constitutes Moderate Use?

A set limit cannot be recommended for all people because individual factors, such as general health and body weight, can determine the effect of alcohol on your system. Nevertheless, there are several things you should keep in mind in determining what constitutes moderation.

The first one is—beware of making excuses! It is so easy to conclude that unwelcome counsel applies to others and not to us. But if everyone thought that way the counsel would apply to nobody!

Next, consider how much alcohol your body can safely handle. An average adult (154 lb/70 kg) can metabolize about 13 ml of alcohol per hour (about 30 ml [1 oz] of 80-proof spirits or 100 ml [3.5 oz] of table wine). When this amount is exceeded, the level of alcohol in your blood increases. It usually takes just two ordinary-sized

drinks* within a few minutes for the average adult to reach a blood alcohol level of 0.05 percent, which produces driving impairment in most people.

A third factor to consider is the viewpoint of fellow Christians. At Romans 14:21 we read: "It is well not to eat flesh or to *drink wine* or do anything over which your brother stumbles." So in determining whether your drinking is moderate or not, ask yourself: Do I generally drink more than others do? Have others—family members or Christian brothers or sisters—become concerned about the amount I drink? Do I have the *reputation* of being able to "hold my liquor," implying that I drink a lot? Even if you may say, 'But I have a higher tolerance than others,' do not Paul's words show that we should be concerned about the viewpoint of our brothers? Remember Jesus' words at Luke 17:1, namely: "It is unavoidable that causes for stumbling should come. Nevertheless, woe to the one through whom they come!"

Of course, it should be noted that none of us has the right to impose his conscience on others. We should be careful to avoid becoming *unduly* critical of the amount others drink. As the apostle Paul said: "You have no right to criticize your brother or look down on him. Remember, each of us will stand personally before the Judgment Seat of God."—Romans 14:10, *The Living Bible.*

Another factor to weigh is this: Why do I drink? Is it simply to relax, to quench thirst or to enhance the taste of a meal? Or is it to blot out worry, anxiety, frustration, to give me courage or to help me escape from reality? Regarding the latter, psychotherapist Dr. Stanley Gitlow states: "We live in a society where, when things get tough, you take a drink; if you're uncomfortable, turn

* One drink is about 1½ ounces of 80-proof spirits, 4 ounces of table wine or 12 ounces of beer.

to some chemical magic. No one says, 'Hey, tolerate the stress and learn to cope.'" What should help a Christian to cope with the anxieties of life? "Some chemical magic" or his relationship with God? —Psalm 4:8.

Abstinence at Times?

Yes! For the alcoholic, it is important that he abstain altogether lest the urge toward excesses overpowers him. This calls to mind Jesus' words at Mark 9:43: "If ever your hand makes you stumble, cut it off; it is finer for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go off into Gehenna [signifying destruction]." So, if drinking has caused you problems, why not "cut it off"? After all, "it is finer for you to enter into life"! As one Christian elder, a project director in an alcoholism rehabilitation program, put it: "Total abstinence is not too high a price to pay for life in God's New Order."

Yet abstinence is not just for alcoholics; there are times when all of us do well to abstain. In ancient Israel priests and Levites on duty at the tabernacle or temple were forbidden to drink alcohol in any form, under the penalty of death. (Leviticus 10:8, 9; Ezekiel 44:21) Kings, too, were advised not to drink wine or intoxicating liquor when officiating. Why not? "That one may not drink and forget what is decreed and pervert the cause of any of the sons of affliction." —Proverbs 31:4, 5.

What about today? Well, would you be at ease knowing that the pilot of the plane on which you were traveling had been drinking? Of course not! Lives



All three contain the same amount of alcohol

are involved. Hence, a Christian should be careful about drinking before driving an automobile. But it would be all the more inappropriate for a Christian to indulge in alcoholic beverages just before or while engaging in the holy activities of the field ministry, attending meetings and giving Bible counsel and direction to others. Why inappropriate? Here, eternal life is involved!

So do you share the Bible's view of drinking? Either you do or you do not. Your life is at stake, as well as that of others who might be stumbled by thoughtless drinking habits. More than that, we want our lives to be pleasing to our God, Jehovah. Yes, alcoholic beverages are a gift from God—when used moderately! But if you personally are better off abstaining, then by all means do so. Remember, "it is finer for you to enter into life"!

However, what can congregation elders do to help their fellow Christians who are overreached in the use of alcohol? And what about the alcoholic—what can be done to help him or her? These and other questions will be considered in our next issue.

Insight on the News

A "Limited" God?

Why does God allow so much evil and suffering to exist in the world? According to Rabbi Harold S. Kushner, author of the best-selling book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, the answer is that God, although kind and loving, is "limited." After the death of his young son, Kushner wrote: "I can worship a God who hates suffering but cannot eliminate it more easily than I can worship a God who chooses to make children suffer and die."

Rabbi Kushner's view may seem reasonable when compared to the common view that God is responsible for catastrophes, such as the death of a child. Yet *both* views well illustrate the truthfulness of God's own word when he said: "The thoughts of you people are not my thoughts, nor are my ways your ways." Showing that he is not a "limited" god, He adds: "So my word that goes forth from my mouth will prove to be. It will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it."—Isaiah 55:8-11.

Neither is God responsible for man's woes, for, as Moses acknowledged, "perfect is his activity, . . . righteous and upright is he. . . . The defect is their own." (Deuteronomy 32:4, 5) Yet, shortly, these inherited defects will be eliminated as the time period needed to settle the is-

suues raised by the rebellion in Eden ends and God's purpose to restore a Paradise earth is realized.—Micah 7:18-20; Isaiah 65:17-25.

Would Jesus Recognize It?

"I am convinced that Christianity has to be radically 'born again' if it is to survive as a faith for the future," says Tom Harpur, religious editor for the Toronto *Star* and a former priest. He added: "Much that has been accumulated as extra baggage over the centuries will have to be either radically altered or perhaps scrapped altogether."

As a start, he poses the question as to whether Jesus would "recognize what loudly proclaims itself to be His in the modern world?" He asks: "How much did (does) He have really in common with present church leaders in their full, ecclesiastical regalia and pomp? How close was (is) He to the oh-so-right, slick, TV evangelists? How comfortable would He be today at, say, a service in St. James Anglican Cathedral, or St. Michael's Roman Catholic Cathedral, or The Peoples Church?"

Such questions would not be necessary had the churches, from the beginning, followed the Biblical advice to "make sure of all things; hold fast to what is fine." —1 Thessalonians 5:21.

"Therapeutic" Euthanasia"

The "unprecedented rise in the number of elderly" and the "enormous cost of caring for the aged in developed nations" may cause the upcoming generation to call for "therapeutic" euthanasia, according to Dr. Lachlan Chipman of the Department of Jurisprudence at the University of Sydney, Australia.

As reported in *The Medical Post* of Canada, Dr. Chipman said that "the calculated killing of the elderly was not as absurd as it sounded." Why not? Because, the doctor explained, "a generation which has readily accepted the idea of abortion as an efficient and morally neutral mechanism . . . at the birth end, will readily embrace . . . 'therapeutic' euthanasia as a mechanism for disposing of a surplus population at the death end."

How ironic it would be if those now advocating the killing of the unborn by abortion would themselves be the ones killed by "'therapeutic' euthanasia," should such a measure be adopted in the future! Rather than advocate abortion or "death end" euthanasia, much wiser it is to heed Jesus' advice: "You must not murder, . . . honor your father and your mother," thus laying groundwork even for "everlasting life."—Matthew 19:16-19.

Do You Remember?

Have you found the last several issues of *The Watchtower* to be of practical value? See if the following questions will call to mind some of the points discussed.

□ **What are five lines of evidence you could use to prove that the Bible is from God?**

Internal harmony; scientific accuracy; candor; preservation and prophecy.—12/15, pages 4-7.

□ **What important secret is mentioned in the apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians?**

This is the secret of dependency on God and serving him happily whether you have much or little materially. This brings a very satisfying life now and will contribute to the gaining of everlasting life. (Philippians 4:12, 13)—12/15, page 30.

□ **What today is the greatest issue facing all mankind?**

It is the issue of man-rule or of God-rule by means of His Kingdom in the hands of Christ Jesus. There is no room for neutrality. All are obliged to be either for the Kingdom of God or against it. (Matthew 25:31, 32)—1/1, pages 8, 9.

□ **How can Christians benefit from Paul's letter to Philemon?**

In urging Philemon to accept his slave Onesimus back as a brother, Paul demonstrated his own counsel to show humility, love and concern for others. Christian overseers should likewise be careful to practice what they preach.—1/1, page 26.

□ **Why should a Christian take a serious look at the kind of music he enjoys?**

Much of today's music exalts immorality, rebellion, drugs and, at times, spiritism. Some classical music extols false worship and may

even convey a composer's philosophy. Being exposed to such music can present a real threat to a Christian's morality and personality.—1/15, pages 4-7.

□ **How can imperfect humans overcome the bad habit of obscene speech?**

Avoiding the use of obscene speech begins with learning to control the emotions and actions that lead to it. (Ephesians 4:31) Filling the mind with right thoughts from the Bible builds up right desires of the heart and this, in turn, will be reflected in good speech. (Matthew 12:34)—2/1, page 7.

□ **What valuable lesson does David's experience with Bathsheba and Uriah contain for us today?**

It helps us to understand that imperfect people often do bad things because they entertain wrong desires. We can show that we have learned from this by our avoiding situations, as well as activities and entertainments, that work up "sexual appetite." (Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5)—2/15, pages 8, 9.

□ **Why is modesty a fine ornament for young and old?**

Modesty is the course of wisdom for all to follow. (Proverbs 11:2) It keeps us from presuming too much and from promising more than we can deliver. It will also keep us from arousing in others a spirit of competition or rivalry. Modesty promotes peace of mind and contentment, which are essential to true happiness.—3/1, page 11.

□ **Why is God's name, Jehovah, missing from most modern translations of the Bible?**

Superstition that developed among tradition-bound Jews caused them

to avoid pronouncing God's personal name, Jehovah. This has contributed to worldwide ignorance regarding the divine name. Added to this has been Christendom's tendency to focus attention on the person of Jesus Christ, thus relegating Jehovah to second place in their triune godhead.—3/15, pages 5, 6.

□ **In what different ways is the Greek word *porneia* used in the Bible?**

Sometimes *porneia* is used in a limited sense, as applying to sex relations between unmarried (single) persons. (1 Corinthians 6:9) But it is also used in a broad sense, such as at Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 where it evidently refers to a wide range of unlawful or illicit sex relations outside marriage.—3/15, pages 29-31.

□ **What three principles will help us to have a right view of welfare benefits?**

Rely on Jehovah while accepting from the state those necessary benefits to which we may lawfully be entitled. Avoid the love of money. (Hebrews 13:5) In everything we do, consider the effect on God's name. (1 Corinthians 10:31)—4/1, page 11.

□ **What is the antidote for sin and apostasy?**

In his first letter the apostle John tells us that love is the key. God's love expressed through his Son is the antidote for sin's effects, and this knowledge should make us realize that "we are ourselves under obligation to love one another." (1 John 4:8-11) True love for God and our neighbor will help us to resist all inroads of sin and apostasy.—4/1, page 19.

Questions From Readers

■ Might the Bible's prohibition about blood apply only to blood from a victim killed by man, not to unbled meat of an animal that died of itself or blood from a live animal or human?

Some persons have reasoned that way, pointing to a few Bible verses for seeming support. They have thus held that it would not be wrong to accept a transfusion of blood from a living donor. Such reasoning might sound valid, but close examination of the verses used and of other relevant texts indicates that God expects his people to avoid taking in blood and sustaining their life with blood, whether from a living or a dead creature.

The Israelites were told: "You must not eat any body already dead. To the alien resident who is inside your gates you may give it, and he must eat it; or there may be a selling of it to a foreigner, because you are a holy people to Jehovah your God." (Deuteronomy 14:21) Though it was unbled, they could sell the carcass to an alien resident. In *seeming* conflict, Leviticus 17:10 says: "As for any man of the house of Israel or some alien resident who is residing as an alien in their midst who eats any sort of blood, I shall certainly set my face against the soul that is eating the blood, and I shall indeed cut him off from among his people." Why the difference between these verses?

In presenting their view, some have asserted that Deuteronomy 14:21 permitted the alien to eat unbled meat if it was from an animal that was not killed by man, for then man did not have to give its blood (representing life) back to

God. Leviticus 17:15 might seem to support this view; it says that the native or alien who ate a "body already dead or something torn by a wild beast" was simply to "wash . . . and be unclean until the evening." So it could appear that no substantial guilt came from eating blood if the victim was not killed by man. Thus some claim that it would not be wrong to take blood from a *living* creature, using it for food or for transfusions.

However, is the basic difference between Deuteronomy 14:21 and Leviticus 17:10, 15 a matter of how the animal died? The Scriptural answer must be, No.

The Israelites knew that *they* absolutely could not eat unbled meat from an animal that died of itself or was killed by a wild beast. While still at Mount Sinai they had been told to dispose of such carcasses. (Exodus 22:31) Deuteronomy 14:21 is in harmony, directing Israelites in the Promised Land to get rid of such unbled carcasses but allowing them to sell such to aliens.

Now let us carefully examine Leviticus 17:10. It says that no "man of the house of Israel or some alien resident" should eat blood. Was that because the animal had been killed by a human and so the blood had to be returned to God? To claim such is to read into the verse more than it says. Further, if guilt resulted only if blood was from a creature killed by man, then Deuteronomy

14:21 and Exodus 22:31 would not have forbidden *Israelites* to eat unbled flesh from animals that were not killed by men. Yet the Israelites clearly knew they could not eat such meat. Ezekiel stated: "My soul is not a defiled one; neither a body already dead nor a torn animal have I eaten from my youth up."—Ezekiel 4:14; compare 44:31.

Why, then, does Deuteronomy 14:21 say that the "alien resident" could be sold unbled meat, but Leviticus 17:10 forbids the "alien resident" to eat blood? Both God's people and Bible commentators have recognized that the distinction must have been the religious standing of the alien involved. *Aid to Bible Understanding* (page 51) points out that sometimes the term "alien resident" meant a person among the Israelites who was not a full proselyte. It appears that this sort of person is meant at Deuteronomy 14:21, a man who was not trying to keep all of God's laws and who might have his own uses for a carcass considered unclean by Israelites and proselytes. Jewish scholars, too, have offered this explanation.*

* As one example, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, edited by Dr. J. Hertz, observes: "According to Lev. XVII, 15, touching or eating the flesh of a *nevelah* is defiling both to the Israelite and the 'stranger [or alien resident]'. In Lev[iticus] the 'stranger' meant the non-Israelite who had become a proselyte in the full sense of the word, a *ger tzedek*. Here [in Deuteronomy 14:21] the 'stranger that is within thy gates' refers to the time when Israel would be settled in their Land and would have in their midst not only (continued on page 31)

So, no worshiper of God could eat blood, whether from (or in the flesh of) an animal that had died of itself or from one that was killed by man. Why, then, does Leviticus 17:15 say that eating unbled flesh from such an animal that died of itself or was killed by a beast merely produced uncleanness?

We can find a clue at Leviticus 5:2, which says: "When a soul touches some unclean thing, whether the dead body of an unclean wild beast . . . , *although it has been hidden from him*, still he is unclean and has become guilty." Yes, God acknowledged that an Israelite might err inadvertently. Hence, Leviticus 17:15 can be understood as providing for such an error. For example, if an Israelite ate meat served him and then learned that it was unbled, he was guilty of sin. But because it was inadvertent he could take steps to become clean. This, however, is noteworthy: If he would not take those steps, "he must then answer for his error."—Leviticus 17:16.*

(continued from page 30) proselytes, but also men who while they had abandoned idolatry did not completely take upon themselves the life and religious practices of the Israelite. The Rabbis called this class of resident aliens *ger toshav*; and [Deuteronomy 14:21] refers to that class, who were neither Israelites by birth or conversion, nor 'foreigners'." In contrast, this work explains that the 'stranger' (alien) of Leviticus 17:15 was "a full proselyte, . . . otherwise, he was not debarred from eating it."

* We find an instructive parallel in another part of the Law involving blood: A man who unwittingly had sexual relations with his wife as she began to menstruate was unclean, but he could take steps to be forgiven. However, the Israelite who deliberately disregarded his wife's menstrual blood was cut off.—Leviticus 15:19-24; 20:18.

Thus eating unbled flesh was not a trivial matter; it could even result in death. No true worshiper (Israelite or full proselyte alien) could voluntarily eat unbled flesh, no matter if it was from an animal that died of itself, was killed by another animal or was killed by a human. (Numbers 15:30) The apostolic council confirmed this. Writing to Christians making up the spiritual "Israel of God" it forbade eating that which was strangled, whether the unbled meat was from an animal that died from accidental strangulation or it was from one strangled by a man.—Galatians 6:16; Acts 21:25.

That council also directed God's servants to 'abstain from blood.' If those anointed Christians could not consume blood in meat from a strangled creature, they certainly could not take in blood from a living creature. It is not hard to see that neither the ancient Israelites nor obedient Christians would imitate the African tribesmen who shoot arrows into the jugular vein of live cattle to obtain blood that they mix with milk and drink. Similarly, God's servants could not accept the medical practice whereby units of human blood are withdrawn and given as transfusions intended to extend life. Such practices violate God's condemnation of anyone "who eats any sort of blood" and the command that Christians 'abstain from blood.'—Acts 15:28, 29; Leviticus 17:10.

Despite pressures to water down God's requirements, true Christians know that life is a gift from Jehovah God and must be used as *he* directs. They obey God whether it seems physically practical now or not. For example, Acts 15:28, 29 commands Christians to abstain from idolatry. Thus a true worshiper threatened with death if he

refused to share in idolatry would not argue that since "an idol is nothing," he should not lose his present life over just a symbol. (1 Corinthians 8:4) The three faithful Hebrews set the proper example of obedience, as did the early Christians who accepted death in the arena rather than put incense on an altar.—Daniel 3:1-18.

Similarly, if a problem arose concerning blood, as when an accident or an operation causes extreme blood loss, the Christian cannot compromise his integrity. He obeys his Life-Giver with full assurance that if, despite the best alternative medical treatment, his present life should be lost, his eternal life is not endangered. Jesus told his followers: "Do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be in fear of him that can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna."—Matthew 10:28.

Of course, recent medical evidence shows that blood transfusions usually are not essential to save a person, for experienced doctors testify that common alternatives can do as well in most cases. It might even be reasoned that the number of persons who could have been kept alive only by blood transfusion is probably smaller than that of those who have died from the damage of transfusions. Whatever is the case, Christians are determined to obey God and respect his view of blood.

Consequently, true worshipers today will not eat unbled meat, whether from an animal that some man killed or from a creature that died in another way. Nor will they sustain their lives by taking in blood from living creatures, animal or human. They recognize Jehovah as their Life-Giver and are determined to obey him in all respects.

