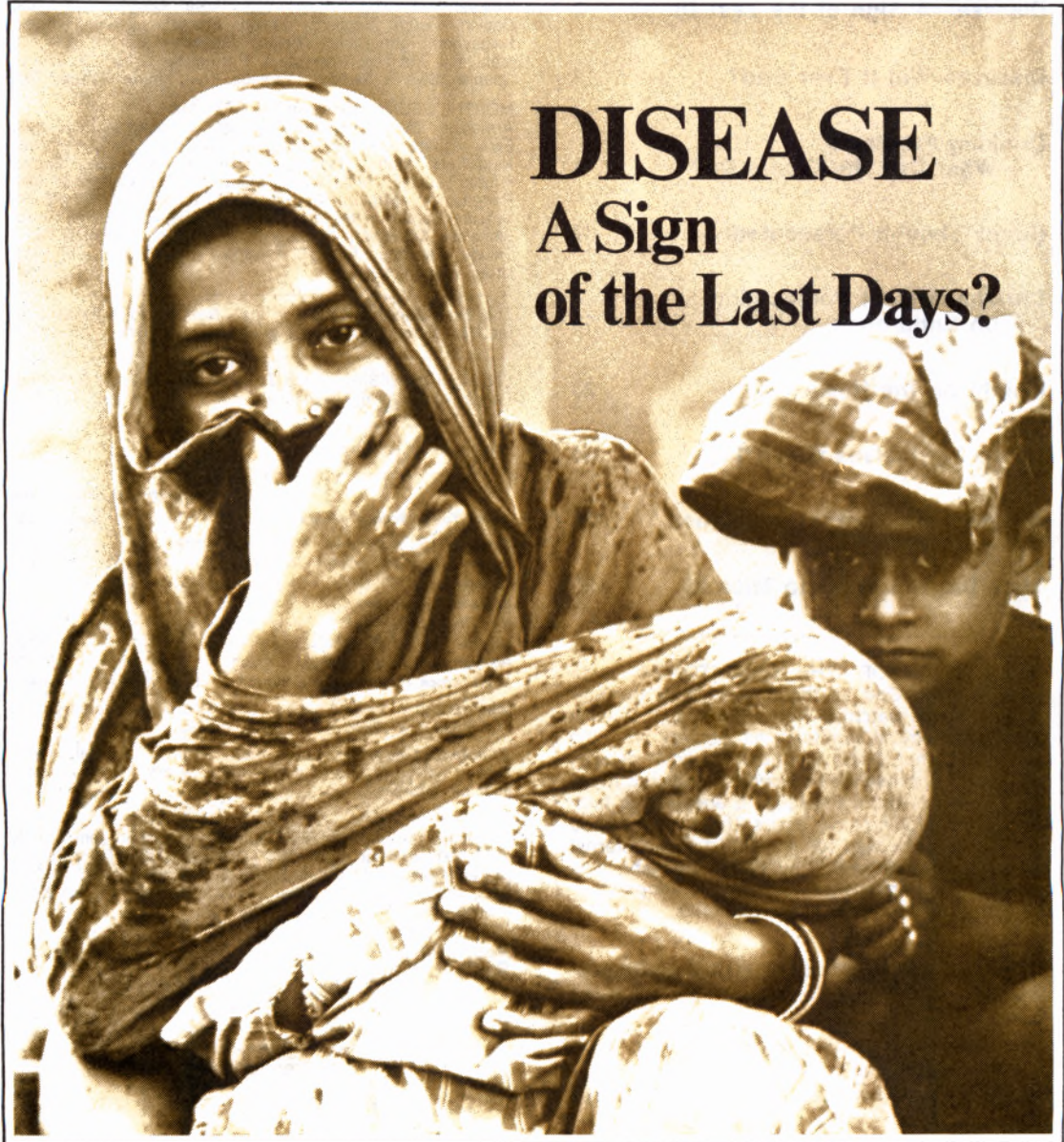


May 1, 1983

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



DISEASE
A Sign
of the Last Days?

The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

May 1, 1983
Vol. 104, No. 9

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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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May 29: Happy Though Persecuted! Page 12. Songs to Be Used: 21, 76.
June 5: Christians Meet Persecution With Endurance. Page 18. Songs to Be Used: 44, 87.
June 12: "Keep Yourselves Clean" Page 24. Songs to Be Used: 71, 70.

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DISEASE

A Sign of the Last Days?

the fight against sickness and disease?

Interestingly, over 1,900 years ago, Jesus Christ indicated that the prevalence of sickness and disease would be part of a "sign" identifying "the last days,"

SCIENTISTS are making rapid progress in decoding human genes. Some believe that they are on the verge of deciphering the link between your susceptibility to diseases and your genetic makeup. It is claimed that in the near future it will be possible to cure certain diseases by altering your genes.

"Once you have the capability of putting genes in to cure diseases, there is also the possibility of getting genes in for cosmetic reasons," claims Dr. W. French Anderson of the National Institutes of Health. He adds: "It will be possible to start playing games with our humanness." A bold claim, to say the least. Does it suggest that science is winning

a time period he called "the conclusion of the system of things." Jesus said: "There will be . . . in one place after another pestilences." These are "raging, epidemic diseases," according to Bible scholar Albert Barnes.—Matthew 24:3-7; 2 Timothy 3:1; Luke 21:10, 11.

'But there has always been pestilence, or disease,' you may say. That is true. Yet, there are two noteworthy things about Jesus' prediction.

First, Jesus did not say that sickness or disease *by itself* would constitute the "sign." Rather, he gave a *composite* sign, listing many things. Read for yourself his detailed prophecy as outlined in Matthew 24 and 25, Mark 13 and Luke 21.

So the "sign" might be compared to a jigsaw puzzle. One piece does not make up the complete picture. Likewise, one happening does not constitute the "sign." Instead, the "sign" would be seen only when all the things Jesus foretold would affect one generation.—Matthew 24:32-34.

Secondly, it would seem to be most inconsistent for Jesus' words about pestilence, or disease, to be coming true

today. Why? Because scientific advancement has never been greater. Medical facilities have never been finer. Medical knowledge has never been more widespread.

So, what do the facts show? Are Jesus' words really coming true? It is important that we know, for the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy would indicate that we are living in the most critical period of human history.

DISEASE

Will It Ever End?

IF YOU had developed bone cancer about 10 years ago, your prospects for the future would have been grim indeed. According to the National Cancer Institute, 10 years ago 80 percent of young adults with bone cancer died within 3 years. Today, however, thanks to the advances of science, it is claimed that 90 percent of these patients are free of the disease three years after diagnosis.

Similar progress has been made in the treatment of other diseases. For example, in 1979 a global commission appoint-



ed by the World Health Organization declared that smallpox had been eradicated worldwide. As for tuberculosis, although some 3 million people still die from it each year, *World Health* magazine claims: "We already possess all the necessary weapons to wipe out tuberculosis. All we need to defeat the disease, now and forever, are the financial resources and the political will."

There is no denying that science has made great strides in the fight against disease. Yet this fact remains: Science

is far from conquering sickness and disease. For example, heart disease remains the leading cause of premature death in industrialized countries. Additionally, please consider the accompanying box "Is Science Ending Disease?" It takes note of other diseases that continue to baffle medical science.

Frustratingly, the list of deadly diseases seems to expand, old ones persisting and new ones being added. Clearly, while science has made much progress and has given us much for which to be grateful, it is by no means eliminating sickness and disease. Is there no hope for the future?

Basis for Hope

There is every reason for true optimism that sickness and disease will come to an end. But, no, not by the dedicated work of scientists. Rather, this will come from a much higher source.

To conquer disease permanently, two very important factors are needed: (1) The capability and (2) the will. One without the other will not do. Recall that *World Health* magazine claimed that man is *capable* of wiping out tuberculosis forever, but he lacks "the financial resources and the political will."

There is only one personage in the universe who ultimately has both the capability and the will to wipe out *all* diseases forever—God himself! Indeed, when Jesus Christ, who perfectly mirrored his Father's qualities, was on earth he marvelously demonstrated how God-given power can conquer disease and infirmity.—John 14:9.

There is no question that Jesus Christ, by means of the "power of God," was *capable* of conquering disease. (Luke 9: 43) In a very real sense Jesus restored the health of many sick, infirm and crippled people—the lame, the maimed and the blind (Matthew 15:30, 31), the epileptic,

the paralytic (Matthew 4:24), the leprous (Luke 17:12-14), a hemorrhaging woman (Mark 5:25-29), one with a withered hand (Mark 3:3-5), a man with dropsy (Luke 14:2-4) and people sick with "various diseases." (Luke 4:40) Why, there are even three verified cases of Jesus' raising the dead! (Luke 7:11-15; 8:49-56; John 11: 38-44) In most instances, the healing was instantaneous, with no period of convalescence or rehabilitation required.

Of course, that Jesus Christ was *willing* to conquer disease is obvious from the many cures that he performed. However, in a very touching way the Bible reveals Jesus' heartfelt desire to restore health to others.

After hearing about the death of John the Baptizer, Jesus went by boat to an isolated place in order to be alone. But apparently a considerable crowd of people saw the boat set sail and figured out where it was going. They were waiting for Jesus when he arrived. How did Jesus react? Was he resentful? Annoyed? After all, was he not entitled to rest and quiet? Far from his finding them a nuisance, however, the account explains:

"Now when he came forth he saw a great crowd; and he *felt pity* for them, and he cured their sick ones." (Matthew 14:13, 14) One Bible scholar says of the Greek word here translated "felt pity":

In Our Next Issue

- **Earthquakes—A Sign of "the End"?**
- **What Will God's Kingdom Do?**
- **The Ride of the Four Horsemen—A Sign**

Jesus was both
able and willing
to conquer disease



“[It is] the strongest word for compassionate pity in the Greek language. It is formed from the word *splagchna*, which means *the bowels*, and it describes the pity and the compassion which move a man to the very deepest depths of his being.” Yes, Jesus could not bear to see the suffering of others without easing the pain.—Luke 5:12-14.

There is no question about it. Empowered by God, Jesus Christ was both capable and willing to conquer disease. And he still is! (Hebrews 13:8) The healings he performed while on earth foreshadowed the healing blessings that will be extended to mankind earth wide under the rule of God’s Kingdom. ‘But when will this come?’ you ask.

The End of Disease at Hand!

As has been shown many times in *The Watchtower*, the composite “sign,” of which ‘pestilence,’ or disease, is a part, has been unmistakably evident since 1914. When you examine the evidence, there is no doubt that Jesus’ words have come true. So, much of the sickness and disease that we see today is actually in

fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy at Matthew 24:3-7 and Luke 21:10, 11. That means we are living at “the conclusion of the system of things”!

Soon God’s Kingdom will remove this present wicked system and replace it with a righteous New Order. (2 Peter 3:13) Then, under Kingdom rule, no longer will pestilence, or disease, rob us of health and life. How thankful we can be that our loving heavenly Father has both the capability and the will to wipe out sickness and disease completely, forever!—Revelation 21:3, 4.

Would you like to find out more about these promised blessings of God and what you must do to benefit from them? Jehovah’s Witnesses will gladly assist you. Why not get in touch with them locally or write to the publishers of this magazine?

Is Science Ending Disease?

Cancer: It is estimated that this year alone there will be some 835,000 new cases of cancer in the United States. At the same time, some 430,000 people will die of it. And the World Health Organization claims that of the estimated 37 million cases of cancer worldwide more than half are in the developing world.

Chagas' Disease: This is a parasitic infection that afflicts some 10 million people in South and Central America. In the early stages parasites invade the body's tissues, particularly the heart. The disease is chronic and can be fatal, death often resulting from cardiac insufficiency. There is no known cure for Chagas' disease.

Influenza: The Spanish influenza was no doubt the worst flu pandemic of all, claiming an estimated 20 million lives in 1918 and 1919. Despite the availability of vaccines, major new strains of the flu virus have cropped up since then. The flu virus has the uncanny ability to change its molecular structure every so often, causing new epidemics. Thus, the Asian flu killed some 57,000 people worldwide in 1957. The Hong Kong flu killed 33,000 in 1968 and 1969. In the past 20 years, some 500,000 Americans have been killed by the flu.

River Blindness: River blindness, also called onchocerciasis, is a chronic disease spread by the bite of black flies. The invasion of the infection into the human body results in the forming of scar tissue in the skin and eyes. Although it can cause blindness, it usually is not fatal. In all, some 40 million people in Africa, Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela, Colombia and Brazil have onchocerciasis. Researchers are still seeking safer therapies for river blindness.

Lupus: S.L.E. (systemic lupus erythematosus), or lupus for short, is a sometimes fatal disease of the immune system, affecting 500,000 to a million Americans. In lupus the body's connective tissues, which hold together and support cells, are attacked by the body's own immune system. The prognosis for most patients has improved in recent

years, with 80 to 95 percent of patients living at least 10 years after diagnosis. As yet, however, there is no known cure for lupus.

Snail Fever: Already afflicting an estimated 200 million people in 71 countries, snail fever (schistosomiasis) is spreading rapidly. Humans become infected by bathing or swimming in water in which there are snails containing the schistosomiasis parasite. Once inside a human host, the parasite's eggs can do serious damage to the bladder and liver, often proving fatal. The control of snail fever remains difficult (especially in poorer countries), for this depends largely on the proper disposal of wastes.

Malaria: Caused by the bite of female *Anopheles* mosquitoes, malaria is an ancient affliction. Once eradicated in countries like India and Sri Lanka, in recent years malaria has made a devastating comeback! Each year, in Africa, it kills a million children under the age of five. Additionally, more than 150 million people worldwide now suffer the chills, fever and other symptoms of malaria. Researchers are still searching for a vaccine against it.

Venereal Diseases: The availability of penicillin gave false confidence to a permissive society. Now a penicillin-resistant form of gonorrhea has been spreading.

A newcomer is genital herpes, said to affect some 20 million people in the United States alone. It is caused by a virus and is usually transmitted by sexual contact. Similarly, the new disease AIDS is spreading rapidly among homosexuals and others. Experts consider it one of the most deadly epidemics. There are no known cures for genital herpes and AIDS.

Multiple Sclerosis: A disease of the central nervous system—the brain and spinal cord—multiple sclerosis afflicts some 500,000 people in the United States alone. It usually strikes its victims during their 20's and 30's. The long list of symptoms includes numbness, loss of coordination, blurred vision, slurred speech and loss of bladder or bowel control. While much research is going on, no cure has been found.

Drinking Problems

—What Can the Elders Do?

SHE tried everything imaginable to cut down on her drinking. Nothing seemed to work. When she met with the appointed elders in the congregation, they were very concerned and gave her Scriptural counsel on moderation. But their efforts proved disappointing. Her problem went deeper. She was an alcoholic.

This raises a very important question: What *can* elders do to help their spiritual brothers and sisters who are having a problem with drinking?

Clearly, the Scriptures do not in any way condone drunkenness. In particular do Christian overseers have the responsibility to see to it that confirmed, unrepentant drunkards are not tolerated in the Christian congregation; they are to be disfellowshipped. (1 Corinthians 5:11-13; Galatians 5:19-21) But elders should first of all be desirous of helping repentant ones who have been overreached in the use of alcohol. So what should an elder do if he is approached by a brother or a sister who has got drunk and is now seeking help?

First, it should be noted that there is a difference between being unwittingly overtaken by drinking too much on one occasion and being a drunkard—making it a *practice* to become intoxicated. Consider the example of Noah, who on one occasion drank too much wine and got drunk. (Genesis 9:20, 21) Certainly, Noah

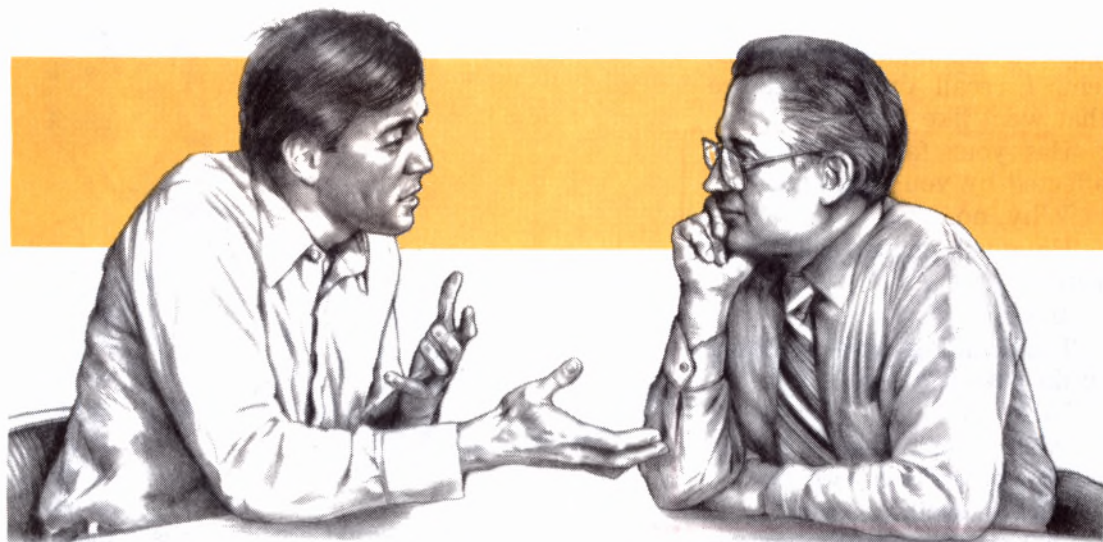
was not a confirmed drunkard. There is no other indication in the Scriptures that he ever again got intoxicated.—Compare Hebrews 11:7.

So the elder who is approached would do well to determine: Was it an *isolated* occurrence? Is the individual determined to exercise care so that it does not happen again? Has he openly acknowledged the wrong and sought God's forgiveness? Is the incident such that no great reproach has resulted? If these and other factors are favorable, then it may suffice for the elder, "in a spirit of mildness," to offer loving counsel on moderation, thus strengthening the person in his resolve not to repeat the wrong.—Galatians 6:1.

But what if there had been *repeated* instances of drunkenness, or notoriety had resulted? In such cases, the matter should be handled by a judicial committee. However, to aid the person it can be helpful for the elders to know if the problem is

Alcoholism

What difference does it make? A big difference! As the opening experience illustrates, if the person is an alcoholic, there may be little point in counseling him to drink moderately. Why? Because most authorities in the field of alcoholism recommend total abstinence for alcoholics, since, once they start drinking, they usually cannot control the amount they drink.



The alcoholic may need an understanding shoulder to lean on, a listening ear

In addition, many alcoholics will deny their problem. Does that mean that they are unrepentant, confirmed drunkards? Not necessarily. Keep in mind that alcoholics are usually blinded to the reality of their situation. They are affected physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, and these factors must be taken into consideration. Thus, it is by no means easy to get them to see that they have a drinking problem.

In handling such cases, there are various questions that elders do well to consider.

How can you know if alcoholism is the problem? You may wish to refer to the article "Alcoholism—The Facts, The Myths" in *Awake!* of July 8, 1982. It outlines the symptoms of alcoholism.

Be alert. At times alcoholism may be an underlying problem. For example, in one congregation a sister approached the elders for help in dealing with severe depression. But, despite their well-meaning efforts to help her, the depression per-

sisted. However, the elders later learned that she had a drinking problem. Further efforts to help her revealed that she was an alcoholic. After accepting help for her alcoholism, the sister recovered very well.

How can you help the alcoholic to see that he has a drinking problem? Avoid opinions and generalizations such as, "We think you are drinking too much." Such comments may tend to raise the alcoholic's defenses still higher. Instead, perhaps the person can be confronted with specific and descriptive details of his drinking and its consequences. It is important that the tone reflect deep concern: "We are very concerned about what is happening to you, and here are the facts that will explain our concern."

One elder, who has successfully dealt with his own alcoholism, recommends the following: "I have found it helpful to determine what problems the person may be having, perhaps at home or at work. Then, using leading questions, I

help him to see that alcohol may be the underlying problem. I recall one experience that went like this:

'Has your family life been affected by your drinking?'

'Why, no.'

'Have you argued with your wife?'

'Yes.'

'Did drinking have anything to do with it?'

'No.'

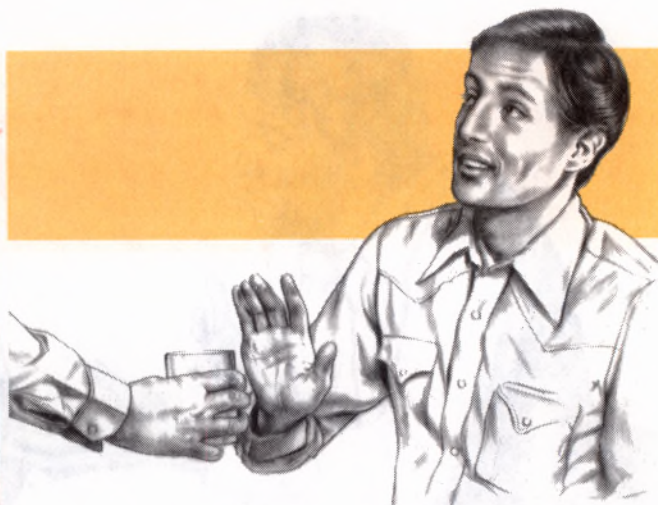
'Well, were you drinking when you argued with her?'

'Uh . . . well, . . . yes.'

"After discussing various problems, I was able to help him to see that on nearly every occasion his problems coincided with a drinking episode."

What about professional help? The alcoholic may require such help to recover. Of course, the elders would not want to recommend a particular form of treatment—that is up to the person involved. Nor would they necessarily look upon his refusal to seek professional help in itself as an indication of a lack of repentance. But at the same time, firmness is necessary. The person must clearly understand that what primarily is at stake is his remaining in Jehovah's favor as an approved member of the Christian congregation.

What about disfellowshipping? It boils down to this: What is the person's attitude toward drinking? Does he, despite your patient but firm efforts to break through to reality, seem intent on continuing his drinking? In this connection, it is of interest to note what the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* advises employers of alcoholics:



For the alcoholic, total abstinence is a must

"If you are sure your man does not want to stop, he may as well be discharged . . . Firing such an individual may prove a blessing to him. It may be just the jolt he needs." Similarly, if the individual's attitude requires that he be disfellowshipped to keep the congregation clean, this may at the same time be just the "jolt" he needs.

What if you are convinced that he really does want to stop? If the individual agrees to accept help, it may take time to see if he will follow through. Professional treatment may be of assistance. Of course, he should understand that it is not the sole answer to the problem.

He will usually need ongoing help, and especially in a spiritual way. In the past he may have handled depression, anger, problems at work, and so forth, by resorting to alcohol. So now he may require your help to face reality with a different way of thinking. Additionally, there may be lingering negative feelings, such as guilt or a lack of confidence. He may feel unworthy of approaching Jehovah in prayer and may need your help to

regain a trusting relationship with God. Your prayers with him and for him, coupled with the comforting reminders from God's Word, can ease his fears and quiet his doubts.*—James 5:14-16.

A person who breaks a leg may need a support for a while. So, too, the one struggling to stop drinking may need an understanding shoulder to lean on, a listening ear. Are you willing to help?

"Both the elders and lots of brothers visited me," explained one brother who had struggled to stop drinking. "Words just cannot express how much I appreciated all this love and understanding. Wonderfully, I was now able to pray to Jehovah again. What a relief!"

"The brothers helped me in more ways than one," said another Witness who was aided in dealing with his alcoholism. "They even suggested that I sit next to them at meetings, since I was afraid to come. One brother really helped me. He would come to see me when I needed it most—no matter what his schedule was. I am very thankful for his love and patience."

In some cases, it can be helpful if the one struggling to stop drinking is able to talk to a brother who has himself successfully dealt with alcoholism. Why? Because such a person can talk understandingly, knowing full well the adjustments an alcoholic must make. But more than that, it shows the one struggling to stop that it is possible to quit. He sees before him an example. Reasonably, alcoholics would rather *see* a sermon than *hear* one.

What if there is a relapse? This could happen. Once again, the question is: What

* Please see the article "An Educated Tongue—To Encourage the Weary," in the June 1, 1982, *Watchtower*. It shows how elders can help those who are depressed due to negative feelings and attitudes.

is the alcoholic's attitude? Are you satisfied that he really wants to get over his drinking problem? Does he see the need to double his efforts if he expects to progress in recovery? If so, he will need understanding help.

So an individual need not be disfellowshipped just because he is an alcoholic. If he truly wants to stop, he should be given the opportunity. But what if by his actions he shows that he really does not want to stop? What if there have been repeated instances of drunkenness, and all reasonable assistance has not helped him? Then, according to Paul's words at 1 Corinthians 5:11-13, he should be disfellowshipped.

To help those who are having a problem with alcohol takes considerable discernment, patience and firmness. It is not just a matter of telling a brother or a sister, "Pull yourself together," or, "If you love Jehovah you will stop drinking."

Rather, try to understand the nature of alcoholism, what it is and what it does to people. Keep in mind that you may have to break down the wall of denial that the alcoholic has built up around himself. You must get him to see that he has a drinking problem and that he needs help. He will need your ongoing help and support. But are not the results well worth the effort involved?

As one sister, who was helped to deal with her own alcoholism, put it: "The elders were so loving and understanding that I am thanking Jehovah every day that he sent them. My head is clear now. I can talk to Jehovah with a clear conscience. I am also attending all the meetings and truly enjoying them." Yes, how grateful such persons are for overseers who give of themselves, caring for the flock willingly, out of "a real desire to serve"!—1 Peter 5:1, 2, *Today's English Version*.

Happy Though Persecuted!

“COVERED with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.” So wrote the Roman historian Tacitus. (*The Annals*, Book XV, paragraph 44) And who were the victims? Christians—disciples of Jesus Christ. Rumor had it that Emperor Nero was responsible for the burning of Rome (in 64 C.E.), and he sought to fasten the guilt on Jesus’ followers. Thus was launched the first of various persecutions of Christians during the heyday of ancient Rome.

² How were those early Christians able to endure such brutal persecution? Indeed, how have past and present witnesses of Jehovah found it possible to be joyful while undergoing harassment or injury deliberately inflicted upon them with a view to stamping out their religious faith and belief? (2 Thessalonians 1:3-5) Yes, Jesus Christ did say: “Happy are those who have been persecuted for righteousness’ sake, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them.” (Matthew 5:10) However, to be happy though persecuted, Jehovah’s Witnesses must know (1) the Devil’s aim in bringing persecution upon them; (2) why Je-

hovah permits this tribulation; (3) why God’s servants can be happy though persecuted; (4) what can be done to prepare for persecution; and (5) how it can be met with endurance.

The Devil’s Aim

³ The Roman rulers had nothing to fear from genuine peace-loving Christians. Those witnesses of Jehovah were in relative subjection to governmental “superior authorities” and ‘rendered Caesar’s things to Caesar, but God’s things to God.’ (Romans 13:1-7; Matthew 22:21) Little did Rome’s emperors know that someone behind the scenes had continually been stirring up hatred against witnesses of Jehovah, doing so all the way back to “righteous Abel.” (Matthew 23:33-36; Hebrews 11:4, 32-40; 12:1) That evil fomentor of such persecution to this very day is none other than Satan the Devil. As an adversary of God, and of Jehovah’s people, he “walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone.”—1 Peter 5:8.

⁴ Jesus repeatedly told his disciples that they would be persecuted. For instance, he said: “A slave is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me [which they certainly did], they will persecute you also.” (John 15:20; 16:2; Matthew 10:22, 23) Moreover, Christ left no doubt about the chief instigator of this

1. Roman Emperor Nero launched what persecution?

2. (a) What did Jesus Christ say about those “persecuted for righteousness’ sake”? (b) To be happy though persecuted, Jehovah’s Witnesses must know what?

3, 4. (a) Who really is behind the persecution experienced by witnesses of Jehovah? (b) How did Jesus identify the chief instigator of this persecution?

"Happy are those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them."

—MATTHEW 5:10.



persecution when saying to one of the "seven congregations": "Look! *The Devil* will keep on throwing some of you into prison that you may be fully put to the test." (Revelation 1:1, 4; 2:10) Yet, what is the Devil's aim in persecuting witnesses of Jehovah?

⁵ Satan's aim in bringing pressure and persecution upon servants of Jehovah is to force them to compromise their faith. He wants to destroy the precious relationship they have with their heavenly Father. Why, at the very inception of sin, Jehovah God foretold enmity between the "serpent" and God's symbolic "woman," and between their respective 'seeds'! (Genesis 3:14, 15) Jesus unquestionably identified the serpent as Satan and told His persecutors that they were 'from their father the Devil,' hence, being of the Adversary's "seed." (John 8:31-59) In these "last days" the Devil's time is short and his anger is great in-

deed. (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Revelation 12:7-17) So enmity between the 'seeds' goes on, and everyone on earth must line up eventually with either the godly seed or the devilish seed. (Compare 1 John 3:10.) Hence, if an individual is faithfully serving Jehovah God, he is or will be the object of persecution. Satan the Devil will see to that.—2 Timothy 3:12.

⁶ Satan has raised an issue of universal sovereignty, and he has called into question the integrity of humans when they are put under test. For instance, integrity to God was at issue when Satan instigated persecution against the man Job, whose wife and three "comforters" wittingly or unwittingly served the Devil's purpose. (Job 1:8-2:9; 16:2; 19:22, 28) As the case of Job makes clear, the Devil challenged Jehovah, claiming that no human would remain faithful to God if Satan were allowed to test that one. Therefore, the Devil persecutes witness-

5. What is the Devil's aim in bringing persecution upon Jehovah's servants?

6. Satan has raised what great issue and has called what into question as far as humans are concerned?

es of Jehovah to break their integrity and to prove his challenge true.

⁷ Satan knows that one "act of worship" to him is enough to compromise a Christian's faith and lend support to the Devil's challenge that humans would not remain faithful to God under test or persecution. When the Devil showed Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world and their glory," what did that chief persecutor say? "All these things I will give you if you fall down and do *an act of worship* to me." But Jesus' staunch refusal supported true worship, upheld Jehovah's side of the issue of universal sovereignty and proved the Devil a liar.—Matthew 4:8-11.

⁸ How appropriate, then, that faithful early Christians refused to render a single "act of worship" that would have supported Satan's side of the great issue! Loyal followers of Christ refused to burn incense in honor of the Roman emperor, even though this cost them their lives. Regarding this, Daniel P. Mannix wrote: "Very few of the Christians recanted, although an altar with a fire burning on it was generally kept in the arena for their convenience. All a prisoner had to do was scatter a pinch of incense on the flame and he was given a Certificate of Sacrifice and turned free. It was also carefully explained to him that he was not worshipping the emperor; merely acknowledging the divine character of the emperor as head of the Roman state. Still, almost no Christians availed themselves of the chance to escape." (*Those About to Die*, page 137) Just one such "act of worship" would have been enough to satisfy Satan.

7. What is enough to compromise a Christian's faith, but how did Jesus react when thus tempted?
8, 9. (a) How did early Christians show that they would not render one "act of worship" to Satan? (b) In what way have some 20th-century Christians been tested similarly, and what position have they taken?

⁹ Some 20th-century Christians have been tested similarly. From the time of arrest and repeatedly throughout the internment of Jehovah's Witnesses in Nazi concentration camps, efforts were made to force them to renounce Jehovah and refuse to have any further contact with his people. To that end the Nazis prepared a declaration that was held out to the Witnesses to sign in return for their freedom. All that was required was one's signature. Yet, few Witnesses signed.

¹⁰ Being aware of Satan's purpose in causing witnesses of Jehovah to be persecuted, may we never yield to any devilish temptation to sidestep an issue to avoid trouble. Let us not even entertain the mistaken idea that a seemingly minor compromise would quickly free us for the preaching work. Any compromising as regards our integrity can mean our total downfall. (Compare Matthew 13:21; Galatians 6:12.) When a compromise constitutes "an act of worship," no longer are we fit to represent Jehovah's Kingdom interests. We can be sure that a single act breaking our integrity would bring glee to the Devil, and surely we do not want to make him happy. Rather, we seek to make Jehovah's heart rejoice by integrity keeping that gives him a reply to the Great Taunter.—Proverbs 27:11.

Why Jehovah Permits Persecution

¹¹ Our heavenly Father could prevent the persecution of his people. But he chooses to allow it, and knowing why will help us to be happy though persecuted. The principal reason for permitting persecution has to do with the issue of universal sovereignty. Every witness of Jehovah who maintains integrity under Devil-inspired testing proves Satan to be

10. Why would it be unwise to make a minor compromise with the hope of gaining freedom to preach?

11. For what principal reason does Jehovah permit his people to be persecuted?

a liar and gives evidence that even an imperfect human can remain faithful to God though sorely tested or persecuted. The loyal individual upholds God's side of the issue and supports Jehovah's right to rule as Universal Sovereign. What a joy to add to the evidence that "he rules supreme"!—Psalm 47:9, *Today's English Version*.

¹² Jehovah also permits persecution in order to test the loyalty of those who have made a dedication to him. He has brought together "a people for special possession" so that these spirit-anointed

12, 13. For what additional reason does Jehovah permit Christians to be persecuted, and who among them will have a lasting place in God's arrangement?

ones might 'declare abroad his excellencies.' (1 Peter 2:9) God is also 'rocking all the nations' so that "the desirable things of all the nations"—people having divine approval—might be brought into his "house" of worship and fill it with glory. (Haggai 2:7; compare Zechariah 8:23.) Accordingly, persons with a heavenly hope and others who look forward to eternal life on a Paradise earth have become dedicated Christians and witnesses of Jehovah.—Luke 23:43; Revelation 7:1-17.

¹³ But who among all these dedicated

When tempted, Jesus refused to render an act of worship to Satan





The Kingdom hope gives
sound reason to be happy
despite persecution

Christians will finally be part of the promised "new heaven" and "new earth"? (Revelation 21:1) Not everyone among them will be. (Psalm 15:1-5; Matthew 22:14) There will be no lasting place in God's arrangement for those proving unfaithful. Hence, whereas Jehovah does not cause persecution, he permits it to sift out from among his people those who are disloyal, while preserving in their ranks individuals of unquestioned loyalty and wholehearted love for God. (Matthew 22:37, 38; 25:31-33; 2 Corinthians 13:5) May we be among those who endure persecution faithfully and so have the continual "privilege of fearlessly rendering sacred service to [Jehovah God] with loyalty and righteousness before him all our days"—even forever.—Luke 1:68, 69, 74, 75.

Why Happy Though Persecuted

¹⁴ *The Kingdom hope* was specifically

14. Jesus specifically cited what as the reason to be happy though persecuted?

cited by Jesus Christ when he said: "Happy the persecuted on account of Righteousness; for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens!" (Matthew 5:10, *The Emphatic Diaglott*) Yes, association with Christ in the heavenly Kingdom is the marvelous prize awaiting Jesus' anointed followers who faithfully endure persecution. (Luke 12:32; Revelation 2:10; 14:1; 20:6) And for faithful witnesses of Jehovah having earthly hopes there is the grand prospect of eternal life on a Paradise earth. (Luke 23:43; John 10:16; 17:3; Revelation 7:9, 10, 14) Surely, then, we can be happy though persecuted if we keep in mind the Kingdom hope.—Romans 12:12.

¹⁵ *Jehovah's universal sovereignty* is inseparably linked with the Kingdom, for by means of it he will sanctify his holy name. As Jehovah's faithful witnesses and Kingdom proclaimers, we are upholding his sovereignty and thus have added reason for happiness even amid tribulation. (Isaiah 43:10-12; Matthew 6:9, 10) So, with God's help, may we maintain integrity to God and thereby prove the Devil a liar who cannot support his claim that no human would remain faithful to Jehovah under test. (Job 27:5) How

15. How is Jehovah's sovereignty linked with the Kingdom, and how is all of this related to our being happy though persecuted?

happy any persecuted Christian can be when he upholds Jehovah's side of the great issue!—Compare Acts 4:24.

¹⁶ A clear conscience also contributes to the happiness of persecuted, though loyal, Kingdom proclaimers. Whereas a professing Christian is likely to experience shame and mental anguish if he suffers for wrongdoing, a person is rightly joyful if his suffering is for righteousness' sake as a faithful witness of Jehovah and follower of Jesus Christ. Thus, even after being flogged, Jesus' apostles "went their way from before the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of [Christ's] name." (Acts 5:40, 41) Similarly, after being beaten and imprisoned at Philippi, Paul and Silas were not morose or conscience stricken, as though they had done something wrong. Instead, about midnight they "were praying and praising God with song." (Acts 16:22-25) Hence, while a witness of Jehovah should never conduct himself in such a way that he must be punished as a guilty and possibly conscience-smitten murderer, thief, evildoer or busybody, he can be happy if he is suffering for the sake of righteousness.—1 Peter 2:11, 12; 3:13, 14; 4:15, 16.

¹⁷ Pleasing Jehovah and glorifying him especially will contribute to our happiness when persecuted as Kingdom supporters. Even when under extreme duress, 'walking so as to please God' is vital to our continued joy as Jehovah's servants. (1 Thessalonians 4:1) Furthermore, when suffering as a Christian, we should "confess that name to the honour of God." Think of it! Besides pleasing Jehovah, when we endure persecution faithfully

16. Why can it be said that a clear conscience contributes to our being happy though persecuted?

17. What especially will contribute to our happiness when we are persecuted as Kingdom supporters?

we "keep on glorifying God." (1 Peter 4:16, *The New English Bible; New World Translation*) What a joyous incentive to endure persecution courageously!

Press On as Integrity Keepers

¹⁸ Clearly, then, Jehovah's Witnesses have sound reasons to be happy though persecuted. Therefore, with God's help, let us be as resolute as the psalmist David, who declared: "As for me, in my integrity I shall walk."—Psalm 26:11.

¹⁹ As faithful Christians, we can be happy though persecuted because we know the Devil's aim in bringing such tribulation upon us. We also realize why Jehovah God permits his people to be persecuted. Yet, while we have such reasons to be happy in the face of persecution, what can we do to prepare for it? And how can we meet intense or even brutal persecution with endurance?

18. How should Jehovah's Witnesses feel about keeping integrity to God?

19. What questions now present themselves for consideration?

Questions for Review

□ What is the Devil's aim in bringing persecution upon witnesses of Jehovah?

□ Satan has raised what great issue and has called what into question as regards humans?

□ Why does Jehovah permit his people to be persecuted?

□ Jesus Christ specifically cited what reason to be happy when "persecuted for righteousness' sake"?

□ What contributes to our happiness when we are persecuted as Jehovah's servants?

Christians

Meet Persecution With Endurance

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES are not seeking martyrdom. However, they know that "all those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted." (2 Timothy 3:12) Does this depress them?

² No, for loyal Christians can "meet persecution with endurance." (1 Corinthians 4:12, *The Twentieth Century New Testament*, Revised Edition) But how can we prepare for such suffering before it comes upon us?

Preparing for Persecution

³ Our previous discussion suggested ways to prepare for persecution. For instance, we need to remember the Devil's aim—to destroy our relationship with Jehovah. By God's undeserved kindness, may we never let that happen! We can also prepare for persecution if we reflect on why God permits it. He does so chiefly because of the issue of universal sovereignty, and also to test our loyalty. Hence, let us determine in advance that, with divine aid, we will be loyal upholders of Jehovah's sovereignty. Additionally, we can be prepared for persecution if the Kingdom hope is in our heart.

⁴ In preparing before persecution comes upon us, daily we need to build up our faith, courage and endurance. If we are to have genuine faith, however, we must

truly love Jehovah, and this calls for accurate knowledge of his Word. This, in turn, requires that we regularly read and study the Scriptures along with related Christian publications. Furthermore, essential to strong faith is association with fellow believers in Jehovah's worship and service.—Hebrews 10:23-25; 12:28; Revelation 7:9, 10, 15.

⁵ To prepare for persecution, we also need to "go on walking in the truth," living it daily, always being "guided by the Truth." (3 John 3, 4, NW; TCNT) By accepting God's guidance as we face smaller tests day after day, we will build up our faith in Jehovah and in his ways. This, in turn, will motivate us to be "guided by the Truth" when we are persecuted.

⁶ Making it our custom to pray regularly to Jehovah will draw us closer to him, and this, too, will help us to prepare for persecution. The more we prayerfully rely on our heavenly Father, the more we will trust him. (2 Corinthians 1:8-10) Our relationship with him thus will become too strong for foes, human or demon, to destroy.—Compare Psalm 9:1-6; 1 John 2:12-14.

Meeting It With Endurance

⁷ When persecution actually does come upon us, especially in some brutal form, what can be done to meet it with en-

1, 2. How do loyal witnesses of Jehovah meet persecution, but what question does this raise?

3. What are some ways to prepare for persecution?

4, 5. In preparing before persecution comes upon us, how can we build up our faith?

6. How can prayer help us to prepare for persecution?

7. When we are persecuted, what can God do if our own strength runs out?



durance? *Strength from Jehovah* is vital! Like Paul, we need "power beyond what is normal," and we should pray for it. (2 Corinthians 4:7-12) Then, with full dependence on our heavenly Father, we can be as confident as Paul was when saying: "I have the strength for everything in him [Jehovah God] who invigorates me." (Philippians 4:13, *Byington*) Even after our own physical strength has run out, Jehovah's resources will not be exhausted. He can and does impart power to his people. (Isaiah 40:28-31; 45:22-25) If we lean upon Jehovah, he will give us strength beyond our own capacity in times of stress. And let us not be fearful. Man can go only as far as taking our present life, but with Jehovah is the power to restore us to life by resurrection.—Psalm 46:1, 2; Luke 12:4-7; John 5:28, 29.

⁸ *Prayer to Jehovah* is indispensable in meeting persecution with endurance. Jesus, who underwent many sufferings, always stayed close to his Father in heartfelt prayer, for we read: "In the days of his flesh Christ offered up supplications and also petitions to the One who was able to save him out of death, with strong outcries and tears, and he was favorably heard for his godly fear." (Hebrews 5:7) Assuredly, the "Hearer of prayer" will also hear us for our godly fear. (Psalm 65:2) During persecution the need to "persevere in prayer," to "pray incessantly," to "be vigilant with a view to prayers," cannot be overstressed. (Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Peter 4:7) Otherwise, we might think only about the discomfort, the suffering, and might yield to a desire for relief, giving in to the inclinations of the flesh by compromising our faith.

⁹ Seek "the peace of God" when under duress. If we have prayed to Jehovah daily, we have established a fine pattern in life and should continue to approach him earnestly when persecuted. It is appropriate to pray for "the peace of God that excels all thought." It will 'guard our hearts and mental powers by means of Christ Jesus'—down to death in faithfulness if necessary.—Philippians 4:6, 7.

¹⁰ That this unsurpassed tranquillity can be ours when persecuted is suggested by the case of faithful Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Just before he was moved by holy spirit to give a final courageous witness, the Bible account states: "As all those sitting in the Sanhedrin gazed at him, they saw that his face was as an angel's face." (Acts 6:15) He did not have the downcast face of a wrong-

8. Why is prayer so important in meeting persecution with endurance?

9, 10. (a) How can "the peace of God" help us when we are persecuted? (b) What can we learn from Stephen's serenity while he faced his persecutors?

doer but the countenance of an angel, a messenger of God, with confidence that he had Jehovah's backing. Stephen was courageous and serene. (Compare John 14:27.) After he exposed their guilt in the murder of Jesus Christ, the judges "felt cut to their hearts and began to gnash their teeth at him." But Stephen, "being full of holy spirit, gazed into heaven and caught sight of God's glory and of Jesus standing at God's right hand." Strengthened by that vision, Stephen could face those unrighteous judges with courage and confidence that he had done Jehovah's will. (Acts 7:52-56) Although Christians today do not expect to have such a vision, they can have God-given serenity as they meet persecution with endurance.

¹¹ *Meditate on Jehovah's Word, dealings and purposes.* Even if deprived of a Bible and Scriptural publications, dwell on God's Word. Recall Bible verses and accounts, doing so throughout the day and during sleepless nights. (Compare Psalm 77:2, 6, 11, 12.) Think about Jehovah's marvelous dealings with his persecuted or oppressed people of the past. For instance, reflect on how God delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, sustained Daniel and his three Hebrew associates in their trials, preserved the Jews in the days of Mordecai and Esther, and upheld the apostles and other early Christians in their sufferings for righteousness' sake. (Exodus 12:1-15:21; Daniel 3:1-30; 6:1-28; Esther 3:1-9:32; Acts 4:1-5:42; 12:1-17; 14:1-7, 19, 20; 16:16-40; 18:12-17; 19:23-41; 21:26-26:32) Think, too, of the way Jehovah has supported his modern-day servants in Nazi concentration camps, communist prisons and the like. When persecuted, worshipers of Jehovah can sense the support

of God's "everlasting arms."—Deuteronomy 33:27, *An American Translation*.

¹² *Suffering will end.* Remembering this will also help us to meet persecution with endurance. Furthermore, 'God will repay tribulation to those causing it for us,' while giving us relief. (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10) Therefore, during our sufferings as witnesses of Jehovah, we should look to the future, confident that our hardships will cease and faithfulness will result in rich blessings from our heavenly Father. For example, in time we may be released from prison and again enjoy freedom to serve him without restraint as joyful Kingdom proclaimers. But even if that does not happen promptly, our suffering will not last forever. And we can endure it if we trust Jehovah completely and maintain our confidence in the fulfillment of his promise of unparalleled blessings in the foretold New Order.—Revelation 21:1-4; compare 2 Corinthians 1:19, 20.

¹³ *God will not let us be tried beyond what we can bear.* The apostle Paul gave that assurance when he wrote: "No trial has assailed you except what belongs to man; and God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tried beyond your ability; but with the trial, will also direct the issue, that you may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13, *The Emphatic Diaglott*) Not all Christians are called upon to endure the same sufferings. Hence, there is no reason to think of the worst possible form of brutal persecution as necessarily being inevitable in our individual case. Jehovah will not fail us or allow anything to come upon us that we individually cannot bear in his strength and with the help of his holy

12. When we are being persecuted, what should we remember about our suffering, and what trust and confidence should we have?

13. During persecution, what comfort can we draw from 1 Corinthians 10:13?

11. Meditation on what can help Jehovah's people to endure persecution?

Stephen did not hate his persecutors, and modern-day witnesses of Jehovah do not hate theirs. Some persecutors later become Witnesses

spirit. Of course, we must rely on him implicitly and believe what his Word says. Yet, if we fully trust in Jehovah we can indeed meet persecution with endurance.—Psalm 9:9, 10.

Satan's Hostility Futile

¹⁴ Because Jehovah's faithful witnesses are directed and helped mightily by their incomparable, all-powerful God, Satan the Devil and his persecuting dupes will never be able to prevail against these genuine Christians. Time and again the Devil has been foiled in his attempts to crush Jehovah's people through persecution. In fact, persecution often has boomeranged on the Archenemy of Jehovah and His people, and the divine will has prevailed.

¹⁵ In proof of this, consider the "great persecution" that arose against the congregation in Jerusalem immediately after Stephen's martyrdom. We are told: "All except the apostles were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria." But the scattered disciples "went through the land declaring the good news of the word," and their efforts were blessed. For instance, there was spiritual prosperity in the city of Samaria. (Acts 8:1-8) Other scattered disciples preached

14, 15. How has Satan been foiled in his attempts to crush Jehovah's people by means of persecution?



in Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, Syria. Why, in Antioch "the hand of Jehovah was with them, and a great number that became believers turned to the Lord"! (Acts 11:19-21) That development, we may be sure, was just the opposite of what was desired by the foiled Great Persecutor.—Compare Philippians 1:12-14.

¹⁶ Every time a loyal witness of Jehovah meets persecution with endurance this adds to the humiliation of Satan, proving him to be a liar. Moreover, when a former persecutor becomes and remains a faithful persecuted witness of God and Christ, the Devil has experienced the disgrace of a defeat. For instance, he certainly was not pleased when the former persecutor Saul of Tarsus became one of Jesus' persecuted followers who labored

16. What sometimes happens in the case of persecutors?

so diligently in spreading the good news despite persecution and many sufferings.—2 Corinthians 11:23-27; 1 Timothy 1:12-16.

¹⁷ How important it is, therefore, that persecuted witnesses of Jehovah have a proper attitude toward their persecutors! Stephen was not filled with hatred for those who persecuted him. In fact, as they were stoning him he bent his knees and, just before falling asleep in death, "he cried out with a strong voice: 'Jehovah, do not charge this sin against them.'" (Acts 7:57-60) Moreover, Jesus said: "Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you."—Matthew 5:44; Romans 12:14; 1 Corinthians 4:11-13.

Our Creator Will Not Fail Us

¹⁸ We now live during the greatest crisis in human history. It is a period of testing and sifting of professed Christians. (Compare Luke 22:31, 32; 1 Peter 4:16, 17.) Satan's time is short, and soon he will make a final all-out assault against Jehovah's people. But God will enable them to meet this persecution with endurance and they will come off victorious. Once again, Satan (as Gog of Magog) will have been foiled and handed a crushing defeat. Additionally, in this defense of His people, God will 'magnify and sanctify himself, making himself known before the eyes of the nations, so that they will have to know he is Jehovah.' Again, that is just the opposite of what Satan would desire.—Ezekiel 38:14-39:7; Revelation 12:12.

¹⁹ As Jehovah's dedicated witnesses, we know that Satan desires to destroy our relationship with Almighty God. By

17. Persecuted witnesses of Jehovah should have what attitude toward their persecutors?

18. What will happen when Satan makes a final assault against Jehovah's people?

19. With divine help, what will persecuted witnesses of Jehovah do?

God's undeserved kindness, however, we will not compromise our faith. Rather, we will bear in mind the great issue and seek in every way to uphold Jehovah's universal sovereignty. Confident in the Kingdom hope, we can be happy though persecuted. We are prepared to meet persecution with endurance, for we trust implicitly in "the one who can, according to his power which is operating in us, do more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive."—Ephesians 3:20, 21.

²⁰ Therefore, let us be fearless before the foe, maintaining integrity, to God's glory and our own salvation. May we "hope in Jehovah and keep his way." (Psalm 37:34) As we endure persecution, may we manifest the attitude evident in the apostle Peter's words: "Let those who are suffering in harmony with the will of God keep on commending their souls to a faithful Creator while they are doing good." (1 Peter 4:19) Our "faithful Creator" will not fail us. In his strength, we can be happy though persecuted and can meet persecution with endurance.

20. What confidence can we have in our "faithful Creator"?

Review Questions

☐ How can witnesses of Jehovah prepare for persecution?

☐ In meeting persecution, why is prayer so important?

☐ How can the "peace of God" help us when we are persecuted?

☐ What comfort can be drawn from 1 Corinthians 10:13?

☐ Jehovah's Witnesses have what attitude toward their persecutors, and why so?

Insight on the News

'Nuclear Arms Different'?

The *New York Times* recently devoted a page to comments from scientists, historians and assorted dignitaries on the antinuclear pronouncements from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Nuclear physicist Harold M. Agnew, former director of Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, wrote: "Where I choked up was at a quote from their meeting under auspices of the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Sciences. It said, 'Nuclear weapons are fundamentally different from conventional weapons. They must not be regarded as acceptable instruments of warfare.'" Putting the matter in perspective, Agnew continued:

"I would have hoped that the churches would have said, 'Warfare is utter nonsense . . . You should not have to resort to force to settle disputes.' I think they are hypocrites in that they seem to be accepting that conventional war is O.K. and nuclear war isn't." Suggesting a motive for the current antinuclear sentiment, he said: "The churches and all the other decision-makers' wine cellars, material wealth and other holdings are no longer immune in the event of nuclear war." Or, since nuclear weapons threaten such religious leaders with the ravages of warfare formerly borne only on the shoulders of young men, the clergy hypocritically condemn only weapons of the nuclear type.

Jesus Christ laid bare similar hypocrisy among the religious leaders in his day, saying: "They

bind up heavy loads and put them upon the shoulders of men, but they themselves are not willing to budge them with their finger." —Matthew 23:4.

Spanish Flu's Lasting Legacy

We may still be feeling the aftereffects of the Spanish flu virus that killed at least 20 million people worldwide after World War I. According to epidemiologist Dr. Reimert T. Ravenholt of the U.S. Center for Disease Control, world health surveys indicate that the Spanish flu could well have been behind the big increases in a "bodywide spectrum of diseases" after the war.

"The [Spanish flu] pandemic may have contributed to an upsurge in manic-depressive psychosis, schizophrenia, and dementia praecox that filled mental hospitals to overflowing during the 1920s, '30s, and '40s and then waned," notes the report on Dr. Ravenholt's findings in *Medical World News*. He also said that much of the heart disease among older people today could have originated with flu damage to nerves controlling their heart action. Alzheimer's disease, lung and stomach cancer, as well as gastric and duodenal ulcers, also were implicated.

Such reports add force to the Bible book of Revelation's prophetic evidence that God's Kingdom (with Jesus Christ as a crowned rider on a white horse) came to power in 1914, when the rider of a "fiery-colored horse," denoting world war, also began to go forth.

A following mount, a "pale horse," carried "Death," whose effects included "deadly plague." Accordingly, the Spanish flu swept the earth in 1918, proving to be an even more deadly pestilence than originally thought.—Revelation 6:1-8; Luke 21:7-11.

"Year of the Bible"

U.S. President Ronald Reagan recently proclaimed 1983 to be the national "Year of the Bible," signing a resolution approved by both houses of Congress. The resolution acknowledged a "national need to study and apply the teachings of the Holy Scriptures." "Can we resolve to reach, learn and try to heed the greatest message ever written, God's Word, and the Holy Bible?" asked the president. "Inside its pages lie all the answers to all the problems that man has ever known."

In this, President Reagan echoes the Bible writer Paul, who stated: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, . . . that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) However, the congressional resolution's stated desire that the Bible be used to "strengthen us as a Nation and a people" is unlikely to succeed. The Bible itself shows that it is God's Kingdom alone that can bring everlasting blessings to mankind. Its message is not just for the strengthening of "a Nation and a people" but for the uniting of the peoples of *all* nations under Kingdom rule.—Isaiah 2:2-4.

“Keep Yourselves Clean”!

“CLEANLINESS is, indeed, next to godliness.” So says a proverb of this old world. Yes, most people appreciate physical cleanliness. That is why supermarkets and drug stores feature soaps, detergents and deodorants. And that is why we have laundries, cleaning services and sanitation departments. Why, suppose you went to a fine restaurant and the tablecloth was stained, the dishes were dirty and the waitress wore a soiled dress! Would you not lose your appetite? Undoubtedly you would because uncleanness is offensive.

² But cleanliness is not merely a matter of aesthetics. Uncleanness is a common denominator of many diseases. According to some medical authorities, the increase in the life span of modern man has largely been due to progress made in sanitation. More than that, leading ecologists state that uncleanness in the form of pollution is threatening the very existence of the human race.

Jehovah and His Organization, Holy and Clean

³ Although physical cleanness is important to most people, spiritual cleanness is even more important. In the first place, spiritual uncleanness offends Jehovah God. It is an insult to his awesome majesty, a rebellion against his

righteous standards. In essence, it constitutes disloyalty to him as a Person. Spiritual uncleanness, whether doctrinal or moral, is divisive and corrupting. It causes confusion and results in death. No wonder Jehovah God is so strongly opposed to it! That is why he commanded his ancient people, the Israelites: “You must prove yourselves holy, because I am holy.” (Leviticus 11:44, 45) That, too, is why God demanded spiritual cleanness of his liberated people who were going from Babylon to Jerusalem, carrying along utensils for use in his worship. In words of prophetic import also to Jehovah’s Witnesses today, God declared: “Turn away, turn away, get out of there, touch nothing unclean; get out from the midst of her, keep yourselves clean, you who are carrying the utensils of Jehovah.”—Isaiah 52:11.

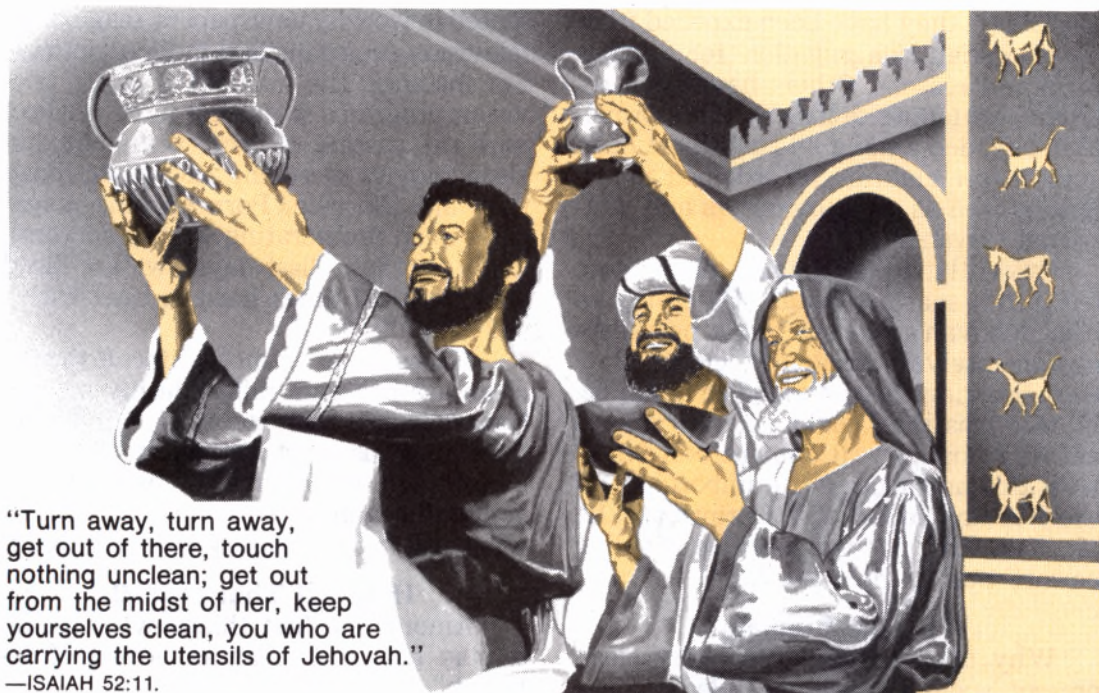
⁴ Jehovah God commands that we, as his witnesses, keep ourselves clean, that is, holy and pure, righteous and chaste. Is that not the way Jehovah himself is? Why, time and again he is referred to as “the Holy One of Israel”! (Isaiah 12:6; 29:19; 41:14; Jeremiah 51:5) And, fittingly, we read at Revelation 4:8: “Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah God, the Almighty.”

⁵ Moreover, is not God’s Son, Jesus Christ, called “the *Holy* One of God”? (John 6:69) Are not God’s heavenly ministers termed “*holy* angels”? (Mark 8:38)

1, 2. (a) What facts show that cleanliness is appreciated by most people? (b) Why is physical cleanliness vital?

3, 4. (a) How does Jehovah God view spiritual uncleanness? (b) As the holy God, what does Jehovah require of his people?

5. (a) As to holiness, what is true of Jesus Christ, the righteous angels, God’s active force and his Word? (b) So, what command does Jehovah God lay upon his servants here on earth?



"Turn away, turn away,
get out of there, touch
nothing unclean; get out
from the midst of her, keep
yourselves clean, you who are
carrying the utensils of Jehovah."

—ISAIAH 52:11.

Is not God's active force called his *holy* spirit? And is not God's Word rightly referred to as "the *holy* writings"? (2 Timothy 3:15) Clearly, then, as Jehovah's Witnesses we must also be clean and holy, even as we are commanded at 1 Peter 1:15, 16: "In accord with the Holy One who called you, do you also become holy yourselves in all your conduct, because it is written: 'You must be holy, because I am holy.'"

⁶ By reason of our repentance, conversion and faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, we have been made clean in God's sight. (1 Corinthians 6:11; Revelation 7:14) We must preserve this condition if we want to continue in God's favor. (Psalm 15:1, 2) More than that, we must keep clean so as to be able to appeal to all lovers of truth and right-

teousness who are distressed because of the wicked, unclean conditions they see upon the earth. (Ezekiel 9:4) Furthermore, it is absolutely imperative that we stay holy and clean so as not to stumble any of our fellow believers. As the apostle Paul reminded the Philippian Christians: "This is what I continue praying, that your love may abound yet more and more with accurate knowledge and full discernment; that you may make sure of the more important things, so that you may be flawless and not be stumbling others up to the day of Christ."—Philippians 1:9, 10; compare Matthew 18:6.

Some Ensnared

⁷ Sad to say, some of our former associates have failed to keep themselves clean, holy, as bearers of Jehovah's uten-

6. (a) How are Christians made clean in the first place? (b) Why is it imperative that Jehovah's people remain holy and clean?

7, 8. (a) What shows that some have not appreciated the need to keep clean as God's servants? (b) This underscores the importance of what warning?

sils. Hence, they have been expelled from the Christian congregation for various Scriptural reasons. Others have been re-proved for failing to live by Bible principles. Included among all such have been quite a few children of ordained ministers, as well as some overseers and ministerial servants.

⁸ Evidently, to an extent, all of these fell into a snare of Satan. By trying to bear Jehovah's utensils while not keeping themselves spiritually clean, they were ignoring the command at Isaiah 52:11, and this they could not continue to do with impunity. (Compare Job 9:1-4.) How this underscores the importance of the warning found at 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall!"

Why the Problem?

⁹ Why does keeping spiritually clean present such a challenge? Because we have arrayed against us three powerful foes—Satan and his demons, his visible organization and our sinful fleshly weaknesses. To begin with, there are Satan and his demons. Are they not unclean, corrupt? Yes, indeed. The demons are referred to as "*unclean spirits*."—Matthew 10:1.

¹⁰ Secondly, Satan's visible organization is our foe. Without question, his religious world empire is spiritually unclean. So is the rest of the world lying in his power. (1 John 5:19; Revelation 16:13; 17:4; 18:2) For our worship to be acceptable to God, therefore, we must 'keep ourselves without spot from the world.'—James 1:27.

¹¹ Unclean, too, are many things pre-

sented in worldly newspapers, magazines, television programs and motion pictures. For instance, the makeup of many television programs is getting more unclean with the passing of time. Years ago, unclean movies were the exception; today they are the rule. Pornographic magazines keep proliferating like mushrooms. Truly, in these "last days" we are faced with "critical times hard to deal with."—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

¹² Making it even more difficult to stay clean are our own fallen fleshly inclinations. (Genesis 8:21; Romans 5:12) Therefore, all of us must struggle to do what is right and to remain clean as bearers of Jehovah's utensils. (Romans 7:13-25) But what will help us to stay holy and clean?

Hate All That Is Bad!

¹³ Among the first things we must do to stay holy and clean as "lovers of Jehovah" is to "hate what is bad." Yes, we need to "abhor what is wicked." (Psalm 97:10; Romans 12:9) We must have strong feelings of aversion, of disgust, as to things that are bad, no matter how pleasurable they may momentarily be to our fallen flesh. We also need to keep telling ourselves that harm will come to us if we do not keep clean. (Galatians 6:7, 8) Moreover, we should bear in mind the harm that comes to others when we commit gross sins. Above all, we need to hate and avoid all that is bad so that we do not bring reproach upon Jehovah God.

¹⁴ To keep clean, we must also guard against such things as entertaining immoral ideas and flirting with individuals other than our marriage mate. As Paul

9. (a) Remaining spiritually clean presents a challenge because of what three foes? (b) Why do Satan and his demons represent such a threat to Christians?

10, 11. What is there about Satan's visible organization that makes it difficult for Christians to serve God in a holy, clean way?

12. To keep holy, clean, Christians have to contend with what foe within themselves?

13. What is one of the first things that we must learn to do if we are to keep ourselves clean?

14. (a) To keep clean morally, against what must we be on guard? (b) What obligation do sisters have in this regard?

counseled at 1 Timothy 5:1, 2, Christian men should treat their older spiritual sisters as mothers and the younger women as their fleshly sisters with all chasteness. But in all of this our sisters also have a responsibility, namely, "to adorn themselves in well-arranged dress, with modesty and soundness of mind." (1 Timothy 2:9, 10) When women look into a mirror, doubtless they know whether they appear modest or whether their attire and bearing have sensual overtones. Modesty is the opposite of worldly sensuality.—Micah 6:8.

Be Conscious of Your Spiritual Need!

¹⁵ However, hating what is bad is, at best, only a negative approach to keeping holy and clean. We must also take positive steps. At all times we must be conscious of our spiritual need. (Matthew 5:3) How vital that "lovers of Jehovah" regularly feed on his Word! (Psalm 119:105-112) We must take to heart the fine counsel at Philippians 4:8, filling our minds with clean, upbuilding things. Of great help is memorizing scriptures and the words of the Kingdom songs. These will then naturally come to mind during times of leisure, or at night when we may lie awake.—Psalm 63:6; 77:6.

¹⁶ If we are conscious of our spiritual need, we will regularly attend congregation meetings, where we can incite one another to love and to fine, clean works. (Hebrews 10:23-25) Even as bad associates can make us unclean, so good associations will help us to keep spiritually clean. Watching our association in times of relaxation is also essential in keeping spiritually clean.—1 Corinthians 15:33.

¹⁷ Nor to be overlooked is the help we get from prayer. We are counseled

to "persevere in prayer," to "pray incessantly." (Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:17) Never should we be too busy for prayer. Let us pray for wisdom, for strength, for God's holy spirit. Then, by working at what we pray for, we will enjoy the "peace of God" that will guard our hearts and mental powers and will enable us to remain holy, clean.—Philippians 4:6, 7.

¹⁸ Talking to others about God's Kingdom, staying busy in Jehovah's service, is another great aid in keeping holy and clean. Not a few who have become involved in bad conduct have done so while relaxing, as when on a vacation. What a warning example we have in King David! Why, it was spring, when kings generally went forth to war, and David stayed behind, taking it easy, as it were! That is when he got into trouble with Bath-sheba. (2 Samuel 11:1-4) Clearly, then, we must be on guard at all times if we are to continue as clean bearers of Jehovah's utensils.

¹⁹ Self-control is vital if we want Jehovah God to keep on using us to bear his utensils. (Galatians 5:22, 23; 1 Corinthians 9:27) We must discipline our minds and guard our hearts, rejecting every temptation, deadening all inclinations to dwell on unclean things. As Jesus Christ put it, we must be willing to pluck out an eye or cut off a hand or a foot, figuratively speaking, if they tend to make us stumble. (Mark 9:43-48) Good counsel along these lines is given by Paul at Ephesians 4:29-5:5.

²⁰ In particular will love for Jehovah help us to keep clean. Are we really

18. How can keeping busy in Jehovah's service help us?

19. Why is self-control so important in keeping clean?

20, 21. (a) What role can love for Jehovah God play in helping us to remain clean? (b) How can love for our brothers and others help us to keep ourselves clean spiritually?

15. What positive steps must we take to keep clean?

16. How can association with our brothers be an aid in keeping holy, clean?

17. Why can prayer help us to remain clean?

“lovers of Jehovah”? Do we appreciate all he has done for us? Is it our determination to walk with him, as did the faithful men of old? (Genesis 5:24; 6:9) If so, loyal love for Jehovah God will help us to keep holy, clean. Yes, if we truly love him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, we will fear to displease him. So, as “lovers of Jehovah” may we never shrink back or let ourselves get spotted by the world or by our own fallen inclinations.—Mark 12:29, 30; Hebrews 10:38, 39.

²¹ Very helpful also in keeping clean and holy is sincere, unselfish love for our brothers. If we are truly interested in their spiritual welfare, we will be careful not to cause them offense or make them feel unclean by our own unclean talk, unclean looks, by our flirting or engaging in unclean conduct. Remember, love “does not rejoice over unrighteousness.” (1 Corinthians 13:4, 6) Unselfish love for God and neighbor will keep us from sinning in these respects. It will cause us to exercise self-control, ‘making straight paths for our feet.’—Hebrews 12:13.

The Rewards for Keeping Clean

²² What are our rewards for keeping clean as bearers of Jehovah’s utensils? Among these are a “good conscience” and a “clean heart.” (1 Timothy 1:5) Peace of mind is another reward. By keeping ourselves spiritually clean, we will never feel the pain that a bad conscience can give—the unhappiness, the sleepless nights, the fear of being discovered or exposed. Yes, by keeping ourselves clean we will never be hypocrites trying to hide something. Freedom from such things certainly is a fine reward.

²³ Another reward for keeping holy and clean is that we will have good relations with our brothers, our own families

22, 23. What are some of the rewards we will personally receive for staying clean?

and outsiders. We will not have it on our conscience that we have stumbled someone. Moreover, by keeping clean we will be able to upbuild one another through love. (1 Corinthians 8:1) Thus we will experience the greater happiness of giving, of contributing to the spiritual well-being of others.—Acts 20:35.

²⁴ Above all, by keeping clean as bearers of Jehovah’s utensils we will make glad the heart of our heavenly Father and will enable him to answer taunting Satan. (Proverbs 27:11) Surely, in view of all that Jehovah God has done for us, we owe this to him. So as Jehovah’s faithful witnesses, may we all keep clean, holy, as bearers of his utensils. To God’s glory, honor and praise, to the upbuilding of our brothers and our families, and with a view to our everlasting salvation, let us keep ourselves clean!

24. What is the greatest and best reason for wanting to keep ourselves clean as Jehovah’s people?

Can You Recall?

- ☐ Since Jehovah is holy, what does he require of his people?
- ☐ The fact that some have not remained clean as Jehovah’s servants emphasizes the importance of what warning given by the apostle Paul?
- ☐ What three foes present a challenge to our remaining spiritually clean?
- ☐ To keep clean spiritually, what positive steps must we take?
- ☐ How can staying busy in Jehovah’s service help us to keep ourselves clean?
- ☐ What is the greatest reason for us to keep clean as witnesses of Jehovah?

A Searching Look at Revelation

IF YOU were to list the things that could make you happy, would you put the Bible book of Revelation on your list?

Most people likely would not. Yet everyone who has a fair understanding of Revelation can agree with the apostle John's words in the opening of this book: "Happy is he who reads aloud and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and who observe the things written in it."—Revelation 1:3.

'But,' you may say, 'it is so hard to make sense of what I read in Revelation.' One reason is that much of the book is in symbolic language. To grasp the meaning, we need knowledge of the Bible as a whole as well as of God's dealings with his people over the years.

You may have found another obstacle in understanding Revelation. Since it contains so many different visions or descriptive pictures, many people tend to miss its overall flow. They, as it were, concentrate on individual trees and fail to step back to see the overall forest. With this in mind, let us scan the book of Revelation in a way that shows how its different parts or visions interconnect. As a clue, note that one sequence, such as the seven *seals*, leads into another series, the seven *trumpets*. The picture on page 30 should help you. As we go along, we will add only a few comments of interpretation, more being available in the books mentioned below.*

The Revealing Begins

The book of Revelation is in letter form, written about 96 C.E., by the apostle John to "seven congregations" in Asia Minor, representing all the congregation of spirit-anointed Christians. (1:4) The introduction (1:1-3) identifies God as the source of and Jesus as the channel for the Revelation. It assures happiness for those who hear and observe the words of the prophecy.

* Jehovah's Witnesses find much help in two Bible study aids that discuss Revelation verse by verse, *"Babylon the Great Has Fallen!" God's Kingdom Rules!* (1963) and *"Then Is Finished the Mystery of God"* (1969), both available from the publishers of this magazine.

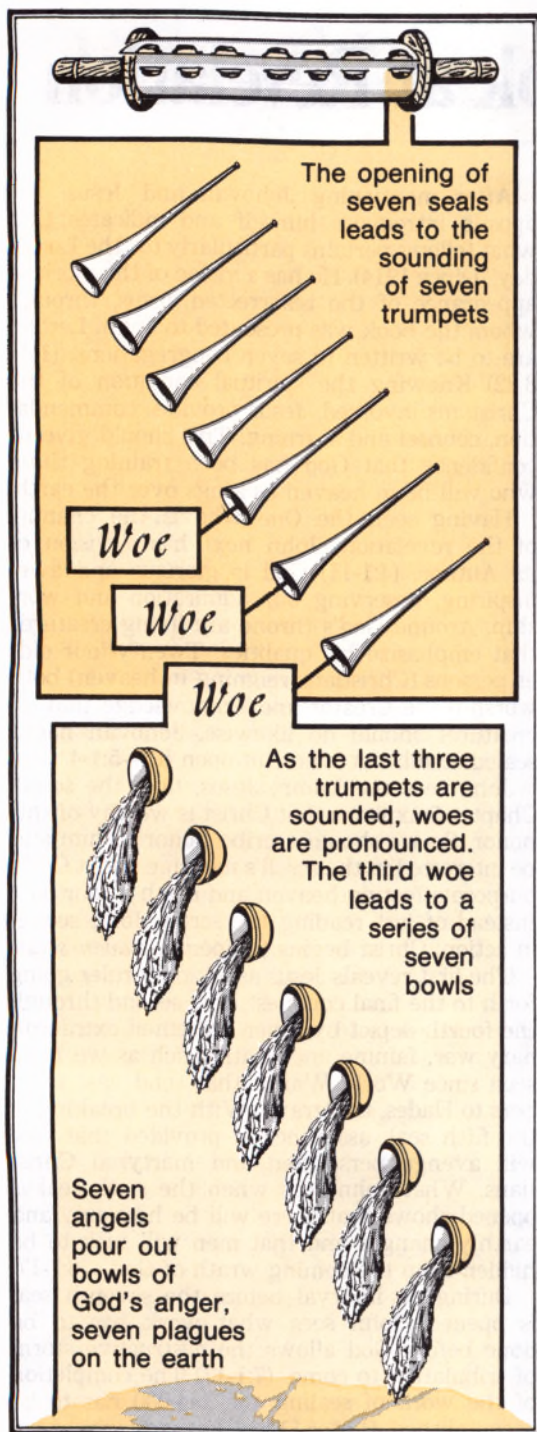
After mentioning Jehovah and Jesus, the apostle introduces himself and indicates that what follows pertains particularly to "the Lord's day" (since 1914). He has a vision of the glorious appearance of the resurrected Jesus, through whom the book was presented to John. Letters are to be written to seven congregations. (1:4-3:22) Knowing the spiritual condition of the Christians involved, Jesus provides commendation, counsel and warning. This should give us confidence that God has been training those who will be in heaven as kings over the earth.

Having seen the One who is the channel of the revelation, John next has a vision of its Author. (4:1-11) God is glorious and awe-inspiring, deserving our admiration and worship. Around God's throne are living creatures that emphasize his qualities. Twenty-four older persons (Christians reigning in heaven) both worship the Creator and acknowledge that all creatures should do likewise. Jehovah has a sealed scroll, but who can open it?—5:1-4.

John sees the Lamb, Jesus, take the scroll. Chapter 5 explains that Christ is worthy of this honor. So we should ascribe honor to him and be interested in the scroll's message about God's purpose affecting heaven and earth in our day. Instead of just reading the scroll, John sees it in action. Christ begins to open its *seven seals*.

The first reveals Jesus as a kingly ruler going forth to the final conquest. The second through the fourth depict by other horsemen extraordinary war, famine and death (such as we have seen since World War I) that send vast numbers to Hades, the grave. With the breaking of the fifth seal, assurance is provided that God will avenge persecuted and martyred Christians. What John sees when the sixth seal is opened shows that there will be heavenly and earthly changes and that men will seek to be hidden from the coming wrath of God.—6:1-17.

During an interval before the seventh seal is opened, John sees what work has to be done before God allows the destructive storm of tribulation to come. (7:1-17) The completion of the work of sealing the 144,000 has to be accomplished. (Later [14:1-3], it is shown as ac-



complished.) The angels' holding back the destructive tribulation allows the "great crowd" to gain God's approval and to worship him along with the 144,000. Now the seventh seal is broken and there is a brief period of prayer and preparation for what is to come.—8:1-6.

Seven Trumpets

Seven angels are to sound *seven trumpets*. (God's earthly servants *began* to deliver judgment messages at their conventions in 1922-1928). So, in the opening of a series of seven seals, the final one widens out into a vision of seven other things, trumpets. Five trumpetlike messages about elements of Satan's organization are sounded. The fifth involves a plague of locustlike preachers; it is also said to be the first of *three woes*. When the sixth trumpet is sounded, comment is made about the releasing of those bound at the Euphrates, where ancient Babylon sat. (In modern times some Christians were released from Babylonish captivity after World War I.) The vision also shows an army of 200,000,000 cavalry.—8:7-9:21.

There is an interruption of the sixth trumpet; John sees an angel with a little, eatable scroll. (10:1-11) The apostle learns that in the days of the sounding of the seventh trumpet the mystery of God will be finished. Then he gets the scroll to eat and is told of additional prophesying work to be done. He must also measure the (spiritual) temple. John is told about witnesses who prophesied for a time (1914-1918), were killed by the wild beast and finally revived. Note that a wild beast is brought into the picture but not yet explained. The standing up to life of the witnesses precedes an earthquake in apostate Jerusalem, bringing to an end the sixth trumpet and the second woe.—11:1-14.

At the sounding of the seventh trumpet an announcement is made about the established Kingdom (the "third woe" to God's enemies). This results in wrathful persecution from the nations. (11:15-19) The next chapter explains more fully what has happened. John sees a glorious woman (God's heavenly organization) give birth safely to a son (the Kingdom) despite the Devil's opposition. Following war in heaven, Satan is cast down to earth, where he persecutes the Christian remnant because of their faithfulness. (12:1-17) This gives warning of the chief enemy, Satan. But other enemies come into view. One is a beast (the Devil's beastly political organization) out of the sea. It wars

against Christians, who thus need endurance and faith. (13:1-10) Another beast, with two horns, that encourages worship of the image of the sea beast, well depicts the powerful Anglo-American political combine that has dominated the world scene in recent times.—13:11-18.

Will these enemies block the sealing of the 144,000? No! John sees the 144,000 happily singing on Mount Zion. (All of this is still under the seventh trumpet.) Then *three angels* in particular give notice of trouble ahead for the enemies. One angel declares that God will execute judgment. Hence, he commands: "Fear God and give him glory." The second announces that Babylon the Great has fallen. The third promises torments for worshipers of the beast or its image. Other angels foretell a reaping and announce a crushing at Armageddon.—14:1-20.

Seven Bowls and Babylon the Great

After these judgments and preliminary announcements, John sees seven angels with seven plagues. (This also is under the sounding of the seventh trumpet; so, again, one series merges into the next.) Despite the persecution, many come off victorious and sing praises. The seven angels will pour out *seven bowls* of anger, which point out God's view of various world conditions and the results, or effects, of his judicial opinion. As with the sixth trumpet, the sixth bowl involves the Euphrates (Babylon). Mention is made also of the gathering to "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" (Armageddon), but details are not yet given. With the seventh bowl a voice says, "It has come to pass!" and Babylon the Great is shaken apart and falls.—15:1-16:21.

Revelation next explains the destruction of modern Babylon, which calls to mind ancient Babylon's being a wellspring of false religion. The Babylon in Revelation is likened to a harlot riding upon a scarlet-colored beast with seven heads representing kings—an eighth king springing from the preceding seven. (This aptly depicts the League of Nations, replaced later by the UN—both of which have been made up of many nations.) An angel says that in time the beast's militarized horns will battle with the Lamb. But first the 10 horns will turn on the harlot and destroy her. (17:1-18) Individuals are urged to get out of religious Babylon the Great before that happens. After she is destroyed,

kings and merchants miss her, but heaven rejoices over her complete and final destruction. (18:1-24) God is to be praised for executing this judgment. It is especially a source of joy to the Lamb's bride of "holy ones," for she has proved victorious over the harlot.—19:1-10.

Now the thread of the war of God and those who fight against the Lamb is taken up again and expanded. Opposed organizations and individuals meet their end. (19:11-21) What about bad spirits? Satan is next cast into the abyss for a thousand years. For that period Christ and the 144,000 will be kings and priests in a special sense. Jumping quickly to the end of the thousand years to show Satan's complete end, the vision depicts his loosing and the rebellion of some humans. Together they are cast into the lake of fire. (20:1-10) Moving back to describe events during the Millennium, the vision shows the dead as resurrected and being judged as worthy of eternal life or of destruction.—20:11-15.

Since the old heaven and earth have fled away, John sees a new heaven and earth, as well as the blessings that these bring to humankind. He also sees a city, not Babylon, but Christ's bride. It is holy and perfect, with a river of life flowing from it. Abundant provisions are made for healthy life. The series of visions of Revelation draws to a close with this glorious, climactic picture of the governing organization of the new system of things.—21:1-22:7.

John is overwhelmed emotionally and wants to worship the agent who communicated the vision; but he is reproved. The prophecy is not to be sealed. Hearers of it are to invite others to take "life's water free." No one should add to or take away from the scroll. Jesus again reminds readers that he is coming quickly. John responds and concludes with a benediction upon the holy ones.—22:8-21.

Looking at the accompanying chart, can you now say that you have a better grasp of what Revelation contains and how the elements in it are connected? More, though, is needed. We ought to study and understand fully the symbolic meaning of the visions in this inspired book and apply its message to our own life. Then we will be in line for blessings, including the happiness that John mentioned in the opening verses.

MORE THAN 4 million people attended last year's "Kingdom Truth" conventions arranged by Jehovah's Witnesses. For many it was not easy.

For example, 13 Australians hired two small airplanes, at a cost of \$2,600, and flew 750 miles over trackless and waterless desert to attend the convention nearest them.

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Eight Christians in Guyana traveled in canoes for seven days to get to the only convention held in their country.

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