

The **Watchtower**

April 1, 1987

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

Is God
a Real Person?

In This Issue

God—Is He a Real Person?	3
How We Can Get To Know God	4
Benefiting From Jesus' Illustrations	8
Grandest Childbirth on Earth Preludes Worldwide Security	10
Worldwide Security Under the "Prince of Peace"	15
Kingdom Proclaimers Report	21
Jehovah Is Guarding Us	22
Do You Always Get the Point?	27
A "Very Rich Encounter"	30
Questions From Readers	31

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.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

May 10: Grandest Childbirth on Earth Preludes Worldwide Security. Page 10. Songs to Be Used: 21, 105.

May 17: Worldwide Security Under the "Prince of Peace." Page 15. Songs to Be Used: 168, 119.

Average Printing Each Issue: 12,315,000

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* Study articles also available in large-print edition.

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<i>Watch Tower Society offices</i>	<i>Semimonthly Languages</i>	<i>Monthly Languages</i>
America , U.S., Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589	\$4.00	\$2.00
Australia , Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565	A\$7.00	A\$3.50
Canada , Box 4100, Halton Hills, Ontario L7G 4Y4	\$5.50	\$2.75
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Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

20 cents (U.S.) a copy

The Bible translation used is the "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated.

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The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly for \$4.00 (U.S.) per year by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Watchtower, **Wallkill, N.Y. 12589.**

Published by
**Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
of Pennsylvania**

25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.
Frederick W. Franz, President

“THERE *must* be a God” declared the August 14, 1981, issue of the *Daily Express*. The paper was reporting on the apparent conversion of two prominent scientists to a belief in God. Their newfound conviction emerged after they discovered the prodigious mathematical odds against life’s appearing spontaneously. However, what did these two new believers mean when they said “God”? Reports the *Daily Express*: “God they suggest, IS the universe.”

If you believe in God, what is *your* conception of him? Do you likewise view him as an indefinable intelligence, an abstract omnipresent force, a great “Something”? Or do you view him as a definable, intelligent Person?

Some find it hard to think of God as a Person. They may even feel that doing so reduces him to a mere humanlike being—as in the childish image of an old man in a hooded robe and with a long white beard, sitting on a cloud. Or as Michelangelo portrayed God in his famous Sistine-chapel ceiling fresco—a muscular, dynamic old man who floats in the air.

True, when we hear the word “person,” we may automatically think of a human.

Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, for example, defines “person” as “an individual human being.” But it also defines “person” as “a being characterized by conscious apprehension, rationality, and a moral sense.” There-

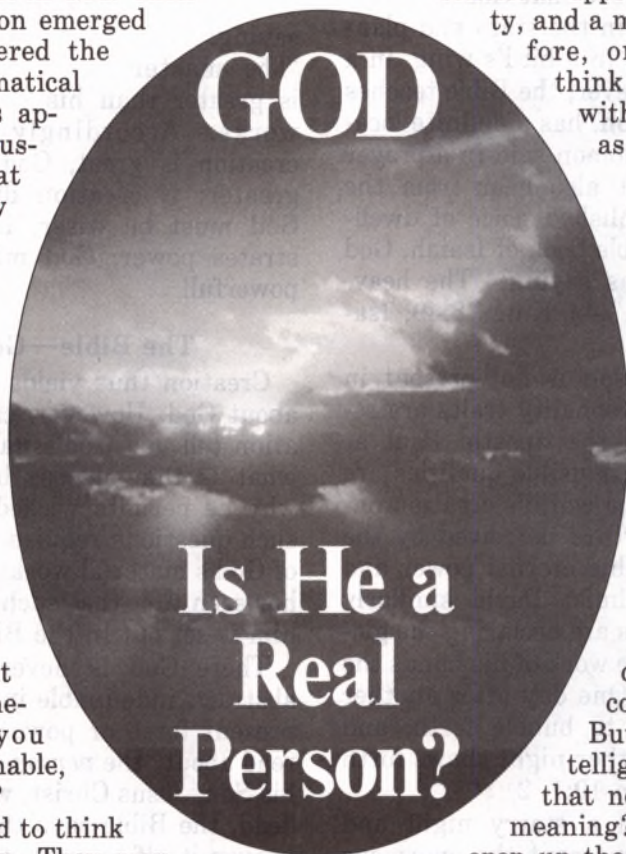
fore, one can accurately think of God as a Person without depicting him as a human.

But some may object: ‘What difference does it make whether you view God as an abstract force or as a Person?’ Well, if God is merely a force, a “Something,” does this not mean that human life is likewise purely mechanical? Man would thus be reduced to an “it,” a cog in a big machine.

But if God is an intelligent Person, would that not give life greater meaning? Indeed, it would

open up the possibility of having a relationship with God—a relationship not between two “its” but between two persons.

Obviously, a person-to-person relationship with God would be most desirable. But in the first place, how do we know whether God is a Person or not? And, if he is, how can we have such a relationship? Let us look at what the Bible has to say on this matter.



How We Can Get To Know GOD

SOME people believe that God is everywhere, present in the stars and planets, in the rainbow, in a bird's wing, in a blade of grass. However, the Bible teaches that God, as a Person, has a definite location. Wise King Solomon said in a prayer to God: "You must also hear from the heavens, your established place of dwelling." And in the Bible book of Isaiah, God himself is quoted as saying: "The heavens are my throne."—1 Kings 8:49; Isaiah 66:1.

Though God himself is not present in his creation, his personality traits are reflected there. Said the apostle Paul at Romans 1:20: "His invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship." The psalmist David similarly wrote: "The heavens are declaring the glory of God; and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling. One day after another day causes speech to bubble forth, and one night after another night shows forth knowledge."—Psalm 19:1, 2.

Yes, look out on a starry night and contemplate for a moment the enormous wisdom and power needed to create and maintain our universe! (Compare Isaiah 40:26.) Indeed, creation is an inexhaustible source of information about God's personality. And man can never fully perceive the enormous witness it sounds out regarding God's qualities and attributes. The book of Job reminds us: "Look! These are the fringes of his ways, and what a whisper of a matter has been heard of him!" (Job 26:14) There is an old Swedish

saying:

'The master is greater than his works.' Accordingly, if creation is great, God must be greater; if creation displays wisdom, God must be wiser; if creation demonstrates power, God must be even more powerful!

The Bible—God's Book

Creation thus yields much information about God. However, can a study of creation tell you God's name? Will it reveal what is the purpose behind creation or why he permits wickedness? Answers to such questions require more than a study of God's material works. Fortunately, God has seen to it that such information about him is set out in the Bible.

There God is never presented as an abstract, indefinable intellect or an omnipresent force or power. At Acts 3:19 we read about "the *person* of Jehovah." When his Son, Jesus Christ, was raised from the dead, the Bible says that he entered into heaven itself to appear before "the *person* [literally, "face"] of God." (Hebrews 9:24, *Kingdom Interlinear*) Certainly, Jesus never called God a Great Force, Infinite Intellect, or any other abstract term when he talked about him or prayed to him. On the contrary, he often called him heavenly Father, a term revealing his deep intimacy with God.—Matthew 5:48; 6:14, 26, 32.

God is therefore not a nameless "Something" but rather a Person with a name. Says Psalm 83:18: "That people may know

**God personally revealed
himself to Noah,
Abraham, and Moses**



that you, whose name is *Jehovah*, you alone are the Most High over all the earth." True, the Bible also uses titles or descriptive terms for God: "Almighty," "King of eternity," "savior," "Shepherd," "Ancient of Days," "overseer," "Grand Instructor," "Grand Maker," "Rock." (Ruth 1:20; 1 Timothy 1:17; Isaiah 43:11; Psalm 23:1; Daniel 7:9, 13, 22; 1 Peter 2:25; Isaiah 30:20; 54:5; Deuteronomy 32:4) Such terms, however, reveal further facets of God's personality, such as his almightiness, his loving concern for his people, and his infinite wisdom.

Because God is a Person, he also has likes and dislikes—even feelings. The Bible tells us that he loves his people (1 Kings 10:9), rejoices in his works (Psalm 104:31), hates idolatry (Deuteronomy 16:22), and feels hurt over wickedness. (Genesis 6:6) At 1 Timothy 1:11 he is even called "the happy God."

Knowing God Intimately

True, no human mind is roomy enough to hold the entire revelation of God's personality. "O the depth of God's riches

and wisdom and knowledge! How unsearchable his judgments are and past tracing out his ways are! For 'who has come to know Jehovah's mind, or who has become his counselor?' (Romans 11:33, 34) Nevertheless, for one with faith, God can be as real as any other person. The Bible tells us that "Noah walked with the true God," as if Jehovah were by his very side. (Genesis 6:9) God was also so real to Moses that it was as if he were "seeing the One who is invisible." (Hebrews 11:27) And of Abraham it was said that he was "Jehovah's friend."—James 2:23.

Of course, God personally revealed himself to Noah, Abraham, and Moses. 'Well, if God would reveal himself to *me* in such a personal way,' some might say, 'he would be real to me too.' Remember, though, Noah, Abraham, and Moses did

not have the Bible. They did not know about Jesus Christ nor of all the dozens of prophecies he fulfilled. As a result, all that Jesus Christ revealed about God was unknown to them. Under such circumstances, it was necessary and appropriate for God to make such direct revelations of himself.

Today, however, we have both the Bible and the perspective of centuries of fulfillment of Bible prophecies. We have the Gospel records of the life, works, and words of Jesus Christ. And says Paul: "It is in him [Christ] that all the fullness of the divine quality dwells bodily." (Colossians 2:9) Yes, we are in a position to know God with an intimacy that was not possible in the days of the patriarchs. Does this not overwhelmingly compensate for the fact that he has not directly revealed himself to us?

Bible Reading Brings Us Close to God

We read at James 4:8: "Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you." By reading the Bible, we can draw close to God. But how? For one thing, by reading a portion of the Bible each day, you learn new characteristics and attributes of his personality. As you read, repeatedly stop and ask yourself: 'What did I learn about God in this verse or portion?' In addition, you can pray for God's spirit to act as a "helper" in your comprehension and in your drawing close to God.—John 14:26.

"I have appreciated getting a much better understanding of *Jehovah as a person*," declared one Christian woman who read the Bible from cover to cover. She was a student at the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, which trains missionaries who are sent all over the world. What method of Bible study is used in this school? Explains one of the instructors: "We started on a project of studying the

whole Bible as a group. We took 10 to 15 pages a day, with all . . . students doing research and contributing to our discussion. If we encountered a difficult verse, we considered (1) the context, (2) the circumstances at the time of writing, and (3) the meaning of key words in the text. We constantly asked, '*What does this tell us about Jehovah and his qualities?*' We found it always told us something about him."

Although you may not have the privilege of studying the Bible formally at this school, some of these study methods may work well for you and your family. For example, among Jehovah's Witnesses it is the custom to study a few chapters of the Bible each week in connection with their congregation meetings. Why not follow this schedule of Bible reading as a family? Further, the Watch Tower Society publishes research helps, such as *Aid to Bible Understanding* and the *New World Translation Reference Bible*, which can help you with difficult Bible passages.* A regular program of Bible reading can greatly enhance your appreciation of Jehovah's personality.

You may also select a portion of the Bible that has particular appeal to you. If, for example, you choose to study the 17 verses in Psalm 86, you will find at least 15 traits in God's personality: He is good, ready to forgive, abundant in loving-kindness, willing to answer prayers, unequaled among the gods, unmatched as a creative worker, a sovereign ruler, a great doer of wondrous things, a deliverer from death, merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abundant in truthfulness, a helper, and a comforter. What better goal could you have than trying to learn about your Creator?

* The *Watch Tower Publications Index 1930-1985* will help you locate explanations and discussions of such passages in these research helps.



*Creation is an inexhaustible
source of information about
God's personality*

Great Benefits From Knowing God

Reaching our ultimate goal of everlasting life is just one benefit from knowing God. (John 17:3) Additionally, there is the benefit of having a daily companion who cares for you and is as stable as a rock. (Psalm 18:31) When King David felt surrounded by enemies and burdened down by problems, he found that God was the only real helper available. He therefore said: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter."—Psalm 55:22.

You, too, can enjoy such a relationship with God, if you but take the time to come to know him. It is not too difficult. Put forth the effort to read his Word. Associate with those whose lives demonstrate that they know God, such as the ones who brought you this journal. Call upon Jehovah in prayer. For God is not some impersonal force that will be deaf to your outcries. He is a living God and a "Hearer of prayer." And "if you search for him, he will let himself be found by you."—Psalm 65:2; 1 Chronicles 28:9.

Benefiting From Jesus' Illustrations

WHEN the disciples come to Jesus after his speech to the crowds on the beach, they are curious about his new method of teaching. Oh, they have heard him use illustrations before but never so extensively. So they want to know: "Why is it you speak to them by the use of illustrations?"

One reason he does so is to fulfill the prophet's words: "I will open my mouth with illustrations, I will publish things hidden since the founding." But there is more to it than this. His use of illustrations serves the purpose of helping to reveal the heart attitude of people.

Actually, most people are interested in Jesus simply as a masterful storyteller and miracle worker, not as one to be served as Lord and to be unselfishly followed. They do not want to be disturbed in their view of things or their way of life. They do not want the message to penetrate to that extent. So Jesus says:

"This is why I speak to them by the use of illustrations, because, looking, they look in vain, and hearing, they hear in vain, neither do they get the sense of it; and toward them the prophecy of Isaiah is having fulfillment, which says, ' . . . For the heart of this people has grown unreceptive.'"

"However," Jesus continues, "happy are your eyes because they behold, and your ears because they hear. For I truly say to you, Many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things you are beholding and did not see them, and to hear the things you are hearing and did not hear them."

Yes, the 12 apostles and those with

them have receptive hearts. Therefore Jesus says: "To you it is granted to understand the sacred secrets of the kingdom of the heavens, but to those people it is not granted." Because of their desire for understanding, Jesus provides his disciples an explanation of the illustration of the sower.

"The seed is the word of God," Jesus says, and the soil is the heart. Of the seed sown on the hard roadside surface, he explains: "The Devil comes and takes the word away from their hearts in order that they may not believe and be saved."

On the other hand, seed sown on soil with an underlying rock-mass refers to the hearts of people who receive the word with joy. However, because the word cannot take deep root in such hearts, these people fall away when a time of testing or persecution comes.

As for the seed that fell among the thorns, Jesus continues, this refers to people who have heard the word. These ones, however, are carried away by anxieties and riches and pleasures of this life, so they are completely choked and bring nothing to perfection.

Finally, as for the seed sown on fine soil, Jesus says, these are the ones who, after hearing the word with a fine and good heart, retain it and bear fruit with endurance.

How blessed are these disciples who have sought out Jesus to obtain an explanation of his teachings! Jesus intends that his illustrations be understood, to impart truth to others. "A lamp is not brought to be put under a measuring basket or under a bed, is it?" he asks. No, "it is brought to be put upon



a lampstand." Thus Jesus adds: "Therefore, pay attention to how you listen." **Matthew 13:10-23, 34-36; Mark 4:10-25, 33, 34; Luke 8:9-18; Psalm 78:2; Isaiah 6:9, 10.**

- ♦ Why did Jesus speak in illustrations?
- ♦ How do Jesus' disciples show themselves to be different from the crowds?
- ♦ What explanation does Jesus provide of the illustration of the sower?



Grandest Childbirth on Earth Preludes Worldwide Security

"There has been a child born to us, there has been a son given to us; and the princely rule will come to be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."—ISAIAH 9:6.



WORLDWIDE security! Under "the Prince of this world," Satan the Devil, it is an impossible dream. (John 12:31, *The New English Bible*) But worldwide security under the "Prince of Peace," Jesus Christ, is an absolute certainty. Jehovah assures us of this in the prophecy about the birth and career of the "Prince of Peace." At Isaiah 9:6, 7, we read: "There has been a child born to us, there

has been a son given to us; and the princely rule will come to be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom in order to establish it firmly and to sustain it by means of justice and by means of righteousness, from now on and to time indefinite. The very zeal of Jehovah of armies will do this."

1. Under whom is worldwide security a certainty, and how do we know this?

² What a marvelous prophecy! It will be thrilling to examine this prophecy about the grandest childbirth on earth. But before we can fully appreciate it, we need to focus on the circumstances under which the prophecy was given. It was a time of international conspiracies during the days of the kingdom of Judah under King Ahaz. Although unfaithful to Jehovah, that king was permitted to sit upon Jehovah's throne. This forbearance was shown to him because of the covenant that Jehovah made with David for an everlasting kingdom in his line of descent. Though David was denied the privilege of building a temple to Jehovah, God gave him an alternative blessing. This was set forth in the words of the prophet Nathan: "And Jehovah has told you that a house is what Jehovah will make for you. And your house and your kingdom will certainly be steadfast to time indefinite before you; your very throne will become one firmly established to time indefinite." (2 Samuel 7:11, 16) That divine promise proved to be so satisfying to King David that he looked forward to its glorious fulfillment.

³ That covenant with David finds its fulfillment in the great Son of David, Jesus Christ, the "Prince of Peace." No other royal house on the face of this earth has ever enjoyed such a covenant for a kingdom, with no end to the abundance of its princely rule, with no end of peace. But that Kingdom covenant held forth a challenge to all the kingdoms of the world of which Satan is prince, or ruler. So the Devil and his demons made it their goal to

try to destroy the house of David and thereby eliminate the prospect of its having a permanent heir. Satan found ready instruments in King Rezin of Syria, in King Pekah of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, and in the king of Assyria.

Conspiracy Against the Kingdom Covenant

⁴ What was the Devil's scheme? His aim was to force King Ahaz of Judah, out of fear, into an improper alliance with the king of Assyria. How could the Devil do this? Well, he caused King Pekah of Israel and King Rezin of Syria to enter into a conspiracy against the house of David. They conspired to remove Ahaz from the throne of Judah in order to install their own man, the son of Tabeel, as puppet king. Who was this son of Tabeel? It is significant that he was not a descendant of David's house. Hence, he was not a man through whom God's covenant for the Kingdom could be passed along until it found its permanent Heir in the "Prince of Peace." He was to be *their* man, not God's man, on the throne of Judah. Thus the Bible exposes Satan's effort to stop the operation of Jehovah's Kingdom covenant that was made with David.

⁵ How did King Ahaz react to this threat? He and his people trembled with fear. So Jehovah gave him some encouraging information to turn him away from forming a protective alliance with the king of the rising world power, Assyria. Jehovah sent his prophet Isaiah to meet Ahaz and to deliver this message found at Isaiah 7:4-9:

⁶ "Do not be afraid . . . for the reason

2. (a) What were the circumstances under which the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6, 7 was given? (b) How do we know that Jehovah will unfailingly hold to the covenant he made with David for an everlasting kingdom in his line of descent?
3. (a) With whom does that covenant with David find fulfillment, and how was that covenant unique? (b) What did the Devil make his goal with regard to the Kingdom covenant?

4. How did the Devil proceed in his efforts to stop the operation of Jehovah's Kingdom covenant that was made with David?

5, 6. How did King Ahaz react to the conspiracy against the house of David, and what encouraging message did Jehovah give him?

that Syria with Ephraim [the leading member of the kingdom of Israel] and the son of Remaliah [Pekah] has advised what is bad against you, saying: 'Let us go up against Judah and tear it apart and by breakthroughs take it for ourselves; and let us make another king reign inside it, the son of Tabeel.' This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said: 'It will not stand, neither will it take place. . . . Unless you people have faith, you will in that case not be of long duration.'

A Sign of the Conspiracy's Failure

⁷ Thus, Jehovah foretold the overthrow of the conspirators. At that moment came the time for a divine prophecy of world-rocking importance, for it pointed to the royal Heir of the Kingdom covenant with David. But what led up to that remarkable prophecy? Well, Jehovah was speaking to King Ahaz. He told Ahaz to ask for any miraculous sign that he could think of, and then Jehovah would perform it as an absolute guarantee that God would break up the conspiracy against the house of David. But Ahaz declined to ask for such a sign. What happened next? Isaiah 7:14 tells us: "Therefore Jehovah himself will give you men a sign: Look! The maiden herself will actually become pregnant, and she is giving birth to a son, and she will certainly call his name Immanuel." That name means "With Us Is God." Since Immanuel and Isaiah's two other sons were to serve as signs, the prophet said at Isaiah 8:18: "Look! I and the children whom Jehovah has given me are as signs and as miracles in Israel from Jehovah of armies." So the birth of Immanuel was a reliable sign that all the conspirators and their conspiracies against God's Kingdom

7. (a) What led up to the remarkable prophecy of Isaiah 7:14? (b) Of what was the birth of Immanuel a reliable sign, and as what were Isaiah's sons to serve?

covenant and its Heir would come to nothing!

⁸ The Bible record does not say who gave birth to the son named Immanuel. It may have been a Jewish maiden who became the second wife of the prophet Isaiah. In any event, the prophecy went on to state that before the boy would grow old enough to distinguish between good and bad, the two kings conspiring against the house of David would come to a disastrous end. (Isaiah 7:15, 16) This proved true. The fact that the identity of Immanuel in the days of Isaiah remains uncertain to us may be in order not to distract the attention of later generations from the Greater Immanuel when he would appear as a miraculous sign from heaven.

⁹ Of course, in the days of Ahaz, there was only a miniature fulfillment of the sign and of the overthrow of the worldly conspiracy against God's Kingdom covenant. Yet that first fulfillment guaranteed that the sign and the overthrow of world conspiracy would be fulfilled in the major sense in our critical time. Today we are face to face with the greatest world conspiracy of all time. In what sense? In that the nations completely ignore Jehovah's arrangement for bringing in lasting peace, and they even oppose the representatives of the "Prince of Peace." The conspiracy is really against the Heir of the Kingdom covenant, the "Prince of Peace." What, now, about the complete fulfillment of the prophecy? If we discern the sign, then we will appreciate that the fate of

8. (a) What did the prophecy at Isaiah 7:15, 16 state about the boy Immanuel, and what was the outcome? (b) Why might it be that the identity of Immanuel in the days of Isaiah remains uncertain?

9. (a) What did the fulfillment of the sign and the overthrow of the conspiracy against the Kingdom covenant guarantee? (b) What is the greatest world conspiracy of all time?

this world conspiracy is a foregone conclusion.

Birth of the "Prince of Peace"

¹⁰ In the prophecy's complete fulfillment, the maiden who produced the child as the sign and Heir of the Kingdom covenant was Mary, a Jewish virgin descended from King David. The angel Gabriel told her that she would give birth to a son who would be named Jesus, that Jehovah God would "give him the throne of David his father," and that there would be "no end of his kingdom." (Luke 1:26-33) The inspired historian Matthew connects the sign of Immanuel with the house of David. We read at Matthew 1:20-23: "Jehovah's angel appeared to [Joseph] in a dream, saying: 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife home, for that which has been begotten in her is by holy spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you must call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this actually came about for that to be fulfilled which was spoken by Jehovah through his prophet, saying: 'Look! The virgin will become pregnant and will give birth to a son, and they will call his name Immanuel,' which means, when translated, 'With Us Is God.'"

¹¹ When and where did this foretold birth of Immanuel take place? All Jewish eyes were turned in the right direction by the words of Micah 5:2, quoted at Matthew 2:6: "And you, O Bethlehem of the land of Judah, are by no means the most insignificant city among the governors of Judah; for out of you will come forth a

governing one, who will shepherd my people, Israel." It was in the year 2 B.C.E. in the city of Bethlehem that the "Prince of Peace" was born, and the thrilling prophecy of Isaiah 9:6, 7 began to be fulfilled.

¹² Who of us would not consider it an honor and a joy to become the parent of the one who was to have the title "Prince of Peace"? It therefore brought great glory to the kingly Father of this Prince. In fact, never, no never before, has a human birth been attended by such glorious and dazzling features.

¹³ Jehovah's radiant angel appeared to shepherds watching over their flocks by night in the fields outside Bethlehem, and "Jehovah's glory gleamed around them." The angel then announced the birth in fulfillment of divine prophecy, saying: "There was born to you today a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in David's city." As if that were not glorious enough, there appeared in the skies above a multitude of angels praising the Father of the newborn child and saying as with one voice: "Glory in the heights above to God, and upon earth peace among men of goodwill." How appropriate for the angels to announce at the birth of the destined "Prince of Peace" that there would be divine peace for all men who have God's goodwill!—Luke 2: 8-14.

¹⁴ Long before the birth of the one to be "Prince of Peace," the angels had praised God on a special occasion. That was when, at creation, he founded the earth. (Job 38:4) Have you seen pictures of our earth taken by astronauts from outer space? Then you saw what only the angels had

10. (a) In the complete fulfillment of Isaiah 7: 14, who produced the child as the sign and Heir of the Kingdom covenant? (b) How does the historian Matthew connect the sign of Immanuel with the house of David?

11. When and where did the foretold birth of Immanuel take place?

12, 13. To whom did the birth of the "Prince of Peace" bring great honor, and what glorious and dazzling features attended this birth?

14, 15. (a) Over what events did the heavenly sons of God praise Jehovah? (b) Why could no other childbirth in all human history compare with this one?

seen up until recent times. And how did the angels respond then? Job 38:7 tells us: "The morning stars joyfully cried out together, and all the sons of God began shouting in applause."

¹⁵ The grandest birth ever to honor the earth would be no less an event over which the sons of God would unite their melodious voices in a song of praise. Just as an earthly father is congratulated at the birth of his firstborn son, so the celestial Father responsible for this grandest birth ever to take place on earth deserves to be magnified in song by members of his heavenly family. How that exquisitely beautiful concert must have been enjoyed by the divine Being on his becoming for the first time a father in an absolutely new set of circumstances! Never before in all universal history had there been a childbirth to compare with that of the destined "Prince of Peace."

"A Great Light" Shines

¹⁶ When Jesus began his public ministry, there was further fulfillment of Isaiah chapter 9. This pertained to its first two verses, which foretold that "a great light" would shine on people "walking in the darkness." The fulfillment of those verses

16. When and how was there further fulfillment of Isaiah chapter 9?

Do You Recall—

- ☐ What conspiracy developed in the days of King Ahaz?
- ☐ What was the miniature fulfillment of the sign of Isaiah 7:14?
- ☐ What was the complete fulfillment of that sign?
- ☐ Why was the birth of the "Prince of Peace" the grandest childbirth on earth?

is explained for us by the inspired historian Matthew at chapter 4, verses 13 through 17: "Further, after leaving Nazareth, [Jesus] came and took up residence in Capernaum beside the sea in the districts of Zebulun and Naphtali, that there might be fulfilled what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'O land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, along the road of the sea, on the other side of the Jordan, Galilee of the nations! the people sitting in darkness saw a great light, and as for those sitting in a region of deathly shadow, light rose upon them.' From that time on Jesus commenced preaching and saying: 'Repent, you people, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.'"

¹⁷ Zebulun and Naphtali lay in the northern extremity of Israel and included the district of Galilee. Naphtali bordered the entire western shore of the Sea of Galilee. So it was by preaching the good news of God's Kingdom in those areas that Jesus, along with his disciples, caused the light to shine to the people there who had so long been sitting in darkness. Jesus said at John 8:12: "I am the light of the world. He that follows me will by no means walk in darkness, but will possess the light of life." Thus, by means of Jesus "those sitting in a region of deathly shadow" were enabled to possess "the light of life" because he gave his life "a ransom in exchange for many." He is the one Jehovah used to shed light on the means whereby men could gain life. —Matthew 4:23; 20:28.

¹⁸ This "great light" promising deliverance from death and oppression was not

17. Why could Jesus cause light to shine on the people in Zebulun and Naphtali, and what would this light mean for those sitting in darkness?

18. (a) Why was this "great light" not to be restricted to people of Galilee? (b) What will be considered in the next article?

restricted to men of Galilee. Had not Isaiah foretold that the government's abundance would be without end? And had not Isaiah foretold that the role of the "Prince of Peace" would be a tremendous one? Yes, for Isaiah 9:6, 7 says: "His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end." In the following article, we will consider the role of Jesus Christ as "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father," as well as "Prince of Peace."

Worldwide Security Under the "Prince of Peace"

"To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom in order to establish it firmly and to sustain it by means of justice and by means of righteousness, from now on and to time indefinite. The very zeal of Jehovah of armies will do this."—ISAIAH 9:7.

JUST as the birth of Jesus, the perfect man-child, was an occasion of extraordinary joy, so the birth of his long-promised Kingdom would be an occasion of immense joy. (Psalm 96:10-12) According to the facts of modern history, that government was placed upon the shoulder of the glorified Jesus in 1914. The existence of the United Nations organization today does not belie that fact. None of the rulers of the 159 members of the UN are of the house of David. Nevertheless, the charter of that world conspiracy assigns to *them* the task of achieving worldwide peace and security for mankind.

² But Jehovah's covenant for the Kingdom has never been canceled. At Isaiah 9:7 the expression "upon the throne of David" confirms the covenant that God made with David for an endless kingdom. Moreover,

1, 2. (a) The birth of God's Kingdom would be an occasion for what, and when did this birth take place? (b) What does the charter of the United Nations assign to that organization, but what has the Kingdom covenant assigned to Jesus Christ? (c) How do we know that Jehovah will unfailingly hold to the Kingdom covenant?

Jehovah has sworn to its successful completion. That Jehovah will hold to this covenant is made clear at Psalm 89:3, 4, 35, 36: "I have concluded a covenant toward my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant, 'Even to time indefinite I shall firmly establish your seed, and I will build your throne to generation after generation.' Once I have sworn in my holiness, to David I will not tell lies. His seed itself will prove to be even to time indefinite, and his throne as the sun in front of me." That covenant, as well as the title "Prince of Peace," assigns to Jesus Christ the task of bringing in worldwide security.

³ However, the time for Jehovah God to put the government upon the shoulder of his Crown Prince was not to be a year of peace either in heaven above or on earth down below. According to Revelation chapter 12, the birth of his Kingdom would be followed by war in heaven. Satan the Devil and his demons fought against the newly

3. Why was the time for the "Prince of Peace" to begin his rule not a time of peace for heaven or for the earth?

established government, and the newly enthroned King with his holy angels fought those demonic forces. The result was that Satan and his demons were hurled out of the heavens and down to the vicinity of our earth. Consequently, the cry rang out: "Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time." (Revelation 12:12) Since the Devil's debasement, our earth has sadly become the site of unparalleled violence and warfare.

How mankind needs the rule of the "Prince of Peace," for it will result in worldwide security!

⁴ According to Isaiah 9:6, other titles, in addition to "Prince of Peace," were to be added to the glorious name of Jesus Christ. One of these titles was to be "Mighty God." He was not to be called almighty God, as though he were a coequal member of a trinity of gods. Even on his resurrection day, he let it be known that he was still inferior to Jehovah. He made an appearance to Mary Magdalene and sent her to inform his anxious disciples that he was returning to their Father and his Father and to their God and his God. (John 20:17) Down to this very day, he continues to lead all creation in the worship of the "God of gods," Jehovah. (Daniel 11:36) Ah, yes, Jesus Christ has a

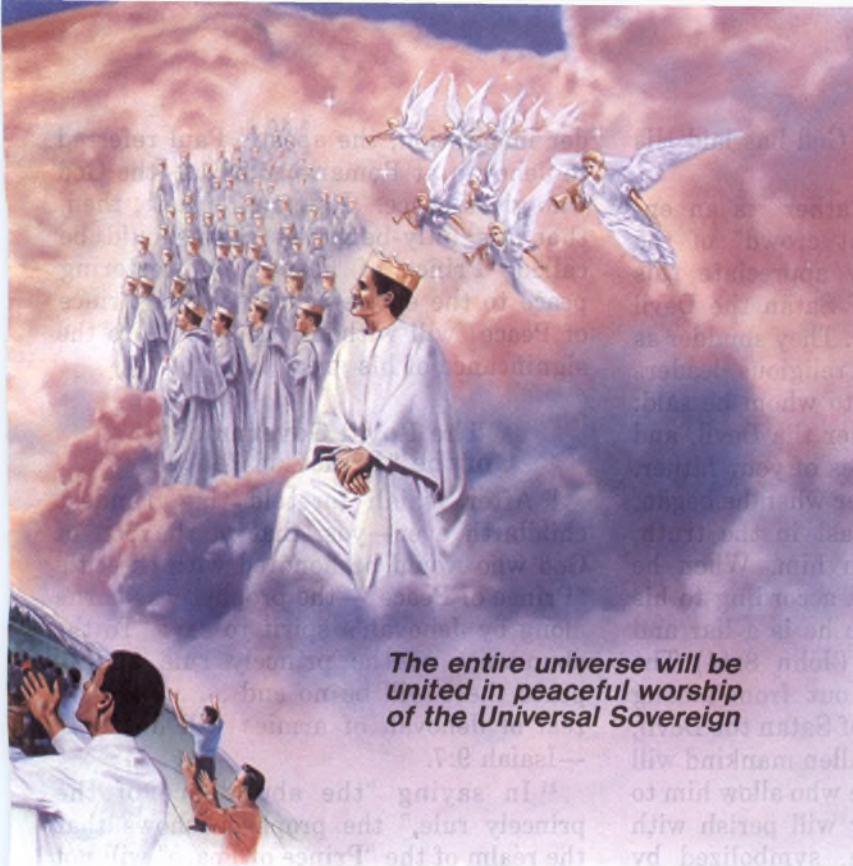
4. Why should the title "Mighty God" not be confused with almighty God?



God and that God is not Jesus himself but is the heavenly Father Jehovah. How grandly the "Prince of Peace" serves as the precursor of universal lasting peace and security!

⁵ For all eternity, the glorified Son of God will continue to lead all intelligent creatures in the worship of this one and true living Deity, Jehovah. The exalted Son of God is eminently qualified for this. Of all creatures in heaven and on earth, the glorified Son of God is the one who has known Jehovah for the longest period of time and that most intimately. At 1 Corinthians 2:11 the apostle Paul says: "For who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of man that is in him?" So it is in the case of Jesus Christ. Although he was used by

5. Why is Jesus Christ the most qualified one to lead all intelligent creatures in the worship of the true and living God, Jehovah?



The entire universe will be united in peaceful worship of the Universal Sovereign

Jehovah God in the creation of man, it was another thing for him actually to become a man himself, to be surrounded by all the earthly circumstances and experience the feelings of a man firsthand. Thus it is written that "although he was a Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered" as a man down here on earth. (Hebrews 5:8) He indeed proved worthy to be safely entrusted with 'all authority in heaven and on the earth' and to bear the title "Mighty God." —Matthew 28:18; compare Philippians 2: 5-11.

"Wonderful Counselor" and "Eternal Father"

⁶ For all these potent reasons, God's heavenly Prince is fully able to serve man—

6. How has Jesus Christ been serving as "Wonderful Counselor," and how has the "great crowd" benefited from his wonderful counsel?

kind as "Wonderful Counselor." (Isaiah 9:6) His counsel is always wise, perfect, and infallible. As the Mediator between Jehovah God and those who have been taken into the new covenant, he has been serving indeed as a wonderful counselor for these past 19 centuries. Now, since 1935, "a great crowd" of his "other sheep" has been taking in his wonderful counsel and is getting the finest instruction and guidance. (Revelation 7: 9-17; John 10:16) As an agency for this

counseling work, he has in this "conclusion of the system of things" raised up the promised "faithful and discreet slave" class and set it up over all his earthly goods, or royal interests. (Matthew 24:3, 45-47; Luke 12:42-44) The "great crowd" is now receiving spiritual counsel that is indeed wonderful and trustworthy because it is based upon the revealed Word of God.

⁷ As a result of their responding to that counsel, Satan the Devil, "the god of this system of things," is no longer a mighty god to us as Jehovah's people. (2 Corinthians 4:4) We have obediently come out of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, and we no longer share in her vicious sins. We have taken our stand immovably upon the side of the One upon

7. Why is Satan the Devil no longer a mighty god to Jehovah's people?

whose shoulder Jehovah God has laid His government.

⁸ The title "Eternal Father" is an endearing one. The "great crowd" of the "other sheep" especially appreciate this term. The fatherhood of Satan the Devil has not appealed to them. They shudder as they recall the Jewish religious leaders who opposed Jesus and to whom he said: "You are from your father the Devil, and you wish to do the desires of your father. That one was a manslayer when he began, and he did not stand fast in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaks the lie, he speaks according to his own disposition, because he is a liar and the father of the lie." (John 8:44) The "great crowd" has got out from among those spiritual children of Satan the Devil, whose fatherhood over fallen mankind will not be everlasting. Those who allow him to be their spiritual father will perish with him. Utter destruction, symbolized by "the everlasting fire" of Matthew 25:41, awaits the Devil and all humans who do not escape from under his fatherhood. —Matthew 25:41-46.

⁹ On the other hand, the "great crowd" is getting a foretaste of the fatherhood of the "Eternal Father." How? By listening to his voice and becoming his "other sheep" and by associating with the remnant of spiritual Israel. This warm family relationship bespeaks peace. Writing un-

* For a detailed discussion of the role of Jesus Christ as the "Eternal Father," see chapter 20 of the book *Worldwide Security Under the "Prince of Peace,"* published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

8. (a) Why is the title "Eternal Father" especially appealing to the "great crowd"? (b) What will happen to those who allow Satan the Devil to be their spiritual father?

9. How is the "great crowd" getting a foretaste of the fatherhood of the "Eternal Father"?

der inspiration, the apostle Paul referred to Jehovah at Romans 16:20 as "the God who gives peace." How appropriate, then, that his only-begotten Son should be called "Prince of Peace"! By restoring peace to the entire universe, the "Prince of Peace" will without fail live up to the significance of his great title.

The Royal Government of the "Prince of Peace"

¹⁰ After Isaiah foretold the grandest childbirth ever—yes, that of the Son of God who would be honored with the title "Prince of Peace"—the prophet was borne along by Jehovah's spirit to say: "To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end . . . The very zeal of Jehovah of armies will do this." —Isaiah 9:7.

¹¹ In saying "the abundance of the princely rule," the prophecy shows that the realm of the "Prince of Peace" will not end short of embracing the entire earth. There will be no boundaries on earth that will limit his domain. It will cover the entire globe. Furthermore, in the Paradise earth to come, there will be no end of peace. Never will there be disorders anywhere. Peace will extend all over the earth and always abound. (Psalm 72:7) Peace in this case means more than the absence of violence and war. It includes justice and righteousness, for Isaiah said that the princely rule would be sustained "by means of justice and by means of righteousness, from now on and to time indefinite." There will be a plentitude of blessings for mankind. And the indefatigable zeal of Jehovah God will accomplish it within our time.

10, 11. After foretelling the grandest childbirth ever, what did Isaiah go on to say, and what do his words mean?

¹² Even now, this government on the shoulder of the "Prince of Peace" is being represented throughout the earth. The acceptance of his royal heavenly government is spreading rapidly. The remnant of the spirit-begotten disciples of Jesus Christ has been fully gathered out from among the nations. In addition, the "great crowd" is being gathered out from over 200 different lands. There are now 3,229,022 witnesses of Jehovah, and the joyful work of ingathering is not yet completed. This "great crowd" acclaims the government that is upon the shoulder of the "Prince of Peace." Its members are most thankful to be subject to that government and to be envoys of it throughout the whole earth, in association with the "ambassadors substituting for Christ," the anointed remnant.—2 Corinthians 5:20.

Modern-Day Conspiracy to Be Shattered

¹³ The Kingdom envoys also keep peace among themselves. They 'earnestly endeavor to observe the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace.' (Ephesians 4:3) They do this despite all the turmoil that now rages throughout the earth. National entities inside and outside the United Nations are in reality lined up against the government of the "Prince of Peace." As God views it, the United Nations is a colossal world conspiracy. Why? Because it declares itself set to gain the objectives that God has laid only upon his "Prince of Peace" to gain. And it calls upon the peoples of all nations to support it in establishing worldwide security by man's ef-

forts. It even proclaimed 1986 to be the "International Year of Peace." It thus proves itself to be a conspiracy against the "Prince of Peace" and against Jehovah's covenant with him for the everlasting Kingdom.

¹⁴ For a reason like that, the prophet Isaiah warned King Ahaz and his subjects back there against seeking peace and security by entering into an alliance with the Assyrian World Power. The warning is found at Isaiah 8:9, 10. In poetic grandeur, the prophet warns all of those in opposition to Jehovah and his Kingdom covenant: "Be injurious, O you peoples, and be shattered to pieces; and give ear, all you in distant parts of the earth! Gird yourselves, and be shattered to pieces! Gird yourselves, and be shattered to pieces! Plan out a scheme, and it will be broken up! Speak any word, and it will not stand, for God is with us!"

¹⁵ So let the nations under the prince of this world, Satan the Devil, conspire against the Kingdom covenant and its princely Heir and Ruler. The conspiracy will be shattered to pieces, just as was the conspiracy in the days of King Ahaz. King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah of Israel did not fear Jehovah of armies but conspired against his covenant for the Kingdom. Well, their conspiracy was broken to pieces. Likewise, King Ahaz of Judah did not fear Jehovah but entered into conspiracy with the world power of Assyria. This did not really help Ahaz and bring him peace and security. It brought distress and bondage. Worst of all, it put Ahaz out of favor with Jehovah.

12. How is the government that is on the shoulder of the "Prince of Peace" being represented throughout the earth?

13. (a) What do the Kingdom envoys endeavor to do among themselves? (b) How does God view the United Nations?

14. How did the prophet Isaiah warn all those in opposition to Jehovah and his Kingdom covenant?

15. What will happen to the conspiracy against the Kingdom covenant today, as demonstrated by the conspiracy in the days of King Ahaz?

¹⁶ After the death of Ahaz and in the days of his son Hezekiah, Jehovah of armies broke the Assyrian conspiracy against the Kingdom covenant. The king of Assyria was forced to retreat from the land of Judah after Jehovah's angel annihilated 185,000 of his soldiers. The enemy did not get to shoot even one arrow against the city of Jerusalem. (Isaiah 37: 33-36) A like defeat of the present-day world conspiracy against Jehovah's Kingdom covenant and "Prince of Peace" is a certainty, for God is with his Prince Immanuel and with all who acclaim him!

Standing Fearlessly for Jehovah's Universal Sovereignty

¹⁷ The political elements will soon direct their efforts not just against Christendom but against all of Babylon the Great, the entire world empire of false religion, to wipe it out of existence. At that critical juncture, divine protection of Jehovah's people will have to come into play to an extraordinary degree. Egged on by the gory victory over Babylon the Great, the atheistic rulers will viciously turn against those who are on the side of God's government by Jesus Christ. Then Jehovah will use his "Prince of Peace" to fight "the war of the great day of God the Almighty." (Revelation 16:14) Jesus Christ will prove to be an unconquerable Warrior whose government is to experience no decrease. He will prove to be the "Mighty God" under the triumphant almighty God, Jehovah. This "Mighty God" will crown his brilliant career with the victory at Armageddon that will resound without fading at all to time eternal. All hail to that peerless victory!

¹⁸ So, then, onward to greater world prominence than ever before, all you witnesses of Jehovah, with complete trust in your God and his reigning King, the "Prince of Peace"! Display outright fearlessness of the present world conspiracy. By your proclamation everywhere of the message of the Kingdom and its coming victory over the world conspiracy at Armageddon, be all of you for signs and miracles to the honor of Jehovah. When the Devil turns the worldly rulers against us, remember, the victory will be with those who stand true and faithful for the Kingdom of Immanuel, the "Prince of Peace," for "With Us Is God"! (Matthew 1:23; compare Isaiah 8:10.) And let all the angels of heaven and all integrity-keeping mankind on earth say "Amen" to the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty over all created things in heaven and on earth, with a security never to end!

¹⁸ In the face of the modern-day conspiracy against the Kingdom covenant, what are Jehovah's Witnesses determined to do, and with what outcome?

16. How did Jehovah break the Assyrian conspiracy against the Kingdom covenant, and what did this foreshadow for our day?

17. (a) What will the political elements shortly do to Babylon the Great, and what will Jehovah's people need and receive? (b) After disposing of Babylon the Great, what will the atheistic rulers now do, prompting Jehovah to take what action?

Questions in Summary

- ☐ How does the title "Mighty God" apply to Jesus Christ?
- ☐ How has Jesus been serving as "Wonderful Counselor"?
- ☐ Whose fatherhood should we seek, and whose should we reject?
- ☐ What in reality is the United Nations?
- ☐ What will happen to today's conspiracy against the Kingdom covenant and its Heir, the "Prince of Peace"?

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

“You Must Be Holy”

GOD'S direction to Christians is to “quit being fashioned according to the desires you formerly had in your ignorance, but, 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.’” (1 Peter 1:14-16) Such holy conduct often is a good witness to others. (1 Peter 2:12) All over the earth, as the following experiences show, sincere persons are making the necessary changes to bring their conduct into harmony with this counsel.

□ In Ecuador a man stopped his Bible study when the Witness who studied with him was disfellowshipped for immorality.

“For I am Jehovah your God; and you must sanctify yourselves and you must prove yourselves holy, because I am holy.”

—Leviticus 11:44.

His spiritual need led him to investigate other religions. He settled for the Evangelist religion and advanced to the point of becoming a pastor of his own church. However, his conscience bothered him, as he was not married to the woman with whom he was living. When he consulted with pastors of other churches, they assured him that this was no problem. However, he felt that this was not right, as the very Witness

who studied with him was disfellowshipped for immorality. He could not understand why he was not reprovved by his own church. Later, his live-in companion came in contact with Jehovah's Witnesses and began to study with them. The man began to study along with her. Both of them are now attending the meetings, progressing in knowledge of Bible principles, and taking steps to get married so they can serve Jehovah in a clean and acceptable way.

□ In another experience from Ecuador, a Witness relates: “In February 1984, a middle-aged lady asked us to study with her.” What motivated this request? This lady's brother had become one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and she had been very impressed by his fine conduct. During the second Bible study, they touched on the subject of smoking, which was one of the lady's problems. However, at the next study a week later she proudly announced that since learning the Bible's viewpoint on smoking she had not touched a cigarette! She had another problem—her house was full of religious images. But on reading Deuteronomy 7:26, which says: “And you must not bring a detestable thing into your house . . . It is something devoted to destruction,” she proceeded to burn all of them.

From that time forward, she began attending meetings and has not missed one since. Shortly after that, she was able to overcome her most difficult obstacle—she broke off an immoral relationship with a mar-

ried man. Now, for the first time in her life, she was able to experience genuine happiness, as she was now able to serve Jehovah with a clean conscience. She was baptized in April 1985 and at the time was conducting four Bible studies with others. Her next goal is to become a pioneer, as she feels this is the

“Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit.”

—2 Corinthians 7:1.

best way that she can show her appreciation to Jehovah, who has liberated her from “a vain and immoral life.”

□ The fine results of godly conduct were seen in a girls' boarding school in Kenya, where the good conduct of a Witness became noticeable in an outstanding way. Nine male teachers were hired by the school, including one of Jehovah's Witnesses. But one by one they had to be dismissed for sexual immorality with the students. After a while, only one out of the nine was left—the teacher who was one of Jehovah's Witnesses!

Indeed, it is possible for people who have lived immoral lives to change. When we become ‘holy in all our conduct,’ we not only provide a fine witness to others but also make Jehovah's heart glad. Thus, we put ourselves in line for everlasting life. —Proverbs 27:11.

Jehovah Is Guarding Us

WHACK! Down came the book on my head. This was my first contact with the Bible, and it was at the hand of a Catholic priest. Why? Because of a question I had asked.

The priest was teaching catechism and religion and was trying to encourage us boys to take up the priesthood. In his effort to do this, he used the scripture at 1 Thessalonians 4:17, where it speaks of those 'being caught away in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.'

I was always full of questions, so I asked: "Why do you say priests go straight to heaven, when, as the Creed says, Jesus had to go to hell?" (Acts 2:31) That was when the Bible came down on my head.

A Desire to Know

But I sincerely wanted answers. I was very much inclined to worship God, even as a young boy. I used to enter to pray in almost every church I passed. Yet I wasn't satisfied. Somehow I always got angry at things I saw, such as the gross idolatry of some of the people or the behavior of some priests.

When I was only about eight years old, I read my first book. It was entitled *The Christianization of Brazil*. I was shocked. To me it seemed like a murder story, the murder of Indians in the name of religion. Learning about such things was enough to change my mind about a lot of things.

This all happened back in the 1920's. I was born in Vienna, Austria, August 19, 1919, the only child of my parents. When I was about six, my father, an electrical engineer, accepted a job in northern

Czechoslovakia, in the German-speaking section of Sudetenland. So my family moved there, and finally to a small town called Warnsdorf.

I became very disillusioned with the Catholic Church. One day, quite bitter because of the punishment I had again received from the priest, I cried on the way home from school. While walking through some fields, I thought that it was not possible that there was a God, in view of the many crooked things I had seen and had been taught.

Then the song of birds came through, and I noticed the flowers, the butterflies, and all the beauty of creation. And it dawned on me that there must be a loving God but that the so-called men of God maybe were not such at all. And perhaps God had given up on humanity. That was when I said my first real, conscious prayer, asking God to help me to get to know him if he ever again would become interested in man. That was in 1928.

About a month later my mother traveled to a family reunion in Vienna; it was her mother's 60th birthday. There my mother saw her brother, Richard Tautz, who at the time lived in Maribor, Yugoslavia. He had recently become one of the Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called. Mother returned home all excited with the new Bible truths she had learned. What she related made sense to me. It seemed that Jehovah's hand was at work. —Psalm 121:5.

Practicing What I Had Learned

Later, Bible Students came over from Germany, and the preaching got under



As related by Erich Kattner

way in our area. Some months later, regular meetings began to be held in a neighboring town in Germany, and we walked the few miles across the border to attend them. It was at this time that I met Otto Estelmann, with whom I worked closely in later years.

In 1932 our family moved to Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, about 45 miles (72 km) from Vienna. There were no other Witnesses there at that time. I decided I had to get active in the preaching work. So I chose what I thought was the toughest territory, an apartment-house project occupied mostly by families of government officials. Four languages were then spoken in Bratislava: Slovak, Czech, German, and Hungarian.

Carrying cards that had a little sermon printed on them in four languages, I went alone ringing bells on the apartment doors. Sometimes my father, who had not

as yet become a Witness, would stand on the other side of the street, watching me and shaking his head. Shortly afterward he also took a firm stand for Jehovah.

On February 15, 1935, at a special meeting with a traveling overseer in our home, I, along with others, was baptized in a bathtub. I graduated from business school that year and was given an attractive job offer, but at the same time I was invited to work at the Watch Tower Society's branch office in Prague, Czechoslovakia. After a serious talk with my parents, we took the matter to Jehovah in prayer. So, shortly before turning 16, I entered the full-time service on June 1, 1935.

Serving in Difficult Times

At the Society's office in Prague, I learned to operate the typesetting machines and to compose type into pages. We produced tracts for our brothers in Germany, who were under ban by Hitler, and also produced *The Watchtower* in several languages. However, these were difficult times for our work in Europe, and finally the authorities closed our branch in December 1938.

I returned home to Bratislava, where the government had passed into the hands of Nazi sympathizers, and I worked unobtrusively for two months doing house-to-house preaching. About this time the Central European Office of the Watch Tower Society in Bern, Switzerland, wrote me that if I was willing to serve as a pioneer anywhere in the world, I should come to Bern.

I accepted the invitation and left home. It was the last time I saw my father, and it would be 30 years before I would see my mother again. But Jehovah guarded all three of us through the many difficulties that followed. For example, I learned later that the infamous Hlinka Guarda (a kind of Slovakian SS) was after me the day I

left Bratislava. And on the trip, when Nazi agents learned that I was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, they tried to get me arrested at the borders of Yugoslavia and Italy. But Jehovah kept guarding me. —Psalm 48:14; 61:3.

In Bern I learned that I would be sent to Shanghai, China, but later this assignment was changed to Brazil. I worked at the branch in Bern until I received my visa for Brazil. By this time troubles in Europe were increasing. Borders were being closed, so in August 1939 the Society urged me to get into France. The Brazilian merchant ship *Siqueira Campos* was leaving from Le Havre, France, August 31, and I was to be on it. Just four hours before World War II broke out, the ship sailed.

The dozen or so passengers I traveled with in the second-class cabin section, I later learned, were all Nazi agents. They did not like my preaching at all. Several times they tried to get me off the ship. In Vigo, Spain, the friendly captain warned me not to go ashore while there. In Lisbon, Portugal, the Nazi agents falsified the departure time of the ship on the notice board so that I would be stranded there. But again Jehovah was guarding me. (Psalm 121:3) I arrived in Santos, Brazil, on the evening of September 24, 1939. The next day I traveled up to São Paulo, where the Society's office was located.

Serving in Brazil

In September 1939 there were only 127 Witnesses in Brazil, which then had a population of about 41 million people. After about a week in São Paulo, I left for my pioneer assignment in the southernmost state, Rio Grande do Sul. I was to stay with some German-speaking Witnesses of Polish descent who lived in a remote jungle area.

The train trip took four days. The end of the line was Giruá, which resembled a wild West town of the early days of North America. From Giruá I still had some 20 miles (32 km) to go into the jungle to get to where the Witnesses lived. A delivery truck gave me a ride, leaving me off on a dirt road. Traveling on by foot for about a mile through virgin forest and wading through a small stream, I finally arrived.

Because of the remoteness of the area, my pioneer service was restricted to times when someone could take me along on a small horsedrawn wagon. Reaching people involved traveling for days, sleeping on dirt roads to avoid snakes or under the wagon when it rained. We also preached in such towns as Cruz Alta.

In 1940 the Society reassigned me to Pôrto Alegre, the capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. There I joined my childhood friend Otto Estelmann, who had also been assigned to Brazil. The authorities there seemed to be Nazi sympathizers. We were arrested and given the choice of signing a paper renouncing our faith or leaving on the evening train for confinement at the Uruguayan border. We were on the train that evening.

Under Restriction

There on the border we spent close to two years under house arrest. But again Jehovah came to our aid. Some Jewish businessmen offered their help. As a result, instead of being kept in jail, I was permitted to do secular work, but we were kept under close surveillance. We were not able to make contact with the Society's branch office.

However, one day on the street we met a pioneer brother from Europe who had been assigned to Uruguay. He just happened to be visiting the border. What a reunion! He gave us a German Bible and

an English *Watchtower*. That is when I really started studying English.

Then, on August 22, 1942, Brazil declared war on Germany and Italy, which meant a change in our situation. We were brought back to Pôrto Alegre, and after some questioning, I was released. Afterward, I met some young Witnesses whom I had known earlier in the jungle area where I had first been assigned. So I was able to make contact with the branch office, and I again began pioneering. Four of these youths joined me in the pioneer work, and we found people who accepted the Kingdom message, some of whom are still preaching.

The new authorities were favorable toward us, so in 1943 we arranged for the first small assembly in Pôrto Alegre. The total attendance was 50, almost half of them plainclothes policemen. A year later, in 1944, we arranged for another assembly. After that I was called to serve at the Society's branch office, which had been moved from São Paulo to Rio de Janeiro.

Gilead and Afterward

In 1950 I was invited to attend the 16th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead at South Lansing, New York. After graduation in February 1951, I received a temporary special pioneer assignment with the South Bronx, New York, Congregation, but later I returned to Brazil.

For about a year and a half I served as a traveling representative of the Society, both as a district overseer and as a circuit overseer. Then, in February 1953, I was called back to the branch office in Rio de



N. H. Knorr speaking, with Erich Kattner interpreting, in São Paulo, Brazil, 1945

Janeiro and assigned to do translation work. Later, from September 1961 to September 1963, I had the privilege of working on a special translation assignment at the Society's headquarters in Brooklyn, New York. While there, I contacted a couple whom I had known in Brazil. The husband agreed to study with me in the hotel where they were staying and became convinced of the truth.

A few months later, when we were back in Brazil, I contacted him again. But he was somewhat complacent. So I told him:

"I'm telling you that unless you act on what you know, you're in trouble"

"Look, Paul, you are a civil engineer. But suppose I were the civil engineer and told you that the roof was ready to fall in on you. What would you do? Well, as a Bible 'engineer,' I am telling you that unless you act on what you know, you're in trouble."

In a short time he was baptized and has been serving as a Christian elder for some years. He was also very instrumental in the construction of the large new branch facilities in Cesário Lange, São Paulo, where 480 of us now work to serve the spiritual needs of the growing number of Witnesses in Brazil.

Continued Increases

In 1945 we had the first visit of the Watch Tower Society's president, Nathan H. Knorr, and also of the then vice president, Frederick Franz. A convention was arranged in the Pacaembu gymnasium in São Paulo City, and I served as translator for the visiting brothers. Our peak attendance was 765.

I remember Brother Knorr looking at the big adjoining stadium and wondering if we would ever fill it. Well, we did in December 1973, when 94,586 packed out Pacaembu Stadium at the "Divine Victory" Convention. This was topped in August 1985 at the "Integrity Keepers" Convention in the Morumbi Stadium, São Paulo City, where 162,941 were present. And simultaneously, another 86,410 were in attendance at a stadium in Rio de Janeiro. Later, 23 additional gatherings raised the total attendance for the "Integrity Keepers" Conventions in Brazil to 389,387!

Over the years, I have been privileged to translate for visiting speakers from the Brooklyn, New York, headquarters. Recently one of them, while he was walking along with me and noting the many persons with whom I had studied over the years coming up to greet me, jokingly said: "I never saw a single man with so many children."

Real highlights in my life have also been the international conventions that I have been able to attend in other countries. At the Nuremberg convention in 1969, I saw my mother for the first time in 30 years. She died faithful in 1973. Father was not allowed to travel out of the country for the convention, and I never did see him again after leaving home. In 1978 I had the privilege of giving the public talk at the international convention in Vienna, Austria, the first big convention I attended in the city of my birth.

During these many years in Brazil, I have witnessed that Jehovah is the One "who makes it grow." (1 Corinthians 3:7) In 1948 we passed the 1,000-publisher mark. After that, the number of publishers jumped to 12,992 in 1958 and to 60,139 in 1970. Instead of the 127 Kingdom publishers we had in September 1939, there were 196,948 in August 1986. Certainly, the 'small one has become a mighty nation' also in this country.—Isaiah 60:22.

But the population of Brazil has also increased, from 41 million in 1939 to more than 135 million now. So we still have a vast field for activity. It has been my joy personally to have been involved in the marvelous increases Jehovah has given, and how thrilling it has been! So I can recommend to anyone who wants to serve Jehovah full-time: Go ahead! Don't be afraid of what might come up, for "Jehovah himself will guard your going out and your coming in."—Psalm 121:7, 8.

Do You Always Get the Point?



THE older brother was furiously angry. The object of his rage was his younger brother. And its cause? His brother had been accorded recognition that he himself had been denied. As his anger grew, a wise acquaintance counseled him to control his hurt feelings. Otherwise something bad would happen. But the man ignored the good advice. Instead, tragically, he killed his younger brother.

That man was Cain, eldest son of our first parents, Adam and Eve. Cain killed his younger brother Abel when Jehovah accepted Abel's sacrifice and rejected Cain's. The wise acquaintance was none other than Jehovah God, who offered the loving counsel that Cain rejected. As a result, murder invaded the fledgling human family, and Cain was sentenced to live the rest of his long life as a rejected outcast. What a sad result from failing to get the point of counsel!—Genesis 4:3-16.

Many centuries after Cain, King David of Israel committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and

the woman came to be pregnant. David tried to handle the problem by urging Uriah to go in to his wife. When he refused, David arranged for Uriah to die on the battlefield and then married Bathsheba to prevent her having to die as an adulteress. A prophet of God came to David and brought to his attention the seriousness of what he had done. David soon grasped the point of the counsel. Thus, although for the rest of his life he suffered the consequences of that crime, Jehovah accepted his heartfelt repentance.—2 Samuel 11:1-12:14.

These two historical examples show the importance of listening to counsel. It can make the difference between success and failure, happiness and sorrow, even life and death. No wonder the Bible says: "The way of the foolish one is right in his own eyes, but the one listening to counsel is wise." (Proverbs 12:15) Yet it is not easy to listen to counsel. Why is this? How can we develop the good attitude of King David in this regard and avoid the bad example of Cain?

Humility Helps

Quite often people find it hard to listen to counsel because they cannot accept the fact that they need help. Or if they do, they cannot see why they should accept counsel from *this* person. Really, this is pride, and a little reasoning can help to overcome it. For example, Paul said: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) That tells us that everyone needs counsel from time to time. It also tells us that even the ones who offer us counsel have shortcomings. No one is exempt. So do not let another person's perceived shortcomings prevent you from accepting any help that he may be in a position to give.

Jesus stressed the need to fight pride when he told his followers: "Unless you turn around and become as young children, you will by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens." (Matthew 18:3) Young children get a sense of security when their parents counsel and guide them. Do you feel the same way when someone counsels you, realizing that such counsel proves that one's love and concern for you? (Hebrews 12:6) King David, whose humble willingness to accept counsel opened the way for Jehovah to accept his repentance, was moved to write: "Should the righteous one strike me, it would be a loving-kindness; and should he reprove me, it would be oil upon the head." —Psalm 141:5.

Such a meek attitude can help us when the counsel we receive touches those areas where there are no set rules. For example, if we are counseled that our grooming or manner of dress is stumbling some in the congregation, it may take real humility to get the point. Nevertheless, doing so would be following the apostle Paul's admonition: "Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person." —1 Corinthians 10:24.

Happily, Jehovah has provided the Bible, which abounds with the finest of counsel. In fact, the word "counsel" in its various forms is found therein more than 170 times. Also, he provides loving shepherds to assist us in applying this counsel. The family arrangement is another provision from Jehovah to render loving assistance by means of counsel from parents who are aware of their responsibilities. Let us always humbly listen to such counsel.

"Be Swift About Hearing"

James 1:19 advises: "Every man must be swift about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath." This is particularly true when we are receiving counsel. Why? For one thing, is it not true that we are often aware of our own shortcomings, and it does not come as a complete surprise when a concerned friend points them out and offers counsel? It surely makes it easier for all concerned if we quickly discern what he is trying to say and humbly accept the loving help.

When a friend approaches us with counsel, we should remember that he or she may be quite nervous. It is not easy to give counsel. Perhaps the would-be counselor has given much thought to the words or approach to be used. An elder may begin the conversation by commending us for

In Our Next Issue

- God's Wisdom
—Can You See It?
- Increase Your Peace Through
Accurate Knowledge
- Traditional Medicine in Africa
—Compatible With
Christianity?

some area of Christian service in which we have been doing well. But that should not cause us to question his motives when he goes on to offer counsel. The one offering counsel may speak in an indirect way at first, trying not to be tactless or blunt. Our being discerning enough to get the point quickly will help the counselor in his task and perhaps spare us hurt feelings.

Sometimes the counselor may use an example or an illustration to help us get the point. One young man had not yet become a serious wrongdoer, but he was on an errant course. In reasoning with him, an older Christian man picked up a ruler that was lying on the desk. Flexing the ruler in his hands, he asked: "If I bend a ruler like this, can I still measure a straight line with it?" The young man got the point. He had been trying to bend the rules to fit his own desires. The illustration helped him to follow the wise advice of Proverbs 19:20: "Listen to counsel and accept discipline."

Recognize Indirect Counsel

Such discernment may help us to benefit from indirect counsel, even without the intervention of someone else. This happened in the case of a young man in Portugal. He was studying the Bible and obtained a copy of the book *Your Youth—Getting the Best out of It*. Just a few days later, he revealed that he had already read the book three times and been helped by it. In what way? Here is what the youth said:

"I had no real hope for the future, but chapter 2 ["Why You Can Look to the Future With Confidence"] has given my life meaning. Also, I have masturbated for some years now; no one ever told me this was displeasing to God as well as harmful to me. After reading chapter 5 ["Masturbation and Homosexuality"], I made a decision to discontinue this practice. Chap-

ter 7 ["Your Clothes and Appearance Talk—About You"] helped me to value my personal appearance, and as you can see, I've already had a haircut."

He continued: "For years I've smoked. Chapter 15 ["Drugs—Key to Real Living?"] straightened me out on that score. I have prayed to Jehovah, and since Sunday I've not smoked another cigarette. You know, for some time I have been having sexual relations with my girlfriend, but chapter 18 ["Does Sexual Morality Make Sense?"] brought to my attention God's point of view on this subject. I already spoke with her about this matter, and she decided to end our relationship."

What a joy it is to see such changes in so short a time in the life of a young person! What made it possible? The fact that he was able to recognize what he read as counsel that applied to him personally.

Heeding Counsel Brings Benefits

Counsel—whether it comes to us indirectly through the Bible or Bible literature, or directly from a friend—can be beneficial. This is seen in the experience of a father who sought help from spiritually older men in his congregation because his 18-year-old son was not responding to his disciplinary efforts. The Christian elders lovingly reasoned with the father, who had a zeal for serving God but apparently needed more balance in dealing with his family.

Paul's words were read to him: "And you, fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) The father was asked to reflect: Had the way he had tried to encourage his son, even though he was well meaning, actually been irritating the boy? Had it been a case of expecting the son to fall in line with the father's own zeal for Christian meetings and service

without trying to implant a love of such things in his heart? Had he helped his son to 'learn to fear Jehovah his God'?—Deuteronomy 31:12, 13.

The father listened to the counsel and applied it. The result? His 18-year-old son is now attending Christian meetings, and the father is conducting a weekly Bible study with him. And as the father commented, "We now have a much better father-son relationship." Yes, both father and son got the point of the counsel.

There is no doubt that we all make mistakes and need counsel from time to time. (Proverbs 24:6) If we get the point and heed wise counsel, we will enjoy many blessings. Among them will be the most precious blessing of all: cultivating and maintaining a meaningful, personal relationship with our loving heavenly Father, Jehovah. Thus, we will echo the words of King David: "I shall bless Jehovah, who has given me advice."—Psalm 16:7.

A "Very Rich Encounter"

DURING the summer of 1984, Gerard, a young man from France, set out on a six-month adventure—a bicycle tour through the United States and Canada. The majestic Rocky Mountains thrilled him, the peaceful parks calmed him, but the scene he saw in Montmagny, Quebec, Canada, impressed him the most; it changed the course of his life.

On Sunday, September 16, Gerard was peddling through Montmagny when he noticed a long line of cars parked alongside the road. Next, he saw hundreds of people milling around a construction site. "What's happening here?" he asked one of the workers who was directing the traffic. Although the man was busy, he took time out to explain to Gerard that all these workers were Jehovah's Witnesses using their weekend to build a hall for their religious meetings. Unknown to Gerard, he had arrived during the final hectic hours of a two-day Kingdom Hall project. He was impressed by all he saw and heard. That night he wrote in his diary: "In the evening I met Jehovah's Witnesses. They have built a house in two days. There were more than 1,000 of them. Very rich encounter."

Shortly thereafter Gerard returned to France. Two years later, on July 26,

1986, he mailed a letter to the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in Montmagny. He wrote:

'Do you still remember talking to a cyclist from France during the second day of your Kingdom Hall building project? That day the traffic controller sowed a seed. Some months later the Witnesses visited me in France, and I accepted the offer to study the Bible with them. Since I'm from a staunch Catholic family, the study was not easy. But Jehovah made the seed grow. Two weeks ago I was baptized at a convention in Nantes. I thank Jehovah for allowing me to find the truth, and I am grateful for all that the brother taught me that Sunday, September 16, 1984. Brotherly greetings from an adventurer converted to the truth.'

What joy the congregation in Montmagny felt after hearing Gerard's letter read in their Kingdom Hall! All those who helped in building the hall experienced the truthfulness of Solomon's words: "Send out your bread upon the surface of the waters, for in the course of many days you will find it again." (Ecclesiastes 11:1) Yes, the good effects of Kingdom Hall projects are long lasting and far reaching in many ways.

Questions From Readers

■ Is it fitting for a Christian to permit an autopsy on a relative?

The Bible does not directly comment on autopsy, but there are some relevant Biblical thoughts that a Christian can consider. Then a personal decision can be made in the light of such texts and the particulars of the given situation.

An autopsy is a surgical (dissection) examination of a corpse in order to determine the cause of death. It can also provide information about the effects or mechanism of disease. Some religions' view of autopsies has been affected by unscriptural teachings. For example, a Catholic encyclopedia states: "The body of the deceased should be treated reverently as the former abode of his soul . . . It is destined to rise with its soul, during the general resurrection, into eternal life . . . There may be an interval between medical death and the soul's departure." However, the Bible shows that when a person (a living soul) dies, he becomes a dead soul. (Genesis 2:7; 7:21-23; Leviticus 21:1, 11) What about his body? Regarding both "the sons of mankind" and the "beasts," we read: "They have all come to be from the dust, and they are all returning to the dust." (Ecclesiastes 3:18-20) In the resurrection, God will not raise the body that has long since become mere dust, but he will provide a body as it pleases him. —See 1 Corinthians 15:38, 47, 48.

Another aspect of the Biblical view of the dead can be considered in connection with autopsy. God commanded Israel: "You must not make cuts in your flesh for a deceased soul, and you

must not put tattoo marking upon yourselves. I am Jehovah." (Leviticus 19:28; Deuteronomy 14:1, 2; Jeremiah 47:5; Micah 5:1) Yes, God's people were not to imitate surrounding nations in mutilating their flesh as a sign of grief over the dead nor for other false religious reasons. This command must also have encouraged the Israelites to manifest respect for their bodies as God's creations.—Psalm 100:3; 139:14; Job 10:8.

Christians likewise should have due respect for their lives and bodies, which they have dedicated to God. (Romans 12:1) Some have concluded that this respectful view of the body should shape their thinking about autopsies. They have felt that unless there was some compelling reason otherwise, they would prefer that the body of a beloved relative not be subjected to a postmortem dissection. They may know that in some places blood taken from cadavers has been used for transfusions or other purposes, of which they would want no part.*

Why, then, have some Christians permitted autopsies? They realize that the Bible does not pointedly comment on this medical procedure. They may also have noted that the Israelites in Egypt permitted the Egyptian physicians to embalm Jacob and Joseph, which likely involved surgical steps to remove internal organs. (Genesis 50:2, 3, 26) In certain cases today, the law of

* Concerning possible use of human body parts for transplant purposes, see *The Watchtower* of March 15, 1980, page 31.

the land requires that an autopsy be performed. For example, if a young, healthy person dies of no apparent cause, a postmortem may be mandatory. Obviously, when the law demands an autopsy, Christians bear in mind the counsel to "be in subjection to the superior authorities."—Romans 13:1, 7; Matthew 22:21.

Even in the case of a person who had been under a doctor's care, and thus the likely cause of death is known, an autopsy may provide helpful information. Surviving children may want to know the precise cause so as to increase information about their family's medical history. Such information could affect their own future life pattern or treatment. There are other reasons, too, why some have permitted an autopsy. A postmortem report documented by tissue studies might enable a family to qualify for survivors' benefits, such as by providing proof of black-lung disease associated with coal mining. Some have even felt that an autopsy could increase their peace of mind by helping them understand what did or did not cause a loved one's death. Persons outside the family might also be involved. The relatives might sincerely feel that permitting an autopsy might help a physician to understand the course of a disease, and thus he might be better equipped to treat others.

Consequently, it is appropriate for Christians to manifest respect for their bodies, but there are other factors that they can consider in deciding whether to permit an autopsy in a particular situation.

APRIL 12 MEMORIAL



"Also, he took a loaf, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them, saying: 'This means my body which is to be given in your behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me.' Also, the cup in the same way after they had the evening meal, he saying: 'This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf.'"—Luke 22:19, 20.

Jehovah's Witnesses invite you to be present for the observation of this very important Memorial celebration. This year the date on our calendar that corresponds to the day Jesus died is Sunday, April 12, after sunset. You can attend on that evening at the Kingdom Hall nearest your home. Check with Jehovah's Witnesses locally for the exact time.