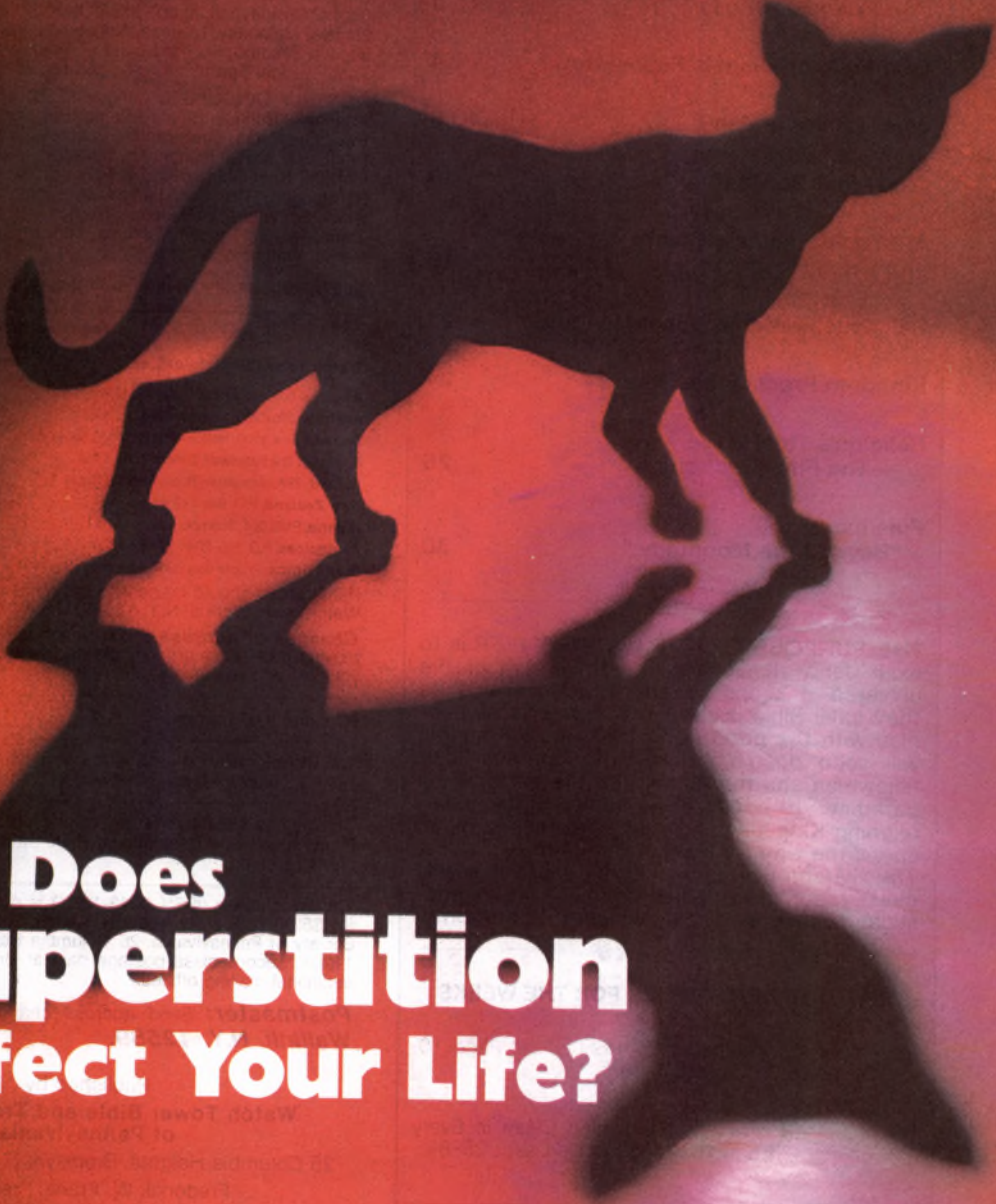


The Watchtower

November 1, 1987

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



**Does
Superstition
Affect Your Life?**

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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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Religion and Superstition

ON Saturday, June 11, 1983, villagers on the Indonesian island of Java could be seen rushing to their houses, frantically sealing all cracks in ceilings, windows, and doors. Why the panic? A solar eclipse had begun, and the villagers feared that the shadow of the eclipse would enter their houses and cause calamity.

Inhabitants of the so-called developing world often follow such beliefs with religious fervor. Thus, in some parts of Africa, people avoid walking in the sun at noontime because they "may become insane." Children are forbidden to eat eggs for fear "they will become thieves." Parents will not tell the exact number of their children, for "witches may hear you bragging and take one of them."—*African Primal Religions*.

Westerners tend to laugh at such practices as a display of superstitious fear, the product of 'pagan ignorance.' Yet, such beliefs are not limited to non-Christians. They "are found among people all over the world," says Dr. Wayland Hand, professor of folklore and Germanic languages. He and his colleague Dr. Tally have already col-

Friends or Foes?



lected nearly a million examples of superstitions in the United States alone.

Yearning to know their fate, many so-called Christians look to astrology—one of the oldest forms of superstition. And curiously, superstitious beliefs sometimes receive the open support and backing of religious leaders. For example, on a cold day in New York, January 10, 1982, Eastern Greek Orthodox patriarch Vasilios presided over an open-air Mass to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. After that, reports the *New York Post*, he hurled a golden cross into the East River and told bystanders that the first person to retrieve the cross would have good luck for the rest of his life.

But are Christian beliefs and superstition compatible? A writer once observed: "On the grave of faith there blooms the flower of superstition." Therefore, would you not expect Christian religion to counteract and dispel superstitious fear?

Religion —Does It Dispel Superstitious Fear?

True religion should, and in the first century it did. Although the early

Christians were living in the midst of the superstitious Roman world, they rejected superstitions. But after the death of Christ's apostles, false religious teachings, including superstitions, began to filter into the congregation. (1 Timothy 4:1, 7; Acts 20:30) A clergy class began to emerge that, according to the book *A History of the Christian Church*, went along with the practice of using horoscopes and following other superstitions. In time such popular practices were labeled "Christian."

And today? Religion still tolerates superstitious customs. Consider Suriname, where so-called Christians of African descent can often be seen wearing amulets for supposed protection against evil spirits. Says one observer: "Daily these people live, eat, work and sleep in dread." Millions throughout the world have a similar fear of the "spirits" of the dead. Ironically, religion has often promoted such superstitious beliefs.

Take as an example what happened on the African island of Madagascar. When Christendom's missionaries began to spread their beliefs, the Madagascans were responsive but unwilling to let go of traditional beliefs. The reaction of the

churches? Says the *Daily Nation*, a newspaper from Kenya: "The early missionaries were tolerant and flexible and came to accept this situation." The result? Today, half the people of Madagascar are listed as Christian. Yet, they also fear the "spirits" of dead ancestors! Thus, they commonly invite the priest or pastor to bless the bones of an ancestor before they are put back in the family sepulcher. Yes, religious leaders have perpetuated the lie that God, the Devil, and dead ancestors can be cajoled, flattered, and bribed by observing superstitious habits.

The same is true in South Africa, where 77 percent of the population claims to be Christian and church attendance is high. Yet, traditional African religion, with its superstitious fear of dead ancestors, lingers on among millions of those churchgoers. Thus, in many so-called Christian countries, religion is merely a veneer. Scratch the surface, and the old superstitions can be seen to have survived and thrived.

True religion, however, dispels superstitious fear. How? The key is knowledge. Knowledge of what? And how can you get it?

True Religion Dispels Fear How?

BBRITISH authors Edwin and Mona Radford were puzzled. After collecting over two thousand superstitions, they found the same superstitious fears in Scotland, India, and Uganda, and in Central America as well. They wondered, "What could account for this?" Writer Robertson Davies correctly observes: "Superstition seems to have a link with some

body of belief that far antedates the religions we know." Then, what pre-Christian "body of belief" is the root of superstition?

Superstition's Root and Branches

The Bible points to the land of Shinar (the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, later called Babylonia) as the birthplace of false religious con-

cepts, including superstitions. There, "a mighty hunter" named Nimrod began the building of the infamous Tower of Babel. It was to be used for false worship. Jehovah God, though, frustrated the plans of the builders by confusing their language. Gradually, the building work halted, and they were scattered. (Genesis 10:8-10; 11:2-9) But wherever they settled, they carried the same beliefs, ideas, and myths with them. Babel, however, remained a center of false religion, in time also expanding its role as mother and wet nurse to magic, sorcery, and superstitious beliefs, such as astrology. (Compare Isaiah 47:12, 13; Daniel 2:27; 4:7.) Thus, the book *Great Cities of the Ancient World* notes: "Astrology was based upon two Babylonian ideas: the zodiac, and the divinity of the heavenly bodies. . . . The Babylonians credited the planets with the influences that one would expect of their respective deities."

How have these ancient events affected us? The Bible book of Revelation indicates that a worldwide, false religious system has developed from the ideas of ancient Babylon. It exists down to our day and is called "Babylon the Great." (Revelation 17:5) Of course, the passing of time and local developments have influenced those original Babylonian ideas. The great diversity of religion seen today is the result. But just



Superstitions spread worldwide from their fountainhead at Babylon

as diverse trees often grow in the same soil, so diverse religions and superstitions around the world have their roots in common ground—Babylon. To illustrate, let us see how one of Babylon's superstitious beliefs has filtered into nearly all religions of the world today.

Fear of the Dead —Based on What?

The Babylonians believed that a spiritual part of man survived the death of the fleshly body and could come back to affect the living for good or for bad. They thus invented religious rites designed to appease the dead and avoid their vengeance. This belief is still alive in many lands today. In Africa, for example, it "plays a vital role in the everyday life of almost every . . . society."—*African Religions—Symbol, Ritual, and Community*.

Even professed Christians in such lands are affected. For example, Henriette, a 63-year-old woman of African descent, admits: "Although I was an active

member of the local Protestant church, I feared the 'spirits' of the dead. We lived close to a cemetery, and whenever a funeral procession approached our house, I woke up my child and held it close until the procession had passed. Otherwise, the 'spirit' of the dead would enter my house and possess the sleeping child."

Such superstition survives because the

teaching of the immortal soul prevails in Christendom. History shows that Greek philosophers—especially Plato—elaborated on the Babylonian idea of immortality. Under their influence, writes John Dunnett, a British senior lecturer in theology, “the concept of the immortality of the soul came largely to permeate the Christian Church.” This Babylonian teaching has kept millions in slavery to superstitious fear.

True religion, however, dispels such fear. Why? Because true religion is not based on beliefs rooted in Babylon but on teachings found in the Bible.

The Soul According to the Bible

The first book of the Bible tells us that man *became* a soul, a living person. (Genesis 2:7) So when a person dies, the soul dies. Confirms the prophet Ezekiel: “The soul that is sinning—it itself will die.” (Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 3:23) The soul is mortal and does not live on after death. Instead, as Psalm 146:4 says: “His spirit goes out, he goes back to his ground; in that day his thoughts do perish.” Hence, lecturer John Dunnett concludes, the immortality of the soul “remains a non-Biblical belief.”

If there is no immortal soul, there can be no “spirits” of the dead to terrify persons on earth. The foundation for superstitious fear of the dead thus crumbles.

Fear Based on Deception

Superstitious fear of the dead dies hard. Why? Because eerie things do happen—like that night when a middle-aged woman in Suriname heard someone calling her name. She ignored it, but invisible “hands” then began to touch her, and when she objected to that, she was nearly strangled by an invisible force. Perhaps you wonder, ‘If the “spirits” of the dead are not alive, then who was responsible?’

Again, Bible knowledge dissolves superstitious fear.

It explains that wicked spirit forces, called demons, do exist. Those demons, however, are not departed souls. They are angels of God who rebelled and sided with Satan, “who is misleading the entire inhabited earth.” (Revelation 12:9; James 2:19; Ephesians 6:12; 2 Peter 2:4) The Bible shows that the demons find delight in misleading, frightening, and harassing humans. The account at Luke 9:37-43 relates that a demon threw a boy “into convulsions with foam” and afflicted him with bruises. Even when the boy was led to Jesus, “the demon dashed him to the ground and violently convulsed him. However,” the account continues, “Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy and delivered him to his father.”

Interestingly, the *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* defines superstition as “the worship of false gods.” Thus, if you perform such superstitious acts, you are, perhaps unwittingly, appeasing “false gods,” or the demons! Such false worship is a serious offense against Jehovah God.—Compare 1 Corinthians 10:20 and Deuteronomy 18:10-12.*

‘Subject Yourselves to God’—Do You?

Would you have the courage to turn your back on those demons by rejecting superstition? True, demons are powerful. But after showing that we have to choose to serve either Jehovah God or the demons, the apostle Paul asked: “We are not stronger than [Jehovah] is, are we?” (1 Corinthians 10:21, 22) No, we are not—but remember, neither are Satan and

* Some Bible versions (for example, the *King James Version*, *Douay*, *The Comprehensive Bible*) use the word “superstition” at Acts 25:19 to translate the Greek word *dei-si-dai-mo-ni’as*, meaning “dread of demons.” See also *New World Translation Reference Bible* footnote.



his demons! Instead, those demons “shudder” out of dread of Jehovah. (James 2:19) But the Almighty God offers you his protection if you ask for it. Bible writer James further says: “Subject yourselves, therefore, to God; but oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7) Your superstitious fear will likewise flee.

Thousands around the globe who once lived in fear and slavery to superstitious customs can now testify to that. The Devil fled from them! In what way? Remember, the enemy of superstitious fear is knowledge. Says Professor Rudolph Brasch, an expert on the origin of superstitions: “It’s a matter of education—that the more educated people get, the less superstitious they get.”

Thus, when Henriette, mentioned before, accepted the invitation of Jehovah’s Witnesses to begin a free study of the Bible, she soon saw through the demonic ruse. The tentacles of superstition lost their grip. She, and thousands like her, have experienced the truthfulness of the words at Hebrews 2:15. There, the apostle Paul says that Jesus will “free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.” (*New International Version*) Just as the tropical morning sun



evaporates the heavy dew of the rain forest, the light of Bible truth dispels all superstitious fear.

Today, numerous former ‘fearful slaves’ have removed the amulets from their necks and the protective strings from their children. Now they feel as does Isaac, a 68-year-old former South African witch doctor. After studying the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses, he said: “I feel very happy and free because I am no longer burdened by the fear of spirits.” How true Jesus’ words prove to be: “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free!” —John 8:32.

Yes, true religion does dispel fear!

What Defiles a Man?

OPPPOSITION to Jesus becomes stronger. Not only do many of his disciples leave but Jews in Judea are seeking to kill him, even as they did when he was in Jerusalem during the Passover of 31 C.E.

It is now the Passover of 32 C.E. Likely, in accordance with God's requirement to attend, Jesus goes up to the Passover in Jerusalem. However, he does so cautiously because his life is in danger. Afterward he returns to Galilee.

Jesus is perhaps in Capernaum when Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem come to him. They are looking for grounds on which to accuse him of religious lawbreaking. "Why is it your disciples overstep the tradition of the men of former times?" they inquire. "For example, they do not wash their hands when about to eat a meal." This is not something required by God, yet the Pharisees consider it a serious offense not to perform this traditional ritual, which included washing up to the elbows.

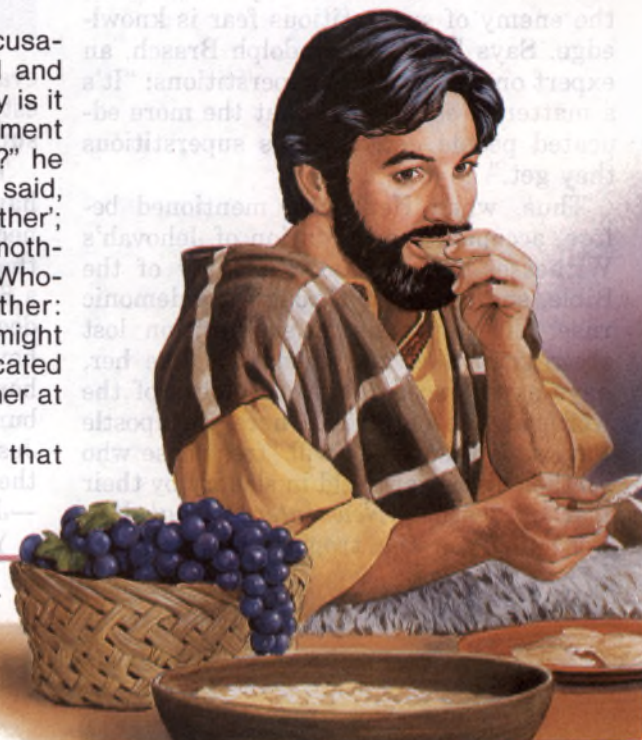
Rather than answering their accusation, Jesus points to their wicked and willful breaking of God's Law. "Why is it you also overstep the commandment of God because of your tradition?" he wants to know. "For example, God said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Let him that reviles father or mother end up in death.' But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother: 'Whatever I have by which you might get benefit from me is a gift dedicated to God,' he must not honor his father at all.'"

Indeed, the Pharisees teach that

money, property, or anything dedicated as a gift to God belongs to the temple, and it cannot be used for some other purpose. Yet, actually, the dedicated gift is kept by the person who dedicated it. In this way a son, by simply saying that his money or property is "corban"—a gift dedicated to God or to the temple—evades his responsibility to help his aged parents, who may be in desperate straits.

Properly indignant at the Pharisees' wicked twisting of God's Law, Jesus says: "You have made the word of God invalid because of your tradition. You hypocrites, Isaiah aptly prophesied about you, when he said, 'This people honors me with their lips, yet their heart is far removed from me. It is in vain that they keep worshiping me, because they teach commands of men as doctrines.'"

Perhaps the crowd had backed away to allow the Pharisees to question Jesus. Now, when the Pharisees have no



answer to Jesus' strong censure of them, he calls the crowd near. "Listen to me," he says, "and get the meaning. There is nothing from outside a man that passes into him that can defile him; but the things that issue forth out of a man are the things that defile a man."

Later, when they enter a house, his disciples ask: "Do you know that the Pharisees stumbled at hearing what you said?"

"Every plant that my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted," Jesus answers. "Let them be. Blind guides is what they are. If, then, a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

Jesus seems surprised when, in behalf of the disciples, Peter asks for clarification regarding what defiles a man.

"Are you also yet without understanding?" Jesus responds. "Are you not aware that everything entering into the mouth passes along into the intestines and is discharged into the sewer? However, the things proceeding out of the mouth come out of the heart, and those things defile a man. For example, out of the heart come wicked reasonings, murders, adulteries, fornications, thieveries, false testimonies, blasphemies. These are the things defiling a man; but to take a meal with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

Jesus is not here discouraging normal hygiene. He is not arguing that a person need not wash his hands before preparing food or eating a meal. Rather, Jesus is condemning the hypocrisy of religious leaders who deviously try to

circumvent God's righteous laws by insisting on unscriptural traditions. Yes, it is wicked deeds that defile a man, and Jesus shows that these originate in a person's heart. **John 7:1; Deuteronomy 16:16; Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23; Exodus 20:12; 21:17; Isaiah 29:13.**

- ♦ What opposition does Jesus now face?
- ♦ What accusation do the Pharisees make, but according to Jesus, how do the Pharisees willfully break God's Law?
- ♦ What does Jesus reveal are the things that defile a man?



“You Must Be Holy . . . ”

“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 1:15, 16.

“HOLINESS belongs to Jehovah.” These stirring words were displayed for all to see, engraved upon a pure gold plate tied upon the turban worn by the high priest of Israel. (Exodus 28:36-38) They served as a shining reminder that unlike the heathen nations who rendered homage to unclean deities, Israel worshipped a clean, holy God.

² If you are already one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, do you appreciate just how pure, clean, holy, and righteous is the God whom you worship? A reminder of such an elementary truth may hardly seem necessary. After all, as Jehovah’s people, we have been blessed with an insight into “the deep things of God”—intricate Bible prophecies, the application of Bible principles, Bible doctrine. (1 Corinthians 2:10; compare Daniel 12:4.) Yet, it is evident that a heartfelt appreciation of Jehovah’s holiness is lacking on the part of some. Why? Because thousands each year lapse into forms of immorality. Thousands more

1, 2. (a) What reminder was displayed on the turban of the high priest, and what purpose did it serve? (b) Why is a reminder of Jehovah’s holiness appropriate today? (c) What admonition does Peter give regarding holiness?



invite calamity by engaging in actions that are just short of being violations of Bible law. Clearly, some do not grasp the seriousness of the words 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.’”

Holy God, Holy Worshipers

³ ‘An imperfect person—holy? Impossible!’ you might say. However, consider the background of Peter’s admonition. The apostle here quoted words that were first addressed to Israel shortly after the Exodus from Egypt. Through this miraculous

3. What does Moses’ song indicate as to Jehovah?

deliverance, Jehovah had been revealed as a Deliverer, a Fulfiller of promises, “a manly person of war.” (Exodus 3:14-17; 15:3) In a song celebrating the Egyptian debacle at the Red Sea, Moses now revealed yet another facet of Jehovah: “Who among the gods is like you, O Jehovah? Who is like you, proving yourself *mighty in holiness*?” (Exodus 15:11) This is the first recorded occasion on which holiness was ascribed to Jehovah.

⁴ The Hebrew and Greek words rendered “holy” in the Bible convey the idea of being ‘bright, new, fresh, untarnished, and clean.’ Moses thus portrayed Jehovah as clean in the superlative degree, devoid of impurity, beyond corruption, unrelentingly intolerant of uncleanness. (Habakkuk 1:13) Jehovah stood in radiant contrast to the gods of the land the Israelites would soon inhabit—Canaan. Documents unearthed at Ras Shamra, a town on the north Syrian coast, give a limited, but nonetheless illuminating, glimpse of the Canaanite pantheon. These texts describe gods that were, according to John Gray’s book *The Canaanites*, “contentious, jealous, vindictive, lustful.”

⁵ Predictably, Canaanite culture reflected the dissolute gods they worshiped. Explains *The Religion of the People of Israel*: “Acts in imitation of the deity were regarded as service to the god. . . . [The sex goddess] Ashtart had a number of men and women ministrants who were described as consecrated persons . . . They consecrated themselves in her service to prostitution.” Adds scholar William F. Albright: “At its worst, however, the erotic aspect of their cult must have sunk to

4. (a) In what way is Jehovah “mighty in holiness”? (b) How did Jehovah thus contrast with the gods of Canaan?

5, 6. (a) How did worshiping dissolute gods affect the Canaanites? (b) How did worshiping the holy God affect the Israelites?

The worship of dissolute gods led to the degradation of the Canaanites



Courtesy of the British Museum, London

extremely sordid depths of social degradation.” The worship of phallic “sacred poles,” child sacrifices, magic, binding with spells, incest, sodomy, and bestiality—all of these became ‘the way of the land’ in Canaan.—Exodus 34:13; Leviticus 18:2-25; Deuteronomy 18:9-12.

⁶ Jehovah, on the other hand, is “mighty in holiness.” He could not tolerate such degradation in his worshipers. (Psalm 15) So, unlike the degrading Canaanite gods, Jehovah elevated his people. Uttering the words Peter would later quote, Jehovah repeatedly exhorted: “You should prove yourselves holy, because I Jehovah your God am holy.”—Leviticus 11:44; 19:2; 20:26.

‘The Law Is Holy, Righteous, and Good’

⁷ ‘Proving themselves holy’ meant neither perfection nor an assumed air of false

7, 8. (a) How could the Israelites ‘prove themselves holy’? (b) Contrast Jehovah’s Law with the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi.

Hammurabi's law brought order to the realm and glorified the king, but it did not bring holiness to the Babylonians



Louvre Museum, Paris

piety; it meant obedience to an extensive law code given to Israel through Moses. (Exodus 19:5, 6) Unlike any other national law, God's Law could be described as "holy and righteous and good."—Romans 7:12.

⁸ True, the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, which is said to predate the Mosaic Law, covered a similar span of subjects. Some of its statutes, such as the law of 'eye for eye,' or talion, are similar to Mosaic principles. Critics thus claim that Moses merely borrowed his laws from Hammurabi's code. Hammurabi's code, however, did little more than glorify Hammurabi and serve his political interests. God's Law was given to Israel 'for their good always, that they might keep alive.' (Deuteronomy 6:24) There is also little evidence that Hammurabi's law was ever legally binding in Babylon, serving as little more than "legal aid for persons in search of advice." (*The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1985 edition, Volume 21, page 921) The Mosaic Law, though, was binding and carried just penalties for dis-

obedience. Finally, Hammurabi's code focuses on how to deal with wrongdoers; only 5 out of its 280 laws are direct prohibitions. The thrust of God's Law, however, was toward preventing, not punishing, wrongdoing.

⁹ Because it was 'holy, righteous, and good,' the Mosaic Law had a powerful impact upon the personal lives of the Jews. It regulated their worship, provided for Sabbaths of desisting from work, controlled the nation's economic structure, outlined some requirements as to clothing, and gave beneficial guidance in matters of diet, sexual activity, and hygienic habits. Even normal body functions came under the scrutiny of the Mosaic Law.

"The Commandment of Jehovah Is Clean"

¹⁰ Such detailed regulations covering day-to-day living had a lofty purpose: to make the Israelites clean—physically, spiritually, mentally, and morally. For example, laws requiring them to bathe themselves, bury their excreta, quarantine the contagiously ill, and avoid certain foods all promoted health and physical cleanness.* —Exodus 30:18-20; Leviticus, chapter 11; 13:4, 5, 21, 26; 15:16-18, 21-23; Deuteronomy 23:12-14.

* Hammurabi's law had no such provisions; nor has a comparable hygienic code been discovered among the ancient Egyptians, although they practiced a relatively advanced form of medicine. Says the book *Ancient Egypt*: "Magical spells and formulae are freely interspersed [in Egyptian medicine texts] with rational prescriptions." God's Law, however, had no demonic overtones but was scientifically sound. Only in modern times, for example, have doctors seen the need to wash after touching corpses, something the Mosaic Law required millennia ago!—Numbers, chapter 19.

9. What impact did the Mosaic Law have on the lives of the Jews?

10. (a) Why did the Law concern itself with so many areas of life? (b) How did the Law promote physical cleanness and good health? (Include footnote.)

¹¹ Yet, good health and sanitation were really secondary to spiritual cleanness. That is why one who perhaps ate one of the prohibited foods, engaged in sexual relations, or touched a dead body was also declared unclean in a ceremonial way. (Leviticus, chapters 11, 15; Numbers, chapter 19) Such an unclean one was thus barred from participation in worship—in some cases under the pain of death! (Leviticus 15:31; 22:3-8) But what did such prohibitions have to do with spiritual cleanness?

¹² Pagan worship was characterized by prostitution, the worship of the dead, and revelry. But *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* points out: "No sexual act was permitted as a means of worshipping Yahweh. All such activity in this regard, therefore, rendered one unclean. . . . In Israel the dead received their proper honor, but in no way were they given undue veneration nor did they become objects of worship . . . Further fellowship at the festivals of pagan neighbors, which would include banqueting, was impossible for an Israelite, because their food was unclean." The regulations of the Law thus constituted a "wall" of separation from unclean religious elements.—Ephesians 2:14.

¹³ The Law also worked for the mental cleanness of the Israelites. Its statutes regarding marital intimacies, for example, served to elevate man's thinking. (Leviticus 15:16-33) Israelites learned self-control in sexual matters, not giving in to unrestrained passion like the Canaanites. The Law even taught its adherents to control their feelings and desires, condemning covetous thinking.—Exodus 20:17.

11. What did it mean to be ceremonially unclean?

12. How did the laws of ceremonial cleanness promote spiritual cleanness?

13. How did the Law promote mental cleanness?

¹⁴ Most remarkable of all, though, was the Law's stress on moral cleanness. True, Hammurabi's code also condemned such wrongs as adultery. However, an article in *The Biblical Archaeologist* observed: "Unlike the Babylonians and the Assyrians who viewed adultery only as a crime against the proprietary rights of the husband, the Old Testament legislation considers adultery also as a grave offense against morality."

¹⁵ How true, then, the psalmist's words: "The commandment of Jehovah is clean, making the eyes shine." (Psalm 19:8) Granted, at times remaining clean required considerable effort. New mothers, just weeks after the birth of their children, had to go up to Jerusalem so as to engage in purification procedures. (Leviticus 12:1-8; Luke 2:22-24) Both men and women were required to cleanse themselves ceremonially following marital relations, as well as in other related situations. (Leviticus 15:16, 18; Deuteronomy 23:9-14; 2 Samuel 11:11-13) If they conscientiously followed the Law and remained clean, they would 'benefit themselves'—physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually. (Isaiah 48:17) Furthermore, the importance and seriousness of remaining clean would be indelibly impressed upon them. Best of all, such sincere efforts to maintain holiness would win them God's approval.

Clean in an Unclean World

¹⁶ We can now better appreciate Peter's

14. How was God's Law unique as to promoting moral cleanness?

15. (a) Illustrate how an Israelite might have had to put forth considerable effort to remain clean. (b) How did the Israelites benefit from such efforts?

16, 17. (a) To what extent are Christians today required to remain clean? (b) Why is remaining clean so difficult today? (c) How have prominent individuals failed as role models?

words to Christians: "As obedient children, 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.

¹⁷ Admittedly, this is not easy. Everywhere we look, we see people practicing deceitfulness, dishonesty, sexual immorality. *The New York Times* reported: "Americans are increasingly choosing to live together before marrying." Even prominent people set poor examples. Some of the most popular people in the world today in the fields of sports, politics, and entertainment openly practice forms of uncleanness. "It's terribly disappointing," bemoaned a sports fan, "to have faith in someone as a role model and have them turn out to be tainted." The problem? Several popular athletes had confessed to drug abuse. How often it is that individuals held up as idols lead unclean lives, yes, even sordid lives, as adulterers, fornicators, homosexuals, Lesbians, thieves, extortioners, and drug addicts! They might appear clean physically, but their mouths are filled with foul gutter language. They may even take delight in flouting public

decency, boasting about their immoral escapades.

¹⁸ Yet, the Bible's words are not easily brushed aside: "God is not one to be mocked. ['There is no thumbing your nose at God.'—*Byington*] For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap; because he who is sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh." (Galatians 6:7, 8) Lewd behavior often results in sickness, or even untimely death, from diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhea, and AIDS, to name the outstanding ones. Mental and emotional imbalance, depression, and even suicide are also at times the result of promiscuous life-styles. So while those sharing in immoral practices may laugh in scorn at those trying to keep themselves clean, the laughter stops as the mockers begin 'reaping what they have sown.'—Compare Romans 1:24-27.

¹⁹ We also live in a religiously defiled world. The clergy may wear beautiful, clean garments, but they teach impure Babylonish practices and doctrines, such as idolatry, the Trinity, hellfire, immortality of the human soul, and purgatory. They are like the religious leaders of whom Jesus said: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you resemble whitewashed graves, which outwardly indeed appear beautiful but inside are full of dead men's bones and of every sort of uncleanness. In that way you also, outwardly indeed, appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."—Matthew 23:27, 28.

²⁰ The clergy even condone uncleanness in their flock. Individuals who are known as immoral and unclean—practicers of fornication, adulterers, homosexuals—are

18. How are many who lead unclean lives 'reaping what they have sown'?

19, 20. How have Christendom's clergy proved themselves religiously and morally contaminated?

Questions for Review

- ☐ How is Jehovah "mighty in holiness," and what does this mean for his worshipers?
- ☐ How did the Law of Moses differ from the laws of all other nations?
- ☐ How did the Mosaic Law promote physical, spiritual, mental, and moral cleanness?
- ☐ How are many who lead unclean lives 'reaping what they have sown'?

permitted to remain in good standing. On this point, *Newsweek* reports: "Maryland psychologist Richard Sipe, a former priest, concludes that about 20 percent of the 57,000 U.S. Catholic priests are homosexual . . . Other therapists think the true figure today may be closer to 40 percent." Catholic theologian John J. McNeill (an admitted homosexual) openly justifies homosexuality: "The love between two lesbians or two homosexuals, assuming that it is a constructive human love, is not sinful nor does it alienate the lovers from God's

plan, but can be a holy love."—*The Christian Century*.

²¹ The reminder displayed on the high priest's turban is thus more apropos than ever: "Holiness belongs to Jehovah." (Exodus 28:36) Jehovah requires, yes, demands, that we remain clean in all respects! But just how can one do so? What areas might need particular attention? The following article will discuss these questions.

21. How is the reminder "Holiness belongs to Jehovah" appropriate for us today?

Are You Remaining Clean in Every Respect?

"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.

SUDDENLY they were free—after 70 years of slavery! A royal decree of about 538 B.C.E. allowed the Jewish nation to return "and rebuild the house of Jehovah the God of Israel." (Ezra 1:2, 3) Next, another startling development: "King Cyrus [of Persia] himself brought forth the utensils of the house of Jehovah, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought out from Jerusalem." (Ezra 1:7, 8) Among these were the sacred vessels Belshazzar and his grandees had defiled on the night of Babylon's fall by brazenly using them to praise false gods! (Daniel 5:3, 4) Now the former exiles could

return these utensils to Jerusalem and use them in praise of Jehovah!

² As they excitedly prepared for departure, the returning Jews doubtless recalled the words of the prophet Isaiah: "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) The Levites, of course, did the actual transporting of the utensils. (Numbers 1:50, 51; 4:15) However, Isaiah had foretold that all returnees would be honorary vessel bearers. All were thus

1. (a) How did a royal decree permit the utensils of Jehovah to be returned to Jerusalem?
- (b) How had some of those vessels been defiled?

2. (a) What prophecy of Isaiah would the returnees call to mind? To whom would it apply?
- (b) Why were they exhorted not to touch anything unclean?



Our homes should be models of cleanness

obliged to be clean. They were not to strip the Babylonians of valuables as did the Israelites when leaving Egypt. (Compare Exodus 12:34-38.) They had to be free of any materialistic or selfish motive in returning. As for Babylon's "dungy idols," just touching one would be defiling.* (Jeremiah 50:1, 2) Only by being clean in every way could the Jews walk "the Way of Holiness" back to Jerusalem.—Isaiah 35:8, 9.

³ Jehovah's Witnesses today must similarly be clean as bearers of Jehovah's "utensils." The apostle Paul quoted Isaiah's words and applied them to Chris-

* The Hebrew word for dungy idols, *gil-lu-lim*, was a term of contempt that originally meant "dung pellets"—something detestable to the Jews.—Deuteronomy 23:12-14; 1 Kings 14:10; Ezekiel 4:12-17.

3. Who today bear Jehovah's "utensils"? Why is it such a challenge for them to remain clean?

tians of his day, saying: "Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear." (2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1) Besides living in an unclean world, we have to grapple with our inherited fallen tendencies. (Genesis 8:21) Jeremiah 17:9 reminds us: "The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate. Who can know it?" Some deceive themselves and others into believing that their lives are clean and acceptable to God, when in reality such is not the case. They practice a form of hypocrisy. Each of us must therefore ask, 'Am I putting forth every effort to be clean before Jehovah in every respect?' To assist us in doing so, let us now focus on four aspects of cleanness.

Physical Cleanness: A Priority

⁴ Physical cleanness is a priority among Jehovah's people today as it was in ancient times. (Exodus 30:17-21; 40:30-32) After all, would we be treating the "utensils of Jehovah" with respect if our hair, hands, face, teeth, or fingernails were dirty, or if we emitted unpleasant body odors? It is easy, though, to let the world's low standards influence us.—Romans 12:2.

⁵ How can we stand out as different from the world if we settle for the world's low standards? Would not a dirty home or a slovenly place of worship cause 'the word of God to be spoken of abusively'? (Titus 2:5) But when we practice good personal hygiene, pick up litter at convention sites, assist in Kingdom Hall maintenance, and keep our homes—even the humblest

4. (a) Why is physical cleanness a priority among Jehovah's people? (b) Why may it be difficult sometimes to maintain a high standard of cleanliness?

5. (a) Why is it so important that we keep our standard of cleanness high? Give local examples of how this counsel could be applied. (b) How can elders assist?

abode—neat and clean, we bring glory to God! (Compare 1 Peter 2:12.) Elders, set a good personal example in cleanliness. Do not “hold back” from giving appropriate counsel where necessary.—Acts 20:20.

⁶ What about the clothing we wear when worshiping at meetings and when in field service? Should it not be ‘modest and well arranged’? (1 Timothy 2:9; Hebrews 10:23-25) Do not reason that we are obliged to dress up only if we have a part on the meeting. Overly casual attire is immodest and inappropriate for worship. Worn-out book bags and dog-eared or soiled Bibles also detract from the Kingdom message.

Avoiding Mental Contamination

⁷ At Philippians 4:8 Paul counseled: “Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things.” Nevertheless, everywhere we are assailed with temptations to peer into “the ‘deep things of Satan.’”—Revelation 2:24.

⁸ For example, the easy availability of pornographic and excessively violent material has resulted in serious problems for some users of videocassette recorders. In Europe, a married brother would watch unclean tapes after his wife had gone to bed. The seed of wrongdoing was firmly planted, resulting in adultery. (Compare James 1:14, 15.) In one African land, a group of Witness youths borrowed un-

6. What should be our standard of dress for meetings and field service?

7. What is the key to mental cleanness, according to Philippians 4:8?

8. How may the dangers posed by various forms of entertainment be illustrated? Give local examples.

Christians must use good judgment in avoiding video tapes and TV programs that could contaminate the mind



clean tapes from school friends and watched them while their parents were away. An elder in Nigeria, however, observes: ‘Greater danger often lies in regular TV programs that similarly depict violence, crime, war, lovemaking scenes, and contempt for marital integrity.’ Cheap tabloid newspapers, pornographic magazines, sexually arousing novels, movies, and debasing music are also prevalent dangers.

⁹ We cannot afford to dirty our minds with things “shameful even to relate.” (Ephesians 5:12) So be selective about what you listen to, watch, and read. Be on guard and react quickly to reject objectionable material. (Psalm 119:37) This will require real self-control, perhaps

9. (a) Why must we be selective about what we listen to, watch, and read? (b) How should we react if confronted with objectionable material?



figuratively 'pummeling your body and leading it as a slave.' (1 Corinthians 9:27) Always remember, though, that what we watch in secrecy is observed by "the One who is invisible." (Hebrews 11:27) So shun what is questionable. "Keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord." —Ephesians 5:10.

"Keeping on Guard" to Stay Morally Clean

¹⁰ At Ephesians 5:5 Paul warned: "For you know this, recognizing it for yourselves, that no fornicator or unclean person or greedy person—which means being an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of the Christ and of God." Yet,

10. (a) What is one reason so many are reprov'd or disfellowshipped each year? (b) What Bible principle should guide our conduct on vacations and at work?

thousands each year are reprov'd or disfellowshipped because of sexual immorality—'sinning against the body.' (1 Corinthians 6:18) Often, it is simply a result of not "keeping on guard according to [God's] word." (Psalm 119:9) Many brothers, for example, drop their moral guard during vacation periods. Neglecting theocratic association, they strike up friendships with worldly vacationers. Reasoning that these are 'really nice people,' some Christians have joined them in questionable activities. Similarly, others have become overly friendly with their workmates. One Christian elder became so involved with a female employee that he abandoned his family and took up living with her! Disfellowshipping resulted. How true the Bible's words, "Bad associations spoil useful habits"!—1 Corinthians 15:33.

¹¹ From South Africa comes this report: "Another danger that threatens the moral uprightness of many is large parties . . . some of which were held after sessions of the district convention." However, smaller Christian gatherings that are well supervised seldom deteriorate into "revelries." (Galatians 5:21) If alcoholic beverages are to be served, do so under supervision and in moderation. "Wine is a ridiculer," and under its influence, some brothers have dropped their moral guard or awakened slumbering weaknesses. (Proverbs 20:1) Thus, two young ministers engaged in homosexual acts after overindulging in alcohol.

¹² When tempted to err, call to mind that, no matter how clean we may appear outwardly, it is what we are inside that counts. (Proverbs 21:2) Some evidently

11. Why should Christian gatherings be properly supervised?

12, 13. (a) How have some justified immoral conduct? Why is such reasoning fallacious? (b) How can we stay on guard against threats to good morals?

feel that God will forgive repeated excursions into immoral conduct because they are weak. But is this not “turning the undeserved kindness of our God into an excuse for loose conduct”? (Jude 4) Some even imagine that “Jehovah is not seeing us.” (Ezekiel 8:12) Remember, though, that “there is not a creation that is not manifest to his sight, but all things are naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have an accounting.” —Hebrews 4:13.

¹³ So be on guard against threats to good morals! “Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people; neither shameful conduct nor foolish talking nor obscene jesting, things which are not becoming.” (Ephesians 5:3, 4) “Abhor what is wicked,” no matter how pleasurable it might be to the flesh.—Romans 12:9.

Keeping Spiritually Clean

¹⁴ Some have exposed themselves to possible spiritual contamination by tuning in to religious radio and television broadcasts. In one African land, some have watched TV dramas that portray the superstitions of traditional animist religions in a favorable light. The apostle Paul, though, warned of a more lethal danger —apostate men who were “subverting the faith of some.” (2 Timothy 2:16-18) Individuals like that still exist! (2 Peter 2:1-3) And at times they have succeeded in sullying the thinking of others. As Proverbs 11:9 says: “By his mouth the one who is an apostate brings his fellowman to ruin.”

¹⁵ Apostates often appeal to the ego, claiming that we have been deprived of

our freedoms, including the freedom to interpret the Bible for ourselves. (Compare Genesis 3:1-5.) In reality, these would-be defilers offer nothing more than a return to the nauseating teachings of “Babylon the Great.” (Revelation 17:5; 2 Peter 2:19-22) Others appeal to the flesh, urging former associates to “take it easy” because the humble work of witnessing from house to house is “unnecessary” or “unscriptural.” (Compare Matthew 16:22, 23.) True, such smooth talkers may look outwardly clean in a physical and moral way. But inside they are spiritually unclean, having given in to prideful, independent thinking. They have forgotten all that they learned about Jehovah, his holy name and attributes. They no longer acknowledge that all they learned about Bible truth—the glorious hope of the Kingdom and a paradise earth and the

Zealous Witnesses keep spiritually clean and find protection and joy through diligent Bible study



14, 15. (a) How have some exposed themselves to spiritual contamination? (b) How do apostates use their ‘mouths’ to bring their fellowman to ruin? (c) In what ways are apostates really unclean, and what have they forgotten?

overturning of false doctrines, such as the Trinity, the immortal human soul, eternal torment, and purgatory—yes, all of this came to them through “the faithful and discreet slave.”—Matthew 24:45-47.

¹⁶ Interestingly, a circuit overseer in France observes: “Some brothers are deceived because they lack accurate knowledge.” That is why Proverbs 11:9 states: “By knowledge are the righteous rescued.” This does not mean giving apostates a hearing ear or delving into their writings. Rather, it means coming to “an accurate knowledge of the sacred secret of God” through diligent personal study of the Bible and the Society’s Bible-based publications. Having this accurate knowledge, who would become so curious as to pay any attention to apostate mouthings? May no man “delude you with persuasive arguments”! (Colossians 2:2-4) False religious propaganda from any source should be avoided like poison! Really, since our Lord has used “the faithful and discreet slave” to convey to us “sayings of everlasting life,” why should we ever want to look anywhere else?—John 6:68.

Will You Remain Clean?

¹⁷ Much is therefore involved in remaining clean before Jehovah God. Keeping our bodies, our homes, our clothing, and our Kingdom Halls physically clean adorns our Kingdom message. Keeping mentally clean helps us stay clean morally and spiritually. This calls for our heeding Paul’s admonition at Philippians 4:8, to keep our minds on things that are true, chaste, and praiseworthy.

¹⁸ We can also appreciate more than ever that we must stay morally clean in

16. How are the righteous rescued “by knowledge”?

17, 18. Why is it vital to cultivate (a) physical cleanness, (b) mental cleanness, (c) moral cleanness, and (d) spiritual cleanness?

both word and deed. Jehovah explicitly warns us that those who engage in any form of immorality will not inherit God’s Kingdom. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) No matter how pleasant such unclean things may seem, if we sow to the flesh, we will reap corruption from the flesh. (Galatians 6:8) Finally, there is the matter of remaining spiritually clean, doctrinally clean. Such cleanness helps us maintain the purity of our hearts and minds. We are thus moved always to seek God’s thoughts on matters—not our own.

¹⁹ Soon the main promoter of uncleanness—Satan the Devil—will, along with his demons, be cast into the deep abyss. Until then, may all of Jehovah’s servants—of the anointed and of the “great crowd”—remain clean as bearers of Jehovah’s vessels. (Revelation 7:9, 13-15; 19:7, 8; 20:1-3) The fight is unrelenting and hard. Remember, though, that Jehovah gives freely of his “spirit of holiness.” (Romans 1:4) His clean organization, with its elders, also stands ready to assist us by offering sound, Scriptural advice. With such help and our own determination, we can remain clean in every respect!

19. What can aid both the anointed and the “great crowd” in remaining clean in all respects?

Questions for Review

- ☐ Why did the Jews returning from Babylon have to be clean?
- ☐ How can we give attention to physical cleanness?
- ☐ How can we protect our minds from contamination?
- ☐ How can we stay on guard against moral dangers?
- ☐ How can we maintain our spiritual cleanness?

Religious Freedom Upheld in India

THE August 11, 1986, Supreme Court verdict in New Delhi took millions by surprise. At a time when nationalism was running strong, few expected that the religious freedom of a mostly unknown religious minority would be respected. But after a close examination of the facts, India's highest court decreed that the children of Jehovah's Witnesses cannot be compelled to sing the national anthem. In a landmark decision the court said:

"We are satisfied, in the present case, that the expulsion of the three children from the school for the reason that because of their conscientiously held religious faith, they do not join the singing of the national anthem in the morning assembly though they do stand up respectfully when the anthem is sung, is a violation of their fundamental right 'to freedom of conscience and freely to profess, practice and propagate religion.'"

Justice O. Chinnappa Reddy and Justice M. M. Dutt of the Supreme Court of India were the judges who heard the now famous anthem case of Jehovah's Witnesses.

How the Issue Arose

Nearly half of the 8,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in India are found in the small state of Kerala in the southernmost part of this vast nation. In most schools there, the national anthem is sung daily. The custom in the particular school in question was for all the students to sing the anthem in chorus. The children of Jehovah's Witnesses, however, merely stood while the others sang. As the Supreme Court judgment said: "No one bothered. No one worried. No one thought it disrespectful or unpatriotic. The children were left in peace and to their beliefs." This was the situation for years.

Then came July 1985. A member of the State Legislative Assembly objected that he thought it was unpatriotic for anyone to refuse to sing the national anthem. A discussion followed, and what was discussed was published in many prominent newspapers in the country.

The authorities of most schools in Kerala, who until then were sympathetic to the children of Jehovah's Witnesses, became afraid because of the objection in the Legislative Assembly and the negative publicity. As a result, the children of Jehovah's Witnesses were dismissed from one school after another.

Children Versus the State

V. J. Emmanuel, whose three minor children, Bijoe, Binu Mol, and Bindu, were expelled from school, sought legal remedy. Mr. Emmanuel was firmly convinced that the law was on his side. He knew that, according to Article 25 (1) of the Constitution of India, "all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion."

Eventually a Division Bench of the High Court of Kerala heard the case, but it

rejected the appeal of V. J. Emmanuel. This was a great shock because the Constitution of India does not say that the national anthem must be sung to show respect for it. It only says that citizens should "abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem." Neither is there any other law requiring all citizens of India to sing the national anthem.

The case was appealed to the Supreme Court of India. In overruling the Kerala High Court, the Supreme Court judgment said: "The High Court misdirected itself and went off at a tangent. They considered, in minute detail, each and every word and thought of the National Anthem and concluded that there was no word or thought in the National Anthem which could offend anyone's religious susceptibilities." Yet, as the Supreme Court correctly noted, "that is not the question at all."

The question is a religious one, namely, the right of individuals to maintain their freedom of worship. The fact is, Jehovah's Witnesses do not sing the national anthem of *any* country. Such anthems are, in effect, hymns or prayers set to music, and Jehovah's Witnesses conscientiously object to singing them. "They desist from actual singing," the Indian Supreme Court judgment understandingly explained, "because of their honest belief and conviction that their religion does not permit them to join any rituals except it be in their prayers to Jehovah their God."

Significantly, the Constitution of India guarantees "freedom of speech and expression," which includes the freedom to be silent. That was what the children were doing when the anthem was sung during the morning assembly at school—they remained silent. Yet, the Kerala educational authorities had, in effect, imposed a ban

on silence. So the question arose whether such a ban was consistent with the rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

The Supreme Court concluded on this matter: "We may at once say that there is no provision of law which obliges anyone to sing the National Anthem nor do we think that it is disrespectful to the National Anthem if a person who stands up respectfully when the National Anthem is sung does not join the singing."

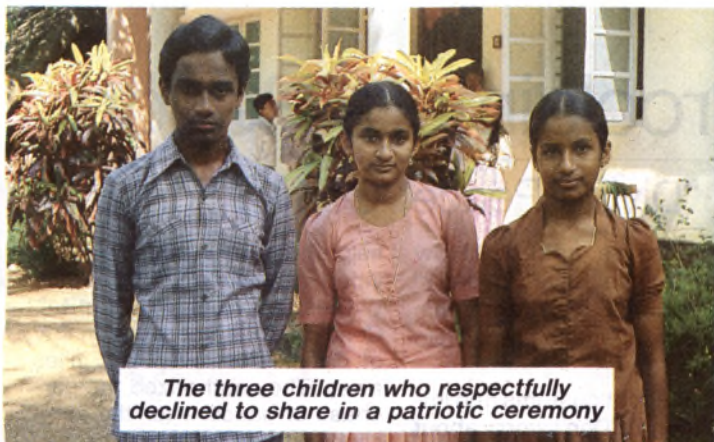
As noted earlier, the duty of every citizen, according to the Constitution, is to 'respect the National Anthem.' Regarding such respect, the Prevention of Insults to National Honor Act of 1971 says: "Whoever intentionally prevents the singing of the National Anthem or causes disturbance to any assembly engaged in such singing shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, or with fines, or with both." The children of Jehovah's Witnesses, however, had never prevented anyone from singing the national anthem. They had never caused any disturbance to any assembly engaged in such singing.

A Threat to National Unity?

One of the State's arguments was that singing the national anthem was essential for the unity and integrity of the country. Yet, does the forced singing of a national anthem really contribute to a country's unity or to the integrity of its citizens?

Interestingly, the Indian national anthem is only in the language of one state, and so it is not understood by the majority of Indians who sing it. Thus, for the majority, singing the national anthem is probably meaningless and constitutes, basically, an empty ritual. Jehovah's Witnesses do not join in such rituals. They pray only to their God, Jehovah.

It was also argued that if the Supreme Court judgment went in favor of Jeho-



The three children who respectfully declined to share in a patriotic ceremony



The dedicated family of the three children



These four persons read of the court case, studied the Bible, and were baptized

vah's Witnesses, it could threaten the security of the country. But Jehovah's Witnesses in India are a small minority, numbering only some 8,000 persons. Would such a small group be a threat to a nation of over 800 million people? Besides, Jehovah's Witnesses are noted worldwide for their honesty and obedience to the laws of the governments under which they reside.

In Nigeria a lawyer said: 'Witnesses are tax-paying and law-abiding citizens. Any Witness who can be honest with his religion to the extent of obeying it at the risk of losing certain privileges will be equally honest in most other things. The reason he refuses to steal government money while his other colleagues sing the national anthem and yet embezzle funds is that his Bible which asks him not to sing the national anthem also said he should not steal.'

The last sentence of the landmark Supreme Court judgment is noteworthy. It said: "We only wish to add: our tradition teaches tolerance; our philosophy teaches tolerance; our constitution practices tolerance; let us not dilute it." Will the government and the leaders appreciate this fine thought? Will the decision by the Supreme Court remain final? Only time will tell.

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

Guinea Welcomes "Divine Peace" Conventioners

THE first four days of 1987 saw the first district convention of Jehovah's Witnesses ever held in the Republic of Guinea, West Africa. Though Guinea is a predominantly Muslim country where the work of Jehovah's Witnesses is not yet officially recognized, the Witnesses there have earned a reputation as good, kind, peaceable people. It was because of this reputation that the government opened the doors wide to receive the "Divine Peace" conventioners.

Among the delegates were nine missionaries who traveled from Freetown, Sierra Leone, in a van and on two motorcycles. At the border, they had to cross a river on a ferry that consisted of three dugout canoes with planks laid across them. Once they had safely crossed with the vehicles, the

missionaries asked: "How much do we have to pay?" "You people are Jehovah's Witnesses," was the reply. "No charge."

What about customs and immigrations? "Don't worry about it," they were told. "Everything has been taken care of. Just wear your lapel cards." Hundreds of other delegates were having similar experiences. Not only had the government of Guinea allowed free passage across the river separating Guinea from Sierra Leone and Liberia; they had waived customs and immigration formalities for anyone possessing a "Divine Peace" lapel badge! One circuit overseer, who came from Liberia, said: "The lapel badge was far better than a passport."

The Guinean government was

helpful in other ways. They provided a vehicle to transport Witnesses from the capital, Conakry, to the convention city of Guéckédou, over 400 miles away. They authorized the purchase of gasoline for the vehicles that had come from Freetown. They directed the hotel nearest the convention site to reserve all their rooms for the Witnesses. They also sanctioned the use of the city hall for the convention, providing it free of charge.

The district governor, who is the highest official in that part of the country, hosted 11 delegates at his own residence. He was also among the 1,132 who listened to the public talk on Sunday.

Jehovah God will not forget such kindness shown to his servants.—Matthew 10:42; 25:40.

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Religion's Tidal Wave

—The Final Reckoning

BONFIRES crackle, sparklers flash, rockets rush to color the sky red, blue, yellow, and green. Potatoes in their jackets. Peals of laughter, shrieks of delight. Bonfire Night in England.

WORKERS found the 25 corpses by accident. The skeletons had been carefully buried, arms folded. Historians thus stumbled onto a trail of mystery going back some 200 years. Quebec, Canada.

The above are two unconnected events with a common root—the Reformation.

AN ARTICLE in our October 1 issue showed that Europe witnessed tremendous religious upheaval in the 16th century. The results spread to other parts of the world. Many aspects of life today are nothing more than gullies left by the Reformation waters. Perhaps they even influence your daily routine. Still more important, we stand on the brink of a final religious catastrophe that will definitely affect your life. Do you know how?

Trace the Reformation tracks in the following countries:

Germany: Some say that Luther's influence on German culture is unequalled by that of any individual in the English-speaking world. His translation of the Scriptures is one of the most widely accepted German Bibles. Luther did much to set the tone of the language and to lay the framework for German domestic relations. He made the State recognize the need for schooling for all, elevating the status of the teaching profession.

Canada: The colonial past saw Britain and France engaged in a tug-of-war that left its mark on one province in particular—Quebec. Originally settled by French Catholic immigrants, Quebec came under British, and hence Protestant, control in 1763. It was shortly before then that the

corpses mentioned at the start of this article were secretly buried near the fortified walls of the city. Why secretly? Because they seem to have been Protestants, who at that time were denied burial in Catholic cemeteries. Quebec still stands as an island of French-speaking Catholicism, and this gives rise to modern separatist movements.

Ireland: Unimpressed by the Reformation, the Emerald Isle kept its distance. In time, Protestant influence seeped across the Irish Sea from England into the northern provinces. The legacy today is a partitioned Ireland. Annual summer marches in Ulster commemorate Protestant victories of the past. Celebrations commonly leave a trail of barricades, bombs, and plastic bullets. The Orange Day Parade in July 1986 left 160 injured. It memorialized the day some 300 years ago when King William of Orange, who made Protestantism in Britain secure, defeated England's last Catholic monarch, James II.

United States: "[The] variety of sects with differing European backgrounds was a potent factor in bringing about religious freedom in America," writes A. P. Stokes in *Church and State in the United States*. Colonial days saw the United States draped in Protestant colors.



Martin Luther and John Calvin—leaders in the Reformation

Calvinist values gave direction in religion, politics, and commerce. The fundamental belief was that each man stood directly accountable to his Creator without priestly mediation. This ideal bred a character intent on working out its own destiny, on reaping the rewards of its own labor.

T. H. White recalls in his book *In Search of History* that at the turn of this century, 13 percent of the U.S. population was Catholic. This proportion rose to over 25 percent by 1960. Even so, few Catholics attained to the upper reaches of politics. White continues: "At the higher level of the Senate, where war and peace were made, where treaties and foreign policy were decided, where Supreme Court Justices were confirmed, Americans still preferred Protestants of the old tradition as custodians of national purpose." The custom was broken when John F. Kennedy became the first Catholic president of the United States.

For further examples from other countries, please see box on page 29.

A Swamped Landscape

Under Protestantism, theological debate swelled, and Bible translations and

commentaries came to float on the tide of liberty and individual expression. However, as time passed, freedom dredged Bible criticism to the surface. New ideas were accommodated; self-determination became the order of the day. Progress was no longer the gentle lapping of waves but the thunderous roar of breakers. The powerful current of reform swept away the very foundations of traditional Christian doctrine. Modern alternatives like evolution, women's liberation, and the 'new morality' have been washed up like driftwood, silent witnesses to the storm. Personalized religion in some Protestant lands left each individual stranded, a castaway on his own lonely island of faith.

Terrain in Protestant areas is molded by a penchant for questioning established norms. People are raised on a credo of progress, freedom, and human rights. Max Weber, German sociologist and economist, published an essay in 1904 on Protestantism and capitalism. He stated that capitalism was not simply a result of the Reformation. But he did discover that in successful capitalist areas of mixed religious backgrounds, it was outstandingly the Protestants who were the owners, the

A powerful current of reform swept away the very foundations of traditional doctrine. Alternatives like evolution, women's liberation, and the 'new morality' have been washed up like driftwood

leaders, the skilled, and the trained. According to *Der Fischer Weltalmanach*, of the 540 Nobel prizes awarded up until 1985, two thirds went to citizens from Protestant cultures. Inhabitants of Catholic environments won only 20 percent. Of the top 20 nations, in terms of gross national product per person, nine were Protestant, two Catholic. On the other hand, of the ten indebted developing countries listed, five were Catholic, none Protestant.

German newsweekly *Der Spiegel* wrote that Calvinist ideals spurred the British on to becoming a major world power. From the 19th century, the growing political strength of the United States, Germany, and Great Britain became a force for social renewal. Equality of opportunity for all was emphasized. Eddies within the mainstream of the Reformation are regarded by some as being precursors of modern socialism. A political awareness of social responsibility paved the way for the welfare state. Especially in Protestant surroundings, civil authorities gradually took over control of the legal aspects of birth, death, marriage, divorce, and inheritance. The availability of divorce and legal abortion in Catholic countries is now often quite different from that in Protestant lands.

Two bulwarks of Protestantism, the United States and Great Britain, grew together into the two-horned beast of Bible prophecy. (Revelation 13:11) A 20th-century giant of politics, the United Nations organization, first called the League of Nations, blossomed out of Protestant initiatives.

The Flood Will Return

A receding tide leaves a tidemark on the beach that reminds us of its pending return. Similarly, the Reformation of the 16th century left visible traces that we can see today. And there is strong evidence that we are standing on the threshold of an ultimate wave of religious change that will surpass all previous upheavals, sweep away false religion forever, and affect everyone alive. Will you survive it? Worldwide, there is a broad-based dissatisfaction with organized religion, among individuals and governments. Why the dissatisfaction?

Religion often goes beyond its spiritual mandate, confusing the cloak of office with the cloth of ordination, the crown with the miter, the scepter with the cross. Some years ago the *Observer* Sunday newspaper raised the question as to whether politicians in Ireland were prepared to take over from the priests the running of the country. Former West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt commented on religious interference in politics by saying, "I do not believe that this can be permitted indefinitely." And *Le Figaro* of Paris accused the church of "meddling in politics" so much that "it is in danger of seeing politics meddle with religion." From India to Egypt to the United States, from Poland to Nicaragua, from Malaysia to Chile, the weary struggle between politics and religion goes on.

This is no surprise, nothing new. Revelation chapter 17 describes the whole of

There is strong evidence that we are standing on the threshold of an ultimate wave of religious change. Will you survive it?

false religion as a harlot, "Babylon the Great," which commits fornication with the politicians of the earth. Verse 4 further pictures her as being "adorned with gold and precious stone and pearls." The religious empire is insatiate, wallowing in luxury, oozing wealth. In the 16th century, the glittering coffers of the Catholic Church attracted longing glances. The same is true of the jewel-studded lucre of all religion in our 20th century.

Governments already cast covetous eyes toward such opulence. Albania saw the more than 2,000 mosques, churches, and other religious buildings, and either secularized or razed them. The *Sunday Times* reported in 1984 that the government of Malta "began eyeing the church's wealth," cutting subsidies of church schools. Asked how the church should make up the loss, a government minister replied: "If need be, they can melt down their gold crosses and silver altars." The Greek Orthodox Church has strongly fought legislation approved earlier this year by the Greek Parliament that would enable the government to take over huge church land holdings (about 10 percent of the area of the country).

Worldwide, religion is a great disappointment. Instead of unifying, it splits asunder. One German daily newspaper noted the "rivalry between Catholics and Protestants that amounts to hatred." The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote that even ecumenical movements, designed to bridge the gap, started out from a position of "mutual distrust, irreconcilable enmity between Catholics and Protestants." Elie Wiesel, 1986 Nobel Peace

Prize winner, was quoted in another German daily as saying: "I often think we have failed. If someone had told us in 1945 that we would yet again see religiously motivated wars raging on practically every continent . . . we would not have believed it." Religion that foments trouble, incites or condones war, is false religion. And the Creator decided long ago to do away with it.

Chapter 17 of Revelation leaves no doubt as to the fate of all false religion. In verse 16 we read: "The ten horns [governmental powers within the United Nations organization] that you saw, and the wild beast [United Nations], these will hate the harlot [false religion] and will make her devastated and naked, and will eat up her fleshy parts and will completely burn her with fire."

Where Do You Stand?

Remarkable as it may seem, false religion has had its day. Its practices, customs, traditions, and privileges will soon

In Our Next Issue

- Can Religion Satisfy Our Needs?
- Singleness—A Rewarding Way of Life
- Anabaptists and "the Pattern of Healthful Words"

If someone had told us in 1945 that we would again see religiously motivated wars raging on every continent, we would not have believed it

disappear. That may seem as unlikely to you as the swamping of the Catholic Church did to people in the 16th century. But the Reformation waters were overwhelming. Church wealth went to the people, its power to the monarchs. Even so in our day, the nations will preside over the final dissolution of false religion.

What does that mean for you personally? Examine the religious institution to which you belong. Does what it stands for agree with the Bible in every way? If not, then your organization is part of "Babylon

the Great," or the world empire of false religion. Follow the command found at Revelation 18:4, which is: "Get out of her, my people, . . . if you do not want to receive part of her plagues."

Remember, the tidal wave bringing conclusive destruction to false religion is on its way. It can be seen on the horizon. Where will you be standing when it brings thunderous destruction? In the valley of indifference? On the hill of some secular authority? Or on the mountain of Jehovah? There is only one safe place to be.

South Africa: Calvinist belief in predestination offered apartheid a theological foundation. The German daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* called the theologians of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (as the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa became known) "architects of the politics of apartheid."

Switzerland: As the center of the Calvinist movement, Geneva attracted many thousands of refugees, who brought with them wealth and know-how. As a result, this is still a major banking city and has a thriving industry producing watches and clocks.

India: The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) grew as part of the Counter-Reformation, a movement to revive Catholicism following Reformation reverses. Society members came to the province of Goa in the 16th century, shortly after its colonization by Portugal. The influence of the church is reflected in the population today: In Goa, 3 persons out of 10 are Catholic, whereas in India overall, only 1 person in 25 is a professed Christian.

England: The year 1605 saw James I, a Protestant, on the throne. As oppression of Catholics in the country grew, a plot was conceived to blow up Parliament, King and all. The conspirators, a group of Catholics led by Guy Fawkes, were discovered and executed. November 5 marks the celebration of Bonfire Night. Families and friends still gather to warm up the damp evening with fireworks and to burn a "guy," or model, of the plotter.

Fine Increase

"Beyond the Mountains"

HAITI was the first black republic in the West to gain independence. Its name comes from the Arawak Indian language and means "mountains." Indeed, there is an old Creole proverb that says: "Beyond the mountains are mountains." This is a good description of the Haitian countryside.

In recent years something remarkable has been happening here "beyond the mountains." Increasing numbers have responded to the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom and taken their stand for Jehovah and his appointed King. (Isaiah 60:22) By 1980 an average of almost 3,000 publishers were reporting field service each month, and the branch office in the capital city of Port-au-Prince was too small to care for their needs. New premises were needed. So in November 1984 construction of a brand-new facility was begun in Santo, a delightful location on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince.

First the property had to be enclosed by a 4,000-foot-long wall. A local company made the concrete panels for this wall, but local Witnesses were hired, and many volunteers worked weekends, to accomplish the project. Then the building construction work was begun, and over a period of three years, as many as a hundred volunteers from the Port-au-Prince congregations helped out on weekends. Members of the International Volunteer Construction Worker Program came from the United States, Canada, and other countries—many at their own expense—to lend a hand.

As construction progressed, an unforeseen problem developed. On one side of the property, there is a ravine. During the rainy season, river waters flood down the ravine, causing considerable erosion. This would eventually have caused the collapse of the fence around that part of the property. So a retaining wall was built right in the riverbed, and the property is now well protected from the rampaging waters that run by during the rainy season.

With Jehovah's help, a fine facility was eventually completed. The branch is a U-shaped structure made of concrete and block. Its left wing has eight bedrooms, a laundry, and a library. The right wing is the literature depot. In the front part of the building, a spacious lobby comfortably accommodates the brothers who arrive from different parts of the country at various times during the month in order to pick up magazines and literature for their respective congregations. The front also houses the offices, dining room, and kitchen.

Along with the branch office, a new Assembly Hall seating about 3,000 was also built on the property. Two sides of the hall are open, so that those seated inside are constantly cooled by the prevailing winds—a welcome relief from the hot Haitian sun. There is also a modern, fully equipped kitchen and facilities to serve refreshments, as well as a baptismal pool and a carpenter shop. The grounds are tastefully landscaped with tropical shrubs and flowers.

By the beginning of 1987, the number



**Views of the
Assembly Hall (top
right) and of the
new branch**

of Witnesses “beyond the mountains” had increased to more than 4,700. What a grand event it was for all of these to come together on January 25, 1987, for the dedication of these two fine buildings! Some foreign brothers who had worked on the site earlier returned with their families to share the occasion.

The dedication program began in the early afternoon with the various members of the Branch Committee explaining the great need that existed for the new buildings because of the fine increase that was taking place in Haiti. After a short intermission, the 5,384 in attendance were treated to a slide program showing the various stages of the construction work.

Finally, the dedication talk was given by Charles Molohan, a visiting zone overseer from Brooklyn, New York. Brother Molohan spoke of the importance of build-

ing for true Christian worship. He discussed how Noah and his family were among the earliest construction workers, and their faithfully completing their work assignment meant survival for the human family, as well as the continuation of true worship on earth. Another ancient building project was Herod’s temple, but this was eventually destroyed because it was not used to promote true worship. (Matthew 23:38) Today, we must be busy building faith and other Christian qualities if we are to avoid a similar eventuality.

It was truly a stimulating and joyful occasion. When it was over, all present returned to their respective homes knowing that this new construction in the land “beyond the mountains” will continue to play a vital role in the gathering of true worshipers in this part of the Caribbean.



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surely broadens my understanding, and I can make better personal application."