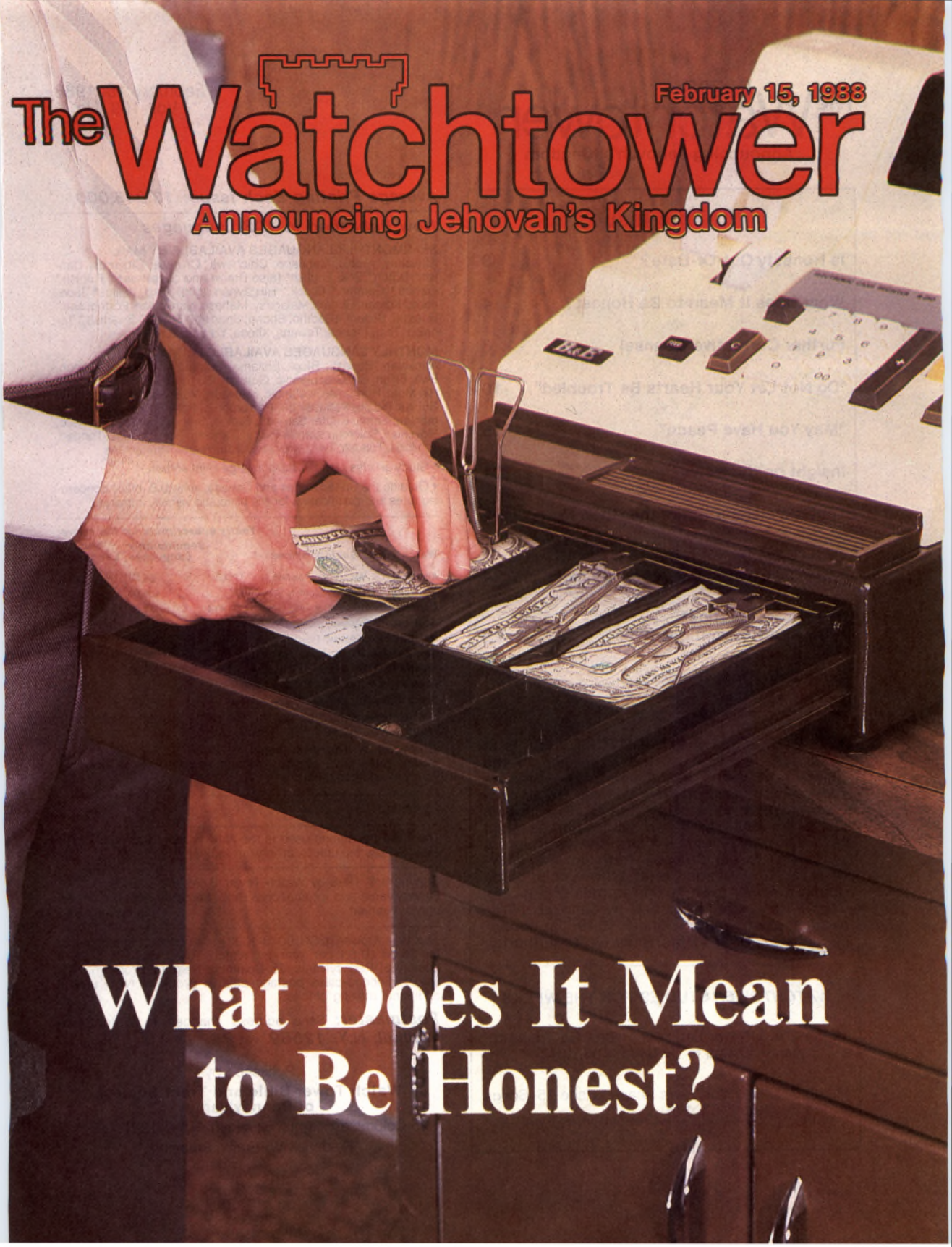
The Watchtower
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom
February 15, 1988



What Does It Mean to Be Honest?

The Watchtower®

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

February 15, 1988
Vol. 109, No. 4

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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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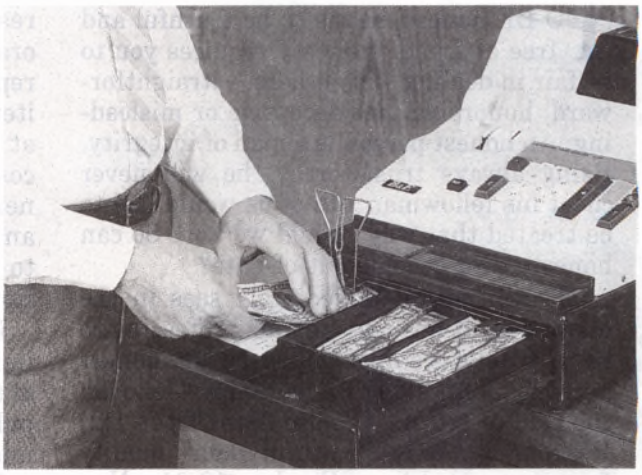
Is Honesty *Out-Of-Date?*

UPHOLDING honesty as a way of life—is that out-of-date in the modern world, abandoned as no longer practical or of any real value? It would seem so. Just consider a few examples of how widespread dishonesty is, the forms it takes, the levels to which it has penetrated, and how costly a burden it has become.

In recent years, West Germany's tax-fraud cost has been estimated at $10 billion (U.S.) a year, and in Sweden the annual cost amounts to $720 (U.S.) per person. So if you live in either land, dishonesty affects what you pay in taxes. Cheating on income-tax payments is so prevalent in the United States that the government loses an estimated $100 billion in revenue annually. Think what a help all that money could be in paying off the staggering federal budget deficit! Moreover, illegal businesses cheat the U.S. government out of another $10 billion. Shoplifting and pilfering in the United States cost stores $4 billion a year, raising the prices on goods. Dishonestly charging long-distance phone calls to someone else's number is costing Americans $1 million annually.

In Canada "time bandits," those who waste time on the job, cost their employers $15 billion (Canadian) a year, "more than three times the total lost through sticky-fingered employees, embezzlement, insurance fraud, vandalism, kickbacks, arson and other actual crimes against business." According to a 1986 study, the burden for time theft in the United States is $170 billion annually.



Successful multimillion-dollar firms greedily steal from their own governments. How? By selling them tools and parts at exorbitant prices: 12-cent allen wrenches for $9,606 (U.S.); 67-cent transistors for $814; 17-cent plastic caps for stool legs for $1,118. "You're talking about billions of dollars" of loss to the government, a U.S. senator said.

Added to the above, bad examples on every hand by prominent persons discourage honesty. As you may have noted, leaders in some lands lie, misrepresent, cover up, and evade their responsibility—yes, even murder political rivals and make it appear that someone else is to blame.

So is being honest out-of-date? Is it no longer the best policy? Is honesty best only because God's Word tells us that we must be honest? The following article is important to you if you want answers to these questions.

What Does It Mean to Be Honest?

TO BE honest means to be truthful and free of fraud. Honesty requires you to be fair in dealing with others—straightforward, honorable, not deceptive or misleading. An honest person is a man of integrity. Being always trustworthy, he will never cheat his fellowman. All of us would like to be treated that way, would we not? So can honesty ever become out-of-date?

The Christian immediately sees in the above definitions why anyone professing to be a true worshiper must be an honest person. (John 4:24) He worships "Jehovah the God of truth." (Psalm 31:5; Titus 1:2) Reasonably, only "truthful men" qualify to represent him.—Exodus 18:21, *New World Translation Reference Bible,* footnote.

Honesty affects many aspects of our lives, so it is understandable that the apostle Paul said: "We wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things." That includes in speech, at work, in family matters, in business dealings, and in responding to whatever legal requirements governments impose on us.—Hebrews 13:18.

In What We Say

There are many ways—though often viewed as innocent and acceptable—in which people do not speak truth. They falsify reports on hours of work, get children to tell untruths to callers, give inaccurate statements to insurance agents, and lie about being sick to get off from work, to mention a few.

Sometimes what we have to say to another has to be put in writing. For some reason, individuals who would never lie orally feel that it is a different matter when reporting income for taxes or writing an itemized declaration for customs agents at an international border. This cheating costs all taxpayers. Is that real love of neighbor? Besides, do not Christians have an obligation to "pay back Caesar's things to Caesar"?—Luke 20:25; 10:27; see also Romans 13:1, 2, 7, 8.

In what we speak, we certainly want to imitate "the God of truth," not "the father of the lie." (Psalm 31:5; John 8:44) Unscrupulous men may resort to doubletalk to misrepresent and deceive. But lying to our neighbor is not loving him. Besides, liars have no real future.—Ephesians 4:25; Revelation 21:27; 22:15.

On the Job

Doing an honest day's work for wages received is a reasonable and Scriptural requirement. (Colossians 3:22-24) Yet, there are many thousands of time thieves who waste company time on extended breaks, come to work late and leave early, spend much time grooming themselves *after* arriving at work, use the company phone for long unauthorized personal calls, operate their own businesses on company time, and even take naps. Their stealing escalates costs for everybody.

Other forms of theft on the job include taking supplies and equipment for personal use. Some claim that this is nothing more than making up for inadequate salaries, as if they are evening up things with a stingy employer! But if taking things is without the knowledge and permission of

the owner or employer, it is really a form of stealing.

In all these situations, the true Christian will apply the inspired counsel: "Let the stealer steal no more, but rather let him do . . . with his hands what is good work, that he may have something to distribute to someone in need."—Ephesians 4:28; Acts 20:35.

Yet, what if your employer asks you to perform a dishonest or an illegal act and threatens to dismiss you if you do not comply? Some examples: Charge a customer for replacement of auto parts that were never put on the vehicle; place less expensive, inferior merchandise in boxes so customers can be charged higher rates; write new, "marked down" prices on goods, when the original prices were the same or lower. Many employees would view this as the employer's responsibility, not the worker's. What have Jehovah's Witnesses done when faced with such a situation? Daryl J—— relates:

"While working as a produce manager in a grocery store, I was approached by management and asked to increase the profit margin without raising any of the prices. Suggestions to accomplish this were: Exaggerate the weight of certain products, and submit 'dummy' credit notes to a supplier. Common practices but dishonest."

Daryl refused to misrepresent and cheat. (Proverbs 20:23) A few weeks later he was laid off. Was he unwise to subject his family to the effects of his unemployment? Did he regret having been honest? No, because when a fellow Witness heard what had happened, he provided employment. Daryl says: "In three to four weeks, I was back supporting myself and my family by honest means. I count it a privilege to be blessed by Jehovah for keeping my integrity to him."

On the other hand, you might get a job because you *are* honest. An agent for a well-known international insurance company advised the owner of a successful store in downtown Toronto, Canada, to end his problems with employee theft by hiring Jehovah's Witnesses. The agent explained: 'When I was in another city receiving my insurance training, I found out that among their clients was a large supermarket chain that hired only Witnesses to restock the grocery shelves at night. They had had some bad experiences with other workers but had not lost a thing since they had given keys to the Witnesses to come in after hours to do the restocking.'

Other Ways to Be Honest

At the time of borrowing money, the borrower often reflects humility and

Can You Deal With the Challenge to Your Honesty?

The world we live in challenges our convictions and our determination to do what is right. It is structured to emphasize putting ourselves first, even at the expense of others.

Is it your sincerely held view that honesty is still the best policy? Are your convictions strong enough to *keep* you honest when pressures put you to the test? For example, what would you do if:

□ After you have been unemployed for many months, you find a large sum of money that would cover your bills and give you funds to spare?

□ Cheating on an important examination in your school was the only way you could get the grade that could determine your economic future?

□ Finding recognition as a scientist would require you to "adjust" the data from your research so that your report would be published?

□ On your vacation to another country, you buy an expensive item at a very good price but to declare it at the border would mean paying a high duty?

respect, and he expresses reassuring words about repayment and gratitude for help. But when the time arrives to pay off the debt, an amazing Jekyll-and-Hyde change in attitude comes over some borrowers. It is common then to note anger, hostility, complaints of being harassed for repayment, and claims that the lender lacks mercy. In the borrower's eyes, the generous lender has been transformed into a monster! The Bible, though, says that 'the borrower who does not pay back is wicked.' (Psalm 37:21; Romans 13:8) This would especially be the case where the borrower makes no effort to pay even modest amounts to demonstrate good faith, perhaps making no effort even to communicate with the lender.

Acts of Honesty Not Out-Of-Date

Do people still care about their fellowman? Yes, even though newspapers report acts of honesty as if they were the exception and hence newsworthy.

The police in Fort Wayne, Indiana, U.S.A., tried to lure thieves by placing an expensive TV set in an unlocked car. They watched for several weeks to see what would happen. "What we found was people would walk by the car, look in and see the TV, open the door, push the lock button down, close the door and walk on by." By so doing they showed honesty.

Canadian newspaper headlines tell about the return of lost cash because of the beneficial effect of Bible teaching:

"Good Samaritans save holiday."
—The Windsor Star
"Honest Pat turns in $421."
—The Spectator
"Return of missing $983 restores merchant's faith."—*The Toronto Star*

In these cases, those returning the lost cash were Jehovah's Witnesses. In the first, two young Witnesses sharing in the door-to-door ministry found and returned a purse to a woman. She said: "I think those boys are one in a million. . . . You know, that really does restore your faith in human nature." Since she was from out of town, it would have been easy for the youths to have kept the money, but they said: "It was nothing. We were just doing something good for someone else."

The second report also had to do with a traveler. "But temptation left no question in [the finder's] mind," the paper reported. The finder explained that he was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, "and we believe strongly in honesty."

In the third case, the person who lost the cash "confessed he had almost lost his faith in humanity." The husband of the Witness who found the brown paper bag of cash told a reporter that being guided by the Bible was the key: "That made it easy for my wife" to turn it in.

In another case, two Witnesses working from house to house found a lost pay envelope. When they took it to the local police station, the sergeant on duty said that there had been no report of lost money. The Witness suggested announcing the find on the local radio station. The policeman looked rather puzzled. He said: "You're making a lot of effort to return this money. What religion do you belong to anyway?" When the Witness replied, the sergeant said: "I thought so, because you're the only ones who are honest enough to make such efforts."

Making house-to-house calls, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, W. K———, was met with a most unusual request. The man of the house and his wife were quite ill but had to have a bank transaction made that day. They asked if the Witness would do it. Upon agreeing, he was given $2,000 in cash to take to the bank. Returning from the bank, he could not resist asking: "How could you trust me without even knowing me?" The answer: "We know, and everyone knows, that Jehovah's Witnesses are the only ones to trust."

Though there certainly are honest people to be found in all lands, in addition to Jehovah's Witnesses, it seems that they are sufficiently rare to merit special note. How thankful we can be that the Bible's teaching on honesty produces beneficial and practical results!

In family life, honesty is called for in many matters: The head of the house ought to be truthful with his wife about his income and financial matters; the wife should be honest with him about how she spends family funds; both need to be persons of integrity, including limiting their sex interests to each other; the children do well to be truthful and obedient as respects their associations and forms of entertainment, consistent with their parents' stated wishes. —Ephesians 5:33; 6:1-3.

From all that has been said, it ought to be clear that a genuine Christian must "renounce unrighteousness"—the wicked works and bad fruitage that accompany dishonesty, lying, deceiving, cheating, and moral corruption.—2 Timothy 2:19; Romans 2:21-24.

Rewards and Benefits

Fairness and straightforwardness, truthful dealings with others, promote honesty. A climate of trust and confidence thus develops, leading to healthy attitudes and relationships. Honesty also provides an atmosphere for confident living, free of time- and energy-consuming defensiveness bred by suspicions, doubts, and fears about others.—Compare Isaiah 35:8-10.

Honesty contributes to our having a clean conscience, which is essential if we are acceptably to "render sacred service to the living God." (Hebrews 9:14; 1 Timothy 1:19) It gives peace of mind, leading to a good night's sleep. You can face others without embarrassment. Being honest eliminates the gnawing fear of being caught in wrongdoing. In this way we maintain human dignity and self-respect. How could that ever be out-of-date or impractical?

Thus, there are many present rewards and benefits that will flow to us and others if we are honest persons. Yet, more than anything else, we should want to be honest not just because it is the best policy or because we are commanded to be honest but because we love our Father Jehovah. We want to maintain our precious relationship with him and have his approval. We also want to be honest because we thereby express love of neighbor. So, simply put, being a true Christian means being honest.—Matthew 22:36-39.

The psalmist says: "O Jehovah, who will be a guest in your tent? Who will reside in your holy mountain? He who is walking faultlessly and practicing righteousness and speaking the truth in his heart. . . . To his companion he has done nothing bad." (Psalm 15:1-3) If we lead honest lives as worshipers of Jehovah, then when he justly ends the present unrighteous system and when "the tent of God is with mankind," we will be among those who enjoy eternal blessings as his "guest." Then *we* will never be out-of-date!—Revelation 21:1-5.

Further Corrective Counsel

WHILE still in the house in Capernaum, something besides the apostles' argument over who is the greatest is discussed. This incident too may have occurred on their return to Capernaum, when Jesus was not personally present. The apostle John reports: "We saw a certain man expelling demons by the use of your name and we tried to prevent him, because he was not accompanying us."

Evidently John views the apostles as an exclusive, title-holding team of healers. So he feels that the man was performing powerful works improperly because he was not part of their group.

However, Jesus counsels: "Do not try to prevent him, for there is no one that will do a powerful work on the basis of my name that will quickly be able to revile me; for he that is not against us is for us. For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink on the ground that you belong to Christ, I truly tell you, he will by no means lose his reward."

It was not necessary for this man bodily to follow Jesus to be on his side. The Christian congregation had not yet been set up, so his not being part of their group did not mean that he was of a separate congregation. The man really had faith in Jesus' name and thus succeeded in expelling demons. He was doing something that compared favorably with what Jesus said was deserving of a reward. For doing this, Jesus shows, he will not lose his reward.

But what if the man was stumbled by the words and actions of the apostles? This would be very serious! Jesus observes: "Whoever stumbles one of these little ones that believe, it would be finer for him if a millstone such as is turned by an ass were put around his neck and he were actually pitched into the sea."

Jesus says that his followers should remove from their lives anything as dear to them as a hand, a foot, or an eye that may cause them to stumble. Better to be without this cherished thing and enter into God's Kingdom than to hold on to it and be pitched into Gehenna (a burning rub-

bish heap near Jerusalem), which symbolizes eternal destruction.

Jesus also warns: "See to it that you men do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." He then illustrates the preciousness of "little ones" by telling about a man who possesses 100 sheep but loses one. The man will leave the 99 to search for the lost one, Jesus explains, and on finding it will rejoice more over it than over the 99. "Likewise," Jesus then concludes, "it is not a desirable thing with my Father who is in heaven for one of these little ones to perish."

Possibly having in mind his apostles' argument among themselves, Jesus urges: "Have salt in yourselves, and keep peace between one another." Tasteless foods are made more palatable by salt. Thus, figurative salt makes what one says easier to accept. Having such salt will help preserve the peace.

But because of human imperfection, at times serious disputes will occur. Jesus also provides guidelines for handling them. "If your brother commits a sin," Jesus says, "go lay bare his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother." If he does not listen, Jesus advises, "take along with you one or two more, in order that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every matter may be established."

Only as a last resort, Jesus says, take the matter to "the congregation," that is, to responsible overseers of the congregation who can render a judicial decision. If the sinner will not abide by their decision, Jesus concludes, "let him be to you just as a man of the nations and as a tax collector."

In making such a decision, overseers need to adhere closely to instructions in Jehovah's Word. Thus, when they find an individual guilty and worthy of punishment, the judgment 'will already have been bound in heaven.' And when they "loose on earth," that is, find one innocent, it will already have been "loosed in heaven." In such judicial deliberations, Jesus says, "where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst." **Matthew 18: 6-20; Mark 9:38-50; Luke 9:49, 50.**

- Why was it not necessary in Jesus' day to accompany him?
- How serious is the matter of stumbling a little one, and how did Jesus illustrate the importance of such little ones?
- What probably prompted Jesus' encouragement for the apostles to have salt among themselves?
- What significance is there to 'binding' and 'loosing'?

"Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled"

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Exercise faith in God, exercise faith also in me."—JOHN 14:1.

IT WAS Nisan 14 in the year 33 C.E. A small group of men were meeting in an upper room in Jerusalem after sundown. Their Leader was giving them farewell counsel and encouragement. In part he said: "Do not let your hearts be troubled." (John 14:1) His words were very timely, for shattering events were soon to occur. That night he was arrested, tried, and condemned to be executed.

[2] You have good reason to view that day as the most crucial in history, affecting the whole future of mankind. The sacrificial death of the Leader, Jesus, fulfilled many ancient prophecies and provided the basis for everlasting life to those believing in him. (Isaiah 53:5-7; John 3:16) But the apostles, stunned and bewildered by the traumatic events of that night, became confused and fearful for a time. Peter even disowned Jesus. (Matthew 26:69-75) However, after the faithful apostles received the promised helper, holy spirit, they became bold and untroubled. (John 14:16, 17) Thus, when Peter and John experienced tough opposition and were put in custody, they prayed to God for help in speaking his word "with all boldness." Their prayer was answered.—Acts 4:1-3, 29-31.

1. Why were Jesus' words at John 14:1 very timely?
2. Why was that day so crucial, and what helped the disciples?

[3] Today, we live in a world that is deeply troubled. The end of this old system of things is swiftly approaching. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Millions are personally affected or deeply disturbed by a serious breakdown in family life and moral standards, an alarming increase in strange diseases, political instability, unemployment, food shortages, terrorism, and the threat of nuclear war. Many hearts are troubled with a brooding fear of the future. As Jesus foretold, there is "anguish of nations . . . while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth."—Luke 21:25, 26.

[4] Even Christians can be seriously affected by such depressing factors. They may also face stress due to religious prejudice or opposition from relatives, neighbors, workmates, schoolmates, and governmental authorities. (Matthew 24:9) So how can we keep calm, untroubled, in these difficult times? How can we maintain peace of mind when the going gets tough? How can we face the future with confidence? What will help us to overcome the deep anxiety that is becoming commonplace? We are in the season when Jesus offered the counsel at John 14:1, so let us look closely at it.

How Can We Overcome Anxiety?

[5] Having given loving encouragement 'not to let their hearts be troubled,' Jesus told his apostles: "Exercise faith in God, exercise faith also in me." (John 14:1) The inspired Scriptures give us many similar exhortations: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you." "Roll upon Jehovah your way, and rely upon him, and he himself will act." (Psalm 55:22; 37:5) Paul gave the Philippians this crucial advice: *"Do not be anxious over anything,* but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers."—Philippians 4: 6, 7.

[6] Anxiety or concern caused by problems and heavy responsibility can sometimes affect our health as well as our spirit. However, a medical expert, in the book *Don't Panic,* comments: "If people are able to talk their problems out with somebody they respect . . . , the level of stress is often very greatly decreased." If that is so regarding an exchange with another human, how much greater the help will be from speaking to God. For whom could we have greater respect than Jehovah?

[7] That is why a close personal relationship with him is so vital for Christians today. Mature servants of Jehovah know this well, so they are careful to avoid the sort of association with worldly people or the sort of pastimes that could weaken that relationship. (1 Corinthians 15:33) They also appreciate how important it is to address Jehovah in prayer, not just once or twice a day, but frequently. Young or new Christians especially need to cultivate this close bond with Jehovah by regular study and meditation on his Word and by Christian association and service. We are urged: "Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you."—James 4:8.

Counsel That Jesus Gave

[8] In many countries, unemployment and

3. Why are so many people deeply troubled today?
4. What factors can cause Christians to suffer stress?
5. What encouraging exhortations do the Scriptures give us?

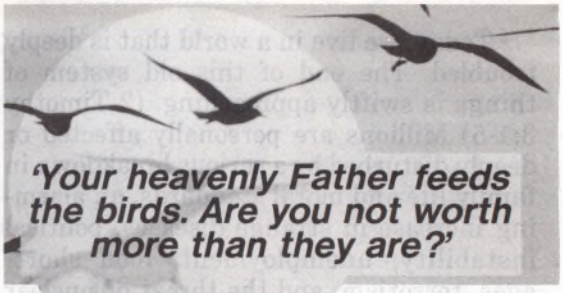
6, 7. (a) What is one way to decrease stress? (b) How can we cultivate a close bond with Jehovah?
8, 9. We can apply what positive counsel about economic problems?

economic depression are serious causes of worry. Jesus gave very positive counsel about these concerns: *"Stop being anxious* about your souls as to what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your bodies as to what you will wear. Does not the soul mean more than food and the body than clothing?" (Matthew 6:25) Yes, the soul and body, or the whole person, are vastly more important than food and clothing. God's servants can be sure that he will help them to obtain their basic needs. Jesus gave this example: "Observe intently the birds of heaven, because they do not sow seed or reap or gather into storehouses; still your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth more than they are?" (Matthew 6:26) It is unthinkable that God would provide for feathered creatures yet neglect his human servants, who are very precious to him and for whom Christ laid down his life.

9 Jesus then reinforced this by referring to the lilies of the field that neither toil nor spin, yet "not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these." King Solomon's reign was noted for its splendor. Jesus then comfortingly asked: "Will [God] not much rather clothe you?"—Matthew 6:28-32; Song of Solomon 3:9, 10.

10 However, Jesus goes on to show that this is *only* for those "seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness." Worldwide, such true Christians appreciate what God's Kingdom really is and put it first in their lives. To them, Jesus' admonition applies: "Never be anxious about the next day, for the next day will have its own anxieties. Sufficient for each day is its own badness." (Matthew 6:33, 34) In other words, handle each problem as it arises, and do not worry unduly about the future.

10. (a) To whom are the comforting words of Jesus addressed? (b) What advice did he give about the future?



'Your heavenly Father feeds the birds. Are you not worth more than they are?'

11 Most people, though, are inclined to worry about the future, especially when things are going wrong. But Christians can and should turn in faith to Jehovah. Consider the case of Eleanor. Her husband was very ill, and for a year he was unable to work. She had two small children and an aged father to care for, so she could not hold a full-time job besides. They asked Jehovah for help. One morning, shortly after this, they found an envelope under the door. It contained a large sum of money—enough to keep them going until the husband was able to work again. They felt deeply grateful for this timely help. There is no Biblical basis for expecting that a similar thing will happen to each Christian in need, but we can be sure that Jehovah will hear our cries and that he has the ability to assist us in various ways.

12 A Christian widow in southern Africa had to seek work to provide for her two young children. But she strongly desired to work only half a day in order to spend time with them. After she found a job, she was forced to resign from it when the manager decided that he needed a full-time secretary. Out of work again, this sister prayed earnestly to Jehovah for help. Three weeks later, her former manager asked her to come back on a half-day basis. How happy she was! She felt that Jehovah had answered her prayers.

11, 12. How have some Christians felt that Jehovah helped them in response to their prayers?

Supplicate Jehovah

13 Please note that after advising, "Do not be anxious over anything," Paul adds, "but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God." (Philippians 4:6) Why mention "supplication"? The word means "earnest entreaty," or 'beseeching prayer.' It involves imploring God very earnestly, as in time of great stress or peril. When a prisoner, Paul asked fellow Christians to make supplication for him so that he could fearlessly preach "the good news . . . as an ambassador in chains." (Ephesians 6:18-20) The Roman army officer Cornelius also "made supplication to God continually." How thrilled he must have been when an angel said: "Your prayers and gifts of mercy have ascended as a remembrance before God"! And how privileged he was to be among the first Gentiles anointed with holy spirit!—Acts 10:1-4, 24, 44-48.

14 It is worthy of note that such earnest beseeching of Jehovah is usually not done just once. Jesus taught in his famous Sermon on the Mount: "Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7) Many Bible versions render this: "Ask . . . seek . . . knock." But the original Greek conveys the thought of continuous action.*

* In agreement with the precision of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures,* Charles B. Williams translates the verse: "Keep on asking . . . keep on seeking . . . keep on knocking, and the door will open to you."—*The New Testament: A Translation in the Language of the People.*

13. (a) What is meant by "supplication"? (b) What Scriptural examples of supplication do we have?
14. How can we know whether earnest beseeching of Jehovah is to be done only once?

15 When Nehemiah was serving the Persian king Artaxerxes as wine steward, the king asked why he was so gloomy. Nehemiah said that it was because he had learned that Jerusalem was in a devastated condition. The king then asked: "What is this that you are seeking to secure?" At once Nehemiah asked Jehovah for help, no doubt briefly, silently. He then requested permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild his beloved home city. His request was granted. (Nehemiah 2:1-6) However, *before* that crucial interview, Nehemiah had spent days beseeching, supplicating, Jehovah for help. (Nehemiah 1:4-11) Do you see the lesson in this for you?

Jehovah Answers

16 On occasion, Abraham enjoyed the privilege of communicating with Jehovah through angels. (Genesis 22:11-18; 18:1-33) Though that does not occur today, we are blessed with powerful aids that Abraham lacked. One is the complete Bible—an inexhaustible source of guidance and comfort. (Psalm 119:105; Romans 15:4) Very often, the Bible can give us the guidance or encouragement that we need, Jehovah helping us to recall the desired passages. Frequently, a concordance or one of the many Bible publications that God has provided through his organization can give us the answer. A detailed and efficient index to these publications is yet another invaluable aid in finding the needed information.

17 If we are troubled with a problem or

15. (a) Why was Nehemiah gloomy while serving wine to King Artaxerxes? (b) How had Nehemiah done more than offer a brief prayer?
16. (a) What special privilege did Abraham enjoy? (b) What powerful aids do we have that can be involved in answers to our prayers?
17. In what other ways may Jehovah answer our prayers, and how can kind, sympathetic Christians help?

feeling sad or discouraged, answers to our prayers may come in other ways too. For example, a Bible talk at the congregation or at a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses may contain just the "medicine" we need. At other times, a chat with another Christian will supply what we require. Many times congregation elders can offer encouragement or advice. Even just unburdening our hearts to a mature, kind, and sympathetic Christian who is a good listener can frequently make us feel much better. That is especially so if this friend helps us to reflect on Biblical thoughts. Such an interchange can take a heavy load off our mind and heart.—Proverbs 12:25; 1 Thessalonians 5:14.

18 Various forms of depressed moods are common during these "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1) People become discouraged and dejected for a variety of reasons. This may happen to Christians too, and it can be a most unpleasant experience. Many have found, though, that preaching the good news has helped them to snap out of a temporary bout with the blues.* Have you tried that? When feeling somewhat down, try sharing in a form of Kingdom service. Talking to others about God's Kingdom will often help you to change your frame of mind from negative to positive. Speaking about Jehovah and using his Word can give you joy—a fruit of his spirit—and make you feel different. (Galatians 5:22) A young pioneer also found that keeping busy in Kingdom work made her realize that "in comparison with others' problems, [hers] were very small and temporary."

19 At times, a low physical condition, perhaps compounded by worries or problems, can lead to a depressed mood. This may cause one to waken at night troubled, as happened at times to a middle-aged Christian who had poor health. But he found that heartfelt prayer was a real help. Whenever he awoke feeling depressed, he would calmly pray to Jehovah. This soon made him feel better. He also found it soothing to repeat from memory comforting Bible passages, such as Psalm 23. Invariably, Jehovah's spirit, operating in response to prayer or through his Word, would help to replace the depressed state of mind with a happier one. Later, the man could think about his problems with balance and calmness, seeing how to overcome them or feeling fortified to bear them.

20 This is an example of how prayer can

18. What special activity can help Christians to overcome blue periods, and how did this help a young pioneer?

How Would You Reply?

- □ What factors may cause Christians to be troubled?
- □ What can help us to overcome anxiety?
- □ Why can Christians be sure that God will help them with their basic needs?
- □ What does "supplication" mean, and how do past examples illustrate how Jehovah responds?
- □ In what different ways may Jehovah answer our prayers?

* A temporary sad mood is different from severe, prolonged depression, which is a much more serious and complex emotional or mental condition. See *Awake!* of October 22, 1987, pages 3-16.

19. How did a Christian in poor health overcome negative thoughts?

20. Why may response to prayer sometimes seem delayed?

bring a response. But sometimes there seems to be a delay in finding a solution. Why? Perhaps the answer must await God's due time. It appears that in some cases God allows his petitioners to demonstrate the depth of their concern, the intensity of their desire, the genuineness of their devotion. One of the psalmists had that experience!—Psalm 88:13, 14; compare 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

[21] In any event, to commune with Almighty God in prayer is a faith-strengthening experience that can lift us from despair to confidence. How comforting it is to know that he hears and responds! As Paul wrote to the congregation in Philippi, we should offer our prayers and supplications "along with *thanksgiving.*" (Philippians 4:6) Yes, daily we should open our hearts in gratitude to Jehovah and "in connection with everything give thanks." (1 Thessalonians 5:18) This will contribute to a close, warm bond and will bring us peace. The next article shows how important this is for Jehovah's servants in these troubled, dangerous times.

21. Why is it a great privilege to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses today, and how can we show appreciation?

"May You Have Peace"

"Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them: 'May you have peace.'"—JOHN 20:19.

"THE whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) This was true in John's day, and it is even more apparent today, with the appalling increase in personal violence, terrorism, wars, and corruption. John's inspired statement also rules out any hope of reaching world peace by human endeavor, despite the efforts of the pope, of national leaders, and of the UN. Why? "'There is no peace,' my God has said, 'for the wicked ones.'"—Isaiah 57:21.

[2] However, the word "peace" can mean something other than just the absence of war. Peace also can be "a mental or spiritual condition marked by freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions: calmness of mind and heart." Yet, the Hebrew word for "peace" (*sha·lohm'*) and the Greek word (*ei·re'ne*) have an even wider meaning. They also denote welfare, as in the parting words, "Go in peace." (1 Samuel 1:17; 29:7; Luke 7:50; 8:48) This helps us to appreciate Jesus' loving concern for his disciples during the traumatic period surrounding his death.

[3] Jesus died on Friday, Nisan 14, in the year 33 C.E. On Sunday, Nisan 16, he was resurrected. Being, as always, deeply concerned with his disciples' welfare, he then sought them out. Where did he find them? They were behind locked doors "for fear of the Jews." Understandably, they were anxious, fearful. But Jesus said: "May you

1. Why are man's efforts to bring world peace doomed to fail?
2. What does the word "peace" imply, especially in Hebrew and Greek?

3. How did Jesus show deep concern for his disciples after his resurrection, and with what effect?

Paul knew from experience that God's peace can guard our hearts

have peace." (John 20:19-21, 26) Later, strengthened by holy spirit, they fared well. They boldly tackled their preaching assignment, helping many to attain godly peace.

Godly Peace Today

[4] We live in the time of the end, in "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1) The horsemen foretold in Revelation are riding through the earth—as you can see from the wars, food shortages, and death from sickness. (Revelation 6: 3-8) Jehovah's people are also affected by the conditions around them. So how can you maintain godly peace of mind and heart? By keeping close to the great Source of comfort and peace. As the previous article showed, this requires frequent prayer and supplication. In that way "the peace of God that *excels* all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Philippians 4:6, 7.

[5] The apostle Paul, who wrote those words, had himself endured dangers and difficulties. He had been imprisoned and beaten by Jews and Romans. He was stoned and left for dead. Traveling in those days was risky; Paul was shipwrecked three times, and often he was in danger from highwaymen. He spent many sleepless nights and frequently suffered from cold, hunger, and thirst. Beyond all of that, he daily felt "anxiety for all the congregations." (2 Corinthians 11:24-28) So Paul knew from wide personal experience how important is "the peace of God" that can guard our hearts.

[6] "The peace of God" can be explained as a sense of tranquillity and serenity, reflecting a good relationship with God. This is so important for Christians, especially when they face persecution or tribulation. Why? Well, all of us are imperfect; hence, when harassed by problems, stress, opposition, or various kinds of setbacks, we could easily become fearful. That might lead to our failing to keep our integrity. Such would bring reproach on God's name, would cost us Jehovah's favor, and could lead to our loss of everlasting life. So how vital it is to strive to gain "the peace of God" that will assist us in facing such challenges successfully. That peace certainly is one of the 'good gifts and

4. How can Jehovah's people maintain peace of mind and heart in these critical times?

5. Why was Paul sure that "the peace of God" could guard our hearts?

6. Why is it vital to establish and maintain a warm, intimate bond with our Creator?

perfect presents' made available by our heavenly Father.—James 1:17.

[7] You may have seen that some people go through life calm and confident. Often this is due to natural ability, family influence, wealth, education, or other such factors. "The peace of God" is very different. It is not based on favorable circumstances, nor does it result from human ability or reasoning. It emanates from God and "excels all thought." J. B. Phillips' rendering of Philippians 4:7 is that "the peace of God . . . surpasses human understanding." Worldly people are often amazed at the way Christians face serious problems, physical harm, or even death.

[8] A modern example of this was one of Jehovah's Witnesses who was conducting a Christian meeting in an African land where the Witnesses, largely at the instigation of local Catholics, were accused of being terrorists. Suddenly, military police with fixed bayonets appeared. They sent the women and children home but began beating the men. The Witness recalls: "I do not have words to describe the manner in which we were treated. The corporal in charge openly declared we would be beaten to death. I received such blows with a wooden club that later I vomited blood for 90 days. But my concern was for the lives of my companions. In prayer I asked Jehovah to care for the lives of these, his sheep," who all survived. What an example of keeping calm in terrible adversity and of lovingly considering others! Yes, our loving heavenly Father does answer the requests of his faithful servants, granting them his peace. One of the puzzled soldiers in that case remarked that the God of the Witnesses "must be the true one."

7, 8. (a) On what is "the peace of God" based, and how does it 'excel all thought'? (b) How was such peace exemplified in the case of one African brother?

[9] In these difficult times, many Christians have problems that make them feel frustrated and discouraged. A fine way to retain peace of mind is to read the Bible and meditate on it. It can infuse one with the strength and determination to push on and stand firm. "The word of God is alive and exerts power."—Hebrews 4:12.

[10] Yet, what if adversity overtakes us when the Bible is not available? For example, a Christian might be arrested suddenly and clapped into jail with no Bible. In that case, it would be a real blessing to be able to recall texts such as Philippians 4:6, 7; Proverbs 3:5, 6; 1 Peter 5:6, 7; and Psalm 23. Would you not deeply appreciate being able to recall and ponder over such passages? In the grim setting of a prison, it would be as though Jehovah himself were talking to you. God's Word can heal hurt minds, fortify faint hearts, and replace mental anguish with peace. (See Psalm 119:165.) Yes, it is very important to implant scriptures in our minds now while we still have opportunity to do so.

[11] Arthur Winkler was one who deeply appreciated the Bible, especially during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, when the Witnesses had to carry on their Christian activity underground. The Gestapo had been hunting for Brother Winkler. When they finally captured him, they tried to make him compromise but failed. They then beat him into unconsciousness. With his teeth knocked out, lower jaw dislocated, and body beaten raw, he was put into a dark cell. But his guard was sympathetic and friendly. Brother Winkler sought Jehovah's guidance in prayer. He also felt deeply a need for spiritual food

9. What effect can reading the Bible and meditating on it have?
10. How could being able to recall scriptures be a blessing?
11. How did a brother in the Netherlands manifest a need for spiritual food?

She Learned It to Be True

During World War II the Nazis sent Elsa Abt's husband to Sachsenhausen concentration camp because of his Christian preaching. Then in May 1942, the Gestapo came to her home, took away her little daughter, and sent Elsa to work and suffer in various camps. She gives this personal testimony:

"My years in German concentration camps taught me an outstanding lesson. It is, how greatly Jehovah's spirit can strengthen you when you are under extreme trial! Before I was arrested, I had read a sister's letter that said that under severe trial Jehovah's spirit causes a calmness to come over you. I thought that she must have been exaggerating a bit. But when I went through trials myself, I knew that what she had said was true. It really happens that way. It's hard to imagine it, if you have not experienced it. Yet it really happened to me. Jehovah helps."

and asked the guard for help. Later, the cell door opened, and a Bible was thrown in. "What a joy it was," recalled Brother Winkler, "daily to enjoy the pleasant words of truth . . . I felt myself getting stronger spiritually."*

Godly Peace Will Safeguard You

12 Jehovah promises that his peace "will *guard* your hearts and your mental powers." (Philippians 4:7) This is so vital! The heart is the seat of motivation and emotions. In these last days, our hearts can easily be weakened by fear or anxiety, or entice us to do wrong. The general pattern of life is deteriorating rapidly. We have to be on our guard constantly. In addition to needing strong hearts, we must also have our "mental powers" strengthened and directed by God through his Word and his congregation.

13 According to W. E. Vine, the Greek word *no'e·ma* (rendered "mental powers") has the thought of "purpose" or "device." (*An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*) Thus, God's peace can strengthen our Christian purpose and guard us against any tendency to weaken or change our minds without good reason. Discouragement or problems would thus not easily put us off. For example, if we have purposed to serve Jehovah in some special capacity, such as by being a full-time pioneer minister or moving to serve where ministers are greatly needed, "the peace of God" will be a great help to us in persisting toward that goal. (Compare Luke 1:3; Acts 15:36; 19:21; Romans 15:22-24, 28; 1 Thessalonians 2:1, 18.) To strengthen your mental powers further, devote ample time to studying God's Word and to Christian association. You thus feed your mind and heart with clean, upbuilding thoughts. Are you able to devote sufficient time to involve yourself with God's inspired "sayings"? Should you give them more attention?

14 You can see that both the heart and the mind, or mental powers, are involved in acquiring and benefiting from "the

* See the *1986 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pages 154-7.

12. Why is there a special need for us to guard our hearts and mental powers?
13. What benefits can come from having our mental powers guarded?

14. To what inspired counsel should we give careful heed, and why?

peace of God." This is borne out in the divine advice: "My son, to my words do pay attention. To my sayings incline your ear. May they not get away from your eyes. Keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are life to those finding them and health to all their flesh. More than all else that is to be guarded, safeguard your heart, for out of it are the sources of life." —Proverbs 4:20-23.

15 "The peace of God" that results from a warm, intimate bond with Jehovah guards our hearts and mental powers *"by means of Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 4:7) What role does Jesus play in this? Paul explains: "May you have undeserved kindness and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. He gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from the present wicked system of things according to the will of our God and Father." (Galatians 1: 3, 4) Yes, Jesus lovingly gave his life that we might be ransomed. (Matthew 20:28) So it is "by means of Christ Jesus" that we can be acceptable to Jehovah as his dedicated servants and be in position to enjoy that godly peace that can be our safeguard.

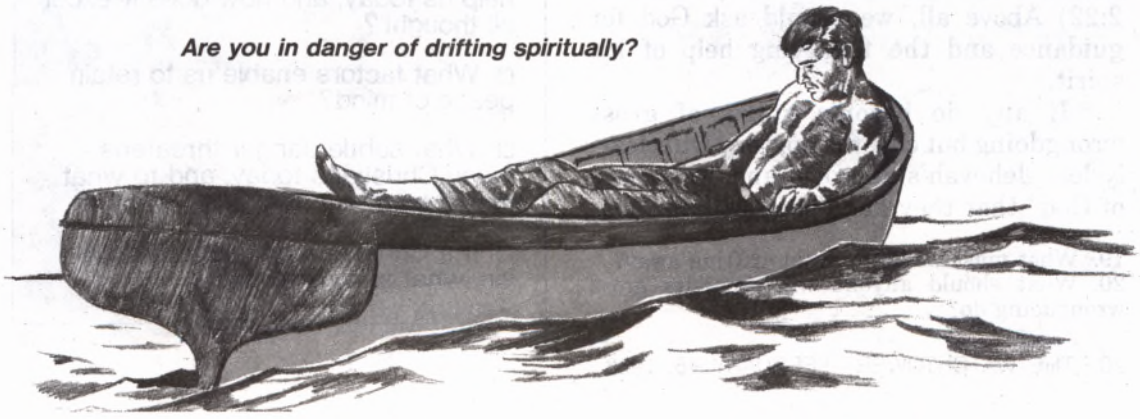
Dangers That Threaten Godly Peace

16 Once having received and enjoyed peace from God, we must exercise care that we retain it. Many factors can rob Christians of peace. Among the most common, and certainly most dangerous, are youthful desires. In Paul's second letter to Timothy, who at that time was likely in his early 30's, he included this counsel: "Flee from the desires incidental to youth, but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, along with those who call upon the Lord out of a clean heart."—2 Timothy 2:22.

17 Those desires include the sexual impulse, which has an honorable place within marriage. Throughout history, though, this impulse has been misexpressed in premarital or extramarital sex relations, both of which are disapproved by our wise Creator. (Hebrews 13:4; Genesis 34:1-3) The danger of giving in to sexual immorality threatens Christians today, both young people and older ones. In these last days of a debauched world, sex has for many come to mean merely fleshly passion, often with practices common among homosexuals, male and female.—Romans 1:24-27.

18 The fact that we live in such a climate underscores how vital it is for us to have strong, steady hearts devoted to Jehovah. Some who have accepted the Kingdom message, believe the Bible's basic truths, and regularly associate with Jehovah's

15. What part does Jesus play in our having "the peace of God"?
16. What counsel did Paul give that can help us to retain "the peace of God"?
17. What has often happened regarding Jehovah's provision of sex?
18. Why are the hearts of some not yet steady, and to what may this lead?



Are you in danger of drifting spiritually?

people do not develop deep appreciation for Jehovah, his Word, and his worldwide congregation. Their hearts are not yet steady. They can easily be sidetracked by "desires incidental to youth." Some of them may resist temptations to commit fornication or adultery, but they become, as Paul warned, "lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God." (2 Timothy 3:4) They spend far more time watching TV, reading novels, or listening to wild music than in personal study, Christian meetings, or Kingdom service. This easily leads to spiritual debility and, eventually, falling into serious sin.

[19] Such ones, like a boat with no anchor, are drifting in a current flowing toward disaster. What must they do? Paul advises: "That is why it is necessary for us to pay more than the usual attention to the things heard by us, that we may never drift away." (Hebrews 2:1) So those in danger should "pay more than the usual attention" to studying God's Word, preparing for Christian meetings, and sharing Kingdom truths with others. Of course, it would be easy to think, 'That is good advice, but I am not in that condition, so it doesn't apply to me.' How much wiser it would be for each of us to consider seriously how we might further cleanse our hearts, innermost thoughts, and desires and "pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, along with those who call upon the Lord out of a clean heart." (2 Timothy 2:22) Above all, we should ask God for guidance and the fortifying help of his spirit.

[20] If any do become guilty of gross wrongdoing but cover it up, they will clearly lose Jehovah's approval and "the peace of God" that they had. They will also lose their own peace of mind. (Compare 2 Samuel 24:10; Matthew 6:22, 23.) You can see, then, why it is imperative that any Christian who has fallen into serious sin confess that to Jehovah and to loving elders, who can promote spiritual healing. (Isaiah 1: 18, 19; 32:1, 2; James 5:14, 15) When a person who has lost spiritual balance on the slippery path of sin seeks help from mature brothers, he will not continue to have a troubled conscience or be without godly peace.

[21] What a privilege it is to be one of Jehovah's dedicated Witnesses today! All around us, this satanic world is breaking up and becoming a shambles. It will soon pass away. Many people are "faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth." But we can raise our heads because we know that our "deliverance is getting near." (Luke 21: 25-28) To show how grateful we are to Jehovah for his "peace . . . that excels all thought," let us do our utmost to serve faithfully "the God who gives peace."—Romans 15:33; 1 Corinthians 15:58.

19. What must we do to avoid drifting away?
20. What should anyone who commits gross wrongdoing do?
21. What cause for deep gratitude to Jehovah do we have today, and what should be our determination?

Points for Review

- How does "the peace of God" help us today, and how does it 'excel all thought'?
- What factors enable us to retain peace of mind?
- What subtle danger threatens many Christians today, and to what may it lead?
- If a Christian commits a serious sin, what should he do?

Insight on the News

"Our *Father* . . ."

"Women around the country have been telling fellow worshipers that it bothers them to use exclusively male language ('Our Father who art in Heaven') in worship services," reports the *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*. "It makes them feel like second-class citizens, the women say, and they can't relate to a male deity." Supporting the issue, the administrative board of the United Methodist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S.A., voted in favor of a new list of expressions to be used by parishioners when referring to God during prayer, worship services, and other church activities.

Some nongender expressions prepared by the church board are "source of peace, source of mercy, steadfast and loving one, strength of our life, . . . mind of the universe, . . . high and holy one." Use of these expressions will be encouraged as an alternative to male pronouns as well as terms like Lord, King, and Father, which ascribe masculinity to God.

However, rejecting the Biblical use of masculine references to God is without precedent. Shortly before his death, Jesus, God's only-begotten Son, specifically used the Aramaic word *Abba,* meaning "Father," when praying to Jehovah God. (Mark 14:36) Similarly, the apostle Paul used this word to convey the intimate relationship between spirit-anointed Christians and their heavenly Father, Jehovah. (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6) If, therefore, Jesus taught his disciples to pray saying, "Our *Father* in the heavens," should not all Christians today do the same? —Matthew 6:9.

Churches in Debt

After a synod meeting of the Dutch Reformed Church in the northern Transvaal, South Africa, it was reported that the church's 134 congregations were in debt to the sum of R13,890,000 ($6,667,000, U.S.). Commenting on the problem, an editorial in the Afrikaans newspaper *Beeld* asked: "Does the fault, however, not sometimes lie with the minister and the church council?" The newspaper explains: "It often happens that the deacon regularly comes around on a monthly house call to collect money, while the minister is conspicuous by his absence and the elder is a stranger in his area. Are church members, in such instances, to be blamed for gaining the impression that the church is interested only in their money, not in their spiritual well-being?"

In contrast, the ministry of Jesus and his disciples laid emphasis on *spiritual* giving. (Matthew 10:8) While appreciative listeners often came to their aid by voluntarily supplying basic needs such as food and accommodations, neither Jesus nor his disciples sought material benefits. (Luke 10:5-9) As the apostle Paul stated: "I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel." Instead, he admonished true ministers of God to "let [their] manner of life be free of the love of money." His visits from house to house were made so that he could 'bear witness about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus.' (Acts 20:20, 21, 33; Hebrews 13:5) It was the religious leaders of the day who were described by Bible writer Luke as being "money lovers." —Luke 16:9-15.

Wrong Entertainment

Just for fun, German pupils in Lahnstein began to induce occult spirits to speak by means of a drinking glass moving from letter to letter, "writing" a message. What was the result?

"Fifteen-year-olds, afraid to go alone to the bathroom, chatter confusedly about demons. At night, youngsters want to sleep with their parents," reports German newspaper *Rhein-Zeitung.* Panic broke out among many of those who "in hush-hush meetings called on spirits and finally on 'Lucifer.'" Commenting on the children's reaction "when 'Lucifer' supposedly got in contact with them," one teacher observed: "Even the most frenzied children suddenly became very subdued. They were terror-struck." Following the experience, the city's juvenile center prohibited such "games," and parents were asked not to leave their frightened children alone.

According to the paper, "the occult wave is spilling over into movies, TV, and records." Yet, dabbling in the occult for entertainment did not provide the German pupils of Lahnstein the fun they expected. Why not? Because the Bible informs us that the Devil is crafty and "is misleading the entire inhabited earth." It connects the Devil's effectiveness on earth with "woe." Satan and his "wicked spirit forces" (the demons) should be regarded seriously as a real spiritual danger, and avoided.—Revelation 12:9, 12; Ephesians 6:11, 12; compare Acts 19:19.

Thursday Island
Hears the Good News

AS THE plane circles, all we can see is a cluster of islands of various shapes and sizes in the midst of an aqua-blue sea. Nearing touchdown, we see the runway —how tiny—but what a relief!

We have landed on Horn Island. After a bus trip to the wharf, a small ferry takes us to Thursday Island, the center of the Torres Strait Islands. These isles spread out like stepping-stones from the northern tip of Queensland, Australia, all the way across to Papua New Guinea.

During the hot, wet season (January through May), everything is green and lush. Violent cyclones sometimes develop, making interisland passage dangerous. For the balance of the year, dry and dusty is the norm.

Good News Reaches These Islands

It was in 1938 that the Watch Tower Society's 52-foot ketch *Lightbearer* stopped briefly at these islands while on the way to the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). On board were seven of Jehovah's Witnesses, eager to share the Bible's message of hope.

Unknown to these brothers, however, one of Christendom's missionaries arrived about the same time. He told the islanders not to listen to the Witnesses or to accept any of their literature. But when the brothers reached his home and talked to him, he accepted four books. Some of the islanders saw this, so they thought: 'If he can have them, why can't we?' That evening, while the other Witnesses were showing slides, one brother sat outside with cartons of books. Repeatedly, in the dark, a hand with money in it appeared, and a voice asked for a book. In just one hour, 200 books were thus placed! Later, the missionary tried without success to use the books he obtained as evidence in a charge against the Witnesses.

A Congregation Is Formed

Those first seeds of truth were not watered for a long time. Not until the late 1950's did additional help arrive in these isolated islands. Two full-time workers were sent in by the Watch Tower Society. They were followed by the Rudds, a family of three who came to serve where the need was greater. Soon, a small congregation was formed on Thursday Island.

These were difficult times, with scarcely any accommodations available and substantial opposition from the government and the established religions. At first the congregation met in a small room right above the local bakery's ovens. Just imagine how hot that was in the tropics!

Realizing the need to keep spiritually strong, the Witnesses determined to attend a convention on the coast of mainland Australia, approximately 800 miles away. Not having the airfare, they prayerfully sought another way to the convention.

First, the brothers purchased an old pearling boat that lacked engine, propeller, sails, and anchor. Searching among derelict boats, they finally found one with a big five-cylinder diesel engine and gearbox. Buying this, the brothers were delighted to find sails, anchors, and many other parts. Yet, there was still no shaft or propeller.

Brother Rudd asked a slipway owner if he might look around. The owner jokingly said that if he could find a shaft anywhere on the premises, the Witnesses could have it. To the owner's surprise, a shaft was found. While going from house to house a few mornings later, Brother Rudd kicked something in the long grass. It was a propeller that would just suit their boat!

After preparing the vessel, the congregation of 25 was ready for the seven-day voyage. As they departed, the local witch doctor put a "curse" on them. One night the boat got stuck on a reef. The brothers used the time advantageously to catch a supply of fish. When the morning tide came in, the boat floated off, though they had to pump water out for the rest of the trip.

As they arrived at Townsville, Australia, a wealthy slipway owner met them. Apparently he had read a newspaper article about their efforts to attend the convention, and he was moved to help. He insisted on repairing the damage to the boat even though they could neither afford to pay nor help with the repairs because they were at the convention. Later, they were charged only 40 pounds ($80, U.S.) instead of the 500 pounds ($1,000 U.S.) that might have been reasonable.

Reaching the Other Islands

By Jehovah's direction, the Kingdom message has also reached the outer islands. For instance, Brothers Rod Anderson and Allan Webster, who moved to Thursday Island a few years ago, have used their boat in witnessing on other islands. Up till now, preaching has been done on 12 of the 17 inhabited islands.

A Fine Meeting Place

The brothers long wondered, though, if they would ever have their own Kingdom Hall on Thursday Island. Then Jehovah's spirit in action became evident. In September 1983, Brother Graham Keen, a skilled builder, moved in to help construct a hall. A number of Australian congregations had generously provided materials needed for the construction. This was packed into containers and shipped from Cairns, Queensland. The islanders were surprised to see this mound of building material on the once-empty plot of land. It took only 140 working days to complete the hall, together with a home at the rear. There were 120 in joyful attendance on the day the new hall was dedicated.

How happy all the Witnesses were to have this new Kingdom Hall to serve as a center for the work of spreading the good news in the Torres Strait Islands. With the help of Jehovah's spirit, they rejoice to tell forth praise to Jehovah God.—Isaiah 42:12.

Cruel Assyria

The Second Great World Power

Archaeological discoveries of the palaces of ancient Assyrian kings can add to your confidence in the historical accuracy of the Bible. What do those discoveries show about Biblical history, and what should they mean to you?

THE Assyrians were a violent and warlike people. They developed a vast, ruthless empire that spread out from their homeland on the northern end of the Mesopotamian plain. They are referred to many times in the Bible, being enemies of Judah and Israel.

Knowing more about this ancient people will certainly help us to understand things that the Bible says. Even Assyria's own records confirm the truthfulness of Bible history and prophecy. But where did the Assyrians originate?

This strong people, who pictured themselves with heavy eyebrows and beards, descended from Asshur, a grandson of Noah. In fact, the same Hebrew word means both "Asshur" and "Assyria(n)." Nimrod, who is noted in the Bible as "a mighty hunter in opposition to Jehovah," founded the cities of Nineveh and Calah. These two cities, along with Asshur and Khorsabad, later became Assyrian capitals.—Genesis 10:8-12, 22.

The book of Nahum opens with the words: "The pronouncement against Nineveh," the capital of Assyria. Why? Because, as the prophet Nahum later describes, Nineveh was a "city of bloodshed . . . all full of deception and of robbery." (Nahum 1:1; 3:1) Was he exaggerating? Far from it!

The Assyrians had an unparalleled reputation for brutality. Decorations in their own great palaces showed them pillaging, burning, and destroying in

Based on a map copyrighted by Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est. and Survey of Israel

one country after another. Their king Ashurnasirpal boasts of covering a pillar with skins of his enemies. He says: "Many captives from among them I burned with fire . . . From some I cut off their noses, their ears and their fingers, of many I put out the eyes. I made one pillar of the living and another of heads."

Religious Influence

Yet, these people were very religious. It has been said concerning the ancient Assyrians: "Fighting was the business of the nation, and the priests were incessant fomenters of war. They were supported largely from the spoils of conquest . . . This race of plunderers was exceedingly religious."—*Ancient Cities,* W. B. Wright, page 25.

The Assyrians inherited their religion from Babylon. Says *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary:* "In most respects Assyrian religion differed little from that of Babylonia, whence it had been derived." An Assyrian seal, now displayed in the British Museum in London, shows their national god Asshur with three heads. The belief in triads of gods was common in their worship. So, with their record of cruelty and violence, it is little wonder that the Bible prophet Nahum wrote that the one true God, Jehovah, "is taking vengeance and is disposed to rage" at the Assyrians.—Nahum 1:2.

When Nineveh fell, its destruction was so thorough that for centuries even its site was forgotten. Some critics ridiculed the Bible, saying this city never existed. But exist it did! It was rediscovered, and what archaeologists found there was exciting indeed!

Great Palaces Discovered

In 1843 French consular agent Paul-Émile Botta dug at Khorsabad, hoping it would be ancient Nineveh. Instead, he discovered the splendid palace of "Sargon the king of Assyria," mentioned by name in the Bible at Isaiah 20:1. Critics had claimed that the Bible was wrong because it was the only known ancient document to mention this king. But Sargon did exist, for archaeologists uncovered his 200-room palace, as well as a fantastic treasure of inscriptions and other items. These include Sargon's annals that confirm, from the Assyrian viewpoint, events mentioned in the Bible. Since the mid-19th century, Sargon has been one of the best known of the Assyrian kings, although many details concerning him are still incomplete.

Courtesy of the British Museum, London

King Ashurbanipal pours a wine offering over slain lions. Does this remind you of Nimrod?

Then, in 1847, Austin Henry Layard discovered Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh, some 12 miles southwest of Khorsabad. This is the very same Sennacherib who violently opposed Jerusalem and is mentioned by name 13 times in the Bible. Layard investigated 71 rooms of this palace. It was lavishly decorated with scenes of battles, victories, and religious ceremonies.

Even more amazing, archaeologists found Sennacherib's own annals—yearly reports of events, recorded on clay cylinders, or prisms. One is kept at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, while another, the Taylor Prism, is in the British Museum.

What did these discoveries show? That what the Bible says about these people and

Assyrian relief depicting the assault with a siege engine against the fortified Judean city of Lachish

Courtesy of the British Museum, London

the events in which they were involved is precisely true—even to the naming of the Assyrian rulers!

The Assyrian Kings

The names of these ancient kings may sound strange to you, yet it is good to become acquainted with at least seven of them, as they are closely associated with events related in the Bible.

Shalmaneser III followed his father Ashurnasirpal on the throne. His famous Black Obelisk, found at Nimrud (Calah) and displayed in the British Museum, has a relief showing King Jehu of Israel paying tribute to him, perhaps through an emissary.—Compare conditions mentioned at 2 Kings 10:31-33.

Later that same century, sometime about the year 844 B.C.E., the prophet Jonah was sent to warn Nineveh of coming destruction.* The city repented and was spared. Though we do not know exactly who was the king at Nineveh when this happened, it is interesting to note that this period was one of decline in Assyrian aggressiveness.

Tiglath-pileser III (also called Pul) is the first Assyrian king mentioned by name in the Bible. He advanced into the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of Menahem (791-780 B.C.E.). The Bible says Menahem paid him a thousand talents of silver to withdraw.—2 Kings 15:19, 20.

In his own annals, found at Calah, Tiglath-pileser confirms this Biblical fact, saying: "I received tribute from . . . Menahem of Samaria."

Samaria Falls

However, Samaria and the northern ten-tribe kingdom of Israel were in trouble not just with the Assyrians but with the Creator of heaven and earth, Jehovah God. They had turned from his worship to a riotous, drunken worship of Baal. (Hosea 2:13) Although they received abundant warning through Jehovah's prophets, they refused to turn back. So the prophet Hosea was inspired to write: "Samaria and her king will certainly be silenced, like a snapped-off twig on the surface of waters." (Hosea 10:7; 2 Kings 17:7, 12-18) The Bi-

Tell Lachish. This important outpost in the southwest guarded the Judean hill country until the Assyrians laid siege to Lachish and conquered it

Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

* As to dates, we accept the chronology that is indicated by the Bible, which differs from ancient dates based on less reliable secular sources. For a detailed discussion of Biblical chronology, see *Aid to Bible Understanding*, pages 322-48, particularly the section on Assyria, pages 325-6.

ble says that the Assyrians did this to Israel—and so do the Assyrians' own records, as we shall see.

Shalmaneser V, who succeeded Tiglath-pileser, invaded the northern ten-tribe kingdom of Israel and laid siege to its well-fortified capital Samaria. After a three-year siege, Samaria fell (in 740 B.C.E.), as Jehovah's prophets had said would happen. —Micah 1:1, 6; 2 Kings 17:5.

Sargon II succeeded Shalmaneser and may have completed the conquest of Samaria, as the beginning of his reign is said to coincide with the year the city fell. The Bible says that after Samaria fell, the king of Assyria "led Israel into exile in Assyria." (2 Kings 17:6) An Assyrian inscription, found at Khorsabad, confirms this. On it Sargon states: "I besieged and conquered Samaria, led away as booty 27,290 inhabitants of it."

The Bible further says that after the Israelites were moved out, the king of Assyria brought people from other regions "and had them dwell in the cities of Samaria instead of the sons of Israel; and they began to take possession of Samaria and to dwell in its cities."—2 Kings 17:24.

Do Assyrian records confirm this too? Yes, Sargon's own annals, recorded on the Nimrud Prism, say: "I restored the city of Samaria . . . I brought into it people from the countries conquered by my own hands."—*Illustrations of Old Testament History,* R. D. Barnett, page 52.

Jerusalem Is Saved

Sennacherib, Sargon's son and successor, is well known to students of the Bible. In 732 B.C.E. this militaristically minded king brought a mighty war machine against the southern kingdom of Judah.

The Bible says that "Sennacherib the king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and proceeded to seize them." Jerusalem's king Hezekiah, frightened by this threat, "sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish" and offered to buy him off with a heavy tribute.—2 Kings 18: 13, 14.

Relief of Sargon II (on the left) facing an Assyrian official who may be Crown Prince Sennacherib

Courtesy of the British Museum, London

Does Sennacherib confirm that he was at Lachish? Definitely! He displayed scenes of this siege on large panels in his immense palace that archaeologists studied at Nineveh. These detailed panels in the British Museum show Lachish under attack. Inhabitants stream out in surrender. Captives are led by. Some are impaled on posts. Others pay homage to Sennacherib himself, the very person mentioned in the Biblical account. An inscription in wedge-shaped cuneiform writing says: "Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, sat upon a *nímedu*-throne and passed in review the booty (taken) from Lachish."

The Bible says that Hezekiah paid as tribute "three hundred silver talents and thirty gold talents." (2 Kings 18:14, 15) This payment is confirmed in Sennacherib's annals, though he claims to have received "800 talents of silver."

Despite this payment, the Assyrian

king's messengers stood outside Jerusalem's walls, mocked Jehovah God, and threatened his holy city. Through Isaiah, who was inside Jerusalem, Jehovah said of Sennacherib: "He will not come into this city nor will he shoot an arrow there nor confront it with a shield nor cast up a siege rampart against it. By the way by which he proceeded to come, he will return, and into this city he will not come." —2 Kings 18:17-19:8, 32, 33.

Did Jehovah stop Sennacherib, as promised? That very night 185,000 Assyrians were struck down by means of God's angel! Sennacherib pulled away and returned to Nineveh, later to be killed by two of his own sons while he was bowing down to his god Nisroch.—2 Kings 19:35-37.

Of course, haughty Sennacherib would not be expected to boast of this loss of his troops. But what he does say is interesting. His annals, recorded on both the Oriental Institute Prism and the Taylor Prism, say: "As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke, I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts and to the countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered (them) . . . Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage." Sennacherib says that "the terror-inspiring splendor of my lordship" overwhelmed Hezekiah. Yet, he does *not* say he captured Hezekiah or conquered Jerusalem, as he had said about the "strong cities" and "small villages." Why not? As the Bible shows, the elite of the troops that Sennacherib had sent to do so had been destroyed!

Esar-haddon, a younger son and successor of Sennacherib, is mentioned three times in the Bible—in Second Kings, Ezra, and Isaiah. The Bible records that the Assyrians captured Judah's king Manasseh. Archaeologists have found an Assyrian list that includes "Manasseh king of Judah" among those who paid tribute to Esar-haddon.—2 Chronicles 33:11.

Ashurbanipal, son of Esar-haddon, is thought to be "the great and honorable Asenappar" mentioned at Ezra 4:10. He expanded the Assyrian empire to its greatest extent.

End of a World Power

Because of Assyria's wickedness, its destruction had been decreed. Jehovah's prophet Nahum had written that its capital Nineveh would be breached at the "gates of the rivers . . . and the palace itself [would] actually be dissolved." There would be a plundering of silver and gold, the city would be laid waste, and people would say: "Nineveh has been despoiled! Who will sympathize with her?"—Nahum 2:6-10; 3:7.

Did this happen too? Let Nineveh's conquerors answer. In 632 B.C.E. the Babylonians and the Medes wreaked bitter vengeance on the Assyrian capital. Babylon's chronicles report: "The great spoil of the city and temple they carried off and [turned] the city into a ruin-mound."

Two great mounds now mark the site of this once proud capital. They are a silent testimony to the fact that no nation—not even proud and violent Assyria—can block the sure fulfillment of Jehovah's prophecies.

In Our Next Issue

- **The Book of Nature and the Bible**
- **Responsible Childbearing in This Time of the End**
- **Mighty Babylon—The Third Great World Power**

The "Divine Justice" District Conventions

WHAT a great deal of suffering there is in the world due to a lack of justice! Widespread abuse of power on the part of some political rulers has resulted in much unjust suffering. Greedy commercial interests oppress people, resulting in much hardship. Then there is the oppression of religious leaders today who are like their counterparts in Jesus' day, and of whom he said: "They bind up heavy loads and put them upon the shoulders of men, but they themselves are not willing to budge them with their finger." (Matthew 23:4) There is also much abuse of power and resultant injustice within family circles.

History shows that it would be futile to look to imperfect men, however well-meaning these *might* be, to remedy such matters. But there exists in the heavens the Supreme Being and Judge, Jehovah. He is the God of justice. Rightly, Moses sang: "The Rock, perfect is his activity, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice; righteous and upright is he."—Deuteronomy 32:4.

Jehovah has long tolerated all the injustices of this world, but he will not do so for all time. There is an appointed time for him to act, and then the prophecy found at Isaiah 14:4-7 will be fulfilled, which promises that all manner of tyranny will cease and 'the whole earth will come to rest.'

Because of their firm faith in these prophetic promises, Jehovah's Witnesses delight to proclaim far and wide that soon Jehovah will bring an end to all oppression, unrighteousness, and injustice by ushering in complete Kingdom rule. Then no one will cause any harm or ruin, for 'the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea.'—Isaiah 11:9.

To strengthen our faith in Jehovah's righteous judgments, the 1988 district conventions will have the theme "Divine Justice." Stressing this theme will not only spur us on in making known our hope for divine justice but also encourage us to act in harmony with divine justice in all our dealings.

As Jehovah's servants, all of us know that because of the transgression of our first parents, our inclination is toward selfishness, toward injustice. So we will appreciate the fine information that we will receive by means of Bible lectures, demonstrations, interviews, and dramas that will underscore the need to uphold divine justice. This is in keeping with the command at Micah 6:8, 'to exercise justice, love kindness, and be modest in walking with our God.' This makes for harmony, contentment, and joy; it also helps to further the preaching of the good news in all the earth.

An outstanding feature of these conventions will be that a number of cities will be tied in for special talks by members of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. For these conventions missionaries throughout the world will have transportation provided for them; this will also enable them to visit with their families again.

Jehovah willing, the "Divine Justice" District Conventions will begin Thursday at 1:30 p.m. and will conclude at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. Let us arrange our affairs to be on hand when the program begins and plan to stay until the closing song and prayer every day. Come with a good spiritual appetite and equipped to take notes. Be assured that Jehovah has in store for us "a banquet" of good things that will strengthen and stimulate us for the work ahead.—Isaiah 25:6; Song of Solomon 2:4.

Yes, let each one come determined to get the greatest possible spiritual blessing from the "Divine Justice" District Conventions.

Convention Locations

United States

June 16-19: **AMARILLO, TX,** Civic Center Coliseum, 3rd & Buchanan Sts. **BILOXI, MS,** Mississippi Coast Coliseum, 3800 W. Beach Blvd. **DAYTONA BEACH, FL,** The Ocean Center, 101 N. Atlantic Ave. **FT. WORTH, TX,** Tarrant County Convention Center Arena, 1111 Houston St. **GREENVILLE, SC,** Memorial Auditorium, 300 E. North St. **HOUSTON, TX,** Astrodome, Loop 610 at Kirby Dr. **MACON, GA,** Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr. **MADISON, WI,** Dane County Memorial Coliseum, John Nolen Dr. **NEW HAVEN, CT,** Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 275 S. Orange St. **NEW YORK, NY,** Yankee Stadium, 157th St. & River Ave. **RENO, NV,** Centennial Coliseum, 4590 S. Virginia St. **ST. LOUIS, MO,** The Arena, 5700 Oakland Ave. **SAN DIEGO, CA,** Jack Murphy Stadium, 9449 Friars Rd. **SAN FRANCISCO, CA,** Cow Palace, Geneva Ave. **TUCSON, AZ,** Community Center, 260 S. Church St. **WICHITA, KS,** Kansas Coliseum, I-135 at 85th St. N.

(Continued on page 30)

Convention Locations (*Continued*)

June 23-26: **AMARILLO, TX,** Civic Center Coliseum, 3rd & Buchanan Sts. **BILLINGS, MT,** Yellowstone Metra, Hwy. #10. **BILOXI, MS,** Mississippi Coast Coliseum, 3800 W. Beach Blvd. **CHARLESTON, WV,** Civic Center Coliseum, 200 Civic Center Dr. **CICERO, IL,** Sportsman's Park Race Track, 3301 S. Laramie. **COLUMBIA, SC,** Carolina Coliseum, Assembly & Sweet Sts. **CORVALLIS, OR,** Gill Coliseum, 600 S.W. 26th St. **DAYTONA BEACH, FL** (Sign language also), The Ocean Center, 101 N. Atlantic Ave. **FT. WORTH, TX** (Sign language also), Tarrant County Convention Center Arena, 1111 Houston St. **GREENVILLE, SC,** Memorial Auditorium, 300 E. North St. **HIALEAH, FL,** Hialeah Park Race Track, E. 32nd St. at E. 2nd Ave. **JACKSONVILLE, FL,** Memorial Coliseum, Gator Bowl Sports Complex. **LAFAYETTE, LA** (Sign language also), Cajundome, West Congress. **LANDOVER, MD,** Capital Centre, Beltway Exit 15 E. or 17. **LITTLE ROCK, AR,** Barton Coliseum, Roosevelt & Dennison St. **LOS ANGELES, CA,** Dodger Stadium, 1000 Elysian Park Ave. **MACON, GA** (Sign language also), Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr. **MADISON, WI,** Dane County Memorial Coliseum, John Nolen Dr. **NEW HAVEN, CT,** Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 275 S. Orange St. **OGDEN, UT,** Dee Events Center, 4600 South 1400 East. **PITTSBURGH, PA,** Three Rivers Stadium, 420 Stadium Cir. **ROCHESTER, MN,** Mayo Civic Center Arena, 30 2nd Ave. S.E. **ST. LOUIS, MO,** The Arena, 5700 Oakland Ave. **SAN FRANCISCO, CA** (Sign language also), Cow Palace, Geneva Ave. **SOUTH BEND, IN,** N.D.U. Athletic Center, Juniper Rd.

June 30–July 3: **CHARLESTON, WV,** Civic Center Coliseum, 200 Civic Center Dr. **CICERO, IL** (Sign language also), Sportsman's Park Race Track, 3301 S. Laramie. **COLUMBIA, SC,** Carolina Coliseum, Assembly & Sweet Sts. **CORVALLIS, OR,** Gill Coliseum, 600 S.W. 26th St. **FRESNO, CA,** Convention Center, 700 "M" St. **GREENSBORO, NC,** Coliseum, 1921 W. Lee St. **HIALEAH, FL,** Hialeah Park Race Track, E. 32nd St. at E. 2nd Ave. **LANDOVER, MD** (Sign language also), Capital Centre, Beltway Exit 15 E. or 17. **LITTLE ROCK, AR,** Barton Coliseum, Roosevelt & Dennison St. **LOUISVILLE, KY,** Coliseum, Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center. **MACON, GA,** Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr. **MADISON, WI,** Dane County Memorial Coliseum, John Nolen Dr. **NASHVILLE, TN,** Municipal Auditorium, 417 4th Ave. **NEW HAVEN, CT,** Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 275 S. Orange St. **NEW YORK, NY** (Sign language also), Yankee Stadium, 157th St. & River Ave. **OGDEN, UT,** Dee Events Center, 4600 South 1400 East. **OKLAHOMA CITY, OK,** Myriad, One Myriad Gardens. **PITTSBURGH, PA** (Sign language also), Three Rivers Stadium, 420 Stadium Cir. **PONTIAC, MI,** Silverdome, 1200 Featherstone. **PROVIDENCE, RI,** Civic Center, One LaSalle Sq. **RENO, NV,** Centennial Coliseum, 4590 S. Virginia St. **ST. PAUL, MN,** Civic Center, 143 W. 4th St. **ST. PETERSBURG, FL,** Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S. **SAN FRANCISCO, CA,** Cow Palace, Geneva Ave. **SOUTH BEND, IN,** N.D.U. Athletic Center, Juniper Rd. **TALLAHASSEE, FL,** Civic Center, 555 W. Pensacola St.

July 7-10: **BIRMINGHAM, AL,** Civic Center Coliseum, One Civic Center Plaza. **BISMARCK, ND,** Civic Center Arena, 6th & Sweet Sts. **CICERO, IL,** Sportsman's Park Race Track, 3301 S. Laramie. **CORVALLIS, OR,** Gill Coliseum, 600 S.W. 26th St. **DENVER, CO,** McNichols Sports Arena, 1635 Clay St. **FRESNO, CA,** Convention Center, 700 "M" St. **GREENSBORO, NC,** Coliseum, 1921 W. Lee St. **HAMPTON, VA,** Coliseum, 1000 Coliseum Dr. **HIALEAH, FL** (Spanish only), Hialeah Park Race Track, E. 32nd St. at E. 2nd Ave. **KNOXVILLE, TN,** Civic Center Coliseum, 500 Church Ave. S.E. **LANDOVER, MD,** Capital Centre, Beltway Exit 15 E. or 17. **LINCOLN, NE,** Devaney Sports Center, 16th & Military. **LITTLE ROCK, AR,** Barton Coliseum, Roosevelt & Dennison St. **LOUISVILLE, KY** (Sign language also), Coliseum, Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center. **NASHVILLE, TN,** Municipal Auditorium, 417 4th Ave. **PHILADELPHIA, PA,** Veterans Stadium, S. Broad & Pattison Ave. **PROVIDENCE, RI** (Sign language also), Civic Center, One LaSalle Sq. **RENO, NV,** Centennial Coliseum, 4590 S. Virginia St. **ST. PETERSBURG, FL,** Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S. **SAN FRANCISCO, CA,** Cow Palace, Geneva Ave. **SOUTH BEND, IN** (Spanish only), N.D.U. Athletic Center, Juniper Rd. **TACOMA, WA** (Sign language and Spanish also), Tacoma Dome, 2727 E. "D" St. **TUCSON, AZ** (Sign language also), Community Center, 260 S. Church St.

July 14-17: **BILOXI, MS,** Mississippi Coast Coliseum, 3800 W. Beach Blvd. **CICERO, IL,** Sportsman's Park Race Track, 3301 S. Laramie. **CROWNSVILLE, MD** (Korean only), Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, Sunrise Beach Rd. **DENVER, CO** (Sign language also), McNichols Sports Arena, 1635 Clay St. **EL PASO, TX** (Spanish only), Special Events Center, Baltimore at Mesa. **FT. LAUDERDALE, FL** (French only), Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 20850 Griffin Rd. **FRESNO, CA,** Convention Center, 700 "M" St. **HAMPTON, VA,** Coliseum, 1000 Coliseum Dr. **HIALEAH, FL** (Spanish only), Hialeah Park Race Track, E. 32nd St. at E. 2nd Ave. **HOUSTON, TX** (Spanish only), Astrodome, Loop 610 at Kirby Dr. **JERSEY CITY, NJ** (French only), Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 2932 Kennedy Blvd. **LINCOLN, NE** (Sign language also), Devaney Sports Center, 16th & Military. **LOS ANGELES, CA** (Sign language also), Dodger Stadium, 1000 Elysian Park Ave. **LOS ANGELES, CA** (Japanese only), Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 4310 Degnan Blvd. **LOS ANGELES, CA** (Korean only), Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 20600 Ventura Blvd., Woodland Hills. **PROVIDENCE, RI,** Civic Center, One LaSalle Sq. **RENO, NV,** Centennial Coliseum, 4590 S. Virginia. **ROANOKE, VA,** Civic Center, 710 Williamson Rd. N.E. **ST. PETERSBURG, FL,** Bayfront Center, 400 1st St. S. **SAN FRANCISCO, CA** (Chinese also), Cow Palace, Geneva Ave. **TUCSON, AZ,** Community Center, 260 S. Church St.

July 21-24: **EL PASO, TX** (Spanish only), Special Events Center, Baltimore at Mesa. **FRESNO, CA** (Spanish only), Convention Center, 700 "M" St. **HIALEAH, FL** (Spanish only), Hialeah Park Race Track, E. 32nd St. at E. 2nd Ave. **LOS ANGELES, CA** (Spanish only), Dodger Stadium, 1000 Elysian Park Ave. **NEW YORK, NY** (Spanish only), Yankee Stadium, 157th St. & River Ave. **SAN FRANCISCO, CA** (Spanish only), Cow Palace, Geneva Ave.

Britain

June 23-26: **JERSEY, C.I.,** The Gloucester Hall, Fort Regent. **PLYMOUTH,** Plymouth Argyle Football Club, Home Park. **SOUTHAMPTON,** Southampton Football Club, The Dell, Milton Road.

June 30–July 3: **NOTTINGHAM,** Nottingham Forest Football Club, City Ground. **STOKE,** Stoke City Football Club, Victoria Ground, Stoke-on-Trent.

July 7-10: **EDINBURGH,** Rugby Union Ground, Murrayfield. **MANCHESTER,** Manchester City Football Club, Maine Road, Moss Side.

July 14-17: **COVENTRY,** Coventry City Football Club, King Richard Street. **LEEDS,** Leeds United Football Club, Elland Road. **NORWICH,** Norwich City Football Club, Carrow Road.

July 21-24: **CARDIFF,** Welsh National Rugby Ground, Cardiff Arms Park. **CRYSTAL PALACE,** National Sports Centre, Norwood. **LONDON** (Greek and Spanish sessions also), Rugby Union Ground, Whitton Road, Twickenham.

Ireland

July 14-17: **NAVAN,** Navan Exhibition Centre, Trim Road.

July 21-24: **NAVAN,** Navan Exhibition Centre, Trim Road.

Canada

July 7-10: **EDMONTON, ALTA.** (Sign language also; Ukrainian, French, and Spanish sessions also), Edmonton Northlands Coliseum, 75th St. & 118th Ave. **HAMILTON, ONT.** (Sign language also), Copps Coliseum, 101 York Blvd. **MONTREAL, QUE.** (French, French and English sign language; Arabic sessions also), Olympic Stadium, Pie IX Blvd. & Sherbrooke St. **MONTREAL, QUE.** (Italian only), Velodrome, Olympic Park, Pie IX Blvd. & Sherbrooke St. **MONTREAL, QUE.** (Spanish only), Arena Maurice-Richard, 2800 Viau St. **MONTREAL, QUE.** (Greek and Portuguese only), Centre Pierre Charbonneau, 300 Viau St. **SASKATOON, SASK.** (Sign language also; Ukrainian/Polish sessions also), Saskatchewan Place, 3515 Thatcher Ave. **VANCOUVER, B.C.** (Sign language also; Portuguese sessions also), B.C. Place Stadium, 777 Pacific Blvd. S.

July 14-17: **HALIFAX, N.S.** (Sign language also), Atlantic Winter Fair Exhibition Park, Rte. 333 (Peggy's Cove Rd.), Prospect Road. **HAMILTON, ONT.** (Sign language also; Hungarian sessions also), Copps Coliseum, 101 York Blvd.

July 21-24: **HAMILTON, ONT.** (Sign language also; Korean and Ukrainian/Polish sessions also), Copps Coliseum, 101 York Blvd. **ST. JOHN'S, NFLD.** (Sign language also), Memorial Stadium, Lake Ave.

Questions From Readers

■ **God's people are supposed to 'care for those who are their own,' so how could Abraham just send Hagar and Ishmael off into the wilderness?**

It is both loving and fitting for God's servants to care for needy family members. Concerning Christian parents, the apostle Paul wrote: "Certainly if anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith."—1 Timothy 5:8.

We can be sure that Abraham's course was not contrary to the spirit of such godly counsel, for he is set as an example of true faith, being "Jehovah's friend."—James 2:23; Hebrews 11:8-19.

God promised a blessing through Abraham's seed, or heir. When Sarah had become elderly and was still barren, she urged Abraham to produce a son through her Egyptian maidservant Hagar. Later, when Hagar was pregnant, she began to act so insolently toward Sarah that it could be described as "violence," or a malicious wrong against Abraham's beloved wife. (Exodus 23:1; 2 Samuel 22:49; Psalm 11:5) Abraham let Sarah put Hagar in her place, whereupon Hagar ran away to the wilderness, perhaps heading back to Egypt. The account does not say that she took provisions with her, so she may have known that she could obtain food and water at other encampments, such as from Bedouin groups.—Genesis 12:1-3, 7; 16:1-6.

An angel intervened and told Hagar that she should return, that she would have many descendants, and that her son Ishmael's 'hand would be against everyone.' (Genesis 16:7-12) Not too many years later, Ishmael proved to be against young Isaac, Abraham's true heir born to Sarah. Ishmael began to 'poke fun' at, or abuse, Isaac. This was more serious than sibling rivalry. God's Word identifies it as "persecuting" Abraham's divinely foretold seed. So firm action was fitting.—Genesis 21:1-9; Galatians 4:29-31.

Jehovah told Abraham to heed his wife's stand on what needed to be done, to 'drive out Hagar and her son.' Though Abraham was not pleased with the prospect of Hagar's leaving with his son, Abraham did make material provisions for them. In possible contrast to the previous time when Hagar went into the wilderness, this time she left with a supply of bread (perhaps implying various foods) and water—provided by Abraham. She evidently got lost somewhere "in the wilderness of Beer-sheba," and her supplies ran out before she found one of the wells in the area. But her predicament was not to Abraham's discredit, for he had made 'provisions for those who were his own,' even in the face of misconduct that required their dismissal from the household.—Genesis 21:10-21.

Wadi Zin, a dry river valley south of Beer-sheba

"This is a teacher's boon!"

The head of a department at a school in Durban, South Africa, said that he regularly reads the *Awake!* Because of the magazine's educational value on so many subjects, he asked if he could obtain a year's supply. When an *Awake!* bound volume was brought to him, he exclaimed: "This is a teacher's boon! I am going to tell all my teachers that this is what each of them should have in their library."

The man requested that at the end of each year, a bound volume of the magazines be brought to him. When told that the volumes are $6, he exclaimed: "That's very reasonable for all the wonderful articles in here! The ones on dealing with children and how to communicate with them are really helpful. In fact, all the articles are informative and a delight to read."