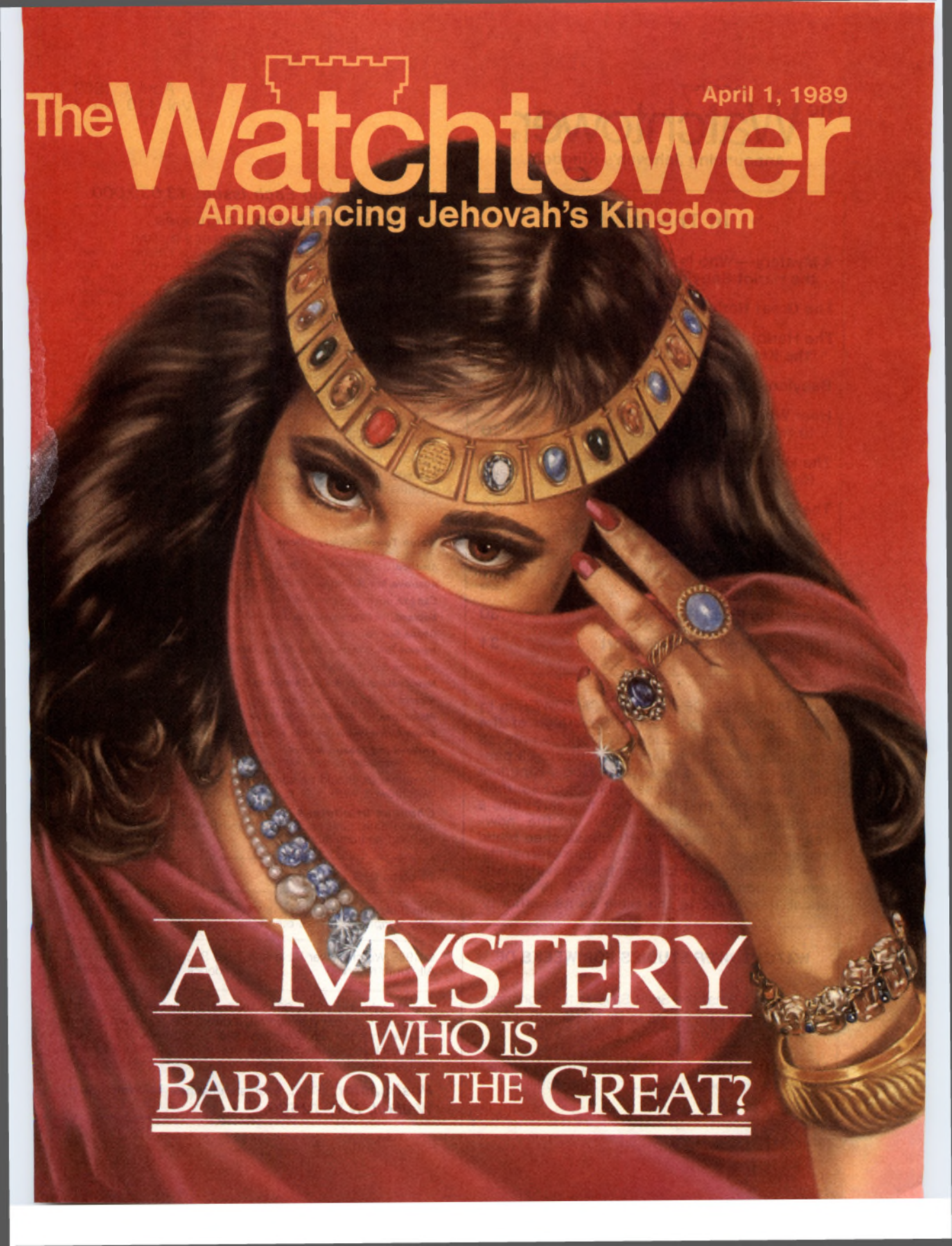


A woman with long, wavy brown hair is depicted from the chest up. She is wearing a red veil that covers her face, leaving only her eyes visible. She is adorned with a gold headband featuring a row of colorful gemstones (red, blue, black, and white). She also wears a gold necklace with blue and white beads. Her right hand is raised to her face, showing several rings with large blue and white stones. She is wearing a gold bracelet on her left wrist. The background is a solid red color.

The Watchtower

April 1, 1989

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

A MYSTERY
WHO IS
BABYLON THE GREAT?

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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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A MYSTERY

WHO IS THE HARLOT

BABYLON THE GREAT?

A WOMAN, an infamous prostitute, who has influenced the lives of billions of people, is killed, executed. But this is no ordinary execution. What makes it different? The executioner is an animal, a wild beast that strips her naked, devours her flesh, and then leaves her remains to be destroyed by fire. Who is this influential woman? Why does a wild beast attack her? What has she done to deserve this violent end?—Revelation 17:16, 17.

This could be the basis for an intriguing mystery story—except that it is not the plot for a novel. It is a historical reality that is in the course of being fulfilled. And it matters to you because this infamous prostitute may be influencing your life right now. Furthermore, whether you stay with her or break away will mean the difference between life and death. So who is she?

The Mystery Woman's Clients

This *femme fatale*, this shameless seductress, is described by John in the prophetic Bible book of Revelation, where we read: "And [the angel] carried me away in the power of the spirit into a wilderness. And I caught sight of a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored wild beast that was full of blasphemous names and that had seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and was adorned with gold and precious stone and pearls and had in her hand a golden cup

that was full of disgusting things and the unclean things of her fornication. And upon her forehead was written a name, a mystery: 'Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and of the disgusting things of the earth.'"—Revelation 17:3-5.

Now this "Babylon the Great" must be a formidable woman, for the account says in verse 1 that she "sits on many waters." What does that mean? God's angel explained to John: "The waters that you saw, where the harlot is sitting, mean peoples and crowds and nations and tongues." (Revelation 17:15) Without a doubt this is a prostitute with worldwide influence. But she is no commonplace whore. She is "the mother of the harlots," the madam of the institution. When it comes to fornication, she gives the orders. But she also has special clients.

The angel reveals who these favored clients of the great harlot are. How does he identify them? He says that Babylon the Great is the one "with whom *the kings of the earth* committed fornication, whereas those who inhabit the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." (Revelation 17:2) This has to be an alluring harlot with good connections to be able to attract the political rulers of the world, the very "kings of the earth"! So who is she?

The angel says she has a name, a mystery name, "Babylon the Great." Now here are two clues as to her identity—one is the clients she favors and the other is her name, Babylon the Great. To what conclusion do those clues lead?

* This is the first of four issues of *The Watchtower* that will address these and related questions regarding this mysterious woman.

THE GREAT HARLOT UNMASKED

THE present world system under Satan's control has three principal elements that are manipulated by "the god of this world." These are political rulership, big business control and influence, and religion. Over the millenniums of history, these three factors have been the constants of virtually every ruling system. Which of these powerful forces is symbolized by "the mother of the harlots"?—2 Corinthians 4:3, 4, *The Jerusalem Bible*; Revelation 12:9; 17:5.



Which of these—politics, big business, or religion—is represented by "Babylon the Great"?

According to John's vision that is here under discussion, the rulers, "the kings of the earth," have willingly gone to her bed of fornication. (Revelation 18:3) (Historical evidence of this will be presented in the following pages.) Thus, Babylon the Great cannot symbolize the political rulership factor in the world system.

What about the big business sector that plays such a vital role in man's affairs today? It certainly is a powerful influence in many nations and, in effect, decides who will be rich and who will be poor. Could this be Babylon the Great? An angel gave a vital clue to John that answers this question. He announced a startling event—Babylon's fall from grace! She loses her clients and paramours, who suddenly find her repugnant. Who else, apart from "the kings of the earth," have been among her regular visitors? The angel states: "Because of the wine of the anger of her forni-

cation all the nations have fallen victim, and the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and the traveling merchants of the earth became rich due to the power of her shameless luxury." Yes, the merchants of the world have benefited by trading and consorting with her and increasing her "shameless luxury." Thus, she cannot symbolize big business on a world scale. —Revelation 18:3.

Therefore, by a process of elimination, political rulership and big business control and influence are out of the running. What does that leave us with? It has to be that sector of power that also matches the indictment, "for by your spiritistic practice all the nations were misled." It is the once powerful but now waning element that has deeply influenced the thinking and the actions of the nations ever since the days of ancient Babylon. She is the one who has had "a kingdom over the kings of the earth"—namely, **false religion!**—Revelation 17:18; 18:23.

Yes, shocking as it may seem to some sincere religious people, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, is a symbol of Satan's world empire of false religion. She is a symbol of the religions of the world that in one way or another have compromised themselves with the political and financial rulership elements down through history.

Babylon the Warmonger

In accordance with the prophetic vision, Babylon the Great is the great whore that has led nations, peoples, and tribes into bloody wars, crusades, and vendettas, blessing them with incantations, holy water, prayers, and fiery patriotic speeches.* —Revelation 18:24.

Her clergy, especially her chaplains, have been willing tools of the rulers in herding the masses as cannon fodder into the slaughter of two world wars and other major conflicts. Catholic has killed

* The "holy" Crusades (1096-1270), the Thirty Years' War in Europe (1618-48), two world wars, and the slaughter of some 200,000 Hindus and Muslims on the partition of India (1947) are just a few examples of religion's bloodguilt.

Catholic, and Protestant has dutifully massacred Protestant, with a loss of some 50 to 60 million lives in just the two world wars.

In this enlightened 20th century, religion's legacy continues to breed hatred and death—not just in the realm of Christendom with its Catholic versus Protestant confrontation but also in the non-Christian world with its Islam versus Judaism, Hinduism versus Islam, Buddhism versus Hinduism, Sikhism versus Hinduism, and so forth.

Furthermore, religion has always wanted to exert a powerful influence over "the kings of the earth," attempting to decide their destinies and their successors. Let us briefly consider a few examples.

THE HARLOT AND "THE KINGS OF THE EARTH"

CHRISTENDOM'S history is full of examples of influence peddling and of meddling in the realms of power. Let us consider a few of them. Charlemagne (742-814 C.E.) was a ruler who saw the benefits of consorting with religion and having the blessing of the clergy of the Catholic Church.

The New Encyclopædia Britannica explains that the pope anointed Charlemagne, his father, and his brother, in founding a new dynasty after the former reigning family had been 'shunted aside.' Then it adds: "The political alliance between the Franks [Charlemagne's people] and the Pope against the Lombards was affirmed on the same occasion. . . . Charles [who became Charlemagne] early acknowledged the close connection between temporal power and the church."

In the year 800 C.E., Pope Leo III, "determined to make Charles emperor" of the Western Roman Empire, crowned him at Christmas Mass in St. Peter's, Rome.

A Greedy Harlot

But a harlot requires payment. What could Charlemagne pay Babylon's representative, Rome? "Charles . . . reiterated, in St. Peter's Basilica, his father's promise to transfer to papal rule large sections of Italy." The same source adds: "In his politically conditioned religiosity, the empire and the church grew into an institutional and spiritual unit."

Another example of religion's past powerful influence in rulership is Cardinal Wolsey of England (1475-1530). The *Britannica* states that he was a "cardinal and statesman who dominated the

government of England's King Henry VIII. . . . In December 1515 Wolsey became lord chancellor of England. . . . Wolsey used his vast secular and ecclesiastical power to amass wealth second only to that of the King." Applying the symbolic language of Revelation, high-class prostitution demands high-class payment.

Another notorious example of religious influence in State matters was the cardinal and duke of Richelieu (1585-1642), who exercised great power in France and also accumulated wealth that was "excessive even by the standards of the age," states the *Britannica*.

Richelieu was succeeded by yet another cardinal, Jules Mazarin (1602-61), who served as first minister of France during the reign of King Louis XIV. Although not an ordained priest, he was made a cardinal in 1641 by Pope Urban VIII. Cardinal Mazarin too was ambitious for wealth. The encyclopedia states: "Mazarin's enemies reproached him for his greed. He had accumulated offices and benefices and had sometimes confused royal income with his own."

In modern times false religion still amasses wealth and tries to influence and, if possible, control the political elements. One outstanding example is the secretive Catholic organization Opus Dei (Latin, God's Work), which presently enjoys the pope's favor and, according to author Lawrence Lader, is "totally committed to anti-communism and right-wing politics." It has a policy of taking the intellectual cream of Catholic youth through its high schools and universities and then having its men placed in high positions of influence and control in government, finance, and the media. In Spain they had a heyday under Catholic Fascist dictator Franco when, during one period, 10 of his 19 cabinet members

were associates of the elitist Opus Dei.*

In the United States, TV evangelists are noted for their ostentation of wealth and luxurious life-styles. Some Protestant clergy have proudly entered the political arena and have even aspired to the presidency. No doubt about it, although in a fallen state, the old harlot, under one guise or another, still enjoys the trappings and luxury of power and tries to rule the roost.—Revelation 17:4.

But what about the harlot's name, Babylon the Great? How does that help to confirm the identification of the woman symbolized in Revelation?

* For more information on Opus Dei and church involvement in politics, see the books *Hot Money and the Politics of Debt*, by R. T. Naylor, and *Politics, Power, and the Church*, by L. Lader.



Cardinals
Wolsey,
Mazarin,
and
Richelieu
amassed
fortunes
while serving
the State

BABYLON

CENTER OF FALSE WORSHIP

"SHE has fallen! Babylon has fallen, and all the graven images of her gods he has broken to the earth!" What kind of city was the Babylon about which Isaiah prophesied? That is a vital clue in our understanding the significance of modern Babylon the Great.—Isaiah 21:9.

Ancient Babylon was noted for its worship of heathen gods and goddesses. In his book *Babylonian and Assyrian Religion*, Professor S. H. Hooke states: "Babylon was the city where Marduk held the chief place among the other gods who were worshiped there. . . . There were in Babylon in the time of Nebu-

chadnezzar II no less than fifty-eight temples belonging to designated gods, to say nothing of many other temples not so assigned. Hence it can be seen how large a part the priestly caste must have played in the life of a great city." It is said that Marduk's temple in Babylon had 55 side chapels. How reminiscent of many temples, churches, and cathedrals today that have side chapels for lesser gods, saints, and Madonnas!

Babylon was a center of idolatry in the cult of the gods. One account states that the priests and the faithful "used to lavish attention upon their sacred images, con-

sidering the statues as intermediaries with the gods. The statues were covered with expensive vestments, adorned with necklaces, bracelets, and rings; they rested on sumptuous beds and were taken out in procession over land and water on foot, in carriages and private boats."* How similar to the worship rendered to gods, saints, and Madonnas in modern Hinduism, Buddhism, and Catholicism, in which they likewise parade their images

through streets and on rivers and the sea!

As a further example of the parallel between ancient Babylon and modern religion, consider the following description taken from the same encyclopedia: "Her faithful believers call her by the sweetest names: She is not only goddess and lady but also merciful mother, she who listens to prayers, she

* *Las Grandes Religiones Ilustradas* (The Great Religions Illustrated): *Asirio-Babilónica*, Volume 20, Mateu-Rizzoli, Barcelona, Spain, 1963, page 53.



who intercedes . . . she who has given life to the universe and to humanity.” Compare that to the following prayer from *El Santo Rosario* (The Holy Rosary): “We give you thanks, Sovereign Princess, for the favors we receive every day from your beneficent hand; be so kind, Lady, as to have us now and forever under your protection and shelter.”

Who is the subject of this description and the prayer? Many will immediately conclude, “The Virgin Mary.” That answer is only half right. The prayer is offered to Mary. However, as *Las Grandes Religiones Ilustradas* informs us, the first quotation is a description of Ishtar, the “Lady of Love,” the Babylonian goddess of fertility, love, and war. Sometimes she is presented in images “as a mother suckling her baby boy.”* Yet another example of how modern religion is not such a far cry from ancient Babylon!

We could also draw a comparison between ancient Babylon with its concepts of the human soul and its triads of gods and, today, the similar concepts of the immortal soul and the triads of modern religion. The evidence reinforces our understanding that “Babylon the Great” is an appropriate symbol of Satan’s world empire of false religion.

Babylon—Arrogant Enemy of True Worship

Babylon was also the arrogant enemy of Jehovah’s an-

* Volume 19, pages 19, 20.



cient people, Israel, and a despiser of their true worship. Babylon destroyed the temple in Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E., carried away all the valuable utensils of Jehovah’s worship, and desecrated these vessels at Belshazzar’s feast. —Daniel 5:3, 4.

Likewise, in modern times Babylon the Great has been a relentless opposer of true worship. In most instances where Jehovah’s Witnesses have been persecuted, the clergy have promoted it, often through their alliances with political rulers.



*Babylon the Great
has her roots in ancient
Babylonish religion*

One clear example of clergy-inspired opposition goes as far back as 1917, and this pattern has been repeated time and again. In that year the International Bible Students, as the Witnesses were then known, published the book *The Finished Mystery*. A few pages of this book were construed as subversive by the Canadian

and U.S. clergy, whose countries were embroiled in World War I. They hastened to inform their political paramours of this publication. The result? According to Professor Martin Marty, in his book *Modern American Religion—The Irony of It All*: “The clergy turned against the Russellites [Witnesses] and cheered to hear that twenty-year sentences [for alleged sedition] were to be imposed upon convicted Jehovah’s Witnesses leaders.”

But what was the clergy reaction a few months later when those leaders were exonerated of the charges? “There were no cheers by the orthodox church members.” The Witnesses stood alone for Bible principles “to the point that they antagonized the federal government over their religion.” The Witnesses were not and never have been willing to be the obsequious consorts of political rulers, not even under Nazi rule in Germany or under Fascist rule in Italy, Spain, and Portugal.

Babylon Denounced and Shamed

How appropriate, then, when Revelation states that Babylon the Great is “drunk with the blood of the holy ones and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus” and “in her was found the blood of prophets and of holy ones and of all those who have been slaughtered on the earth.” World religion’s blood-guilt for actively participating in or passively condoning wars and persecution of true Christians can be traced down through the centuries.—Revelation 17:6; 18:24.

Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, has enjoyed luxury and power throughout history. But an angel warned John that the great harlot’s day would come. The account tells us: “And he cried out with a strong voice, saying: ‘She has fallen! Babylon the Great has fallen, and she has become a dwelling place of demons and a lurking place of every unclean exhalation and a lurking place of every unclean and hated bird!’”—Revelation 18:2.

When will Babylon fall? Or has she fallen already? In what way does she suffer a fall? And how does that affect you? These and related questions will be answered in our next issue of *The Watchtower*.

Hear What the Spirit Says to the Congregations

"Let the one who has an ear hear what the spirit says to the congregations."

—REVELATION 3:22.

SOME years ago a sociologist in the United States commented that people in that land had too much freedom but not enough happiness. People, he added, "find that happiness has escaped them. The paradise they promised themselves has proved empty." In view of this, the

1. What words of Revelation are good news in this unhappy age, and what are the "prophecy" and "the appointed time" referred to?

words of the apostle John at Revelation 1:3 are good news, for he tells us how to find happiness. John wrote: "Happy is he who reads aloud and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and who observe the things written in it; for the appointed time is near." The "prophecy" he is referring to is the one recorded in the book of Revelation. And "the appointed time" is the time when this Revelation prophecy

The information on pages 10 to 21 was presented at the Divine Justice District Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses during 1988 as the opening talks of the symposium entitled "The Appointed Time Is Near."



must be fulfilled. John's words have deep significance for us today.

² More than 60 years before he wrote the book of Revelation, John was present at Pentecost when the anointed Christian congregation was established. Now, in 96 C.E., that congregation had grown from its original 120 members to a large, international organization. But there had been problems. Just as Jesus, Paul, and Peter had warned, apostasies and sects were beginning to appear, and John must have wondered what the future held. —Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43; Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Peter 2:1-3.

³ Imagine his happiness, then, when he received "a revelation by Jesus Christ, which God gave him, to show his slaves the things that must shortly take place." (Revelation 1:1) In a series of magnificent visions, John saw that Jehovah's purposes *would* be fulfilled and that the endurance of faithful Christians would be wonderfully rewarded. He also received messages from Jesus for seven congregations; these were, in effect, Jesus' final direct counsel to Christians before His coming in Kingdom glory.

The Seven Congregations

⁴ These seven congregations of anointed Christians were represented as seven lampstands, and the anointed elders within them were represented as seven stars in the right hand of Christ. (Revelation 1:12, 16) By this vivid image, John saw that faithful Christian congregations must be light bearers, like lighted lampstands in a darkened world. (Matthew 5:14-16) Jesus'

holding the elders in his right hand showed that he leads the elders, guiding and governing them.

⁵ Jesus tells John: "What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven congregations, in Ephesus and in Smyrna and in Pergamum and in Thyatira and in Sardis and in Philadelphia and in Laodicea." (Revelation 1:11) These congregations really existed in John's day, and we can be sure that when John finished writing Revelation, each congregation received a copy. But notice what Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* states about Revelation: "Hardly any other book in the N[ew] T[estament] is so well attested in the 2nd cent[ury]." This means that the book of Revelation was known and read not only by Christians in the seven congregations but by many others who wanted to study the words of the prophecy. Indeed, Jesus' counsel was for all anointed Christians.

⁶ But these messages to the seven congregations have an even wider application. At Revelation 1:10, John says: "By inspiration I came to be in the Lord's day." This verse is an important key to unlocking the understanding of Revelation. It indicates that it applies primarily to "the Lord's day," which began when Jesus became King in 1914. This understanding is confirmed by Jesus' messages to the seven congregations. In them we find expressions such as these words to Pergamum: "I am coming to you quickly." (Revelation 2:16; 3:3, 11) After 96 C.E., Jesus did not 'come' in any significant way until he was enthroned as King in 1914. (Acts 1:9-11) Then, in fulfillment of Malachi 3:1, he 'came' again in 1918, when

2. What must John have been wondering as the first century drew to a close?

3. Of what were the visions that John saw and recorded in Revelation a guarantee?

4. (a) What is the responsibility of faithful Christian congregations? (b) What is implied by the fact that anointed elders are seen as seven stars in the right hand of Christ?

5. To whom in John's day were the messages to the seven congregations directed?

6, 7. (a) When do the words of Revelation primarily apply, and how do we know this? (b) Who today are represented by the seven stars and by the seven congregations?

he came to Jehovah's temple to judge first the household of God. (1 Peter 4:17) He will 'come' once more, in the near future, when he "brings vengeance upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus."—2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8; Matthew 24:42-44.

⁷ With this in mind, we understand that the seven congregations picture all congregations of anointed Christians after 1914, and the seven stars represent all anointed elders in those congregations. Moreover, elders who are of the "other sheep" are also, by extension, in Jesus' right hand of control. (John 10:16) And the counsel to the seven congregations applies in principle to all the congregations of God's people today around the world, including those made up of Christians with an earthly hope.

⁸ When Jesus came to inspect professed Christians in 1918, he found anointed Christians on earth trying hard to observe the words of the prophecy. Since the 1870's they had been warning people of the importance of the year 1914. They had suffered much at the hands of Christendom during the first world war, and in 1918 their work virtually ceased when the leading officials of the Watch Tower Society were imprisoned on false charges. But their experiences at that time match the prophecies in Revelation to a marvelous degree. And their determination to heed Jesus' words to the seven congregations identified them without a doubt as the only light-bearing Christians in this benighted world. Today, this remnant makes up a John class that lives to see and participate in the fulfillments of many parts of Revelation.

8. What situation did Jesus find when he came to inspect professed Christians in 1918?

Counsel and Commendation

⁹ At Revelation 3:8, Jesus said to the congregation in Philadelphia: "I know your deeds—look! I have set before you an opened door, which no one can shut—that you have a little power, and you kept my word and did not prove false to my name." Evidently, Christians in Philadelphia had been active, and now a door of opportunity was opening up for them.

¹⁰ The modern-day reality of this message made God's people very happy. After their trialsome experiences in 1918, they were spiritually restored, and in 1919 Jesus opened a door of opportunity for them. They walked through that door when they accepted the commission to preach the good news of the Kingdom to all the nations. With Jehovah's spirit upon them, nothing could hinder this work, and these faithful Christians had the great privilege of fulfilling a major feature of the sign of Jesus' presence. (Matthew 24:3, 14) As a result of their faithful preaching activity, remaining ones of the 144,000 were called and anointed, and the "great crowd" was gathered in great numbers. (Revelation 7: 1-3, 9) What joy this has brought to God's people!

¹¹ Can anything rob them of this joy? Yes. For example, the elders in Pergamum, despite a fine record of endurance, were unable to keep the teaching of the sect of Nicolaus out of the congregation. (Revelation 2:15) Sectarianism was taking hold. Similarly, throughout these last days, some individuals have apostatized and tried to corrupt Jehovah's organization. The elders as a whole have resisted them, but, sadly, certain ones have been

9, 10. The fulfillment of what words of Jesus has brought great happiness to modern-day Christians? Explain.

11. How did sectarians try to corrupt Jehovah's organization in John's day, and how have they done so in our own day?

misled. May we never allow apostates to rob us of our joy!

¹² Jesus also warned the congregation in Pergamum against those “holding fast the teaching of Balaam.” (Revelation 2:14) What teaching was this? Someone in Pergamum was corrupting Christians there in the same way that Balaam corrupted the Israelites in the wilderness: by encouraging them “to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.” (Numbers 25:1-5; 31:8) Jesus warned the congregation in Thyatira against “that woman Jezebel.” This woman too was teaching Christians “to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols.” (Revelation 2:20) Has Satan tried to introduce a Balaam or a Jezebel influence into the Christian congregation today? He certainly has, to the extent that almost 40,000 a year are disfellowshipped, most because of immo-

12. (a) What is a Balaam and a Jezebel influence? (b) Has Satan tried to introduce a Balaam or a Jezebel influence into the Christian congregation in modern times?

rality. What a tragedy! Both Balaam-like men and Jezebel-like women have rebelled against the elders and tried to corrupt the congregation. May we resist such unclean influences with all our might!—1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 John 5:21.

¹³ At Revelation 3:15, 16, Jesus said to the congregation in Laodicea: “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or else hot. So, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of my mouth.” What a graphic description of the disgust Jesus feels at lukewarmness! He continues: “You say: ‘I am rich and have acquired riches and do not need anything at all.’” Yes, materialism had seduced Christians in Laodicea. They were self-satisfied and apathetic. But Jesus said to them: “You do not know you are miserable and pitiable and poor and blind and naked.” (Revelation 3:17) Do we want to be “miserable and pitiable and poor and blind and naked” in Jesus’ eyes? Of course not! So let us by all means fight against being materialistic or lukewarm.—1 Timothy 6:9-12.

Endure to the End

¹⁴ A congregation that was not lukewarm was that in Smyrna. To these Christians, Jesus said: “I know your tribulation and poverty—but you are rich—and the blasphemy by those who say they themselves are Jews,

13. (a) Describe Jesus’ disgust at lukewarmness. (b) Why were the Laodiceans lukewarm, and how can we avoid this weakness today?

14. (a) What hardships were faced by the congregation in Smyrna? (b) What modern parallels are there to Smyrna’s experiences?

Some of the faithful Christians who suffered in Nazi concentration camps



Vienna, Austria

and yet they are not but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not be afraid of the things you are about to suffer. Look! The Devil will keep on throwing some of you into prison that you may be fully put to the test, and that you may have tribulation ten days." (Revelation 2:8-10) How this matches the experience of Christians today! Modern Christians, both anointed and other sheep, have also endured fierce opposition from today's "synagogue of Satan," Christendom. From the first world war until now, thousands of men, women, and children have been beaten, imprisoned, tortured, raped, or killed for refusing to compromise their integrity.

¹⁵ Do such experiences bring happiness? Not in themselves. But like the apostles, faithful Christians who endure trials experience a deep inner joy at having "been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of [Jesus'] name." (Acts 5:41) And they stay happy whatever their enemies do to them because they know that the appointed time is near for their integrity to be rewarded, and the reward is truly great. Jesus said to Christians in Smyrna: "Prove yourself faithful even to death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10) And to those in Sardis he said: "He that conquers will thus be arrayed in white outer garments; and I will by no means blot out his name from the book of life."—Revelation 3:5.

¹⁶ True, these promises apply specifically to anointed Christians, reminding them of the prize of immortal heavenly life that awaits them. But those who are of the other sheep are also strengthened by these words. Jehovah has a reward prepared for them too, provided they are zealous and

15, 16. (a) How can anointed Christians be happy despite suffering persecution? (b) What special rewards awaiting the other sheep help them to be happy also?

endure. They have the glorious prospect of inheriting everlasting life on a paradise earth under the Kingdom in the hands of Christ. There they will find the Paradise that people of this world will fail to find.

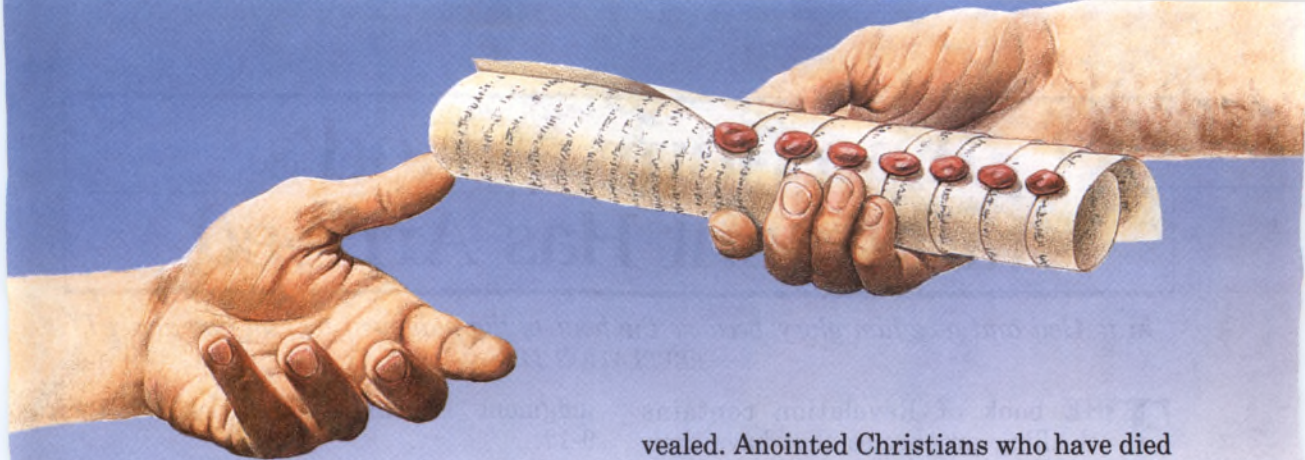
¹⁷ Jesus concluded each of his messages to the congregations with the words: "Let the one who has an ear hear what the spirit says to the congregations." (Revelation 3:22) Yes, we must hear and obey the words of the Chief Shepherd. We must shun uncleanness and apostasy, and we must maintain our zeal. Our receiving the reward depends on it. And when we consider the further information in Revelation, we are even more determined to do just that.

The Seals of the Scroll

¹⁸ In chapters 4 and 5, for example, John sees a wondrous vision of Jehovah's celestial court. The Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, is there, and he receives a scroll with seven seals. In chapter 6, Jesus opens six of the seven seals, one after the other. When the first is opened, a rider on a white horse is seen. He is given a crown and rides forth "conquering and to complete his conquest." (Revelation 6:2) This is Jesus, the newly crowned King. When he began his victorious, kingly ride in 1914, the Lord's day began. When the next three seals are opened, three more horses with their riders appear. These are frightening manifestations, representing human warfare, famine, and death by pestilence and other causes. They confirm Jesus' great prophecy that his heavenly presence in royal power would be marked

17. With what words did Jesus conclude each message, and what do his words mean for us today?

18. (a) What does Jesus receive in the heavenly court? (b) What do the rides of three of the horsemen of Revelation chapter 6 mean for mankind living today?



on earth by great wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and other disasters. (Matthew 24:3, 7, 8; Luke 21:10, 11) Truly, Christians must heed Jesus' words to the seven congregations if they are to endure at such a time.

¹⁹ At the opening of the fifth seal, an event in the invisible spirit realm is re-

19. (a) During the presence of Christ, what reward is given to faithful anointed Christians who have already died? (b) What horrendous events are foreshadowed by the opening of the sixth seal, leading to what question?

Do You Remember?

- ☐ What is the relationship between Jesus and the congregation elders?
- ☐ What problems confronted the elders in Pergamum and Thyatira, and how have similar problems affected the congregations today?
- ☐ What serious mistake did the Laodicean congregation make, and how can we avoid making a similar mistake today?
- ☐ How have Christians had to endure in this 20th century, and what promises of Jesus have helped them to do so?
- ☐ How can we avoid the despair and hopelessness that the nations will experience at Armageddon?

vealed. Anointed Christians who have died for their faith are each given a white robe. Evidently, with the presence of Christ now a reality, the heavenly resurrection has begun. (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; Revelation 3:5) Then the sixth seal is opened, and "the earth," Satan's earthly system of things, is shaken by a great earthquake. (2 Corinthians 4:4) "The heaven" of human rulership under Satan's control is rolled up like an old scroll, ready to be thrown away. Terrified, rebellious humans cry out in despair to the rock-masses: "Fall over us and hide us from the face of the One seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, because the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"—Revelation 6:13, 14, 16, 17.

²⁰ And who *is* able to stand? Why, Jesus has already answered that question. Those who "hear what the spirit says to the congregations" will stand in that great day of wrath. And to confirm this, John goes on to learn of the sealing of the last ones of the 144,000 and the gathering of a great crowd out of all nations to survive "the great tribulation." (Revelation 7:1-3, 14) But now it is time for the seventh seal of the scroll to be opened and more dramatic visions to be shown to John and, through him, to us today. The following article discusses some of these.

20. Who is able to stand during the great day of the wrath of Jehovah and of the Lamb?

The Hour of God's Judgment Has Arrived

*"Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of the judgment by him has arrived."
—REVELATION 14:7.*

THE book of Revelation contains thrilling prophecies that have their fulfillment in our day. The previous article considered some of them, including the opening of six symbolic seals. These opened seals revealed the devastating ride of the four apocalyptic horsemen in these "last days." (2 Timothy 3:1; Revelation 6:1-8) They also told about those who will rule with Christ in heaven and those who will survive "the great tribulation" to live on earth forever. The six seals show that God's "appointed time" for executing

judgment "is near."—Revelation 1:3; 7:4, 9-17.

² But there is one more seal, the seventh. Revelation 8:2 tells us what is revealed when it is opened: "And I saw the seven angels that stand before God, and seven trumpets were given them." Verse 6 says: "And the seven angels with the seven trumpets prepared to blow them." In Bible times, trumpets were used to signal important events. In the same way, these seven trumpet blasts call attention to matters of life-and-death importance in

1. What do the opening chapters of Revelation include?

2. How are the seven symbolic trumpets of Revelation chapter 8 to be used?



our time. And while angels sound the trumpets, human Witnesses on earth follow through by spreading abroad the vital news heralded by each trumpet blast.

What the Trumpet Blasts Mean

³ These trumpet blasts remind us of the plagues that Jehovah poured out on ancient Egypt. Those plagues were expressions of Jehovah's judgment on that first world power and its false religion, but they also opened the way of escape for God's people. Similarly, the trumpet blasts of Revelation are modern-day plagues, this time on Satan's entire world and its false religion. They are not, though, literal plagues but plaguing messages of Jehovah's judgments. They also spell out the way of escape for God's people.

⁴ In line with these seven trumpet blasts, hard-hitting resolutions against Satan's world were featured at seven special annual conventions of Jehovah's people from 1922 to 1928. Hundreds of millions of copies of the resolutions were distributed. However, the trumpeting of those scorching messages was not confined just to those years, but it has been continuous throughout the last days. And today the heralding of them is more powerful than ever, as millions of the "great crowd" have added their voices to the small band of anointed ones initially preaching after World War I. (Revelation 7:9) Each year now, with increasing force and numbers, these millions declare that Satan's world is utterly doomed.

⁵ At Revelation 8:6-12, the first four trumpets sound. Hail, fire, and blood are

poured out, resulting in devastation for "a third" of the world. Why is "a third" mentioned as the guilty part of the world that comes in for adverse judgment first? Because while all of Satan's system is reprehensible to God, one part is more so. Which part? The part that took the name of Christ to itself—Christendom. And when God's judgment messages came against her after World War I, the realm of Christendom at that time embraced about a third of mankind.

⁶ Christendom's religion is the fruitage of the 1,900-year-old apostasy from true Christianity that Jesus and his disciples foretold. (Matthew 13:24-30; Acts 20: 29, 30) The clergy of Christendom represent themselves as teachers of Christianity, but their doctrines are far removed from Bible truth, and their corrupt actions continually bring God's name into disrepute. Their bloodguilt due to supporting the wars of this 20th century has been laid bare. Christendom is wholly a part of Satan's system of things. Thus, she receives powerful, plaguing messages from Jehovah that show she merits no divine favor whatsoever. Jehovah has abandoned Christendom's house to destruction as surely as he did the Jewish house of the first century!—Matthew 23:38.

Revived for Global Preaching

⁷ At Revelation 9:1 the fifth angel sounds his trumpet, and the vision reveals a star coming down to the earth. This star has a key in his hand. With it he opens a pit in which a swarm of locusts had been confined. The star is Jehovah's newly installed heavenly King, Jesus Christ. The locusts are God's servants, who were

6. Why has Jehovah abandoned Christendom to destruction?

7, 8. (a) In Revelation chapter 9, what does the fifth trumpet blast reveal? (b) Whom do the locusts symbolize?

3. What is the meaning of the seven trumpet blasts?

4. How have the seven trumpet blasts found fulfillment in our time?

5. Who is the "third" of the world that is adversely judged first, and why?

persecuted and seemingly put out of the way when their leading officials were imprisoned in 1918. But Christ, now in Kingdom power in heaven, releases them so that they can resume their global public preaching, much to the dismay of the clergy, who had plotted to kill their work. —Matthew 24:14.

⁸ The locusts are described this way at Revelation 9:7: "And the likenesses of the locusts resembled horses prepared for battle; and upon their heads were what seemed to be crowns like gold, and their faces were as men's faces." Verse 10 adds: "Also, they have tails and stings like scorpions." These locusts well picture the revived remnant of Kingdom heirs going again into spiritual battle from 1919 onward. With renewed energy, they proclaimed God's stinging judgment messages, especially against corrupt Christendom.

⁹ Next, the sixth angel blows his trumpet. (Revelation 9:13) This reveals the letting loose of armies of cavalry. Verse 16 says that they number "two myriads of myriads," which is 200 million! And they are described in verses 17 and 19 as fol-

9, 10. (a) What does the sixth trumpet blast reveal? (b) Who are included in the myriads of powerful horses?



lows: "The heads of the horses were as heads of lions, and out of their mouths fire and smoke and sulphur issued forth. . . . Their tails are like serpents." These armies thunder forth under the direction of the King, Christ Jesus. And what a fear-some spectacle they are!

¹⁰ What do these powerful horses represent? Since they number into the millions, they could not just be the anointed remnant, of whom there are now only about 8,800 on earth. These myriads of horses must include the "great crowd" of Revelation chapter 7, those who have the hope of living forever on earth. In the Bible, the word "myriad" often refers to a vast, indefinite number. Thus, these symbolic horses would include not only the diminishing number of anointed ones but also the growing and powerfully vocal millions of the "great crowd" of "other sheep" who continue the public work begun by the locustlike anointed remnant.—John 10:16.

¹¹ Revelation 9:19 states: "The authority of the horses is in their mouths," and "with [their tails] they do harm." In what way is authority in their mouths? In that for decades, through the Theocratic Ministry School and other meetings, God's servants have been taught how to preach his judgment messages authoritatively by word of mouth. And in what way do they do harm with their tails? In that they have distributed billions of Bible-based publications worldwide, thus leaving behind stinging messages against Satan's world. To their opponents, these armies of cavalry truly seem like myriads of myriads.

¹² Thus, the symbolic locusts and horses

11. Why is it said that "the authority of the horses is in their mouths," and how do they 'do harm with their tails'?

12. What must the symbolic locusts and horses continue to do, and with what effect?

must sound God's judgment messages more clearly and loudly as his day of vengeance approaches. To those of honest heart, those messages are the best news on earth. But to those who prefer Satan's world, they are bad news, for they mean that their world is soon to be destroyed.

¹³ The plaguing locusts and the armies of cavalry are described as the first and second of three divinely determined "woes." (Revelation 9:12; 11:14) What is "the third woe"? At Revelation 10:7 we are told: "In the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, . . . the sacred secret of God according to the good news which he declared to his own slaves the prophets is indeed brought to a finish." This sacred secret involves the "seed" first promised in Eden. (Genesis 3:15) That "seed" is primarily Jesus but it also includes his anointed associates who will rule with him in heaven. So the sacred secret concerns the heavenly Kingdom of God. This Kingdom will bring the third divinely purposed "woe," for it will execute God's judgments against Satan's world to a finality.

The Kingdom Is Established

¹⁴ Then it happens! Revelation 11:15 says: "And the seventh angel blew his trumpet. And loud voices occurred in heaven, saying: 'The kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord [Jehovah] and of his Christ, and he will rule as king forever and ever.'" Yes, it is announced that God's Kingdom by Christ was established in heaven in the year 1914. And when the remnant was revived after World War I, they brought this news to the fore.

13. "The third woe" associated with the seventh trumpet blast involves what, and how is it a "woe"?

14. What did the seventh trumpet blast of Revelation 11:15 announce?

¹⁵ At a 1922 convention of Jehovah's servants in Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A., the thousands in attendance heard the thrilling announcement: "This is the day of all days. Behold, the King reigns! You are his publicity agents. Therefore advertise, advertise, advertise, the King and his kingdom." That set off the great surge of public Kingdom preaching that has included the judgments heralded by the seven angelic trumpeters. Today, about three-and-a-half-million servants of Jehovah in over 57,000 congregations throughout the world are involved in this global Kingdom preaching. Myriads indeed!

¹⁶ But the seventh angel has more to reveal. Revelation 12:7 says that then "war broke out in heaven." Verse 9 gives us this result of Christ the King's action: "So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him." Verse 12 adds: "On this account be glad, you heavens and you who reside in them!" Yes, the heavens were cleansed of Satan's influence, a cause for great rejoicing among the faithful angels. But what does it mean for humankind? That same verse answers: "Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time."

¹⁷ Revelation 12:3 describes Satan as 'a great dragon, with seven heads and ten horns,' a monstrous beastlike destroyer. This shows that he is the designer of the

earthly political "wild beast" described in chapter 13, verses 1 and 2. That beast also has seven heads and ten horns, in imitation of Satan. Verse 2 says: "The dragon [Satan] gave to the beast its power and its throne and great authority." Depicting the political governments as a wild beast is certainly appropriate, for in just this 20th century, more than a hundred million people have been killed in the wars of the nations.

¹⁸ The next scene in Revelation 13 reveals, as verse 11 says, "another wild beast ascending out of the earth, and it had two horns like a lamb, but it began speaking as a dragon." This two-horned beast is the Anglo-American political combine. It is lamblike in that it pretends to be inoffensive, the most enlightened form of government. But it speaks like a dragon, like Satan, and is called "another wild beast" because its ruling actions are beastlike. It pressures and threatens and even uses violence wherever its version of rulership is not accepted. It encourages, not submission to God's Kingdom, but, rather, subservience to Satan's world. That is why verse 14 says: "It misleads those who dwell on the earth."

¹⁹ This world under Satan's domination is a difficult place in which to live for those who, in harmony with Jesus' command to true Christians, are no part of it. (John 17:16) Thus, it is an outstanding demonstration of Jehovah's power and blessing that his servants throughout the world today keep integrity and unitedly continue to magnify Jehovah and his righteous ways. They do this in the face of intense opposition, persecution, and even death.

18. What is the two-horned beast of Revelation 13:11, and how do its actions help identify it?

19, 20. (a) What does the integrity of Jehovah's servants demonstrate? (b) How do we know that the anointed remnant will certainly triumph over Satan's world?

15. In 1922, what event signaled a new surge in Kingdom preaching?

16. In Revelation chapter 12, what further development involving heaven and earth was revealed by the seventh trumpet blast?

17. Why is depicting world government as "a wild beast" in Revelation chapter 13 appropriate?

²⁰ The anointed remnant in particular have been targets of Satan because they are to be corulers with Christ. But *Revelation* chapter 14 shows that the full number of them, 144,000, are triumphantly gathered with Christ in Kingdom power. They have loyally clung to their Master, for as verse 4 says: "These are the ones that keep following the Lamb no matter where he goes"—this in spite of the cruel persecution Satan has brought upon them.

Receiving God's Judgments First

²¹ At Revelation 14:7 an angel cries out: "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of the judgment by him has arrived, and so worship the One who made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters." Who receives God's adverse judgment first? Verse 8 answers: "And another, a second angel, followed, saying: 'She has fallen! Babylon the Great has fallen, she who made all the nations drink of the wine of the anger of her fornication!'" Here for the first time, but not the last, Revelation speaks of "Babylon the Great," the global empire of false religion.

²² Since religion still exercises influence in various parts of the earth, why does the angel announce that Babylon the Great has already fallen? Well, what resulted in 539 B.C.E. when ancient Babylon fell but was not yet completely destroyed? Why, Jehovah's captive servants returned to their homeland two years later and restored true worship! In the same way, the restoring of God's servants to the renewed activity and spiritual prosperity that began in 1919 is clear evidence that then, in 1919, Babylon the Great experienced a downward tumble as viewed by Jehovah.

21, 22. (a) What announcements do the angels make at Revelation 14:7, 8? (b) Why does an angel announce religious Babylon's fall when she is still in existence?

He there condemned her to a later extermination.

²³ As a prelude to her approaching annihilation, modern Babylon has already come into deep trouble. Her corruption, gross immorality, dishonesty, and political meddling have been exposed everywhere. In most of Europe, few people go to church anymore. In many socialistic countries, religion is regarded as "the opium of the people." Also, modern Babylon is disgraced in the eyes of all lovers of God's Word of truth. So she now waits, as it were, on death row for her merited execution. Yes, "the appointed time is near" for world-shattering developments! And in the next *Watchtower* issue, further study articles will discuss the prophecies in Revelation regarding the impending destruction of the religious "harlot," as well as of Satan's entire system of things.

23. (a) How is the way being paved for Babylon the Great's destruction? (b) What further prophecies will be considered in the next issue of *The Watchtower*?

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ What do the seven trumpet blasts that begin at Revelation chapter 8 mean for our day?
- ☐ Why does Christendom come in for adverse judgment first?
- ☐ How is the preaching work of the anointed remnant and the "great crowd" described in Revelation chapter 9?
- ☐ What did the announcement at Revelation 11:15 mean for heaven and earth?
- ☐ As described at Revelation 14:8, how did religious Babylon fall in 1919, and what does this mean for her?

The Demise of a Nation

Lessons From the Scriptures: Amos 1:1-9:15

"GET ready to meet your God," says "Jehovah the God of armies" to the nation of Israel. (Amos 4:12, 13) The reason? Blinded by prosperity, the Israelites had forgotten his Law and were guilty of polluting his sacred land with idolatry, immorality, bloodshed, and violence.

As Jehovah's prophet, Amos is raised up to pronounce a warning message not only to his own nation of Judah but particularly to the northern kingdom of Israel. He condemns Israel for her self-indulgent life-style and foretells her eventual demise at the hands of enemy nations. The book of Amos, written

sometime between 829 B.C.E. and 804 B.C.E., provides insight into God's ability to foresee coming disasters, and it offers some timely warnings.

Fiery Destruction of God's Enemies

No one can escape God's judgments.

How true this proved to be for the nations of Damascus (Syria), Gaza (Philistia), Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and Judah! Jehovah will 'not turn back' his hand from against them for their wrongdoing. Nevertheless, their foretold calamity only served to emphasize the judgment Israel faced for failing to maintain her covenant relationship with

BIBLE TEXTS EXAMINED

o 1:5—Ancient cities had high walls and huge gates. To lock these gates, long bars of iron or bronze were placed against them on the inside. 'Breaking the bar of Damascus' meant that the Syrian capital would fall to the Assyrians. It would be as if its city gates could not be locked because their bars had been broken.—2 Kings 16:8, 9.

o 4:1—The luxury-loving women dwelling in Samaria were referred to as "cows of Bashan." Bashan's rich pastures contributed to the production of fine breeds of animals. (Deuteronomy 32:14; Ezekiel 39:18) These selfish "cows of Bashan" evidently pushed their "masters," or husbands, to extort money from the poor in order to fill their own "houses of ivory." (Amos 3:15) Such actions, though, resulted in divine retribution.

o 4:6—The expression "cleanness of teeth" is explained by the parallel phrase "want of bread." It thus appears to refer to a time of famine, when teeth were clean because there was nothing to eat. Evidently, Jehovah had expressed his disapproval of the idolatrous ten-tribe kingdom by sending famine to the land, even as he had warned long before. (Deuteronomy 28:48) However, neither this nor other expressions of divine judgment reached the heart of this covenant-breaking people.—Amos 4:6, 8-11.

o 5:2—When Amos uttered his prophecy, the people as well as the land of Israel had not been subdued and ravished by a foreign power. Thus, they were personified as a virgin. In just a few years, though, the virgin Israel would fall to the

Assyrians and "go into exile beyond Damascus." (Amos 5:27) So certain is Amos of Israel's destruction because of her unfaithfulness that he describes it as having already taken place.

o 7:1—"The mown grass of the king" most likely referred to the tax or tribute levied by the king to provide food for his animals and cavalry. The king's tax was to be paid first, after which the people could get the "grass," or vegetation, for their own use. But before they could do so, the locusts came and ate up this later planting.

o 8:2—Summer fruit was picked toward the end of the harvest season. The end of the agricultural year thus symbolized that Israel had reached its end. "I shall no more do any further excusing of them," declared Jehovah. The nation was due for the execution of his judgment.

o 9:7—Because of their faithful ancestors, Jehovah chose the Israelites, delivered their forefathers from Egyptian bondage, and brought them into Canaan. But they had no basis for pride over this, for their wickedness gave them the same standing as the Cushites. (Compare Romans 2:25.) Likewise, the deliverance from Egypt was no more a guarantee of continued divine approval than was the fact that the Philistines and the Syrians were living in areas other than their earlier locations. Descent from the faithful patriarchs was not going to save the Israelites. An approved standing with God depends on compliance with his will.—Amos 9:8-10; Acts 10:34, 35.

God and to uphold his laws.—Amos 1:1-2:16.

Heed God's warning. "You people only have I known out of all the families of the ground," says Jehovah to Israel. (Amos 3:2) However, their sinful course showed contempt for God's name and sovereignty. Many were determined to be rich, living in idle luxury with 'a winter house in addition to a summer house,' at the expense of their own brothers. (Amos 3:15) With deceptive weights, they selfishly cheated the poor. Their forsaking true worship meant that Jehovah's punishment was due. Yet, 'Jehovah would not do a thing unless he revealed it to his servants.' Thus, Amos foretells Jehovah's judgments and warns them: "Get ready to meet your God."—Amos 3:1-4:13.

Jehovah Is Salvation

God will show mercy to those who repent. "Search for me, and keep living," is Jehovah's appeal to Israel. (Amos 5:4) "Hate what is bad, and love what is good." (Amos 5:15) Such words, however, are ignored. Apostates preferred to go up to Bethel and Gilgal, centers of idol worship, there to offer sacrifices to false gods. (Amos 5:26; 1 Kings 12:28-30) On ornate couches of ivory, smug evildoers gulp down fancy wine and pamper themselves with the choicest of foods and oils. (Amos 5:11; 6:4-6) "The day of Jehovah" is coming, and "by his own soul" God has sworn to Israel's destruction. (Amos 5:18; 6:8) Jehovah will raise up a nation to oppress Israel and lead her into exile. —Amos 5:1-6:14.

Fear Jehovah, not opposers. The destruction of Israel could be brought about by a swarm of locusts or an all-consuming fire. Amos appealed to God in Israel's behalf, and "Jehovah felt regret" over his judgment, so it was not carried out in this way. However, like a builder who checks the vertical plane of a wall with a plummet, Jehovah "shall no more do any further excusing" of Israel. (Amos 7:1-8) The nation must be desolated. Incensed by the prophet's message, Amaziah, a priest of calf worship, falsely charges Amos with treason and orders him to 'run to the land of



Judah and no longer do any prophesying' at Bethel. (Amos 7:12, 13) Does Amos cower? No! He fearlessly foretells the death of Amaziah and calamity for his family. As fruit is gathered at harvesttime, so it is time for Jehovah to make an accounting with Israel. There will be no escape.—Amos 7:1-8:14.

There is hope for those trusting in Jehovah. "I shall not completely annihilate the house of Jacob," says Jehovah. There is still hope for some of Jacob's offspring but not for the sinners. Their destruction is certain. Nevertheless, Jehovah will "gather back the captive ones" of Israel.—Amos 9:1-15.

Lessons for today: Those who make themselves enemies of God will be judged worthy of death. However, any who heed the divine warning message to repent will receive Jehovah's mercy and keep alive. If we fear God, we will not allow opposers to keep us from doing his will.

Rich Man and Lazarus Experience a Change

JESUS is relating an illustration about a rich man and a poor beggar named Lazarus. The rich man represents the religious leaders who are favored with spiritual privileges and opportunities, and Lazarus pictures the common people who hunger for spiritual nourishment. Jesus continues his story, describing a dramatic change in the men's circumstances.

"Now in course of time," Jesus says, "the beggar died and he was carried off by the angels to the bosom position of Abraham. Also, the rich man died and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, he existing in torments, and he saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in the bosom position with him."

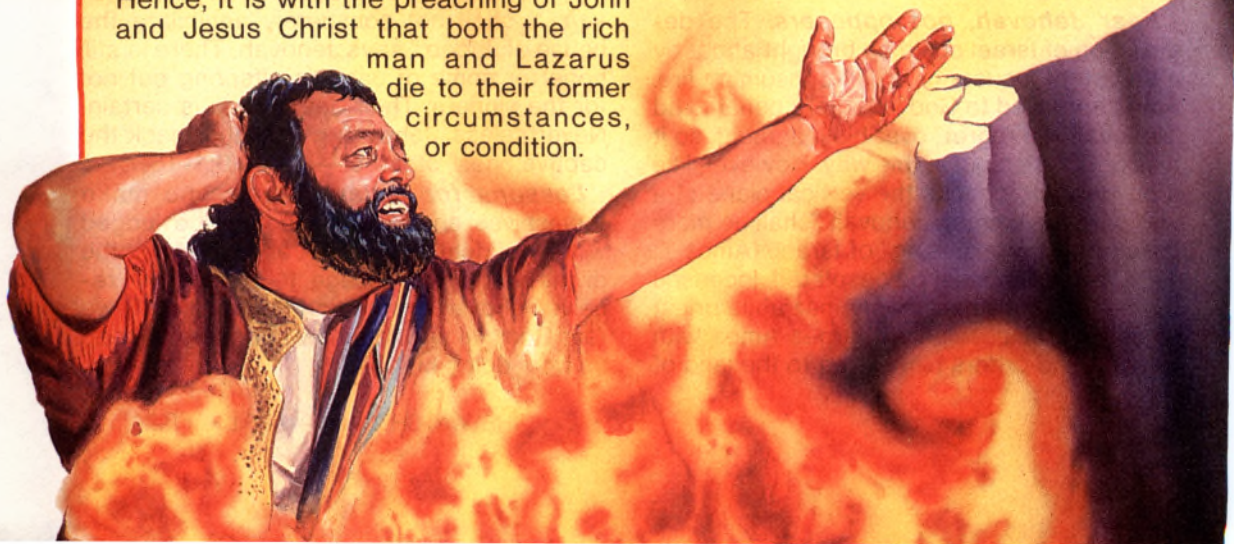
Since the rich man and Lazarus are not literal persons but symbolize classes of people, logically their deaths are also symbolic. What do their deaths symbolize, or represent?

Jesus has just finished pointing to a change in circumstances by saying that 'the Law and the Prophets were until John the Baptizer, but from then on the kingdom of God is being declared.' Hence, it is with the preaching of John and Jesus Christ that both the rich man and Lazarus die to their former circumstances, or condition.

Those of the humble, repentant Lazarus class die to their former spiritually deprived condition and come into a position of divine favor. Whereas they had earlier looked to the religious leaders for what little dropped from the spiritual table, now the Scriptural truths imparted by Jesus are filling their needs. They are thus brought into the bosom, or favored position, of the Greater Abraham, Jehovah God.

On the other hand, those who make up the rich-man class come under divine disfavor because of persistently refusing to accept the Kingdom message taught by Jesus. They thereby die to their former position of seeming favor. In fact, they are spoken of as being in figurative torment. Listen as the rich man speaks:

"Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in this blazing fire." God's fiery judgment messages proclaimed by Jesus' disciples are what torment individuals of the rich-



Jesus' Life and Ministry

man class. They want the disciples to let up on declaring these messages, thus providing them some measure of relief from their torments.

"But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you received in full your good things in your lifetime, but Lazarus correspondingly the injurious things. Now, however, he is having comfort here but you are in anguish. And besides all these things, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you people, so that those wanting to go over from here to you people cannot, neither may people cross over from there to us.'"

How just and appropriate that such a dramatic reversal take place between the Lazarus class and the rich man class! The change in conditions is accomplished a few months later at Pentecost 33 C.E., when the old Law covenant is replaced by the new covenant. It then becomes unmistakably clear that the disciples are favored by God, not the Pharisees and other religious leaders. The "great chasm" that separates the symbolic rich man from Jesus' disciples therefore represents God's unchangeable, righteous judgment.

The rich man next requests "father Abraham" to send Lazarus "to the house of my father, for I have five brothers." The rich man thus confesses he has a closer relationship to another father, who is actually Satan the Devil. The rich man requests that Lazarus water down God's judgment messages so as not to put his "five brothers," his religious allies, in "this place of torment."



"But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to these.'" Yes, if the "five brothers" would escape torment, all they have to do is heed the writings of Moses and the Prophets that identify Jesus as the Messiah and then become his disciples. But the rich man objects: "'No, indeed, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.'" God will not provide special signs or miracles to convince such. People must read and apply the Scriptures if they would obtain his favor. **Luke 16:16, 22-31; John 8:44.**

- ♦ Why must the deaths of the rich man and Lazarus be symbolic, and what is pictured by their deaths?
- ♦ What are the torments suffered by the rich man, and by what means does he request that they be relieved?
- ♦ What does the "great chasm" represent?
- ♦ Who is the rich man's real father, and who are his five brothers?

A WONDERFUL CAREER

57 Years of Missionary Life

As told by Eric Cooke

IN THE pale dawn light, I leaned on the rail of the cross-channel boat and gazed at the smudge on the horizon. My brother and I had left Southampton, England, the previous evening and were heading for Saint-Malo, France. Tourists? No, we were intent on taking the message of God's Kingdom to France. On arriving at Saint-Malo, we collected our bicycles and pedaled south.

Thus it was that my younger brother John and I set out for foreign missionary work over 57 years ago. What had led to our entering full-time service? What impelled us to leave a settled life in a comfortable English home?

What Influenced Our Life

In 1922 my mother attended the public talk "Where Are the Dead?" She was thrilled by it and soon became a dedicated servant of Jehovah. But Dad was not pleased. He was a member of the Anglican Church, and for years he took us to church on Sunday morning while Mum taught us from the Bible in the afternoon.

In 1927 John turned 14 and began to attend meetings with Mum and to share in door-to-door witnessing. But I was self-satisfied, having a good job in Barclay's Bank. Yet, out of

respect for Mum, I eventually began to study the Bible, along with the Watch Tower Society's publications. After that, spiritual progress was rapid, and in 1930 I was baptized.

On leaving school in 1931, John began the full-time ministry as a pioneer. When he suggested that I accompany him in the pioneer work, I abandoned my banking career and joined him. Our determination was strengthened by our new name, Jehovah's Witnesses, which we had just received. Our first assignment was the town of La Rochelle and the surrounding territory on the west coast of France.

Pioneering by Bicycle in France

As we cycled south from Saint-Malo, we enjoyed seeing the apple orchards of Normandy and sniffing the ripe odors from the cider mills. Little did we realize that the nearby Normandy beaches 13 years later, during World War II, would be ravaged by some of the bloodiest battles in history; nor did we realize that our full-time ministry would last so long. I jokingly said to John: "I think we can manage five years as pioneers. Armageddon can't be too far away!"

After three days of cycling, we arrived at La Rochelle. Both of us



had some knowledge of French, so we had no difficulty in finding a modest furnished room. On our bicycles, we covered all the villages within a radius of about 12 miles, distributing Bible literature. Then we moved on to another city and repeated the procedure. There were no other Witnesses in that part of France.

In July 1932, John, who had learned Spanish in school, was sent by the Society to serve in Spain. I continued in southern France and for two years had a series of partners from England. Because there was no other association with Witnesses, regular prayer and Bible study were vital to maintain our spiritual strength. We also returned to England once a year for annual conventions.

In 1934 we were expelled from France. The Roman Catholic Church, which then had powerful influence, was responsible. Instead of returning to England, I joined two other English pioneers, and we headed for Spain—on our bicycles as usual. One night we slept under some bushes, another on a haystack, yet another on the beach. We finally arrived in Barcelona in northeast Spain and joined John, who welcomed us.

The Challenge of Spain

There were no congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Spain at the time. After working a few months in Barcelona, we went on to Tarragona. It was there we first started using a portable phonograph and recordings of short Bible talks in Spanish. These were very effective, especially in crowded cafés and taverns.

In Lérida, to the northwest, we were joined by an isolated Witness, Salvador Sirera. Encouraged by our stay in the area, he served for a while as a pioneer. In Huesca, Nemesio Orus welcomed us enthusiastically to his little home above his watchmaker's shop. It was with him that

we conducted our first home Bible study, using one of the early booklets of the Society. We held it for a couple of hours each day, and soon he joined us as a pioneer.

In the next city we worked, Zaragoza, we had the joy of helping Antonio Gargallo and José Romanos, two youngsters in their late teens. Every evening they came to our little room for a Bible study that we conducted in the book *Governments*. In time, both joined us in the pioneer work.

Accused of Being Fascists

Meanwhile, trouble was brewing. The Spanish Civil War was about to erupt, a conflict in which hundreds of thousands were eventually to die. In one village near Zaragoza, Antonio and I ran into difficulties. A woman who accepted our booklets mistook them for Catholic propaganda and accused us of being Fascists. We were arrested and taken to the police station. "What are you doing in this village?" demanded the sergeant. "The people here are communists and don't like Fascist propaganda!"

After we explained our work, he was satisfied. He kindly gave us lunch and advised us to leave the village quietly during the siesta period. But when we left, a mob was waiting. They grabbed all our literature. It was an ugly situation. We were thankful, however, that the sergeant arrived and talked tactfully to the mob. He satisfied them when he offered to take us to Zaragoza to see the authorities. There he spoke in our behalf to a city official, and we were released.

In July 1936, when the civil war began, Antonio refused to fight with Franco's forces and was executed. What a joy it will be for John and me to welcome him in the resurrection and see his gentle smile again!

Called Communists in Ireland

Shortly before the civil war broke out, John and I returned to England for our usual annual leave. The war then made it impossible to return to Spain, so we pioneered for several weeks in Kent, near our home in Broadstairs. Then came our next assignment—Ireland. The Society's president, Joseph F. Rutherford, arranged for us to go there and distribute a special tract entitled *You Have Been Warned*. There were no congregations in southern Ireland, only a few isolated Witnesses.

This time, at the instigation of the Catholic clergy, we were accused of being communists—the very opposite of the charge against us in Spain! Once an infuriated gang of Catholics burst into the house where we were staying, took our cartons of literature, and burned them. We suffered a number of similar incidents before we returned to England in the summer of 1937.

World War II and On to Gilead

When World War II was declared in September 1939, John was serving in Bordeaux, France, and I was the congregation overseer in Derby, England. Some pioneers, including John, who had rejoined me, were exempted from compulsory military service, but others, like me, were refused exemption. So I was in and out of prison during the war. Endurance was needed to put up with conditions in those wartime prisons, but we knew our brothers in Europe were suffering far more.

After the war the new president of the Watch Tower Society, Nathan H. Knorr, visited England and arranged for some pioneers to attend the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead in upstate New York, for missionary training. So May 1946 found John and me crossing the Atlantic on a wartime-built Liberty ship.

The eighth class of Gilead was the first truly international one. What a heart-warming experience it was to study and associate with veteran pioneers during the five-month course! Eventually, graduation day came, and we finally learned our assignments. I was assigned to Southern Rhodesia, now known as Zimbabwe, and John was sent to Portugal and Spain.

Missionary Service in Africa

I landed in Cape Town, South Africa, in November 1947. Another boat brought classmates Ian Fergusson and Harry Arnett. Brother Knorr soon visited, and we attended a convention in Johannesburg. Then we proceeded north to our assignments—Ian to Nyasaland (now Malawi), Harry to Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), and I to Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). In due time the Society established a branch, and I was appointed branch overseer. We had 117 congregations with about 3,500 publishers in the country.

Soon four new missionaries arrived. They expected their assignment to be one of mud huts, lions roaring at night, snakes under the bed, and primitive conditions. Instead, with flowering trees lining the avenues of Bulawayo, modern amenities, and people ready to listen to

In Our Next Issue

- False Religion
Plays the Harlot
- A Mission of Mercy
Into Judea
- A Catholic Dilemma

the Kingdom message, they called it a pioneer's paradise.

Two Personal Adjustments

When I was baptized in 1930, there was little understanding regarding those who would have everlasting life on earth. So both John and I partook of the emblems at Memorial time, as did everyone then. Even in 1935, when the "great crowd" of Revelation chapter 7 was identified as an earthly class of "sheep," our thinking was not altered. (Revelation 7:9; John 10:16) Then in 1952, *The Watchtower* on page 63 published a clarification of the distinction between the earthly hope and the heavenly hope. We came to realize that we did not have the hope of heavenly life, but that our hope was of life on a paradise earth.—Isaiah 11:6-9; Matthew 5:5; Revelation 21:3, 4.

The other adjustment? I was becoming increasingly fond of Myrtle Taylor, who had been working with us for three years. As it became clear that she felt the same about me and that we both deeply appreciated missionary service, we became engaged and were married in July 1955. Myrtle has proved to be a very supportive wife.

Ministry in South Africa

In 1959 Brother Knorr visited Southern Rhodesia, and Myrtle and I were reassigned to South Africa. Before long we began traveling in my assignment in the circuit work. Those were golden days. But I was getting older, and Myrtle's health had caused us some anxiety. After a while we could no longer stand the pace of circuit work, so we established a missionary home in Cape Town and served there for some years. Later, we were reassigned to Durban, in Natal.

Our assignment there turned out to be Chatsworth, a large Indian community.

A visitor comes to Myrtle Cooke's camp kitchen



This was a foreign assignment *within* a foreign assignment—a real challenge to us elderly missionaries. When we arrived in February 1978, there was a congregation of 96 Witnesses, mostly Indian. We had to study the religious thinking of the Hindu people and understand their customs. The approach used by the apostle Paul in witnessing in Athens served as a helpful example for us.—Acts 17:16-34.

Blessings of Missionary Service

Now I am 78 years old, with 57 years of missionary service behind me. How encouraging it is to see the amazing increases in the countries where I have served! France has reached 100,000 Kingdom proclaimers, Spain has over 70,000, and South Africa has increased from 15,000 when we arrived to more than 43,000.

Young folks, do your circumstances allow you to enter the full-time ministry? If so, I can assure you that it is the finest career. Not only is it a protection from the problems and temptations that beset young people today but it can mold your personality to conform to Jehovah's righteous principles. What an advantage and a privilege it is for both young and old to serve Jehovah now!

Questions From Readers

■ Why did *The Watchtower* of September 15, 1988, indicate that Protestantism has defiled herself even more than Roman Catholicism?

This was said because it fits the prophecy and the facts. In the book of Ezekiel chapter 23, the figurative Oholah and Oholibah were described as immoral sisters. The ten-tribe kingdom of Israel was represented by Oholah, whereas Oholibah denoted the two-tribe kingdom of Judah. In discussing these symbolic women, *The Watchtower* of September 15, 1988, said on page 21:

"For pursuing a more sinful course than her sister [Oholah, or Israel], Oholibah (Judah) suffered national calamity at Babylonian hands in 607 B.C.E. Her children fell by the sword or were led away captive, and she was disgraced among the nations. Like Oholah and Oholibah, Christendom commits spiritual adultery, a sin in the sight of the God she claims to worship. Protestantism, with her many denominations, has defiled herself with the commercial and political powers of the world even more than her elder sister, Roman Catholicism. Thus, Jehovah will see to it that all of Christendom is destroyed."

Beginning with the Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E., Emperor Constantine fused the pagan Roman state cult with apostate Christianity and became the head of the new Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church thus can trace its existence to the fourth century of our Common Era. Protestantism had its start in the Reformation of the 16th century. Hence, as Oholah (Israel) was older than Oholibah (Judah), *The Watchtower* appropriately called Roman Catholicism the elder sister of Protestantism.

Yet, why can it be said that "Protestantism . . . has defiled herself with the commercial and political powers of the world even more than her elder sister, Roman Catholicism"? Because the facts match the prophecy, which states: "When her sister Oholibah got to see it, then she exercised her sensual desire *more ruinously* than she, and her prostitution

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Mrs. F. F. Thompson, 1926. (26.229)



Constantine fused apostate Christianity with the pagan Roman state cult, thus becoming head of the new Catholic Church

more than the fornication of her sister."—Ezekiel 23:11.

As parts of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, both Catholicism and Protestantism have been deeply involved with the commercial and political elements of this world. (Revelation 17:1-6; 18:1-19) True, an individual Protestant denomination may have less influence than the powerful Roman Catholic Church. But the many Protestant

churches combined outstrip the one Catholic Church in power and influence. For instance, Protestantism exerts great influence in certain prominent industrial countries, with some Protestant clergymen seeking high political office. So this is one way in which Protestantism, with its many denominations, has defiled herself even more than Catholicism.

In yet another way, however, Protestantism has "exercised her sensual desire *more ruinously*" and is more reprehensible than Catholicism. How so? Well, the Reformation gave Protestantism at least the hope and prospect of greater spiritual enlightenment. In fact, some reformers made sincere and notable moves in this regard. But when everything was said and done, such unscriptural doctrines as the Trinity, immortality of the human soul, and hellfire continued unchanged among the Protestants. Like the Catholics, they have also been guilty of engaging in creature worship and of putting the traditions of men in place of Biblical truth.—Matthew 15:1-9; 23:9, 10.

Of interest in this regard is what was stated in *Vindication*, Book One, back in the year 1931. On page 309, this Watch Tower publication (now out of stock) said concerning Ezekiel 23: 11-13: "Protestant 'organized religion' saw how Roman Catholicism had defiled herself with the commercial and political powers of this world, and said much against the Catholics for that reason; but then Protestantism went and straightway did likewise, and even worse. . . . Both have taken the same course; but Protestantism had had more enlightenment than Romanism, and therefore is the more reprehensible."

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

Love Unites Families

FAMILY unity can be achieved only when marriage is based on love guided by unselfishness. Such love emanates from Jehovah, the God of love, so it is a fruit of God's spirit. (Galatians 5: 22, 23; 1 John 4:8) The following experiences illustrate how love based on Bible knowledge has united families.

Hong Kong

□ In Hong Kong a pioneer started a home Bible study with a housewife and her two daughters. The husband voiced concern that she might be getting involved with a radical religious group. The pioneer suggested to the wife that she invite her husband to sit in on the study and decide for himself, which he did. Meanwhile, the wife began attending meetings, but she had a problem training her children. She would constantly scold the older one and spoil the younger one. Then it became known that she and her husband were having problems. Their quarrels often erupted into violence, and several times the police had to be called. The pioneer used the powerful Word of God to teach them how to manifest godly love in their marriage. Soon old ways and habits began to change. Both became regular meeting attenders, and a much happier atmosphere prevailed in the home. The husband gave up smoking and has now joined the Theocratic Ministry School. The wife is now a baptized publisher.

Family unity was achieved by demonstrating love, a fruit of God's spirit.

Britain

□ An experience from Britain illustrates how Jehovah blesses



a husband who shows love, patience, and endurance in dealing with his wife. When the husband was coming into the truth 12 years ago, his wife's bitter opposition led her to get a legal divorce. However, the husband continued to show her kindness, making sure she was financially cared for, doing small chores for her on a regular basis. After four years and in spite of her former opposition, he decided to mention the truth to her once again. When he suggested that a sister study the Bible with her, she accepted, much to his surprise. Eventually she took her stand for the truth and was baptized. The husband had never lost his love for her, and when she proved that she had made the truth her own, he asked her to marry him again. She was thrilled, never expecting him to do this in view of her previous

bad attitude. They have been remarried now for almost eight years, and both are progressing well in the truth.

South Pacific

□ Over 20 years ago, a young man on an island in Tuvalu in the South Pacific wrote to the Watch Tower Society asking for literature. There were no Witnesses on the island at the time. Nevertheless, he read the literature on his own and recognized it as the truth. His wife, however, bitterly opposed his new faith, so he abandoned it.

Recently, when literature became available in Tuvaluan, the wife came into possession of some publications and was able to read them herself. She now recognized the truth and complained to her husband: "All these years you have had the light, but you didn't hold it up high. Why didn't you at least explain to me why you believed the Witnesses were right?" Now united in Bible truth, this couple started to associate with the Witnesses.

When their two daughters, who had been going to school in Fiji, returned home, the parents informed them of their decision to become Jehovah's Witnesses. They encouraged the girls to join them in a Bible study, but to their surprise, they found that the girls had already been attending meetings in Fiji. The family happily accepted the truth together, and the father, the mother, and one of the daughters have become Kingdom publishers.

What a joy to see how Bible truth and love unite families all over the world.

A NEW BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA



Many have been writing to express their appreciation for the new Bible encyclopedia that they have received. "What a wonderful aid to research the two new volumes *Insight on the Scriptures!*" enthuses a writer from Wisconsin, U.S.A. "It is indeed a wonderful gift, one that I shall forever cherish and endeavor to use to the full," writes a woman from Jamaica, West Indies.

The two volumes of *Insight on the Scriptures* contain a total of 2,560 pages in clear, readable type. Its thousands of articles are alphabetically arranged and comprehensive. They deal with people, places, plant and animal life, notable events, figurative expressions in the Bible, and the record of God's dealings with humankind.

Fifty-three subjects are developed as special features in full color. Many of these include maps and photographs of geographical locations and museum displays, as well as other artwork designed to help you to visualize Bible accounts. Valuable background and explanatory material is provided on upwards of 3,500 Bible texts. Subject, scripture, and map-location indexes are included.

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