

The **Watchtower** October 1, 1989
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

**IS HELL
HOT?**

In This Issue

Is Hell Hot?	3
The Origin of Hell	4
The Truth About Hell	6
The Illustration of the Minas	8
Do You Condemn the World Through Your Faith?	10
Maintain Your Faith and Spiritual Health	15
Kingdom Proclaimers Report	21
Always Finding Something to Do for Jehovah	22
'Unless Jehovah Builds the House ...'	27
Questions From Readers	30
AIDS—'Beginning of a New Morality'?	31

THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

WATCHTOWER STUDIES FOR WEEKS OF

November 6: Do You Condemn the World Through Your Faith? Page 10. Songs to Be Used: 215, 144.

November 13: Maintain Your Faith and Spiritual Health. Page 15. Songs to Be Used: 132, 181.

Average Printing Each Issue: 13,030,000

Now Published in 106 Languages

SEMIMONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL

Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Cibemba, Danish,* Dutch,* Efik, English* (also Braille and cassettes†), Ewe, Finnish,* French,* Ga, German,* Greek,* Hiligaynon, Igbo, Iloko, Italian,* Japanese,* Korean, Malagasy, Maltese, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese,* Russian, Sepedi, Sesotho, Shona, Spanish,* Swahili, Swedish,* Tagalog, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Twi, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

MONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL

Armenian, Bengali, Bicol, Bislama, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Fijian, Greenlandic, Gujarati, Gun, Hausa, Hebrew, Hindi, Hiri Motu, Hungarian, Icelandic, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, New Guinea Pidgin, Pangasinan, Papiamentu, Rarotongan, Romanian, Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sango, Serbian, Silozi, Sinhalese, Slovenian, Solomon Islands-Pidgin, Tahitian, Tamil, Telugu, Tongan, Turkish, Tuvaluan, Ukrainian, Urdu, Venda, Vietnamese

* Study articles also available in large-print edition.

† Outside the United States and Canada, write U.S. office concerning rates and certification for the blind and visually impaired.

Watch Tower Society offices	Yearly subscription for the above:	
	Semimonthly Languages	Monthly Languages
America , U.S., Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589	\$5.00	\$2.50
Australia , Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565	A\$8.00	A\$4.00
Canada , Box 4100, Halton Hills, Ontario L7G 4Y4	\$7.00	\$3.50
England , The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	£5.00	£2.50
Ghana , Box 760, Accra	¢1,000	¢500
Ireland , 29A Jamestown Road, Finglas, Dublin 11	IR£6.00	IR£3.00
Jamaica , Box 180, Kingston 10	\$20.00	\$10.00
New Zealand , P.O. Box 142, Manurewa	NZ\$12.00	NZ\$6.00
Nigeria , PMB 001, Shomolu, Lagos State	N24.00	N12.00
Philippines , P.O. Box 2044, 1099 Manila	P60.00	P30.00
South Africa , Private Bag 2067, Krugersdorp, 1740	R12.00	R6.00
Trinidad and Tobago, Rep. of , Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe	TT\$21.00	TT\$10.50

Remittances should be sent to the office in your country or to Watchtower, Wallkill, N.Y. 12589, U.S.A.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

25 cents (U.S.) a copy

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

© 1989 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Frederick W. Franz, President

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly for \$5.00 (U.S.) per year by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Printed in U.S.A.

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



IS HELL HOT?

“AT SOME point in the nineteen-sixties, Hell disappeared.” So said British author David Lodge in his book *Souls and Bodies*, and his words reflect the thinking

of many Catholics and Protestants during the decades following the second world war. For a time, many of the mainstream churches themselves soft-pedaled their official doctrine of a fiery hell in their efforts to adapt to modern thought patterns.

The idea of punishment after death was especially unacceptable to people because the notion of sin itself had become cloudy in their minds. Interviewed in 1984, Rome's Cardinal Ratzinger said: “Our civilization . . . focuses on mitigating circumstances and alibis in the attempt to take away people's sense of guilt, of sin . . . , that very reality with which belief in hell and Purgatory is associated.”

Is it possible today to believe in the reality of sin without accepting the doctrine of punishment after death in purgatory and hell? A recent book, *Abrégé de la foi catholique* (Summary of the Catholic Faith), prefaced by French Cardinal Decourtray, put the question squarely: “Is it necessary to believe in hell?” The answer: “It is not possible to elude the frightening question of hell.” The work *Vatican Council II—More Postconciliar Documents* (1982) quotes “The Credo of the People of God” as stating: “We believe . . . [that] those who have responded to the love and compassion of God will go into eternal life. Those who have refused them to the end will be consigned to the fire that is never extinguished.”

So, in spite of all theological efforts to prove the contrary, hellfire is still very much a part of official Catholic dogma. Yet *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* (1983) speaks of the “embarrassment” and the “discomfort” that the doctrine of eternal damnation causes many members of Christendom's churches today. They have trouble reconciling this dogma with the notion of a God of love. They wonder: ‘Is a hot hell really a Christian and Biblical doctrine? If not, where did it originate?’

THE ORIGIN OF HELL

"HELL," explains the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, is the word "used to signify the place of the damned." A Protestant encyclopedia defines hell as "the place of future punishment for the wicked."* But belief in such a place of punishment after death is not limited to the main churches of Christendom. It originated many centuries before Christendom came into existence.

The Mesopotamian Hell

About 2,000 years before the birth of Jesus, the Sumerians and the Babylonians believed in an underworld that they called the Land of No Return. This ancient belief is reflected in the Sumerian and the Akkadian poems known as "The Epic of Gilgamesh" and the "Descent of Ishtar to the Underworld." They describe this abode of the dead as a house of darkness, "the house which none leave who have entered it."

As to the conditions prevailing there, an ancient Assyrian text states that "the nether world was filled with terror." The Assyrian prince who was supposedly granted a view of this subterranean abode of the dead testified that his "legs trem-

bled" at what he saw. Describing Nergal, the king of the underworld, he recorded: "With a fierce cry he shrieked at me wrathfully like a furious storm."

Egyptian and Oriental Religions

The ancient Egyptians believed in the immortality of the soul, and they had their own concept of the afterworld. *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* states: "Egyptian funerary texts depict the way to the next world as beset by awful perils: fearsome monsters, lakes of fire, gates that cannot be passed except by the use of magical formulas, and a sinister ferryman whose evil intent must be thwarted by magic."

The Indo-Iranian religions developed various beliefs on punishment after death. Concerning Hinduism, the French *Encyclopædia Universalis* (Universal Encyclopedia) states: "There are innumerable descriptions of the 21 hells imagined by the Hindus. Sinners are devoured by wild beasts and by snakes, laboriously roasted, sawed into parts, tormented by thirst and hunger, boiled in oil, or ground to powder in iron or stone vessels."

Jainism and Buddhism both have their versions of hell, where impenitent sinners are tormented. Zoroastrianism, founded in Iran, or Persia, also has a hell—a cold, ill-smelling place where the souls of sinners are tormented.

Interestingly, it would appear that the torments of the Egyptian, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, and Zoroastrian versions of hell are not everlasting. According to these religions, after a period of suffering, the souls of sinners move on to some other place or state, depending on the particular religion's concept of human destiny. Their ideas of hell resemble Catholicism's purgatory.

* M'Clintock and Strong's *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Volume 4, page 165.

Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Hells

The ancient Greeks believed in the survival of a soul (*psy-khe'*, the word they also used for the butterfly). They called Hades the realm of the dead and believed it was ruled over by a god of the same name. In his book *Orpheus—A General History of Religions*, French scholar Salomon Reinach wrote of the Greeks: "A widely spread belief was that [the soul] entered the infernal regions after crossing the riv-

Dover Publications, Inc.



Crossing the Styx as described in Dante's "Inferno"

er Styx in the boat of the old ferryman Charon, who exacted as the fare an obolus [coin], which was placed in the mouth of the dead person. In the infernal regions it appeared before the three judges of the place . . . ; if condemned for its crimes, it had to suffer in Tartarus. . . . The Greeks even invented a Limbo, the abode of children who had died in infancy, and a Purgatory, where a certain mild chastisement purified souls." According to *The World Book Encyclopedia*, souls that ended up in Tartarus "suffered eternal torment."

In Italy the Etruscans, whose civilization preceded that of the Romans, also believed in punishment after death. The *Dictionnaire des Religions* (Dictionary of Religions) states: "The extreme care that the Etruscans took of their dead is explained by their conception of the nether

regions. Like the Babylonians, they considered these to be places of torture and despair for the manes [spirits of the dead]. The only relief for them could come from propitiatory offerings made by their descendants." Another reference work declares: "Etruscan tombs show scenes of horror that inspired Christian paintings of hell."

The Romans adopted the Etruscan hell, calling it Orcus or Infernus. They also borrowed the Greek myths about Hades, the king of the underworld, calling him Orcus, or Pluto.

The Jews and the Hebrew Scriptures

What about the Jews before Jesus' day? Concerning them, we read in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1970): "From the 5th century B.C. onward, the Jews were in close contact with the Persians and the Greeks, both of whom had well-developed ideas of the hereafter. . . . By the time of Christ, the Jews had acquired a belief that wicked souls would be punished after death in Gehenna." However, the *Encyclopædia Judaica* states: "No suggestion of this later notion of Gehenna is to be found in Scripture."

This latter statement is correct. There is no suggestion in the Hebrew Scriptures of a postmortem punishment for a soul in a fiery hell. This frightening doctrine goes back to the post-Flood religions of Babylonia, not to the Bible. Christendom's doctrine of punishment in hell originated with the early Babylonians. The Catholic idea of remedial suffering in purgatory goes back to the early Egyptian and Oriental religions. Limbo was copied from Greek mythology. Prayers and offerings for the dead were practiced by the Etruscans.

But upon what basic supposition are these doctrines of conscious punishment after death based?

THE TRUTH ABOUT HELL

OBVIOUSLY, the underlying doctrine behind belief in punishment after death is the belief that the real man does not actually die when the fleshly body dies but that something—often called a soul—survives the death of the body. This belief, as we saw in the preceding article, goes back to the early Sumerians and Babylonians in Mesopotamia. Later, it was adopted by the Greeks, whose philosophers, such as Plato, polished the theory. Their refined dualistic belief in “body and soul” became a part of apostate Jewish belief.

When did professed Christians adopt the belief in such an afterlife? Certainly not during the time of Jesus and his apostles. The French *Encyclopædia Universalis* states: “The [apocryphal] *Apocalypse of Peter* (2nd century C.E.) was the first Christian work to describe the punishment and tortures of sinners in hell.”

In fact, it appears that among the early church fathers, there was much disagreement over hell. Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Cyprian were for a fiery hell. Origen tried to give hell a remedial twist, claiming that sinners in hell would eventually be saved. He was followed to a greater or lesser degree by Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa. But Augustine put an end to such soft views of hell. In his book *Early Christian Doctrines*, Oxford professor J. N. D. Kelly writes: “By the fifth century the stern doctrine that sinners

will have no second chance after this life and that the fire which will devour them will never be extinguished was everywhere paramount.”

As to purgatory, the book *Orpheus—A General History of Religions* states: “St. Augustine had held that there was an intermediate state of probation between future felicity and damnation, that of the purification of souls by fire. This is the Orphic [pagan Greek] and Virgilian [pagan Roman] doctrine of Purgatory: there is not a word about it in the Gospels. . . . The doctrine of Purgatory . . . was formulated in the sixth century, and proclaimed a dogma of the Church by the Council of Florence (1439).” The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* admits: “The Catholic doctrine on purgatory is based on tradition, not Sacred Scripture.” With regard to Limbo, Rome’s Cardinal Ratzinger admits that it is “only a theological hypothesis.”

No Punishment After Death

What, though, about the Bible? Does it say that the soul survives the body at death and can therefore be punished in a fiery hell or purgatory? The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* states: “The notion of the soul surviving after death is not readily discernible in the Bible. . . . The soul in the O[ld] T[estament] means not a part of man, but the whole man—man as a living being. Similarly, in the N[ew] T[estament] it signifies human life: the life of an individual.”

So the underlying premise for punishment after death falls flat. The Bible states: “The soul that sins shall die.” (Ezekiel 18:4, *Revised Standard Version*, Catholic Edition) It also declares: “The wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23, *RSV*) Therefore, when the Bible speaks of impenitent wicked people ending up in “Gehenna,” “everlasting fire,” or “the lake of fire,” it is merely using symbolic language to speak of their undergoing permanent death, “the second death.”—Matthew 23:33; 25:41, 46; Revelation

20:14; 21:8;* compare 2 Thessalonians 1: 7-9.

Hell Emptied by the Resurrection

Is hell hot, then? Not according to the Bible. Indeed, the Hebrew and Greek words translated in some Bibles as "hell" merely designate the common grave of dead humans. It is not a hot place of torment. It is, rather, a place of rest, from which the dead will come forth in the resurrection. (Ecclesiastes 9:10; Acts 24:15) Oscar Cullmann, professor at the Theological Faculty of the

* For further information on these and other Bible texts that have been used by some to attempt to bolster the doctrine of a fiery hell, see the book *Is This Life All There Is?* published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

University of Basel, Switzerland, and of the Sorbonne, in Paris, speaks of the "radical difference between the Christian expectation of the resurrection of the dead and the Greek belief in the immortality of the soul." Correctly, he says that "the fact that later Christianity effected a link between the two beliefs . . . is not in fact a link at all but *renunciation of one* [the Bible doctrine of the resurrection] *in favour of the other* [the pagan belief in the immortality of the human soul]."—Italics ours.

Jehovah's Witnesses have not renounced their faith in the resurrection in favor of the idea of the immortality of the soul. They will be delighted to share with you their happy hope and prove to you from the Bible that, of a truth, hell is not hot.



The Illustration of the Minas

JESUS is perhaps still at the home of Zacchaeus, where he has stopped en route to Jerusalem. His disciples believe that when they get to Jerusalem, he will declare that he is the Messiah and set up his Kingdom. To correct this idea and to show that the Kingdom is yet a long way off, Jesus gives an illustration.

"A certain man of noble birth," he relates, "traveled to a distant land to secure kingly power for himself and to return." Jesus is the "man of noble birth," and heaven is the "distant land." When he arrives there, his Father will grant him kingly power.

Before leaving, however, the man of noble birth calls ten slaves and gives each of them a silver mina, saying: "Do business till I come." The ten slaves in the initial fulfillment represent Jesus' early disciples. In an enlarged application, they picture all who are prospective heirs with him in the heavenly Kingdom.

The silver minas are valuable pieces of money, each amounting to about three months' wages for an agricultural worker. But what do the minas represent? And what kind of business are the slaves to do with them?

The minas represent assets that spirit-begotten disciples could make use of in producing more heirs of the heavenly Kingdom until Jesus' coming as King in the promised Kingdom. After his resurrection and appearance to his disciples, he gave them the symbolic minas for making more disciples and thus adding to the Kingdom-of-heaven class.

"But," Jesus continues, "his citizens hated [the man of noble birth] and sent out a body of ambassadors after him, to

say, 'We do not want this man to become king over us.'" The citizens are Israelites, or Jews, not including his disciples. After Jesus' departure to heaven, these Jews by persecuting his disciples made known that they did not want him to be their king. In this way they were acting like the citizens who sent out the body of ambassadors.

How do the ten slaves use their minas? Jesus explains: "Eventually when he got back after having secured the kingly power, he commanded to be called to him these slaves to whom he had given the silver money, in order to ascertain what they had gained by business activity. Then the first one presented himself, saying, 'Lord, your mina gained ten minas.' So he said to him, 'Well done, good slave! Because in a very small matter you have proved yourself faithful, hold authority over ten cities.' Now the second came, saying, 'Your mina, Lord, made five minas.' He said to this one also, 'You, too, be in charge of five cities.'"

The slave with ten minas pictures a class, or group, of disciples from Pentecost 33 C.E. until now that includes the apostles. Those that gained five minas also represent a group during the same time period that, according to their opportunities and abilities, increase their king's assets on earth. Both groups zealously preach the good news, and as a result, many righthearted ones become Christians. Nine of the slaves did successful business and increased their holdings.

"But," Jesus goes on, "a different one came, saying, 'Lord, here is your mina,

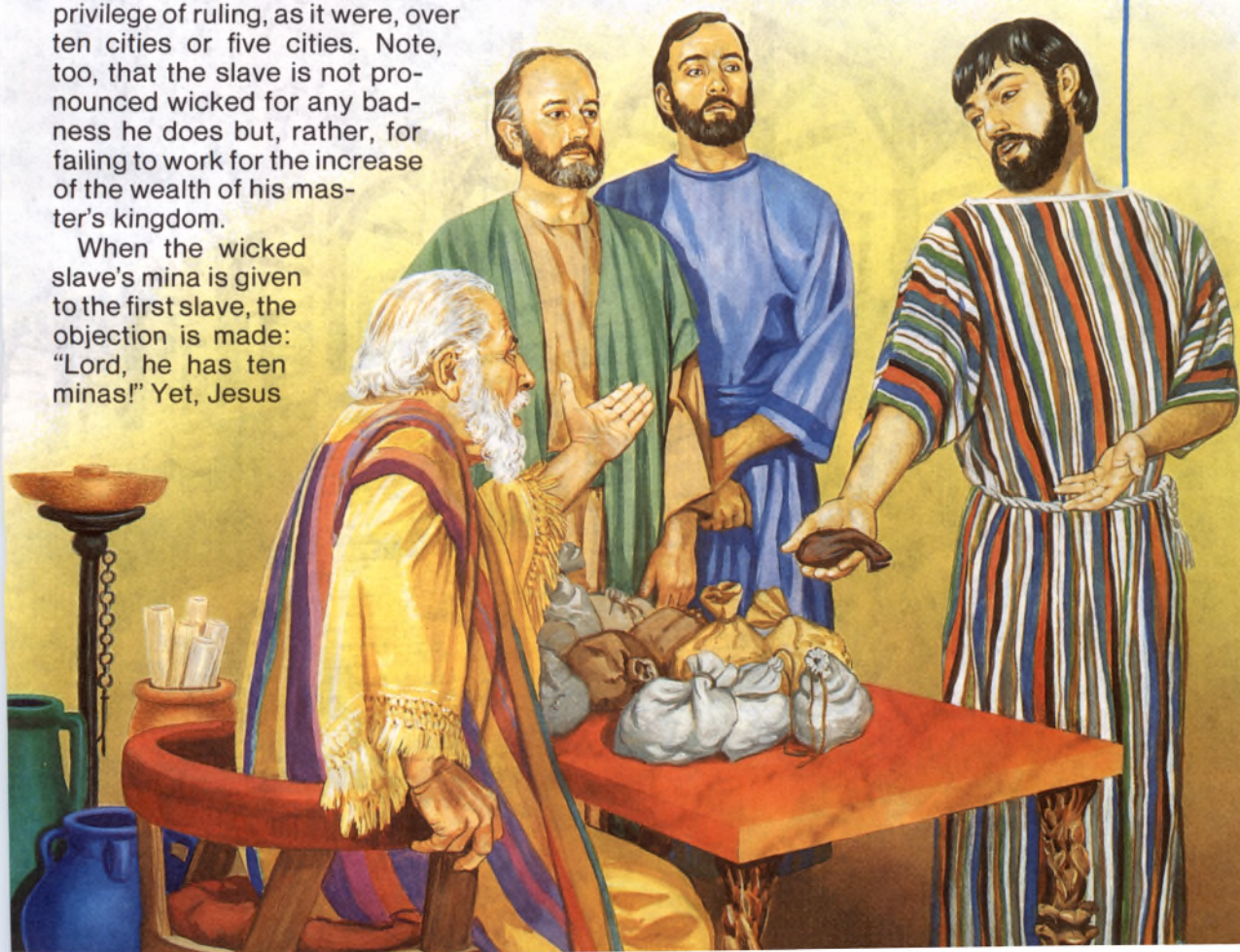
that I kept laid away in a cloth. You see, I was in fear of you, because you are a harsh man; you take up what you did not deposit and you reap what you did not sow.' He said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I judge you, wicked slave. You knew, did you, that I am a harsh man, taking up what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? Hence why is it you did not put my silver money in a bank? Then on my arrival I would have collected it with interest.' With that he said to those standing by, 'Take the mina from him and give it to him that has the ten minas.'

Loss of the symbolic mina means loss of a place in the heavenly Kingdom for the wicked slave. Yes, he loses the privilege of ruling, as it were, over ten cities or five cities. Note, too, that the slave is not pronounced wicked for any badness he does but, rather, for failing to work for the increase of the wealth of his master's kingdom.

When the wicked slave's mina is given to the first slave, the objection is made: "Lord, he has ten minas!" Yet, Jesus

answers: "To everyone that has, more will be given; but from the one that does not have, even what he has will be taken away. Moreover, these enemies of mine that did not want me to become king over them bring here and slaughter them before me." **Luke 19:11-27; Matthew 28:19, 20.**

- ♦ What prompts Jesus' illustration of the minas?
- ♦ Who is the man of noble birth, and what is the land to which he goes?
- ♦ Who are the citizens, and how do they show their hatred?
- ♦ Who are the slaves, and what is represented by the minas?
- ♦ Why is one slave called wicked, and what does loss of his mina mean?



DO YOU CONDEMN THE WORLD THROUGH YOUR FAITH?

"By faith Noah . . . constructed an ark for the saving of his household; and through this faith he condemned the world."—HEBREWS 11:7.

JEHOVAH granted Noah and his family—just eight in number—the privilege of being the only humans to survive the Flood. The lives of all the rest of Noah's contemporaries were cut short when God swept them into a watery grave. Since Noah is therefore our common ancestor, we should be very grateful for the faith he exercised.

1, 2. What can we learn from an examination of Noah's life?

² We can learn much from examining Noah's life. The Scriptures tell us why God favored him with salvation while He destroyed the people of Noah's generation. This same divine record clearly shows that our generation faces a similar judgment by God. Concerning this, Jesus said: "There will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again." (Matthew 24:21) By imitating Noah's



faith, we can have the sure hope of surviving the imminent destruction of this present wicked system.—Romans 15:4; compare Hebrews 13:7.

³ During the 1,656 years from Adam's creation to the Deluge, very few humans had the inclination to do good. Morality plummeted to an extremely low level. "Jehovah saw that the badness of man was abundant in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time." (Genesis 6:5) Violence, pleasure-seeking, and the presence of materialized angels who married women and produced giant offspring were among the factors that led to the execution of God's judgment upon that ancient world of mankind. To Noah, Jehovah said: "The end of all flesh has come before me, because the earth is full of violence as a result of them." The patience of the Creator, the "Judge of all the earth," had run out.—Genesis 6:13; 18:25.

Noah Walked With God

⁴ How different Noah was from people of his day! He "found favor in the eyes of Jehovah. . . . Noah was a righteous man. He proved himself faultless among his contemporaries. Noah walked with the true God." (Genesis 6:8, 9) How did Noah walk with God? By doing right things such as preaching as an advocate of righteousness and building the ark in faith and obedience. Thus, although that ancient world was destroyed because it was completely corrupt, God "kept Noah, a preacher of righteousness, safe with seven others when he brought a deluge upon a world of ungodly people." (2 Peter 2:5) Yes, our loving and just God, Jehovah, did

not destroy the righteous with the wicked. He instructed Noah to build a huge ark for the saving of himself, his household, and a number of animals, all for repopulating the earth after the Deluge. And Noah "did just so."—Genesis 6:22.

⁵ With the ark finished, God told Noah: "Go, you and all your household, into the ark, because you are the one I have seen to be righteous before me among this generation." Paul sums matters up in this way: "By faith Noah, after being given divine warning of things not yet beheld, showed godly fear and constructed an ark for the saving of his household; and through this faith he condemned the world, and he became an heir of the righteousness that is according to faith."—Genesis 7:1; Hebrews 11:7.

⁶ Noah had outstanding faith. He believed what God said about wiping out that generation. Noah had a healthy fear of displeasing Jehovah and obediently built the ark according to God-given orders. Moreover, as a preacher of righteousness, Noah told others about the impending destruction. Though they did not heed his words, he refused to let that wicked world 'squeeze him into its mold.' (Romans 12:2, *Phillips*) Rather, through his faith, Noah condemned the world for its wickedness and showed that it deserved destruction. His obedience and righteous acts demonstrated that others besides him and his family could have survived if they had been willing to change their life-style. Indeed, Noah proved that, despite pressures from his own imperfect flesh, the wicked world around him, and the Devil, it was possible to live a life that pleased God.

3. Why did Jehovah bring the Flood?

4. (a) How did Jehovah view Noah, and why?
(b) While God's justice demanded destruction of that wicked world, how was his love manifested in behalf of Noah and his family?

5. How do the Scriptures describe Noah's righteousness and faith?

6. How did Noah condemn the world of his day through his faith?

Why God Will Destroy This System

⁷ Each decade of this 20th century has seen the world sink more deeply into wickedness. Particularly has this been true since the beginning of World War I. Mankind has become so steeped in such things as sexual immorality, crime, violence, warfare, hatred, greed, and misuse of blood that those who love what is right wonder if conditions can possibly get worse. Yet, the Bible foretold the development in our generation of extreme wickedness, giving further proof that we are in "the last days."—2 Timothy 3:1-5; Matthew 24:34.

⁸ Today, the concept of sin has been neutralized in the minds of the vast majority. Over 40 years ago, Pope Pius XII observed: "The sin of this century is the loss of all sense of sin." The present generation refuses to acknowledge sin and guilt. In his book *Whatever Became of Sin?* Dr. Karl Menninger stated: "The very word 'sin' . . . has almost disappeared—the word, along with the notion. Why? Doesn't anyone sin anymore?" Many have lost the ability to discern right from wrong. But we are not surprised at this, for Jesus foretold such developments when discussing 'the sign of his presence' in "the time of the end."—Matthew 24:3; Daniel 12:4.

Pattern of Judgment Set in Noah's Day

⁹ Jesus drew a parallel between events of Noah's day and what would occur during His presence in Kingdom power, beginning in 1914. He said: "Just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man [Jesus] will be. For as they were in those

days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and they took no note until the flood came and swept them all away, so the presence of the Son of man will be."—Matthew 24:37-39.

¹⁰ Yes, as in Noah's day, people today take no note. Being very busy with everyday living and selfish pursuits, they refuse to recognize that present conditions differ significantly from those of the past and fit exactly what Jesus said would mark the time of the end. For years, Jehovah's Witnesses have been telling a modern generation that Jesus' presence as Messianic King in heaven began in 1914 and runs parallel to "the conclusion of the system of things." (Matthew 24:3) Most people scoff at the Kingdom message, but even this was foretold when the apostle Peter wrote: "You know this first, that in the last days there will come ridiculers with their ridicule, proceeding according to their own desires and saying: 'Where is this promised presence of his? Why, from the day our forefathers fell asleep in death, all things are continuing exactly as from creation's beginning.'"—2 Peter 3:3, 4.

¹¹ Yet, today's generation will be without excuse when the great tribulation arrives. Why? Because there are Bible accounts of ancient divine judgments that set a pattern for what God will do in our day. (Jude 5-7) Bible prophecy in course of fulfillment right before their eyes shows conclusively where we are in the stream of time. This generation also has before it the preaching activity of Jehovah's Witnesses and their record of integrity-keeping like that of Noah.

7. How do we know that we are living in the last days?

8. What have some said about consciousness of sin?

9. How did Jesus compare Noah's day with what would occur during His presence?

10. How do people in general take no note of significant events associated with Christ's presence?

11. Why will today's generation be without excuse when the great tribulation arrives?

¹² Peter explains what will happen to those who take no note of these facts. Like Jesus, the apostle does so by referring to what happened in Noah's day, saying: "According to their wish, this fact escapes their notice, that there were heavens from of old and an earth standing compactly out of water and in the midst of water by the word of God; and by those means the world of that time suffered destruction when it was deluged with water. But by the same word the heavens and the earth that are now are stored up for fire and are being reserved to the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men."—2 Peter 3:5-7.

¹³ With this certain judgment of God staring us in the face, let us not be deceived or intimidated by ridiculers. We need not share their destiny. Peter counsels: "Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion, awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah, through which the heavens being on fire will be dissolved and the elements being intensely hot will melt! But there are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell."—2 Peter 3:11-13.

Imitate Noah's Faith for Survival

¹⁴ Today, we face the same challenges as those faced by Noah and his family in becoming and remaining candidates for survival. Like Noah, Jehovah's Witnesses are condemning the world by their faith

backed up by good works. But each of us might ask himself: 'How am I personally doing? If the great tribulation were to come tomorrow, would God judge me worthy of survival? Like Noah, who "proved himself faultless among his contemporaries," do I have the courage to be different from the world? Or is it sometimes difficult to tell the difference between me and a worldly person because of the way I act, speak, or dress?' (Genesis 6:9) Jesus said of his disciples: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world."—John 17:16; compare 1 John 4:4-6.

¹⁵ Peter counsels: "The time that has passed by is sufficient for you to have worked out the will of the nations when you proceeded in deeds of loose conduct, lusts, excesses with wine, revelries, drinking matches, and illegal idolatries. Because you do not continue running with them in this course to the same low sink of debauchery, they are puzzled and go on speaking abusively of you." (1 Peter 4:3, 4) Your former worldly friends may speak abusively of you because you are walking with God and no longer running with them. But, like Noah, you can condemn them by your faith and good works performed with modesty.—Micah 6:8.

¹⁶ God considered Noah to be a righteous man. That faithful patriarch "found favor in the eyes of Jehovah." (Genesis 6:8) When you examine your thoughts and conduct in the light of God's standards, do you feel that he approves of what you are doing, of all the places that you go to? Do you sometimes dabble in degraded

12. In essence, how does Peter compare the destruction of the world of Noah's day with that to come upon "the heavens and the earth that are now"?

13. In view of the momentous events ahead, what counsel from Peter should be heeded?

14. What questions can help us to analyze ourselves?

15. (a) According to 1 Peter 4:3, 4, how should we view our previous worldly thinking and conduct? (b) What should we do if we are criticized by former worldly friends?

16. How did God view Noah, and what questions may help us to examine our thoughts and conduct?

entertainment, now so prevalent? God's Word says that we should think about clean, wholesome, and upbuilding things. (Philippians 4:8) Are you diligently studying God's Word so as to 'train your perceptive powers to distinguish both right and wrong'? (Hebrews 5:14) Do you reject bad associates and cherish association with fellow worshipers of Jehovah at Christian meetings and on other occasions?—1 Corinthians 15:33; Hebrews 10:24, 25; James 4:4.

¹⁷ After reporting on the completion of the ark, the Scriptures say: "Noah proceeded to do according to all that God had commanded him. He did just so." (Genesis 6:22) That godly man was also diligent in preaching as a witness of Jehovah. Like Noah, you can be a staunch advocate of what is right as a regular preacher of righteousness. Persevere in sounding the warning of the end of this wicked world, even though few listen. Work unitedly with fellow believers to get the disciple-making work done before the end.—Matthew 28:19, 20.

¹⁸ Applying the same righteous and just standards as he did in Noah's day, God is

17. As Witnesses of Jehovah, how can we be like Noah?

18. On what basis is Jehovah determining who should survive the great tribulation?

Do You Recall?

- ☐ Why is a study of Noah's life important for Christians?
- ☐ Of what do people of this generation take no note, leading to their destruction?
- ☐ Like Noah, how can we condemn this world?
- ☐ How can we be like Noah as a preacher of righteousness?

now determining who should survive and who should perish during the great tribulation. Jesus likened the present dividing work to a shepherd's separating of sheep from goats. (Matthew 25:31-46) People who center their lives on selfish desires and pursuits do not want the old world to end and will not survive. But those who avoid involvement in this world's filth, who maintain strong faith in God, and who keep preaching the Kingdom message, sounding the warning of Jehovah's coming judgment, will enjoy divine favor as survivors. Said Jesus: "Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken along and the other be abandoned; two women will be grinding at the hand mill: one will be taken along and the other be abandoned."—Matthew 24:40, 41; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:12-15.

Inherit Blessings With Noah

¹⁹ In parallel prophecies, God's prophets Isaiah and Micah both described what would occur during the last days. They foresaw what we see being fulfilled today—a stream of righteoushearted people coming out of the old world and going up to the symbolic mountain of true worship. To others they extend the invitation: "Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths." (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Micah 4:1, 2) Are you walking with this happy throng?

²⁰ Isaiah and Micah also cited the blessings to be enjoyed by those who condemn the world by their faith. True peace and justice will prevail among them, and they will learn war no more. They will have the sure hope of an inheritance from Jehovah

19. What ingathering did Isaiah and Micah foretell for the last days?

20. What blessings will be enjoyed by those who condemn the world through their faith?

and will "sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree." But each person must make a firm decision, for Micah shows that two courses are possible, saying: "All the peoples, for their part, will walk each one in the name of its god; but we, for our part, shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God to time indefinite, even forever." —Micah 4:3-5; Isaiah 2:4.

²¹ The Scriptures clearly show what is needed to survive the great tribulation: a strong faith. Noah had such faith, but do

21. How can you share in the grand blessing of eternal life on earth?

you have it? If you do, like him you will become "an heir of the righteousness that is according to faith." (Hebrews 11:7) Noah survived the God-decreed destruction that came upon his generation. Not only did he live for 350 years after the Flood but he is to be resurrected with the prospect of living on earth forever. What a grand blessing! (Hebrews 11:13-16) You can share in that blessing with Noah, his family, and millions of others who love righteousness. How? By enduring to the end and condemning the world through your faith.

MAINTAIN YOUR FAITH AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH

"Keep holding the pattern of healthful words that you heard from me with the faith and love that are in connection with Christ Jesus."—2 TIMOTHY 1:13.

GOOD physical health is a precious possession. When we are healthy, we can do many things and enjoy life more. But when we are chronically sick or infirm, life is much more difficult. Of course, good health must be maintained. Many neglect their health or do things that cause illness. Those who look after themselves, however, usually have a measure of good health and strength throughout most of their lifetime.

² Spiritual health is far more important than physical health. The best physical health cannot bring God's gift of eternal

life. Good spiritual health results from clean worship and faith based on accurate knowledge. (John 17:3; Hebrews 11:6; James 1:27) The apostle Paul said: "Let the aged men be moderate in habits, serious, sound in mind, healthy in faith, in love, in endurance." (Titus 2:2) Anyone desiring to be healthy in faith must put forth diligent effort and maintain constant vigilance. Threats to sound spiritual health may come from within us or from outside. We must be aware of these threats if we are to maintain faith and spiritual health in this sick world.

How Sick Is This World?

³ There is no doubt that the world is

1. Why is good physical health a valuable possession that has to be maintained?

2. (a) Why is spiritual health more valuable than physical health? (b) What is required to remain healthy in faith?

3, 4. How is moral sickness reflected in this world and in the actions of people?



Even in a sick world, it is possible to have strong faith and good spiritual health

very sick morally. We see deadly disease in all the “organs” of this world—its religions, its political systems, its commercial institutions, its entertainment. Few have respect for God and for the laws he has given for the welfare of mankind. And as history shows, moral decay invariably leads to an increase in physical diseases and troubles. Ironically, most do not want to do anything about curing this diseased moral condition because they love the things that cause it.

⁴ How sick this world is! In seeking thrills or in trying to escape reality, many have ruined their lives through alcohol and drug abuse. Violence is everywhere, life is cheap, and jails are filled to overflowing with criminals. In many countries, half of all marriages end in divorce. Children lacking proper parental supervision grow up as delinquents. Because sex-

ual immorality is rampant, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases are spreading rapidly.

⁵ God could say of this sick world what he inspired Isaiah to declare about wayward Judah: “Woe to the sinful nation, the people heavy with error, an evildoing seed, ruinous sons! They have left Jehovah, they have treated the Holy One of Israel with disrespect, they have turned backwards. Where else will you be struck still more, in that you add more revolt? The whole head is in a sick condition, and the whole heart is feeble. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no sound spot in it.”—Isaiah 1:4-6.

⁶ Jehovah’s appeal to repent and “learn to do good” went generally unheeded in Judah. (Isaiah 1:16-20) This eventually led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the Jews in Babylon. Only a few faithful ones experienced God’s blessing and preservation in the midst of the sick nation. Likewise today, in this world that is sick from head to toe, only a few desire to learn to do good. These faithful servants of Jehovah are making diligent efforts to maintain faith and spiritual health now, with the hope of gaining perfect physical health and eternal life in God’s promised new world.—2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-4.

Spiritual Dangers in This Sick World

⁷ Maintaining faith and spiritual health is a challenge because this world’s moral sickness is very contagious. Christians must also contend with their own inherit-

5. How did Isaiah describe conditions in ancient Judah?

6. In ancient Judah and in our day, what response has there been to Jehovah’s appeal to learn to do good?

7. (a) What dangers imperil our faith and spiritual health? (b) What do the Scriptures say about coping with the three main elements endangering spiritual health?

ed imperfection. (Romans 7:21-25) Moreover, Satan, "the ruler of the world," knows the weaknesses of the flesh and is a master of temptation. (John 14:30; 1 John 5:19) These three main dangers imperiling faith and spiritual health—the flesh, the world, and the Devil—are formidable. But it is possible to be "no part of the world," though we live in it. We can 'keep walking by God's spirit and carry out no fleshly desire.' And with divine help we can "stand firm against the machinations of the Devil." (John 17:15, 16; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 6:11; 2 Corinthians 2:11) But let us now consider how we can cope with these three main elements endangering faith and spiritual health.

⁸ Within our imperfect human nature are forces that can result in sin and that can make us spiritually sick. (James 1:14, 15) This is particularly true within the figurative heart. Jesus said: "From inside, out of the heart of men, injurious reasonings issue forth: fornications, thieveries, murders, adulteries, covetings, acts of wickedness, deceit, loose conduct, an envious eye, blasphemy, haughtiness, unreasonableness. All these wicked things issue forth from within and defile a man." —Mark 7:21-23.

⁹ Although the heart is the source of bad desires, in godly persons it is also the seat of reverence for Jehovah and love for what is right. (Matthew 22:37; Ephesians 4:20-24) Whether good or bad will prevail in our case depends on what we take into our hearts. God's Word counsels: "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 find-

ing 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.

¹⁰ Our fleshly weaknesses affect our emotions and desires. Who is not occasionally plagued by discouragement, impatience, the taking of offense? If we promptly correct these fleshly tendencies, spiritual health can be maintained. But pride and ambition can quickly take root in the heart. Greed and a desire for excessive pleasures and revelries can take over. And sexual desire, while natural because of the way God made us, can subtly lead us astray. To prevent such spiritual sickness from developing within us, we need to cultivate the fruits of God's spirit in our lives every day, training ourselves to "abhor what is wicked" and to "cling to what is good." —Romans 12:9; Galatians 5:22, 23.

Outside Sources of Spiritual Disease

¹¹ Spiritual infection can come from outside sources. It can spread to us from those who are spiritually dead. (Ephesians 2:1-3) If we are too close to them, we can pick up their attitudes and life-styles. Getting ahead secularly, loving money, enjoying the best materially, and having a good time are the big things in the lives of people of this world. But desire for such things is very contagious, and even limited exposure to them can make us spiritually sluggish. Jesus warned: "Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come in upon all

8. How does Jesus describe the forces within us that work against spiritual health?

9. (a) What desires are rooted in the figurative heart? (b) According to Proverbs 4:20-23, how can we safeguard the heart?

10. How do our fleshly weaknesses affect our emotions and desires?

11. (a) What worldly attitudes and actions are very contagious? (b) According to Jesus, in what respect should we pay attention to our hearts?



Good spiritual health depends on zealous Christian activity and regularly taking in spiritual food at the proper time



those dwelling upon the face of all the earth.”—Luke 21:34, 35.

¹² This world’s wrong ideas and teachings can also infect us. Paul warned: “There will be a period of time when they will not put up with the healthful teaching, but, in accord with their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves to have their ears tickled; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, whereas they will be turned aside to false stories.” (2 Timothy 4:3, 4) False teachings are like gangrene. (2 Timothy 2:16, 17) When it sets in, a portion of your flesh dies because life-giving blood has been cut off from that part of the body.

¹³ How fast gangrene spreads! To prevent death, the doctor may have to amputate a part of the body. So, if doubts, complaints, or apostasy threaten to con-

12. How can wrong ideas and teachings be dangerous to spiritual health?

13. If spiritual sickness has set in like gangrene, what should be done?

taminate you spiritually, cut them away quickly! (Compare Matthew 5:29, 30.) Get help from the congregation elders. Do not become like those whom Paul described as “mentally diseased over questionings and debates about words” because they did “not assent to healthful words.”—1 Timothy 6:3, 4.

¹⁴ To protect the spiritual health of the congregation, elders need "to exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict." (Titus 1:9, 13, 16; 2:1) Perhaps such persons can be restored to a spiritually healthy state. (2 Timothy 2:23-26) But what if they unrepentantly promote false teaching? Then, in effect, they must be quarantined. They are disfellowshipped, and we stay away from them so that their spiritual infection does not spread to us.—Romans 16:17, 18; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; Titus 3:9-11.

¹⁵ The third source of danger to faith and spiritual health is the Devil. (Ephesians 6:11, 12) Right into our day, he has tried to weaken the faith of Jehovah's people by persecution, including mob action, beatings, imprisonments, and threats of death. (Revelation 2:10) Since Satan rarely with these tactics succeeds in breaking the integrity of one of God's servants, he uses the attractions of this world, of which he is the god, in an effort to cause some to fall.—2 Corinthians 4:4; 11:3, 14.

¹⁶ How can we withstand attacks by the Devil? By putting on all the spiritual armor from God. Especially must we 'take up the large shield of faith, with which we can quench all the burning missiles' that Satan hurls at us. We must also pray in harmony with Jesus' words: "Do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the wicked one." (Ephesians 6:11-18; Matthew 6:13) If we pray in that way and act in accord with our prayers, we can expect

14. What may the elders find it necessary to do to protect the spiritual health of the congregation?

15. In trying to undermine the spiritual health of God's people, what two main approaches has the Devil used?

16. What defenses do we have in withstanding the Devil's attacks on our faith and spiritual health?

our heavenly Father's help in quenching all of Satan's fiery missiles.

Staying Healthy in Faith

¹⁷ Prevention is a big factor in maintaining good physical health. Nutritious food, proper exercise, and general care of the mind and body are vital. Natural defenses against disease are stronger in a healthy body. Similarly, to maintain spiritual health, it is vital to follow the diet God prescribes and to appreciate the nourishing spiritual "food at the proper time" provided through "the faithful and discreet slave." Rejecting the spiritual junk food of this world, we must study the Bible and Christian publications and meet with God's people regularly. (Matthew 24:45-47; Hebrews 10:24, 25) We also need the exercise that results from "always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord" in the ministry and other Christian activities.—1 Corinthians 15:58.

¹⁸ To stay healthy in faith, make full use of God's spiritual provisions. As Paul told Timothy: "Keep holding the pattern of healthful words that you heard from me with the faith and love that are in connection with Christ Jesus. This fine trust guard through the holy spirit which is dwelling in us." (2 Timothy 1:13, 14) A language has a pattern of words. Similarly, the "pure language" of Bible truth has a pattern based mainly on the theme of Jehovah's vindication through the Kingdom. (Zephaniah 3:9) We must keep this pattern of healthful words in heart and mind if we are to maintain our faith and spiritual health. Otherwise, it will fade in significance to us. This evidently happened in the congregation at Corinth,

17. In maintaining spiritual health, how important is it to take in "food at the proper time" and to participate regularly in Christian activities?

18. What is "the pattern of healthful words," and why must we keep it in heart and mind?

where some were “weak and sickly” because they lacked spiritual comprehension.—1 Corinthians 11:29-32.

¹⁹ What should be done if you have developed spiritual sickness? Loving help is definitely needed and is available, for James says: “Is there anyone sick among you? Let him call the older men of the congregation to him, and let them pray over him, greasing him with oil in the name of Jehovah.” (James 5:14) Yes, call upon the elders. As spiritual physicians, they can help you get to the root of the spiritual sickness. They will gently but effectively rub in the curative oil of God’s Word. If you have committed sins but are repentant, be assured that Jehovah truly does forgive. (Psalm 103:8-14) As the elders pray with you and in your behalf, what can be expected? James answers: “The prayer of faith will make the indisposed one well, and Jehovah will raise him up. Also, if he has committed sins, it will be forgiven him.”—James 5:15.

Spiritual Health Leads to Eternal Life

²⁰ “Good health to you!” With those words, the first-century governing body of Jehovah’s people closed its letter mentioning “necessary things” required of Christians. They were to “keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication.” (Acts 15:28, 29) That prescription for good spiritual health is still valid. And as we await the blessings of the new world, we can maintain our faith and spiritual health if we zealously keep preaching the Kingdom good news and upholding Jehovah’s name in this sick world. Stay—

19. (a) If spiritual sickness has developed, what should be done? (b) What can elders do if a person is spiritually sick?

20. (a) What counsel did the first-century governing body give about maintaining spiritual health? (b) What will help us as we await the blessings of the new world?

ing busy in this way will keep us from becoming impatient for the blessings of the new world so near at hand. True, “expectation postponed is making the heart sick, but the thing desired is a tree of life when it does come.”—Proverbs 13:12.

²¹ Do not miss out on the grand blessings Jehovah has in store for those who love him. All the resisting of worldly influences, all the wrestling with your fleshly weaknesses, and all the turning away of the Devil’s burning missiles will not have been in vain. In Jehovah’s new world, you will see with your own eyes the time when “no resident will say: ‘I am sick.’” (Isaiah 33:24) This will be true because of God’s provision through the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the one who “took our sicknesses and carried our diseases.” (Matthew 8:17; Isaiah 53:4) You will be able to drink from the symbolic “river of water of life” and eat from “trees of life” that have leaves “for the curing of the nations.” (Revelation 22:1, 2) Endless life in perfection and happiness will be your reward for maintaining your faith and spiritual health in this sick world.

21. What blessings are in store for those who successfully maintain their faith and spiritual health in this sick world?

Do You Recall?

- ☐ Why is being healthy in faith more important than being in good physical health?
- ☐ What are the three main dangers imperiling faith and spiritual health?
- ☐ What relationship does good spiritual health have to the figurative heart?
- ☐ If one is spiritually sick, what should be done?

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

They Found a Reason to Change

CAN gang members and violent persons change their conduct? What could help them to do so? Dramatic changes in conduct are possible as seen in the case of Saul of Tarsus, who changed from persecuting Christians to becoming a Christian himself. He was thereafter known as the apostle Paul. (Galatians 1:13, 14; 1 Timothy 1:13) Similar dra-

matic changes are reported from Kenya.

□ One young man was a gang member in the Nairobi area and was sent to western Kenya to scout out the possibilities for bank robberies there. He took up lodging with an elderly man and found a stack of old *Awake!* magazines in his house. The young man became so engrossed in reading these magazines that he completely forgot about his plans for bank robberies. When he had read everything, he asked for more, and the elderly man told him that one would be coming every two weeks by mail. From then on the young man implored his host to go to the post office every day to look for more magazines. In the meantime, he made the decision to abandon his bad ways, to follow what he had learned from the magazines, and to become a Witness of Jehovah. He even started telling the neighbors that he was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Later, a special pioneer worked the territory and was startled to find this young man claiming to be a Witness. A Bible study was started with him, he gained maturity, and today he is a regular pioneer. Accurate Bible knowledge gave him a reason to change his life.

□ A man in Argentina also found a reason to change his violent way of life. For 20 years, he had badly mistreat-

ed his wife, who was a Witness. It was said that he even dug a hole in his yard with a cross at its top, with a view to killing the person who was stealing his chickens and burying him there. Because of the man's mean character, all the neighbors avoided him.

The circuit overseer called on him. While there, the circuit overseer offered the man a Bible study and was surprised when he said that he would be glad to study the Bible. The brother studied the brochure *Enjoy Life on Earth Forever!* with him. The man progressed in Bible knowledge and spiritual understanding. He is now attending all the meetings. He likes the meetings and association with the brothers so much that he said, "This is where I want to live."

The change in this man was so remarkable that the neighbors asked his wife which doctor was treating him. When she explained that the change had occurred because he was studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, one neighbor was so impressed that she asked for a Bible. Another neighbor subscribed to one of our magazines.

Accurate Bible knowledge gave these men a reason to change their way of life. It can help anyone who desires a more meaningful life now and a hope for eternal life in God's promised new world.—John 17:3.



Always Finding Something to Do for Jehovah

As told by Jean Queyroi

IT WAS a glorious summer back in 1939. The countryside around Martigny, in the Swiss canton of Valais, was radiant under the August sun. Above us towered some of the highest peaks in the Alps, such as snowcapped Grand Combin, reaching a height of 14,154 feet. I was enjoying the hospitality of a Christian family for a few days, and we spent many carefree hours rambling along mountain trails together. I felt as if I were already in Paradise.

All too soon it was time to say good-bye and return to Paris. I bought a newspaper to read on the train, and the alarming news brought me back to reality with a jolt. The world situation had greatly deteriorated, and war was imminent.

I resumed my work in the Paris office of the Watch Tower Society, where I had been serving for over a year. But a few days later, I received a draft notice and was ordered to report to the barracks of Fort of Vincennes, just east of Paris. My life was about to change drastically.

A Neutral Stand

On September 3, 1939, France and Great Britain declared war on Germany. I reported to Vincennes and took my stand on the issue of Christian neutrality. I quickly found myself in the sidecar of a military motorcycle driven by a young soldier who had orders to take me to the

nearby Fort of Charenton. In spite of the deafening roar of the motorcycle, the young soldier, who knew why I was being sent there, tried to reason with me. He begged: "Queyroi, please don't go through with it. Don't refuse to fight, or things will not go well for you." I hastened to assure him that I was not afraid.

Then came my first night in a prison cell. The cell measured six and a half feet by five feet and contained only a couple of blankets and a board to sleep on. There was no lighting. I reflected on what I could do for Jehovah in my present situation. When I awoke, I discovered that there was not even a tiny window to let in a gleam of daylight. For a quarter of an hour each day, I was allowed out to wash, escorted to the sink by a sergeant holding a revolver, accompanied by two soldiers with rifles. I was being treated like a dangerous criminal!

Different soldiers brought me my food. They were intrigued by my stand, and this gave me the opportunity to do something for Jehovah. I gave them a good witness, and shortly some of them warmed toward me and supplied me with matches, candles, and even extra food. Initially my Bible had been confiscated, but thanks to an officer, it was given back to me. How I appreciated reading its precious words by candlelight!

I was later transferred to a military prison that no longer exists, on the rue

du Cherche-Midi, in Paris. I was put in solitary confinement, so I had plenty of time to meditate on my situation.

I was 27 and had been serving Jehovah full-time for two years. My family's first contact with Jehovah's Witnesses was through broadcasts on Radio Vitus, a private station in Paris. That was in 1933. I took my stand for the truth in 1935, after finishing compulsory military service. I was baptized in Lucerne, Switzerland, in August 1936.

My parents, my brother, my sister, and I were associated with the only congregation in Paris. Brother Knecht, who was then in charge of the work in France, continually encouraged young Witnesses to enter the full-time ministry. As a result, in April 1938, my brother, my sister, and I decided to become pioneers, or full-time ministers. Our assignment was Auxerre, a town about 96 miles southeast of Paris. My sister Jeannette witnessed in the town itself, and my brother Marcel and I cycled out to the surrounding villages within a radius of about 20 miles. Back then the preaching work consisted mainly of distributing Bible literature, without making return visits. I can remember how much this bothered me.

In June 1938 I was invited to work in the Paris office of the Watch Tower Society. At that time the staff, or Bethel family, in



Jean Queyroi with his wife, Titica

France was made up of about ten members, and I was assigned to help in the Shipping Department. This was where I was working when I was called up for military service and received a "new assignment."

My New Assignment —Prison

From the start I realized that if I did not seek ways to do something—however little—for Jehovah while I was in prison, my faith would quickly weaken. But I was soon able to create opportunities to talk about the truth of

God's Word. A few weeks after I arrived at the Cherche-Midi prison, I was transferred to a common room with other prisoners. There I met a law student who had been sentenced to prison because he returned from his military leave a few days late. There was also a Catholic seminary student who had been sentenced for stealing. The three of us enjoyed many long conversations about Bible truth.

One day I noticed a prisoner all alone in a corner of the yard. As I approached, I could see that he was reading. I spoke to him. He turned around and showed me his Bible. Just imagine! He was one of Jehovah's Witnesses! He was of Polish descent, named Ceglarski, and like me, he was in prison because of his neutrality. Christian fellowship at last! You can imagine how overjoyed we both were. We could now

enjoy many hours in upbuilding conversation.

In this prison we were allowed out into the yard several hours a day, so I managed to speak with a few prisoners who enjoyed hearing the Bible message. Sometimes even some of the guards joined in our discussions. I had found something to do for Jehovah. In fact, prison had become my new preaching assignment, and I was now doing pioneer hours, even though I could not report them. But that did not trouble me.

The Exodus

Months passed by relatively uneventfully—the so-called Phony War. But this came to an end in May 1940, when the Germans attacked France. In June the French authorities evacuated all the Paris prisons because of the advancing German troops. We were loaded into military trucks and taken to Orleans, a town over 70 miles south of Paris. After a short halt, both civil and military prisoners were grouped and instructed to continue southeast on foot along the north bank of the river Loire. Armed guards kept watch over the convoy. The going was hard under the hot June sun.

There were criminals among us, and the guards had received instructions to shoot anyone who stopped, fell, or was unable to continue walking. On the third day, Brother Ceglarski began to suffer from sunstroke. To abandon him would have meant certain death for him. The guards allowed me, with the help of some other prisoners, to put him in a blanket, and we carried him. The following day he felt better and was able to continue on foot.

Just before arriving at Briare, a small town situated on the north bank of the Loire, our group met up with a stream of people laden with as many of their posses-

sions as they could carry or push in a cart. They were fleeing south from the advancing German armies. We were able to grasp to some degree the extent of the civilian exodus as thousands fled for their lives.

Then we discovered that our guards had disappeared, and we were on our own. What were we to do now? It was impossible to cross the wide river Loire and continue our journey south because all the bridges had been blown up. Our little group (made up of Brother Ceglarski, two other prisoners, and me) decided to return to Paris.

We found some abandoned horses, and we saddled them as best we could. I had injured my knee and could not bend my leg, so my companions had to help me onto the back of the horse. Then we discovered that my horse had a limp too! So progress was slow as my horse hobbled along. In any case, our expedition soon came to an abrupt end. We had covered only a few miles when we came face-to-face with a German army detachment, and a military policeman made us dismount. All we had succeeded in doing was to change guards!

Prisoner of War

Soon after our capture, Brother Ceglarski and I were separated, and he remained a prisoner of the Germans until the end of the war. After a few months in prison at the Joigny barracks, in central France, I was deported to Stettin, a port in what used to be East Prussia. It is now the Polish port of Szczecin.

Since I was technically in a French military prison when the Germans captured me, I was put in a prisoner-of-war camp, where conditions were nowhere near as harsh as in the concentration camps. The camp was an enormous hangar accommodating 500 prisoners, watched over by armed guards. The prisoners worked at

different jobs in the city during the day and were brought back to camp in the evening. So how was I going to find something to do for Jehovah, with the men away all day?

In the hangar, there was a large board where information could be posted, and I obtained permission to use a small space on the board. I found some paper, and after having carefully smoothed it out, I wrote several short texts on Bible subjects. At the bottom, I explained where I could be found and at what time anyone interested in the message of God's Kingdom could come and see me.

Preaching to All Sorts of Men

This method brought good results. Soon I was able to hold a small meeting each evening with six, eight, and sometimes even ten in attendance. Our discussions often lasted an hour or more, depending on the questions brought up. From time to time, a German guard who spoke French joined in.

As I had only one Bible, I wrote to the Red Cross in Geneva, asking them to send me as many Bibles as they could. Time passed, but eventually I received my first parcel of secondhand Bibles. One day I was told to go to the camp office because a visitor, a representative of the Red Cross, wished to see me. He turned out to be a Protestant minister. He apparently thought that I was a Protestant also. He was a little disappointed when he learned that I was one of Jehovah's Witnesses!

Nevertheless, he was kind and even congratulated me for what I was doing. He assured me that I could continue ordering Bibles and that I would receive them. This turned out to be true. Thus, I was able to distribute nearly 300 Bibles during the time I stayed in that camp. After the war,

what a joy it was to learn that a Belgian prisoner named Wattiaux, to whom I had witnessed in the Stettin camp, had taken his stand for the truth!

During my captivity in Germany, I was privileged to receive food parcels from my family. I soon discovered that each parcel also concealed an abundance of precious spiritual food. My sister typed out articles from *The Watchtower* on very thin paper and hid them in packets of macaroni. The guards never found them. I even received a copy of the book *Children* in a food parcel. This proved to be most useful to me in my ministry.

Expanding My Ministry

Being a mechanic, I was eventually assigned to work at a garage repairing tractors. About 20 Germans, most of whom were too old to be drafted into military service, worked there. So I made efforts to learn a little German. My heartfelt desire was to expand my ministry and no longer limit my preaching to French-speaking prisoners.

I had to act cautiously, however, because the German workmen were afraid to express their opinions in public. So I talked to them individually. As a rule, they knew the Bible quite well and had heard of Jehovah's Witnesses. Some even knew that many Witnesses had been sent to concentration camps.

Each day in the garage, I ended up by making the rounds to talk to my fellow workers about the truth. Some were favorable toward the message, but the man in charge was not. I no doubt overdid things when I chalked *Jehovas Zeugen* (Jehovah's Witnesses) on his work bench to help him understand who I was. The man seemed scared when he saw it and quickly rubbed it off. But he did not punish me. As time went on, other workers became friendly.

In fact, they brought me so much food that I was able to share it with several other prisoners back in the camp.

Jehovah, a Strong Tower

Over the years, I have learned that we can always do something for Jehovah and our fellowman, however difficult circumstances may become. Stettin was heavily bombed several times by the Allied forces. We tried to shelter in trenches covered with planks and earth. These offered only an illusion of security, for dozens of prisoners lost their lives in those trenches. During the air raids, I would sometimes feel a hand grip me in the dark, only to let go as soon as the raid was over. I never knew who it was. Apparently, some of the prisoners thought that I had special protection because I talked about God.

During one air raid, our camp was burned to the ground by incendiary bombs. Left to ourselves in the streets of the town, we witnessed many scenes of horror. Civilians suffering from severe burns jumped into the Oder River canals that flow through Stettin. When these burn victims got out of the water, the phosphorus continued to burn on them. Many died.

Because of the advance of the Russian troops, we were ordered to leave Stettin and make our way west to Neubrandenburg and then on to Güstrow. Perched high on a large tractor, we traveled along a road where Soviet shells fell from time to time. The Russian tanks finally caught up with us at Güstrow. The Soviet shock troops were the masters of the town for a week. The British troops were nearing, and while waiting for the armies to meet, the Soviet authorities separated the military prisoners from the civilian. They detained some of the prisoners and turned the rest (including me) over to the British.

That was the end of a nightmare. A few weeks later, I found myself back on the platform of the Gare du Nord railway station in Paris. Day was just starting to break. It was mid-May 1945, and I was back at last, after 69 months of captivity.

Finding More Things to Do for Jehovah

In 1946 the Society again invited me to serve in Bethel, then located in Montmoryncy, a suburb north of Paris. A few months later, Brother Paul Dossman and I were assigned to visit the congregations in France as circuit overseers. At that time, there were barely 2,000 Witnesses in the whole country. Today, more than 40 years later, there are over a hundred thousand publishers.

Later I was called back to Bethel, by then located in a residential section of Paris. In 1949, encouraged by two missionary brothers from England, I started learning English—not without some difficulty, I must admit. The following year, I was invited to the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead.

When I got back to France, I served for a while in the circuit work, and then the Society asked me to serve as a missionary in Africa. Meanwhile, I had married Titica, a sister of Greek descent. We stayed in Senegal for five years and were privileged to see the first congregation formed in Dakar. For health reasons, we were later obliged to return to France.

I am now in my 50th year of full-time service and have had the joy over all these years of helping over a hundred persons take their stand for the truth. Jehovah has indeed continually been good and generous toward me. I have learned from life's experiences that whatever our situation may be, we can always find some way of praising and honoring our God, Jehovah.



'Unless Jehovah builds the house...'

NO MATTER where you live, there is some place that, for you, is home. Styles of dwellings and construction methods vary greatly. Mud-and-wattle huts, log cabins, prefabricated concrete houses—the list seems endless. Some feel just as much at home in a grass hut as others do in more substantial abodes. Why is this so?

Feeling at ease, being content, depends largely on the company one keeps. (Proverbs 18:24) In spite of all the glitter and glamour the world has to offer, home is where one instinctively wants to turn for peace and solace. Yet, judging by reports about modern-day homelife, there is no guarantee that one will always find peace and solace at home. To a great extent, those who live with you—your family—can either share your peace or mar it. What, then, is the secret of building a happy, peaceful home?

Building the House

"Unless Jehovah himself builds the house, it is to no avail that its builders have worked hard on it," says the first verse of Psalm 127. Those who share in constructing buildings for the worship of the true God, Jehovah, find this to be true. Though skilled workers volunteer their time and efforts for the quick erection of fine Kingdom Halls, it is Jehovah's blessing that guarantees success. Even onlookers can often see that something extraordinary is at work. For example, a magazine reporting on one such project in Colchester, England, used the title "Jehovah Raises the Roof."

However, success in endeavors other than literal building projects also depends upon Jehovah's blessing. Consider Solomon's words in the third verse of Psalm 127: "Look! Sons are an inheritance from Jehovah; the fruitage of the belly is a reward." Jehovah is also a Builder par excellence when it comes to families, and parents have the wonderful privilege of

being his fellow workers, or collaborators.* (Hebrews 11:10) How can Christian parents take advantage of this privileged partnership and successfully build a happy, peaceful family, one that brings honor to the Creator, Jehovah God?

Successful Family-Building

An essential element in successful construction is a sound architectural plan, or blueprint. For building young praisers of God, there is no better blueprint than his inspired Word, the Bible. (2 Timothy 3: 16, 17) "Train up a boy according to the way for him; even when he grows old he will not turn aside from it," wrote Solomon. (Proverbs 22:6) "The way for him" is Jehovah's way, and when parents follow it, they offer their youngsters the prospect of developing into faithful servants of God.

A sound building requires sound building material. One African visitor to Europe found it difficult to believe that some of the buildings he saw were hundreds of years old. It was a revelation to him to see the durable materials used in these buildings. On the other hand, when builders skimp on materials, the results frequently prove disastrous, even fatal. This can also be true in bringing up children.

At conception, children receive a genetic legacy characterized by imperfection due to sin. (Psalm 51:5) In other words, they are flawed right from the start. Christian parents must counteract this by endeavoring to build enduring, godly qualities into their offspring. (1 Corinthians 3: 10-15) Unless this is done, no matter how

* Actually, the Hebrew words for "builders" (verse 1) and "sons" (verse 3) are both thought to come from the root meaning "to build." Furthermore, in Hebrew the word "house" can refer to either a "dwelling place" or a "family." (2 Samuel 7: 11, 16; Micah 1:5) Thus, building a house is linked with raising a family. Jehovah's blessing is essential in both undertakings.

hard the parents work in other areas, such as in providing their sons and daughters with the best of food, clothing, and shelter, their building efforts will be to no avail.

That is why the divine admonition to parents, especially fathers, is: "Go on bringing them [children] up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) The discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah involve the best blueprints and building materials. Using them will result in everlasting benefits for the entire family.

On-the-Job Training

In spite of the best-laid plans, there are always unexpected crises during the course of any construction. Similarly, parents must learn to anticipate unexpected problems in the day-to-day life of family members and be prepared to deal with them. How can this be done?

Good communication between the two parents is vital. When father and mother prayerfully discuss the young ones' progress together, they will find some areas where commendation is due and others where more "building" is needed. Once such weaknesses are identified, the parents can act together and take appropriate steps to deal with them.

But perhaps you have a large family, and you may wonder: 'How can we tailor our efforts to the individual needs of our many children?' Why not give on-the-job training so that your children can help one another? Apprentices serve for years in learning skills alongside master craftsmen. Perhaps at your family study, you can try asking your teenage children to explain certain matters to the younger ones. Honesty, choice of friends, resisting bad influences in school, and so on, are topics that both the older and the younger children can relate to very well. By assign-

ing the older children such real-life projects, you can help train them to develop their perceptive powers and teaching ability while teaching the younger ones what they need to know. (Hebrews 5:14) This has the added benefit of cultivating a true kinship among siblings.

Perhaps your family is small, with only one child. Then, you have many opportunities to get to know and understand your youngster. Be aware, however, of the danger of spoiling your child by making him too much the center of attention. There are three of you, are there not? So do things together. This will teach him to communicate with others and turn his attention outward, thus preventing him from becoming self-centered.

Aim for Family Togetherness

There is, of course, much more to building a family than conducting a Bible study and giving counsel and discipline. Solomon said: "With a man there is nothing better than that he should eat and indeed drink and cause his soul to see good because of his hard work." (Ecclesiastes 2:24) No doubt your family enjoys its food when it is tastily prepared. Do you arrange to take your meals together as a family? This may not always be possible when different family members are away at work, at school, or on other business. Usually, though, there is at least one meal a day you can eat together as a family. What can contribute to a wholesome atmosphere at the family table?

One brother uses the occasion to raise a Bible question for all present to discuss. Of course, he avoids embarrassing those who may not know the answer. Others relate field ministry experiences. By paying attention to spiritual matters, meal-times become occasions for building up the whole family. (See Romans 14:19.) True, in some parts of the world, it is not

the custom to converse much during the meal. Yet, a conscious effort to maintain a happy atmosphere is vital. Proverbs 15:17 says: "Better is a dish of vegetables where there is love than a manger-fed bull and hatred along with it."

Relaxation and a change of pace also have their place in Christian family life. Wise parents use such occasions to build a strong theocratic family unit. How?

While it is easy to let the young ones go off and pursue their own interests, there is danger in this. For example, how unwise it can be to allow youngsters to become so heavily involved in sports that there is threat to life or limb! (1 Timothy 4:8) To the extent possible, choose activities that involve every member of the family. Father can solicit their opinions and ideas and assign each one something to do in preparation.

Can you as a family widen out in your love and invite other members of the congregation to share your family joys? Older members of the congregation often enjoy sharing the family spirit, especially when their own families are not around or do not live according to Christian principles. (James 1:27) In many congregations, there are single-parent families. With due consideration to theocratic headship and with respect for Christian propriety, elders and others can offer spiritual shelter to members of such families. (Isaiah 32:1) Many a "fatherless boy" has blossomed into a balanced family head as a result of the loving interest shown by a mature Christian adult.—Psalm 82:3.

Building a Christian household is hard work. But with Jehovah's help, you will truly come to appreciate that "sons are an inheritance from Jehovah; the fruitage of the belly is a reward." (Psalm 127:1, 3) They can be a source of praise not only to the Christian parents but also to their Creator, Jehovah God.

Questions From Readers

■ Did first-century Christians believe that the end of this wicked system would come within their lifetime?

Jesus' followers in the first century were very eager for the end to come. As we will see, some of them did conclude that the end was imminent, coming right away. Their view needed to be corrected. But it certainly is not bad for Christians, then or now, to believe sincerely that the foretold end must be treated as close and to live daily with that awareness.

In answering his disciples' question about "the sign" of his presence, Jesus warned them: "Keep on the watch, therefore, because you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." (Matthew 24:3, 42) Such alertness should affect their actions, for Christ added: "Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you . . . Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man." —Luke 21:34-36.

Note that Jesus gave this advice just after outlining events that would make up "the sign." So the apostles were alerted to the fact that certain things had to develop historically before the end. Nonetheless, a few weeks later, they asked the resurrected Jesus: "Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?" He replied: "It does not belong to you to get knowledge of the times or seasons which the Father has placed in his own jurisdiction." —Acts 1:6, 7.

We can see from this that Jesus' closest followers were so anxious for the end to come quickly that

they overlooked what he had recently told them about physical evidences that had to develop during his presence prior to that end.

We find another indication of their eagerness in the apostle Paul's letters to Thessalonian Christians. About 50 C.E. he wrote: "As for the times and the seasons, brothers, you need nothing to be written to you. For you yourselves know quite well that Jehovah's day is coming exactly as a thief in the night. So, then, let us not sleep on as the rest do, but let us stay awake and keep our senses." (1 Thessalonians 5:1, 2, 6) Some of those spirit-anointed Christians took that to mean that Jesus' presence (with Jehovah's day for executing the wicked) was coming right then, immediately.

But not so. In fact, Paul wrote them in a second letter: "Respecting the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we request of you not to be quickly shaken from your reason nor to be excited either through an inspired expression or through a verbal message or through a letter as though from us, to the effect that the day of Jehovah is here. Let no one seduce you in any manner, because it will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness gets revealed." —2 Thessalonians 2:1-3.

This did not mean that they could be casual about Jesus' presence and the end of the system. With each passing year, Jesus' warning became ever more poignant: "Keep on the watch, therefore, because you do not

know on what day your Lord is coming."

Thus, about five years after writing Second Thessalonians, Paul wrote: "It is already the hour for you to awake from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than at the time when we became believers. The night is well along; the day has drawn near. Let us therefore put off the works belonging to darkness and let us put on the weapons of the light." (Romans 13:11, 12) After five more years, Paul advised Hebrew Christians: "You have need of endurance, in order that, after you have done the will of God, you may receive the fulfillment of the promise. For yet 'a very little while,' and 'he who is coming will arrive and will not delay.'" (Hebrews 10:36, 37) Then, in the penultimate verse of Revelation, the apostle John wrote: "He that bears witness of these things says, 'Yes; I am coming quickly.' Amen! Come, Lord Jesus." —Revelation 22:20.

Unquestionably, a Christian back then was not being unreasonable to feel that the end could come in his lifetime. And if through accident or natural processes, he should die before the end, he would have lived with the

In Our Next Issue

■ What Hope for the Dead?

■ The Resurrection —For Whom and When?

■ Guard Against Harmful Gossip

valid sense of urgency that Jesus and the inspired Scriptures generated.

All of this is even more applicable to us, at the late hour in which we live. Paraphrasing Paul's words, we cannot deny that 'now our salvation is nearer than at the time when the early Christians became believers and even than when we ourselves became believers. The night is well along; the day certainly has drawn near.'

We have been able to see in history starting with World War I

the physical evidence piling mountain high, evidence that proves that we are in the conclusion of the system of things. Rather than be preoccupied with guessing just when the end will occur, we should be occupied with the preaching of the good news, which can save our lives and the lives of many others.—1 Timothy 4:16.

We have ample reasons to expect that this preaching will be completed in our time. Does that mean before the turn of a new

month, a new year, a new decade, a new century? No human knows, for Jesus said that 'even the angels of the heavens' did not know that. (Matthew 24:36) Furthermore, we do not need to know as we continue doing what the Lord commands us to concentrate on doing. What is most important is that God's will and work be done and that we have the fullest share in that. Thus we "may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man."—Luke 21:36.

AIDS 'Beginning of a New Morality'?

AFTER pointing out that a medical doctor had said that "a completely monogamous relationship" is the only way to avoid contracting AIDS sexually, a Canadian editorial writer asks: "Could the dreaded AIDS be the beginning of a whole new morality in our world?" The writer wondered, too, as to whether it is not "strange" that what the Bible has taught for years, namely, monogamy, "could now be a matter of survival for mankind." Referring also to today's world of "drugs, tobacco, alcohol and not least, sexual overdrive," the editorial says: "We are now paying the price for the pornographic, promiscuous, polluting world we have created."

While it is good to hope for improvement in conduct and for survival, is it merely the fear of an early death or of the end of mankind that will produce "a whole new morality"? No, for despite warnings from

doctors and researchers, most smokers and heavy drinkers of alcohol foolishly continue to abuse their health, bringing their lives to a premature end. And some homosexuals have stated that they will carry on with multiple partners even at the risk of contracting AIDS.—Proverbs 10:21, 23.

What, then, will properly restrain wrongdoing? Surely, a healthy fear of and respect for Jehovah, seen in obedience to his laws on morality. "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge." And this kind of knowledge produces the wisdom that truly "preserves alive its owners."—Proverbs 1:7; Ecclesiastes 7:12.

Significantly, the editor, noting that AIDS may be contracted through a blood transfusion, also asked: "Isn't [it] ironic that we who have roundly condemned the Jehovah[']s Witnesses for refusing blood transfusions . . . may now be doing the same thing for other reasons?"

"I would happily pick *Awake!*!"

So wrote Frank Senge in Papua New Guinea's *Post-Courier*. In his weekly column of July 19, 1988, Senge explained:

"[*Awake!*] magazine's contents page explains that it is published for the 'enlightenment of the entire family.'

"It shows how to cope with today's problems,' it says.

"And it does. Unlike many other church newsletters or magazines, *Awake!* explains God through the worldly problems surrounding us. . . .

"This may seem like religious propaganda (I am not a [Witness]) . . . but if we were to judge magazines, for the family, I would happily pick *Awake!*"

Awake!

HOW TO
ENJOY YOUR
NATIONAL
PARKS