

The **Watchtower**
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

April 1, 1990



WHO
WILL LEAD
MANKIND
TO PEACE?

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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 PEACE EPIDEMIC." "Oh, What a Peaceful World." "Peace Is Busting Out All Over." These were among the newspaper headlines that have startled readers during the last year or two. Around the world, the change in the news from gloom and doom to optimism was astonishing. What was happening?

Remarkably, not long ago a number of major conflicts all came to an end or reduced in intensity within just a few months. In Africa, peace 'broke out' in Angola. In Central Asia, the Soviet Union pulled its forces out of Afghanistan. In Central America, fighting subsided between the Nicaraguan government and the Contra rebels. In Southeast Asia, the Vietnamese agreed to withdraw from Kampuchea. The "peace epidemic" even reached the Middle East when the bloodthirsty war between Iran and Iraq finally ground to a halt.

"A PEACE EPIDEMIC"?

Perhaps even more noteworthy was the new atmosphere between the superpowers. After 40 years of cold war, it was difficult to believe the conciliatory gestures, the expressions about mutual interests, and the concrete moves toward peace between the Soviet Union and the United States. Moreover, according to *The Economist*, Europe has now marked the longest continuous period without war in all its recorded history. Truly, peace is in the news.

What does it mean? Are politicians on the brink of delivering "peace for our time"? Fifty-one years ago, these words were uttered by British prime minister Neville Chamberlain. They proved to be cruelly ironic when, a short time later, the second world war broke out. Are they now going to come true at long last?

PEACE WHAT ARE THE CHANCES?

DESPITE the newspaper headlines, the truth is, as most of us realize, that mankind is still a long way from real peace. The withdrawal of foreign armies from Afghanistan did not bring peace to that land. And there is still strife of one kind or another in the Philippines, Sudan, Israel, Northern Ireland, Lebanon, and Sri Lanka, to name just a few.

Since most sane people prefer peace to war, why is peace so elusive? Politicians have tried in many ways over many centuries to bring peace, but their efforts have always failed. Why? Let us look at a few examples and see.

Peace Through Religion and Law

Some view the Roman Empire as a successful attempt at peacemaking.

Under it, a combination of established law, flexible administration, formidable legions, and well-designed roads for some centuries maintained an international stability known as the *Pax Romana* (Roman Peace) over large areas of Western Asia, Africa, and Europe. Eventually, though, the Roman Empire succumbed to internal corruption and invasions from outside, and the Roman Peace collapsed.

This illustrates a sad truth about human endeavors. After an initially hopeful start, they usually deteriorate. God himself said: "The inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up," and this bad inclination usually wins out in the long run. (Genesis 8:21) Moreover, the prophet Jeremiah said: "The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate. Who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) Humans are unpredictable. The good intentions of one person may be subverted by the jealousy or selfish ambitions of others. Or a ruler with high principles may himself become corrupt. In view of this, how can humans ever bring peace?

In the third century B.C.E., a remarkable peacemaking effort was reported from the subcontinent of India. There, a powerful ruler named Aśoka carved out a huge empire through warfare and bloodshed. Then, according to the record, he was converted to the principles of Buddhism. Renouncing warfare, he erected monuments around his domain inscribed with sayings to help his subjects live better lives.

And his empire was apparently peaceful and prosperous.

Is Aśoka's way the one to peace? Unhappily, no. When the emperor died, his peace died with him, and his empire crumbled. This illustrates that even the efforts of a well-intentioned and capable ruler are eventually frustrated because he has to die. The writer of Ecclesiastes mentioned this problem when he wrote: "I . . .

hated all my hard work . . . that I would leave behind for the man who would come to be after me. And who is there knowing whether he will prove to be wise or foolish? Yet he will take control over all my hard work at which I worked hard and at which I showed wisdom under the sun. This too is vanity."—Ecclesiastes 2:18, 19.

Yes, man's mortality is an insuperable obstacle to his bringing lasting peace. The psalmist's counsel is surely wise in this regard: "Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs. His spirit goes out, he goes back to his ground; in that day his thoughts do perish."—Psalm 146:3, 4.

Further Efforts at Peace

Other human efforts likewise illustrate why man fails in his endeavor to bring peace. For example, in the tenth century, a movement called the Peace of God was initiated in Europe. Designed to

*However wise
and highly
principled a
ruler may be,
eventually he
dies and often
others less
capable and
less principled
take over*

protect church property, it developed into a kind of nonaggression pact that by the middle of the 12th century had spread to much of Europe.

Another concept is termed the "balance of power." Following this policy, a community of nations—such as Europe—discourages war by maintaining a more or less balanced distribution of power among states. If a strong nation menaces a

weaker one, another strong nation temporarily allies itself with the weak one to discourage the would-be aggressor. This policy guided European relations from the end of the Napoleonic Wars to the outbreak of the first world war in 1914.

After that war, the League of Nations was established as a forum in which the nations could talk out their differences instead of fighting over them. The League ceased to function when the second world war broke out, but after the war, its spirit was revived in the United Nations, which still exists.

U.S. National Archives photo



However, all these efforts failed to bring real or lasting peace. While the Peace of God movement was existing in Europe, Europeans fought Muslims in blood-thirsty Crusades. And while politicians were trying to preserve peace in Europe by the balance of power, they were waging war and building empires in lands outside Europe. The League of Nations was unable to prevent the second world war, and the United Nations did not prevent vicious massacres in Kampuchea or conflicts in places such as Korea, Nigeria, Vietnam, and Zaire.

Yes, up to now the politicians' best peace-making efforts have failed. Rulers just do not know how to make lasting peace, hampered as they are by the mortality and human failings of themselves and others. Even if that were not the case, however, politicians still could not bring peace. Why not? Because of another obstacle that is truly formidable.

*The biggest
single obstacle
to peace is
Satan the Devil*

A Hidden Force Preventing Peace

The Bible speaks of this obstacle when it says: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) The wicked one is Satan the Devil, a superhuman spirit creature

far more powerful than we are. From the beginning, Satan has been involved in rebellion, lying, and murder. (Genesis 3:1-6; John 8:44) His powerful, though hidden, influence on world affairs is vouched for by other inspired commentators. Paul called him "the god of this system of things," "the ruler of the authority of the air." (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2) Jesus more than once called him "the ruler of this world."—John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.

Since the world lies in Satan's power, there is no possibility at all that human politicians will bring lasting peace. Does that mean that peace will never come? Can anyone lead mankind to peace?



WHO WILL LEAD MANKIND TO PEACE?

DOES the fact that humans cannot bring peace mean that we will never see peace? No. Just as Satan, who is more powerful than we are, is the ultimate obstacle to peace on earth, so there is One even more powerful than Satan who will finally lead mankind to peace. The Bible, which tells about Satan, also tells of this One. It says: "The princely rule will come to be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6, 7) Who is this Prince of Peace? None other than Jesus Christ, and he can bring peace because he is far more qualified than we are. In what ways?

More Than Human Qualifications

For one thing, Jesus is not mortal, subject to death. True, he lived as a man and died a sacrificial death. But then he was resurrected

to immortal heavenly life, and it is in this condition that he becomes the Prince of Peace. That is why a prophecy says: "There will be no end of his kingdom." (Luke 1:32, 33) Unlike the Oriental emperor Aśoka, Jesus will live unendingly to ensure that his good work is not ruined by inferior successors.

Moreover, Jesus is untainted by sin. His rulership is based on godly wisdom and right principles. The prophet Isaiah foretold: "Upon him the spirit of Jehovah must settle down, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of mightiness, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah . . . He will not judge by any mere appearance to his eyes, nor reprove simply according to the thing heard by his ears. And with righteousness he must judge the lowly ones." (Isaiah 11:2-4) Unlike Europeans of an earlier age, Jesus will not preserve peace at home only to wage war in foreign lands. Under him, peace will be universal.

Further, Jesus has the power to bring peace. The prophecy says: "The spirit of Jehovah . . . , the spirit of counsel and of mightiness," is upon him. This spirit was behind the creation of the universe as well as all the powerful works of righteousness reported in the Bible. Even the great opposer, Satan, has no weapons that will successfully counter the force of God's spirit.



The Steps to Peace

How will Jesus lead mankind to peace? You may be surprised to know that he has already started. In the prophetic book of Revelation, Jesus is seen receiving from God kingship in a heavenly Kingdom. (Revelation 11: 15) If we closely examine the Bible's prophecies and compare them with events in our century, we see that Jesus' enthronement as King took place in heaven back in 1914. (Matthew 24: 3-42) That was a major step in bringing peace to the earth.

If that is the case, though, why did World War I break out in 1914? And why has our century seen worse wars than any other in history? Because the first act of the heavenly King was to ban-

ish Satan for all time from the heavens and cast him down to earth's vicinity. The result? The prophecy says: "Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time." (Revelation 12:7-12) The great wars of our century are related to the anger of Satan. But notice: Satan's anger is for "a short period of time." The crisis will soon be over!

Before it is, though, the Prince of Peace makes further vital preparations for peace. To begin with, mankind has to know of God's purpose to bring peace through Christ. Correspondingly, Jesus prophesied that in our time "this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth

*Only Jesus
has the
qualifications
to lead
mankind to
peace*

for a witness to all the nations.” (Matthew 24:14) In fulfillment of this, the good news is being preached today by Jehovah’s Witnesses in every corner of the globe.

Then, righthearthed ones have to be educated in the ways of peace. The Bible promises: “All your sons will be persons taught by Jehovah, and the peace of your sons will be abundant.” (Isaiah 54:13) Millions of righthearthed ones are receiving this education even now.

The Next Step

It is now almost time for another decisive step in the peace-making process. What is that? One that many know by name but of which few know the real purpose. The Bible calls it “the war of the great day of God the Almighty,” or Armageddon. (Revelation 16:14, 16) Many think of Armageddon as a nuclear war that will destroy civilization. On the contrary, it is a direct act by Jesus, the Prince of Peace, to accomplish things that are vital to peace.

First, Armageddon will remove all human obstacles to peace. The prophecy at Psalm 37:10 says: “Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give attention to his place, and he will not be.” Yes, Jesus will remove “the wicked one”—the warmakers, the criminals, the terrorists, as well as all those who refuse to accept the great Prince of Peace—from the earthly scene. They will have no further right to continue living on this planet.—Revelation 19:19-21.

Second, at Armageddon this prophecy of Daniel will be fulfilled: “In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to

any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite.” (Daniel 2:44) The national divisions that have so often led to war will be dissolved. Finally, there will be a world government under a ruler we can trust!

When will Armageddon come? The Bible does not say. But world events in fulfillment of prophecy indicate that it will be very soon. The Bible clearly foretells an event that will be an immediate precursor. The apostle Paul says: “Whenever it is that they are saying: ‘Peace and security!’ then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them.” (1 Thessalonians 5:3)

Then, immediately after the sudden destruction that climaxes with Armageddon, the greatest obstacle to peace will be removed. Satan’s “short period of time” will be over, and he will be put in a situation where he can no longer cause trouble here on earth. (Revelation 20:1-3) What a relief!

*Today, the
good news of
the Kingdom is
being preached
in every corner
of the globe*

A World at Peace

Picture the situation at that time. The psalmist prophesied: “The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.” (Psalm 37:11) These meek ones will continue to fulfill the beautiful prophecy of Isaiah: “They will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore.”—Isaiah 2:4.

At last, for the first time since Eden, all living humans will enjoy the blessing of Jehovah God, and he will fulfill his promise: “Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with

them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away.”—Revelation 21:3, 4.

A Solid Hope

Who, then, will lead mankind to peace? Jesus Christ, the appointed Prince of Peace. Is this a practical hope for us today? Well, if the Bible’s promises were not reliable, there

would be no real hope for peace. Men would continue to fight and kill one another with no end in sight. But the Bible *is* reliable, and God’s Kingdom under Christ *will* bring peace. We encourage you to listen to the good news of the Kingdom that Jehovah’s Witnesses bring to your home and see this for yourself. Then, when the time comes, may you be among the meek ones who will inherit the earth and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

The hope for peace discussed in this article is from the Bible. Today, when many no longer believe in the Bible, you may question whether this hope is practical. Jehovah’s Witnesses firmly believe that it is. They accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God, hence as completely trustworthy. In 1989 they published a book entitled *The Bible—God’s Word or Man’s?* presenting many proofs of this fact. Some of the information in that book is discussed in the following two articles, which we invite you to read.

More information about the Bible’s promise of peace will appear in the article “World Peace—What Will It Really Mean?” that will be published in the April 15, 1990, issue of *The Watchtower*.

“All Those in the Memorial Tombs”

CAN you be sure that most of the dead will live again? Yes, since Jesus said: “Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out.” (John 5:28, 29) Notice the expression “memorial tombs,” which is unique to the *New World Translation*. It reminds us of the importance of God’s memory in the resurrection.

Why is the usual rendering, “graves,” not used? Because Jesus did not use the plural of the Greek word *ta’phos*, which means “grave” or “burial ground.” Indeed, not all who ever died were buried in literal graves, or *ta’phoi*. Nevertheless, those whom God will bring back in the resurrection are in his memory. This is indicated by Jesus’ use of the plural form of *mne-mei’on*, which is closely related to Greek words basically meaning “to remember.” (Matthew 16:9; Mark 8:18) The *Greek-English Lexicon* by H. G. Liddell and R. Scott translates *mne-mei’on* as “memorial, remembrance, record of a person or thing, . . . tomb, . . . generally, monument.”

Thus, the *New World Translation* differentiates between the words *ta’phos* and *mne-mei’on*. It is also worthy of note that many Bible translations similarly use two different expressions at Matthew 23:29 where both Greek terms appear. The *Revised Standard Version* renders them as follows: “You build the tombs [a form of *ta’phos*] of the prophets and adorn the monuments [a form of *mne-mei’on*] of the righteous.”

The Creator of man does not forget the life patterns of thousands of millions of humans who have lived. (Psalm 139:16; 147:4; Matthew 10:30) In his due time, he will remember those in the “memorial tombs” and bring them back to life on a cleansed earth. How encouraged and comforted we are by knowing that God’s perfect memory cannot fail!—Revelation 20:11-13.

GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH

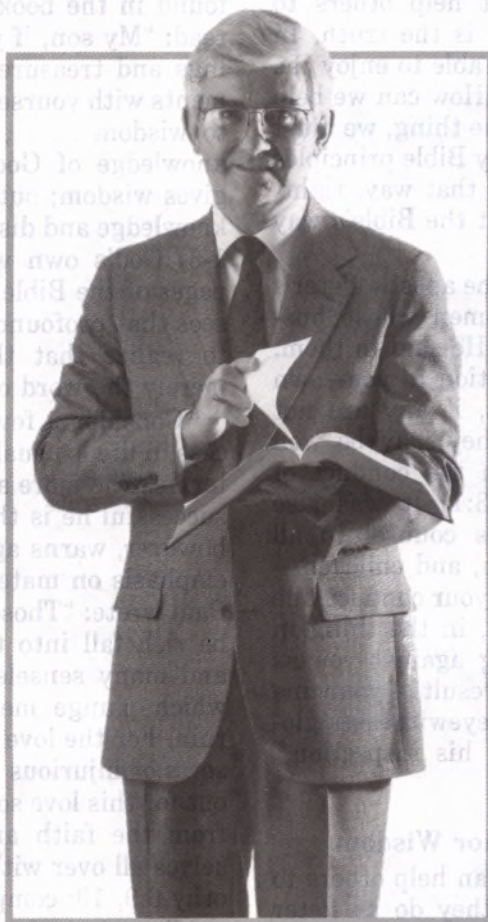
"Sanctify them by means of the truth; your word is truth."—JOHN 17:17.

YOUR word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my road-way." (Psalm 119:105) So said the Hebrew psalmist. Only a minority today have respect like that for God's Word. In this 20th century, God's Word exists in written form as the Holy Bible. It has been translated into more languages and distributed more widely than any other book in history. Yet, most refuse to accept it as a lamp for their feet. Even those who claim to be Christians prefer, for the most part, to follow their own ideas rather than let the Bible light their road-way.—2 Timothy 3:5.

² In sharp contrast, we who are Jehovah's Witnesses agree with the psalmist.

1. How did the Hebrew psalmist view the Bible, but how do many view it today?

2, 3. How do Jehovah's Witnesses view the Bible, and what benefits has this brought them?



For us, the Bible is a God-given guide. We know that "all Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16) Unlike many today, we do not want to experiment in matters of morality and conduct. We know what is right because the Bible tells us.

³ This has brought us great benefits. We have come to know Jehovah, and we have learned his magnificent purposes for the

earth and mankind, so we are confident that a bright future is possible for us and our families. We agree wholeheartedly with the psalmist who said: "How I do love your law! All day long it is my concern. Wiser than my enemies your commandment makes me, because to time indefinite it is mine."—Psalm 119:97, 98.

Witnessing by Conduct

⁴ We have, therefore, every reason to agree with Jesus' words addressed to his Father: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) But recognizing this fact puts an obligation upon us. We must help others to realize that God's Word is the truth. In this way they too will be able to enjoy the blessings we experience. How can we help them in that way? For one thing, we must make every effort to apply Bible principles in our everyday lives. In that way, right-hearted ones will see that the Bible's way really is the best.

⁵ This was the gist of the apostle Peter's counsel to Christian women whose husbands were unbelievers. He said to them: "You wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, in order that, if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives." (1 Peter 3:1) It was also the principle behind his counsel to all Christians—men, women, and children—when he said: "Maintain your conduct fine among the nations, that, in the thing in which they are speaking against you as evildoers, they may as a result of your fine works of which they are eyewitnesses glorify God in the day for his inspection."—1 Peter 2:12; 3:16.

The Bible's Superior Wisdom

⁶ Further, Christians can help others to appreciate the Bible if they do as Peter also counsels: "Sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you, but doing so together with a mild temper and deep

respect." (1 Peter 3:15) Christian ministers should be able to defend the Bible and explain to others that it is God's Word. How can they do that?

⁷ One persuasive line of reasoning is found in the book of Proverbs. There we read: "My son, if you will receive my sayings and treasure up my own commandments with yourself, so as to pay attention to wisdom . . . , you will find the very knowledge of God. For Jehovah himself gives wisdom; out of his mouth there are knowledge and discernment." (Proverbs 2:1-6) God's own wisdom is found in the pages of the Bible. When a sincere person sees that profound wisdom, he cannot fail to realize that the Bible is more than merely the word of man.

⁸ Consider a few examples. Today, success in life is usually measured in financial terms. The more a person earns, the more successful he is thought to be. The Bible, however, warns against putting too much emphasis on material things. The apostle Paul wrote: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains."—1 Timothy 6:9, 10; compare Matthew 6:24.

⁹ Experience has shown how appropriate this warning is. A clinical psychologist notes: "Becoming No. 1 and rich does not make you feel fulfilled, satisfied, authentically respected or loved." Yes, those who spend all their energies pursuing wealth

7. What fact about the Bible demonstrates that it must be God's Word?

8, 9. How has the Bible's counsel about keeping a balanced view of acquiring wealth been shown to be correct?

4. Recognizing the Bible as God's Word puts what obligation upon us?

5. What counsel did Peter give about witnessing by our conduct?

6. How does Peter help us to see that we should assist others to appreciate the Bible?

often end up feeling bitter and frustrated. The Scriptures, while acknowledging the value of money, point to something far more important: "Wisdom is for a protection the same as money is for a protection; but the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom itself preserves alive its owners." —Ecclesiastes 7:12.

¹⁰ The Bible has many such precepts. Another one is: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." (Proverbs 13:20) This has also been proved true by experience. Peer pressure has led young people into drunkenness, drug abuse, and immorality. Any who mix with users of foul language eventually find themselves using similar disgusting speech. Many steal from their employers because 'everyone is doing it.' Truly, as the Bible also says: "Bad associations spoil useful habits."—1 Corinthians 15:33.

¹¹ One of the most famous pieces of counsel in the Bible is the so-called Golden Rule: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." (Matthew 7:12) If mankind followed this rule, the world would clearly be a better place. But even if humans in general do not follow the rule, it is better for you individually to do so. Why? Because we were made to care for others and be concerned about them. (Acts 20:35) A psychological study conducted in the United States to find out how people reacted when they helped others reached *this* conclusion: "It appears, then, that caring about others is as much a part of human nature as caring about ourselves." —Matthew 22:39.

10. Why should we take heed of the Bible's counsel to watch our associations?

11. How did a psychological study show the wisdom of following the Golden Rule?

The Bible's Counsel—Uniquely Wise

¹² Today, of course, there are many sources of counsel outside the Bible. Newspapers carry advice columns, and bookstores are full of self-help books. Additionally, there are psychologists, professional counselors, and others who offer advice in different fields. But the Bible is unique in at least three aspects. First, its counsel is *always* beneficial. It is never mere theory, and it never works to our harm. Anyone who follows the Bible's counsel has to agree with the psalmist when he said to God in prayer: "Your own reminders have proved very trustworthy." —Psalm 93:5.

¹³ Second, the Bible has stood the test of time. (1 Peter 1:25; Isaiah 40:8) Counsel from human sources is notoriously changeable, and what is in fashion one year is often criticized the next. However, although the Bible was completed almost 2,000 years ago, it still contains the wisest counsel available, and its words are universally applicable. They apply with equal effect whether we live in Africa, in Asia, in South or North America, in Europe, or in the isles of the sea.

¹⁴ Finally, the wide range of the Bible's counsel is unequalled. A Bible proverb says: "Jehovah himself gives wisdom," and no matter what problem or decision we face, there is wisdom in the Bible that helps us to solve it. (Proverbs 2:6) Children, teenagers, parents, old folks, employees, employers, people in authority, all find that the wisdom in the Bible applies to them. (Proverbs 4:11) Even when we face situations that were unknown in the time of Jesus and his apostles, the Bible

12. What is one thing that makes the Bible unique?

13. What shows the Bible to be vastly superior to human sources of wisdom?

14. In what way does the counsel of God's Word excel?

gives us counsel that works. For example, back in the first century, tobacco smoking was unknown in the Middle East. Today, it is widespread. Nevertheless, anyone who takes note of the Bible's counsel to avoid being "brought under authority [or controlled] by anything" and to keep clean from "every defilement of flesh and spirit" will avoid this habit, which is both addictive and destructive to health.—1 Corinthians 6:12; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

For Our Long-Term Good

¹⁵ True, many say that the Bible is out-of-date and irrelevant in this 20th century. However, the reason likely is that the Bible does not say what they want to hear. Following Scriptural counsel works out for our long-term benefit, but it often takes patience, discipline, and self-denial—traits that are not popular in a world that encourages us to seek instant gratification.—Proverbs 1:1-3.

¹⁶ Take the matter of sexual morality. Scriptural standards are very strict. The only place for sexual intimacy is within marriage, and all such intimacy outside marriage is forbidden. We read: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men . . . will inherit God's kingdom." (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) Moreover, for Christians the Bible requires monogamy, one husband for one wife. (1 Timothy 3:2) And while there are extreme cases where divorce or separation might be allowed, the Bible says that in general the marriage bond is for life. Jesus himself said: "He who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said, 'For this reason a man

will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh' . . . So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has yoked together let no man put apart."—Matthew 19:4-6, 9; 1 Corinthians 7:12-16.

¹⁷ Today, these standards are widely ignored. Loose sexual practices are tolerated. Sexual relations between dating teenagers are viewed as normal. Living together without the benefit of marriage is accepted. Among married couples, illicit sexual affairs by either partner are not uncommon. And divorce is pandemic in this modern world. These relaxed standards, however, have not brought happiness. The bad results have proved that the Bible was right after all in insisting on strict moral standards.

¹⁸ *Ladies' Home Journal* said: "The emphasis upon sex that typified the sixties and seventies has brought not infinite human happiness but some serious human misery." The "serious human misery" here referred to includes that of children traumatized by their parents' divorce and that of adults suffering deep emotional pain. It also includes an increase in single-parent families and an epidemic of young single girls who have babies when they are hardly out of childhood themselves. Moreover, it embraces a pandemic of sexually transmitted diseases, such as genital herpes, gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia, and AIDS.

¹⁹ In view of all of this, a professor of sociology noted: "Perhaps we are grown up enough to consider whether it would not serve us all better to promote premarital abstinence as a policy that is the most responsive to the needs of our citizens and their right to freedom: freedom from disease, freedom from unwanted

18, 19. What has resulted from the widespread ignoring of Jehovah's standards of morality?

pregnancy." The Bible correctly states: "Happy is the able-bodied man that has put Jehovah as his trust and that has not turned his face to defiant people, nor to those falling away to lies." (Psalm 40:4) Those who trust the Bible's wisdom are not deceived by the lies of those defying the Bible and saying that a looser moral code brings happiness. The Bible's wise, if strict, standards are for the best.

Difficult Problems in Life

²⁰ The wisdom of the Bible also helps us to handle the difficult problems we face in life. For example, in a number of lands, there are Christians living in severe, deep poverty. Yet they cope with their poverty and still find happiness. How? By following the inspired Word of God. They take seriously the comforting words of Psalm 55:22: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you." They rely on God for strength to endure. Then they apply Bible principles and avoid harmful, wasteful habits, such as smoking and drunkenness. They are industrious, as the Bible recommends, and thus often find that they can feed their families when lazy people or those who give in to despair fail. (Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:26) Further, they heed the Bible's warning: "Do not be envious of those doing unrighteousness." (Psalm 37:1) They do not resort to gambling or to criminal activities, such as selling drugs. These things may offer a quick "solution" to their problems, but the long-term fruitage is bitter.

²¹ Does following the Bible really help

20. What Bible principles have proved helpful to those who must face severe poverty in their lives?

21, 22. (a) How did one Christian woman draw help and comfort from the Bible? (b) What further fact about the Bible helps us to realize that it is God's Word?

those who are very poor? Yes, as many, many experiences prove. One Christian widow in Asia writes: "Although I live near the poverty line, I am not resentful or bitter. Bible truth fills me with a positive outlook." She reports that a notable promise given by Jesus has been fulfilled in her case. Jesus said: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33) She testifies that by putting her service to God first in her life, she always receives, in one way or another, the material necessities of life. And her Christian service gives her dignity and a goal in life that makes her poverty endurable.

²² Truly, the depth of its wisdom shows that the Bible really is God's Word. No book produced solely by humans could cover so many different aspects of life and be so deeply discerning and so consistently right. But there is another fact about the Bible that demonstrates its divine origin. It has the power to change people for the better. We will discuss this in the next article.

Can You Explain?

- ☐ In what way are Jehovah's Witnesses blessed by their acceptance of the Bible as God's Word?
- ☐ As believers in God's Word, what obligation do we have, and how can our conduct help us to discharge this obligation?
- ☐ What makes the Bible's wise counsel superior to mere human advice?
- ☐ What are some examples that show the depth of the Bible's wisdom?

"THE WORD OF GOD IS ALIVE AND EXERTS POWER"

IN THE middle of the first century C.E., the apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Christian congregation in Rome. In it he highlighted the requirement that true Christians had to make changes. He said: "Quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind

over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:2) What is it that transforms Jesus' followers, altering their very way of thinking? Basically, it is the power of God's Word, the Bible.

² Paul showed how deeply the Bible can influence us when he wrote: "The word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword and pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of joints and their marrow, and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12) Indeed, the extraordinary power of the Bible to work

1, 2. (a) What causes changes in the lives of those who become Christians? (b) How deeply can the Bible influence a person?



such changes in people is a persuasive proof that it is more than merely the word of man.

³ The Greek word translated "be transformed" at Romans 12:2 comes from *meta-mor-pho'o*. It indicates a complete change, like the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly. It is so com-

plete that the Bible speaks of it as a change of personality. In another Bible verse, we read: "Strip off the old personality with its practices, and clothe yourselves with the new personality, which through accurate knowledge is being made new according to the image of the One who created it." —Colossians 3:9, 10.

⁴ Writing to the congregation at Corinth, Paul showed the extent of the personality changes that took place in the first century. He said: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor

3, 4. To what extent are the personalities of Christians changed?

extortioners will inherit God's kingdom. *And yet that is what some of you were. But you have been washed clean.*" (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) Yes, immoral and quarrelsome persons, thieves and drunkards, had been transformed into exemplary Christians.

Personality Changes Today

⁵ Similar personality changes are seen today. For example, a young boy in South America was orphaned at the age of nine. He grew up without parental guidance and developed severe personality problems. He relates: "By the time I was 18, I was completely addicted to drugs and had already spent time in prison for stealing to support the habit." His aunt, though, was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and eventually she was able to help him.

⁶ The young man explains: "My aunt began to study the Bible with me, and after seven months I was able to break the drug habit." He also broke with his previous companions and found new friends among Jehovah's Witnesses. He goes on: "These new companions, along with my regular study of the Bible, enabled me to make progress and finally to dedicate my life to serve God." Yes, this former drug addict and thief is now an active, clean-living Christian. How was such a radical personality change effected? Through the power of the Bible.

⁷ Another example comes from southern Europe. There, a young man grew up with a difficult personality problem: a violent temper. He was constantly in fights. During one family argument, he even beat his father, knocking him to the ground! Eventually, though, he studied the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses and took note of

5, 6. How was the personality of one young man completely changed by the power of the Bible?

7, 8. Describe how a difficult personality problem was solved with the help of the Bible.

God's command in the book of Romans: "Return evil for evil to no one. . . . If possible, as far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men. Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath."—Romans 12:17-19.

⁸ Those words helped him to realize how bad his weakness was. A growing knowledge of the Bible refined his conscience, which helped him to subdue his quick temper. Once, after he had made some progress in his studies, a stranger shouted insults at him. The young man felt the familiar rage welling up inside. Then he felt something else: a sense of shame; and this stopped him from giving way to his anger. He had developed self-control, an important fruit of the spirit. (Galatians 5:22, 23) His personality was now different, thanks to the power of God's Word.

⁹ How, though, does the Bible produce such a powerful effect? Paul, at Colossians 3:10, said that our personalities are changed through accurate knowledge, which knowledge is found in the Bible. But how does knowledge change people?

The Role of Accurate Knowledge

¹⁰ First, the Bible identifies undesirable personality characteristics that have to be shed. These include such things as "lofty eyes, a false tongue, and hands that are shedding innocent blood, a heart fabricating hurtful schemes, feet that are in a hurry to run to badness, a false witness that launches forth lies, and anyone sending forth contentions among brothers." (Proverbs 6:16-19) Second, the Bible describes desirable traits that we should

9. According to Paul, through what agency is our personality changed?

10, 11. (a) When we study the Bible, what do we learn about desirable and undesirable personality characteristics? (b) What is needed in addition to knowledge to effect a change in our personality?

The sad result of Solomon's unfaithfulness in his old age should motivate us to love righteousness and hate lawlessness

cultivate, including "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control."—Galatians 5:22, 23.

¹¹ Such accurate knowledge helps a sincere person to examine himself and see which personality traits he needs to cultivate and which he must work to eliminate. (James 1:25) Nevertheless, that is only a beginning. In addition to knowledge, motivation is needed, something to move him so that he wants to change. Here again, he needs accurate knowledge from the Bible.

Motivated to Be Good

¹² Paul said that the desirable new personality is molded "according to the image of the One who created it." (Colossians 3:10) So the Christian personality must resemble God's own personality. (Ephesians 5:1) Through the Bible, God's personality is revealed to us. We see his dealings with mankind and observe his fine qualities, such as his love, kindness, goodness, mercy, and righteousness. Such knowledge moves a righthearated person to love God and to want to be the kind of person that God approves. (Matthew 22:37) As loving children, we want to please our heavenly Father, so we try to imitate his personality as much as we can in our weak, imperfect state.—Ephesians 5:1.

¹³ Our motivation is strengthened by

12. How does knowledge of God's personality help us to change?

13. What knowledge teaches us to 'love righteousness and hate lawlessness'?



the knowledge the Bible gives as to where both good personality traits and bad ones lead. (Psalm 14:1-5; 15:1-5; 18:20, 24) We learn that David was blessed for his godly devotion and love of righteousness but that he suffered when he lost self-control. We see the sad outcome when Solomon's fine qualities were corrupted in his old age. The blessings that resulted from the uprightness of Josiah and Hezekiah are contrasted with the calamitous effects of Ahab's weakness and Manasseh's stubborn apostasy. (Galatians 6:7) Thus we learn to 'love righteousness and hate lawlessness.'—Hebrews 1:9; Psalm 45:7; 97:10.

¹⁴ This motivation is strengthened still more by an accurate knowledge of God's purposes. Such knowledge helps to change the very 'force actuating our minds,' the spirit that motivates our thoughts and actions. (Ephesians 4:23, 24) When we study the Bible, we learn that Jehovah will

14. What are Jehovah's purposes for the world and for individuals in it?

not forever tolerate wickedness. Soon, he will destroy this unrighteous world and bring about 'new heavens and a new earth wherein righteousness is to dwell.' (2 Peter 3:8-10, 13) Who will live in this new world? "The upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it." —Proverbs 2:21, 22.

¹⁵ If we truly believe this promise, our whole way of thinking will be affected. The apostle Peter, after prophesying the destruction of wickedness, says: "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." (2 Peter 3:11, 12) Our personalities should be molded by our strong desire to be among the upright who will be left over when the wicked are destroyed.

¹⁶ The book of Revelation promises upright ones that, after the end of this world, "[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." But then it warns that "the cowards and those without faith and those who are disgusting in their filth and murderers and fornicators and those practicing spiritism and idolaters and all the liars" will be rejected. (Revelation 21:4, 8) How wise to avoid the undesirable qualities that God will refuse to allow in the new world!

15. If we truly believe what the Bible says about Jehovah's purposes, how will this affect us as persons?

16. What kind of personalities will have no place in the new world, and how should this knowledge affect us?

Help From Outside

¹⁷ Nevertheless, humans are weak, and usually they need something in addition to information and motivation if they are to make changes. They need personal help, and the Bible shows us where we can find this help. For example, it says: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." (Proverbs 13:20) Similarly, if we associate with those who manifest the qualities we want to cultivate, we will be greatly helped to become more like them.—Genesis 6:9; Proverbs 2:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33.

¹⁸ In addition, Jehovah himself provides help in the form of holy spirit—the same spirit that he used to work miracles in earlier times. Indeed, the highly desirable qualities of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control" are called "the fruitage of the spirit." (Galatians 5:22, 23) How do we gain the help of holy spirit? Since the Bible was inspired by holy spirit, when we read it or talk to others about it, we are exposing our mind and heart to the persuasive power of that spirit. (2 Timothy 3:16) Indeed, Jesus promised that when we speak to others about our hope, we may experience the direct action of that spirit.—Matthew 10:18-20.

¹⁹ In addition, the Bible commands: "Persevere in prayer." (Romans 12:12) By prayer we address Jehovah, praise him, thank him, and ask for his help. If we ask for help to overcome undesirable personality traits, such as a bad temper, stubbornness, impatience, or pride, God's spirit will back up any efforts we make in harmony with that prayer.—John 14:13, 14; James 1:5; 1 John 5:14.

17. What kind of help does the Bible counsel us to seek?

18, 19. What do we need to do to expose our minds and hearts to God's spirit?

If we ask Jehovah for help, his spirit will reinforce any efforts we make to overcome bad traits

²⁰ When Paul wrote: "Be transformed by making your mind over," he was writing to a congregation of baptized, anointed Christians. (Romans 1:7; 12:2) And in the original Greek, he used a form of the verb that implies continuing action. This suggests that the transformation worked on us by accurate knowledge from the Bible is progressive. We today—like Christians in Paul's day—are surrounded by a world full of corrupting influences. And we—like them—are imperfect, prone to do wrong. (Genesis 8:21) Hence, we have to keep working at overcoming the old, selfish personality and putting on the new one, just as they did. The early Christians succeeded to such an extent that they stood out as totally different from the world around them. Christians today do the same.

A People "Taught by Jehovah"

²¹ Indeed, God's spirit today works not only on individuals but on a whole organization of Christians, who number into the millions. On this organization are fulfilled Isaiah's prophetic words: "And many peoples will certainly go and say: '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 2:3) Isaiah's further prophecy has also been fulfilled in their case: "All your

20. Why do Christians have to keep working at putting on the new personality?

21. What are some of the prophecies that are fulfilled on God's people in these last days?



sons will be persons taught by Jehovah, and the peace of your sons will be abundant." (Isaiah 54:13) Who are these ones who enjoy peace because of being taught by Jehovah?

²² Well, note this extract from a letter written to the *New Haven Register*, a North American newspaper: "Whether you have been aggravated or ired [angered], as I have, by their proselytizing, you have to admire their dedication, their wholesomeness, their outstanding example of human behavior and healthful living." Whom was the writer talking about? The same group that was discussed by the *Herald of Buenos Aires*, Argentina, when it said: "Jehovah's Witnesses have proven throughout the years to be hard-working, sober, thrifty and God-fearing citizens." Similarly, the Italian newspaper *La Stampa* said: "They do not dodge taxes or seek to evade inconvenient laws for their own profit. The moral ideals of love for neigh-

22. (a) Who today are being taught by Jehovah?
(b) Give examples to show that outsiders recognize that Jehovah's Witnesses are different.

bor, refusal of power, nonviolence and personal honesty . . . enter into their 'daily' way of life."

²³ Why do Jehovah's Witnesses as a group—like the early Christians—stand out as different? In many respects, they are the same as everyone else. They are born with similar human imperfections, and they have the same economic problems and basic needs. However, as a worldwide congregation, they allow God's Word to exert power in their lives. The resulting international brotherhood of genuine Christians is powerful evidence that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.—Psalm 133:1.

The Bible Is Inspired

²⁴ In these two articles, we have discussed just two lines of evidence to demonstrate that the Bible is God's Word, not man's. Whether they consider the unparalleled wisdom of the Bible or its power to change people—or the many other things that mark it as unique—sincere people

23. Why do Jehovah's Witnesses as an organization stand out as different?

24. What is our prayer in behalf of many more people?

can hardly fail to realize that it must be inspired by God. As Christians, we pray that many more will come to recognize this truth. Then they too will echo the psalmist's joyful words: "O see that I have loved your own orders. O Jehovah, according to your loving-kindness preserve me alive. The substance of your word is truth, and every righteous judicial decision of yours is to time indefinite."—Psalm 119:159, 160.

Do You Remember?

- ☐ What effect does the Bible have on true Christians?
- ☐ How does accurate knowledge help to transform us?
- ☐ How does the Bible help motivate us to cultivate good qualities and overcome bad ones?
- ☐ What help is available in developing godly qualities?
- ☐ What evidence that the Bible is inspired is seen among Jehovah's people?

SERVING THE GREATEST ARTIST OF ALL

AS A young girl seven years of age, I began asking myself: 'Why will I have to die? Is it possible to avoid death?' I had been told that God takes away good people because he wants them with him in heaven. I still remember one of my class-

mates exclaiming: "It's better to be a bad person because the good die first!"

I loved drawing, so I began to study art. At school, I had no opportunity to consider religious matters, nor time to take an interest in them. In fact, I used to tell my

friends that to be religious, one needed a low level of intelligence. When I completed my art studies, I was given the post of art teacher in high school.

I loved my work and was also interested in Italian and foreign literature, chamber and symphonic music, and opera. The only thing religious I studied in that period was the iconographic subjects of painters of various epochs. Then I learned what being at the center of attention was all about, what exhibiting one's own works felt like, what it meant to be highly esteemed, praised, and admired as an artist.

At that time, the art world meant a great deal to me, since it was there that I found the reason for the greater part of my existence. But the questions I had posed when I was seven were still present in my mind. I relentlessly searched for something deeper, something I could not as yet explain. I was an avid reader and asked philosophers for explanations. At all costs, I wanted a definite answer to my doubts.

I still had this confusion when I got married. After the birth of my daughter, my search for the truth became more intense. I tried to find it by painting, writing poetry, listening to music, reading books. Whenever I went to a concert and listened to the opening bars of the overture, my mind automatically went to God, to the Supreme Being I didn't know, and I thanked him. During that period, I would often praise God for the beautiful things I admired—my sleeping baby, the colors of a landscape. "What a shame," I used to exclaim, "that art, which could have so many beautiful things as its subject, should be used so much to describe death instead of life!" Some of the most splendid pieces of poetry and theatrical works are either hymns to pessimism or tragedies; some of the finest masterpieces of paint-

ing exalt death rather than life and its beauty. Why?

These contrasting sentiments greatly disheartened me, and I gradually began moving toward apathy. It was at that point that Jehovah's Witnesses came to my door. As I listened to them, it seemed as if they were talking to me in a new language. God's promise to make the earth a paradise sounded like sweet music to my ears. I began to read the Bible. There I finally found the answers to the questions I had not stopped asking since I was seven years old. God does not want man to die but intends to bless his faithful servants by giving them everlasting life on earth!

That was 1973. The following year I made a dedication to Jehovah and was baptized. It wasn't easy to replace my impulsive and sentimental character with the spirit of true brotherly love, my self-centeredness with selflessness, and personal comfort with the spirit of sacrifice! I had to disown myself. Jehovah's Witnesses have greatly helped, as have the meetings held in the Kingdom Hall.

The Great Artist has cleared up my doubts and perplexities. How grateful I am to him! That is why, since September 1984, I have taken up the regular pioneer service, spending 90 hours each month in preaching the good news of God's Kingdom.

Serving the Great Artist and Creator, Jehovah, with my family is truly satisfying. We anxiously await the time when he will paint the most vivid picture ever; when he finally removes the old, wicked system that sullies and envelops this earth. Death will be no more, and art will then be exclusively devoted to life. Then, only beauty will be depicted, for by means of God's righteous new system, misery and pain will have been eliminated forever.—*Contributed.*

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

Accepting the Good News in Belgium

"WHO has seen things like these?" says the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Belgium. (Compare Isaiah 66:8.) This beautiful country reports a peak of 24,464 publishers for the 1989 service year. There was also a 4-percent increase in the average number of those sharing in the preaching activity each month.

□ The good news proclaimed by Jehovah's Witnesses was acknowledged by a Catholic priest who at a Sunday Mass said to his parishioners: "If Jehovah's Witnesses come to your door, open it wide to them. They have the truth!" This is exactly what one lady did. When the Witnesses came, she opened her door wide and accepted the book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* Later she asked for the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*. A Bible study was started with her, but her husband did not join in. So a brother phoned him and asked

if he would like to live with his wife in a better world? As a result, he joined the study. The couple were living together without being legally married, but they legalized their union and soon got baptized.

□ The truth transformed the life of a young girl. When not yet 14 years old, she was left on her own. She met a young boy and lived with him in the punk world, taking drugs and showing a spirit of violence. Then the boy lost his life in a motor accident. This left the girl with a serious nervous breakdown, and she considered suicide: "Where can I find a solution to my problems?" she wondered. She met a person practicing spiritism who made her believe that she could contact her deceased companion. They experimented with hypnotism and extrasensory perception. Not finding in this the expected comfort, she again fell into deep depression. For several months she isolated herself totally. Then one of Jehovah's Witnesses met her and endeavored to help her spiritually. For a while this was done by letter, and in time things straightened out after much effort and courage on her part. Now she was freed from demonic influence, from the tobacco habit, and from deep feelings of guilt. As time progressed, more Bible knowledge and Jehovah's spirit greatly helped her. Also, the meetings strengthened her, as she earnestly prepared for them. Now she is baptized and has the pioneer spirit. She is already conducting several Bible studies,

one of them with her mother, who is now attending some meetings. Truly, Jehovah has helped her!

□ Those taking advantage of opportunities in school enjoy fine success in spreading the good news. One young sister in school in Belgium was assigned to give a speech on a subject of her choice. She decided to talk about Jehovah's Witnesses and their beliefs, basing her material on the brochure *Jehovah's Witnesses in the 20th Century*. Her professor was impressed. After she presented her talk to the class, the students were allowed to ask questions. Several classmates afterward asked what they had to do in order to live in God's Paradise mentioned in her talk. Many, including the professor, asked for copies of the different brochures the sister had. Other classes requested brochures and more information, and a professor of religion examined the brochures and recommended them to his class.

The courageous action of our young sister was blessed. Twenty-three brochures were distributed to two professors and many students; one student, having heard about the talk, requested the material to explain the work of Jehovah's Witnesses in her class.

Many are accepting the good news in Belgium. They accept God's Word, "not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God, which is also at work in you believers." —1 Thessalonians 2:13.



Confidence During the Last Days

AS TUESDAY, Nisan 11, draws to a close, Jesus is with his apostles on the Mount of Olives. They have recently left the temple area, which they can see below, and Jesus has been discussing with them the sign of his presence in Kingdom power and of the end of the system of things.

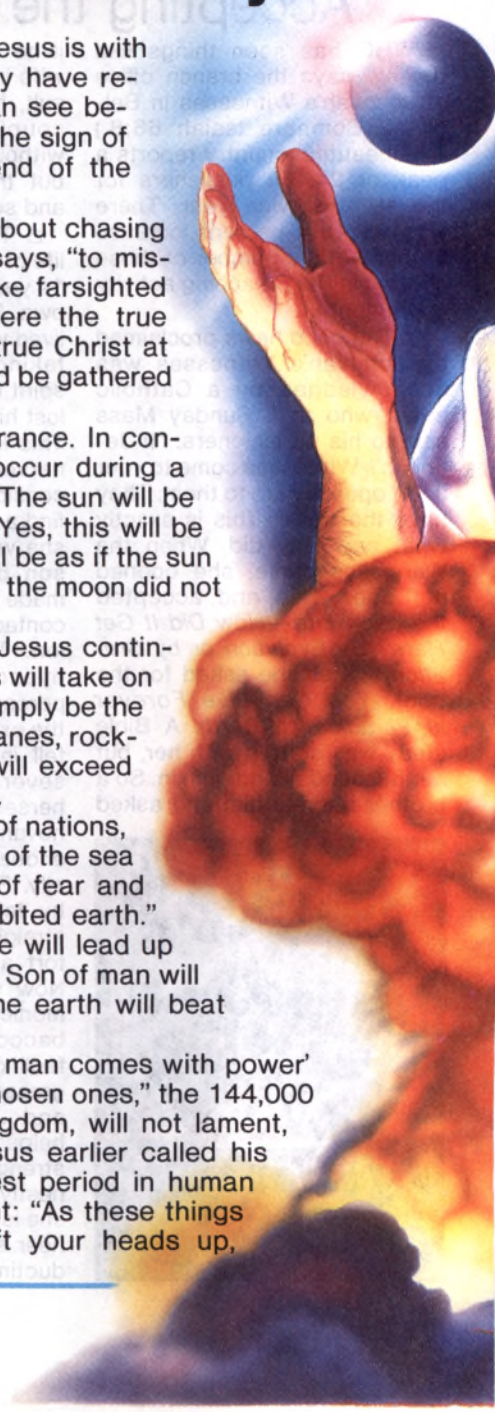
Continuing his comments, Jesus warns them about chasing after false Christs. Attempts will be made, he says, "to mislead, if possible, even the chosen ones." But, like farsighted eagles, these chosen ones will gather to where the true spiritual food is to be found, namely, with the true Christ at his invisible presence. They will not be misled and be gathered together to a false Christ.

False Christs can make only a visible appearance. In contrast, Jesus' presence will be invisible. It will occur during a frightful time in human history, as Jesus says: "The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light." Yes, this will be the blackest period of mankind's existence. It will be as if the sun had been darkened during the daytime, and as if the moon did not give its light by night.

"The powers of the heavens will be shaken," Jesus continues. He thus indicates that the physical heavens will take on a foreboding appearance. The heavens will not simply be the domain of birds, but they will be filled with warplanes, rockets, and space probes. The fear and violence will exceed anything experienced in previous human history.

As a result, Jesus says, there will be "anguish of nations, not knowing the way out because of the roaring of the sea and its agitation, while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth." Indeed, this blackest period of human existence will lead up to the time when, as Jesus says, "the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation."

But not all will be lamenting when 'the Son of man comes with power' to destroy this wicked system of things. The "chosen ones," the 144,000 who will share with Christ in his heavenly Kingdom, will not lament, nor will their companions, the ones whom Jesus earlier called his "other sheep." Despite living during the blackest period in human history, these respond to Jesus' encouragement: "As these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up,





because your deliverance is getting near."

So that his disciples who would be living during the last days could determine the nearness of the end, Jesus gives this illustration: "Note the fig tree and all the other trees: When they are already in the bud, by observing it you know for yourselves that now the summer is near.

In this way you also, when you see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I say to you, This generation will by no means pass away until all things occur."

Thus, when his disciples see the many different features of the sign being fulfilled, they should realize that the end of the system of things is near and that God's Kingdom will soon wipe out all wickedness. In fact, the end will occur within the lifetime of the people who see the fulfillment of all the things Jesus foretells!

Admonishing those disciples who would be alive during the momentous last days, Jesus says:

"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 those dwelling upon the face of all the earth. 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."

Matthew 24:23-51; Mark 13:21-37; Luke 21:25-36; Revelation 14:1, 3; John 10:16.

- ♦ What world conditions mark Christ's presence?
- ♦ When will 'all the tribes of the earth beat themselves in lamentation,' but what will Christ's followers be doing?
- ♦ What illustration does Jesus provide to help his future disciples discern when the end is near?
- ♦ What admonition does Jesus provide for those of his disciples who would be living during the last days?

'I mounted up with wings like eagles'

As told by Ingeborg Berg

I WAS born over a hundred years ago, on June 5, 1889, near Fredensborg Castle, just north of Copenhagen. When the Danish royal family had guests, including kings and emperors from European countries, ladies from the well-to-do homes in Fredensborg were invited to help with the food and the serving. As a little girl, I was often taken along and allowed to play and run about in the castle.



Most vivid is my recollection of Czar Nicholas II of Russia and his family. Outside his bedroom stood his bodyguard, a cossack with drawn sword. The cossacks were fond of children, and once one of them tried to give me a hug. Frightened, especially by his enormous beard, I fled through the long corridors of the castle.

On one occasion Czar Nicholas II, Emperor Wilhelm II of Germany, and the son of Queen Victoria, who later became King Edward VII of England, visited the Danish king Christian IX. While they strolled the streets of Fredensborg, talking kindly with people, Czar Nicholas patted me on my head as I made a curtsy to him. It was a peaceful time then, and heads of nations did not fear

for their safety as they do today.

Peace Taken Away

In 1912 I began to work as a nurse in South Jutland, serving the pro-Danish people on the German side of the border. South Jutland had been under German rule since the war in 1864 between Denmark and Prussia. I helped mothers with newborn babies and became well-acquainted with many of these young families.

In 1914 I married a Danish border guard and came to live on the Danish side of the border. Shortly afterward war broke out. Later it was called the Great War and, eventually, World War I. One morning, barbed wire was rolled out along the border, hindering free movement across it. The peace and security we had experienced until then was gone.

The horror and senselessness of the war came very close to us when we learned that the young fathers in all the families I had visited as a nurse were being called up for military service. And all except one fell on the Western Front at the Marne! It was terrible to think of the young widows, suffering the loss of their husbands and

the little children their fathers. How could these young women care for their farms? "Where is God?" I asked.

During the war, the situation at the border was often very tense as refugees tried to cross. I was assigned to frisk the women who were suspected of smuggling. Usually, it was food that they carried, and I often overlooked it and let them go. The war ended in 1918, and in 1920 South Jutland was reunited with Denmark.

Finding Faith in God

Although my faith in God had weakened because of all the injustices I saw, I was searching for some meaning to life. Alfred, my husband, and I regularly attended church, but our questions were not answered.

In 1923 we moved to a small fishing village at the Flensburg Fjord, and Alfred began to work as a fisherman. Soon we became acquainted with a family who were Baptists. Although we were Lutherans, one day we accepted their invitation to a Bible talk at the Ferry Inn in Egersund. Before we went, I fell on my knees and prayed: "If there is a God, please listen to my prayer!"

The talk was about the woman at the well of Sychar, and it gave me a desire to read the Bible. As a result, I became, as it were, a new person! I wrote to my mother: "You always said that I should be converted to God. I think that this has happened now; I have been afraid to tell you for fear that the joy I have experienced should disappear. But it remains!"

Sometime later, in 1927, I found in our attic a booklet entitled *Freedom for the Peoples*. It caught my attention, and I became so engrossed in the contents that I forgot time and place. Not until the children came home from school and wanted to eat did I tear myself away from reading it.

When Alfred came home that evening, I told him with great enthusiasm what I had read. I told him that if what the booklet said was true, then the church was not the house of God, and we ought to resign and leave it right away. Alfred thought that this would be somewhat rash, and he said so. But we agreed to write a letter to the branch office of the Watch Tower Society in Copenhagen and ask for more literature.

In answer to our request, a traveling overseer, Christian Rømer, was sent to visit us. We gave him the children's room and put their beds in the attic. In the morning and in the afternoon, Brother Rømer went out preaching from door to door, and each evening he studied with us. He stayed for four days, and we really had a wonderful time. When he left, I again asked Alfred about resigning from the church. This time he enthusiastically agreed.

So Alfred went to the minister with our resignation. The minister thought that Alfred had come because there was another baby to be baptized. However, when he understood why Alfred had come, he could not believe it. "What is wrong with the church?" he wanted to know. Alfred mentioned the doctrines of the Trinity, immortality of the soul, and eternal torment. "The Bible does not teach these things," Alfred said. When the minister lamely answered that he would never speak of these matters to people who could think for themselves, Alfred firmly said: "We want to get out of the church!"

A Surprise Catch and Baptism

A convention was to be held in Copenhagen, but we were short of money and could not afford the trip. I prayed to God that he show us a way to get there, since we wanted to get baptized. Shortly before the convention, Alfred sailed out on the

fjord to fish. He caught so many that the boat was filled, and we could pay for our trip. The local fishermen were amazed, since few fish were caught that year in the fjord. In fact, more than 50 years later, the local fishermen still talked about "the miracle." We called it Peter's catch of fish. So on August 28, 1928, we were baptized.

The baptism was different from baptisms today. Behind a curtain was the baptism pool. When the curtain was opened, there was Brother Christian Jensen ready to do the immersing. He was dressed in a tailcoat, standing in the middle of the pool with the water up to his waist. We baptismal candidates were dressed in long white robes. First the men were baptized and then the women.

During the convention in Copenhagen, we stayed with my parents. When I came home that evening, my father asked where we had been.

"We have been to a meeting," I said.

"What happened there?"

"We were baptized," I answered.

"You were baptized?" he roared. "Was the baptism you were given as a child not good enough?"

"No, Father," I replied. Then he gave me a stinging box on the ear, yelling: "I will baptize you!"

I was 39 years old and the mother of five children when I thus got the last box on the ear from my father, who was otherwise very nice and kind. He never again mentioned the episode. Fortunately, Alfred had not yet come home, and it wasn't until years later that I told him what had happened.

A Time of Sifting

When we got home, I visited someone I had viewed as a sister and enthusiastically told her about the convention and our baptism. She sat very quiet and then said: "Poor, poor Sister Berg. You must not

believe this anymore. One of these days a brother from Flensburg will come, and he will explain the truth to us."

I was dumbfounded. I was hardly able to bicycle home. A church bell nearby was pealing, and for every stroke it was as if I heard "death, death" in my ears. Inwardly I cried to Jehovah for help, and the words of Psalm 32:8, 9 came to my mind: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." —King James Version.

When I arrived home, I took my Bible and read the Lord's Prayer. I was reassured. The parable of the pearl of high value came to my mind. (Matthew 13: 45, 46) The Kingdom was like that pearl. I wanted to give all that I had in order to gain the Kingdom. These thoughts were a comfort to me. And there were other blessings.

In 1930 the magazine *The Golden Age* (now *Awake!*) began to be published in Danish under the name *The New World*. And the following year, we Bible Students were delighted to receive the name Jehovah's Witnesses. There were only a few of us in our area at the time, and now and

In Our Next Issue

- World Peace—What Will It Really Mean?
- Deliverance Near for People of Godly Devotion!
- Are You Your Own Idol?

then meetings were held in our home. Since the street on which we lived was named The Staircase, we were called The Staircase Congregation.

Enduring Further Tests

In 1934 I underwent major surgery and as a result, I became paralyzed. I was in bed for two and a half years, and the physicians predicted that I would be confined to a wheelchair for the rest of my life. It was a very difficult time for me, but my family was a wonderful help.

Alfred bought me a Bible with large print, and our youngest son made a stand for it so that I could lie in bed and read it. But I also wanted to preach, so Alfred placed by the road a placard that advertised the new magazines. Those who were interested came in to see me, and I talked to them. The effect of this placard was that people in the region called our family The New World.

Traveling overseers were alert to visit me. Thus I became well-acquainted with these mature and experienced brothers, and I was greatly encouraged by them. Also, I used the time to study the Bible, and the knowledge sustained me. I felt as though 'I mounted up with wings like an eagle.'—Isaiah 40:31.

When, in 1935, the identity of the "great crowd" became clear, most brothers and sisters in our area, including our oldest son and daughter, discontinued partaking of the bread and the wine at the Memorial. However, a few of us never doubted our heavenly calling. Yet, we were also happy about our new understanding of Jehovah's grand purpose regarding the great crowd and their reward of everlasting life on the earth.—Revelation 7:9; Psalm 37:29.

Little by little my health improved, contrary to what the doctors had anticipated, and I was again able to have a full share

in the vital work of preaching and teaching.

World War II and Afterward

Across the fjord we could see Germany, and we began to sense the influence of Nazism. Some of our neighbors became Nazis, and they threatened us: "Wait until Hitler comes. Then you will end up in a concentration camp or on a desolate island!"

We felt it best to move. Some friendly people helped us get an apartment in Sønderborg, a larger town not too far away. World War II began in September 1939; we moved in March 1940; and on April 9, German troops occupied Denmark. Strangely, however, Jehovah's Witnesses in Denmark did not become the object of German attention.

When Hitler's dream of conquest finally collapsed, I had Bible studies with many disillusioned Germans living in Sønderborg. What a joy not only to see many of these Bible students dedicate their lives to Jehovah but also to have most of my children and grandchildren active in Christian service!

I lost my husband in 1962, a grandchild in 1981, and my oldest daughter in 1984. Keeping active in Jehovah's service is what has helped me through these times of sorrow.

It has been wonderful to see the progress of the Kingdom work in Denmark from the time I began in 1928. Then we had only about 300 publishers, but now there are over 16,000! I am grateful that I can still, at a hundred years of age, be active in the service. I have truly experienced the fulfillment of the words at Isaiah 40:31: "But those who are hoping in Jehovah will regain power. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not tire out."

"That Woman Jezebel"

I DO hold this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and misleads my slaves to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols." (Revelation 2:20) So said Jesus to the Christian elders in Thyatira. The congregation was very active and had manifested love, faith, and endurance. But it had tolerated a corrupting Jezebel influence. Why? And could such a thing happen today?—Revelation 2:19.

Likely, no one in Thyatira was actually named Jezebel. Jesus used the name to remind us of historical Queen Jezebel, wife of King Ahab. That strong-minded woman thoroughly corrupted God's people when she introduced immoral Baal worship into Israel, waging a determined campaign to stamp out pure worship.—1 Kings 16:31-33; 21:1-7.

The Jezebel in Thyatira—either one woman or a group of women—similarly encouraged immorality and idolatry among God's people. Some in the congregation listened to her, since Jesus speaks of "her children," likely her followers. (Revelation 2:22, 23) Her influence threatened to make the Thyatira congregation as corrupt as was Israel in Ahab's day.

Why was the Jezebel of Thyatira so influential? Looking at the parallel with Jezebel of old, some have thought she was the wife of the leading elder in Thyatira. The Bible, however, does not say that. More likely, her strong personality and the fact that she claimed to be a prophetess gave her status in the congregation.

It has been suggested that the wrong practices she promoted had to do with trade guilds. According to Dr. W. M. Ramsay, "more trade-guilds are known in Thy-

atira than in any other Asian city." Of these, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* says: "Every such guild had its patron god, its feasts, its social occasions which could at times become immoral revels. 'Jezebel' may have argued that . . . these revels need not be condemned since every workman, to make a living, had to join a guild." *The Expositor's Greek Testament* agrees with this, suggesting that those following Jezebel "prided themselves on their enlightened liberalism."

In fact, the teaching of Jezebel in Thyatira resembled "the teaching of Balaam" in Pergamum. (Revelation 2:14) The Pergamum congregation had endured much persecution, but some there were imitating Balaam of old in promoting fornication and idolatry. It has been suggested that in Pergamum, the Balaam influence encouraged compromise so as to avoid harsh persecution, while in Thyatira Jezebel encouraged compromise for economic reasons. Whatever the case, both teachings were death-dealing apostasy.

Could a Jezebel—or Balaam—influence exist today? Yes, indeed. Many leaders of Christendom imitate Jezebel in tolerating in their congregations active homosexuality, fornication, adultery, abortion, and similar things condemned by God. Even within the Christian congregation, a few individuals have promoted a "liberalizing" of true worship, encouraging Christians not to adhere strictly to Bible standards and even promoting immorality.

All who wish to please Jehovah should avoid such ideas, even if they are presented by individuals—men or women—with colorful or forceful personalities. This thinking is as deadly today as it was in the first century.—Revelation 2:22, 23.

Questions From Readers

■ When did the seven angelic trumpet blasts of Revelation begin to sound?



In Revelation chapters 8, 9, and 11, we read of seven angels who blew seven trumpets, heralding plagues of great intensity on portions of mankind. These represent proclamations of Jehovah's judgments that have been publicized by Jehovah's people throughout the time of the end starting notably with the Cedar Point convention of 1922.—See *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At Hand!*, chapters 21 to 23 and chapter 26.

The first four trumpet blasts expose the spiritually dead state of Christendom's portion of "the earth" and "the sea," as well as the fallen condition of the clergy and Christendom's spiritual darkness.—Revelation 8:7-12.

History shows that the public exposure of these facts actually began before 1922. For example, the lecture "Millions Now Living May Never Die," first delivered in 1918 and published in booklet form in 1920, told of Christendom's failure and of the approaching end of this world. *The Golden Age* of September 29, 1920, plainly exposed Christendom as a fornicator, a lying fraud, and a misleader of the people.

Why, then, does the *Revelation Climax* book say that these four trumpets only started to be blown at the Cedar Point convention in 1922? Because it was then that the call went forth to "advertise, advertise, advertise the King and the Kingdom," giving great impetus

to the preaching activity. The November 1, 1922, issue of *The Watch Tower*, says: "The friends . . . took it as the keynote of the convention that the real privilege and duty of the consecrated now on earth is to advertise the presence of the Lord, the great King of kings, and that his kingdom is here, and that this is the most important thing for them to do."

It should also be noted that while all four of these judgment messages have been publicized by Jehovah's Witnesses since 1922, each in turn received a powerful impetus from the adoption of four resolutions at conventions held between 1922 and 1925. Tens of millions of copies of these resolutions were subsequently distributed in printed form, effectively exposing Christendom's spiritually dead state.—See the *Revelation Climax* book, page 133, paragraph 15.

The final three trumpet blasts involve "woes." (Revelation 8:13) They are different from the first four trumpet blasts in that they relate to specific events. The fifth trumpet blast is related to the release in 1919 of God's people from "the abyss." The sixth has to do with the "cavalry" and the massive international preaching campaign that began in 1922. The seventh is linked to the birth of God's Kingdom in 1914.—Revelation 9:1-19; 11:15-19.

Each of these events brought woe to Satan and his world. The release of the anointed in 1919 from the abyss of inactivity stung Christendom's clergy and demonstrated Jehovah's total rejection of her. From 1922 down to today, the huge cavalry has killed Christendom, spiritually speaking, ex-

posing her dead condition and warning of her coming destruction. And after the birth of the Kingdom in 1914, Satan was cast out of heaven, stirring up ruinous trouble among mankind. Soon the Kingdom will remove the seemingly stable human society Satan has built up (the earth), wiping out rebellious mankind (the sea) at Armageddon.—Revelation 11:17-12:12; 21:1.

At the Cedar Point convention in 1922, all three "woes" became evident to the world at large. The preaching campaign then initiated made it clear that "the locusts" were out of "the abyss" and the charge by the "cavalry" was under way. And the stirring call to advertise the King and the Kingdom was in full harmony with the seventh trumpet blast. The March 1, 1925, issue of *The Watch Tower* explained that events in 1914, 1919, and 1922 were foretold in Revelation chapter 12. This was a deeper understanding of the birth of the Kingdom, and it was faithfully publicized by Jehovah's Witnesses. In addition, the announcing of this plaguing information received a major impetus from the adoption and subsequent distribution of powerful resolutions during conventions held from 1926 to 1928.—See *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At Hand!*, pages 147, 149, 172.

Hence, the blowing of the seven trumpets began in 1922 and got well under way during the 1920's. Since then, Jehovah's people have cooperated fearlessly with the angels in telling all mankind that Christendom is spiritually dead, her clergy are fallen leaders, and soon she and the rest of this satanic world will be destroyed.

An event you should not miss

"Keep doing this in remembrance of me." Those words of our Lord Jesus Christ, found at Luke 22:19, were spoken at the time when he instituted the memorial of his death. It is Jesus' death that opened to humankind the prospects of attaining everlasting life in paradise conditions. So his death is something we must remember.

Will you observe the memorial of it this year?

Please accept this invitation from Jehovah's Witnesses to join them in memorializing this important event. This observance will be after sundown on the date that corresponds with Nisan 14 on the Bible's lunar calendar. Mark down the date on your calendar so that you do not forget. It is April 10, 1990. Jehovah's Witnesses locally can tell you the location and the exact time that this event will be observed in your community.

