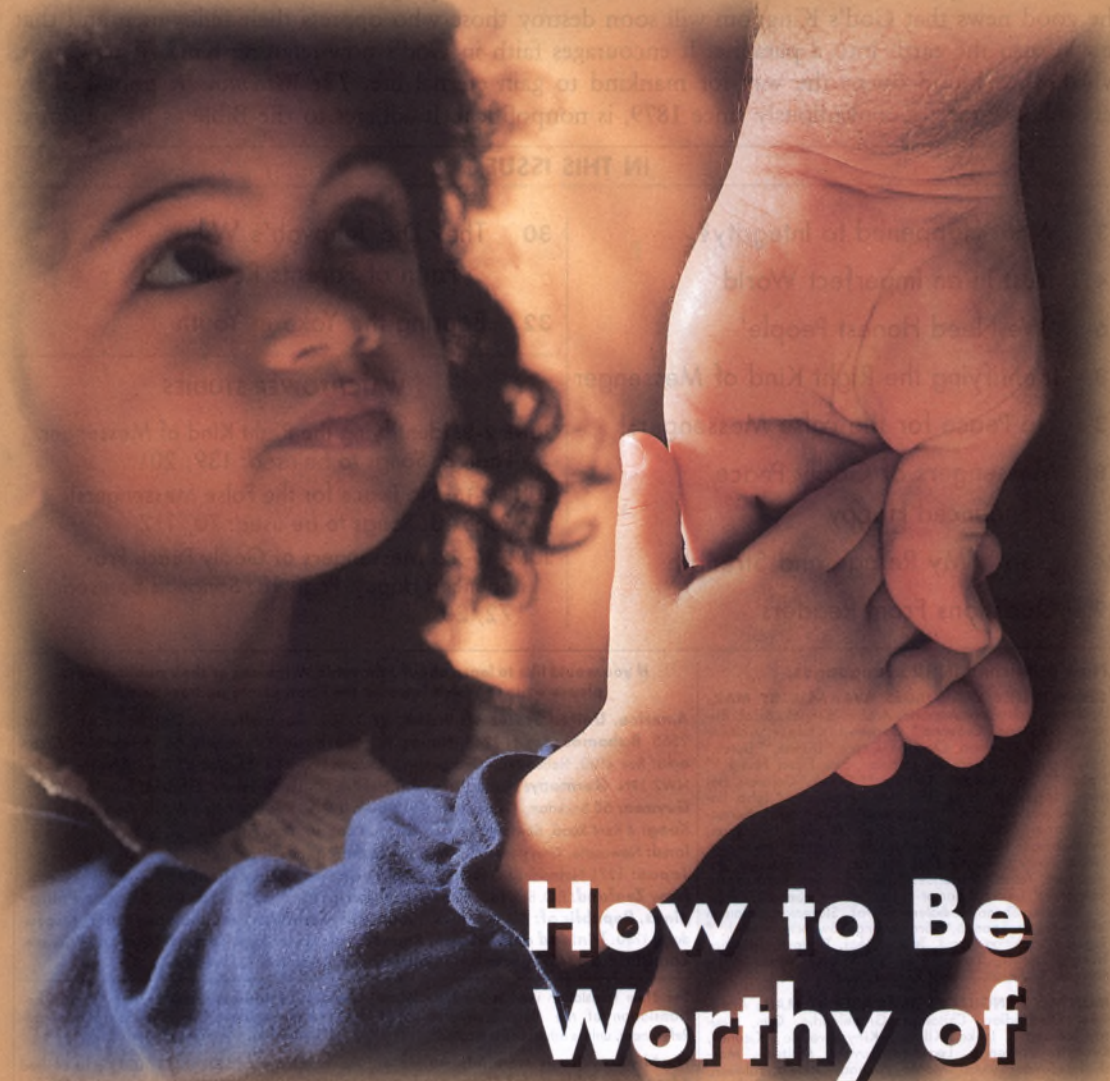


MAY 1, 1997

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**How to Be
Worthy of
TRUST**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these 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 God's 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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What Happened to Integrity?

A LITTLE over one hundred years ago, Barney Barnato, a diamond speculator, returned to England from South Africa. Upon his arrival he took exception to a newspaper story written about him. So he gave the editor some handwritten notes for a second article, "just putting things right," with a check for a large sum of money.

The editor, J. K. Jerome, threw the notes into the wastepaper basket and gave the check back. Surprised, Barnato immediately doubled his offer. That was likewise rejected. "How much do you want?" he asked. Recalling the incident, Jerome says: "I explained to him it wasn't done—not in London." His editorial integrity was definitely not for sale.

"Integrity" has been defined as "moral uprightness; honesty." A person of integrity is worthy of trust. But today, improbity—a lack of integrity—is undermining all walks of life.

In Britain the media have popularized the word "sleaze" to describe the loss of moral integrity. As *The Independent* newspaper put it, sleaze covers "everything from love affairs and local government gerrymandering to kickbacks on big export orders." No area of life is exempt.

Integrity's Fluctuating Standards

Integrity does not, of course, mean perfection, but it does reflect a basic quality in a person. In our get-rich-quick world, integrity may be seen as an encumbrance, not a virtue. For example, student use of sophisticated gadgets to cheat on exams is on the increase, and these new devices are almost impossible to detect. One British university professor claims that more than half of all

British students have cheated, and Britain is surely not alone.

Not to be overlooked is the cost to innocent people when untrustworthy individuals lie and deceive. Take the case of the Indian town of Bhopal where, in 1984, toxic gas killed more than 2,500 men, women, and children and injured hundreds of thousands more. *The Sunday Times* reported: "Relief schemes to help the victims are mired in corruption. . . . The task of sifting through legitimate cases has been complicated by thousands of bogus claims, forged documents and fake evidence." As a result, ten years later barely \$3,500,000 of a \$470,000,000 damages settlement had been distributed to those in need.

What about religion? How does it rate in this matter of integrity? Sadly, standards are often no higher than in the secular world. Take as an example Roman Catholic bishop Eamon Casey, who confessed to fathering an illegitimate son, now a teenager. Casey's situation, as Britain's *Guardian* newspaper pointed out, was "far from unique." In a similar vein, *The Times* reported: "The truth about Bishop Casey's disgrace is not that his misdeed was exceptional, but that cheating on celibacy is neither new nor rare." Supporting this contention, *The Glasgow Herald*, Scotland, claims that only 2 percent of Roman Catholic clergy in the United States have avoided both heterosexual and homosexual relationships. Whether this figure is accurate or not, it indicates the reputation of Catholic priests in the matter of morality.

Faced with such examples, is it possible for an individual to keep moral integrity? Is it worth it? What would it require, and what are the rewards for doing so?

Trust in an Imperfect World

"THE good that I wish I do not do, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice." Do you find this to be true in your case? Be encouraged to know that the apostle Paul had the same problem; yet he was a man of outstanding Christian integrity. Is this not a contradiction? In his letter to the Christians in Rome, Paul analyzed the problem: "If, now, what I do not wish is what I do, the one working it out is no longer I, but the sin dwelling in me." To what sin does he refer, and how did he overcome it so as to be a man of integrity?—Romans 7:19, 20.

Earlier in his letter, Paul wrote: "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." The "one man" was Adam. (Romans 5:12, 14) Adam's sin—the sin of the first man, Adam—is the cause of the inbred imperfections of the human race and an underlying reason why keeping integrity is a real challenge.

Paul's view of "original sin," as it used to be termed, is not widely accepted today because the Bible's account of creation has been rejected in theological circles in favor of theories of evolution. "Scholars have thrust the whole passage aside" is how one modern commentary on Romans 5:12-14 puts it. Yet a hundred years ago, Bible commentaries consistently explained that "when Adam sinned . . . he tainted with that sin and with its consequences all his progeny."*

* Comment in *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, according to the *Authorized Version*, with a brief commentary by various authors.

Original Loss of Integrity

Just as the existence of Adam, the first man, is denied by many today, so too is Satan, the Devil, brushed aside as a figment of mythology.* But no less an authority than Jesus Christ tells us that this one "did not stand fast in the truth," in other words, he was untrustworthy. (John 8:44) And it was at Satan's instigation that Adam and his wife, Eve, rebelled against Jehovah and broke their integrity under test.—Genesis 3:1-19.

Because we all descend from Adam, we all inherit the tendency to sin. The wise man Solomon stated: "There is no man righteous

* The name Satan means "Resister." "Devil" means "Slanderer."

Despite his mistakes, David proved worthy of trust



in the earth that keeps doing good and does not sin.” (Ecclesiastes 7:20) Still, any human can be trustworthy. How is this possible? Because it does not take a perfect man to keep integrity.

The Basis of Integrity

King David of Israel made many mistakes, including his well-documented adulterous relationship with Bath-sheba. (2 Samuel 11:1-27) David’s many failings served to highlight that he was far from perfect. What, though, did Jehovah see in the man? Addressing David’s son, Solomon, Jehovah said: “Walk before me, just as David your father walked, with *integrity of heart* and with uprightness.” (1 Kings 9:4) Despite his many mistakes, David’s basic trustworthiness was recognized by Jehovah. Why?

David gave the answer when he told Solomon: “All hearts Jehovah is searching, and every inclination of the thoughts he is discerning.” (1 Chronicles 28:9) David made mistakes, but he was humble, and he wanted to do what was right. He consistently accepted reproof and correction—indeed, he asked for it. “Examine me, O Jehovah, and put me to the test; refine my kidneys and my heart” was his request. (Psalm 26:2) And refined David was. The constraints resulting from his sin with Bath-sheba, for example, lasted until the end of his life. Still, David never tried to justify his wrongdoing. (2 Samuel 12:1-12) More important, he never swerved from true worship. For this reason, and because of David’s genuine, heartfelt contrition and repentance, Jehovah was prepared to forgive his sins and accept him as a man of integrity.—See also Psalm 51.

Trustworthy Under Test

Jesus was tested by Satan the Devil in an effort to break his integrity. He had to



Jesus left us the finest example of trustworthiness

maintain his integrity through hardships and suffering, in contrast with Adam, whose obedience as a perfect man was tested simply by his being instructed to obey a divine law. In addition, Jesus had the pressure of knowing that upon his integrity rested the redemption of the human family.—Hebrews 5:8, 9.

Satan, determined to break Jesus’ integrity, approached him when Jesus was at his weakest—after he had spent 40 days meditating and fasting in the wilderness. Three times he tempted Jesus—to turn stones into bread; to jump off the temple battlement, presuming that angelic intervention would save him and thus give a miraculous sign to prove his Messiahship; and to accept rulership of all the kingdoms of this world in exchange for just one “act of worship” toward Satan. But Jesus rejected each temptation, maintaining his integrity to Jehovah.—Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13.

The Integrity of Job

Job's stand, maintaining his integrity under test, is well-known. Interestingly, Job did not understand why disaster came upon him. He did not know that Satan had imputed false motives to him, alleging that Job served God for selfish reasons and claiming that to save his own skin, Job would willingly break his integrity. God allowed Job to undergo some very trying experiences so as to show that Satan was wrong.—Job 1:6-12; 2:1-8.

Three false friends entered the picture. They deliberately misrepresented God's standards and purposes. Even Job's wife,

also unable to see the issue, failed to encourage her husband in his time of extreme need. (Job 2:9-13) But Job stood firm. "Until I expire I shall not take away my integrity from myself! On my justness I have laid hold, and I shall not let it go; my heart will not taunt me for any of my days."—Job 27:5, 6.

Job's sterling example, along with the integrity of many other faithful men and women, as recorded in the Bible, proved Satan a liar.

Integrity and the Christian Ministry

Is integrity a quality that Jehovah esteems just for his own satisfaction? No. Integrity has an intrinsic value for us humans. It was for our benefit that Jesus admonished us to 'love Jehovah our God with our whole heart and with our whole soul and with our whole mind.' Truly, this is "the greatest and first commandment," and it takes a man, woman, or child of integrity to keep it. (Matthew 22:36-38) What is involved, and what are the rewards?

A man of integrity can be trusted, not just by his fellow man but, more important, by God. His purity of heart is seen in his actions; he is free from hypocrisy. He is not devious or corrupt. The apostle Paul put it this way: "We have renounced the underhanded things of which to be ashamed, not walking with cunning, neither adulterating the word of God, but by making the truth manifest recommending ourselves to every human conscience in the sight of God."—2 Corinthians 4:2.

Notice that Paul mentions attitudes that have to do with the Christian ministry. How can a Christian minister serve others if his hands are not pure, if he is not a man of integrity? The head of an Irish religious order who recently resigned well illustrates

'We Need Honest People'

HONESTY is rare in today's world. Yet, it is a basic requirement for Christians. Paul wrote: "We wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things." (Hebrews 13:18) This is what Wilma, one of Jehovah's Witnesses in Faenza, Italy, wanted to do.

The newspaper *Il Resto del Carlino* relates that when she found a wallet containing a large sum of money outside a supermarket in her city, she turned it over to the police "without hesitation" so that it could be returned to its owner.

When the mayor heard of this, he immediately sent a brief note of thanks to Wilma. "In the name of the City," he wrote, "I heartily thank you for your fine gesture. Our noble city of Faenza needs good and honest people."

Whether good actions become known or not, we should always strive to be honest. As the Holy Scriptures exhort, "we are trying to do right not only in the sight of God but also in the sight of men."—2 Corinthians 8:21, *The Jerusalem Bible*.

the point. He admitted that he “allowed a paedophile priest to continue working with children long after his child abuse became known,” according to *The Independent* newspaper. The account explained that the abuse extended over 24 years. The priest was jailed for four years, but think of the suffering imposed upon the children he assaulted during those years because his overseer lacked the moral integrity to take action!

Integrity—The Rewards

The apostle John was a fearless man. On account of their fiery enthusiasm, Jesus called him and his brother James “Sons of Thunder.” (Mark 3:17) A man of outstanding integrity, John, along with Peter, explained to the Jewish rulers that he ‘could not stop speaking’ about the things he had seen and heard while he was with Jesus. John was also one of the apostles who said: “We must obey God as ruler rather than men.”—Acts 4:19, 20; 5:27-32.

It seems that when John was well into his 90’s, he was exiled on the Isle of Patmos “for speaking about God and bearing witness to Jesus.” (Revelation 1:9) At his age, he may have thought that his ministry had ended. But only a man of his integrity could be entrusted with the assignment to pen the thrilling vision of Revelation. In this, John was faithful. What a privilege that was for him! And there was more to come. Later, apparently in the vicinity of Ephesus, he wrote his Gospel account and three letters. Such grand privileges to cap 70 years of faithful, trustworthy service!

To be a person of integrity in a general way gives deep satisfaction. To be trustworthy in God’s sight brings everlasting rewards. Today, “a great crowd” of true worshipers is being prepared to enter a new world of peace and harmony, with the pros-



Being trustworthy brings great satisfaction

pect of everlasting life. (Revelation 7:9) Integrity in the vital matters of morality and worship must be upheld, despite the trials of this system of things and the many challenges Satan may bring to bear. Be assured that in the power Jehovah imparts, you can succeed!—Philippians 4:13.

Speaking both of the present and of the future, the psalmist David reassures all of us when he says, in a prayer of thanks to Jehovah: “As for me, because of my integrity you have upheld me, and you will set me before your face to time indefinite. Blessed be Jehovah . . . Amen and Amen.”—Psalm 41: 12, 13.

IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT KIND OF MESSENGER

"I am . . . the One making the word of his servant come true, and the One that carries out completely the counsel of his own messengers."—ISAIAH 44:25, 26.

JEHOVAH GOD is the Grand Identifier of his true messengers. He identifies them by making the messages he delivers through them come true. Jehovah is also the Great Exposer of false messengers. How does he expose them? He frustrates their signs and predictions. In this way he shows that they are self-appointed prognosticators, whose messages really spring from their own false reasoning—yes, their foolish, fleshly thinking!

² Both Isaiah and Ezekiel claimed to be messengers of Jehovah God. Were they? Let us see. Isaiah prophesied in Jerusalem from about 778 B.C.E. to sometime after 732 B.C.E. Ezekiel was exiled to Babylon in 617 B.C.E. He prophesied to his Jewish brothers there. Both prophets boldly announced that Jerusalem would be destroyed. Other prophets said that God would not let this happen. Who proved to be the right kind of messengers?

Jehovah Exposes False Prophets

³ Ezekiel, while in Babylon, was given a vision of what was going on in Jerusa-

1. How does Jehovah identify the right kind of messengers, and how does he expose the false?
2. What conflict between messengers occurred in Israelite times?
- 3, 4. (a) What two opposing messages were delivered to Israelites in Babylon, and how did Jehovah expose a false messenger? (b) What did Jehovah say would happen to false prophets?

lem's temple. At the entrance of its eastern gate were 25 men. Among them were two princes, Jaazaniah and Pelatiah. How did Jehovah view them? Ezekiel 11:2, 3 answers: "Son of man, these are the men that are scheming hurtfulness and advising bad counsel against this city; that are saying, 'Is not the building of houses close at hand?'" These presumptuous peace messengers were saying, "There is no danger to Jerusalem. Why, soon we are going to build more houses in her!" So God told Ezekiel to counterprophecy against these lying prophets. In verse 13 of chapter 11, Ezekiel tells us what happened to one of them: "It came about that as soon as I prophesied Pelatiah the son of Benaiah himself died." This probably happened because Pelatiah was the most prominent and influential prince and the foremost idolater. His sudden death proved that he was a false prophet!

⁴ Jehovah's execution of Pelatiah did not stop the other false prophets from lying in God's name. These deceivers continued in their mad course of predicting things against God's will. So Jehovah God told Ezekiel: "Woe to the stupid prophets, who are walking after their own spirit, when there is nothing that they have seen!" Like Pelatiah, they would be "no more" for defiantly visioning for Jerusalem "a vision of

peace, when there is no peace.”—Ezekiel 13:3, 15, 16.

⁵ As for Isaiah, all his divine messages about Jerusalem came true. In the summer of 607 B.C.E., the Babylonians destroyed the city and took a Jewish remnant back to Babylon as captives. (2 Chronicles 36:15-21; Ezekiel 22:28; Daniel 9:2) Did these calamities stop the false prophets from bombarding God’s people with vain babblings? No, those lying messengers kept at it!

⁶ As if this were not enough, Israelite exiles were also exposed to Babylon’s boastful fortune-tellers, diviners, and astrologers. However, Jehovah proved all these false messengers to be frustrated fools, having things backward. In time he showed that Ezekiel was his true messenger, as was Isaiah. Jehovah fulfilled all the words that he spoke through them, just as he had promised: “I am frustrating the signs of the empty talkers, and I am the One that makes diviners themselves act crazily; the One turning wise men backwards, and the One that turns even their knowledge into foolishness; the One making the word of his servant come true, and the One that carries out completely the counsel of his own messengers.”—Isaiah 44:25, 26.

Startling Messages About Babylon and Jerusalem

⁷ Judah and Jerusalem were to be desolated, without human inhabitant, for 70 years. However, Jehovah declared through Isaiah and Ezekiel that the city would be rebuilt and the land inhabited at the precise time that he had foretold! This was an amazing prediction. Why? Because Bab-

5, 6. In spite of all the false messengers, how was Isaiah vindicated as a true prophet?

7, 8. What inspired message did Isaiah have for Babylon, and what did his words mean?



***Babylon seemed impregnable
to the nations of Ezekiel's day***

ylon had the reputation of never freeing her prisoners. (Isaiah 14:4, 15-17) So who could possibly liberate these captives? Who could overthrow mighty Babylon, with her colossal walls and river-defense system? Almighty Jehovah could! And he said that he would: “I am . . . the One saying to the watery deep [that is, the watery defense of the city], ‘Be evaporated; and all your rivers I shall dry up’; the One saying of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and all that I delight in he will completely carry out’; even in my saying of Jerusalem, ‘She will be rebuilt,’ and of the temple, ‘You will have your foundation laid.’”—Isaiah 44:25, 27, 28.

⁸ Think of that! The Euphrates River, a truly formidable barrier to men, was to

Jehovah like a drop of water on a red-hot surface. Poof, the barrier would evaporate! Babylon would fall. Although it was about 150 years before the birth of Cyrus the Persian, Jehovah had Isaiah foretell this king's capture of Babylon and the liberating of the Jewish captives by his authorizing their return to rebuild Jerusalem and its temple.

⁹ We find this prophecy at Isaiah 45: 1-3: "This is what Jehovah has said to his anointed one, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have taken hold of, to subdue before him nations, . . . to open before him the two-leaved doors, so that even the gates will not be shut: 'Before you I myself shall go, and the swells of land I shall straighten out. The copper doors I shall break in pieces, and the iron bars I shall cut down. And I will give you the treasures in the darkness and the hidden treasures in the concealment places, in order that you may know that I am Jehovah, the One calling you by your name.'"

¹⁰ Notice that Jehovah speaks to Cyrus as if he is already alive. This harmonizes with Paul's statement that Jehovah "calls the things that are not as though they were." (Romans 4:17) Also, God identifies Cyrus as "his anointed one." Why did he do that? After all, Jehovah's high priest never poured holy anointing oil on Cyrus' head. True, but this is a prophetic anointing. It indicates an induction into a special office. So God could speak of his advance appointment of Cyrus as an anointing.—Compare 1 Kings 19:15-17; 2 Kings 8:13.

9. Whom did Jehovah name as his agent for the punishing of Babylon?

10. In what way was Cyrus "anointed," and how could Jehovah speak to him more than a hundred years before his birth?

God Fulfills the Words of His Messengers

¹¹ At the time Cyrus moved against Babylon, its citizens felt very safe and secure. Their city was surrounded by a deep and broad protective moat, formed by the Euphrates River. Where the river ran through the city, there was a continuous quay along the east bank of the river. To separate it from the city, Nebuchadnezzar built what he called "a great wall, which like a mountain cannot be moved . . . Its head [he] raised mountain high."* This wall had gates with huge copper doors. To enter them, one had to climb up the slope from the river's edge. No wonder Babylon's prisoners despaired of ever being set free!

¹² But not those Jewish captives who had faith in Jehovah! They had a bright hope. Through his prophets, God had promised to liberate them. How did God fulfill his promise? Cyrus ordered his armies to divert the Euphrates River at a point several miles north of Babylon. Thus, the city's chief defense was turned into a relatively dry riverbed. On the crucial night, carousing revelers in Babylon carelessly left open the two-leaved doors along the Euphrates waterfront. Jehovah did not literally break the copper doors in pieces; nor did he cut down the iron bars that closed them, but his marvelous maneuvering to keep them open and unbarred had the same effect. Babylon's walls were useless. Cyrus' troops did not have to scale them to get inside. Jehovah went before Cyrus, smoothing out

* *The Monuments and the Old Testament*, by Ira Maurice Price, 1925.

11. Why did the inhabitants of Babylon feel secure?

12, 13. How did Jehovah's words through his messenger Isaiah come true when Babylon fell to Cyrus?

“the swells of land,” yes, all obstacles. Isaiah was proved to be God’s true messenger.

¹³ When Cyrus had complete control of the city, all its treasures fell into his hands, including those hidden in dark, concealed rooms. Why did Jehovah God do this for Cyrus? In order that he would know that Jehovah, ‘the One calling him by his name,’ is the God of true prophecy and the Sovereign Lord of the universe. He would know that God had arranged for him to come to power to liberate His people, Israel.

¹⁴ Listen to Jehovah’s words to Cyrus: “For the sake of my servant Jacob and of Israel my chosen one, I even proceeded to call you by your name; I proceeded to give you a name of honor, although you did not know me. I am Jehovah, and there is no one else. With the exception of me there is no God. I shall closely gird you, although you have not known me, in order that people may know from the rising of the sun and from its setting that there is none besides me. I am Jehovah, and there is no one else. Forming light and creating darkness, making peace [that is, for his exiled people] and creating calamity [for Babylon], I, Jehovah, am doing all these things.”—Isaiah 45:4-7.

¹⁵ Cyrus owed his conquest of Babylon to Jehovah, for He it was who had strengthened him to carry out His delight against that wicked city and free His captive people. In doing this, God called upon his heavens to shower down righteous influences or forces. He called upon his earth to open up and produce righteous events and salvation for his exiled people. And his figurative heavens and earth responded to this command. (Isaiah 45:8) More than a hundred years after his death, Isaiah was shown to be Jehovah’s true messenger!

14, 15. How do we know that Cyrus owed his victory over Babylon to Jehovah?

The Messenger’s Good News for Zion!

¹⁶ But there is more. Isaiah 52:7 tells of good news for Jerusalem: “How comely upon the mountains are the feet of the one bringing good news, the one publishing peace, the one bringing good news of something better, the one publishing salvation, the one saying to Zion: ‘Your God has become king!’” Imagine how thrilling it was to see a messenger approaching Jerusalem from the mountains! He must have news. What is it? It is exciting news for Zion. News of peace, yes, news of God’s goodwill. Jerusalem and her temple are to be rebuilt! And the messenger proclaims with triumphant enthusiasm: “Your God has become king!”

¹⁷ When Jehovah allowed the Babylonians to overturn his typical throne on which the kings of David’s line sat, it might have seemed that He was no longer King. Marduk, Babylon’s chief god, appeared to be king instead. However, when Zion’s God overthrew Babylon, he demonstrated his universal sovereignty—that he was the greatest King. And to underscore this fact, Jerusalem, “the city of the great King,” was to be reestablished, along with its temple. (Matthew 5:35) As for the messenger who brought such good news, although his feet were dusty, soiled, and bruised, in the eyes of the lovers of Zion and her God, they looked, oh, so comely!

¹⁸ In a prophetic sense, Babylon’s fall meant that God’s kingdom was established and the bearer of good news was a proclaimer of that fact. Further, this ancient

16. What good news could be proclaimed in the desolated city of Jerusalem when Babylon went down in defeat?

17, 18. How did Cyrus’ defeat of Babylon affect Jehovah’s own name?

courier, foretold through Isaiah, prefigured a messenger of grander good news—grander because of its sublime content and its Kingdom theme, with marvelous implications for all people of faith.

¹⁹ Ezekiel too was given glowing prophecies of restoration. He prophesied: "This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said, '... I will also cause the cities to be inhabited, and the devastated places must be rebuilt. And people will certainly say: "That land yonder which was laid desolate has become like the garden of Eden."'"—Ezekiel 36:33, 35.

²⁰ In Babylonian captivity, God's people had been mourning over Zion. (Psalm 137:1) Now, they could rejoice. Isaiah exhorted: "Become cheerful, cry out joyfully in unison, you devastated places of Jerusalem, for Jehovah has comforted his people; he has repurchased Jerusalem. Jehovah has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth must see the salvation of our God."—Isaiah 52:9, 10.

²¹ Yes, Jehovah's chosen people had great reason for joy. They were now going to reoccupy those once desolate places, making them become like the garden of Eden. Jehovah had "bared his holy arm" for them. He rolled up his sleeve, so to speak, to work at bringing them back to their beloved homeland. This was not some minor, inconspicuous incident in history. No, all people living then saw God's 'bared arm' exerting power in human affairs in order to bring about the astounding salvation of a nation. They were given unimpeachable

19. What message about the land of Israel did Jehovah give through Ezekiel?

20. What cheerful exhortation did Isaiah prophetically give to Jerusalem?

21. How were the words of Isaiah 52:9, 10 fulfilled following the defeat of Babylon?

proof that Isaiah and Ezekiel were Jehovah's true messengers. No one could doubt that Zion's God was the only living and true God in all the earth. At Isaiah 35:2, we read: "There will be those who will see the glory of Jehovah, the splendor of our God." Those who accepted this proof of Jehovah's Godship turned to worshiping him.

²² How thankful we should be that Jehovah identifies his true messengers! He is indeed "the One making the word of his servant come true, and the One that carries out completely the counsel of his own messengers." (Isaiah 44:26) The restoration prophecies he gave Isaiah and Ezekiel magnify his great love, undeserved kindness, and mercy toward his servants. Surely, Jehovah deserves all our praise for this! And we today should be especially thankful that he exposes false messengers. This is because there are many of them now on the world's scene. Their grandiose messages ignore Jehovah's announced purposes. The next article will help us identify those false messengers.

22. (a) For what can we today be thankful?
(b) Why should we be especially thankful that Jehovah exposes false messengers?

Can You Explain?

- ☐ How does Jehovah identify his true messengers?
- ☐ Through Isaiah, whom did Jehovah name as his agent for defeating Babylon?
- ☐ How were Isaiah's prophecies describing the defeat of Babylon fulfilled?
- ☐ What good result did the defeat of Babylon have on Jehovah's name?

NO PEACE FOR THE FALSE MESSENGERS!

"Evildoers themselves will be cut off . . . But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—PSALM 37:9, 11.

MESSENGERS—false or true? There were both kinds in Bible times. But what of our day? At Daniel 12:9, 10, we read that a heavenly messenger told God's prophet: "The words are made secret and sealed up until the time of the end. Many will cleanse themselves and whiten themselves and will be refined. And the wicked ones will certainly act wickedly, and no wicked ones at all will understand; but the ones having insight will understand." We are now living in that "time of the end." Do we see a sharp distinction between "the wicked ones" and "the ones having insight"? Certainly we do!

² At chapter 57, verses 20 and 21, we read the words of God's messenger Isaiah: "The wicked are like the sea that is being tossed, when it is unable to calm down, the waters of which keep tossing up seaweed and mire. There is no peace," my God has said, "for the wicked ones." How aptly these words describe this world as it approaches the 21st century! Some even ask, "Will we ever reach that century?" What do messengers having insight have to tell us?

³ The apostle John had divinely inspired insight. At 1 John 5:19, it is stated: "We

1. Why should we expect to find messengers, both true and false, in "the time of the end"?
2. How is Isaiah 57:20, 21 being fulfilled today?
3. (a) What contrast is drawn at 1 John 5:19?
- (b) How are "the ones having insight" described in Revelation chapter 7?

know we originate with God, but the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." In contrast with this world are the 144,000 spiritual Israelites, an aging remnant of whom are still with us. Joining these today are "a great crowd . . . out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues," who now number more than five million, who also have insight. "These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation." And why are they rewarded? Because they too "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" by exercising faith in Jesus' ransom. As messengers of light, they too "are rendering [God] sacred service day and night."—Revelation 7:4, 9, 14, 15.

So-Called Messengers of Peace

⁴ What, though, of the so-called messengers of peace in Satan's worldly system? At Isaiah chapter 33, verse 7, we read: "Look! Their very heroes have cried out in the street; the very messengers of peace will weep bitterly." How true this is of those scurrying about feverishly from one world capital to another, trying to bring peace! How futile! Why so? Because they tackle

4. (a) Why are the so-called messengers of peace in Satan's world doomed to failure?
- (b) How does Ephesians 4:18, 19 apply today?

the symptoms of the world's ills rather than grapple with the root causes. In the first place, they are blind to the existence of Satan, whom the apostle Paul describes as "the god of this system of things." (2 Corinthians 4:4) Satan has sown seeds of wickedness among humankind, with the result that the majority, including many of the rulers, now fit the description of Ephesians 4:18, 19: "They are in darkness mentally, and alienated from the life that belongs to God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the insensibility of their hearts. Having come to be past all moral sense, they gave themselves over to loose conduct to work uncleanness of every sort with greediness."

⁵ No agency of imperfect humans can root out of human hearts the greed, the selfishness, and the hatred that are so prevalent today. Only our Creator, the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, can do that! Further, it is only the meek ones, a minority among mankind, who are willing to submit to his guidance. The results to these and to the wicked of the world are contrasted at Psalm 37:9-11: "Evildoers themselves will be cut off, but those hoping in Jehovah are the ones that will possess the earth. And just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more . . . But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."

⁶ Can messengers of peace be found, then, among the religions of this ailing world? Well, what is religion's record to date? History shows that religion has

5. (a) Why do human agencies fail as peacemakers? (b) What comforting message does Psalm 37 convey?

6, 7. What record of the world's religions shows that they have failed to serve as messengers of peace?

shared in, yes, has even been the instigator of much of the bloodshed throughout the centuries. For example, the *Christian Century* of the week of August 30, 1995, reporting on the turmoil in the former Yugoslavia, stated: "In Serb-held Bosnia, priests sit in the front row of the self-styled parliament, and are also at the front lines, where units and even weapons are blessed before battles."

⁷ A century of Christendom's missionary work in Africa has brought no better result, as was well illustrated in Rwanda, a land reputedly 80-percent Catholic. *The New York Times* of July 7, 1995, reported: "Goliath, a liberal, lay Catholic magazine published in Lyons [France], plans to identify 27 more Rwandan priests and four nuns who it says killed or encouraged the killings in Rwanda last year." African Rights, a human rights organization in London, had this comment: "Even more than its silence, the churches must answer for the active complicity of some of its priests, pastors and nuns in the genocide." This resembles the situation in Israel when Jehovah's true messenger Jeremiah described the "shame" of Israel, along with her rulers, her priests, and her prophets, adding: "In your skirts there have been found the blood marks of the souls of the innocent poor ones."—Jeremiah 2:26, 34.

⁸ Jeremiah has often been called a prophet of doom, but he could also be called God's messenger of peace. He referred to peace as often as Isaiah had done before him. Jehovah used Jeremiah to pronounce judgment on Jerusalem, saying: "This city, from the day that they built it, clear down to this day, has proved to be nothing but a

8. Why may it be said that Jeremiah was a messenger of peace?

cause of anger in me and a cause of rage in me, in order to remove it from before my face, on account of all the badness of the sons of Israel and of the sons of Judah that they have done to offend me, they, their kings, their princes, their priests and their prophets, and the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” (Jeremiah 32:31, 32) This foreshadowed Jehovah’s judgment on rulers and clergy in Christendom today. For true peace to prevail, these instigators of badness and violence must be removed! They are certainly no messengers of peace.

The UN as a Peacemaker?

⁹ Could not the United Nations become a true messenger of peace? After all, the preamble to its charter, put forward in June 1945, just 41 days before the atom bomb devastated Hiroshima, stated its purpose: “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.” The 50 prospective members of the United Nations were “to unite [their] strength to maintain international peace and security.” Today the UN has 185 member nations, all supposedly dedicated to the same cause.

¹⁰ Over the years, the UN has been loudly acclaimed, especially by religious leaders. On April 11, 1963, Pope John XXIII signed his encyclical entitled “*Pacem in Terris*” (Peace on Earth) in which he stated: “It is our earnest wish that the United Nations organization—in its structure and in its means—may become ever more equal to the magnitude and nobility of its tasks.” Later, in June 1965, religious leaders, said to represent one half of the world’s population,

9. How has the UN claimed to be a messenger of peace?

10, 11. (a) How have religious leaders voiced their support of the UN? (b) In what way have the popes misrepresented “the Good News of God’s Kingdom”?



Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel all foretold the failure of mere human peace efforts

celebrated in San Francisco the 20th birthday of the UN. Also in 1965, Pope Paul VI on a visit to the UN described it as “the last hope of concord and peace.” In 1986, Pope John Paul II cooperated in promoting the UN International Year of Peace.

¹¹ Again, during his visit in October 1995, the pope declared: “Today we are celebrating the Good News of God’s Kingdom.” But is he actually God’s messenger of Kingdom good news? Speaking of world problems, he went on to say: “As we face these enormous challenges, how can we fail to acknowledge the role of the United Nations



"The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one."—The apostle John

Organization?" The UN, rather than God's Kingdom, is the pope's choice.

Reasons for 'Weeping Bitterly'

¹² The celebration of the 50th anniversary of the UN failed to reveal any real prospect of "peace on earth." One reason was indicated by a writer in *The Toronto Star* of Canada, who wrote: "The U.N. is a toothless lion, which roars when confronted by human savagery, but has to wait for its members to pop in its dentures before it can bite." Too often that bite has been too little too late. The messengers of peace in the present world system, and especially those in Christendom, have been echoing the words of Jeremiah 6:14: "They try to heal the breakdown of my people lightly, saying, 'There is peace! There is peace!' when there is no peace."

12, 13. (a) How has the UN acted in the way described at Jeremiah 6:14? (b) Why is UN leadership included in the description at Isaiah 33:7?

¹³ Successive secretaries-general of the UN have worked hard, and no doubt sincerely, to make the UN succeed. But the constant wrangling between the multipurposed 185 members about how to contain warfare, frame policy, and handle financing has stymied prospects of success. In his annual report for 1995, the then secretary-general wrote of the receding "spectre of global nuclear cataclysm" as opening the way for "nations to work together towards economic and social progress for the whole of humankind." But he added: "Sadly, the record of world affairs over the past few years has largely belied those optimistic expectations." Truly, the would-be messengers of peace are 'weeping bitterly.'

¹⁴ A headline in *The Orange County Register* of California read: "The U.N. Is Financially, Morally Bankrupt." The article stated that between 1945 and 1990, there were over 80 wars, claiming more than 30 million lives. It quoted a writer for the October 1995 issue of *Reader's Digest* who "describes U.N. military operations as distinguished by 'incompetent commanders, undisciplined soldiers, alliances with aggressors, failure to prevent atrocities and at times even contributing to the horror.' Moreover, 'the level of waste, fraud, and abuse is overwhelming.'" In a section entitled "The U.N. at 50," *The New York Times* carried the headline "Mismanagement and Waste Erode U.N.'s Best Intentions." *The Times* of London, England, headed an article with the words "Frail at Fifty—The UN needs a fitness programme to get back into shape." Factually, it is as we read at Jeremiah chapter 8, verse 15: "There was a hoping for peace, but no good came; for a time of healing, but, look! ter-

14. (a) Why can it be said that the UN is both financially and morally bankrupt? (b) How is Jeremiah 8:15 being fulfilled?

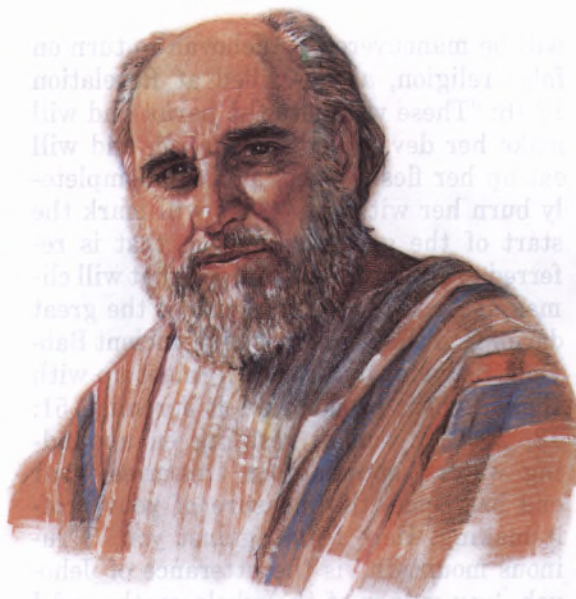
ror!" And the threat of a nuclear holocaust still hangs over mankind. Clearly, the UN is not the messenger of peace that mankind needs.

¹⁵ What will be the outcome of all of this? Jehovah's prophetic Word leaves no doubt. In the first place, what lies ahead for the world's false religions that have so often been extremely friendly with the UN? They are the offspring of one idolatrous fountainhead, ancient Babylon. Appropriately, they are described at Revelation 17:5 as "Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and of the disgusting things of the earth." Jeremiah described the doom of this hypocritical conglomerate. Harlotlike, they have seduced earth's politicians, flattering the UN and forming illicit relations with its member political powers. They have been major participants in the wars of history. One commentator stated with reference to religious warfare in India: "Karl Marx referred to religion as the opium of the masses. But that statement cannot be quite right because opium is a downer, it lulls people into a stupor. No, religion is more like crack cocaine. It unleashes tremendous violence

15. How have ancient Babylon and its religious offspring proved to be both destructive and stupefying?

Questions for Review

- ☐ With what strong words have God's prophets exposed false messengers?
- ☐ Why do human agencies fail in trying to usher in lasting peace?
- ☐ How do true messengers of peace contrast with advocates of the UN?
- ☐ What must the meek do in order to delight in Jehovah's promised peace?



**"They are in darkness mentally."
—The apostle Paul**

and is a very destructive force." That writer is not quite right either. False religion is *both* stupefying *and* destructive.

¹⁶ What, then, should honesthearted people do? God's messenger Jeremiah gives us the answer: "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and provide escape each one for his own soul. . . . For it is the time of vengeance belonging to Jehovah." Happy we are that millions have fled from the confines of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. Are you one of these? Then you can well understand how Babylon the Great has affected the nations of earth: "From her wine the nations have drunk. That is why the nations keep acting crazed."—Jeremiah 51:6, 7.

¹⁷ Shortly, "crazed" members of the UN

16. Why should honesthearted people now flee from Babylon the Great? (See also Revelation 18: 4, 5.)

17. What judgment is about to be executed on Babylon the Great, and what follows that action?

will be maneuvered by Jehovah to turn on false religion, as described at Revelation 17:16: "These will hate the harlot and will make her devastated and naked, and will eat up her fleshy parts and will completely burn her with fire." This will mark the start of the great tribulation that is referred to at Matthew 24:21 and that will climax at Armageddon, the war of the great day of God the Almighty. Like ancient Babylon, Babylon the Great will meet up with the judgment pronounced at Jeremiah 51:13, 25: "'O woman residing on abounding waters, abundant in treasures, your end has come, the measure of your profit making. Here I am against you, O ruinous mountain,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'you ruiner of the whole earth; and I will stretch out my hand against you and roll you away from the crags and make you

a burnt-out mountain.'" Corrupt, war-mongering nations will follow false religion into destruction as Jehovah's day of vengeance catches up with them also.

¹⁸ At 1 Thessalonians 5:3, it is said of the wicked: "Whenever it is that they are saying: 'Peace and security!' then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them just as the pang of distress upon a pregnant woman; and they will by no means escape." These are the ones of whom Isaiah said: "Look! . . . Messengers of peace will weep bitterly." (Isaiah 33:7) Indeed, as we read at Isaiah 48:22, "'there is no peace,' Jehovah has said, 'for the wicked ones.'" But what future awaits the true messengers of godly peace? Our next article will tell.

18. When and how is Isaiah 48:22 yet to be fulfilled?

MESSENGERS OF GODLY PEACE PRONOUNCED HAPPY

"The very ones redeemed by Jehovah will return and certainly come to Zion with a joyful cry; and rejoicing to time indefinite will be upon their head."

—ISAIAH 35:10.

TODAY as never before, mankind needs a messenger of good news. There is an urgent need for someone to tell the truth about God and his purposes, a fearless witness who will warn the wicked of coming destruction and help righteased ones to find godly peace.

1. What does the world desperately need?

² In the days of Israel, Jehovah promised to provide messengers of that sort. At the end of the ninth century B.C.E., the prophet Amos said: "The Sovereign Lord Jehovah will not do a thing unless he has revealed his confidential matter to his servants the

2, 3. In the case of Israel, how did Jehovah fulfill his promise recorded at Amos 3:7?

prophets.” (Amos 3:7) In the centuries following this pronouncement, Jehovah performed many mighty acts. For example, in 607 B.C.E., he severely disciplined his chosen people because they were rebellious and bloodguilty. He also punished the nations round about who gloated because of Israel’s suffering. (Jeremiah, chapters 46-49) Then, in 539 B.C.E., Jehovah brought about the downfall of the mighty Babylonian world power, and as a result, in 537 B.C.E., a remnant of Israel returned to their land to rebuild the temple.—2 Chronicles 36:22, 23.

³ These were earthshaking events, and in harmony with the words of Amos, Jehovah revealed them in advance to prophets who served as messengers, warning Israel of what was to come. In the middle of the eighth century B.C.E., he raised up Isaiah. In the middle of the seventh century B.C.E., he raised up Jeremiah. Then, toward the end of that century, he raised up Ezekiel. These and other faithful prophets gave a thorough witness about Jehovah’s purposes.

Identifying God’s Messengers Today

⁴ What about today? Many in the world feel a sense of foreboding when they observe the deterioration of human society. Those with a love of righteousness are pained at heart when they see the hypocrisy and sheer wickedness of Christendom. As Jehovah foretold through Ezekiel, they “are sighing and groaning over all the detestable things that are being done in the midst of it.” (Ezekiel 9:4) However, many do not realize what Jehovah’s purposes are. They need to be told.

⁵ Does anyone today speak out with the

fearless spirit of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel? Jesus indicated that someone would. When foretelling events of our day, he said: “This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14) Who today is fulfilling that prophecy, serving as a messenger, a preacher of good news? Similarities between our day and the time of ancient Israel help us to answer that question.

⁶ During the dark days of World War I, Jehovah’s modern-day people, the remnant of the anointed “Israel of God,” went into a captivity similar to that of Israel in Babylon. (Galatians 6:16) They suffered spiritual exile in Babylon the Great, the world conglomerate of false religions, of which Christendom is the most prominent and reprehensible. Nevertheless, Jehovah’s words to Ezekiel showed that they were not abandoned. He said: “I will also collect you from the peoples and gather you from the lands among which you have been scattered, and I will give you the soil of Israel.” (Ezekiel 11:17) In order to fulfill that promise for ancient Israel, Jehovah raised up the Persian Cyrus, who overthrew the Babylonian World Power and opened the way for a remnant of Israel to return to their land. But what of today?

⁷ Earlier in this century, there was powerful evidence that a Greater Cyrus was at work. Who was he? None other than Jesus Christ, enthroned since 1914 in the heavenly Kingdom. This great King showed goodwill toward his anointed brothers on earth when, in the year 1919, anointed Christians were freed from spiritual captivity

4. What demonstrates mankind’s need for messengers of peace?

5. How did Jesus show that there would be messengers in our day?

6. (a) Describe the experiences of “the Israel of God” during the first world war. (b) How was Ezekiel 11:17 fulfilled on ancient Israel?

7. What event in 1919 showed that Jesus had acted against Babylon the Great? Explain.

and returned to their “land,” their spiritual estate. (Isaiah 66:8; Revelation 18:4) Thus Ezekiel 11:17 had a modern-day fulfillment. In ancient times it took the fall of Babylon to open the way for Israelites to return to their land. In modern times the restoration of the Israel of God was evidence that Babylon the Great had experienced a fall at the hands of the Greater Cyrus. This fall was announced by the second angel of Revelation chapter 14, when he cried out: “Babylon the Great has fallen, she who made all the nations drink of the wine of the anger of her fornication!” (Revelation 14:8) What a reversal for Babylon the Great, especially for Christendom! And what a blessing for true Christians!

⁸ At Ezekiel 11:18-20, we read the prophet’s description of the happiness of God’s people after their restoration. The first fulfillment of his words meant the cleansing of Israel in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. The modern-day fulfillment meant something similar. Let us see how. Jehovah says: “They will certainly come [to their land] and remove all its disgusting things and all its detestable things out of it.” Just as prophesied, starting in 1919, Jehovah cleansed his people and reinvigorated them to serve him. They began to remove from their spiritual environment all the Babylonish practices and doctrines that polluted them in his eyes.

⁹ Then, according to verse 19, Jehovah goes on to say: “And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I shall put inside them; and I shall certainly remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh.” In harmony with these

words, in 1919, Jehovah united his anointed servants, gave them “one heart,” so to speak, in order that they would serve him “shoulder to shoulder.” (Zephaniah 3:9) Further, Jehovah gave his people holy spirit to invigorate them in the witness work and to produce in them the fine fruitage described at Galatians 5:22, 23. And rather than an unresponsive, stonelike heart, Jehovah gave them a soft, pliable, obedient heart, a heart that would respond to his will.

¹⁰ Why did he do this? Jehovah himself explains. We read at Ezekiel 11:20: “In order that they may walk in my own statutes and keep my own judicial decisions and actually carry them out; and they may really become my people and I myself may become their God.” The Israel of God learned to obey Jehovah’s law rather than follow their own ideas. They learned to do God’s will without fear of man. Thus, they stood out as different from the imitation Christians of Christendom. They were Jehovah’s people. As such, Jehovah was ready to use them as his messenger, his “faithful and discreet slave.”—Matthew 24:45-47.

The Happiness of God’s Messengers

¹¹ Can you picture their happiness when they realized what a privileged position they enjoyed? As a group, they echoed the words of Isaiah 61:10: “Without fail I shall exult in Jehovah. My soul will be joyful in my God.” The promise of Isaiah 35:10 was fulfilled upon them: “The very ones redeemed by Jehovah will return and certainly come to Zion with a joyful cry; and rejoicing to time indefinite will be upon their head. To exultation and rejoicing they will attain, and grief and sighing must flee

8. How does the book of Ezekiel describe the happiness of God’s people after their liberation in 1919?

9. What significant blessings did Jehovah give his people, starting in 1919?

10. Why has Jehovah blessed his restored people from 1919 onward?

11. How does the book of Isaiah describe the happiness of Jehovah’s people?



When they see the deterioration of human society, many feel a sense of foreboding

away.” Such was the happiness of Jehovah’s messengers of godly peace back in 1919 as they set out to preach the good news to all mankind. From then on down till this day, they have not ceased to perform this task, and their happiness has increased. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus stated: “Happy are the peacemakers, since they will be called ‘sons of God.’” (Matthew 5:9, footnote) The truthfulness of that pronouncement has been experienced by the remnant of anointed “sons of God” from 1919 until today.

¹² As the years passed, the number of the Israel of God swelled until the 1930’s when the gathering of the remaining ones of the anointed neared completion. Did the increase in the number of preachers of the good news then stop? By no means. A great crowd of Christians with an earthly hope had already started to appear, and these were joining their anointed brothers in the preaching work. The apostle John saw this great crowd in vision, and the way he describes them is noteworthy: “They are be-

fore the throne of God; and they are rendering him sacred service day and night.” (Revelation 7:15) Yes, the great crowd got busy serving God. As a result, when the number of the anointed began to decrease, following 1935, the witnessing work was carried forward with increased momentum by these faithful companions.

¹³ In this way Isaiah 60:3, 4 was fulfilled: “Nations will certainly go to your light, and kings to the brightness of your shining forth. Raise your eyes all around and see! They have all of them been collected together; they have come to you. From far away your own sons keep coming, and your daughters who will be taken care of on the flank.” The happiness that these developments brought to the Israel of God is beautifully described at Isaiah 60:5, where we read: “At that time you will see and certainly become radiant, and your heart will actually quiver and expand, because to you the wealthiness of the sea will direct itself; the very resources of the nations will come to you.”

Jehovah’s Organization on the Move

¹⁴ In 613 B.C.E., Ezekiel saw in vision

12, 13. (a) Who joined the Israel of God in serving Jehovah, and to what did they apply themselves? (b) What great joy has been experienced by Jehovah’s anointed servants?

14. (a) What vision of heavenly things did Ezekiel see, and what command did he receive? (b) What did Jehovah’s people in modern times discern, and what obligation did they feel?

Jehovah's heavenly, chariotlike organization on the move. (Ezekiel 1:4-28) Afterward, Jehovah said to him: "Son of man, go, enter in among the house of Israel, and you must speak with my words to them." (Ezekiel 3:4) In this year of 1997, we discern that Jehovah's heavenly organization is still moving inexorably to fulfill God's purposes. Hence, we still feel impelled to tell others about those purposes. In his day, Ezekiel spoke words that were directly inspired by Jehovah. Today, we speak words from Jehovah's inspired Word, the Bible. And what a message that book has for mankind! While many are worried about the future, the Bible shows that things are far worse—and at the same time, far better—than they imagine.

¹⁵ Things are worse because, as we learned in the previous articles, Christendom and all other false religions will soon be destroyed, as completely as was Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. Furthermore, the whole global political entity, pictured in the book of Revelation as a wild beast with seven heads and ten horns,

15. Why are conditions worse than many today think?

Do You Remember?

- ☐ Who are God's messengers of peace today?
- ☐ How do we know that Babylon the Great experienced a fall in 1919?
- ☐ What is the main concern of the "great crowd"?
- ☐ Why is the future bleaker than most people today think?
- ☐ For righthearted ones, why can the future be better than they imagine?

is about to be wiped out, as were many of the pagan neighbors of Jerusalem. (Revelation 13:1, 2; 19:19-21) In Ezekiel's day Jehovah vividly described the terror inspired by the approaching destruction of Jerusalem. But his words will have far more meaning when people discern the imminent destruction of this world. Jehovah said to Ezekiel: "As for you, O son of man, sigh with shaking hips. Even with bitterness you should sigh before their eyes. And it must occur that, in case they say to you, 'On account of what are you sighing?' you must say, 'At a report.' For it will certainly come, and every heart must melt and all hands must drop down and every spirit must become dejected and all knees themselves will drip with water. 'Look! It will certainly come and be brought to occur,' is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah." (Ezekiel 21:6, 7; Matthew 24:30) Fear-inspiring events lie just ahead. Our deep concern for fellow humans moves us to sound the warning, to tell the "report" of Jehovah's coming wrath.

¹⁶ At the same time, for meek ones things are far better than most people imagine. In what way? In that Jesus Christ has died for our sins and now rules as King of God's Kingdom. (1 Timothy 1:15; Revelation 11:15) The seemingly intractable problems of mankind will soon be overcome by means of that heavenly Kingdom. Death, sickness, corruption, hunger, and crime will become things of the past, and God's Kingdom will rule unopposed over a paradise earth. (Revelation 21:3, 4) Mankind will enjoy godly peace—a peaceful relationship with Jehovah God and with one another.—Psalm 72:7.

¹⁷ In some parts of the world, striking-

16. For meek ones, why are conditions better than many think?

17. What increases bring joy to the hearts of messengers of godly peace?



***The messengers of godly peace
are the happiest people on earth today***

ly large crowds of meek ones are responding to this message of godly peace. To mention just a few examples, last year Ukraine reported a 17-percent increase in publishers. Mozambique reported a 17-percent increase, Lithuania a 29-percent increase. Russia had a 31-percent increase, while Albania experienced a 52-percent increase in publishers. These increases represent tens of thousands of honesthearted individuals who want to enjoy godly peace and who have taken their stand for righteousness. Such rapid growth brings joy to the whole Christian brotherhood.

¹⁸ Do people respond so readily where you live? If so, we rejoice with you. In some territories, though, it takes many, many hours of hard work before even one interested person is found. Do those serving in such territories slack their hands or lose heart? No. Jehovah's Witnesses remember God's words to Ezekiel when He first commissioned the young prophet to preach to his Jewish compatriots: "As for them, whether they will

18. Whether people listen or not, what will our attitude be?

hear or will refrain—for they are a rebellious house—they will certainly know also that a prophet himself happened to be in the midst of them." (Ezekiel 2:5) Like Ezekiel, we keep telling people about godly peace whether they respond or not. If they listen, we are thrilled. If they turn their backs on us, mock us, even persecute us, we persevere. We love Jehovah, and the Bible says: "Love . . . endures all things." (1 Corinthians 13:4, 7) Because we preach with endurance, people know who Jehovah's Witnesses are. They know our message. When the end comes, they will know that Jehovah's Witnesses tried to help them to enjoy godly peace.

¹⁹ Is there any greater privilege than serving Jehovah? No! Our greatest happiness comes from our relationship with God and the knowledge that we are doing his will. "Happy are the people knowing the joyful shouting. O Jehovah, in the light of your face they keep walking." (Psalm 89:15) May we always treasure the joy of being God's messengers of peace to mankind. May we diligently play our part in this work until Jehovah says that it is done.

19. As servants of the true God, what great privilege do we treasure?



GOD IS MY REFUGE AND STRENGTH

AS TOLD BY CHARLOTTE MÜLLER

“Your nine years under Hitler do you credit,” said the Communist judge. “You really were against war, but now you are against our peace!”

HE WAS referring to my earlier imprisonment by the Nazis and to socialism in the German Democratic Republic. I was speechless at first but then replied: “A Christian does not struggle for true peace in the same way as other people do. I simply try to follow the Biblical command to love God and my neighbor. God’s Word helps me to maintain peace in word and deed.”

On that day, September 4, 1951, the Communists sentenced me to eight years in prison—one year less than the Nazi regime had done.

When we Jehovah’s Witnesses were being persecuted by the National Socialists and by the Communists, I found comfort in Psalm 46:1: “God is for us a refuge and strength, a help that is readily to be found during distresses.” Jehovah alone gave me the strength to endure, and the more I made his Word my own, the stronger I became.

Strengthened for the Future

I was born in 1912 in Gotha-Siebleben in Thuringia, Germany. Even though my parents were Protestants, my father was searching for Bible truth and for a righteous government. When my parents saw the “Photo-Drama of Creation,” they were thrilled.* Father had found what he had been searching for—the Kingdom of God.

Father and Mother, along with us six children, resigned from the church on March 2, 1923. We were living in Chemnitz in Saxony, and there we associated with the Bible Students. (Three of my brothers and sisters became Witnesses of Jehovah.)

At the meetings of the Bible Students, Scripture texts and precious truths were impressed upon me, and these filled my young heart with happiness. First and foremost

* The “Photo-Drama” consisted of slides and moving pictures and, starting in 1914, was widely shown by representatives of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

there was the instruction that we Christian youths, over 50 of us, were given on Sunday, and which my sister Käthe and I received for a while. Our group included young Konrad Franke, who organized hikes and practiced singing with us. Later, from 1955 to 1969, Brother Franke served as overseer of the Watch Tower branch in Germany.

The '20's were turbulent years, at times even among God's people. Some, no longer accepting *The Watchtower* as "food at the proper time," were against the house-to-house preaching activity. (Matthew 24:45) This led to apostasy. But it was this very "food" that gave us the strength that we so desperately needed at that time. For instance, there were the *Watchtower* articles "Blessed Are the Fearless" (1919) and "Who Will Honor Jehovah?" (1926) I wanted to honor Jehovah through courageous activity, so I distributed many of Brother Ruth-erford's books and booklets.

In March 1933, I was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. In that same year, our evangelizing work was banned in Germany. At the baptism, Revelation 2:10 was offered as advice for the future: "Do not be afraid of the things you are about to suffer. Look! The Devil will keep on throwing some of you into prison that you may be fully put to the test, and that you may have tribulation ten days. Prove yourself faithful even to death, and I will give you the crown of life." I took this verse to heart, having no doubt that arduous trials awaited me. This proved to be true.

Because we remained politically neutral, several of our neighbors viewed us with suspicion. Following a political election, a delegation of uniformed Nazi troopers called out in front of our house, "Traitors live here!"

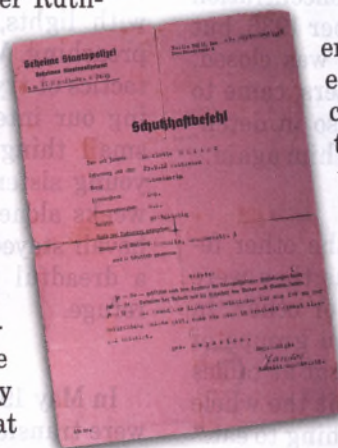
The article "Fear Them Not," which appeared in the German edition of *The Watchtower* in December 1933, was of special encouragement to me. I wanted to remain a faithful Witness of Jehovah even under the most adverse circumstances.

The Enemy's Answer—Prison

It was possible to produce *The Watchtower* secretly in Chemnitz until the autumn of 1935. Thereafter the duplicating machine that was used had to be taken to Beierfeld in the Ore Mountains, where it was used to reproduce literature until August 1936. Käthe and I distributed copies to brothers whose addresses Father gave us. Everything went well for a time. But then the Gestapo put me under surveillance, and in August 1936 they picked me up in my home and put me in detention, where I awaited trial.

In February 1937, 25 brothers and 2 sisters—myself included—appeared before a special court in Saxony. It was claimed that the organization of Jehovah's Witnesses was subversive. Those brothers who had reproduced *The Watchtower* received five years in prison. I was given two years.

Instead of being set free after having completed my sentence, I was picked up by the Gestapo. I was supposed to sign a declaration stating that I would no longer be active as a Witness of Jehovah. I steadfastly refused, upon which the official became furious, sprang to his feet, and issued a warrant for me to be placed in detention. The warrant is shown in the picture. Without being allowed to see my parents, I was immediately taken to a small concentration camp for women at Lichtenburg on the river Elbe. Shortly thereafter I met





The SS office at Ravensbrück

My pass to work outside the camp

Top: Stiftung Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten



Käthe. She had been in the concentration camp at Moringen since December 1936, but when that concentration camp was closed, she, along with many other sisters, came to Lichtenburg. My father was also in detention, and not until 1945 did I see him again.

At Lichtenburg

I was not permitted to join the other female Witnesses straightaway, as they were being punished for something or other. In one of the halls, I observed two groups of prisoners—women who usually sat at tables and the Witnesses who had to sit the whole day on stools and were given nothing to eat.*

I readily accepted any work assignment, in hopes of coming across Käthe somehow. And that is exactly what happened. She was

* The magazine *Trost* (Consolation), published by the Watch Tower Society in Bern, Switzerland, on May 1, 1940, page 10, reported that on one occasion the female Jehovah's Witnesses in Lichtenburg received no midday meal for 14 days because they refused to make a gesture of honor when Nazi hymns were played. There were 300 Witnesses of Jehovah there.

on her way to work with two other prisoners when our paths crossed. Overjoyed, I gave her a big hug. But the female guard reported us straightaway. We were questioned, and from that time on, we were deliberately kept apart. That was extremely hard.

Two other incidents at Lichtenburg have stuck in my memory. On one occasion all prisoners were to assemble in the courtyard to listen to one of Hitler's political speeches on the radio. We Jehovah's Witnesses refused, since patriotic ceremonies were involved. So the guards turned the fire hoses on us, spraying us with the powerful jet of water from a hydrant and chasing us defenseless women from the fourth floor down to the courtyard. There we had to stand, saturated.

On another occasion I, together with Gertrud Oehme and Gertel Bürlen, was ordered to decorate the commandant's headquarters with lights, as Hitler's birthday was approaching. We refused, recognizing Satan's tactics of trying to maneuver us into breaking our integrity through compromises in small things. As punishment, each of us young sisters had to spend the next three weeks alone in a small, dark cell. But Jehovah stayed close to us and, even in such a dreadful place, proved himself to be a refuge.

In Ravensbrück

In May 1939 the prisoners at Lichtenburg were transferred to Ravensbrück concentration camp. There I was assigned to the laundry, along with several other Witness sisters. Shortly after the outbreak of war, we were supposed to collect the swastika flag, which we refused to do. As a result, two of us, Mielchen Ernst and I, were put in the penal block. That was one of the most severe forms of punishment and meant that we had to perform hard work every day, even on Sunday, whatever the weather. Normally,

the maximum sentence was three months, but we remained there for a year. Without Jehovah's help, I would never have survived.

In 1942, conditions for us prisoners eased somewhat, and I was assigned to work as a housekeeper for an SS family not far from the camp. The family allowed me a certain amount of freedom. For instance, once when I was taking the children for a walk, I met Josef Rehwald and Gottfried Mehlhorn, two prisoners with purple triangles, with whom I was able to exchange some words of encouragement.*

Difficult Postwar Years

When in 1945 the allied troops moved closer, the family for whom I worked fled, and I had to accompany them. Together with other SS families, they formed a large convoy traveling westward.

The last few days of the war were chaotic and fraught with danger. Finally, we met some American soldiers who allowed me to register at the next town as a free person. Whom did I meet there? Josef Rehwald and Gottfried Mehlhorn. They had learned that all the Witnesses from the concentration camp in Sachsenhausen had reached Schwerin following a perilous death march. So the three of us set out for that town, which was about 50 miles away. What a joy it was in Schwerin to meet all those faithful brothers, survivors of the concentration camps, including Konrad Franke.

By December 1945 the situation in the country had improved to such a degree that I was able to travel by train. So I was homeward bound! However, the journey included time spent lying on the roof of the railway wagon and standing on the running board. In Chemnitz, I made my way from the railroad station to the place where we had lived as a family. But on the street where

Nazi troopers had earlier stood and shouted, "Traitors live here!" not a single house had survived. The whole residential area had been bombed into oblivion. To my relief, though, I found Mother, Father, Käthe, and my brothers and sisters still alive.

The economic situation in postwar Germany was atrocious. Nevertheless, congregations of God's people began to flourish all over Germany. The Watch Tower Society spared no effort in trying to equip us for the preaching activity. Work at Bethel in Magdeburg, which the Nazis had closed, was recommenced. In the spring of 1946, I was invited to work there and was assigned to the kitchen.

Once More Under Ban and in Custody

Magdeburg is in that section of Germany that came to be controlled by the Communists. They placed our work under ban on August 31, 1950, and closed the Magdeburg Bethel. Thus ended my service at Bethel, which had been a time of valuable training. I returned to Chemnitz, determined even under the Communists to keep a tight grip on the truth and to proclaim the Kingdom of God as the only hope for distressed mankind.

In April 1951, I traveled with a brother to Berlin to collect copies of *The Watchtower*. When we returned, we were aghast to find the railroad station in Chemnitz surrounded by civilian police. They were clearly expecting us, and we were arrested on the spot.

Upon arrival in pretrial detention, I was carrying documents that proved that I had been imprisoned for several years by the Nazis. Consequently, the guards treated me with respect. One of the chief female guards said: "You Jehovah's Witnesses are not criminals; you do not belong in prison."

One time she came into my cell, where I was with two other sisters, and secretly

* A report about Josef Rehwald appeared in *Awake!* of February 8, 1993, pages 20-3.

placed something underneath one of the beds. What was it? Her own Bible, which she let us have. On another occasion, she called on my parents at home, since they lived not far from the prison. She got copies of *The Watchtower* and some food, concealed it all on her person, and smuggled everything into my cell.

There is something else I like to recall. Sometimes on Sunday morning, we sang our theocratic songs so loud that the other prisoners applauded each song with pleasure.

Strength and Help From Jehovah

During the court proceedings on September 4, 1951, the judge made the comment mentioned at the beginning of this article. I served my prison sentence in Waldheim, then in Halle, and finally in Hoheneck. One or two brief incidents will show how God was a refuge and strength to us Jehovah's Witnesses and how his Word invigorated us.

At the prison at Waldheim, all Witness sisters came together regularly in one hall, so that we were able to hold Christian meetings. Pencil and paper were not allowed, but some sisters got some pieces of cloth and managed to make a small banner bearing the yeartext for 1953, which was: "Worship Jehovah in holy array."—Psalm 29:2, *American Standard Version*.

In Our Next Issue

Have You Lived Before?

When Jesus Comes
in Kingdom Glory

How to Find Hope Amid Despair

One of the female guards took us by surprise and reported us without delay. The head of the prison came and told two of us sisters to hold the banner aloft. "Who made this?" he demanded. "What's the idea?"

One of the sisters wanted to own up and take the blame for us, but we quickly whispered among ourselves, agreeing that the responsibility should be shared by us all. So we answered: "We made it to strengthen our faith." The banner was confiscated, and we were deprived of meals as a punishment. But during the whole discussion, the sisters held it aloft so that we could impress upon our minds the encouraging scripture.

When the women's prison at Waldheim was closed, we sisters were transferred to Halle. Here we were allowed to receive packages, and what was sewn into a pair of slippers that my father sent to me? *Watchtower* articles! I can still recall those entitled "True Love Is Practical" and "Lies Lead to Loss of Life." These and other articles were veritable delicacies, and when we secretly passed them from one to another, each made notes for herself.

During a raid, one of the guards found my personal notes hidden in my straw mattress. Later, she called me in for questioning and said that she definitely wanted to know the meaning of the article "Prospects for Fears of Jehovah for 1955." She, a Communist, had been deeply concerned about the death of her leader, Stalin, in 1953, and the future seemed gloomy. As for us, the future would bring some improvements in our conditions in prison, but I was not yet aware of that. I explained confidently that the prospects for Jehovah's Witnesses were the very best. Why? I quoted from the theme scripture text of the article, Psalm 112:7: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in Jehovah."—AS.

Jehovah Remains My Refuge and Strength

Following a serious illness, I was released from prison two years early, in March 1957. The East German officials again put pressure on me because of my activities in Jehovah's service. Hence, on May 6, 1957, I took the opportunity to escape to West Berlin, and from there I moved to West Germany.

It was several years before I recovered my

physical health. But to this day I still have a healthy spiritual appetite and look forward to each new copy of *The Watchtower*. From time to time, I take stock of myself. Am I still spiritually minded? Have I cultivated fine qualities? Is the tested quality of my faith a cause for praise and honor to Jehovah? It is my goal to please God in all things, so that he remains my refuge and strength forever.

QUESTIONS FROM READERS

Could it be said that the recently updated understanding of the word "generation" at Matthew 24:34 allows for the idea that the end of the system of things could be delayed into the distant future?

That is certainly not the case. On the contrary, the recent improved understanding of this matter should help us to keep in constant expectation of the end. How so?

Well, as *The Watchtower* of November 1, 1995, explained, Jesus applied the phrase "this generation" to contemporary wicked people. (Matthew 11:7, 16-19; 12:39, 45; 17:14-17; Acts 2:5, 6, 14, 40) It was not, as such, a description of a fixed length of time beginning with a specific date.

In fact, "Questions From Readers" in that same issue of *The Watchtower* focused on two key points: "A generation of people cannot be viewed as a period having a fixed number of years" and, "The people of a generation live for a relatively brief period."

We often use "generation" in this way. For example, we might say, 'The soldiers of Napoléon's generation knew nothing about airplanes and atom bombs.' Would we be referring just to soldiers who were born in the very same year as Napoléon was? Would we be referring merely to

those French soldiers who died before Napoléon did? Of course not; nor would we by such a use of "generation" be trying to fix a set number of years. We would, though, be referring to a relatively short period, not hundreds of years from Napoléon's time into the future.

It is similar with our understanding of what Jesus said in his prophecy given on the Mount of Olives. The fulfillment of the different features of that prophecy proves that the end of this system is close. (Matthew 24:32, 33) Remember that according to Revelation 12:9, 10, with the establishment of God's heavenly Kingdom in 1914, Satan was cast down to the vicinity of the earth. Revelation adds that Satan now has great anger. Why? Because he knows "he has a short period of time."—Revelation 12:12.

It was thus appropriate that *The Watchtower* of November 1 carried the subheading "Keep on the Watch!" The following paragraph aptly said: "We do not need to know the exact timing of events. Rather, our focus must be on being watchful, cultivating strong faith, and keeping busy in Jehovah's service—not on calculating a date." Then it quoted Jesus' words: "Keep looking, keep awake, for you do not know when the appointed time is. But what I say to you I say to all, Keep on the watch."—Mark 13:33, 37.

Faith of Parents Rewarded

TO THE Israelites, the birth of a male child was cause for great rejoicing. It meant that the line of descent would continue and that the inheritance of land would remain in the family. But about the year 1593 B.C.E., bearing a son may have seemed more a curse than a blessing to the Hebrews. Why? Because the Pharaoh of Egypt, apprehensive about the mushrooming Jewish population in the territory under his control, had commanded that all their newborn males were to be put to death.—Exodus 1: 12, 15-22.

It was during this heinous attempt at genocide that Amram and Jochebed, a Hebrew married couple, became parents to a beautiful baby boy. It is easy to imagine how their joy may have been eclipsed by dread when they remembered Pharaoh's decree. Yet, as Amram and Jochebed looked at their baby boy, they firmly resolved not to forsake him, regardless of the consequences.—Exodus 2:1, 2; 6:20.

Acting in Faith

For three months Amram and Jochebed kept their baby concealed. (Exodus 2:2) This was risky, however, since the Hebrews and the Egyptians lived in close proximity. Anyone found attempting to circumvent Pharaoh's decree would likely be punished with death—and the baby would die too. What, then, could these devoted parents do to keep their son and themselves alive?

Jochebed gathered up some papyrus shoots. The papyrus is a strong rush, similar to bamboo, and has a three-sided stalk about the thickness of a finger. It may reach up to 20 feet in height. The Egyptians used this plant to make paper, mats, sails, sandals, and lightweight boats.

Jochebed formed out of the stalks a chest of sufficient size to contain her baby. She next applied bitumen and pitch to hold the chest together and to make it watertight. Jochebed then placed her baby inside the vessel and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile River.—Exodus 2:3.

The Baby Is Discovered

Jochebed's daughter, Miriam, stationed herself nearby to see what would happen next. Then Pharaoh's daughter came to the Nile to bathe.* Perhaps Jochebed knew that the princess frequented this part of the Nile and purposely left the chest where it would easily be discovered. In any event, Pharaoh's daughter soon caught sight of the chest nestled among the reeds, and she called one of her attendants to fetch it. When she saw the weeping child inside, her compassion was stirred. She perceived that this was a Hebrew baby. Yet, how could she have such a beautiful child murdered? Apart from human kindness, Pharaoh's daughter may have been influenced by the popular Egyptian belief that admittance to heaven depended on a record of kind acts during one's lifetime.—Exodus 2:5, 6.

Miriam, who was watching from a distance, approached Pharaoh's daughter. "Shall I go and specially call for you a nursing woman from the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you?" she asked. The princess answered: "Go!" Miriam ran to her mother. Before long, Jochebed

* The Egyptians worshiped the Nile as a god of fertility. They believed that its waters had the power to impart fruitfulness and even to prolong life.

"The Egyptians believed that at death a person's spirit would recite in the presence of Osiris such affirmations as "I have not afflicted any man," "I have not withheld milk from the mouths of sucklings," and "I have given bread to the hungry and drink to him that was athirst."



was standing before Pharaoh's daughter. "Take this child with you and nurse him for me," the princess said to her, "and I myself shall give you your wages." It may well be that by this time Pharaoh's daughter realized that Jochebed was the baby's mother.—Exodus 2:7-9.

Jochebed kept her child until he was weaned.* This gave her many precious opportunities to teach him about the true God, Jehovah. Then Jochebed brought the child back to Pharaoh's daughter, who named the boy Moses, meaning "saved out of water."—Exodus 2:10.

Lesson for Us

Amram and Jochebed took full advantage of the brief opportunity they had to teach their son the principles of pure worship. Parents today should do the same. Indeed, it is imperative that

* In ancient times, many children were breast-fed much longer than is common today. Samuel was likely at least three years old when weaned, and Isaac was about five.

they do so. Satan the Devil "walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone." (1 Peter 5:8) He would love to have as his victims precious youths—boys and girls—who have the prospect of becoming fine servants of Jehovah. Their tender years elicit no sympathy from him! In view of this, wise parents train their infant children to fear the true God, Jehovah.—Proverbs 22:6; 2 Timothy 3:14, 15.

At Hebrews 11:23, the effort of Amram and Jochebed to conceal their infant during the first three months of his life is recorded as an act of faith. Both of these God-fearing parents showed trust in Jehovah's saving power by refusing to abandon their child, and for this they were blessed. We too should show strict adherence to Jehovah's laws and principles, confident that whatever Jehovah permits to come upon us will eventually work out for our eternal welfare and happiness.—Romans 8:28.

Bearing the Yoke in Youth



IN THESE "critical times hard to deal with," young people face heavy pressures. (2 Timothy 3:1) They are daily barraged with propaganda encouraging immorality, smoking, and other forms of destructive behavior. Those who follow Bible standards may be ridiculed for refusing to go along with the crowd, and some Christians may feel that it would be easier to give in.

Toward the end of the seventh century B.C.E., Jeremiah wrote: "Good it is for an able-bodied man that he should carry the yoke during his youth." (Lamentations 3:27) What did he mean? That learning to cope with trials while young helps prepare one to meet the challenges of adulthood. Adversities, though unpleasant, are inevitable for both Christian youths and adults.

(2 Timothy 3:12) But the benefits of faithfulness far outweigh any temporary relief that compromise might bring.

If you are a youth, face up to tests of faith squarely. When tempted to engage in wrong conduct, refuse to compromise. Though at the moment it may be difficult to do this, in the long run, you will have fewer anxieties. Jesus promised: "Take my yoke upon you . . . , and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light."—Matthew 11:29, 30.

Accept the challenge of living by Bible principles. Doing so will give you the best way of life now and a sure hope for the future. As the Bible states, "the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:17.