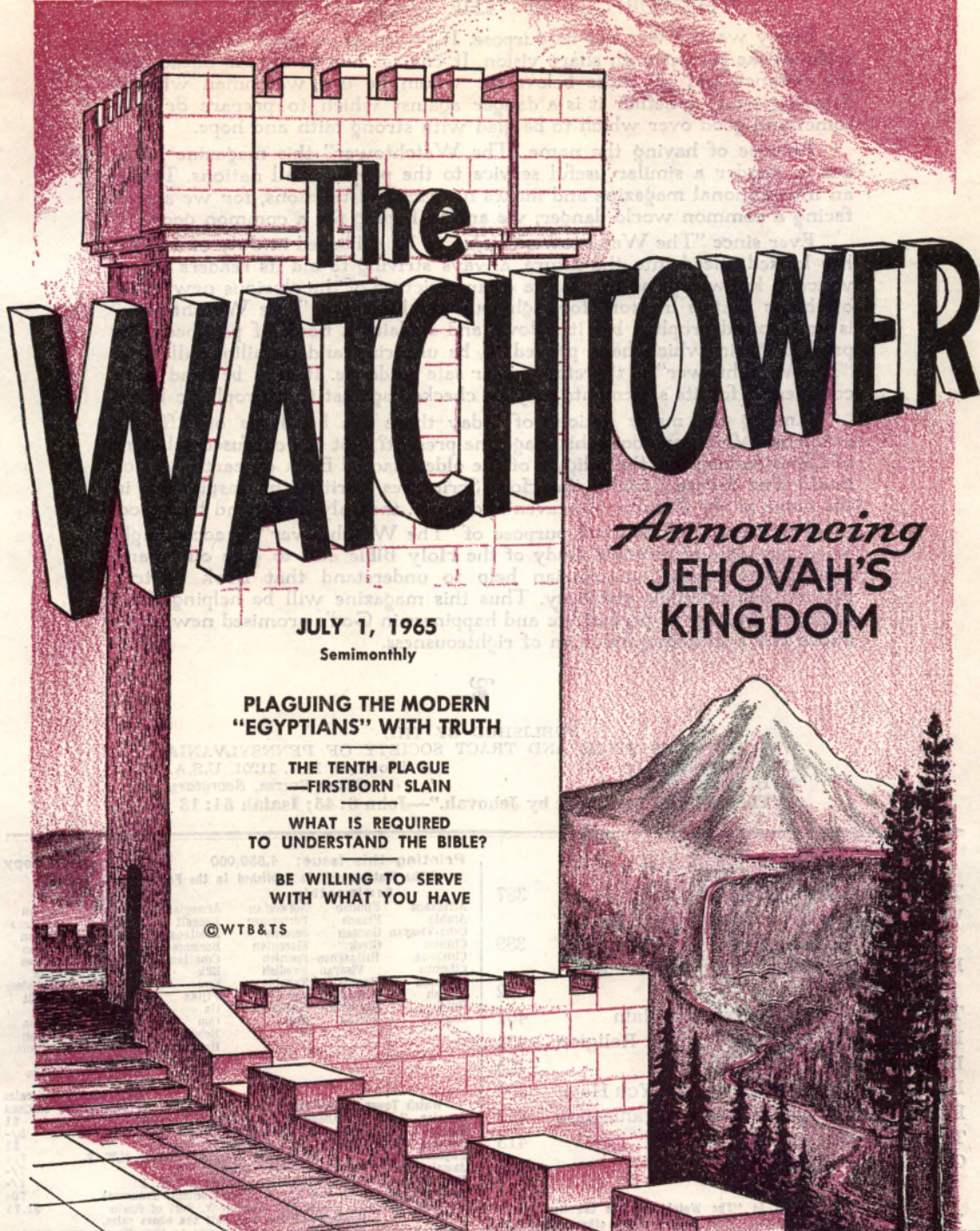




The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

JULY 1, 1965

Semimonthly

**PLAGUING THE MODERN
"EGYPTIANS" WITH TRUTH**

**THE TENTH PLAGUE
—FIRSTBORN SLAIN**

**WHAT IS REQUIRED
TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?**

**BE WILLING TO SERVE
WITH WHAT YOU HAVE**

©WTB&TS

"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Every watchtower has its purpose. It serves as an elevated place for a wide-awake person with sharp vision. It enables him to see far ahead into the distance and tell those below for whom he is a watchman what is drawing near, whether it is a danger against which to prepare or it is something good over which to be glad with strong faith and hope.

Because of having the name "The Watchtower" this magazine justly has to render a similar useful service to the people of all nations. This is an international magazine and makes no racial distinctions, for we are all facing a common world danger; we are all hoping for a common good.

Ever since "The Watchtower" began to be published in July of 1879 it has looked ahead into the future, always striving to aid its readers to advance in knowledge and to gain a clearer picture of the glorious new order of things that is in store for righteous mankind. No, "The Watchtower" is no inspired prophet, but it follows and explains a Book of prophecy the predictions in which have proved to be unerring and unfailing till now. "The Watchtower" is therefore under safe guidance. It may be read with confidence, for its statements may be checked against that prophetic Book.

Among the many nations of today there are hundreds of differing religions. Which one does this magazine present? Not the confused religions of Christendom, but the religion of the oldest sacred Book on earth. Which Book? The Sacred Bible of the Holy Scriptures, written by inspiration in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth, the only living and true God.

The sacred, nonpolitical purpose of "The Watchtower" is accordingly to encourage and promote study of the Holy Bible and to give our many readers the needed unsectarian help to understand that Book of true religion and infallible prophecy. Thus this magazine will be helping them to prove worthy of perfect life and happiness in God's promised new order under His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.



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"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6: 45; Isaiah 54: 13

CONTENTS

The Greater Happiness of Giving	387
What Is Required to Understand the Bible?	389
Plaguing the Modern "Egyptians" with Truth	392
The Tenth Plague—Firstborn Slain	401
Breaking Free from Babylonish Religion	404
Death of a Dynasty	405
Be Willing to Serve with What You Have	409
Faithful and Loyal to God's Organization	412
Tempering Justice with Mercy	413
Questions from Readers	416

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THE GREATER HAPPINESS *of Giving*

IN YOUTH we are apt to take all things for what they appear to be. But as we mature, as we become older and wiser, we appreciate the truth of the saying that "all is not gold that glitters." However, without God's Word to guide us, we are bound to hang on to certain misconceptions because of what things appear to be.

One of these has to do with our quest for happiness. Because our receiving gifts from others gives us keen pleasure we are prone to overlook the fact that there are other sources of happiness aside from receiving things, such as that of accomplishment, of having done a difficult task well. It is unfortunate that this fact is overlooked, for, if we attach too much importance to receiving, we make our happiness dependent upon others' giving to us.

But our wise and loving Creator did not intend for us to be dependent upon the gifts of others for our happiness. How so? In that a greater happiness comes to us from our own giving, even as God's Son, Jesus Christ, taught when he said: "There is more happiness in giving than

there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.

Why should there be greater happiness in giving than in receiving? Because the greatest of all qualities is love, and our expressing it has the power to make us happy. This is true because we were created in the image of the One of whom it is said: "God is love." Since giving results in happiness, how happy must the Creator, Jehovah God, be, in view of his being the 'Giver of every good gift and every perfect present'! Rightly he is called "the happy God." To the extent that we seek to imitate him in this respect we can know the greater happiness of which Jesus spoke. Two who did their best to imitate their Maker in this respect were Jesus Christ himself and the apostle Paul. They devoted their lives to giving, literally impoverishing themselves so as to enrich others.—1 John 4:8; Jas. 1:17; 1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Cor. 6:10; 8:9.

It might well be asked, Since giving makes for the greater happiness, why is there not more liberality? Because of the sin of our first parents. Their willful disobedience resulted in their stamping all their offspring with an inclination toward selfishness, and therefore we are prone to overlook the importance of love, of giving to others.—Gen. 8:21.

Then too, we all have a measure of cautious fear because of the instinct of self-preservation. This instinct, proper in itself,

unless controlled, acts against our being generous. When we refuse to attach unwarranted importance to it, it indicates a triumph over selfish fear, over undue apprehensiveness about the future. Giving in spite of being of modest means implies a trust in God that we can be generous today and yet will not be in want tomorrow. Then we are like the widow to whom Jesus called attention, who gave all she had to the temple treasury. Her giving implied trust in her God Jehovah that she would not starve on the morrow! Such trust in God, such freedom from undue apprehensiveness, likewise contributes to one's happiness.—Luke 21:1-4.

This principle of there being greater happiness in giving than there is in receiving is certainly not limited to the giving of money. Otherwise the materially rich would have the greatest possibility for happiness, but that is not so. Giving applies to all our assets of which others may have a need. One of these is time. When others pay us a visit or take time to assist us in one way or another, it makes us happy, does it not? Well, then, to know still greater happiness we must give others of our time. Jesus commended the "sheep" on his right hand for their having given to him not only food and drink, clothing and shelter, but also of their time, in that they looked after him when he was sick and came to him when he was in prison. Yes, "to look after orphans and widows in their tribulation" takes time.—Matt. 25:34-36; Jas. 1:27.

In fact, time and again our being generous with our time in visiting a deserving or needy or sick friend brings with it unexpected dividends in happiness. An example of this is furnished by an elderly lady living in the eastern part of the United States who is bedridden, blind and crippled with arthritis. Those who go out of

their way to visit her come away feeling greatly benefited because of her keen understanding and appreciation and her cheerful disposition.

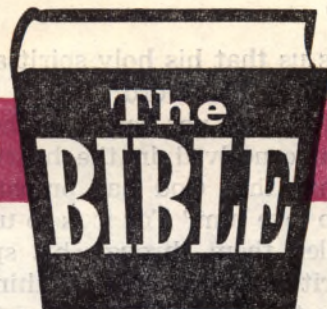
Then again, there is such a thing as giving knowledge that we possess to others who may have need of it. Why, do we not feel better for having been able to give directions to a motorist who stopped to ask us how to get to his destination? That is why those who have a knowledge and understanding of God's purposes receive such happiness when they find someone who appreciates his need of knowledge to reach his destination of everlasting life!—John 17:3.

Not to be overlooked is the happiness that comes from giving of ourselves, our personality. This can take the form of simply being ready to smile; a smile can do so much good to one who may be shy, backward, downcast or temporarily depressed. An encouraging word, a friendly greeting, are other little ways in which we can give of ourselves and know the greater happiness that comes from giving.

Has someone offended you, trespassed against you? Here also you can know the greater happiness by giving, by forgiving his debt to you. And keep forgiving, seventy-seven times if need be! To refuse to forgive—well, there is nothing like harboring a grudge or cherishing resentment to rob us of our happiness. Well has it been said that "the one covering over transgression is seeking love." And remember, there is a special reason why forgiving brings happiness, because then we can with clear conscience beg God to forgive us!—Prov. 17:9; Matt. 6:14; 18:22.

We cannot escape it. God's principles are sound. Receiving brings with it happiness, but for the greater happiness be outgoing, look for ways to give of yourself and what you may have to those in need.

What is Required to **UNDERSTAND**



A CHRISTIAN minister was going from house to house in one

of the poorer sections of Brooklyn, New York, encouraging study of the Bible. At one doorstep a lady said, "We already have a Bible!" and with that she at once proceeded to bring out a beautifully ornamented cardboard box. Proudly she opened it and displayed a lavishly embossed large Douay Bible containing many colored pictures. "I paid forty dollars for it," she assured the calling minister. But had she been reading it?

What good is God's Word, the Bible, in the home unless it is read—more than that, unless it is understood? For how can the Bible increase our faith in God and Jesus Christ when we do not understand what we are reading? And most important of all is it to apply the Bible's principles to our lives. How can we do that if we do not understand it?

So many persons think that it is enough to have a Bible in their homes and so they give little thought to reading it and becoming familiar with its contents. Or they find themselves so busy with their everyday cares that their intentions to read the Bible never materialize. Often they get little encouragement from their religious leaders; either because these lack faith in the Bible as God's inspired Word or because they are conscious of their inability to answer questions that their parishioners might ask if they read the Bible.

Thus when a certain woman's auxiliary of an Anglican church in Canada started a Bible study group they repeatedly em-

Reading the Bible regularly is a good thing. But to benefit fully from your reading you must understand it.

barrassed their clergyman by coming up with questions he was unable to answer. Seeking help from his bishop, he was first told that the 'Trinity, the fable of creation and the myth of the birth of Christ are not meant to be scrutinized too closely.' And when the clergyman made still further inquiries of his bishop regarding questions his parishioners asked, he was told, "Close down that study or you are going to have to close down your church!"

Why all this lack of understanding of the Bible? One of the chief reasons for it is the failure to appreciate the importance of God's holy spirit. It is needed to understand the Bible, even as in the first place God used it to inspire men to write down His thoughts. Said that Bible writer David: "The spirit of Jehovah it was that spoke by me, and his word was upon my tongue." Yes, "prophecy was at no time brought by man's will, but men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit." This holy spirit is no person, but may be likened to a powerful electric current that cannot be seen, or to the invisible television, radio or radar signals that send out information and which require a certain kind of receiver to be reproduced. —2 Sam. 23:2; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21.

GOD'S SPIRIT NEEDED

But we are not left merely to reason on the subject. God's inspired Word plainly

tells us that his holy spirit aids in understanding his Word: "Eye has not seen and ear has not heard, neither have there been conceived in the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love him." For it is to us God has revealed them through his spirit, for the spirit searches into all things, even the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2:9, 10) Likewise Jesus, shortly before leaving his apostles, assured them: "The helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, that one will teach you all things and bring back to your minds all the things I told you." "The spirit of the truth . . . will guide you into all the truth."—John 14:26; 16:13.

Many are the examples in the Christian Greek Scriptures that might be produced to show that God's spirit is necessary to an understanding of the truth regarding God and Christ. Why, even before God poured out his holy spirit to anoint Christ's followers on the day of Pentecost this had been true. A case in point is the time Jesus asked his apostles whom they believed him to be, and Peter answered: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Had Peter reached this conclusion solely on the basis of his own study, reasoning or observation? No, but by means of the help of God's holy spirit, even as Jesus indicated when he told him: "Flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but my Father who is in the heavens did."—Matt. 16:16, 17.

Of course, that the holy spirit aided in understanding God's Word was unequivocally demonstrated on the day of Pentecost, 33 C.E. There Peter was able to quote and correctly apply some prophecies that had not been previously understood, such as that found at Joel 2:28-32, which tells that Jehovah God would pour out some of his spirit on all sorts of flesh, and prophecies in the Psalms that applied to and were

fulfilled by Jesus Christ.—Acts 2:17-21, 27, 34, 35.

Likewise, with the aid of God's holy spirit it was learned that not only Jews but also Gentiles who became believers could be in line for the honor of being associated with the Messiah: "In other generations this secret was not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by spirit, namely, that people of the nations should be joint heirs . . . with Christ Jesus."—Eph. 3:5, 6.

A particularly striking instance showing how God's spirit helps Christians to understand God's Word is seen in the record of a meeting held by the apostles and older men in Jerusalem. These, who constituted the visible governing body of the early Christian congregation world wide, came together to consider the question as to whether Gentile believers needed to be circumcised. After going into what the Scriptures had to say and hearing the testimony of the apostles as to how God had been giving his holy spirit to Gentile believers, they sent out a letter in which appeared the following: "For the *holy spirit* and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you, except these necessary things," and so forth. Here, then, we have an example of the enlightenment of God's holy spirit, which spirit searches into the deep things of God in that it caused these early Christians to make a thorough search into the Scriptures and the facts and then aided them in coming to the right conclusion.—Acts 15:1-29.

The fact is that not even the men who were inspired to write the prophecies, nor even angels, were able to understand them until God's due time, when they were made plain with the help of God's holy spirit: "It was revealed to them that, not to themselves, but to you, they were minis-

tering the things that have now been announced to you through those who have declared the good news to you with holy spirit sent forth from heaven. Into these very things angels are desiring to peer."—1 Pet. 1:10-12.

HOW CAN YOU OBTAIN THE HELP OF GOD'S SPIRIT?

Since it is important that we understand God's Word and it is necessary that we have God's spirit to understand it, how can we obtain God's spirit? First of all by praying for it, even as Jesus showed: "If you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!"—Luke 11:13.

Obviously that implies having the right mental attitude when we approach the study of God's Word. We cannot be filled with the spirit of the world, which is greedy, lustful, materialistic, critical, capacious, superficial and irreverent, and expect to understand the Bible. In fact, the Bible assures us that no such "ones at all will understand." Only by approaching God's Word in the spirit of humility and reverence, seriously, with open mind and a consciousness of our spiritual need can we hope to understand and appreciate it.—Dan. 12:10; Matt. 5:3.

But in looking to God for his holy spirit we may not overlook God's manner of imparting his spirit. Not only must we study God's Word, have the right mental attitude and pray for God's spirit, but we must recognize God's visible organization. God is consistent, a God of order, not a God of disorder, even as his Word assures

us. (1 Cor. 14:33) He does not impart his holy spirit and an understanding and appreciation of his Word apart from his visible organization. Thus Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, did not get an understanding about Jesus' being the Messiah and receive the holy spirit merely as a result of his own prayers, perusal of God's Word and gifts of mercy, but he needed to get in touch with the Christian congregation, which God was using as his agency; and for that reason God sent Peter to Cornelius. Only then did Cornelius and his household receive God's holy spirit and understanding.—Acts 10:1-48.

Should we expect the same today? Yes, for Jesus prophesied that he would have a visible agency upon earth at the time of the end of this system of things where we now are: "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his Master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master upon arriving finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings." The magazine you are reading is a part of the spiritual food that that "slave" is providing at the present time.—Matt. 24:45-47.

So we can see that it is not enough to have a beautiful Bible put away in a cardboard box, nor even just to read it. The Bible must be understood if it is to give us faith and if we are to be able to apply it in our lives. And to be able to understand it we need the help of God's holy spirit, for which we are told to pray. However, for God to answer our prayers for his spirit we must meet his conditions, among which is that we recognize the visible channel he is using for that very purpose.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Jehovah's Advancing Organization.
- Do Not Resist Jehovah's Counsel.
- Jehovah's Witnesses—Unworldly or Antisocial?
- A Judgment Without Mercy.

PLAGUING

CONCERN-

ING the day in which we are living the apostle Paul prophesied:

"There will be a period of time when they will not put up with the healthful teaching, but, in accord with their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves to have their ears tickled; and they will turn their ears away from the truth." True as those words are of the modern religious leaders and their flocks, as noted time and again in the pages of this journal, they should not be and are not true of the dedicated Christian ministers of Jehovah. These must and do welcome the truth, even though it may hurt at times.—2 Tim. 4:3, 4.

² Those who find fault with the blunt and warning message that these ministers of Jehovah bring and who accuse them of preaching a loveless God and a message of hate entirely overlook the fact that these ministers apply to themselves, first of all, God's warning messages concerning his vengeance. Thus the first three plagues upon ancient Egypt, considered in a previous issue of this journal, were seen to affect, not only the "Egyptians," but also the enslaved "Israelites," Jehovah's people. However, by benefiting from the modern-day fulfillment of these plagues, being corrected by them, as it were, Jehovah's people today are spared the effects of the remaining seven plagues, which they also have a share in pouring out. In the modern-day pouring out of the plagues Je-

1, 2. (a) To whom does 2 Timothy 4:3, 4 apply and to whom not, and why? (b) What fact do those overlook who find fault with the plaguing messages delivered by Jehovah's ministers?

THE MODERN "EGYPTIANS"

with
TRUTH

"Proclaim . . . the day of vengeance on the part of our God."—Isa. 61:2.

hovah's remnant on earth today were pictured by Moses' brother Aaron, whereas Moses himself pictures Jesus Christ, reigning in heavenly glory and power. (Ex. 6: 5, 6, 20; 9:8) Aaron acted as a mouthpiece for Moses and used Moses' rod.

FOURTH PLAGUE—GADFLIES

³ The fourth plague upon ancient Egypt was the first one of the ten in which Jehovah made a distinction between his people of Israel and the Egyptians. It consisted of gadflies and is recorded for us at Exodus 8:21-24. The gadfly appears to have been a fly larger than the ordinary housefly, more like the dog fly or horsefly. Certain species of this fly attacked humans and animals; others, only vegetation. They also filled the earth with their maggots. They spread throughout all the houses of

3. Of what did the fourth plague consist, and what was its effect?

Egypt, and their damage was so extensive that "the land came to ruin as a result of the gadflies," we are told. This plague might be said to have poured contempt upon the goddess of the ichneumon fly, Wadjet.* It caused Pharaoh to yield, but only until it was ended.—Ex. 8:28-32.

Since this plague was said to have ruined the *land* of Egypt, it would aptly picture a plaguing message from Jehovah that exposes the ruined state of modern "Egypt," Satan's organization. And what is that? A clue is given in the prophecies found at Isaiah 62:4 and 66:8, which read, in part: "Your own land will be owned as a wife." "Will a land be brought forth with labor pains in one day?" These prophecies refer to the restored condition of spiritual Israel in our day. The expression "land" refers to the earthly position or situation occupied by the restored remnant of God's spiritual nation; their status, as it were. During World War I of 1914-1918 they appeared to be disowned by God. But in 1919, as history shows, their favored status with God was renewed, reborn, "brought forth with labor pains," suddenly, as "in one day." This involved their doctrines, their organization and their form of worship.

Since this being so, it might be said that for status with God the religionists of modern Egypt have depended upon their man-made doctrines, organization and practices. Included would be such doctrines as the

trinity God, eternal torment after death of the body, purgatory, immortality of the human soul, divine right of kings, and so forth. They have also sought to obtain or gain status with God by such religious practices as asceticism, clerical celibacy, monks, nuns, going to church on Sunday, confession to priests, use of the cross, holy water, images, not forgetting the icons of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, adoration of Mary and of the "saints," veneration of relics, and so forth. And they also expect to gain status with God by their 'mighty works,' such as building costly churches and temples, faith healing, interfaith of Catholics, Protestants and Jews, moral reform, influencing legislation, charity, including soup kitchens for the poor in the United States and rice for the poor in the Orient.

The fourth plague of truth reveals what is the real status of

the religionists of modern Egypt in the eyes of God and in the eyes of all persons enlightened by God's truth. This plague has exposed the unscripturalness of Christendom's teachings, her organization and her forms of worship and works. A striking example of this plague took place in connection with the 1924 Columbus (Ohio) convention of Jehovah's witnesses, where an Indictment was issued which showed the falsity of Christendom's chief doctrines and religious practices. At that time upward of thirteen million copies were printed for distribution. A more recent publication that has been doing this nineteen years now is the Bible-study aid, the book "Let God Be True," more than nineteen million copies



* Compare with H. Rimmer's *Dead Men Tell Tales*, p. 106.

4. How is the "land" of spiritual Israel identified?
5, 6. How has modern "Egypt" sought status with God, but what did the fourth plague reveal, and by what means?

of which have been published in fifty-four languages. An especially plaguing message along this line was the booklet *"The Word"—Who Is He? According to John*, which was sent to practically all the clergymen of Christendom. Upward of nine million copies in many languages were printed for distribution around the world. Proof of its plaguing them was to be seen in the many irate letters they wrote to the publishers of that booklet. Another example of this plague was the special issue of *Awake!* April 22, 1964, entitled "Examining the Foundations of Modern-Day Religion," 6,196,655 copies being printed. Yes, in ever so many Watch Tower publications the "land" of modern "Egypt" has been exposed as ruined, having no status with God, not owned by him. This exposé by Jehovah's witnesses under the Greater Moses, Jesus Christ, has truly served as a plague.

THE FIFTH PLAGUE—PESTILENCE

Upon Pharaoh's plea, Moses interceded with Jehovah on behalf of Egypt, and the fourth plague was lifted. But again Pharaoh made his heart unresponsive, and so Jehovah sent the fifth plague, which was aimed at the livestock of Egypt. Said Moses: "Look! Jehovah's hand is coming upon your livestock that is in the field." The plague took in all of them. "On the horses, the asses, the camels, the herd [of cattle] and the flock [of sheep and goats] there will be a very heavy pestilence." "Accordingly Jehovah did this thing . . . and all sorts of livestock of Egypt began to die; but not one of the livestock of the sons of Israel died."—Ex. 9:3, 6.

What is pictured by this plague? In the Scriptures livestock, domestic animals, and in particular sheep and cattle, are often

used to picture humans, who are like beasts of burden. In that all Egypt's livestock brought support to Egypt, it would well picture the supporters of the anti-typical Egypt of today, Satan's organization. And even as all sorts of livestock died, but not literally *all* livestock, so we find that all sorts of men, supporters of anti-typical Egypt, high and low, rich and poor, old and young, male and female, of differing nationalities and races, are figuratively dying as far as their supporting Satan's organization is concerned because of the plaguing judgment message brought by God's people. In particular would this plague picture the messages that are directed to persons of honest heart, lovers of righteousness but ignorantly supporting Satan's organization, and that appeal to them to come out of it and take their stand for Jehovah and his kingdom.

⁹ While all seven annual messages sounded by Jehovah's witnesses from 1922 to 1928 concluded with such appeals, it was particularly the Resolution of 1927, passed at their international assembly in Toronto, Canada, that highlighted this feature of the ministry of Jehovah's remnant, pictured by Moses' brother Aaron. (Ex. 9:27) Note how pertinent its language is. Among other things, the Resolution stated: "There is no reason to give further *support* to that . . . system. In this hour of perplexity Jehovah God bids the peoples to abandon and forsake forever 'Christendom' or 'organized Christianity' and to turn completely away from it, because it is the Devil's organization, and to give it no *support* whatever; and that the peoples give their heart's devotion and allegiance wholly to Jehovah God and to his King and Kingdom and receive full freedom and the blessings God has in store for them." Over 3,900,000 copies of this Resolution in booklet form were distributed in many languages.

7. Of what did the fifth plague consist?
8-11. How is the fifth plague of modern times being fulfilled?

¹⁰ Similar appeals have since been made, such as the pointed one contained in the Resolution passed by Jehovah's witnesses at their 1958 Yankee Stadium-Polo Grounds convention in New York City. In its conclusion it called upon "all lovers of life and happiness under a righteous government to whose attention this Resolution may come, to take to heart its import and to honor the name of the Creator of heaven and earth and to turn to His kingdom by Christ as the rightful government of the new world." This Resolution had a circulation of 70,000,000 copies in fifty languages of the world. This plaguing message continues upon antitypical Egypt to the present time, calling on the people to heed the command of Revelation 18:4: "Get out of her [Babylon the Great], my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues." Not that Babylon the Great and symbolic Egypt of today are the same thing; rather, Babylon the Great is the religious part of symbolic Egypt, Satan's visible organization. So by fleeing from modern Babylon the Great, or dying as to giving it support, one is figuratively dying as far as giving his support to modern "Egypt" is concerned just like the domestic animals of ancient Egypt.

¹¹ Each annual report of Jehovah's witnesses, as it is published in each January 1 issue of *The Watchtower* and in the *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* in several languages now, tells of the extent of this plague. How so? In that it tells how many persons detached themselves from modern "Egypt" by dedicating themselves to Jehovah and being baptized in water. During the 1963 service year the number was 62,798, and during 1964 the number was 68,236. Surely the very publishing of this information in such literature serves as a plague to modern "Egypt."

THE SIXTH PLAGUE—BOILS AND BLISTERS

¹² Although all sorts of livestock of the ancient Egyptians perished in the fifth plague, "Pharaoh's heart continued to be unresponsive, and he did not send the people away." So Jehovah warned of the sixth plague, and in obedience to Jehovah's instructions Moses took soot from a kiln and "tossed it toward the heavens, and it became boils with blisters, breaking out on man and beast. And the magic-practicing priests were unable to stand before Moses as a result of the boils, because the boils had developed on the magic-practicing priests and on all the Egyptians."—Ex. 9:7-11.

¹³ This plague disgraced Imhotep, the Egyptian god of medicine, for none of the Egyptian physicians were able to cure it. In particular did it bring low the magic-practicing priests of Egypt. Previously they had appeared to imitate the first two plagues that Moses brought on, and the third plague, that of gnats, they had to admit was by the "finger of God." (Ex. 8:1-19) But the sixth plague really disgraced them to the extent of their being unable to appear before Pharaoh. Some Bible commentators hold that this plague was the black leprosy or botch of Egypt, known as elephantiasis, the disease that most likely afflicted Job some years before this. (Job 2:6-12) Be that as it may, it was a skin disease marked with boils, swellings, ulcers and skin eruptions and without a doubt was extremely painful, as can be gathered from its effect on Egypt's priests.

¹⁴ How is this plague having its fulfillment in modern times? Revelation 16:2 gives us a clue, for it tells that as a result of the pouring out of the bowl of God's anger hurtful and malignant ulcers came upon those who had the mark of the wild

12, 13. Of what did the sixth plague consist?

14-16. By what means has modern "Egypt" been plagued till now by the sixth plague?

beast and who worshiped its image. The book entitled "Babylon the Great Has Fallen! God's Kingdom Rules!" shows that this plague began in 1919, when the failure of the League of Nations was foretold. It was in the year 1921 that *The Watchtower* for the first time identified the symbolic sea beast of Revelation chapter 13 as Satan's visible political organization rather than an ecclesiastical system, and the idolized "image" of the beast as the League of Nations. This plague, even as the other plagues, might be said to have two aspects in modern times. One aspect is the use of the Bible to show the way the modern "Egyptians," the worshipers of the "image" of the beast, appear in the eyes of Jehovah, and the other is the pain that this exposé gave them. Since Egypt stands for Satan's entire visible organization, this plague affects the religious leaders and guides of both Christendom and pagandom.

¹⁵ An early high point in this plague came in 1922 when, on September 8 at the Cedar Point, Ohio, convention of Jehovah's witnesses, Joseph F. Rutherford, as president of the Watch Tower Society, called attention to King Uzziah's becoming a leper because of his presumptuousness in mixing religion with politics in Jerusalem, in that he as king presumed to offer incense at the temple, which privilege was only for the priests of the tribe of Levi; and in this presumptuousness and its punishment King Uzziah was a prototype of Christendom. (2 Chron. 26:1, 16-23) Then referring to Christendom's endorsement of the League of Nations as a man-made substitute for God's kingdom, Judge Rutherford said: "Thus they denied the coming

of the Lord and his Kingdom," and at once they appeared to Jehovah God to be leprous or filled with boils and blisters, and hence unclean. And just as the sixth plague upon Egypt was an expression of Jehovah's anger and brought pain, so did the proclamations made by his dedicated people regarding these things. Such expression of his anger at the men that had the "mark" of the beast and that worshiped its image, the League of Nations, pained the anti-typical Egyptians of our twentieth century.

¹⁶ Since then the Watch Tower Society as publishers for the Christian witnesses of Jehovah has published and caused to be distributed much literature showing that the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations, are futile man-made substitutes for the kingdom of God. A particularly striking recent example was the special issue of *Awake!* October 8, 1962, entitled "The United Nations or the Kingdom of God?" The Watch Tower Society printed for distribution 5,269,268 copies of the October 8, 1962, issue of *Awake!*

All this publication and distribution of God's judgment message has shown how wretched, unclean, miserable and spiritually diseased the supporters of these schemes of men must appear in the eyes of God. Such publication has been very painful to the supporters of these political instruments for world peace and security both inside and outside Christendom, and is part of the sixth plague.

THE SEVENTH PLAGUE—HAIL, FIRE AND THUNDERS

¹⁷ Six plagues had been sent upon Pha-

17, 18. (a) Why did Jehovah proceed with Pharaoh the way he did? (b) Of what did the seventh plague consist back there?



raoh and his nation by Jehovah God and still Pharaoh's heart remained obstinate. Why was Jehovah, the omnipotent One, dealing with this stubborn, proud, yet puny man in this manner? Jehovah himself, at this point, told him: "By now I could have thrust my hand out that I might strike you and your people with pestilence and that you might be effaced from the earth. But, in fact, for this cause I have kept you in existence, for the sake of showing you my power and in order to have my name declared in all the earth." Yes, by proceeding in this manner Jehovah was making a name for himself as well as showing Pharaoh how great and varied His divine power is. Having told Pharaoh his reason for proceeding with him the way He did, Jehovah next warned him of the seventh plague: "Are you still behaving haughtily against my people in not sending them away? Here I am causing it to rain down tomorrow about this time a very heavy hail, the like of which has never occurred in Egypt from the day it was founded until now."—Ex. 9:15-19.

¹⁸ Pharaoh refusing to heed this warning, Jehovah God had Moses stretch out his hand toward the heavens, "and Jehovah gave thunders and hail, and fire would run down to the earth, and Jehovah kept making it rain down hail upon the land of Egypt. Thus there came hail and fire quivering in among the hail. . . . Only in the land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel were, there occurred no hail."—Ex. 9:22-26.

¹⁹ This plague, by reason of its thunder,



fire and hail coming from the sky, might be said to have affected the heavens, the air and the earth. It calls to mind the seventh plague of Revelation 16:17-20, which was poured out upon the air, which people breathe. It reads: "And the seventh one poured out his bowl upon the air. At this a loud voice issued out of the sanctuary from the throne, saying: 'It has come to pass!' And lightnings and voices and thunders occurred, and a great earthquake occurred such as had not occurred since men came to be on the earth, so extensive an earthquake, so great. And the great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give her the cup of the wine of the anger of his wrath. Also, every island fled, and mountains were not found." That plague of Revelation was an expression of God's anger against the spirit that the people of the world breathe in. It is the spirit of the Devil and it bears its fruitage among men. A message calling attention to this was delivered in Detroit, Michigan, in 1928, entitled "Declaration Against Satan and for Jehovah." It put the blame squarely upon Satan the Devil for all mankind's ills and warned of Armageddon's rapid approach. All that has been written exposing Satan's role in world affairs is a part of this plague on modern-day "Egypt" and its Pharaoh. Included, therefore, are *The Watchtower* articles "The Taunt-Song Against Satan the Devil,"* and "Delivering Satan's Death Notice,"† as well as all else that has been written exposing Satan's invisible influence

19-21. (a) Against what was the seventh plague directed? (b) What are pictured by the thunder, hail and lightning?

* *The Watchtower*, October 15, 1949.

† *Ibid.*, August 1, 1956.

in world affairs, including the exposé of what is "the spirit of the world," in *The Watchtower* of December 15, 1963.

²⁰ Back in ancient Egypt the seventh plague was also accompanied with thunder and fire or lightning. So this plague in modern times also consists of thunderous warnings of divine judgments upon antitypical Egypt, Satan's visible organization, to be executed at the battle of Armageddon. Those symbolic thunders were, in turn, caused by spiritual lightnings, flashes of truth emanating from Jehovah's heavenly temple. This plague warns that there is no safety in modern "Egypt" and all who will not heed this warning and who will die at Armageddon will be like those ancient Egyptians who failed to heed the warning back there and who died of the hail.

²¹ Yes, there was also hail in connection with this seventh plague, even as there was in connection with the seventh bowl poured out, as recorded at Revelation chapter 16, and after the seventh trumpet sound, as recorded in Revelation 11:15-19. As regards ancient Egypt, the fire and smashing hail of this seventh plague call to mind the words of Jeremiah 23:29: "Is not my word [when executed] correspondingly like a fire, . . . and like a forge hammer that smashes the crag?" Hail is made up of frozen water; and accordingly the bound books published by the Watch Tower Society picture hard, smashing Bible truths. The Bible-study aids, such as the books *Enemies* and *Religion*, continued the spiritual hail, even as did the public lecture "Christendom Has Failed God! After Her End, What?" delivered around the world in 1962. And currently a plague of spiritual hail is falling by the presentation of

the messages found in the Bible-study aid, the 704-page book *"Babylon the Great Has Fallen!" God's Kingdom Rules!* and the two-hour-long moving picture "Proclaiming 'Everlasting Good News' Around the World."

²² As regards the plague of hail, the congealed, hard spiritual truths, together with the thunderous warnings to the antitypical Egyptians of today, it appears that the climax of this plague is yet in the future. Says the book *"Babylon the Great Has Fallen!" God's Kingdom Rules!*

on pages 574, 575: "The hard, unyielding message of God's vengeance against Satan's visible organization will at last pelt men. It will presage their destruction. The symbolic hailstorm was not meant or expected to convert mankind at that late development of world affairs. . . . The fact that 'the plague of it was unusually great' foreshows that at the last there will be an unusually great proclamation of God's vengeance by Jehovah's witnesses." Based on that comment, we ask the question: Since this plaguing hail-like message will not convert men, why will it be delivered? So that the wicked will know for a certainty who is causing their destruction and why.

THE EIGHTH PLAGUE—LOCUSTS

²³ When ancient Pharaoh saw the extent of the damage done by the hail and fire, he professed repentance, but it lasted only as long as the plague. As soon as the hail ceased, he changed his mind, and so Jehovah now sent Moses and his spokesman



22. Of what will the plague of hail yet consist?

23, 24. What interesting facts are noted regarding the eighth plague?

Aaron to Pharaoh with the warning of the eighth plague, one of locusts. Concerning it we read, at Exodus 10:13-15: "The morning came and the east wind carried the locusts. And the locusts began to come up over all the land of Egypt and to settle down upon all the territory of Egypt. . . and they went on eating up all the vegetation of the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left; and there was left nothing green on the trees or on the vegetation of the field in all the land of Egypt."

²⁴ Egyptian locusts may be as much as three inches long. Under the law of God given through Moses, locusts were considered clean insects and suitable for eating; in fact, they are still being eaten in the Orient. This plague was the greatest that ancient Egypt had ever seen of locusts, swarms darkening the skies. The warning itself as given by Moses and Aaron was enough to get the servants of Pharaoh up in arms against the policy of their ruler. So he called back Moses and Aaron, after having turned them down. But when Moses and Aaron insisted that *all* Israel, and not merely the able-bodied men, be permitted to go into the wilderness to worship Jehovah, Pharaoh drove them from his presence in rage. So this plague came, and not only did it strip the country bare of what remained from the previous plagues, inflicting catastrophic desolation, but at the same time it was a signal victory over the Egyptian gods credited with fertility and harvest. Hurriedly Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and professed repentance, but afterward he again let his heart become obstinate. One does not learn from experience unless one's heart is right.

²⁵ What is pictured by this plague? The literal plague disastrously affected Egypt's remaining food supplies, producing famine

conditions, but not hurting Jehovah's people in the land of Goshen. Jehovah God sent those locusts; and the antitypical fulfillment would be the exposé made by his witnesses of today concerning the religious food of antitypical Egypt, proving such "Egypt" to be without life-giving spiritual food.

²⁶ This plague shows the way antitypical Egypt appears to Jehovah God as regards spiritual food. The Bible truths published by his spiritual remnant, pictured by Aaron, under the direction of the Greater Moses, Jesus Christ, prove the religious doctrines and practices of antitypical Egypt to be false, without life in them. Commerce, politics, the scientists, the philosophers, and all the false religionists, including the Catholic clergy, the Protestants, the fundamentalists and the modernists with their evolution theory, have been unable to relieve the situation. The antitypical Egyptians were shown to be without any spiritual food that had any value. This exposé of the spiritual famine in modern "Egypt" was a plague to the "Egyptians." The subject of the world's spiritual famine has been dealt with in *The Watchtower* as well as in the *Awake!* magazine, and in public lectures by Jehovah's witnesses. More recent expressions of this symbolic plague have been such publications as *What Has Religion Done for Mankind?* and *"Babylon the Great Has Fallen!"* *God's Kingdom Rules!* All such messages, which take in all false religion and expose the spiritual famine in modern "Egypt," show there is not a single green thing of spiritual nourishment left and that those who are conscious of their spiritual need have to look elsewhere.

THE NINTH PLAGUE—DARKNESS

²⁷ Pharaoh of ancient Egypt refusing to learn from the eighth plague, Jehovah God

25, 26. What destruction has the modern locust plague till now been causing, and by what means?

27, 28. (a) What was the ninth plague, and why was it the most telling plague yet against the gods of Egypt? (b) How did Pharaoh respond after it was lifted?

sent the ninth plague, darkness. Exodus 10:21-29 tells us that it was a darkness so thick that it could be felt, as though it were a thick smog. In fact, the darkness was so dense that no Egyptian stirred from his place during the three days and nights that it lasted. The Israelites, however, had light in their dwellings, they being spared from this ninth plague even as from the five previous plagues. This plague poured out contempt upon the sun-god Amon-Ra and upon Thoth, who was the counselor of Osiris and was god of the moon as well as the so-called systematizer of sun, moon and stars. It might be said to have been the most telling blow till then against the gods of Egypt. How so? In that the Egyptians, above all, were especially devoted to the worship of the sun and light.

²⁸ At the end of the plague of unnatural darkness Pharaoh agreed to let all the Israelites go to worship Jehovah in the wilderness. But when Moses and Aaron insisted that the Israelites take along their livestock for offering sacrifices, Pharaoh thundered: "Get out from me! Watch yourself! Do not try to see my face again, because on the day of your seeing my face you will die." To this Moses calmly replied: "That is the way you have spoken. I shall not try to see your face any more." —Ex. 10:28, 29.

²⁹ As for the modern counterpart of this ninth plague: Today Christendom does not recognize Jehovah God as the light of the universe, nor Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world and its Light, no more than does the rest of antitypical Egypt. Many look to evolution to save man; others to materialistic science; many pagan religions hold out their particular remedies; the Jews claim that Judaism is the light of the world and man's only hope. The ninth

plague reveals the folly of all such supposed lights, and it shows that those who look to these or hold them forth are actually in a pitch-black darkness, yes, not only in a mental darkness but in the darkness of God's disfavor. An outstanding expression of this plague was first given in 1926 at the London, England, convention of Jehovah's witnesses in connection with the public lecture "Why World Powers Are Tottering—the Remedy," given in support of the Resolution passed by the conventioners at that time. That Resolution showed the League of Nations to be a complete failure, that by reason of "the blinding influence of Satan the minds of the rulers and of the ruled are turned away from the true God," and that only God's kingdom would be able to remove "the blind ignorance" with which the people have long been afflicted. (Rev. 16:10, 11) Likewise the recent Assembly Resolution of 1963, as adopted all around the globe, pointed out that the darkness of God's disfavor rests upon modern "Egypt." Much has been published by Jehovah's people showing that the would-be saviors of men, individuals, movements or organizations, such as the League of Nations that was hailed as "the only Light there is!" are no lights, no saviors. The public talk and Resolution of the 1926 convention in London, England, were made up in printed form as a tract and fifty million copies were distributed. Additionally, the Watch Tower Society paid for a full-page ad, to carry this same message, in a London newspaper, the *Daily News*, a paper available to 800,000 readers. All such publication showing how dense the darkness upon antitypical Egypt is forms part of this symbolic ninth plague, and such messages by Jehovah's witnesses certainly do plague those looking to such worldly things as lights.

29. What marks the fulfillment of the ninth plague in our day?

NOW we come to the climactic tenth plague on ancient Egypt, the death of the firstborn. The details of this plague are

given at Exodus 11:1 to 12:36. What a demonstration of Jehovah's power that occasion was, both to preserve and to destroy! Every firstborn son perished, from Pharaoh's to that of the captive in the prison hole, as well as the firstborn of every beast. The gods of Egypt were judged helpless that night and so proved no gods. Especially so was Amon-Ra the supposed preserver of all the firstborn. Where was he that night? There could be no question now as to who was greater, Pharaoh's Amon-Ra or Moses' Jehovah.

² Forgotten now was Pharaoh's threat to kill Moses and Aaron if he ever saw them again. Instead, he urgently sent for them and said: "Get up, get out from the midst of my people, both you and the other sons of Israel, and go, serve Jehovah, just as you have stated. Take both your flocks and your herds, . . . and go. Also, you must bless me besides." (Ex. 12:31, 32) Thus was fulfilled the warning that Jehovah told Moses to declare to Pharaoh at the very beginning of the negotiations: "This is what Jehovah has said: 'Israel is my son, my first-born. And I say to you: Send my son away that he may serve

1, 2. What was the tenth plague, and what effect did it have on Pharaoh?

THE TENTH PLAGUE

FIRSTBORN SLAIN

me. But should you refuse to send him away, here I am killing your son, your first-born.'"—Ex. 4:22, 23.

³ Just what is the modern counterpart of the plague of the death of the firstborn? From earliest

times the firstborn were those devoted to God. It was the firstborn that served as a priest for each family. That is why we read of priests in the book of Exodus (19:22, 24) before Jehovah appointed Aaron the firstborn and his sons as priests and caused Aaron to be anointed. The firstborn of modern Egypt would therefore be all those religionists who profess to be devoted, especially set apart for the service of their god. This would include nuns, monks, priests, all the clergy, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches, all the way up to the pope. It would also include the sadhus or "holy men" and monks of India, the Dalai Lama of Tibet, and suchlike of other Oriental and African lands.

⁴ So in the antitypical plague on the firstborn these are pictured as slain because of being exposed as not being devoted to Jehovah God, not being, in fact, his holy firstborn. They are dead to his service. All the Watch Tower Society's literature has exposed the religious pretensions of these

3. How are the modern "first-born" identified?
4, 5. What in our day corresponds to the tenth plague?



men, showing them to be really serving the "god of this system of things," they being self-righteous and commercialists, like the Pharisees, money-lovers, or greedy for power, as are the politicians. Such publicity is part of this plague. A plaguelike message of modern times directed against these religious devotees was first given after World War I at the convention in Los Angeles, California, in 1923. It enumerated instance after instance in which the clergy of Christendom have shown themselves to be hypocrites, false religious shepherds, and so forth. It applied to the clergy 2 Timothy 3:1-5, which tells of the perilous "last days" when men would be lawless, extremely selfish, lovers of themselves and of pleasures rather than lovers of God, and so forth. It charged them with having forsaken the Word of God, using the name "Christian" as a cloak for their wicked deeds, teaching evolution and higher criticism by which they are destroying the faith of millions, posing as representatives of the Prince of Peace but advocating war.

* The Indictment, the Resolution that was issued in connection with the 1924 convention at Columbus, Ohio, also lashed out against the antitypical firstborn of modern "Egypt," and so did the Resolution passed at the 1958 assembly of Jehovah's witnesses at Yankee Stadium and the Polo Grounds, New York City. Among other things, that Resolution, adopted by 194,418 conventioners, showed that the clergy had caused the people to forget the name of Jehovah, that they have refused to join in giving the Kingdom witness, that they have turned their backs on Jesus Christ and endorsed the United Nations, and that the clergy of Christendom stand as the most reprehensible and delinquent class of men on earth before Jehovah, and, when

God executes his judgments, he will give them judicial attention first. This Resolution, as has been pointed out, was printed in fifty languages, to the number of seventy million copies, and thus received worldwide distribution. All that has been written and circulated exposing clericalism, honorary religious titles, celibacy, monasticism, whether of Christendom or of pagandom, to prove such religionists as dead to God's true service, is a part of this symbolic tenth plague. A most recent example is the motion picture telling of preaching the good news around the world, and exposing false Babylonish religion, which motion picture is being exhibited free to large audiences all around the world, numbering into the millions. All such shows that these people of the cloth are not in fact "firstborn" or devoted to God and true religion, and so are dead to his pure worship. They are the firstborn of the false gods of this world, antitypical Egypt, under Satan the Devil, and are marked as "vessels of wrath made fit for destruction."—Rom. 9:22.

* Any Israelite household in ancient Egypt that failed to obey instructions for holding the passover supper suffered the death of its firstborn. (Ex. 11:7 to 12:30) So today, all who profess to be members of spiritual Israel, Jehovah's spiritual anointed people, devoted to him, will likewise be considered as dead in his sight unless they exercise faith in "Christ our passover" and render obedience and live truly devoted lives toward Jehovah God. (1 Cor. 5:7) Any such dead "firstborn" from among spiritual Israel would be those who after having dedicated themselves to Jehovah God have become 'drowned in the sea of commercialism,' as well as those

6. (a) What is pictured by the fact that the tenth plague represented a threat to Israel's firstborn?
(b) Who else in modern times are affected by the tenth plague?

who for selfish reasons have severed themselves from Jehovah's people. They too have been exposed in the Watch Tower Society's publications as not being faithful in their dedication and devotion to Jehovah, as in the *Watchtower* article entitled "The Traitorous Evil Slave and His Prototypes."—Matt. 24:48-51.

⁷ Today Jehovah's dedicated people have the great privilege of sharing in sending the antitypical ten plagues upon modern Egypt and will continue to do so until religious Babylon the Great suffers destruction and the battle of Armageddon strikes. And just as those plagues back there in ancient Egypt magnified Jehovah God, so they do today. Back in ancient Egypt, Moses and Aaron had to appear before Pharaoh time and again, twelve times in all as far as the plagues were concerned, yet not knowing from one plague to the next how many more times they would need to do so. Today Jehovah's servants must keep going over their territory time and again, not knowing the exact number of times remaining. It was not easy for Moses and Aaron to appear at the court of Pharaoh with its officials, retainers and soldiers. So today, it is not easy for Jehovah's people to go forth to the homes of the people with these messages and to fight their legal cases in the judicial courts of the land. Back in ancient Egypt the plagues caused the name of Jehovah to be talked about in an unfriendly way by some Egyptians. So today, the plaguing messages that Jehovah's people bring cause the majority to speak about Jehovah in an unfriendly way.

⁸ And what has been the result of all ten of these plagues upon antitypical Egypt of today? The same as back there. On the one hand, the ten plagues have hardened the hearts of those having the spirit of the antitypical Pharaoh, Satan the Devil. On

the other hand, the plagues have softened those who are of honest heart and who love righteousness. Yes, back in 1513 B.C.E. "a vast mixed company" associated itself with Jehovah's people, leaving Egypt with them. (Ex. 12:38) So today a "great crowd" of persons from all nations, tribes and tongues have left modern "Egypt," as it were, and taken their stand with the spiritual Israelites, the remnant of anointed Christians still on earth. (Rev. 7:9-17; 11:8) After the death of Egypt's firstborn, the Israelites and the "mixed company" left Egypt. Today, therefore, from one standpoint, God's people have left antitypical Egypt and are now on their way to the Promised Land. They must yet pass through the Red Sea experience of Armageddon, where Pharaoh's counterpart, Satan the Devil, and his pursuit forces will be "drowned." The antitypical firstborn ones of modern "Egypt" will all be *literally* destroyed then. (Ex. 14:19-15:19) But, from another point of view, in that the ten plagues are still being poured out upon modern "Egypt," it might be said that God's people are still in antitypical Egypt, or, as Jesus said, in the world but no part of it.—John 17:15, 16.

⁹ Until Jehovah God's destruction of Babylon the Great and his war at Armageddon, may there be no quitting or even slowing down on the part of Jehovah's servants. As faithful King Hezekiah of Jerusalem told the priests and the Levites back in his day: "My sons, do not give yourselves up to rest, for you are the ones whom Jehovah has chosen to stand before him to minister to him and to continue as his ministers." (2 Chron. 29:11) Let Jehovah's servants keep on declaring his name and sharing in plaguing antitypical Egypt, of which religious Babylon the Great is a prominent part. At the same time let them

7, 8. What other parallels are to be seen in the prophetic drama of the ten plagues on Egypt?

9. How can we today heed the instructions King Hezekiah gave the priests and Levites?

not forget their peaceful, constructive, educational, lifesaving work. By making the most of their opportunities in antitypical Egypt they will share in the vindication of Jehovah's name. They will also help increase the numbers of the "vast mixed company" in modern "Egypt" that are taking their stand for Jehovah and his

kingdom. They themselves can hope to gain freedom from all oppression by antitypical Pharaoh, Satan the Devil, and his world organization after Jehovah overthrows all the enemies at the antitypical Red Sea, Armageddon. After that they hope to gain everlasting life in happiness in Jehovah's new order of things.

Breaking Free from Babylonish Religion

ONE of Jehovah's witnesses in New Jersey reports his calling on a family who had shown some interest in God's Word: "This family was disgusted with world conditions and thirsted for something better, but they were so wrapped up in the social activities of their church that it was difficult to start a home Bible study with them. I felt that perhaps my wife could start a study with the wife and then we could invite the husband to sit in. At the second study, Mr. C—— was attending and a weekly Bible study was under way. Good progress was made and soon the family realized that they were indeed learning the truth from God's Word, the Bible.

"Since we are located on the fringe of the New York metropolitan area, we have access to something most encouraging and unique. This is the opportunity to visit the Watch Tower Society's headquarters in Brooklyn. So now we felt it was time for this family to see this spectacle of Kingdom activity. A date was set. Though we had visited the Society's headquarters many times, we always look forward to going again; and this time we had the added joy of seeing this family's amazement at what they saw. The result of this visit in respect to increased interest in the truths taught by Jehovah's witnesses was at once manifest. After this came a circuit assembly, Memorial and a special talk. By now the family was regular in attending meetings at the Kingdom Hall.

"But they wished now to make a definite break with Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, in harmony with Revelation 18:4. So they wrote a letter of resignation from the Methodist Church. They were not content with just mailing the letter; they wished to present it to the pastor in person.

So they invited him over for an evening's discussion. They prepared well and had clearly in mind the Scriptural reasons for withdrawing from the church.

"The result of this meeting with the Methodist pastor gave further strength to their desire to break free from Babylonish religion. The clergyman had no defense to make. When confronted with the point that the church had become a social organization, he agreed and recognized that the fault lay with the clergy. The clergyman thought that they were doing well to be studying the Bible; he felt that the Methodists and Jehovah's witnesses had a great deal in common. However, they assured him that this was not so, and they confronted him with Babylonish doctrines taught by the church but not taught by Jehovah's witnesses or the Bible.

"Mr. C——, who as a member of the church had doubted the accuracy of the Bible, now told the clergyman he had faith in God's Word and that the Bible does not contradict itself. 'Oh,' replied the clergyman, 'but it does contradict itself.' Thus the clergyman displayed his disbelief in the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures and further convinced the family of the rightness of their action in withdrawing from the church. Little did the clergyman realize that by his inability to defend his faith and stand up for the Bible as God's sure Word of Truth he had helped them to do the right thing now more than he had in all the years he served as their pastor in Babylon the Great. It was a clergyman burdened with the loss of two pillars of his church who took leave of the family that evening. Freed from Babylonish religion, Mr. and Mrs. C—— recently were baptized at a circuit assembly, in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah God."

Death of a

DYNASTY

"O HOW you have fallen from heaven, you shining one, son of the dawn! . . . you have said in your heart, "To the heavens I shall go up. Above the stars of God I shall lift up my throne, . . . I shall make myself resemble the Most High." However, down to Sheol you will be brought, to the remotest parts of the pit." —Isa. 14:12-15.

Who is this one who had such a self-exalting ambition and who would be brought down to such a debased, humiliated state? And why should we today want to know what this dramatic statement from the Scriptures means? Why, because of the importance of the participants in this dramatic action, for (1) the "shining one, son of the dawn," represents the dynasty of kings of Babylon established by King Nebuchadnezzar and ending with Belshazzar; (2) the "stars of God" are the kings of Judah's Davidic line sitting representatively on "Jehovah's throne" at Jerusalem; (3) the Most High and the Speaker of the words to the "shining one" is Jehovah God, the Almighty.

BABYLONISH OR DAVIDIC DYNASTY—WHICH?

In addition to the worldwide effect of this action at the time, we recognize the infinitely more far-reaching effect on the world scene of our day when we reflect on the fact that the kings of the line of David

were those who were in Jehovah's covenant with David for the kingdom over His people and who were to produce the Messiah. The covenant for the kingdom and the posterity of the line of these kings must continue and not be cut off until

the coming of the Messiah, whose throne is to be exalted alongside that of Jehovah. Would the dynasty of Babylon, with Satan as god, or would the dynasty of David prevail? Which would survive?

There is also a modern-day parallel that magnifies the importance of this prophecy. This "shining one" is spoken of as one "disabling the nations" (Isa. 14:12), as one making "the productive land like the wilderness" (14:17), and as one whose fall brings "the whole earth . . . to rest, . . . free of disturbance," and causes people to "become cheerful with joyful cries" (14:7). Consider the record of modern-day Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion under its invisible ruler, Satan the Devil. The leaders of Babylon the Great have represented God as a three-headed trinitarian monstrosity, an eternal-torment fiend, and have led the peoples of the earth to worship other false gods. They have exalted themselves with high-sounding titles. They have put their trust in materialism and military might and not in God or his Word, the Bible. By Concordats with dictators, by wars prosecuted in the name of religion, especially of "Christian" religion, they have disabled the nations, destroyed the productiveness of land, slaughtered the flower of manhood of the nations and brought extreme misery and

sadness. What happened to Babylon and its dynasty of kings is a sure-to-be-fulfilled pattern of the annihilation of Babylon the Great, to the relief and joy of people of all nations.

How did the situation come about, that the Babylonian dynasty of kings could entertain such ambitious visions? Well, the "king of Babylon" had enjoyed phenomenal success in defeating the nations. This projected him like a meteor to the position of Third World Power. As Isaiah tells us, he struck peoples "in fury with a stroke incessantly" and subdued nations "in sheer anger with a persecution without restraint" for not submitting voluntarily to world domination by Babylon. No earthly power was able to restrain him. He was like a woodcutter to the nations, cutting down their kings just like trees. He disabled the nations and put them in abject slavery to Babylon. He agitated the earth, making the kingdoms rock and bringing productive land to a wilderness, as, for example, when he finally destroyed Jerusalem and transported the people of Judah to Babylon, leaving the land desolate of man and domestic animal. He had no intention whatsoever of letting his prisoners go home, forever.—Isa. 14:6, 12, 16, 17.

The earlier successes of the "king of Babylon" did not satisfy him. He could have no rest until he overthrew the kings of Judah, since these sat on "Jehovah's throne" at Jerusalem as the earthly representatives of God's theocratic rule. As long as the throne at Jerusalem existed, the king of Babylon could not fully exalt his god Marduk. Ah, if he could but dethrone these kings of Judah, put them under his feet, then he would indeed be exalted to the heavens, above the stars, for in Bible prophecy the kings of the royal line of David were likened to stars. Representing Jehovah, they had a brilliance, a royal glory. (Num. 24:17) Psalm forty-

eight speaks of the temple located in the city of Zion, on an elevated place near the palace of the Judean kings. To this place Jehovah commanded all Israel to come up three times a year. Thus it became the "mountain of meeting." The psalmist says: "Jehovah is great and much to be praised in the city of our God, in his holy mountain. Pretty for loftiness, the exultation of the whole earth, is Mount Zion on the remote sides of the north, the town of the grand King [Jehovah]." (48:1, 2) If Babylon's king could only displace these "stars," then he would, in his own eyes and the eyes of the Babylonians, occupy a position "upon the mountain of meeting, in the remotest parts of the north," comparable to that of Jehovah, who established these kings on Zion.

To the ancient pagan world, the king of Babylon would make himself resemble the Most High. In effect, the Babylonian stargazers could see, as it were, a new star sparkling in the heavens with a brightness surpassing that of other stars. He would outshine the "stars of God." When he took Zedekiah off the throne and destroyed Jerusalem with its temple of Jehovah, he felt he had reached this heavenly pinnacle.—2 Ki. 25:1-7.

BABYLON'S DYNASTY THE "SHINING ONE" (LUCIFER)

At this point it is well to discuss the meaning of the Hebrew word *heilēl*, translated "shining one." It also means "brightness" and, according to some Hebrew-English Lexicons, the entire expression "shining one, son of the dawn" means "morning star," which was the brightest star in the heavens. The English *Authorized Version* uses the name Lucifer, as does also the Roman Catholic Douay Version of the Bible. Both were following the Latin *Vulgate* translation, which uses Lucifer, meaning "Light Bearer." Lucifer,

however, is not the name of the king of Babylon. Lucifer, as a name, was applied to Satan the Devil by early uninspired religious writers of our Common Era. Notice that the Latin *Vulgate* uses the word *lucifer* again, in 2 Peter 1:19, and there applies it, not to Satan the Devil, but to the "day star" that was to arise for Christian hearts. So this term *heil'el*, or *lucifer*, applies to Satan the Devil only as the earthly king of Babylon symbolizes that wicked spirit or reflects him. Of course, Satan the Devil was Babylon's real god and invisible king, as well as being ruler over modern-day Babylon the Great.

The first application of Isaiah 14:12-14, then, is to the *human* king of Babylon. That is why certain expressions, such as Sheol, are used in it. Satan the Devil was never in Sheol, hell, the grave, and never will be in it, for he is a spirit in the invisible heavens, whereas Sheol, hell, the grave is in the earth. It is where the visible, material, human dead are laid. Even Jesus Christ, after dying, was in Sheol, hell or the grave for parts of three days, as the apostle Peter himself said.—Acts 2:27-32; Ps. 16:10.

A DEAD CARCASS WITHOUT BURIAL OR SUCCESSORS

Accordingly, it is the self-exalted *human* "king of Babylon" of whom Isaiah 14:15 says: "However, down to Sheol [hell, AV; Dy] you will be brought, to the remotest parts of the pit." This expression indicates how far the "king of Babylon" fell from such heaven-high glory and power. It was as low as any human could fall. But the prophecy shows that he is not laid to rest in Sheol, the common grave of dead mankind. The expression "king of Babylon" does not mean the individual kings of Babylon, but the dynasty of the kings of Babylon, for most, if not all, of the kings of Babylon were buried with honor in Sheol.

But the imperial dynasty of kings of Babylon, who destroyed Jehovah's temple, was disgraced. This dynasty was not given a place with other kings of the nations down in Sheol, but was thrown away, without a respectable burial place for it. It was like a "detested sprout," which, not being desired on a plant, was cut off and thrown away. It was like a carcass over which lay the bodies of other soldiers dead from sword stabs, like a carcass trampled underfoot. Left lying on the field, it could be eaten by scavenger animals—a disgraceful end with no honorable memory, no memorial tomb, a name held in reproach and dying out. The goatlike leaders and the kings of the nations buried in state on their thrones are pictured as being awakened from their sleep of death in Sheol, so astounding is the "king of Babylon's" fall. (Isa. 14:9, 10) The ones who observe this fall express their amazement at how Jehovah God has brought this "shining one" down to his annihilation. As they do so they call attention to the crimes that the "king of Babylon" has committed, as voiced at Isaiah 14:16-21. Yes, moreover, the liberated Israelites are to take up this theme as a taunt song against the "king of Babylon."—Isa. 14:3, 4.*

Jehovah says: "And I will cut off from Babylon name and remnant and progeny and posterity." (Isa. 14:22) While there were later Chaldean kings who rose up to try to reestablish Babylon, such as Nidintu-Bel, who took the royal name Nebuchadnezzar III, he was not of the dynasty of Nebuchadnezzar and was not able to restore Babylon to power, his rule lasting for less than a year. A Nebuchadnezzar IV rose up in revolt against King Darius I, but was soon put down. So no "sons" or successors of the "king of Babylon" could

* For a more detailed discussion of Sheol and of Isaiah, chapter 14, see the book "*Babylon the Great Has Fallen!*" *God's Kingdom Rules!*, by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, New York.

make a comeback. (Isa. 14:21) The imperial dynasty, symbolized by the "king of Babylon," was to be wiped out, root and branch, to have no survivors. Chaldeans and Babylonians are no more today, having been annihilated during the succeeding centuries, according to the divine will. However, by Jehovah's providence, Jehoia-chin, of the line of David, had offspring while captive in Babylon, to preserve the Davidic line, to provide Jesus Christ the legal claim to the throne as the "son of David."—Matt. 1:6, 12, 16; Luke 3:23, 27, 31.

Babylon's complete blotting out is described at Isaiah 14:23, where she is condemned to be swept with "the broom of annihilation," cleaning out every trace of her, and her location made unfit for human occupancy. Overthrowing a world power was not too great an act for Jehovah to perform. He foretells here through Isaiah the fall of the Second World Power, Assyria. After her fall would come Babylon's, just as surely. (Isa. 14:24, 25) History now recounts how Jehovah destroyed 185,000 soldiers of King Sennacherib of Assyria in one night and finally let Assyria be overthrown and taken into subjugation to the Babylonians. (Isa. 36:1 to 37:38) History also bears testimony as to Babylon's fall and final desolation.

JOYFUL RESULT OF "KING OF BABYLON'S" FALL

So God's judgment upon Babylon brought joy to all the nations, who now came under the more considerate rule of the Aryan world power of the Persians under Cyrus. As for the Israelites, they were restored to their own land, and the prophecy came true: "He will actually give them rest upon their soil, and the alien resident must be joined to them . . . And peoples will actually take them and bring them to their own place, and the house of

Israel must take them to themselves as a possession . . . as menservants and as maidservants; and they must become the captors of those holding them captive, and they must have in subjection those who were driving them to work." (Isa. 14:1, 2) Cyrus the Persian, an outsider, restored the sons of Israel. There were thousands of non-Israelites who went back to Palestine with them, to serve under the Israelites as temple servants. Also, the aged Daniel was made one of the three high officials under Darius to whom the one hundred and twenty satraps of the Medo-Persian Empire reported. (Dan. 6:1-3, 28) About sixty years afterward the Israelitess Esther was made the queen of King Ahasuerus the Persian, and her older cousin Mordecai was elevated to be prime minister of the empire, the Fourth World Power. (Esther 2:5-18; 8:1-15; 10:2, 3) Thus the Babylonians were no longer able to hold the Israelites captive, but they themselves, who had driven the Israelites to work, were put in subjection to their former slave laborers.

In view of this prophetic illustration, let Babylon the Great, who has ruled as a mistress over the empires of the world, committing spiritual fornication by mixing religion with politics and military conquest, give special notice to Jehovah's words at Isaiah 14:26, 27: "This is the counsel that is counseled against all the earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. For Jehovah of armies himself has counseled, and who can break it up? And his hand is the one stretched out, and who can turn it back?" Though Babylon of ancient times is gone, this prophecy assures that the Babylon of the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, will soon suffer a like fate, being cut off without name or progeny, suffering complete humiliation and abasement, never to rise again.

Be willing to serve WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

WHEN Jesus was on earth he emphasized the need to weigh values, to work for what was really worth while. He urged: "Work, not for the food that perishes, but for the food that remains for life everlasting."—John 6:27.

Jesus frequently spoke of everlasting life under God's kingdom. That would be really worth while! But such life requires more than physical food. For this reason, Jesus stated: "Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth."—Matt. 4:4.

However, what are God's servants to do about the needs of life, such as food and clothing? Jesus said: "Never be anxious and say, 'What are we to eat?' or, 'What are we to drink?' or, 'What are we to put on?'" For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things." (Matt. 6:31, 32) God would bless the efforts of his servants to obtain the daily necessities of life. That is why Jesus taught his followers to pray: "Give us today our bread for this day."—Matt. 6:11.

SERVED WITH WHAT THEY HAD

Jesus and the early Christians appreciated that what God promised were the basic necessities and not great riches. For this reason they did not expend their energies trying to store up great material wealth. Jesus himself was so busy in the service of God that he did not take time to settle down permanently. Of him the Bible says: "The Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head." (Matt. 8:20) He concentrated on doing God's will and

trusted his Father, Jehovah, to take care of his basic needs.

When Jesus sent his disciples out to do God's work, he showed them that they

would not have to store up extra possessions. He said: "Do not procure gold or silver or copper for your girdle purses, or a food pouch for the trip, or two undergarments, or sandals or a staff; for the worker deserves his food."—Matt. 10:9, 10.

The apostle Paul worked only for the necessities of life. He said he was often "in labor and toil, in sleepless nights often, in hunger and thirst, in abstinence from food many times, in cold and nakedness." (2 Cor. 11:27) But Paul did not starve to death, nor did he die from being exposed to bad weather. He had what he needed to sustain life so he could serve God.

The point to learn from Jesus, the apostle Paul and the other zealous first-century Christians is that they were satisfied with what they had and served God with what they had, even if it was very little. They appreciated that the main thing was to do Jehovah's will. As Paul said: "I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be self-sufficient. I know indeed how to be low on provisions, I know indeed how to have an abundance. In everything and in all circumstances I have learned the secret of both how to be full and how to hunger, both how to have an abundance and how to suffer want."—Phil. 4:11, 12.

IMITATE THEIR EXAMPLE

Dedicated servants of God today should imitate the fine example of the early Christians. They should learn to be content with what they have and to serve God with what they have, regardless of how little that may be.

At times, though, a Christian who is poor in material possessions may feel hesitant about engaging in the ministry, especially from house to house. He may feel it is a reproach to Jehovah God and his visible organization since he does not have stylish clothing to wear. His clothing may be quite old. However, while it is commendable to want to be at one's best when serving God, there is no reproach involved just because one does not have fashionable clothing. The Christian who wears old clothing when preaching the good news of God's kingdom is no less of a witness for Jehovah than the one who wears the best. What is needed is for one's clothing to be clean and neat. Even new clothing, if filthy, is a reproach.

Nor should one feel badly because he does not have fine shoes to wear. Perhaps he has none at all. This should not interfere with the ministry, because, even if he feels he cannot preach in communities where he would feel uncomfortable for lack of shoes, in many countries he can go where others are in the same circumstances and will not notice whether Kingdom preachers have shoes or not.

Regardless of how much or how little you have to wear, remember that it is the One who sent you that counts. If someone reproaches you as one of God's servants for being poor materially, you can remind him that God's Word says, at Galatians 2:6: "God does not go by a man's outward appearance." It is the heart that counts with God, not what a man has to wear. When God's servants are neat and clean, it does not matter how old their clothing is or how little they have. They are a credit to Jehovah because they do his will and do not permit lesser issues to divert them. This pleases God. But it would not please Him to have one neglect the ministry because he is poor. Many, perhaps most of Jehovah's servants throughout the ages

have been relatively poor, but they served the Most High nevertheless.

EDUCATION

Perhaps it is the lack of a formal education that hinders you from the ministry. But is this a requirement? By no means! Most of the disciples of Jesus were those who had little formal education. Of them Acts 4:13 states: "Now when they [the rulers, older men, scribes and chief priest] beheld the outspokenness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were men unlettered and ordinary, they got to wondering."

Those educated authorities wondered how men who had not been to their schools could be so outspoken. They soon determined why, for that same verse adds: "And they began to recognize about them that they used to be with Jesus." That was why they were so bold! They had been with Jesus and had been educated by him in what was really important! Now they were equipped to teach others about God, this time with the added assistance of God's powerful holy spirit, which had been poured out upon them. This would more than make up for any deficiencies of education.

Not that the early Christians were ignorant. By no means. They were intelligent people. It was just that many of them did not have an opportunity to obtain a formal education. Nor was such formal education any advantage in God's sight, for the highly educated frequently lacked humility and opposed Jesus, as evidenced by the rulers and the scribes and Pharisees.

So do not let a lack of school education hinder you from the ministry. The best minister that ever walked this earth did not have a degree from a school of higher education! But Jesus was educated by God through his Word, the very highest education. That is what you need. If you do have

a formal education and you use it to good advantage in the ministry, that is fine, but do not consider it a requirement for becoming a servant of God.

In addition, no dedicated servant of God need feel he knows too little about the Bible to preach to others. Your dedicating your life to Jehovah is evidence that you understand and have an appreciation of God's basic purposes and requirements. That is sufficient to tell others, for it is more than the overwhelming majority of persons on earth have. Be like the lame man the apostle Peter cured. The Bible says of him: "And, leaping up, he stood up and began walking, and he entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and *praising God*." (Acts 3:8) He praised God with what knowledge he had. You can do the same.

WISELY USE WHAT YOU HAVE

Where material things are concerned, those who have dedicated their lives to God certainly have a huge advantage. How so? In that their money goes farther because they do not squander it on loose living, immoral women, excessive drinking, smoking or on lavish entertainment and other excesses. Nor do they throw away their money by gambling. By not spending money foolishly, God's servants have more to spend on necessities.

Of course, where it is possible to better yourself materially, you may do so. But if it means sacrificing one's spiritual interests to get more of this world's goods, then the Christian says, No! If it means simply planning one's life and finances more carefully, or seeking work that provides more

income without jeopardizing spiritual interests, then there is no objection to doing so.

Never think that fine clothing, a beautiful home or the choicest delicacies to eat make one a better servant of God. The contrary is generally true. Plenty of money and material possessions are usually a hindrance to spirituality, for one can become satisfied with just those things. This would dim one's vision of God's new order and could result in the neglecting of God's will. Jesus warned of this danger when he said: "How difficult a thing it will be for those having money to make their way into the kingdom of God!" (Luke 18:24) Perhaps, too, if you were rich you might look down on your fellowman, with the result that you might be inclined to ignore ministering to him.

So be content with what you have and serve God no matter what state you are found in. Do not be overly concerned if you are materially poor. In God's new order all of those worthy of life will be blessed with many material things because they put spiritual interests first now. At that time they will delight in peace and prosperity, even using things others of this world are now storing up: "For to the man that is good before him he has given wisdom and knowledge and rejoicing, but to the sinner he has given the occupation of gathering and bringing together merely to give to the one that is good before the true God."—Eccl. 2:26; Josh. 24:13.

Yes, be willing to serve God with what you have and he will bless you with life, health and abundance in his righteous new order, now so near!



Faithful and Loyal to God's Organization

WHAT fine qualities faithfulness and loyalty are! Yet, look where we will, how lacking they are in the world today! Because of this all Christian ministers of Jehovah must be on guard against being influenced by such gross selfishness. Most timely, therefore, is our theme for the month of July based on the words found at Revelation 2:10 and 1 Timothy 2:8: "Prove yourself faithful even to death, and I will give you the crown of life." "I desire that in every place the men carry on prayer, lifting up loyal hands."*

What does it mean to be faithful? It means to be dependable, true to one's agreements. It means 'unswerving adherence to a person, vow or pledge.' Chief of all the many faithful examples recorded in the Word of God is that of Jesus Christ.—Rev. 1:5; 3:14.

Today we have a close imitator of Jesus' faithfulness in the "faithful and discreet slave," who in modern times has for more than eighty years been faithfully discharging his obligation to feed all Christ's "domestics" with "their food at the proper time." This slave gives special training to traveling representatives, missionaries and congregation overseers, as well as directing a campaign of education for the individual ministers by means of circuit servant visits, five weekly meetings, various assemblies and by publishing Bibles and Bible-study aids, chief among the latter being *The Watchtower*. This "faithful and discreet slave" is the visible representative of God's universal organization.—Matt. 24:45-47.

All dedicated Christian ministers are stewards, and it is required of stewards, the apostle Paul tells us, that they be found faithful. To be faithful to God we must be faithful to his visible organization. For most of these ministers their association with God's organization is primarily with the local congregation. What does it mean to be faithful to it?—1 Cor. 4:2; 1 Pet. 4:10.

It means being dependable in bearing one's share of the burdens of the local congregation. It means being regular in meeting attendance, giving both one's spiritual and material support. It means being willing to accept an assignment and then proving one-

self dependable by properly preparing for it and carrying it out, regardless of how humble a part it may be. It also means being dependable in the little details of the field ministry.—Luke 16:10.

Loyalty also is required. Loyalty may be said to go beyond faithfulness. It emphasizes tenacity and continuance of heartfelt devotion. Loyalty to God is shown by us when we lovingly stick to him and his organization both when it is easy and when it is difficult, "through thick and thin." Loyalty is a loving devotion that acts as a powerful adhesive.

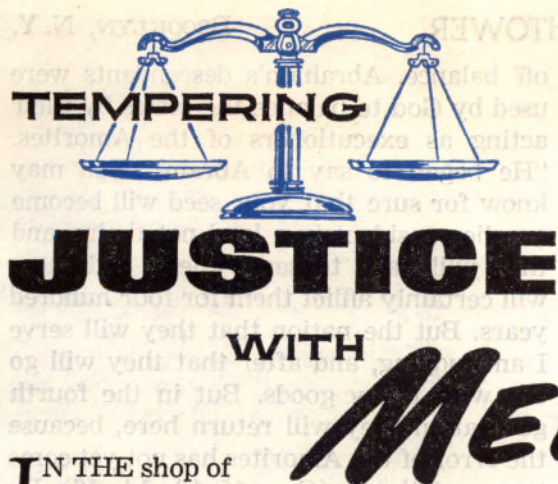
Jehovah God being The loyal One, it is but fitting that he should require loyalty of us. (Rev. 15:4) However, we cannot be loyal to God without being loyal to his visible earthly organization, the "faithful and discreet slave," and the local Christian congregation which represents that "slave."

For us to be loyal to God's organization we must be jealous about its interests, always quick to come to its defense should any speak ill of it and ever ready to protect it against any who would seek to harm it by stealing or damaging its property. More than that, loyalty to God's organization means backing up the local congregation committee representing it, as when that committee takes action against any who would sow division or practice uncleanness. Rather than feeling so sorry for those wrongdoers we should have feeling for the ones who have the difficult burden of weighing matters and then needing to take action. Loyalty to God's organization also means giving the local servants whole-souled support, being always submissive, never making the mistake of taking ourselves too seriously, as Aaron and Miriam once did.—Num. 12:1-15.

Loyalty to God's organization also means being loyal to our individual Christian brothers. Do not indulge in unfavorable talk about them nor give a listening ear to others that do. Rather, come to the defense of the one thoughtlessly or willfully maligned and steer the conversation into more upbuilding channels.—1 Pet. 4:8.

In all such ways we can be faithful and loyal to God's organization, thereby contributing to the advancement of God's work in the earth and assuring ourselves of his approval.

* For details see *The Watchtower*, August 1, 1964.



TEMPERING JUSTICE WITH MERCY

IN THE shop of an apothecary there usually is a set of balance scales that is capable of weighing very small amounts of fine powder. A standard weight is placed on one pan and powder is put on the other one until there is enough powder to balance the weight. Justice is like that scale. When a person's actions are compared with a specific law and they do not balance out because he has been disobedient to that law, justice requires that he be punished. This action balances the scales of justice. But should the rendering of justice be limited to the cold balancing of matters?

The great God of the universe has given mankind good laws, and from time to time he has had to balance the scales of justice by punishing those who violate those laws. In so doing, however, he warms up cold justice and tempers it with kindness and mercy. A representing angel said of him: "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth." (Ex. 34:6) Such are the gracious qualities he puts into the scales of justice.

When one violates God's law, thus throwing off balance the scales of divine justice, action must be taken to right matters. Strict justice calls for punishment to the full extent specified by the law. How-

ever, when heartfelt repentance is shown on the part of the wrongdoer, mercy can be extended. Such mercy is not something that God owes to one who violates His law; it is an undeserved kindness, but the sincere repentance of the sinner provides a basis for mercy to be shown. As a result there may be a lessening of the punishment administered. In the case of King David, the sentence of death was not carried out on him when he sinned with Uriah's wife because of his sincere repentance.

"David now said to Nathan: 'I have sinned against Jehovah.' At this Nathan said to David: 'Jehovah, in turn, does let your sin pass by. You will not die.'" (2 Sam. 12:13) But he was punished by losing his infant son by Bathsheba.

JEHOVAH WEIGHS EVERYONE ACCURATELY

Unlike God, who always judges righteously and accurately, many men in authority give unjust and crooked judgments and expect a bribe to induce them to straighten things out. This was done in the case of the apostle Paul when he was brought before the Roman Governor Felix. The governor kept Paul unjustly imprisoned for two years, hoping for a bribe. (Acts 24:26) Felix's successor, Festus, was no better, for he was willing to send Paul to his death by turning him over to his enemies in order to win the popular support of the Jews for his Roman administration. (Acts 25:9) Other men in authority may not be as crooked, but they will permit their emotion, sentimentality, prejudice and fear of men to distort justice.

The great God of justice, however, is just at all times and weighs everyone accurately in his true scales of justice. Regarding this Job says: "He will weigh me in accurate scales and God will get to know

my integrity." (Job 31:6) The judgment he renders and the punishment he measures out always are just and right, for he is a lover of justice.—Ps. 37:28.

Belshazzar, who ruled Babylon in the days of Daniel, came under God's judgment, and he failed to balance the scales of justice. In the year 539 B.C.E., a strange handwriting appeared on the wall of his banquet room while he and his royalty were having a feast, in which they defiled the sacred vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem sixty-eight years earlier. The handwriting warned him: "God has numbered the days of your kingdom and has finished it. . . . you have been weighed in the balances and have been found deficient. . . . your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and the Persians." (Dan. 5: 26-28) The scales of justice were balanced by his violent death that very night.

LONG-SUFFERING

In the exercising of divine justice, Jehovah does not move to balance the scales of justice until the errors of the guilty come to their full. Warnings are given and time is allowed for repentance, but none can escape his judgment. Showing that he is long-suffering in order that violators of his laws might repent, he states: "I take delight, not in the death of the wicked one, but in that someone wicked turns back from his way and actually keeps living. Turn back, turn back from your bad ways, for why is it that you should die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 33:11) But in due time he will "pay back to earthling man according to his activity."—Prov. 24:12.

The Amorites, for example, that were living in the land of Canaan during Abraham's time had not developed their error to the point that required divine punishment, but Jehovah saw that their bent of badness was putting the scales of justice

off balance. Abraham's descendants were used by God to balance the scales by their acting as executioners of the Amorites. "He began to say to Abram: 'You may know for sure that your seed will become an alien resident in a land not theirs, and they will have to serve them, and these will certainly afflict them for four hundred years. But the nation that they will serve I am judging, and after that they will go out with many goods. But in the fourth generation they will return here, because the error of the Amorites has not yet come to completion.'" (Gen. 15:13, 14, 16) By means of the Israelite armies, divine justice was executed on them.

TEMPERING JUSTICE

In the case of the first man, Adam, who disobeyed God by eating a fruit that was forbidden to him, justice was executed when he died, which would not have happened if he had been obedient. His offspring inherited his sin and passed it down to all mankind. God has shown compassionate mercy to Adam's descendants by providing a redemptive sacrifice that can free them from the execution of cold justice because of their sinful condition. It opens the way for them to escape from the permanent death sentence that came upon Adam, but they must manifest their repentance and their faith. They must furnish grounds for having God's mercy extended to them. "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

Jehovah also tempered his justice in the days of Noah. The Biblical record tells us that about 120 years before the great Flood "the badness of man was abundant in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time." The violating by man of what was

righteous in the eyes of God threw the scales of justice off balance. Jehovah God judged the world of that time and sentenced it to destruction. "Jehovah said: 'I am going to wipe men whom I have created off the surface of the ground.'" (Gen. 6:3-7) But this judgment decree was tempered when Jehovah showed the guilty undeserved kindness by staying the execution decree for 120 years. He was long-suffering with them. This gave men the opportunity to produce grounds for Jehovah to extend mercy to them on the basis of their repentance, which would mean the preservation of their lives through the Flood. All who failed to take advantage of those 120 years to build up legal grounds for mercy to be shown them were swept from the surface of the ground by the floodwaters. Their destruction balanced the scales of justice.

MODERN TIMES

Down to our modern times mankind, as a whole, have been repeating the unrighteous acts of the people who were swept away by the Flood. Their wickedness has become just as great, reaching a point that requires justice to be executed. God's patience with them will soon run out. Because the scales of justice have been thrown off balance by their wickedness, Jehovah will execute global judgment once again in order to bring about a balancing of justice. Through his written Word he foretold the executing of this justice. "It is righteous on God's part to repay tribulation to those who make tribulation for you, but, to you who suffer tribulation, relief along with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful an-

gels in a flaming fire, as he brings vengeance upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus." (2 Thess. 1:6-8) That will be the "war of the great day of God the Almighty," at which time "he must personally put himself in judgment with all flesh. As regards the wicked ones, he must give them to the sword."—Rev. 16:14; Jer. 25:31.

As during Noah's day when Jehovah tempered his justice by deferring execution for 120 years, so today he tempers his justice by deferring his war, called "the war of the great day of God the Almighty," (Rev. 16:14) Since 1918, he has shown undeserved kindness toward disobedient mankind by holding back his executional forces in the heavens in order that some "flesh would be saved." (Matt. 24:22) By means of his patience Jehovah has been giving all mankind opportunity to repent and to perform works of repentance. He has thus tempered justice with mercy. People must take advantage of this opportunity before Jehovah can show them further mercy by providing them with deliverance. They must give him grounds for preserving their lives through his coming war.

Although Jehovah God has a legal right to apply cold justice toward disobedient mankind, he has been compassionate by tempering his justice with mercy. Out of love he has provided the means by which mankind can escape the execution of cold justice and can regain what Adam lost—eternal life. But to benefit lastingly from this act of undeserved kindness, a person must appreciatively accept and act in harmony with God's provision for life.

If your brother commits a sin give him a reproof, and if he repents forgive him. Even if he sins seven times a day against you and he comes back to you seven times, saying, "I repent," you must forgive him.

—Luke 17:3, 4.

Questions from Readers

● Is cremation proper for Christians?

Among the ancient Hebrews it seems that it was the common practice to bury the dead in the ground or in tombs. (Gen. 50:13; Judg. 8:32; 1 Ki. 11:43) But on occasion bodies were burned or cremated for various reasons. The men of Jabesh-gilead took the corpses of Saul and his sons, faithful Jonathan included, to "Jabesh and burned them there. Then they took their bones and buried them." (1 Sam. 31:12, 13) For this they were praised by David. (2 Sam. 2:4-7) So, while cremation is not the general custom of Jews today, for ethical or personal reasons, "it is generally agreed that there is no express law to be found in the Bible demanding the burial of the human body."—*Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. IV, p. 343.

It appears that the early Christians, many of whom were natural Jews, generally followed the Jewish practice of burial in the earth. But since the Bible does not require burial, they were not overly concerned about some special custom. In time, though, pagan prac-

tices and fears began to creep into Christian beliefs. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, under the heading "Cremation," points out that the "Greeks and Romans varied in their practice according to their views of the after life." Pagan persecutors misunderstood the Christian belief and felt that the Christian resurrection depended upon a preserved body. The same publication continues: "The pagans, to destroy faith in the resurrection of the body, often cast the corpses of martyred Christians into the flames, fondly believing thus to render impossible the resurrection of the body."—Vol. IV, p. 481.

Of course, the true Christian has no misconception about the dead body in connection with the resurrection. In reference to those who are to rule with Christ in heaven, the Bible plainly states, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom." (1 Cor. 15:50) Accordingly, God will provide suitable bodies for those to be raised from death to earthly life. So whether a body returns to the elements by decaying in the ground or is burned to ashes does not in any way affect God's ability to resurrect the person, if that is His desire.

Christians can, therefore, consider local legal requirements as well as the sentiments of those in the community in deciding on this matter. (Phil. 1:10) Since Jehovah does not express disapproval of cremation in the Bible, it remains a matter for personal decision.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIELD MINISTRY

Faithfulness and loyalty are qualities that all servants of Jehovah God need. As they carry on their ministry, preaching God's Word, they find that they are called on to demonstrate these qualities every day. This will continue to be true during July as Jehovah's witnesses call on people everywhere to point out from the Bible the dangers of false religion and the blessings of God's kingdom. To aid truth seekers, they will offer the book *"Babylon the Great Has Fallen!" God's Kingdom Rules!*, along with a booklet, on a contribution of 75c.

SINCERITY CANNOT COVER CONTRADICTIONS

"What's in a name?" Many say that of religion—"just as long as you are sincere." But sincerity cannot cover the multitude of op-

posing and contradictory beliefs. Nor can such differences be pleasing to God. The apostle Paul made this clear when he said there are "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Your life depends on learning where these differences arose and how a vast system of false worship has grown out of the conflicting views about God. We are commanded to 'get out of her lest we suffer of her plagues.' Read *"Babylon the Great Has Fallen!" God's Kingdom Rules!* Send now and receive free the booklet *God's Way Is Love*. Send only 75c.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

August 1: Plaguings the Modern "Egyptians" with Truth, ¶1-22. Page 392.

August 8: Plaguings the Modern "Egyptians" with Truth, ¶23-29, and The Tenth Plague—Firstborn Slain. Page 398.