WHAT BINDING SATAN THE DEVIL Will Mean for Mankind

"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

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AV – Authorized Version (1611)
Du – Catholic Douay version
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"Happy are Those Conscious of Their Spiritual Need"

DID you ever see a person totally blind who was not aware of his blindness? Or did you ever meet a person so afflicted with trembling palsy that he could not feed himself and yet did not know that something was wrong with him? Hardly! But do you know that it is possible for a person to be just as blind and helpless in a religious or spiritual sense, in regard to his relationship to his Maker, the God of heaven and earth, and yet be wholly unaware of it?

Yes, there are such persons today, even as there were in Bible times. Thus Jesus Christ, the Son of God, said that the religious leaders of his day were 'blind men leading the blind and that both would fall into the pit'; although they themselves said to him, "We are not blind also, are we?" Likewise in the book of Revelation we find a certain Christian congregation, the one at Laodicea, being told, among other things: "You say, 'I am rich and have acquired riches and do not need anything at all,' but you do not know you are miserable and pitiable and poor and blind and naked."—Matt. 15:14; John 9:40; Rev. 3:17.

Such calloused sinners certainly are not included in the opening words of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them." In passing it might be noted that the nine conditions Jesus mentioned in his opening remarks are, according to the original Greek, states of felicity rather than "beatitudes," as they are usually termed.—Matt. 5:3-11.

Literally translated, Jesus' words, as noted in the footnote of the *New World Translation,* 1950 edition, read: "Happy are those who are beggars for the spirit." The word in the original Greek rendered "poor" or "beggars" is *ptokhos,* which means not just the poor but the very poor, the destitute, the beggars. It is used to describe Lazarus in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, making the greatest possible contrast.—Luke 16:20, 22.

Why did Jesus refer to these "beggars for the spirit" as being happy, that is, having a state of felicity or being favored by God? First of all, because, in contrast to those who are calloused, indifferent or ignorant of their spiritual need, there is hope for these. Conscious of their spiritual plight, they have stopped going in the wrong direction.

Those who are truly conscious of their spiritual needs or are beggars for the spirit may also be said to be happy because they will do something about it. They will heed Jesus' instructions: "Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you." Among the things they may ask for is Jehovah's spirit, which Jesus said his heavenly Father was ready to give.—Luke 11:8-13.

Further, those "conscious of their spiritual need" are happy in an anticipatory sense, even as Jesus said, "since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them." Strictly speaking, those to whom the "kingdom of the heavens" belongs are a limited number of Christ's followers who will sit on thrones and rule with him for a thousand years. (Luke 12:32; Rev. 20:4-6) However, the principle stated at Matthew 5:3 also applies to others, to Christ's "other sheep" mentioned at John 10:16. These will be happy in that they will inherit the earthly realm of the kingdom of God, even as Jesus said to the "sheep" on his right hand in his illustration or parable of the 'sheep and the goats': "Come, you who have my Father's blessing, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world." —Matt. 25:34.

The felicity or happiness of those conscious of their spiritual need Jesus illustrated in his parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Lazarus pictured those of the common people who were conscious of their spiritual lacks and shortcomings and upon whom the religious leaders laid great burdens. On the other hand, the rich man pictured those who were rich religiously speaking, having seated themselves in Moses' seat and having access to the Law of Moses and occupying the chief seats in the synagogues.—Matt. 23:2-4.

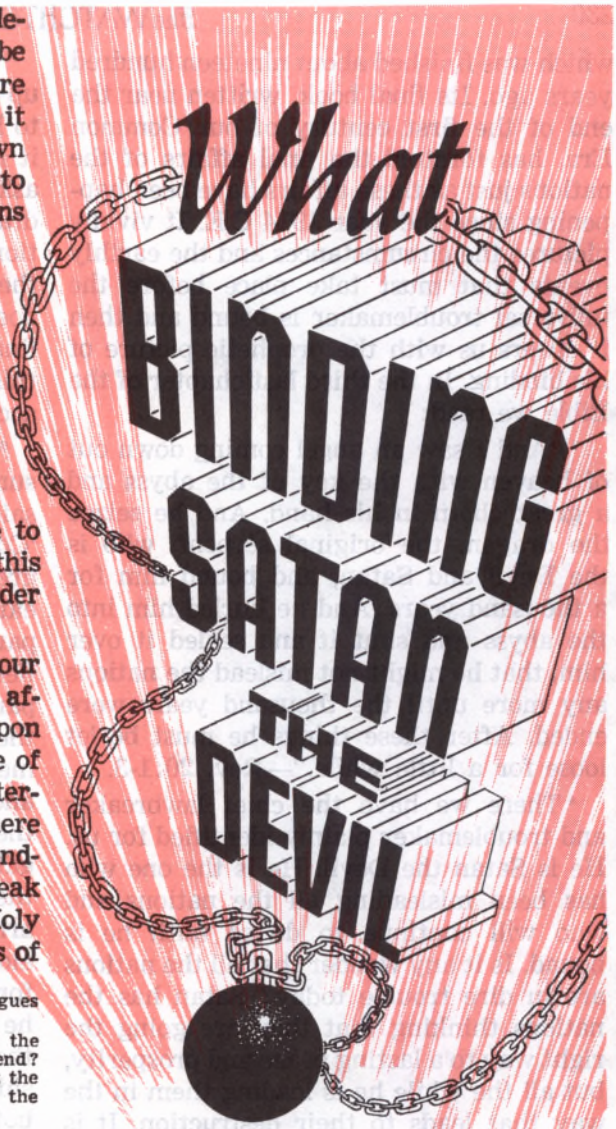
However, as a result of Jesus' preaching a change took place, pictured in the parable by the death of each. The 'rich' religious leaders came to be in torment because of the blunt message that Jesus preached, exposing their greed, hypocrisy and false religious teachings; whereas the Lazarus class, those conscious of their spiritual need, accepted the truth Jesus preached, became the spiritual remnant of Jewry and were given the hope of the heavenly kingdom.—Luke 16:19-31.

If you would know the happiness that Jesus spoke about, then you too must be conscious of your spiritual need. How do you show that you are conscious of your spiritual need? One way is by being a "beggar for the spirit," that is, praying to God for his spirit and for help in knowing and doing his will. (Luke 11:13) Another way is by carefully studying God's Word, wherein he reveals his will for his earthly creatures. Of course, to understand that Word you will need help, which God has providentially provided, as, for example, through the magazine you are now reading.—Matt. 24:45-47.

If you would satisfy your spiritual need you may "not neglect the house of our God," but must assemble with others who are conscious of their spiritual need for the purpose of satisfying it. Coming together with others of the same heart and mind, you are able to minister to one another's needs, to incite one another to love and fine works, giving and receiving mutual encouragement. Included in such fine works is ministering to still others who are conscious of their spiritual need with the Word of God. Doing so will result in even greater happiness!—Neh. 10:39; Acts 20:35; Heb. 10:23-25.

Truly it can be said that those who "are conscious of their spiritual need" and who sincerely strive to satisfy that need are happy now and will yet become increasingly happy!

What Binding Satan the Devil Will Mean for Mankind



THE greatest lawbreaker and troublemaker of all creation needs to be bound. Now all nations of the earth are in a bad plight. The one responsible for it needs to be bound, even during our own generation, if the human family is to survive. The very fact that the nations in desperate distress are close to their extremity argues that the binding is near, in fact, so near that members of this generation may live on and experience the grand effects of this. When in the near future the threatening world situation reaches its worst, it simply offers an excellent opportunity for the binding to take place, just when it is needed most. The one able to do the binding will take advantage of this opportunity, with benefit to the good order and peace of all.

[2] According to the grim realities of our times we must be near the end of the affairs of the nations. We cannot depend upon modern science to speak with the voice of supreme authority and to foretell or determine the destiny of our human race. There is something far older and more dependable than modern science, and it does speak with supreme authority. It is the Holy Bible, the writing of the sixty-six books of

1. Who especially needs to be bound, and what argues that this binding is near at hand?
2, 3. (a) As to speaking authoritatively regarding the destiny of our race, upon what can we depend? (b) What does the last book of the Bible say about the final affairs of the nations and of the binding of the troublemaker?

"And he seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years."—Rev. 20:2.

which was finished about nineteen hundred years ago. Its final book, written near the end of the first century of our Common Era, has foretold the final affairs of the nations just as these affairs have been happening since the year 1914 C.E. It vividly pictures the circumstances and the earthly events that must take place before the universal troublemaker is bound and then it cheers us with the prophetic picture of his binding. In the third last chapter of the Bible we read:

[3] "And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. And he hurled him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, that he might not mislead the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After these things he must be let loose for a little while."—Rev. 20:1-3.

[4] There we have the chief lawbreaker and troublemaker plainly identified for us. He is Satan the Devil. He is the one who has been misleading all the nations and who will continue to do so until he is bound. Is it any wonder that all the nations are in dire trouble today? Satan has the nations thinking that they are going the right way to a lasting peace and prosperity, but all the while he is leading them in the way that leads to their destruction. It is not surprising, then, that he is likened to a snake; and because he misled mankind from the beginning of human history, by means of deception, he is called "the original serpent." (Gen. 3:1-15) For his ability to do harm and to swallow up victims, Satan the Devil is no small enemy but is likened to a great fiery dragon with seven heads.—Rev. 12:3, 4; Jer. 51:34.

4. How is Satan the Devil misleading the nations in their thinking, and to what does the Bible therefore liken him?

[5] Dragonlike, Satan has tried to swallow up all men into his power. In order for us to locate the time for his binding, whether it is to be within our generation, we may ask, What is the thing that this symbolic dragon, Satan the Devil, does to the nations right before he is bound, hurled into the abyss and put under seal? Into what does he mislead the nations? It is to their final war! There can be no mistake about this, for in the five verses right before the account of the binding of Satan we read:

[6] "I saw also an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice and said to all the birds that fly in midheaven: 'Come here, be gathered together to the great evening meal of God, that you may eat the fleshy parts of kings and the fleshy parts of military commanders and the fleshy parts of strong men and the fleshy parts of horses and of those seated upon them, and the fleshy parts of all, of freemen as well as of slaves and of small ones and great.' And I saw the wild beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage the war with the one seated on the horse and with his army. And the wild beast was caught, and along with it the false prophet that performed in front of it the signs with which he misled those who received the mark of the wild beast and those who render worship to its image. While still alive, they both were hurled into the fiery lake that burns with sulphur. But the rest were killed off with the long sword of the one seated on the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth. And all the birds were filled from the fleshy parts of them." —Rev. 19:17-21.

[7] Ah, yes, the symbolic Dragon, Satan

5, 6. (a) To help us locate the time of his binding, in what relevant question do we interest ourselves? (b) What is the answer to the question, and why can there be no question about its rightness?

7. Who is it that brings the kings and their armies to the battle position, and how is this shown some verses ahead of the battle description?

the Devil, uses the "wild beast" and the "false prophet" and brings the kings of the earth and their armies to this battle position. In some verses ahead of the above battle description, in chapter sixteen, verses thirteen through sixteen, the Bible points this out, saying: "And I saw three unclean inspired expressions that looked like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the wild beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are, in fact, expressions inspired by demons and perform signs, and they go forth to the kings of the entire inhabited earth, to gather them together to the war of the great day of God the Almighty. . . . And they gathered them together to the place that is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon [or, Armageddon]."—Rev. 16:13-16; see also the *Authorized* and *Douay Versions*.

[8] So, as a human race, we are unavoidably headed for war. It will be no ordinary war. Otherwise, it would not be called "the war of the great day of God the Almighty." All the political rulers, here called "the kings of the entire inhabited earth," will be gathered to that war, and all of them on the one side, namely, against "God the Almighty." The religious leaders of the nations may persuade the political rulers, the "kings of the earth and their armies," that they are fighting for God, but this is all part of the deception by the 'inspired expression' that comes out of the mouth of the Dragon, Satan the Devil. Certainly these earthly nations will not be fighting for the God of truth and of righteousness, the Creator of heaven and earth, for his own Word warns us that he will destroy all these nations. Why so?

[9] Because they will be his enemies, opposed to his good purposes and to his heavenly government. They are all misled by the Chief Enemy of Almighty God, namely, the Dragon, Satan the Devil, who uses the "wild beast" and the "false prophet." In being destroyed the nations will experience the ultimate result of their having been misled by Satan the Devil for over four thousand years.

[10] The "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Armageddon is bound to come for the reason that the Dragon, Satan the Devil, and his demons are not yet bound and hurled into the abyss. The imprisoning of them in the abyss will not take place until *after* the war of Almighty God at Armageddon has been fought and his earthly enemies have been destroyed. Thus Satan the Devil must first see his visible organization on earth wiped out of existence and must know that he is whipped. Inasmuch as that war at Armageddon is impending, we know that the binding and imprisoning of Satan the Devil and his demons is also drawing near.

NO MERE "PRINCIPLE OF EVIL"

[11] In bluntly saying that all the worldly nations are lining up against God the Almighty and are going to fight against him, are we not assuming something? No! Our saying such a thing is not meant as an insult to such nations. This is only what the inspired Holy Bible has to say, namely, that all the nations are being misled by the great Dragon, Satan the Devil, and his demons.

[12] Of course, that goes contrary to what the religious leaders of the nations, the priests and clergymen of Christendom and of "heathendom," say to the political rul-

8, 9. (a) What indicates that this will be no ordinary war, and on what side will earth's kings be gathered? (b) For that reason, what will the nations deserve and get?

10. Why is the war at Armageddon bound to come, and why do we know that the binding of Satan is drawing near?

11. Why is our speaking of nations fighting against God not meant as an insult to them?

12. This statement goes contrary to what who say to the world rulers, and why do worldly-wise men smile at our talking of a personal Devil?

ers with whom they have friendly connections. The religious and political rulers of the earth are so worldly-wise and proud of their worldly learning that it hurts their feelings to be told that they are marching to a military Armageddon under the invisible guidance of the Dragon, Satan the Devil. While they admit that evil is really running rife throughout the earth, yet many highly educated persons will smile at our talking about a personal Devil. They say that Satan the Devil is only the "principle of evil," not a literal person.*

13 True, no cloven-hoofed, spike-tailed, two-horned, red devil exists. Such a creature is only the imagination of old-fashioned artists, painters and religiously backward persons. But with the world in the condition in which it is, this is no time to be fooling ourselves by imagining that Satan the Devil is merely the "principle of evil" personified, and not a superhuman, invisible spirit person who is the source and chief promoter of wickedness. The idea that the Devil is only the "principle of evil" is not recent, due to our coming into this scientific age, this age of nuclear power and travel in outer space. That religious idea was already given attention in the year 1894, when the ninth volume of the *Cyclopœdia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature* was published by the scholars John M'Clintock and James Strong in New York city.

* On page 3063, column 2, Volume 2 (edition of 1836) of the comments on the New Testament by Adam Clarke, LL.D., as published in London, England, said in a footnote on Revelation 12:9: *"That old serpent]* The rabbins speak much of this *being*, sometimes under the notion of יצר הרע yetser hara, *the evil principle*, and sometimes *Sammael*.

"He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.] This is very like a saying in the book *Bahir*, in *Sohar Gen.*, fol. 27, col. 107: *'And God cast out Sammael and his troops from the place of their holiness.'"*

13. What kind of Satan the Devil as pictured by old-fashioned artists does not exist, but is the idea of Satan as being merely the "principle of evil" something recent?

14 On page 361 this volume discusses the "Personality of Satan" and says that we determine whether Satan is a real person by the same standards of judgment that we use for "determining whether Caesar and Napoleon were real, personal beings; or [were] the personification of abstract ideas, namely, by the tenor of history concerning them and the ascription of personal attributes to them." Then this volume nine goes on to refer to the sacred writers of the Holy Scriptures, such as the Jewish prophet Moses and the first-century disciples of Jesus Christ, and says:

15 "All the forms of personal agency are made use of by the sacred writers in setting forth the character and conduct of Satan. They describe him as having power and dominion, messengers and followers. He tempts and resists; he is held accountable, charged with guilt; is to be judged, and to receive final punishment." If we were only to *suppose* that the sacred writers meant to teach that Satan was an actual person, "they could have found no more express terms than those which they have actually used." For anyone to *suppose* that "all this semblance of a real, veritable, conscious moral agent" is only a figure of speech, only the personification of a lifeless thing, a representation of an imaginary person, "is to make the inspired penmen guilty of employing a figure in such a way that, by no ascertained laws of language, it could be known that it was a figure—in such a way that it could not be taken to be a figure, without violence to all the rhetorical rules by which they on other occasions were known to have been guided."

14, 15. (a) According to this *Cyclopœdia*, by what standards of judging do we determine whether Satan is a real person? (b) If we were just to suppose that the Bible writers wanted to present Satan as a real person, could they have carried out their idea in a better way than they did? (c) From the way they wrote about him, could it be known that Satan was just a figure of speech, or what would treating Satan as a figure of speech mean?

[16] However, the inspired Bible writers, from the prophet Moses down to the Christian apostle John, did not use the Devil as a figure of speech. They purposely wrote in the most effective way for us Bible readers to know and understand that Satan the Devil is a real, corporeal, conscious, intelligent spirit person. They did not violate the laws of language and thus merely deceive us into thinking that Satan the Devil is a true-to-life person instead of simply the "principle of evil" personified. Hence the above-quoted *Cyclopædia* goes on to say: "But there are other difficulties than those general ones by which the theory of personification is encumbered. This theory supposes the devil to be the *principle of evil.* Let it [the theory] be applied to the interpretation of two or three passages of Scripture." Then the *Cyclopædia* takes up the Scripture passage about the temptation of Jesus Christ in the wilderness of Judea by Satan the Devil, as told by the Christian apostle Matthew, and says:

[17] " 'Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil.' (Matthew 4:1-11) Was Jesus tempted by a real, personal being? Or was it by the principle of evil? If by the latter, in whom or what did this principle reside? Was it in Jesus? Then it could not be true that in him was no sin. The very principle of sin was in him, which would have made him the tempter of himself. This is bad [science of interpretation], producing worse theology. Let it also be remembered that this principle of evil, in order to be moral evil, must inhere in some conscious moral being. Sin is evil only as it implies the state or action of some personal and accountable agent."

16. (a) Were the Bible writers trying to impose upon us a deception by the way they wrote about the Devil? (b) Is the theory that the Devil is merely the personification of the "principle of evil" free of encumbrances?

17. How does the aforesaid *Cyclopædia* argue about the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11)?

[18] The same argument against the idea that the "principle of evil" is personified as Satan the Devil could be used with regard to God Almighty himself. This is in connection with the God-fearing man named Job, who was still alive in the days of the prophet Moses fifteen hundred years before our Common Era. The Bible book of Job tells us of how Satan himself appeared in the presence of God at the time of a meeting of the holy angels in heaven. Job, chapter one, verse seven, reads:

[19] "Then Jehovah said to Satan: 'Where do you come from?' At that Satan answered Jehovah and said: 'From roving about in the earth and from walking about in it.' "

[20] Well, now, was Satan here no real person, but merely the "principle of evil"? If so, then to whom was Jehovah God talking? To himself? If so, then Satan, the personified principle of evil, was residing in Jehovah God himself. This would mean, too, that the principle of evil was inherent in God Almighty himself, and that moral evil originated with the only living and true God. Such a blasphemous idea is against all the rest of the Holy Bible.

[21] Furthermore, God pronounced the man Job to be "a man blameless and upright, fearing God and turning aside from bad." But Satan accused Job of serving Jehovah God just for what earthly benefits he could get out of it. We read: "At that Satan answered Jehovah and said: 'Is it for nothing that Job has feared God? . . . But, for a change, thrust out your hand, please, and touch everything that he has and see whether he will not curse you to your very face.' " (Job 1:8-11) Now, if Satan here were just

18. How can this same argument against the personification of the "principle of evil" be applied in connection with Jehovah God?

19, 20. If, in Job 1:7, Satan the Devil is just the "principle of evil," then what questions arise and to what conclusion do we come?

21. Were the theory of the personification of evil principle true, who, then, really accused Job before God, who contradicted himself, and who proved to be a liar in the outcome?

the "principle of evil" personified that really was accusing the man Job to God, then Jehovah God himself would be the accuser, and this right after he had pronounced Job to be a good man without an equal in the earth. In that case the principle of evil would be in the Most High God himself, and he would be contradicting himself. Furthermore, when God let Satan test out Job and when Satan was proved to be a liar, then, if Satan was only the principle of evil, God himself was proved to be a liar.—Job 1:12-22.

[22] His first test having failed, Satan asked for permission to make a further test of Job, and Jehovah God let him do so. Again Satan's accusation of Job was proved to be false. If Satan here was just the personified "principle of evil" that actually resided in Jehovah God, then once more Jehovah God was proved to be a liar. But it is impossible for God to lie, whereas Jesus Christ said that Satan the Devil is the author or "father" of the first lie, the lie by means of which Satan the Devil murdered the human family.—Titus 1:1, 2; Heb. 6:18; John 8:44.

[23] So by all the rules of sound reason and by the laws of language, Satan must be a real, live person in the invisible spirit realm. After Job's faithfulness proved Satan to be a devil or slanderer, God recovered Job from his great affliction and richly blessed him. Other Bible writers besides Moses speak of Job as a historical person, not an imaginary person; and this argues that Satan the Devil was and is a historical person, just the same as Jehovah God is an actual, conscious, moral Being in the Bible book of Job.—Ezek. 14:14, 20; Jas. 5:11; compare Revelation 12:9-12.

22. (a) How does such a theory make God prove himself a liar a second time in connection with Job? (b) Why is the conclusion drawn from such an application of the theory an impossibility?

23. Thus what is Satan the Devil really proved to be, and, parallelwise, what is Job, and even Jehovah God, proved to be?

[24] Other passages of the Holy Scriptures could be discussed to prove how ridiculous it is to say that Satan the Devil in the Bible is no real person but merely an impersonal "principle of evil." But our time does not allow; just as M'Clintock and Strong's *Cyclopœdia* argues with reference to John 8:44 and then says: "It would be a waste of time to prove that, in various degrees of clearness, the personal existence of a Spirit of Evil is revealed again and again in Scripture. Every quality, every action, which can indicate personality, is attributed to him in language which cannot be explained away." —Volume 9, page 361b.

HOW BROUGHT INTO EXISTENCE

[25] Since the God of all goodness and righteousness is not the source of any moral evil or badness, it may be hard for you to reason out how Satan the Devil could come into existence and become a menace to the whole world of mankind today. However, the Sacred Bible gives the simple facts on this. The expression "Satan the Devil" means "Resister the Slanderer." It is not hard for anyone to make himself a resister or opposer and a slanderer [*diábolos*] of someone else, particularly of Jehovah God.

[26] For instance, on one occasion Jesus Christ called his apostle Peter a *satan* or "resister." After Peter rebuked his Master Jesus Christ for predicting a violent death for himself, the Master said to Peter: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you think, not God's thoughts, but those of men." (Matt. 16:23) On another occasion, when this same Peter expressed faith that Jesus was "the

24. What does time not allow us here to do, and what, too, does the *Cyclopœdia* say about proving existence of a personal Devil?

25. What book explains how Satan the Devil came into existence, and what does this name and title of him really mean?

26. How is it shown, in connection with Peter and Judas Iscariot, that it is easy to make a satan or a devil of oneself?

Holy One of God," then, as reported in John 6:68-71 (*AS*), Jesus answered him, "'Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil [*diábolos*]?' Now he spake of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve." Thus Judas Iscariot made himself a devil or slanderer.—John 6:70, *NW*.

27 When the Christian apostle Paul wrote out instructions for Christian women, he said: "Women should likewise be serious, not slanderous [or, female devils]." (1 Tim. 3:11) "Likewise let the aged women be reverent in behavior, not slanderous [*diabólous*]." (Titus 2:3) Paul also wrote: "In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, . . . slanderers [*diáboloi*]." (2 Tim. 3:1-3) So besides spirit devils, there can be human devils in the sense of being slanderers against men and against God. The "God of truth" does not make them devils or slanderers; men and women make themselves such. —Ps. 31:5.

28 The same process of making oneself something is true with respect to the superhuman spirit creature whom the Bible calls "the great dragon . . . , the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth." (Rev. 12:9) The spirit creature who became such had a beginning as such after Jehovah God created him. Regarding him, the Lord Jesus Christ said to some religious persons who were inclined to murder him: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44, *AV*) On this statement made by Jesus the *Cyclopædia* quoted above (Volume 9, page 364a) says: "But here it seems likely the words *ap' arkhés* [*from the beginning*] refer to the beginning of his action upon man."

29 Thus the spirit creature here involved was not created as Satan the Devil. God did not create him a murderer, but created him in the truth. However, he did not choose to remain in the truth, but decided to become a liar, a slanderer (*diábolos*). So, when he lied, he did not speak according to the will and spirit of his heavenly Father but spoke the lie of his own accord or disposition. Since he did not stand fast in God's truth but started off lies, he was called the father of lies. He was a murderer, not from the time of his creation by God, but from his beginning as Satan the Devil. He was a self-made Satan the Devil.

30 In chapter three, the first book of the Bible as written by the prophet Moses tells us how Satan the Devil came to be. As a superhuman spirit person he was present invisibly in man's first home, the garden of Eden in what is now southwest Asia. After Jehovah God created woman to be a companion for the perfect man Adam, Satan the Devil came on the scene of action. Using a snake or serpent as his medium, this invisible spirit son of God displayed resistance or opposition to Jehovah God by telling the perfect woman Eve a shameful lie against God her heavenly Father.

31 The Resister or Opposer thus made himself a slanderer or devil. In telling Eve a lie to mislead her into disobedience toward God, he also became a deceiver. He

27. How does the apostle Paul show that women and men can make devils of themselves in the sense of being slanderers?

28. This process of making oneself something was true also of whom, and how did Jesus confirm this in John 8:44?

29. How did the one who is now Satan the Devil become the "father" of lies, and when did he become a murderer?

30. When did Satan the Devil come on the scene of action, and how did he then show his resistance?

31. What about his course was it that made him a deceiver, and what did God thenceforth use as a symbol of him clear to the end of the Bible?

kept invisible to Eve, but used a visible serpent to tell the lie to her. Hence the Bible says: "The serpent seduced Eve by its cunning." (2 Cor. 11:3) For this reason, right there in the garden of Eden, Jehovah God made the serpent or snake a symbol of Satan the Deceiver, and in the last book of the Bible this arch Deceiver is called "the ancient serpent," or, "the original serpent," who is "misleading the entire inhabited earth."—Rev. 12:9; 20:2, *RS; AT; NW*.

32 What was the purpose of the "original serpent, the one called Devil [*Diábolos*] and Satan," in misleading Eve by calling her God and Father a liar filled with fear? According to the way that things worked out, his purpose was to turn Eve against God and then to use her to turn her husband Adam against God and thus get both of them on his side and under his power. In that way, too, he would get all their offspring, the whole human race, under his power and the whole earth would become a land of rebels or resisters against Jehovah God. About forty-one hundred years later, the Christian apostle John wrote: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19, *NW; RS; NEB*) At the same time wicked Satan brought mankind under the power of sin and death, for God's decree is: "The wages sin pays is death." (Rom. 6:23) We were all born in sin and death from Adam and Eve.

33 In enforcing his sentence of death upon the sinners, Jehovah God drove Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden and thus away from its tree of life. We read: "Jehovah God went on to say: 'Here the man has become like one of us in knowing good and bad, and now in order that he may not put his hand out and actually take fruit also of the tree of life and eat and live to time indefinite,—' With that Jehovah God put him out of the garden of Eden to cultivate the ground from which he had been taken." It was after this that the sinful Adam and Eve began to have children, outside, not within, the garden of Eden. (Gen. 3:22 to 4:3) By God's judicial decree and by the law of genetics sin and death passed on all of us as their descendants. (Rom. 5:12) What a fall we had!

34 However, the angelic son of God who became "the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan," also suffered a fall. This is indicated by God's words directed to him there in the garden of Eden. Speaking to him as if he were speaking to the literal serpent whom Satan had used to mislead Eve, Jehovah God said: "Because you have done this thing, you are the cursed one out of all the domestic animals and out of all the wild beasts of the field. Upon your belly you will go and dust is what you will eat all the days of your life. And I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel."—Gen. 3:14, 15.

35 Satan the Devil thus came under God's curse and became the father of the cursed ones. (Matt. 25:41) Accordingly, he is doomed to be forever destroyed, to be bruised in the head under the foot of the promised Seed of God's "woman." In harmony with this the Christian apostle Paul said to those who are part of this Seed of God's "woman": "God who gives peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly."—Rom. 16:20.

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32. What was the Devil's purpose in misleading Eve, and so in what condition were we all born?

33. To enforce his decree against Adam, what did God do, and why did sin and death pass on to all of us?

34. Who also then had a fall, and how did God indicate this in the garden of Eden?

35. Satan thus became the father of what ones, and to what is he therefore doomed?

WHEN CAST OUT OF HEAVEN

[36] Many readers of the Bible have thought that at the time when God pronounced those words against the serpent in Eden Satan the Devil was cast out of heaven, and that this fall from heaven is what is described in the last book of the Bible, in Revelation 12:3-13, where we read these words:

[37] "Another sign was seen in heaven, and, look! a great fiery-colored dragon, with seven heads and ten horns and upon its heads seven diadems; . . . And the dragon kept standing before the woman who was about to give birth, that, when she did give birth, it might devour her child. And she gave birth to a son, a male, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod. And her child was caught away to God and to his throne. . . .

[38] "And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels battled with the dragon, and the dragon and its angels battled but it did not prevail, neither was a place found for them any longer in heaven. So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven say: 'Now have come to pass the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brothers has been hurled down, who accuses them day and night before our God! . . . Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time.' Now when the dragon saw that it was hurled down to the earth, it persecuted the woman that gave birth to the male child."

36-38. When do many Bible readers think that Satan's fall from heaven occurred, and where do they think the description of this is given in the Bible?

39 Does that account refer to the casting of "the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan," out of God's favor at the garden of Eden? No! Even the *Cyclopædia* already quoted from refers to Revelation 12:7, 9 and says: "Whatever be the meaning of this passage, it is certain that it cannot refer to the original fall of Satan."* At that time, almost six thousand years ago, no woman had given birth to a child. Certainly God's symbolic "woman" had not given birth to the promised "male child." At that early time Jehovah God merely promised that his "woman" would give birth to a seed that would bruise the Serpent in the head. For that reason the "original serpent," Satan the Devil, would thenceforth be on the watch to devour the Seed of God's "woman" and prevent being bruised in the head to destruction. But at that time no war broke out in heaven to cast Satan the Devil out.

40 Another thing: the last book of the Bible was written many years, traditionally sixty-three years, after Jesus Christ died, was resurrected and ascended back to heaven. So its writing was near the close of the first century of our Common Era; and Revelation, chapter one, verse one, says: "A revelation by Jesus Christ, which God gave him, to show his slaves the things that must shortly take place." Hence what is referred to in chapter twelve of the Revelation must be those things due to occur some time after the resurrected Jesus Christ gave this revelation to his faithful apostle John about 96 C.E.

41 It is not strange, therefore, that the book of Job, likely written by Moses, plainly declared that in Job's day, twenty-five centuries after Satan the Devil misled Eve in the garden of Eden, he still had entry into heaven and could accuse God's people before God's face. (Job 1:6 to 2:7) Also, none of the inspired Hebrew Scriptures written after Job reveal that Satan the Devil was cast out of heaven, even down till the prophet Malachi's time.

42 Has Satan the Devil been cast out of heaven and down to this earth as yet? If so, when? How can we tell, since we cannot see him inasmuch as he is a spirit creature unseen to our eyes?

THE EVIDENCE OF HIS OUSTING

43 Look, though, at world conditions on earth since World War I of 1914-1918. Satan's being cast out of heaven and down to our earth would surely affect things on this earth, especially since Revelation 12:12 cries out: "Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time." What is that—"a short period of time"? Till when? Till he and his demons are seized, chained and hurled into an abyss, unable to mislead the nations for a thousand years. (Rev. 20:1-3) Certainly someone superhuman is responsible for the woeful conditions on earth since World War I, and could that one be the angered, ousted Satan? Let us see.

44 Note, please, what Satan's ouster *is* said to betoken. After he and his demon angels were to be defeated in the war in heaven, a loud voice was to be heard in heaven, saying: "Now have come to pass the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ." (Rev.

* Quoted from page 363b of Volume 9 of the *Cyclopædia* by M'Clintock and Strong, under the heading "Satan."

39. That prophetic account in Revelation 12:3-13 could not apply to Satan's fall back in Eden, because of what vital things not yet being fulfilled then?

40. According to Revelation 1:1, why could what is described in Revelation, chapter twelve, not have occurred back at Eden?

41. What does the book of Job reveal as to Satan's access to heaven, and what do the Hebrew Scriptures written after Job have to reveal on this?

42. So, now, what questions do we ask about Satan's being cast out of heaven?

43. Who must be responsible for world conditions since World War I, and why does Revelation 12:12 suggest itself in this connection?

44. What, according to Revelation 12:10, was Satan's ouster to betoken, and so his ouster results really from what?

12:10) From this meaningful announcement it is plain that the casting of Satan and his demon angels out of the high heavens and down to our earth must take place after God's kingdom is set up in the heavens. Satan's ouster results from the fact that God's "woman" in the heavens gives birth to the male child, and then the symbolic Dragon, Satan the Devil, fails to devour the male child but this male child is "caught away to God and to his throne." (Rev. 12:1, 2, 4, 5) So the birth of the male child and its enthronement alongside God in heaven must picture the birth of God's heavenly kingdom by the enthronement of his Son Jesus Christ in power at God's right hand. That is why the announcement could be made in the heavens: "Now have come to pass . . . the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ."

45 Birth and enthronement of God's kingdom with his Christ in royal authority took place in 1914. World events during the more than fifty years since 1914 harmonize with the prophecies given by Jesus Christ himself. In them he foretold the events and conditions that should be in evidence when God would enthrone him in the heavens and when he as the new Messianic king would begin ruling in the midst of his enemies in heaven and on earth. —Ps. 110:1-6; Heb. 10:12, 13; Matt. 24:3 to 25:46; Rev. 6:1-8; 11:15-18.

46 Evidently the war that "broke out in heaven" to oust Satan and his demons therefrom ran simultaneously, for at least part of the time, with World War I here on earth during 1914-1918. But that war, which the politicians said was "the war to end all wars" and to "make the world safe for democracy," did not end carnal warfare, make the world safe for democracy or end our woes.

47 Do you see the fulfillment of Bible prophecies in world affairs since the year 1914? If you do, then the evidence is clear that Satan has been ousted from heaven and is now restrained to our earth. It is evident that we are now living in that "short period of time" that Satan knows he yet has and we see him venting his great anger at his defeat in heaven by causing "woe for the earth and for the sea." Not only that, but he is causing religious persecution, inasmuch as it is written: "Now when the dragon saw that it was hurled down to the earth, it persecuted the woman that gave birth to the male child. . . . And the dragon grew wrathful at the woman, and went off to wage war with the remnant of her seed, who observe the commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness to Jesus." (Rev. 12:12-17) Is it any wonder, then, that in all parts of the world Jehovah's Christian witnesses are persecuted because they bear witness to the birth of God's Messianic kingdom in the heavens in 1914? No, not at all!

48 About fifty years have already been used up of the "short period of time" that the ousted Satan knows he has before he and his demons are bound and hurled into the abyss for a thousand years of imprisonment. The time remaining before that must now be very short. Feverishly he and his demons are using their unseen influence to gather the "kings of the entire inhabited earth" to what the last book of the Bible calls Armageddon, for the "war of the great day of God the Almighty." (Rev. 16:13-16) A "great day" that will be indeed for God the Almighty, for he and his King Jesus Christ will win the war at Armaged-

45. When did the birth of God's Messianic kingdom take place in heaven, and what proof thereof do we have?

46. So what two wars took place simultaneously, and what happened to our woes?

47. In what "period of time" are we evidently living, and what explanation is there for religious persecution today?

48. (a) How is Satan using what remains of his "short period of time"? (b) How will the day of battle at Armageddon prove to be a "great" one?

don. All those on the Devil's side will lose this decisive war, the greatest of all human history. For men it will prove to be the worst woe into which Satan and his demons will have led mankind.—Matt. 24:21, 22.

49 The big question for each one of us to decide is, Will I be on the winning side? It is a most critical question for us, for we want to decide in the right way. The time for deciding is now, as it is a matter of everlasting life or of everlasting death and destruction for us. We do not desire to be lined up at that time with the "wild beast and the kings of the earth and their armies" who are "gathered together to wage the war with the one seated on the horse and with his army," namely, with the heavenly Jesus Christ, the "King of kings and Lord of lords," and his heavenly angels. (Rev. 19:11-19) To be lined up with the "wild beast" and the earthly kings and their armies then would mean our destruction with them, as shown by the Bible prophecy on the outcome of the war of Armageddon on God's "great day."—Rev. 19:20, 21.

BENEFITS TO MEN FROM HIS BEING BOUND

50 The binding of Satan and his demons immediately follows the destruction of his earthly forces at Armageddon, and, were we to be destroyed at Armageddon, we could never enjoy the lasting benefits therefrom. (Rev. 19:20 to 20:3) Never could we enjoy the blessings of the royal rule of Jesus Christ for a thousand years that follows the binding of Satan and his demons and the hurling of them into the abyss of complete restraint. That this is the lineup of events is shown in Revelation 20:3-6, where we read:

51 "And [the angel from heaven] hurled him into the abyss and shut it up and sealed it over him, that he might not mislead the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After these things he must be let loose for a little while. And I saw thrones, and there were those who sat down on them, and power of judging was given them. Yes, I saw the souls of those executed with the ax for the witness they bore to Jesus and for speaking about God, and those who had worshiped neither the wild beast nor its image and who had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand. And they came to life and ruled as kings with the Christ for a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Happy and holy is anyone having part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of the Christ, and will rule as kings with him for the thousand years."

52 What will the reign for a thousand years by Jesus Christ and the rest of the Seed of God's "woman" who did not worship the "wild beast" mean? For one thing, mankind will no more be ruled by the "wild beast." Here you might think we are joking; you might ask, Mankind has never been ruled by a wild beast, has it? No, not by a literal wild beast, but by a symbolic one. And what is that? In explanation, the Revelation to John refers to the Dragon, Satan the Devil, after his being cast out of heaven, and then says:

53 "And it stood still upon the sand of the sea. And I saw a wild beast ascending out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, and upon its horns ten diadems, but upon its heads blasphemous names. Now the wild beast that I saw was like a leopard, but its feet were as those of a bear, and

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49. What is now the big question for us to decide, and why is it so critical for us?

50, 51. (a) According to Revelation 19:20 to 20:3, what is the lineup of events at and after Armageddon? (b) So what would one's destruction with Satan's earthly forces at Armageddon mean?

52, 53. Christ's thousand-year reign will relieve mankind of the rule of what earthly thing?

its mouth was as a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave the beast its power and its throne and great authority. . . . And it opened its mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name and his residence, even those residing in heaven. And there was granted it to wage war with the holy ones and conquer them, and authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation. And all those who dwell on the earth will worship it."—Rev. 13:1-8.

54 What does this "wild beast" symbolize? The worldwide political system under the invisible control of God's great adversary, Satan, "the original serpent," who blasphemed God in the garden of Eden. A comparison of the foregoing symbolisms in this Revelation to the apostle John and the symbolisms in the prophetic book of Daniel, chapter seven, will confirm that the "wild beast" symbolizes the worldwide political system that God's great adversary has used since the days of Nimrod the founder of ancient Babylon on the Euphrates in the next century after the watery deluge of Noah's day. Nimrod the great-grandson of Noah was called "a mighty hunter in opposition to Jehovah."—Gen. 10:8-12.

55 The system of political rule from Nimrod's time onward till now has featured seven successive world powers that have oppressed God's people. Has that system been like a "wild beast"? We leave you, our readers, to judge. First read the history of those world powers, namely, ancient Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, Rome and the British-American political alliance, and then render your honest judgment. This symbolic "wild beast" has been worshiped. Even today we witness the worship of the political state, the idolizing of national sovereignty. All this has bred wars!

56 After the "wild beast" is destroyed at Armageddon and its invisible master, the Dragon, Satan the Devil, is bound, there will be no "wild beast" of that kind to worship nor any further oppression of all mankind by it, nor any persecution of the worshipers of Jehovah God by it. This spells the death knell for international wars, civil wars, yes, for political alliances and treaty organizations, for the United Nations organization, for territorial boundaries that divide off one peacefully inclined people from neighboring peoples, for tariffs, customs, duties, for commercial rivalries or battles over world markets, and for all other present divisive arrangements that are due to the worshiping of the political state as a god.

57 Worshipers of the "wild beast" will resent our saying that the Dragon, Satan the Devil, has given to the worldly political system its power, throne and authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. But what can they say in the face of the Devil's own statement to Jesus Christ when tempting Jesus to take over the political rule of the whole earth? Let them read Luke 4:5-8, which says that Satan the Devil took Jesus up and "showed him all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth in an instant of time; and the Devil said to him: 'I will give you all this authority and the glory of them, because it has been delivered to me, and to whomever I wish I give it. You, therefore, if you do an act of worship before me, it will all be yours.' In reply Jesus said to him: 'It is written, "It is Jehovah your God you must worship." ' "

54. What does this "wild beast" symbolize, and how can we confirm this Scripturally?
55. How can we determine for ourselves whether the Bible's use of a "wild beast" as a symbolism fits matters?
56. After the "wild beast" is destroyed at Armageddon and Satan is bound, what things will no longer continue on earth?
57. How may some persons feel about our statement that the Devil has given the political system its control, but what did the Devil himself disclose when tempting Jesus Christ?

[58] Jesus Christ was not just imagining something when he called Satan "the ruler of this world." (John 16:11) The Christian apostle Paul was not just imagining something when he called Satan "the god of this system of things" and said that "Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light" and "his ministers also keep transforming themselves into ministers of righteousness." (2 Cor. 4:4; 11:14, 15) There is a real Satan the Devil that needs to be bound and that will be bound and imprisoned. All hail the day when this is done! When Satan and his demons are finally hurled into the abyss out of touch with all mankind, it will mean the end of all false religions and of religious wars, divisions and hatreds, the end of all demonism, witchcraft, voodooism, spiritism, astrology and sorcery. Then the one true, life-giving religion will prevail throughout all the earth. Men will worship the one living and true God, the One whose name, says Psalm 83:18, "is Jehovah." The benefit of the worship of Jehovah as God is stated by Jesus Christ as follows:

[59] "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ."—John 17:3. See also Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14.

[60] The rule of Satan the Devil for millenniums of time has meant sin, death and the descent into the common grave of all mankind till now. The millennial reign of Jesus Christ with the remaining ones of the Seed of God's "woman" will mean the bruising of the "original serpent" in the head, to his destruction. (Rev. 20:7-10; Gen. 3:14, 15; Rom. 16:20) It signifies the giving to men the opportunity for endless life in happiness under a perfect godly government over an earth transformed at last into a paradise of pleasure for mankind's everlasting habitation. The precious opportunity for this does not confine itself to God-fearing persons on earth who live through the war of Armageddon and the binding and imprisoning of Satan the Devil and his demons. No, but this grand opportunity takes in all people for whom Jesus Christ was 'bruised in the heel' and died as a ransom sacrifice nineteen hundred years ago. —1 Tim. 2:5, 6; Matt. 20:28.

[61] How will that be possible? Ah, there will be a resurrection of those dead in the common grave. (Acts 24:15) Not all of them at once, but by the end of the thousand years the common grave of mankind will have been emptied of them all. All the obedient ones who pass the decisive test of their devotion to God at the end of the thousand years will get or keep their names written on God's book of life. Thus they will "come to life" in its perfect fullness at the end of Christ's thousand-year reign. Those who fail in that final test will be destroyed forever along with Satan and his demons by means of whom God will permit the final test to come upon all inhabitants of the earthly Paradise.—Rev. 20:5, 7-15.

[62] What exquisite expectations, therefore, will be realized by mankind after Satan and his demons are bound and imprisoned! Let us pray constantly for the early realization of those blessed expectations by continuing to offer the Lord's prayer to our heavenly Father: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth."—Matt. 6:9, 10.

58, 59. (a) What did Jesus and his apostle Paul call Satan, not imaginatively, and so what will the binding and imprisoning of him mean for mankind? (b) What will the worship of Jehovah God mean for mankind?

60. (a) In contrast with what Satan's rule has meant for mankind, what will Christ's thousand-year rule mean for them? (b) Will the opportunity thus presented be for earthly survivors of these final events, or for whom?

61. (a) How will that be possible? (b) Thus when will the "rest of the dead" finally "come to life," and how?

62. How can we pray for the realization of these blessed expectations?

ARE YOU BEING EXPLOITED WITH Counterfeit Words?

WHEN word gets out that there is counterfeit money being circulated in a community, you immediately check the money you have on hand because you know it may mean considerable loss to you if you happen to have some of the counterfeit, and, worse, may involve you in a great deal of trouble if you should try to pass some of it. It may be such a skillful counterfeit that you have to go to your banker to identify it. Counterfeit words can be even more deceptive and damaging. You would have to go to a reliable source of true words and facts to detect the fraud.

The apostle Peter, one of the most intimate apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, a short time before his own death wrote an inspired warning to the Christian congregation, telling them to keep on the watch, for, he said, there would be some from right among the Christian congregations who, with covetousness, "will exploit you with counterfeit words." (2 Pet. 2:3) We can be sure, then, that not all that holds itself out to be Christianity is truly Christian and that the counterfeit is no weak and insignificant attempt but a deeply laid plot with strong power to deceive. Happily, due to God's care for us we are able, by looking into the Bible, a source of true words, and by tracing the inception and development of this counterfeit Christianity, to unmask the counterfeit. How? These reliable authorities clear up many questions for us, among them being: Why are there so many different sects and divisions in the lands known as Christendom, when Christianity really sprang from one person, Jesus Christ?

In previous issues we have been watching the contest between Babylon and Zion, or Jerusalem. We have seen how the ancient city swallowed up Jerusalem but later was forced to release its captives. Babylon gradually went into decay but its religion remained and came to be very strongly represented in the religion of pagan Rome. After the fall of Babylon to Cyrus the Persian, the god of the Babylonish religion, Satan the Devil, had to adopt different tactics to fight against God. By playing on the selfishness and greed of the leaders of the Jewish nation, he infiltrated that religion and brought about an apostate condition. So far was it from the true worship of God that it caused these leaders to put to death the Messiah, whom the Hebrew Scriptures had foretold. As a result, God cast them off. No more could Israel be used by God as his holy nation. Nevertheless, there was a faithful Jewish remnant who would not follow their leaders but stuck to the true worship of God and accepted the Messiah. It was these who formed the nucleus of Christianity. The Devil recognized that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, was the Seed who was foretold to crush his head in due

time and that the preaching of Christ's kingdom was a powerful force against him. Therefore, he must employ Babylonish religion again to oppose this new arrangement of God. He must, if possible, destroy Christianity.

In setting out to fight Christianity, however, the religion of Babylon was coming up against something new and different. Christianity was far more vigorous; besides, it was a missionary religion—it was preached to all nations. The early Christian congregation grew amazingly fast and, under the leadership of the twelve apostles, flourished while maintaining its original purity against Jewish and official persecution. Babylon must employ more effective tactics. How Babylonish religion set about to fight Christianity by a devilish strategy and how far it succeeded makes most interesting reading and at the same time is something we must know. It means the unraveling of a mystery.

JESUS FORETELLS THE COUNTERFEIT

Jesus Christ, the leader of Christianity, foresaw the fight and its conclusion. He forewarned his disciples by giving them the following parable:

> "The kingdom of the heavens has become like a man that sowed fine seed in his field. While men were sleeping, his enemy came and oversowed weeds in among the wheat, and left. When the blade sprouted and produced fruit, then the weeds appeared also. So the slaves of the householder came up and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow fine seed in your field? How, then, does it come to have weeds?' He said to them, 'An enemy, a man, did this.' They said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go out and collect them?' He said, 'No; that by no chance, while collecting the weeds, you uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the harvest season I will tell the reapers, First collect the weeds and bind them in bundles to burn them up, then go to gathering the wheat into my storehouse.' "—Matt. 13:24-30.

When asked about the meaning of the illustration Jesus explained that he himself was the sower; the field was the world; the fine seed were the true Christians as sons of the Kingdom; and the weeds were the sons of the wicked one sowed by the Devil—hypocritical Christians. The harvest would be a conclusion of a system of things and the reapers were angels.

The Devil's sowing of the imitation sons of the Kingdom within the Christian congregation was not to wait until a long time after Jesus' death, no, it was to be while men were sleeping, referring to the sleeping in death of the twelve apostles of Christ, or to the sleeping mentally or failure on the part of the appointed overseers of the Christian congregation to keep on the watch spiritually.

WHERE THE COUNTERFEIT ORIGINATED

So the Devil would perpetrate a counterfeit. This would be a much more effective way to hinder the spread of true Christianity than an open fight against it. Supporting Jesus' words and showing just where the deceptive counterfeit Christians would come from, Peter said: "However, there also came to be false prophets among the people, as there will also be false teachers among you. These very ones will quietly bring in destructive sects and will disown even the owner that bought them, bringing speedy destruction upon themselves. Furthermore, many will follow their acts of loose conduct, and on account of these the way of the truth will be spoken of abusively. Also, with covetousness they will exploit you with counterfeit words. But as for them, the judgment of ancient times is not moving slowly, and the destruction of them is not slumbering."—2 Pet. 2:1-3.

In Peter's words the mystery about the method of Satan's fight through Babylon-

ish religion is cleared up. The imitation Christians would be strong professors of Christianity, Christians who would turn from the truth. They would be leaders who would even form sects claiming to be Christian but being actually destructive of true Christianity. They would disown the owner who bought them, not openly in so many words, but by their hypocritical course of action. The apostle Paul described them to Titus in this way: "They publicly declare they know God, but they disown him by their works, because they are detestable and disobedient and not approved for good work of any sort." (Titus 1:16) The result among professing Christians would be loose conduct and would cause the way of truth to be spoken of abusively.

When the apostles of Jesus Christ were alive, they worked hard to build up the Christian congregation as a bulwark against such apostasy, which they knew would occur, and their efforts were not in vain, for true Christianity did survive. A case in point is the congregation at Corinth, where some were trying to divide the congregation, but Paul quickly "nipped in the bud" the disunifying menace. (1 Cor. 1:17-19) In the year 56 C.E., twenty-three years after Jesus Christ had died and been resurrected, the apostle Paul had a meeting with the overseers from the congregation of Ephesus and gave them this warning: "I know that all of you among whom I went preaching the kingdom will see my face no more. . . . Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore keep awake." —Acts 20:16, 17, 25-31.

Paul died about ten years later, or about 65 C.E. In Paul's letters to Timothy, the last being written just before his death, he repeatedly warned Timothy of the apostasy and gave him strong admonition to exert himself vigorously in building up the Christian congregation as a bulwark against apostasy.—1 Tim. 4:1-3; 3:15; 6:3-5, 20; 2 Tim. 2:1, 2; 3:1-7; 4:1-5.

To see how the hideous counterfeit was no ordinary enemy, but kept persistently trying to rear its head, we can look at a point near the very close of the first century. About 98 C.E. the apostle John wrote: "Young children, it is the last hour, and, just as you have heard that antichrist is coming, even now there have come to be many antichrists; from which fact we gain the knowledge that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of our sort; for if they had been of our sort, they would have remained with us. But they went out that it might be shown up that not all are of our sort."—1 John 2:17-19.

In the Revelation given to John about 96 C.E. the Lord Jesus Christ told him to write the congregation in Ephesus, which Paul had warned long before both by word of mouth and by writing to Timothy in Ephesus. Jesus said this, through John: "Remember from what you have fallen, and repent and do the former deeds. If you do not, I am coming to you, and I will remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. Still, you do have this, that you hate the deeds of the sect of Nicolaus, which I also hate." In a warning to the congregation in Pergamum, John was told to write this: "I have a few things against you, that you have there those holding fast the teaching of Balaam, who went teaching Balak to put a stumbling

block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication. So you, also, have those holding fast the teaching of the sect of Nicolaus likewise. Therefore repent. If you do not, I am coming to you quickly, and I will war with them with the long sword of my mouth."—Rev. 2:1, 5, 6, 12, 14-16.

Suggestive of Babylonian influence in the congregation of Pergamum was the existence of the "teaching of Balaam," inasmuch as the original Balaam was from Mesopotamia, the region of ancient religious Babylon. Pergamum or Pergamos was the city to which the Babylonian priesthood, on fleeing from the fall of Babylon to Cyrus, went to set up their central religious college. There they put into the place that Belshazzar and his predecessors had occupied, the kings of Pergamos, thereby filling the seat of Belshazzar and his successors, who had been the heads of the Babylonish religion.—Deut. 23:4, 5; Num. 22:5; 31:8, 16.

WHERE WE FIND THE COUNTERFEIT TODAY

Perhaps in reading this you are already thinking about the things that you have heard from the many sects that claim to be Christian and from their representatives. You have discerned some counterfeit words from these sources. Correspondingly, this description from the Bible clearly points out that the great counterfeit is represented in the religious sects of Christendom, and that the religious leaders thereof, the clergy of Christendom, are the ones warned against by the apostles Peter and Paul. The apostle Paul gives us, probably, the most detailed description of the work of this class of religious counterfeiters and speaks of it as a 'mystery of lawlessness.' Just as Jesus Christ did in the illustration of the wheat and the weeds, Paul also shows that in the time of the end, in the time of the second presence of the Lord Jesus, the apostasy, along with those upholding it, will meet its doom. Let us analyze the words of the apostle Paul for description and clear identification of this counterfeit, in order that we may know what course of action to take to avoid being exploited with counterfeit words. Paul with great concern admonishes:

"However, brothers, respecting the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we request of you not to be quickly shaken from your reason nor to be excited either through an inspired expression or through a verbal message or through a letter as though from us, to the effect that the day of Jehovah is here.

"Let no one seduce you in any manner, because it will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness gets revealed, the son of destruction. He is set in opposition and lifts himself up over everyone who is called 'god' or an object of reverence, so that he sits down in the temple of The God, publicly showing himself to be a god. Do you not remember that, while I was yet with you, I used to tell you these things?

"And so now you know the thing that acts as a restraint, with a view to his being revealed in his own due time. True, the mystery of this lawlessness is already at work; but only till he who is right now acting as a restraint gets to be out of the way. Then, indeed, the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will do away with by the spirit of his mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of his presence. But the lawless one's presence is according to the operation of Satan with every powerful work and lying signs and portents and with every unrighteous deception for those who are perishing, as a retribution because they did not accept the love of the truth that they might be saved. So that is why God lets an operation of error go to them, that they may get to believing the lie, in order that they all may be judged because they did not believe the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness."—2 Thess. 2: 1-12.

We notice that the apostle Paul personifies the counterfeit Christian leaders as

the "man of lawlessness." This could not refer to one individual, for Paul says this man was already doing his work in Paul's day and would finally be done away with at the time of the presence of the Lord Jesus. One man could not live that long nor could he accomplish the things ascribed by Paul to the "man of lawlessness."

The lawlessness that this "man" commits is not against the governments of this world, although he has at times been guilty of this. We see, however, that the clergy of Christendom hobnob with the rulers of the world and try to influence them in political affairs. At times, when it does not suit their purposes, they have been guilty of lawlessness against these rulers. But the lawlessness here mentioned is lawlessness against God. It is not a mere falling or drifting away from Christianity that this man commits, but it is an apostasy, a deliberate, planned rebellion against the sovereignty of God. By misleading the people and exploiting them with counterfeit words he is really turning them away from the King Jesus Christ, who rules in God's name. The clergy follow the pattern of the clergy of the Jewish nation in rejecting the Messiah, the King sent to that nation by Jehovah. The haughtiness of this "man of lawlessness" is so great that "he is set in opposition and lifts himself up over everyone who is called 'god' or an object of reverence." We find an instance in the words of Lucius Ferraris, an eighteenth-century canonist of the Franciscan Order of monks, who says:

> "The pope is of such dignity and highness that he is not simply a man but, as it were, God, and the vicar of God. . . . The pope is, as it were, God on earth, the only prince of the faithful of Christ, the greatest king of all kings, possessing the plenitude of power, to whom the government of the earthly and heavenly kingdom is entrusted. . . . The pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, declare or interpret the divine law. . . . The pope can sometimes counteract the divine law by limiting, explaining," etcetera.*

Yes, God's sovereignty is opposed and the words and law of Jehovah God himself are challenged. And it is not the Catholic clergy alone, but the clergy of all Christendom, who adopt the same attitude, teach Babylonish doctrines and commit spiritual fornication with the governments of this world. They set up their traditions and their own opinions ahead of God's Word and claim to be in charge of all the religious interests of the people. When Jehovah's witnesses enter a city or neighborhood preaching the Bible truth, they object to them as encroachers upon *their* pasture. They do not respect the true Christians, the anointed brothers of Jesus Christ who bring the Kingdom message to them, neither do they respect the words of the apostles themselves. They claim to be living stones in the spiritual temple of God, comprising his congregation.

Paul goes on to say that this apostasy was restrained in his day but that this restraint would be taken out of the way, and then the "man of lawlessness" would blossom forth and become prominent. In reading the letters of the apostles we can see that this restraint was removed by the death of the apostles and their immediate associates who outlived them. So it did not have to wait long after the end of the first century.

'POWERFUL WORKS' THAT DECEIVE MANY

To be effectually deceptive the "man of lawlessness" was to perform "every powerful work." This does not necessarily mean miracles of the kind that the Lord Jesus Christ worked, but, for example, he has performed powerful works by converting the people by means of the state, by

* The *Ecclesiastical Dictionary*, a standard Roman Catholic authority, under the word *papa*.

the conversion of whole populations, by the uniting of church and state, by the crusades. Such powerful works have been performed, not only by the Catholic section of Christendom, but also by the so-called Protestant section, in such things as the reformation, the maneuvering of governments, causing powerful laws to be passed to hold the people tighter in subjection to their organizations. Then there are "signs and portents" that put people in awe of them, for example, their claim of apostolic succession, their many councils, reforms, schools and hospitals operated by religious orders, shrines where they claim cures have been accomplished, Catholic Action, ecumenical councils, the World Council of Churches, encyclicals, appearances before and influences on the United Nations, and many other like things. They even acknowledge spiritism and astrology and have condoned the action of political leaders in going to fortune-tellers and mediums on questions of state. These activities may appear good and may exert powerful influence on people and politicians, but not on Jesus. He says: "Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?' And yet then I will confess to them: I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness."—Matt. 7:22, 23.

Consequently, the apostle Paul says that, inasmuch as these high and mighty men have exalted themselves against him and do not accept the love of the truth that they might be saved, God has allowed an operation of error to go to them and they actually believe the lie. They are those "who are perishing," but they have actually gone along with Satan's counterfeit way and accepted it to the point that they believe they are holy and that God will let them get by with it.

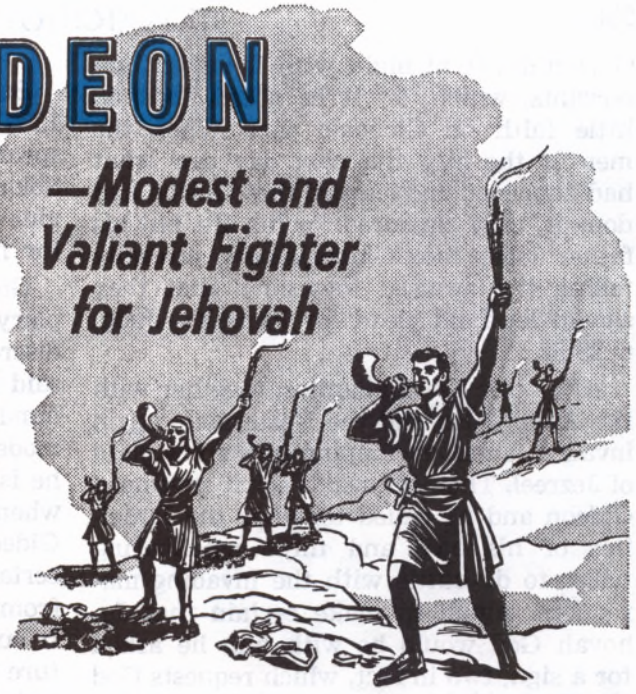
Thus Satan through the Babylonish "man of lawlessness" accomplished much in his fight against true Christianity, but that he did not succeed in stamping it out is evident by the fact that we can read about and understand and identify the great counterfeit today and also by the fact that more than a million Christians are proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom to the people all over the world. Soon the apostle's words will be fulfilled that the Lord Jesus, now in power and great glory in the heavens, will do away with him by the spirit of his mouth and bring him to nothing by the manifestation of his presence.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- The Overseer of a Happy Flock.
- A Happy Flock Requires Servant Leadership.
- "You Will Be with Me in Paradise."
- Is Christendom Truly Christ's Domain?

With this consideration of the Bible's warnings and the facts of first-century history, we identify the counterfeit that Babylon's religion has used in its fight, and we come nearer to the understanding of what Babylon the Great is. There is more to learn, however, about the historical facts, not only regarding the infiltration of selfish men into leading positions to bring about the apostasy and establish the "man of lawlessness," but also just how the doctrines of Babylon were brought by these men into apostate Christendom. We must know these things so that we can unmask the counterfeit thoroughly. For to be exploited with the counterfeit words of this "man of lawlessness" and thereby fall into the hands of Babylon the Great would mean for us a destruction like theirs. Let us look to succeeding issues of this magazine for these historical facts.

GIDEON
—Modest and Valiant Fighter for Jehovah



AMONG the men of ancient times whose faith is held out for Christians to imitate is that of Judge Gideon. Of him the writer of the Bible book of Hebrews states: "What more shall I say? For the time will fail me if I go on to relate about Gideon, . . . who through faith . . . became valiant in war, routed the armies of foreigners." Yes, Gideon was one warrior whose faith in God was so strong that, when Jehovah instructed him to send home most of his army and fight with only 300 men against an army of 135,000, he did it, and Jehovah gave him the victory. But this judge of Israel also manifested another admirable quality, one that especially endears him to us, namely, his modesty, as we shall see.—Heb. 11:32-34.

Some two hundred years had passed since Joshua, Moses' successor, had died. As Moses had prophetically warned, the Israelites were being deprived of the fruits of their toil because of their unfaithfulness to their God, Jehovah. (Lev. 26: 14-16) For a number of years the neighboring pagan nations, in particular, Midian, had invaded Israel at harvesttime with hordes as numerous as locusts "and would ruin the yield of the earth."—Judg. 6:1-6.

Then one day an angel of Jehovah appeared to Gideon, the son of Joash, of the Israelite tribe of Manasseh. At the time he was threshing grain in a winepress so as to avoid being discovered by the Midianites. Said the angel to Gideon: "Jehovah is with you, you valiant, mighty one." Modestly Gideon ignored the compliment and replied with the force of logic: "Excuse me, my Lord, but if Jehovah is with us, then why has all this come upon us, and where are all his wonderful acts that our fathers related to us, saying, 'Was it not out of Egypt that Jehovah brought us up?' And now Jehovah has deserted us, and he gives us into the palm of Midian." —Judg. 6:11-13.

When told that he himself would deliver his people, Gideon again showed his modesty by answering: "Excuse me, Jehovah. With what shall I save Israel? Look! My thousand is the least in Manasseh, and I am the smallest in my father's house." But Jehovah, by his angel, assured him: "Because I shall prove to be with you, and you will certainly strike down Midian as if one man." This caused Gideon to ask for a sign, which was given him and by which he knew that the messenger was indeed Jehovah's angel.—Judg. 6:14-24.

That same night Jehovah put Gideon to the test by commanding him to tear down his father's altar of Baal, to cut down the sacred pole alongside it, to build an altar to Jehovah and then to offer a sacred bull upon it, using as firewood the sacred pole.

Gideon did so at night with the aid of ten servants, which, let it be noted, took no little faith on Gideon's part. When the men of the city the next day saw what had happened and learned that Gideon had done it, they clamored for his life, but his father Joash took Gideon's part, shrewdly telling the aroused townsmen that they should let Baal plead for himself.—Judg. 6:25-32.

After this the Midianites, together with the Amalekites and the Easterners, again invaded Israel, encamping in the low plain of Jezreel. Then Jehovah's spirit enveloped Gideon and he called together the Israelites of his own and three neighboring tribes to do battle with the invading marauders. Again to make certain that Jehovah God would be with him he asked for a sign, two in fact, which requests God readily granted.—Judg. 6:33-40.

As a result of his call to arms 32,000 fighting men gathered to Gideon, whereas the enemy had 135,000 men, or more than four times as many. But Jehovah said that even this number was far too great, for Israel might claim credit for the victory. So by means of two tests that Jehovah stipulated, all the fearful as well as all those not vigilant were eliminated, whittling down Gideon's band to a mere 300. What faith in God it took for Gideon to proceed with 300 men against 135,000! —Judg. 7:1-8.

That Gideon might be certain of victory Jehovah instructed him to take his attendant and reconnoiter the enemy camp. Doing so, he overheard a man telling a dream about a loaf of barley bread that knocked over a tent in the camp of Midian, and heard that dream interpreted to mean: "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel. The true God has given Midian and all the camp into his hand."—Judg. 7:9-14.

CAUTIOUS AND DISCREET

But how were 300 men to put to rout 135,000? Obviously not with swords and spears. The answer is found in wise King Solomon's words: "Wisdom"—that is, divine wisdom—"is better than implements for fighting."—Eccl. 9:18.

Gideon was not only a man of exemplary faith and modesty but he was also discreet and cautious. In fact, it might be said that discreetness and caution went hand in hand with his being modest. The modest man does not presume too much, he is careful, he knows his limitations. So when God's angel first appeared to him, Gideon asked for a sign so as to know for certain that this commission was coming from Jehovah. Was his caution justified? It surely was in view of the unusual *na*ture of his commission and *his* being selected, he being the least of the least. —Judg. 6:17-23.

Note also Gideon's caution in requesting of the angel: "Do not, please, move away from here until I come to you and I have brought out my gift and set it before you." Here he was going to bring an offering by which to test the messenger or angel and he did not want him to vanish or walk off before he returned! (Judg. 6:18) And did not Gideon show due caution by proceeding against Baal's altar at night? To have tried to do so in broad daylight would have infuriated all the Baal-worshiping townsmen and made it impossible to carry out his assignment. Cautiously he did this at night, taking along with him ten servants, no doubt to have some stand watch while the rest assisted him in tearing down the altar of Baal and in carrying out the rest of his assignment.—Judg. 6:25-28.

Then, upon having gathered the fighting men, 32,000 strong, he asked Jehovah for further evidence that Jehovah was with him. He asked that a fleece spread out at night on his threshing floor be wet

with dew the next morning but all the rest of the floor be dry. When God granted him this miracle, Gideon asked for a miracle of the converse: "Do not let your anger blaze against me, but let me speak just once more. Let me, please, make a test only once more with the fleece. Let, please, dryness occur to the fleece alone, and upon all the earth let there come to be dew." Yes, Gideon cautiously wanted to have Jehovah's being with him established by two tests so that there could be no question as to whether the first miracle had been just a coincidence. And Jehovah, far from being displeased, granted Gideon this request also, which, let it be noted, was made with due modesty. No question about it, Gideon had the caution and discreetness that go with modesty. That caution and discreetness guided him in the strategy that he used. And what was that? A war of nerves!—Judg. 6:36-40.

THE STRATEGY

First of all, Gideon gave each of the 300 men with him a horn or trumpet and a large earthenware jar inside of which he had placed a large torch. Next he divided his men into three groups of a hundred men each so as to be able to approach the camp of Midian from three sides. And cautiously Gideon timed matters so that he and his men came upon the camp of Midian right after the guards had been changed at the beginning of the middle night watch and when something unexpected would be the most likely to startle the guards or watchers.—Judg. 7:15-19.

Then, in keeping with Gideon's instructions, his men did as he did. They suddenly shattered the stillness of the night by blasting 300 trumpets, by smashing 300 large earthenware jars and by shouting 300 powerful war cries, at the same time lighting up the sky with their 300 torches. The surprised and startled Midianites, thinking they were surrounded by 300 bands of warriors, began shouting in terror and fleeing. And not only that, but "Jehovah proceeded to set the sword of each one against the other in all the camp."—Judg. 7:19-22.

With this turn of events the men of the three tribes of Naphthali, Asher and Manasseh were called to join in the pursuit, Gideon also sending messengers to the proud and powerful tribe of Ephraim to head off the fleeing Midianites, which they did, capturing their princes Oreb and Zeeb and executing them. But upon meeting up with Gideon the men of Ephraim complained because he had not called them to help in the first place. They "vehemently tried to pick a quarrel with him." But Gideon pacified them by modestly observing, "Are not the gleanings of Ephraim better than the grape gathering of Abiezer [Gideon's family stock]?" And he pointed to their successes, saying: "What have I been able to do in comparison with you?" —Judg. 7:23 to 8:3.

Gideon and his 300 men, though tired, kept on pursuing the fleeing invaders who were finally reduced to a mere 15,000 out of 135,000. Even those remaining ones were caught off guard by Gideon and his men, who dispersed them, capturing their kings Zebah and Zalmunnah, whom Gideon himself executed as war criminals. Thus ended the invasion of Midian and its cohorts. The credit for the victory belonged to Jehovah!—Judg. 8:10-12, 21; 7: 2, 22.

The rout of the Midianites was so complete and devastating that Gideon was able to judge Israel for forty years without needing to resort to war again. Out of appreciation for what Gideon had done, the men of Israel asked him to establish his family as a ruling dynasty: "Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson as well, for you have saved us out of the hand

of Midian." But, no, Gideon, modest warrior that he was, wanted none of the pomp and creature worship that went with man-made royalty: "I myself shall not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. Jehovah is the one who will rule over you." He was content to remain a judge, a servant of God and of the people as they needed him.—Judg. 8:22, 23.

However, Gideon did suggest that they contribute of the gold jewelry they had gained as the spoils of war, which they did and with which he made an ephod. Although he no doubt had this ephod made with all good intentions, in the end it proved to be a snare to all Israel, including Gideon and his household. Apparently the Israelites idolized it as they idolized the copper serpent that Moses had hoisted in the wilderness. So the record of Gideon is not without one serious flaw—again eloquent testimony of the candor of Bible writers.—Judg. 8:24-27; 2 Ki. 18:4.

LESSONS FOR US TODAY

There is much profit to be gained from considering the Bible record of Judge Gideon. Even as Gideon was a man of faith, trusting in Jehovah God though faced with tremendous odds, so must Christians today have strong faith, for they also are greatly outnumbered by an unbelieving and hostile world. Even as Gideon was shown to be modest from beginning to the end, so Christians today must be ever modest, 'not thinking more highly of themselves than it is necessary to think.' (Rom. 12:3) And just as Gideon showed himself cautious throughout, so Christians must be cautious. They want to be sure of the things they believe, even as did the ancient Beroeans; and when faced with those who would interfere with their worship, they heed Jesus' words to be 'cautious as serpents.'—Matt. 10:16; Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:21.

The record of Gideon and his 300 is also of prophetic significance to Christians, for from it we can draw parallels in our day. Thus just as Israel came to be in bondage because of laxness in their worship of Jehovah, so Jehovah's people in modern times for a period came to be in bondage to Satan's agents because of laxness as to pure worship. And as Gideon back there proved to be a breaker of idols, so Christians today expose the idolatry in Christendom, literal and symbolic, both statues of saints and such organizational idols as the United Nations.

Further, as Jehovah provided Gideon back there to deliver his people, he has provided the Greater Gideon, Jesus Christ, to deliver his people today. Then again, as back there tests revealed those who were deserving of sharing in the initial striking victory by weeding out those who were fearful or lacking in vigilance, so in modern times Jehovah has permitted tests that have caused the fearful and negligent to fall by the way. And, finally, as the combined forces of Israel were used by Jehovah to destroy the invading hosts of Midian and their cohorts, so Jesus Christ and all his heavenly forces, including those of spiritual Israel, will destroy all the enemies of Jehovah God and of his people, in line with the inspired prayer of the psalmist: "Do to them as to Midian . . . As for their nobles, make these like Oreb and like Zeeb, and like Zebah and like Zalmunnah . . . that people may know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth."—Ps. 83:9-18.

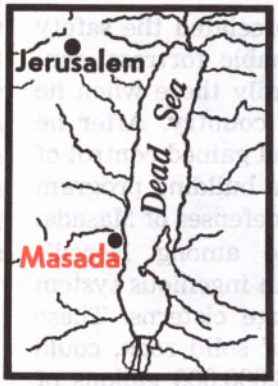
Truly the account of Gideon and his 300 is part of 'all Scripture inspired of God,' and it 'is beneficial for teaching us so that as Christians we may be competent, completely equipped for every good work'; and, in particular, that we might be strong in faith and vigilant, yet modest and cautious!—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

THE DISASTROUS HISTORY of Masada

THE Jews in Christ's time who accepted Jesus as the Messiah could look to the future with confidence, knowing that they had Jehovah's approval. In contrast, the immutable prophecies in the Bible gave the remainder of the people good reason to look to their grim future with anxiety.

Centuries earlier the prophet Daniel had foretold that sometime after the Messiah was cut off in death there would be war and desolation. (Dan. 9:26) John the Baptist pointed forward to "the coming wrath" of fiery destruction. (Matt. 3:7, 11, 12) The "days for meting out justice" were soon to come, Jesus even telling the daughters of Jerusalem to "weep for yourselves and for your children" on account of what was to befall them. (Luke 21:22; 23:28) Those warnings dealt particularly with the fiery destruction that came upon Jerusalem in 70 C.E., when it was ravaged by a flood of Romans under the leadership of the Roman general Titus.

While Jerusalem is thus often considered the focal point of Jewish history during the turbulent years following their revolt in 66 C.E., another location in Judea had tragic importance in that woeful period. That location was the massive rock fortress named Masada. For there, in the year 66 C.E., a band of fanatical patriots seized and massacred the Roman garrison. The historian Flavius Josephus called the slaughter "the true beginning of our war with the Romans." That band of Zealots, called the Sicarii because of the short daggers (*sicae*) they carried, defied the powerful Romans until they met disaster in 73 C.E.



THE SPLENDOR OF MASADA

Recent archaeological expeditions are wresting from the dust and stones many of the secrets of the history and splendor of Masada, which name means "stronghold." Of particular interest to Bible students is the fact that scrolls of Psalms, Genesis and Leviticus have been found there, obviously written before Masada's fall.

Traveling south of Jerusalem to the desolate western shore of the Dead Sea, one can see the flat-topped hill or mesa rising over 1,000 feet above the surrounding ravines. It differs little from the description Josephus penned over 1,800 years ago:

> "There was a rock, not small in circumference, and very high. It was encompassed with valleys of such vast depth downward, that the eye could not reach their bottoms; they were abrupt, and such as no animal could walk upon, excepting at two places of the rock, . . . though not without difficulty. . . . One of these ways is called the *Serpent*, as resembling that animal in its narrowness and its perpetual windings; . . . on each side there is a vastly deep chasm and precipice, sufficient to quell the courage of every body by the terror it infuses into the mind. . . . Upon this top of the hill, Jonathan the high priest first of all built a fortress, and called it *Masada*."—*Wars of the Jews*, Book VII, Chap. VIII, ¶3.

This Jonathan has been understood to

refer to the younger brother of Judas Maccabeus, but modern research suggests that Alexander Janneus, who ruled from 104 to 78 B.C.E., may actually have been the one who first fortified the hill, thus laying the groundwork for the tragedy that was to come.

Herod the Great appreciated the safety of this almost impregnable fortress, confidently leaving his family there when he was forced to flee the country. After he returned from Rome and gained control of the land, Herod began a building program to improve the natural defenses of Masada.

Of chief importance among Herod's works on Masada was an ingenious system of at least a dozen huge cisterns. These vast caverns, cut out of solid rock, could contain an estimated 8,000,000 gallons of water, sufficient for a thousand men to endure a year's siege. Some of the cisterns were filled by damming up a nearby *wadi* or riverbed. When one of the infrequent rains occurred, the water was directed through an aqueduct into the lower cisterns, and later it was carried by hand up to the higher water reservoirs.

The summit of the flat, roughly boat-shaped hill was cultivated so as to provide extra food in times of siege. Around the perimeter of the top ran two stone walls, between which rooms were built for living quarters. Other buildings on the summit included barracks for troops, a complex of storehouses and even a synagogue, though this may have been built later by the Zealots.

However, Herod did not restrict his building to military installations. On the cliff of the northern point of Masada he built an elegant three-tiered hanging palace. It consisted of a nine-room house with terrace or patio, bathing pools, and a luxurious pavilion or "pleasure dome." The palace was in almost constant shade and was decorated with colorful mosaics, paintings and intricately carved stone pillars. Easy passage from one level to another was possible through a staircase hidden in the rock.

Another building of note is what is called the "western palace." Situated on the summit, it was nearly as elaborate as the main palace. Probably Herod housed his guests there. Excavation of it has revealed the largest Roman bathhouse yet discovered in Israel. It contained hot rooms with heating pipes in the walls, resembling modern Turkish baths, cold rooms and dressing rooms. It even had a sit-down lavatory with a flushing system, the oldest one known.

THE DISASTROUS END

This splendor was short-lived, though, for two years after the fall of Jerusalem, the Roman governor Flavius Silva marched with his Tenth Legion to lay siege to Masada. It was the last pocket of resistance among the Jews. With 9,000 Jewish slaves carrying food and water to the camp, 6,000 legionnaires cut off all means of escape from the hill from December of 72 C.E. until late in the spring of 73 C.E. Against the western face of the hill they built a 300-foot siege mound on top of already existing rocks. This was then surmounted by a 75-foot-high stone platform and a 90-foot-high siege tower with which to attack the walls.

When the Romans battered down the stone walls, they faced a hastily built wall made from two rows of wooden beams with earth in between. Since battering just increased the strength of this wall, the Romans set fire to it. Aware that the next day the fortress would be taken, the Roman soldiers retired for the night. Inside, the Jews saw that their plight was hopeless. Their commander, Eleazar, convinced the men that death was better than slav-

ery. Each married man went off to his family, said a tearful good-bye to his wife and children and then killed them. Ten men picked by lot proceeded to slaughter the rest and were, in turn, killed until just one man remained. After setting fire to the fortress, he ran himself through with his sword, climaxing the disaster of Masada.

The Romans returned in the morning expecting to face a stiff fight, but they found alive only two women and five children who had hid in a cave and thus survived to describe the suicidal massacre of 960 men, women and children. The disastrous history of Masada tragically underscores the truthfulness of Jesus' words about the "days for meting out justice" that were to come upon the Jews who refused to heed his prophetic warning.

● Simeon, a reverent man in Jerusalem, referred to Jesus as God's "means of saving" and "a light." He also said that Jesus was "laid for the fall and the rising again of many in Israel." To Mary, Simeon further said, "yes, a long sword will be run through the soul of you yourself." (Luke 2:29-35) What did Simeon mean?—C. R., Scotland.

By means of the holy spirit it had been divinely revealed to Simeon "that he would not see death before he had seen the Christ of Jehovah." (Luke 2:26) When he was an old man, Simeon realized the fulfillment of that promise. Being moved by the holy spirit, he came to the temple on the very day that Joseph and Mary brought Jesus there in compliance with God's law. (Luke 2:22-24; Lev. 12:1-8) It was then that Simeon took the child into his arms, blessed God and declared: "Now, Sovereign Lord [Jehovah], you are letting your slave go free [into death] in peace according to your declaration; because my eyes have seen your means of saving that you have made ready in the sight of all the peoples, a light for removing the veil from the nations and a glory of your people Israel."—Luke 2:29-32.

By these words Simeon foretold that Jehovah would provide salvation for mankind through Jesus, that he was indeed God's "means of saving." This one would also be "a light" for removing from the nations the veil of spiritual darkness, and he would be "a glory of [God's] people Israel." As a result of Christ's ministry, people of Naphtali and Zebulun, in the region of Galilee, for example, saw "a great light," in fulfillment of Isaiah 9:1, 2. (Matt. 4:13-16) Interesting, too, is the fact that Jesus Christ himself declared: "I am the light of the world. He that follows me will by no means walk in darkness, but will possess the light of life." —John 8:12; Isa. 42:6; 49:6.

However, Simeon also declared: "Look! This one is laid for the fall and the rising again of many in Israel and for a sign to be talked against . . . in order that the reasonings of many hearts may be uncovered." (Luke 2:34, 35) These words indicated that some would accept Christ and be lifted up from their already fallen state, whereas others would reject him; they would stumble over him and fall. Jesus did indeed prove to be a stone of stumbling to many Jews. (Rom. 9:30-33; Isa. 8:14; 28:16) Simeon's words do not mean that individual Israelites would experience both things, first fall in unbelief and then rise in belief, accepting Jesus Christ. Simeon was talking about the final outcome of matters. While reactions to Jesus Christ varied with different individuals, surely in connection with him the reasonings of many hearts were uncovered, leading to God's judgment toward them, for good or for bad.

With reference to Mary, Simeon said: "Yes, a long sword will be run through the soul of you yourself." The sword mentioned here is not literal. There is no Scriptural indication that Mary had an actual sword run through her. But what Simeon said did indicate that one day Jesus' mother would be smitten with sorrow. The rejection of Jesus Christ by many Jews must surely have distressed her. But she certainly experienced poignant grief when she saw her son dying upon the torture stake.

"GOD'S SONS OF LIBERTY" DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES

ARE you planning to attend at least one of the district assemblies of Jehovah's witnesses this year? Rich blessings are in store for those who do. Commencing June 22 at Toronto, Canada, the "God's Sons of Liberty" District Assemblies will sweep across Canada, southward into the United States, and, later in the year and early in 1967, into Mexico and a goodly number of Central and South American countries. In Britain and other parts of the world the same assembly program will also be presented.

Many residents in the northern states are already anticipating a visit to one of the Canadian assembly points, which include Corner Brook in Newfoundland, Halifax, Montreal, Winnipeg and Vancouver. Conveniently for those in the middle and southern states, "God's Sons of Liberty" District Assemblies are organized for Dallas, San Francisco, Baltimore, Miami Beach and Mobile. In the far north, the same program will be presented at Anchorage, Alaska. Spanish-language assemblies will be arranged at Newark, Dallas, San Francisco and Miami Beach.

In the United States and Canada great interest in the Central and South American assemblies has been evinced, and it is expected that many from these countries will assemble with fellow Christians in Mexico, Argentina and Brazil, as well as other adjacent lands. Consult your map and note some of the places where assemblies are being prepared: Guatemala City, Managua, La Paz, Barranquilla, Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Caracas and San Juan, to name but a few. Perhaps you too can go south.

At each of these assemblies the identical public address will be given by a special representative of the Watch Tower Society. It will answer the very timely question, "What Has God's Kingdom Been Doing Since 1914?"

If you are interested in keeping up-to-date in understanding of God's revealed purposes and his will for men on earth today, you are welcome to attend any one of the "God's Sons of Liberty" District Assemblies. Future issues of this magazine will be publishing additional details. Why not arrange to combine your vacation trip with attendance at one or more of these five-day gatherings? You will gain spiritual refreshment and enjoy happy fellowship with a multitude of others who share your keen interest in God's purposes and in his kingdom under Christ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIELD MINISTRY

How many people are there in the world who, if there is a choice, are willing to die rather than compromise on what they believe? Not many. But those who have firm faith in God's promise of a resurrection are thus strengthened to faithfulness. Jehovah's witnesses have such faith, and during April they will continue to call at the homes of people everywhere endeavoring to aid others to gain faith in God and his Word. As an aid in this work, they will be offering a year's subscription for this magazine, *The Watchtower*, along with three Scriptural booklets, for $1.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

May 15: What Binding Satan the Devil Will Mean for Mankind, ¶1-31. Page 229.

May 22: What Binding Satan the Devil Will Mean for Mankind, ¶32-62. Page 236.