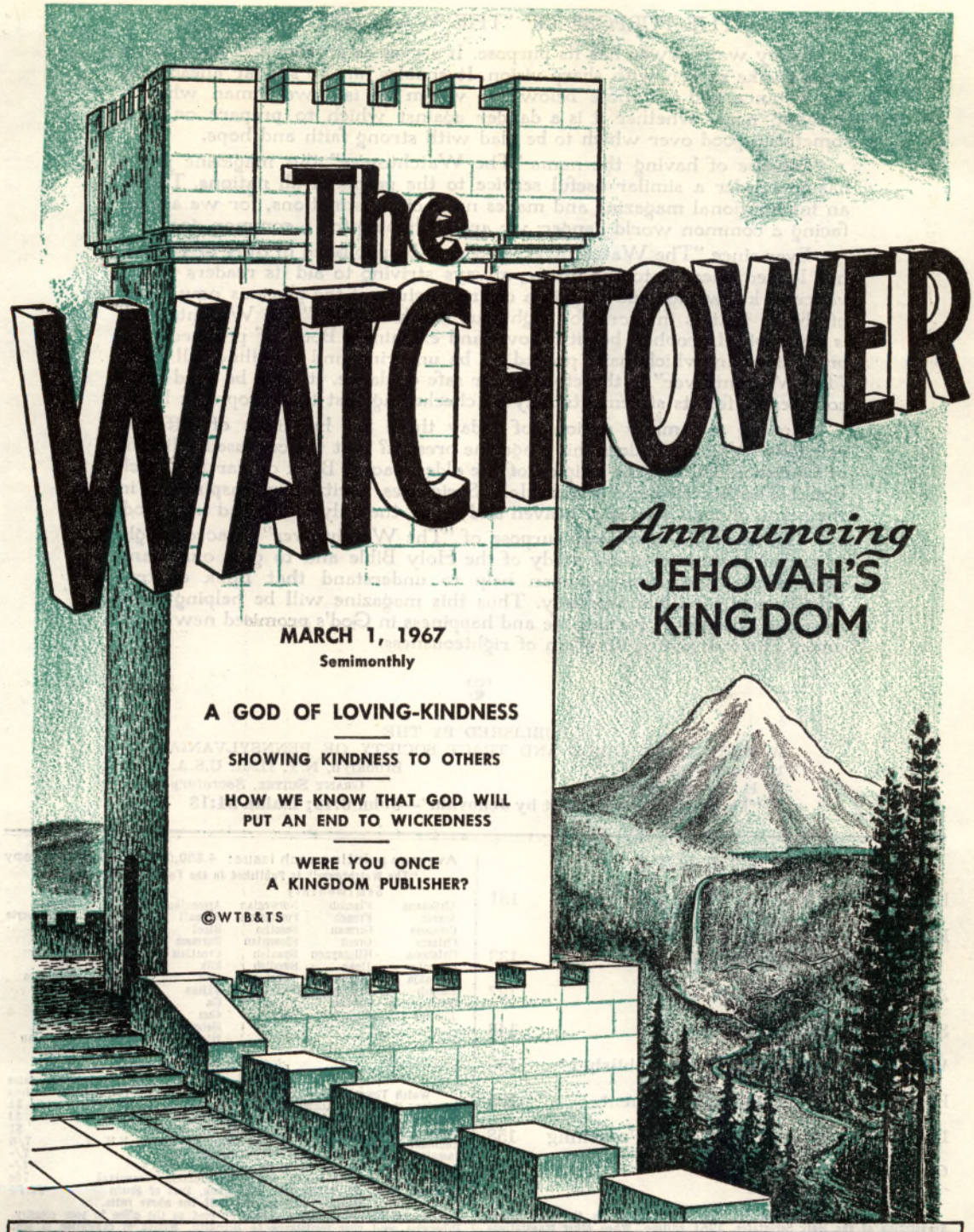

"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—*Isa. 43:12*

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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Filling "LONELY HOURS" with Enjoyment

A NINETEEN-YEAR-OLD wife of a young African United Nations diplomat, on October 15, 1966, leaped from the window of her luxurious apartment in New York city to her death eighteen stories below. The police said there was "no apparent reason for the tragedy." But in the corridors of the United Nations the talk was of loneliness.

Loneliness is a common ailment today in the world. It produces definite physical symptoms, such as feelings of melancholia, bewilderment and insecurity. These emotions often arise from a loss of loving human companionship.

Who are the lonely? They are persons who need the companionship of others and for some reason cannot make contact. They are often shy, introverted teen-agers away from home; the balding bachelors whose independence has turned into confinement; the widows who long for affection; the spinster wanting marriage; the aged father and mother left alone by children; the sick whom the healthy have forgotten; married people who have permitted busy schedules to keep them from seeing the one they love. These are lonely people who need to feel the warmth of human kindness.

What can be done to help them? What can they do to help themselves?

Purposeful work is a safeguard against loneliness. A woman who cooks and keeps house for an appreciative family usually keeps herself creatively busy and mentally healthy. The grandmother who helps her daughter-in-law with the children, the grandfather who does repair work around the house feel useful, active, needed. The thought of working for others or oneself helps prevent the mind from becoming depressed. It keeps people from feeling sorry for themselves.

Single people especially need to fill their free time with meaningful work, if they would keep themselves from feeling lonely. Some have taken up useful, absorbing hobbies, which later turned into paying propositions, such as photography, growing flowers, oil painting, writing and other activity.

TAKING AN INTEREST IN OTHERS

One of the most effective ways of overcoming loneliness is to take an interest in others. Lonely persons need to express more love for other people. There must be not only a love for others but also an

interest in others. And this is true whether one is male or female, married or single. Stressing this point, Proverbs 18:24, according to The Children's Version of the Holy Bible, says: "A man who has friends must show himself friendly." Having many friends keeps one from becoming self-centered and helps assure one happy moments and happy thoughts, which, in turn, are a protection against loneliness.

One way to show interest in others is to do something for them, such as inviting neighbors and friends over for dinner. Planning for these occasions creates interest, activity and pleasure. Single girls have found making candy for children an absorbing outlet. Sewing and knitting for others is also enjoyable.

There is a great need today for cheering people up. One observer stated that almost everyone he knew was "either lonely or afraid." Why not make a list of the aged, the sick, the widows and widowers whom you know that might need cheering up? Then pay them a visit and scatter among them the sunshine of hope. Call them up on the telephone or send them a card or a letter. Cheer up depressed souls and you will be cheered.—Prov. 11:25.

Even greater happiness is achieved when we help people in a spiritual way. This is where Jehovah's witnesses are in an especially favorable position, because the very nature of their ministry brings them in touch with people who need comfort and hope. When we lift the hopes of others, when we strengthen their faith in a brighter future and chart their course in the direction of life everlasting, then we are making happy not only them but ourselves as well. As Jesus Christ said: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) Giving in a spiritual way is a safeguard against loneliness. For happy people are seldom, if ever, lonely.

Even the sick, who very easily are subject to spells of loneliness, can help themselves by helping others spiritually. For example, a lady confined to a wheelchair wrote letters about God's kingdom to residents of restricted apartment buildings. She also used the telephone effectively. She conducted Bible studies and made others happy.

A twenty-year-old cerebral palsy victim not only was confined to a wheelchair but his speech was not very intelligible. What could he do to keep himself from becoming lonely? He learned to type, and his typewriter soon began to speak for him. He typed letters to relatives and friends, as well as drawing upon the local press and the telephone books for names. Is he lonely? He could very easily be if he sat there and did nothing. But now he is much too busy to be lonely.

Bible reading is always enriching to the mind. It is enjoyable and uplifting. However, when we read God's Word with the purpose of aiding others, when we read with the thought of telling others what we read, then the experience becomes doubly rewarding. Such reading causes time to pass quickly, allowing no room for loneliness.

When alone, there is always prayer to God. Fellowship with God through prayer knows no walls or boundaries. The awareness that 'God cares for us' is comforting indeed! (1 Pet. 5:7) Regardless of our situation, there is always God, as Jesus Christ lovingly let us know: "Look! The hour is coming, indeed, it has come, when you will be scattered each one to his own house and you will leave me alone; and yet *I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*" (John 16:32) Remember this during your lonely hours and "the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Phil. 4:7.

How We Know that GOD Will Put AN END TO WICKEDNESS

WILL God ever take decisive action to stamp out wickedness from the universe forever? The urgent need for a conclusive answer is pointed up by the steadily deteriorating conditions of our era. Disregard for the rule of law is everywhere evident, in private as well as in public life. A great upsurge of violence and vicious crime baffles the sociologists. As the current trend in human behavior casts its ominous shadow toward the future, what basis is there for believing that God will interfere to enforce righteousness and peace?

The expectation that God will act to put an end to all wickedness may be grounded upon a knowledge of God's own qualities. He is the God of love and truth. One of his own inspired servants writes of him: "Anyone loving violence His soul certainly hates." (Ps. 11:5) And in another place he informs us: "I, Jehovah, am loving justice, hating robbery along with unrighteousness." (Isa. 61:8) Would this God of righteousness forever endure what he hates?

In vindication of his own name the righteous God, Jehovah, is sure to act in his own due time against every evildoer, and that time is close at hand. He will not permit the wicked forever to get away with giving the impression that God approves of what they are doing. To the lawless, immoral ones Jehovah gives this warning notice: "These things you have done, and I kept silent. You imagined that I would positively become like you. I am going to reprove you, and I will set things in order before your eyes." (Ps. 50:21) The long-suffering of God, intended to give full opportunity to evildoers to repent, has been misconstrued by some and they have lulled themselves into a dangerous complacency. There has been no swift retribution for their crimes, so they imagine that nothing will ever happen to them.

But God knows their inmost thoughts. He knows what it is that keeps them going on in the evil way, and he exposes their erroneous thinking: "Because sentence against a bad work has not been executed speedily, that is why the heart of the sons of men has become fully set in them to do bad." (Eccl. 8:11) By their attitude, too, they betray a failure to consider the many positive warnings of God's purpose to act.

GOD'S PROMISES POINT TO END OF WICKEDNESS

True, we are living in days when wickedness is rampant and evildoers multiply, but Jehovah's promises point to a complete end of wickedness. To the meek ones, for example, he gives this strong assurance: "Do not show yourself heated up because of the evildoers. Do not be envious of those doing unrighteousness. For evildoers themselves will be cut off, but those hoping in Jehovah are the ones that will possess the earth. And just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give attention to his place, and he will not be. But the

meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." —Ps. 37:1, 9-11.

Notice how thorough the cleanup that Jehovah will conduct on this earth. Even though the meek make diligent search they will not be able to find even one wicked person to mar the happy and tranquil scene. Gone will be the wicked, but the meek will survive.

Another promise of God that he will ease righteously disposed persons of the terrible burden of living indefinitely among the wicked was expressed by the patriarch Enoch. So realistic was the vision that God granted him, he was moved to exclaim about its future fulfillment: "Look! Jehovah came with his holy myriads, to execute judgment against all, and to convict all the ungodly concerning all their ungodly deeds that they did in an ungodly way, and concerning all the shocking things that ungodly sinners spoke against him." (Jude 14, 15) The magnitude of that final execution work is indicated by the fact that myriads of angels are involved and by the fact that "*all* the ungodly" are to have execution visited upon them.

Still another promise that points unmistakably to the end of the wicked on an international scale was voiced by God's prophet Zephaniah: " 'Keep yourselves in expectation of me,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'till the day of my rising up to the booty, for my judicial decision is to gather nations, for me to collect together kingdoms, in order to pour out upon them my denunciation, all my burning anger; for by the fire of my zeal all the earth will be devoured.' " (Zeph. 3:8) At the same time God offers protection and survival for those meek ones of all nations who seek him and his ways of righteousness.—Zeph. 2:1-3.

That Jehovah and his appointed Executioner, Christ Jesus, will also strike directly at the root of all wickedness is made certain by the words of Jesus in his illustration about the symbolic sheep and goats: "Then he will say, in turn, to those on his left, 'Be on your way from me, you who have been cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.' " (Matt. 25:41) Annihilation, represented by "everlasting fire," is the destiny of the beginner and leader in all wickedness, for the apostle John so describes the action in the prophetic vision given him by God: "The Devil who was misleading [men] was hurled into the lake of fire and sulphur."—Rev. 20:10.

Thus the promises of God furnish ample basis for anticipating an end of all wickedness, and the putting out of action of the very leader in evildoing.

THE PATTERN OF ACTION GOD FOLLOWS

In addition to these and many other promises to rid the universe of wicked ones, the pattern of action God has followed in his past dealings with evildoers offers some guide to us on how he will deal with them now. Consider, for example, the conditions that developed in the days of Noah. Angel sons of God forsook their proper places in heaven, materialized as men and mated with the beautiful daughters of men to produce a hybrid race of giants or bullies. An era of violence and immorality resulted. The sacred Record tells that "Jehovah saw that the badness of man was abundant in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time." And what was God's determination? "I am going to wipe men whom I have created off the surface of the ground."—Gen. 6:1-7; 2 Pet. 2:5.

As Noah resolutely built the ark for the saving of his family, we can imagine the shouts of ridicule and derision of the mul-

titude: 'It will never come in our day, Noah. You are wasting your time.' But the ark came to its completion, its precious cargo was loaded and the door was shut. Then came the downpour. People rushed for shelter. The water level mounted steadily hour after hour, day after day. The people fled to higher ground, frantic, disorganized. Mountains were transformed into islands as the rising waters separated families. People on the highest mountains could hear the cries and shrieks of trapped multitudes as the lower heights became engulfed by swirling waters. The crazed scramble of crowds to occupy the topmost peaks was attended by great loss of life. Eventually, not one peak was left, and the only sound—the swish of waters piled high above the tallest mountains. The last vain shouts for help were silenced.—Gen. 7: 17-24.

As the ark tossed to and fro on the surface of the boundless waters, its occupants, Noah and his family, had time to ponder the fact that God's announced purposes are always carried out. Even though wickedness had spread abroad and dominated the earth, the Supreme Ruler had swept the earth clean of wicked men.

Another striking example of God's pattern of dealing with wicked ones is to be found in the Bible account of Sodom and Gomorrah. Righteous Lot dwelt in Sodom, and he was "greatly distressed by the indulgence of the law-defying people in loose conduct." In order to satisfy their animalistic passions, those men of Sodom were prepared to resort to violence against apparently defenseless strangers. The shocking depths of their depravity reached Jehovah's ears like a loud "cry of complaint." The angels sent to rescue Lot and his family delivered the urgent message: "Get up! Get out of this place, because Jehovah is bringing the city to ruin!" —2 Pet. 2:7; Gen. 18:20; 19:4-14.

Lot's warning of the impending catastrophe upon the city and district was treated by his prospective sons-in-law as a big joke. The population, now long accustomed to getting away with wrongdoing, had been lulled into a false sense of safety from punishment. Yet, as soon as Lot and his daughters were clear of the doomed district, "Jehovah made it rain sulphur and fire" upon the whole area. Even from a considerable distance Abraham could observe how "thick smoke ascended from the land like the thick smoke of a kiln!" —Gen. 19:24-28.

All the inhabitants of the district, with their cities, their homes, their gardens and all the well-watered fertile country, were overthrown in the fiery disaster. Three persons, God-fearing Lot and his daughters, lived to report the terrible experience. Again God had declared his purpose to bring ruin to the wicked, and again he displayed the pattern of destroying the wicked but delivering the righteous.

PROPHETIC PATTERNS FOR TODAY

These examples of God's pattern of action in dealing with wickedness surely constitute object lessons to be read and understood by all who have lived since. They tell of Jehovah's abhorrence of evildoing, and of his zeal for the eradication of wickedness. But they go farther. They were actually recorded as prophetic patterns of things to take place on a vastly larger scale. And it is not left to us humans to guess that those events were representative of a greater one to come in the future.

That drowning of a wicked race has lived in the traditions of almost all tribes and nations to this day. But nineteen hundred years ago it assumed new importance as a pattern of things to come when Jesus Christ declared: "Just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man

will be. For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and they took no note until the flood came and swept them all away, so the presence of the Son of man will be." (Matt. 24:37-39) Just as they were catering to the selfish desires of the flesh and ignoring God's warning back there, so it is today.

Thus Jesus authoritatively warned that the prophetic pattern is certain to be carried through to a destructive conclusion for the wicked. And, referring to this same prophetic pattern of the Flood, the apostle Peter gives further detail on how the end of international wickedness will come: "By those means [God's word directing the unprecedented downpour] the world of that time suffered destruction when it was deluged with water. But by the same word the heavens and the earth that are now are stored up for fire and are being reserved to the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men." (2 Pet. 3:6, 7) Again an entire world of wicked creatures will be wiped out, but the righteous spared, as were Noah and his family.

Likewise the experience of Sodom and her sister cities is no mere historical incident unrelated to people living on earth today. Under the direction of God's holy spirit the apostle Peter was moved to write: "By reducing the cities Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes [God] condemned them, setting a pattern for ungodly persons of things to come." (2 Pet. 2:6) Thus God is certain to follow that pattern of action in connection with the wicked generation that encumbers the earth today.

Another Bible writer, Jude, adds his inspired testimony as to the real purpose of the record of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah: "So too Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them, after they in the same manner as the foregoing ones [materialized angels] had committed fornication excessively and gone out after flesh for unnatural use, are placed before us as a warning example by undergoing the judicial punishment of everlasting fire." (Jude 7) God will not tolerate the wicked indefinitely.

Are there those today who ridicule the idea that God will bring a complete end to wickedness and deliver the righteous, who treat any thought of an impending destructive judgment as a great joke? God foreknew there would be, and caused the apostle Peter to prophesy: "In the last days there will come ridiculers with their ridicule, proceeding according to their own desires and saying: 'Where is this promised presence of his? Why, from the day our forefathers fell asleep in death, all things are continuing exactly as from creation's beginning.'" (2 Pet. 3:3, 4) The destructive events in Noah's day and in Lot's day point to the error of such ridiculers and to the fact that Jehovah will deliver the righteous.—2 Pet. 2:9.

The qualities displayed by the just and loving God offer a strong guarantee that he will rise up and bring an end to a generation of evildoers who today misrepresent him and ruin his handiwork here on earth. His promises, too, point to such decisive action, and it is impossible for him to lie. (Heb. 6:18) His dealings with wicked men of the past and his deliverance of the righteous point to the pattern he will follow in our day. And perhaps most explicit is the fact that in his Word the destructive Flood of Noah's day and the fiery overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah are specifically named as patterns of "things to come." There can be no doubt that God will put an end to all wickedness.

A GOD OF Loving-Kindness

"O GIVE THANKS TO JEHOVAH, YOU PEOPLE, FOR HE IS GOOD; FOR HIS LOVING-KINDNESS IS TO TIME INDEFINITE."—PS. 107:1.

WHAT is your conception of God? Do you view him as a kindly, benevolent deity, but one who perhaps is aloof from the affairs and problems of mankind? Or perhaps you think of him as a partisan fighter in world affairs, one who blesses the wars and bloodshed of the nations if they are in a "righteous" cause, perhaps even as a God who arbitrarily snuffs out the life of a loved one for his own inscrutable purposes.

[2] This does not sound like the God of whom the psalmist David said: "Good and upright is Jehovah. That is why he instructs sinners in the way. He will cause the meek ones to walk in his judicial decision, and he will teach the meek ones his way. All the paths of Jehovah are loving-kindness and trueness for those observing his covenant and his reminders." —Ps. 25:8-10.

[3] David had been a fugitive, fleeing for his life from his own countrymen, but he did not find fault with God for his troubles. Instead he prayed: "Make me know your own ways, O Jehovah; teach me your own paths. Make me walk in your truth and teach me, for you are my God of salvation. In you I have hoped all day long. Remember your mercies, O Jehovah, and your loving-kindnesses, for they are from time indefinite."—Ps. 25:4-6.

1, 2. How do some view God, as compared with what David wrote?
3, 4. What should be our attitude toward the Creator, and why?

[4] Many persons in less severe circumstances have found fault with the Creator. They cannot understand why he does not personally intervene in their cases, and tend to blame all their troubles, regardless of the source, on God. But we do well to consider what Jehovah's Word has to say about this. Is he a God of kindness and love, as David declared, or an unloving, bloodthirsty God, as even some clergymen have asserted?

[5] David was falsely accused and harassed by King Saul, whom Jehovah had entrusted with the leadership of his people. But David did not become bitter toward Jehovah over Saul's jealous action, and David refused to take matters into his own hands to strike down "the anointed of Jehovah." He recalled the law of Israel: "You must not hate your brother in your heart. You should by all means reprove your associate, that you may not bear sin along with him. You must not take vengeance nor have a grudge against the sons of your people; and you must love your fellow as yourself. I am Jehovah." —Lev. 19:17, 18.

[6] Later David took the lead in the fight Israel waged against the Canaanites to drive them out of the land that had been promised to Israel's forefather Abraham.

5. What counsel from Jehovah's Word did David wisely follow?
6. (a) What did the wars of Israel foreshadow, but what should we not conclude? (b) How did Jehovah deal rewardingly with David?

This action was a prophetic pattern of how Jehovah in our time will cleanse the earth of rebels against his sovereignty and give the inheritance to those loving and serving him, "those observing his covenant and his reminders." However, there is no Scriptural indication that Jehovah in these days fights for one nation or another. To the contrary, Isaiah foretold that his people would beat their swords into plowshares and learn war no more. David was denied the honor of erecting the temple to Jehovah's worship because he had been a man of war. Yet David had carried out Jehovah's will for his time and so Jehovah promised that the kingship would not leave his line of descent. (Acts 13:36) Concerning this, Isaiah prophetically declared: "Incline your ear and come to me. Listen, and your soul will keep alive, and I shall readily conclude with you people an indefinitely lasting covenant respecting the loving-kindnesses to David that are faithful." No wonder David declared: "As for me, in your loving-kindness I have trusted; let my heart be joyful in your salvation. I will sing to Jehovah, for he has dealt rewardingly with me."—Isa. 55:3; Ps. 13:5, 6.

7 The apostle Paul tied in the covenant with David with the events in Jesus' day, explaining: "And so we are declaring to you the good news about the promise made to the forefathers, that God has entirely fulfilled it to us their children in that he resurrected Jesus; even as it is written in the second psalm, 'You are my son, I have become your Father this day.' And that fact that he resurrected him from the dead destined no more to return to corruption, he has stated in this way, 'I will give you people the loving-kindnesses to David that are faithful.'" So the promise to David was fulfilled and Jesus as the heir of David and Jehovah's only-begotten Son was raised up to become King of Jehovah's new order of things at the appointed time.—Acts 13:32-34.

8 From the very beginning a growing chain of events showed Jehovah's kindness and loving concern for mankind. Jehovah's purpose that righteous men live on earth in paradisaic conditions would not be thwarted. When Jehovah formed the earth as a beautiful home for men, he did not provide just the stark necessities, but covered the terrain with fruit-bearing trees and flowering shrubs for their pleasure and delight. In the midst of the garden he planted the tree of life, looking forward to the time when the first couple would prove their faithfulness and expand the boundaries of the paradise garden to the ends of the earth. Even after their rebellion and the execution of sentence against them, Jehovah in prophecy showed his undeserved kindness as he foretold the future redemption of those putting their faith in him.

9 How would this restoration to paradisaic conditions come about? Jehovah had promised Abraham: "By means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves." This seed of Abraham would prove to be a blessing by providing the means for redemption. David had expressed the need for this when he prayed: "The sins of my youth and my revolts O do not remember. According to your loving-kindness do you yourself remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Jehovah. For your name's sake, O Jehovah, you must even forgive my error, for it is considerable." (Gen. 22:18; Ps. 25:7, 11) David saw that something more than animal sacrifices was needed to provide a satisfactory atonement, and he trusted in

7. How did Paul connect God's loving-kindness to David with Jesus' time?

8. What are some evidences that Jehovah is a God of loving-kindness?

9. What need did David recognize, and how was this prospect provided?

Jehovah's loving-kindness to provide it. Jehovah's covenant with David was another step forward in the outworking of Jehovah's purpose. (2 Sam. 7:16) How was that? As Paul said, regarding Jesus: "From all the things from which you could not be declared guiltless by means of the law of Moses, everyone who believes is declared guiltless by means of this One." What a prospect for blessing all nations this opened up, thanks to Jehovah's undeserved kindness, even the forgiveness of sins and errors such as David mentioned!—Acts 13:38, 39.

[10] Still down to this day mankind have not accepted and applied the lesson of kindness taught by Jehovah and his Son. Instead, throughout the world there is hatred due to nationality, prejudice due to religious differences, abuse and unkindness due to race. Those pursuing such a course show they are walking in darkness, as far as the viewpoint of their Creator is concerned, and darkness has blinded their eyes. (1 John 2:9-11) Following the course of kindness is to walk in union with Jehovah, walking in the light. This light from his Word further reveals the contrast between those who are children of God and those who are following the Satanic course of unkindness, division and hatred. "The children of God and the children of the Devil are evident by this fact: Everyone who does not carry on righteousness does not originate with God, neither does he who does not love his brother. For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should have love for one another; not like Cain, who originated with the wicked one and slaughtered his brother."—1 John 3:10-12.

10. In what way have mankind generally responded to Jehovah's provisions, and what does this indicate?

[11] Nor is this love for one's brother to be understood to mean just those of one's own family or even one's own race. As Jesus said: "My mother and my brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it." (Luke 8:21) So he did not make distinctions due to blood ties or race. He knew that his Father had shown undeserved kindness to all kinds of men and that He is impartial toward all. He made all men of one blood, and has given all the same hope of life through his Son under his Kingdom rule. A scholar of the Law, knowing Jehovah's command to love our neighbor as ourselves, asked: "Who really is my neighbor?" Jesus replied by telling of a man on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho who was robbed and beaten and left half-dead. Ignored by a priest and Levite who passed by, he was finally given kindly attention by a Samaritan. Jesus asked: "Who of these three seems to you to have made himself neighbor to the man that fell among the robbers?" Certainly it was the man who acted

11. (a) What illustration of kindness did Jesus give? (b) How did he show the same impartiality as his Father?

mercifully who showed himself to be the real neighbor. Jesus commended this action, saying to his inquirer: "Go your way and be doing the same yourself."—Luke 10:29-37.

12 Despite the fact that many people not only pass by and ignore their neighbors when help is needed, but even act rebelliously toward their Creator, Jehovah has continued to deal with long-suffering, patience and kindness toward mankind. (Ps. 107:11-13) He is not to be blamed because sudden death through accident, war or disease strikes thousands of young and old just when least expected. To the contrary, he is the one opening the way to life for those desiring it. Both he and his Son advocate and practice undeserved kindness.—Eccl. 9:11; Heb. 2:14.

13 However, Jehovah's loving expressions of kindness toward men through the centuries do not mean that he overlooks or will sentimentally forgive all wrongdoing. To Israel he described himself with the words: "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, preserving loving-kindness for thousands, pardoning error and transgression and sin, but by no means will he give exemption from punishment, bringing punishment for the error of fathers upon sons and upon grandsons, upon the third generation and upon the fourth generation." (Ex. 34:6, 7) Israel in time became deserving of chastisement. Hosea described the people as having loving-kindness "like the morning clouds and like the dew that early goes away." Judah had treacherously violated their covenant with Jehovah. Instead of practicing the loving-kindness of their God, Gilead became "a city of wrongdoers, tracked with bloody footprints. Like troops of men lying in wait, so the priests hid themselves; on the way to Shechem they committed murder, they practiced vice." Israel was defiled. Surely with conditions like this in the land it was true that what little loving-kindness there was had vanished away in the early morning like dew. With good reason Hosea pleaded: "Come, you people, and do let us return to Jehovah, for he himself has torn in pieces but he will heal us. He kept striking, but he will bind us up." Jehovah wanted their loyal love rather than sacrifice, and that they recognize the importance of knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. (Hos. 6:1-10, *NW, AT*) If the people would repent, then Jehovah would show himself to be a God 'slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness, but by no means giving exemption from punishment.'

14 The apostle Paul centuries later commented on Jehovah's balance as a God of kindness, yet one showing severity when deserved. He quoted Jehovah's words to Isaiah: "All day long I have spread out my hands toward a people that is disobedient and talks back." Elijah had even pleaded with God against Israel, saying: "Jehovah, they have killed your prophets, they have dug up your altars, and I alone am left." But Jehovah did not reject his people. He knew there were seven thousand men of faith remaining besides Elijah. So though the nation stumbled often, they did not fall completely from Jehovah's favor, and, like the seven thousand who refused to worship Baal in Elijah's time, a remnant of Israel during Jesus' ministry proved faithful. Paul wrote: "In this way, therefore, at the present season also a remnant has turned up according

12. (a) For what is God not to be blamed? (b) How do the Scriptures show this?

13. (a) What condition had Israel fallen into according to Hosea? (b) What kind of God would Jehovah show himself to be if the people were repentant?

14. What was the condition of Israel by the days of the apostles, and what provision did Jehovah make for the Gentiles?

to a choosing due to undeserved kindness." However, the majority of Israel acted as though they were sound asleep, their eyes closed and their ears deaf to the wonderful opportunity Jehovah in his undeserved kindness was opening up to them. Their failure opened the way for Gentiles, the people of the nations, to come into the new covenant that Jesus inaugurated. No longer were the Jews set off as a select people from all the other nations, but the wall of partition had been broken down and now the way was open for others to come into Jehovah's favor as his covenant people. —Rom. 10:21 to 11:11; 1 Pet. 2:10.

[15] Paul described this by likening Jehovah's covenant people to the branches in an olive tree. Since Israel as a nation proved unfruitful, the spiritually dead branches were broken off and new branches from a wild olive tree, representing men of faith of Gentile nations, were grafted in, that they might receive the riches of Jehovah and the blessings he would provide. Paul warns that this was not due to any special works on the part of those grafted in, but due to the lack of faith of those to whom the opportunity was first extended. He reminds them: "If God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. See, therefore, God's kindness and severity. Toward those who fell there is severity, but toward you there is God's kindness, provided you remain in his kindness; otherwise, you also will be lopped off." (Rom. 11:21, 22) Faith and obedience are required to remain in Jehovah's kindness. It is not a question of nationality or race. As Paul put it, "there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for there is the same Lord over all, who is rich to all those calling upon him. For 'everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.' "—Rom. 10:12, 13; 2:7-11.

15. How did Paul illustrate Jehovah's action, and what warning was given?

[16] Jehovah has opened the door to life through his undeserved kindness, balancing the scales of justice by providing his Son as a ransom so that we can escape from the condemnation and death inherited from Adam. Paul highlighted this at Titus 3:4-7, saying: "When the kindness and the love for man on the part of our Savior, God, was manifested, owing to no works in righteousness that we had performed, but according to his mercy he saved us through the bath that brought us to life and through the making of us new by holy spirit. This spirit he poured out richly upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior, that, after being declared righteous by virtue of the undeserved kindness of that one, we might become heirs according to a hope of everlasting life." Jehovah truly is a God of loving-kindness. It is not because of our own righteous works that we become entitled to life, but because of Jehovah's showing undeserved kindness in providing a ransom, which Jesus made available by giving his human life as a sacrifice. "So the Word became flesh and resided among us, and we had a view of his glory, a glory such as belongs to an only-begotten son from a father; and he was full of undeserved kindness and truth. For we all received from out of his fullness, even undeserved kindness upon undeserved kindness." In this Jesus mirrored the kindly qualities of his Father.—John 1:14, 16.

[17] Thus it can be clearly seen that it is due to no action on the part of the individual that he has the hope of everlasting life, because all have sinned; yet God grants this prospect of being declared righteous through faith in the ransom sacrifice of Christ Jesus as a free gift by his undeserved kindness. (Rom. 3:23, 24)

16. How was the hope of everlasting life made possible?
17. In what way did undeserved kindness come to rule as king?

Up to the time of Christ the law that God gave stood as a reminder to Israel of their imperfection and sinfulness, but Jesus' ransom opened up the way to receive the benefits of God's undeserved kindness. Until that time it was true that sin ruled as king with death, but then Jehovah opened up the way that "undeserved kindness might rule as king through righteousness with everlasting life in view." (Rom. 5:21) Jesus had come as a leader and commander to bless all national groups, in fulfillment of God's "covenant respecting the loving-kindnesses to David."—Isa. 55:3, 4.

18 Today Christians are not in the Mosaic law covenant with God, but, being associated with the new covenant, are led by God's spirit. (Rom. 6:14) Even so, our prospects of righteous standing in God's sight do not come as a result of our works. The apostle Paul spoke strongly about this, showing that no one could obtain life through his own efforts: "I do not shove aside the undeserved kindness of God; for if righteousness is through law, Christ actually died for nothing." (Gal. 2:21) In fact, Paul went on to say: "You are parted from Christ, whoever you are that try to be declared righteous by means of law; you have fallen away from his undeserved kindness."—Gal. 5:4; Rom. 11:5, 6.

19 However, although it is not by our own efforts but rather by the merit of Christ's sacrifice that we have the wonderful hope of everlasting life, whether in heaven or upon earth, that fact does not mean that Jehovah has not given us an assignment of service. So Paul reminded the Galatians: "God, who . . . called me through his undeserved kindness, thought good to reveal his Son in connection with me, that I might declare the good news about him to the nations." (Gal. 1:15, 16) By also accepting this call to declare the good news Christians today can share in the ministry and show they appreciate the undeserved kindness of Jehovah. As sons of God, we should reflect his quality of kindness to others, and what better way can there be to do this than by bringing them the truth that leads to life! Jesus did this, sharing both undeserved kindness and truth through his ministry.—John 1: 17, 18.

20 Jehovah himself is the original source of kindness. As the aged apostle John wrote: "Who will not really fear you, Jehovah, and glorify your name, because you alone are one of loving-kindness?" (Rev. 15:4, edition of 1950) Even for those who have gone contrary to the direction of God, if they change their course of action, the opportunity of being reconciled and obtaining the gift of life may still be open, just as the prophet Joel invited the wayward Israelites: "Come back to Jehovah your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness."—Joel 2:13.

21 On the other hand, Satan is doing all he can to counteract the kindness of Jehovah, knowing that he has only a short time remaining to blind the minds of the people to the good news. (2 Cor. 4:4) His every effort is to defame the Creator as a God who does not care and is not concerned with the problems and trials of mankind, a God taking sides in human wars and thus being responsible for the suffering and grief of the people. (John 8:44) But Jesus foreknew that before Jehovah finally brings an end to Satan's deceit and troublemaking, a warning would be given and the real position of Jehovah as a God of loving-kindness would be made clear, One who will bring blessings to his people through his Kingdom under the

18. How do some shove aside the undeserved kindness of God?
19. What privilege has Jehovah given Christians today?
20. Who is the true source of kindness, and what invitation does he extend?
21. What effort is Satan making, but what can lead to salvation?

rule of Christ Jesus. To this end he has gathered together men of faith as his witnesses in a worldwide organization to preach "this good news of the kingdom." Sharing in this God-assigned work now leads to salvation.—Rom. 10:9-11.

[22] During this interim period before the final crushing tribulation comes against Satan's organization many are having the opportunity to hear the Kingdom message and are in effect taking up the prayer of David: "Make me know your own ways, O Jehovah; teach me your own paths." (Ps. 25:4) They come to know Jehovah as a God extending undeserved kindness to those "observing his covenant and his reminders." They no longer fall into the snare of lack of faith that Satan has laid, brooding over the barbaric acts of warfare of recent years and attributing such things to God. (Jas. 4:1, 2) However, Christendom generally, like Israel of old, displays loving-kindness that vanishes in time of trouble like a morning dew in a hot sun, quickly dissipated because of not having real faith in Jehovah, his Word and Kingdom. Unless such ones come back to Jehovah and turn to the knowledge of God, they will be cut down as in a harvest when Jehovah cleanses the earth of all wickedness at the battle of Armageddon. As Isaiah prophesied, men of faith will then "actually go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that were transgressing against me."—Isa. 66:24.

22. What fate awaits those who fall into Satan's snare?

[23] Thus Jehovah in his righteous judgments shows both kindness and severity—deserved severity toward those who oppose his Kingdom ambassadors and their message and who turn their backs on his righteous purpose, but kindness to men of faith with the prospect of everlasting life. (Luke 20:9-18) Even during this "time of the end" Jehovah continues to show his patience, not desiring any to perish. (2 Pet. 3:9) Each one by his course of action will determine whether he will receive of God's kindness or severity. Jehovah will actually be showing kindness to all putting faith in him when he completely cleanses the earth of all wickedness. (Heb. 10:26-29) Then as never before 'undeserved kindness will rule as king through righteousness with everlasting life in view through Jesus Christ our lord.' —Rom. 5:21; Ps. 107:15.

23. (a) How do the Scriptures show Jehovah's justice? (b) How does even Jehovah's severity prove to be a kindness?

Showing Kindness to Others

"A man of loving-kindness is dealing rewardingly with his own soul."—Prov. 11:17.

IF YOU like to have kindness shown to you, try making a practice of showing kindness to others. The little thought and effort it takes bring much happiness. Try to put yourself in the other person's place. If you are driving home at night and are delayed by a stalled car, why honk and get impatient? How much kinder to offer help. Or at the breakfast table if your child accidentally knocks over the milk, do you think he likes to be told crossly that he is clumsy? Try kindness. Treat others

1, 2. (a) Give some suggestions that will help in showing kindness to others. (b) Why is kindness an important quality to have?

as you like to be treated, as this is the real essence of kindness.

[2] Kindness is refreshing. We appreciate it especially because so many people we meet are without kindness. We read of parents' beating children and violence of all kinds, but rarely do we read any headlines telling of an outstanding act of kindness. Since our natural inclination may be to treat others as they treat us, we do well to remember Jehovah's counsel: "I desire kindness, and not sacrifice." (Hos. 6:6, *AS,* ftn.) It is much better to show kindness in the first place rather than to have to atone for speaking harshly and offending someone, for the unkindness is still remembered.

[3] Just as Jehovah has shown wonderful kindness to us, we want to show similar kindness to others, even though they may be unresponsive. This is possible by the help of his spirit. Among those who have no faith in God and consequently do not have the fruitage of his spirit, we often see an outward kindness, but it is sometimes hypocritical. As soon as one's back is turned, the flattery also turns to unkindness. But Christian kindness must be more than a thin veneer of politeness and courtesy. True Christians want to show real warmth, love and consideration, the genuine kindness of Jehovah's spirit. Even if this is difficult at times, there is no need to get discouraged, for we have a high priest, Christ Jesus, who can sympathize with our weaknesses. We are told to "approach with freeness of speech to the throne of undeserved kindness, that we may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time."—Heb. 4:15, 16.

FRUITAGE OF THE SPIRIT

[4] Since kindness is described Scripturally as the fruitage of God's spirit, this means it can be cultivated like any other fruit. (2 Pet. 3:18) It can be encouraged to grow if given the proper care and attention. Now particularly is the time to have kindness grow in us by studying God's Word and the fine example that men of faith in times past have set in showing kindness, by associating with people who manifest this fruitage of the spirit, and by following the Scriptural example and instructions of Christ Jesus, now on the throne of undeserved kindness. Jehovah requires kindness of us. Micah 6:8 says: "And what is Jehovah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be modest in walking with your God?" Thus if we are real children of God, we will not only show kindness, but love to show kindness. The Hebrew word here rendered kindness is the same elsewhere translated loving-kindness. Kindness is linked with love in the Scriptures because kindness stems from love. If we have love for God and love for our neighbor, then we will show kindness.

[5] Kindness is mentioned fifth among the fruits of God's spirit. It indicates that one has a desire to do good, a benevolent disposition, inclined to be considerate and helpful. The fruits of God's spirit include love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control. There is no law against such things, for they are all upbuilding and beneficial. We find that kindness helps to solve problems. It is the force behind tactfulness. It is the basic essence of good manners and true attractiveness. It makes it easier to forgive, but it also helps one to be firm for what is right, and it will attract interested ones to Jehovah and to the truth. —Gal. 5:22, 23.

[6] Christian kindness includes being con-

3. Why should we show genuine kindness, and how is this possible?
4. (a) How can kindness be cultivated? (b) In what way is it linked with love?

5, 6. (a) What does kindness include, and how is it shown? (b) What did Jesus say about kindness?

siderate of all, being sympathetic and concerned about others. Kindness is not just a matter of giving to get or showing thoughtfulness to family or friends or those with whom one works. Try showing kindness to strangers also. Jesus said that if someone in governmental service asks you to go a mile, you should go two miles with him. Kindness and consideration should be shown, not only to friends, but even to enemies. "Continue to love your enemies and to do good and to lend without interest, not hoping for anything back; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind toward the unthankful and wicked."—Luke 6:35, 36.

[7] Kindness is a good way to overcome indifference or opposition to the Kingdom message. When a Christian shows a patient, friendly and obliging spirit, after a time it may have an effect on the other person. God's spirit will help one to respond in this way. We are instructed at Colossians 3:12, 13: "As God's chosen ones, holy and loved, clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering. Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Even as Jehovah freely forgave you, so do you also." Kindness is not something to put on one day and leave home the next. It is a Christian requirement.

[8] So ask yourself, Do you make an effort to show kindness? Or if someone is unkind to you, are you unkind to the next person you meet? Or do you take your feelings out on your family? Do not be surprised, then, to see your children treat the household pet with meanness. Why not act instead as a solid reef to stop the spreading waves of unkindness? The place to start is at home, and the one to start with is oneself. Remember, "the desirable thing in earthling man is his loving-kindness."—Prov. 19:22.

7. How can we clothe ourselves with kindness, and with what results?
8. What is desirable for us to show, and how can we do it?

KINDNESS IN THE FAMILY

[9] In a family where kindness is shown, each one, father, mother and children, must have a part. Husbands should not take their wives for granted, but look for opportunities to give encouragement. Is the spirit in your home such that, when someone says something nice, the other person says, 'All right, now what do you want?' How much better it is when the wife shows appreciation for the hard work of her husband and the husband lets his wife know how much he enjoys the meal and the neat home she keeps. Do you do that? It is important not to have two standards, speaking with consideration and politeness outside the home, but unkindly, bluntly and without feeling to those who are close to you.

[10] It is often true that actions speak louder than words, so kindness can be shown not only in speech but also by our actions in the home. It may be something little, something unexpected, but bringing happiness or expressing sympathy. It is not necessary but certainly kind if a husband brings flowers for his wife. Or perhaps the wife is not feeling well. It does not take long to help with the dishes or with the children, and she may appreciate it more than a gift. Try letting kindness be your gift.

[11] The wife has an important part in establishing a spirit of kindness in the family. If her husband does not yet have an

9. How can kindness be shown within a family?
10. Mention some everyday ways to show kindness to your family.
11. What do the Scriptures tell us about kindness in speech?

appreciation for the hope expressed in the Scriptures, she may draw him to the truth by her kindly example. Proverbs 31:26 says of a good wife: "The law of loving-kindness is upon her tongue." Instead of being an exception, this should be a law or rule of action for the wife. It means thinking before speaking. And the husband wants to keep that law also. With this rule for the home, we will find that kindness solves problems. As Ephesians 4:32 says simply, "Become kind to one another." Showing kindness in speech is important. We should not think that when Abraham, Lot and even Jehovah said, "please," it was a mere formality, but they took account of the importance of kindness.—Gen. 18:3, 4; 19:2; 22:2.

[12] Kindness to children is important for a happy family. Cultivate this quality in them as well, and remember that they do as they see you do. So commend them when they do well in school or in their field ministry, or if they give a good comment in your discussion of the day's Bible text. Parents should not be irritating their children, and it is a good thing for parents to organize their family in kindness, so that the children know what is expected of them and so they will be built up spiritually by a good theocratic schedule. Children, of course, need encouragement and even discipline to follow out a schedule to be prepared for their studies and to fulfill home chores that may be assigned. But kindness is not to be confused with sentimentality or letting things slide. Mistaken kindness can result in juvenile delinquency. It is no kindness to children when parents do not care about the company they keep, about their attendance or deportment at meetings, about their study of God's Word, but just let the children drift and do things their own way. The children may well think the parents do not care if this happens. While children, because of immaturity, may not appreciate the close supervision, reproof given to a wise person will cause him to love you for it, and, in time, the same will be true of the child. Some parents pamper their children by giving them everything they can. But a survey at an Idaho school revealed that not a single straight A student owned a car, while 83 percent of those who failed did. Surely the parents providing the cars thought it was a kindness to the child, but it was not so from an educational standpoint.

[13] Finally, be kind to yourself. Keep a good schedule for study and service. This may mean turning off the television and going to bed to get some sleep to be fresh to enjoy the next day. It may mean less anxiety over material things and spending more time on spiritual treasures. One who is kind to himself in this way will have contentment and peace of mind and be happy with the blessings of the day. These things will contribute to a happy individual and a happy family.—Luke 12:19-21.

KINDNESS IN THE CONGREGATION

[14] Others who deserve our kindness are our spiritual brothers and sisters. Even though one's own family may be alienated because of the message from God's Word, there are brothers and sisters a hundredfold in the Christian congregation. (Mark 10:29, 30) We can show them kindness in many ways: perhaps stopping by to cheer up someone who is sick, taking a tasty dish to an elderly pioneer in the congregation, or doing a few chores for a sick sister. Others kindly help new ones prepare talks for the ministry school. One brother goes out of his way to bring an

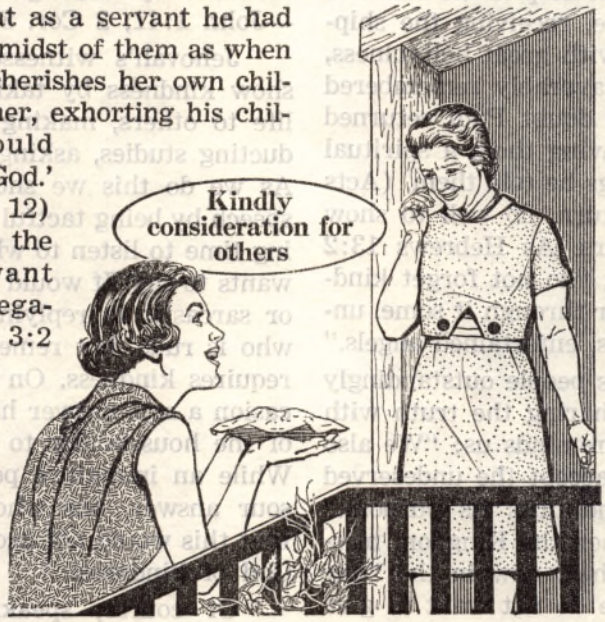
12. What are some ways in which kindness can be shown to children?

13. How can one be kind to oneself and receive a blessing?

14. What are some ways kindness can be shown within the congregation?

invalid sister by wheelchair to the meetings. Many persons drive long distances to bring interested persons and friends by car to the congregational meetings. Those receiving such kindness may, in turn, show their appreciation by offering to help with the expenses. In the early Christian congregation Dorcas was remembered and richly blessed because she made a practice of showing kindness by "good deeds and gifts of mercy."—Acts 9:36-42.

[15] In each congregation it is important for the servants to cultivate the quality of kindness. Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, showed that as a servant he had been 'gentle in the midst of them as when a nursing mother cherishes her own children, or like a father, exhorting his children, so they would walk worthily of God.' (1 Thess. 2:7, 11, 12) This well reflects the attitude of a servant toward the congregation. At Ephesians 3:2 the apostle speaks about "the stewardship of the undeserved kindness of God that was given me with you in view." Paul recognized that just as he had received the undeserved kindness of God, he had the responsibility or stewardship to use it in behalf of others, particularly Gentiles. Peter also declared: "In proportion as each one has received a gift, use it in ministering to one another as fine stewards of God's undeserved kindness expressed in various ways." (1 Pet. 4:10) The overseer may have to exhort, reprimand and counsel, but he will do it in kindness, knowing that kindness attracts but unkindness repels.



[16] Each one in the Christian congregation has the opportunity to manifest kindness to others. Instead of being disturbed because a sister with several children cannot control them as she might like, perhaps you can offer to sit with them to help. It is a kindness to ourselves as well as to others not to make a practice of coming late to meetings, thereby disturbing others and missing important material; or, if late unavoidably, sit at the rear where as few as possible will be disturbed. A brother showing kindness would not severely criticize an older man but entreat him as a father. Younger ones can also show kindness by a friendly word to the older ones, or offering to be helpful.—1 Tim. 5:1-3.

THE PURPOSE OF UNDESERVED KINDNESS

[17] From time to time some have the opportunity to entertain visiting speakers or a circuit servant and his wife. At 3 John 5-8, the aged apostle showed that we have an obligation to receive such persons hospitably, since doing what is good originates with God. If we sow kindness we will also reap kindness. Even the act of giving one of Jesus' disciples a cup of cold water would be favorably remembered by Jehovah. (Matt. 10:41, 42) The Scriptures give

15. What counsel did Paul and Peter give Christian servants?

16. In what ways might kindness be shown at meetings?
17, 18. Why show kindness to strangers?

many fine examples of showing kindness to strangers, as when Elijah was kindly received by the widow of Zarephath. (1 Ki. 17:8-24) This poor widow offered her last bit of food to the prophet during a famine and was richly blessed as a result. Jehovah kept her supplied with flour and oil thereafter, and later restored her son to life.

18 At Acts 28:2 Paul relates how he and others were shipwrecked on the island of Malta, where "the foreign-speaking people showed us extraordinary human kindness." They came out despite the cold and rain and built a fire, receiving the shipwrecked strangers with great helpfulness, so that they were favorably remembered in God's Word. No doubt Paul returned this kindness by leaving them a spiritual blessing by the things he told them. (Acts 28:30, 31) We, in turn, do well to show kindness to strangers. As Hebrews 13:2 (1950 edition) says, "do not forget kindness to strangers, for through it some, unknown to themselves, entertained angels."

19 Today Jehovah's people outstandingly show kindness by sharing the truth with others. The apostle reminds us: "We also entreat you not to accept the undeserved kindness of God and miss its purpose." Now is the time when the Kingdom message is being preached, now in the "day of salvation." So we do not want to give "any cause for stumbling, that our ministry might not be found fault with; but in every way we recommend ourselves as God's ministers, . . . by kindness, by holy spirit, by love free from hypocrisy, by truthful speech, by God's power." (2 Cor. 6:1-7) Regardless of the situation in which we may find ourselves, we can still recommend ourselves, not only by our knowledge of his Word and the way we react under difficulties, but also by showing the fruitage of the spirit, including kindness.

20 Our showing kindness means we are imitating God. Jesus outstandingly set the lead for us in this as he preached the truth. After John the Baptist had pointed him out as the Lamb of God, two of John's disciples followed Jesus and asked where he was staying. Jesus invited them to come and see. After spending the rest of the day with Jesus, Andrew told his brother Simeon: "We have found the Messiah." Yes, Jesus showed hospitality and kindness by talking about God's Word. —John 1:41; 2 Cor. 8:9.

21 Jehovah's witnesses today regularly show kindness by taking the message of life to others, making return visits, conducting studies, asking nothing in return. As we do this we show kindness in our speech by being tactful and courteous, taking time to listen to what the householder wants to say. It would be easy to be sharp or sarcastic in replying to a householder who is rude, but remember that Jehovah requires kindness. On more than one occasion a soft answer has opened the mind of the householder to consider the truth. While an immature person might give a sour answer, one who is mature knows that this would not properly represent the God of kindness.

22 Of course, speaking with kindness does not mean being wishy-washy or watering down the truth, because speech can be kind and yet to the point. Jesus spoke strongly to the clergy class but kindly and patiently to sheeplike ones. It is no kindness to withhold the truth, even though it may hurt at first. Just as an operation may cause pain for a blind person, when his sight is restored, the joy that he gains on seeing again makes up for all of it. So,

19. How can we show we are not missing the purpose of God's undeserved kindness?

20. How did Jesus show kindness in his ministry?
21. How can kindness be shown in the ministry today?
22. Why is it no kindness to withhold the truth?

whether one is sick physically or spiritually, kindness is appreciated and can open closed ears to the truth. An experience showing this was enjoyed by a Witness who started a study with a woman living with her aged Irish mother. The mother was very hostile and told the Witness not to come, but her daughter went to the publisher's home to continue the study. The mother liked this even less, so she finally agreed that the Witness could come to their home again for the study. When she returned, the sister took a few flowers along, as she felt old people are often neglected and feel unwanted. After that the lady gradually took an interest in the truth and finally admitted: "I was an old cat to you, but you just gave me kindness in return. I used to think that all that was left for me was to grow old and die, but there is a new life opening up for me now." So kindness helped change this person's viewpoint toward the truth.

[23] Just as Jehovah shows kindness, giving the rain and the sun, food and shelter, even to those unthankful and wicked, we can show kindness even to those now rejecting the truth. By so doing we show that we are not children of this system but, rather, have the fruits of Jehovah's spirit as his children. (Matt. 5:43-46) The kindly conduct of Jehovah's witnesses at assemblies has been a wonderful testimony to Jehovah's honor. As a New Zealand cafeteria manager said: "I never before met such courteous, kind and thoughtful people."

[24] Finally, kindness in the family and the congregation can be shown by firmness for what is right. Kindness is not weakness. It does not mean condoning what is wrong. Such mistaken kindness can result in juvenile or adult delinquency, and spiritual delinquency may result in the congregation if the overseer views kindness as a lack of firmness for right principle. It is never kind to encourage others to do what is out of harmony with God's will; so, if a Christian begins to drift away from Jehovah's way, kindness would not be shown by withholding counsel or even deserved discipline. Peter at one time gave poor counsel to Jesus when Jesus told him that he was about to suffer and die. Peter said: "Be kind to yourself, Lord." But Jesus turned his back, saying: "Get behind me, Satan!" (Matt. 16:22, 23) Peter was rebuked and rightly so. His words that he felt were spoken in kindness were not in accord with Jehovah's purpose. So kindness must be linked with truth and with love for Jehovah.

[25] Satan wants to cause division and stop the working of God's spirit through friction in Christian homes and congregations. Divisions in Jehovah's congregation because of personal differences or petty arguments would hinder the flow of Jehovah's spirit and hold back the fruitage of the ministry, but Jesus' disciples are known by the love they show, and love covers weaknesses and imperfection, even a multitude of sins. However, all who have the hope of living in Jehovah's new system of things must also be on guard to protect the congregation from those who would let some turn the undeserved kindness of God into an excuse for loose conduct.—Jude 4.

[26] Kindness will help us to improve our relations with others. Instead of getting worked up and tense, we should let Jehovah's spirit operate. A gentle, friendly and merciful attitude is associated with kindness, and it is certainly much better to show kindness in the first place than to

23. How can we show ourselves to be children of Jehovah?
24. What does kindness not include? Why?
25. What effort does Satan make to counteract kindness?
26. In what way can kindness help us to get along with others?

try to patch up unhappiness. So if you find in your family a tendency toward friction or lack of love, even harsh, rude talk, try cultivating this fruit of the spirit. Even though others in the household may be opposed to the truth, a kind attitude on the part of a Christian will help, just like oil on stormy waters.

[27] It is by Jehovah's undeserved kindness that we have the prospect of life; so we should reflect like kindness to others. (Eph. 2:5-8) Just as we endeavor to cultivate Kingdom fruitage in our field ministry, so we want to cultivate the fruitage of God's spirit. If we do this we will show we are obeying God's law of kindness. It will be not only upon our tongue but on our mind and heart, and we will make it a part of our new personality. We will find that it helps to solve our problems and makes it easy to forgive. Kindness has an upbuilding quality that prompts others to respond in kind. It helps us to draw others to Jehovah by our words and acts. As we display this fruit of the spirit, our hope and trust in Jehovah will not lead to disappointment. So, to walk with Jehovah, we must love kindness, for Jehovah requires kindness, even in the midst of an unkind world. Kindness leads to life. —Rom. 2:4; 5:2.

27. Why is kindness so important to a Christian?

IN THESE momentous "last days" it is a privilege to assemble together in Christian meetings and to share in preaching about God's kingdom. (2 Tim. 3:1) Yet, not all who start out in this Christian activity continue in it. As happened with certain disciples in Jesus' day who "went off to things behind and would no longer walk with him," so today circumstances arise in the lives of some persons that cause them to stop associating with the Christian congregation and to quit preaching.—John 6:66.

In the last five years 323,986 new Kingdom publishers symbolized their dedication to Jehovah God by water baptism. Yet, during that period, there was an increase, on an average, of only 174,088 ministers. What happened to the other 149,898? When one subtracts the approximately 1 percent who normally die each year, it still leaves about 100,000 persons who have ceased to preach in just the past five years.* Are you one of these who used to be a Kingdom publisher? If so, what is the reason for it?

We are very much concerned about you who have left the congregation and slipped into inactivity. Jesus compared the situation to a man with one hundred sheep. When one sheep leaves the fold, how does the shepherd feel? Does he feel there is no great loss because he still has ninety-nine sheep? Not at all! Jesus said that he leaves the ninety-nine and travels into the wilderness to recover the lost one. That is how much the shepherd cares for it! We have a similar loving concern for you who have left the congregation fold.—Luke 15:4-7.

* One percent, each year, of the average number of publishers, which increased from 884,587 to 1,058,675 in the past five years, amounts to about 50,000 Kingdom publishers who have died in that period.

You may have already had personal visits from ones in the local congregation. The brothers call because they love you, and want to see you back in the congregation again. All of us desire that you enjoy Jehovah's blessing and gain life in his new system of things. We understand that problems can arise and that these can make it difficult to serve God. But should we not expect Satan the Devil to do everything he can to prevent us from serving Jehovah? Yes, indeed! For he is like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone. (1 Pet. 5:8) He repeatedly tried to turn Jesus from the worship of God, so is it any wonder that he makes similar efforts to turn us away?

"ANXIETIES OF LIFE"

Perhaps it is difficult to pinpoint just what caused you to stop regularly associating with the congregation and to quit preaching the good news. It may simply be the increasing burden of what Jesus called the "anxieties of life," including the problems, the tensions and the frustrations resulting from daily having to contend with this worldly system of things.—Luke 21:34.

In today's highly competitive society you may have experienced increased responsibilities and more and more demands on your time. Perhaps added pressure has been exerted on you by your employer. Also, to meet rising expenses you may have felt it necessary to spend more time at secular employment. In addition, there may be maintenance of the home and garden, and greater responsibilities in connection with your family. Perhaps reduced health and energy accentuate the pressures, causing discouragement and depression. Has a similar set of circumstances resulted in your forsaking Christian responsibilities and slipping into spiritual inactivity?

Increasing pressures may have made you feel the need of relief from the weight of responsibilities, but was cutting yourself off from the Christian congregation the answer? Has it improved the situation? Ask yourself: 'Am I really happier and more content now that I have ceased attending meetings and sharing in the ministry? Are I and my family better Christians? Is there more regular prayer to God, study of His Word and manifestation of the fruits of the spirit in our lives? Is the desire for "God's kingdom to come and his will to be done on earth" as strong as before? Is my hope for life on a paradise earth under Christ's rule as real and meaningful as it once was?'

An honest consideration of such questions will no doubt reveal that genuine happiness and spirituality have diminished. But, really, how could it be otherwise? Did not Jesus say, "Happy are those hearing the word of God and *keeping it*"? (Luke 11:28) And would not failing to comply with God's injunction to assemble with his people and to preach his Word cause you to lose the happiness of which Jesus spoke? (Heb. 10:25; 2 Tim. 4:2) What, then, would be the wise and proper course to take?

ACTION THAT IS NOW URGENT

It is clear: You need association with Christians of like precious faith. So go to the congregation meetings! Your brothers will be so glad to see you. Do not hesitate. Do not wait until next week, but go to a meeting this very week. It is Satan the Devil who weighs Christians down with anxieties and endeavors to extinguish their worship of God. He is the one who tries to make persons think that relief from burdens can come by forsaking Christian meetings and responsibilities. But do not listen to him; listen to Jesus.

Jesus says: "Come to me, all you who

are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and become my disciples." (Matt. 11:28, 29) Being a disciple of Jesus should be refreshing, not burdensome. Yes, it is pleasant, really delightful to assemble with fellow Christians. (Ps. 133:1) The requirements of Christianity do not weigh one down as would a heavy yoke. Each one does as he is able. Jehovah God and Jesus Christ know what you can do, and they are pleased with whatever willing service you are capable of giving.—Ps. 110:3.

Remember Mary, Lazarus' sister. Shortly prior to Jesus' death she was criticized because she anointed Jesus with some perfumed oil. However, Jesus did not criticize her for her simple, heartfelt service, but said: "Let her alone. Why do you try to make trouble for her? . . . She did what she could." (Mark 14:6-8) The day before, Jesus had stationed himself in the temple and observed those making contributions. Instead of censuring a woman who offered very little, he praised her for her contribution. (Luke 21:1-4) She, too, did what she could. That is what Christianity calls for: Doing what you can.

Such Christian activity is not a burden from which to seek relief. Rather, it is a refreshment, for it brings contentment and satisfaction; we can have confidence that Jehovah is pleased with our efforts. So have joy and gain refreshment for your soul by doing what you can as a worshiper of Jehovah God! It is vitally urgent that you become an active Christian *now!* Why? Because the time is short. The end is near!

Note what Jesus said about it: "But pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come in upon all those dwelling upon the face of the earth. Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man."—Luke 21:34-36.

This day of God's judgment is at hand! Time is quickly running out! Prompt action is necessary if that day is not to come suddenly upon you "as a snare." So bestir yourself! Wake up spiritually! Regularly make supplication to Jehovah to help you escape adverse judgment. Then act in harmony with your prayers. The first step is to go to congregation meetings. Do not put it off; go this very week! A warm welcome awaits you.

STUMBLED OVER TEACHING

There are reasons why people leave the Christian congregation and discontinue offering God praise. In the first century Jesus presented some difficult-to-understand teachings to an audience assembled in Capernaum. What was the result? Why, the Bible record says: "Many of his disciples, when they heard this, said: 'This speech is shocking; who can listen to it?' . . . Owing to this many of his disciples went off to the things behind and would no longer walk with him."—John 6:60-66.

Did these disciples benefit in any way by leaving Jesus and quitting their Christian activity? Of course not! For, as Peter said when Jesus asked him if he, too, wanted to go: "Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life." (John 6:67, 68) By cutting themselves off from association with their Christian brothers, those disciples certainly lost true happiness and spirituality. The same is true today.

Think about it. If you have ceased to associate with the Christian congregation because of stumbling over some teaching, has it benefited you in any way? Have you found another place where there is

such a rich table of spiritual food? Really, there is none! You need the Christian congregation and the association of those who love God and want to do His will. Be assured that Jehovah will see that his organization is properly directed, and that anything that is amiss will be corrected in his due time. So accept the invitation back to the congregation meetings.

IMPROPER CONDUCT PROMPTS INACTIVITY

Another reason why some persons stop attending Christian meetings and sharing in the preaching work is that they have committed some wrong, or have slipped into a bad practice that is disapproved by God's Word. They may feel that if they confess their improper conduct they will be disfellowshiped, so what is the use in returning to the congregation? However, in this they are mistaken, for if they are truly repentant and have demonstrated it by having discontinued their unscriptural practice, they will be warmly welcomed back by the brothers, just as was the prodigal son in Jesus' illustration.

You will recall that that young man left his father's house, squandered his inheritance and lived with harlots. But when he came to his senses, sincerely repented of his wrongdoing and returned home, his father "ran and fell upon his neck and tenderly kissed him." There was much rejoicing, for, as the father said to his older son, "your brother was dead but has become alive, and he was lost but has been found." (Luke 15:11-32) We expect similar experiences today.

Are you one of those who has engaged in improper conduct? And have you, like the prodigal son, come to your senses, realized the error of your way and given up such practices or are sincerely endeavoring to do so? Then, humbly return to your heavenly Father, Jehovah God. Have confidence in his mercy, "for he will forgive in a large way." (Isa. 55:7) Come to the congregation meetings. There you will receive a warm welcome and needed assistance to live properly.

THE JOY WHEN ONE RETURNS

However, you may still dread returning to the Kingdom Hall because you fear facing the brothers again. You may feel that they will act coolly toward you. But was that the attitude of the shepherd when the one lost sheep was recovered, or of the father when his prodigal son returned? Not at all! Rather, there was rejoicing. Similarly today, persons who have returned to the congregation have been the cause of much rejoicing. Recently a sister, who had fallen away and seen very few of the brothers for five years, wrote:

"I became sick of the world and its lack of anything spiritual. My children seemed to grow more selfish every day and I was concerned about the lack of spirituality in the home. . . . [It was] arranged for me to go along to the next public talk, but at the last minute I could not face up to meeting the brothers. . . .

"Finally, I prayed for the first time in years to Jehovah to give me a little courage to go down to the Kingdom Hall, and on July 26 my sons and I eventually made it. The brothers were wonderful. They went out of their way to welcome us back, and that day became the highlight of our year. It was almost too much to take in one day, and I was very moved by it."

You can be confident that a similar welcome is awaiting when you return to the congregation meetings. You will enjoy the warm Christian fellowship of your brothers and experience their loving interest. By gradually being built up spiritually through regular Bible study and meeting attendance, you will again find exquisite delight in praising Jehovah God with his people.—Rev. 7:9, 10.

Earth's FINAL Human Government

THE Bible uses the number seven throughout to represent completeness. There are seven days to a week. The time allowed for the Gentiles to dominate the earth was to be a period of "seven times." There are seven plagues poured out in Revelation to complete God's anger against the world. In Pharaoh's dream he saw seven fat cattle and seven lean ones. These are just a few of the examples of the use of the figure seven, of which there are scores, showing it to signify completeness.

The Bible lists seven world powers as successively dominating the earth. One would think, then, that seven world powers would be all that would exist, but strangely there is to be an eighth one, as the last and final one. How can this harmonize with the normal use of the number seven, and how is there an eighth world power? It is interesting to see. It helps us to understand where we stand in the stream of time and it aids us to know the course of action to take in this particular period.

THE EIGHTH WORLD POWER

We find the Eighth World Power mentioned in the Bible book of Revelation, in the apostle John's description of the vision that was given to him by Jesus Christ. He saw a scarlet-colored wild beast having seven heads and ten horns, and it had a woman as rider. John writes: "Here is where the intelligence that has wisdom comes in: The seven heads mean seven mountains, where the woman sits on top. And there are seven kings: five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet arrived, but when he does arrive he must remain a short while. And the wild beast that was but is not, it is also itself an eighth king, but springs from the seven, and it goes off into destruction."—Rev. 17:9-11.

The intelligence that has wisdom would not be mere human intelligence but would be wisdom that is given from above. (Jas. 3:17) The scarlet-colored beast is called a mystery, a secret, something not readily understood but to be revealed at God's time for it. God gives his people who put faith in him and who study his Word the wisdom and good sense to understand the things written in his Word and the things necessary to maintain their integrity to him as his servants. (Eph. 1:8; Matt. 16:17) The things of the Bible are not understood by one who doubts their authenticity and who tries to figure them out by human reasoning.

The "seven heads" are those on the scarlet-colored wild beast. But these heads only image the seven heads of the wild beast that ascended out of the ungodly sea of mankind. (Rev. 13:1, 2, 11-15) They are "mountains" or kingdoms, seven political heads that came one after the other. The usage of this symbol can be understood clearly from Daniel 2:34, 35, 44, 45, where the prophet likens the everlasting world power of the future, God's Messianic

kingdom, to a "large mountain" that "filled the whole earth."

The Bible lists the seven world powers, figuratively, "seven kings," as such in the sense that each is a "king of kings," a king dominating all other kings at a specific time. For example, the prophet Daniel said to the Babylonian world ruler Nebuchadnezzar: "You, O king, the king of kings, you to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, . . . you yourself are the head of gold." (Dan. 2:37, 38) The ruler of the Medo-Persian World Power assumed the same title in the letter that he gave to the Bible copyist Ezra to carry up to Jerusalem, saying: "Artaxerxes, the king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the copyist of the law of the God of the heavens: Peace be perfected."—Ezra 7:7-12.

THE MARCH OF WORLD POWERS

What was the First World Power? Was it Babylon? No, although Nimrod did set up Babylon and there gave a start to what became the world empire of false religion. God's action prevented it from becoming the first political world power. (Gen. 10:8-10; 11:8, 9) The Babylonish religious empire reigned over or sat on top of the first symbolic mountain, the Egyptian World Power, the first political world power of Bible history. The second was Assyria; the third, Babylon, which, while being religious, also became at this time the dominant political world power; the fourth, Medo-Persia; the fifth, ancient Greece or Macedonia; the sixth, Rome; the seventh, Britain and America, a combination or dual world power. All these world powers were very strongly influenced by religion, which was Babylonish religion, so that as a religious empire Babylon the Great of the Bible ruled all along. She did not pass away when the ancient city of Babylon fell in 539 B.C.E. to the Fourth World Power of Medo-Persia, nor when that city finally perished during the time of the Roman World Power. Babylon the Great survives to this day as a religious empire.

When the apostle John had the vision that he recorded in the book of Revelation, he was told that five of the seven kings had already fallen. In John's day Rome was the dominant world power. The first five, from Egypt to

Greece, had existed and passed off the scene as world powers. When the angel said, "one is," he meant the world power that had exiled John to the penal island of Patmos, namely, the sixth or Roman World Power, of which the pagan Roman emperor was then the religious Pontifex Maximus.

Now, we are particularly interested in the seventh king, also the eighth. First of all, when does the Seventh World Power come upon the scene? Not at the capture of Rome by the Teutonic king Odoacer, of Arian faith, who became king of Italy. At that time there was *more* to the Roman Empire than Rome and Italy. The capital of the whole Roman Empire was not Old Rome in Italy, but New Rome, Constantinople, on the Bosporus, at the crossroads of Europe and Asia and of the Mediterranean and Black Seas. In that commercial center of the Roman World Power Emperor Zeno the Isaurian ruled. He finally brought about the expulsion of Odoacer from Rome in 489. That part of the Roman Empire in the East came to an end first in 1453, when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks.

In the West, by strategy of the pope, what became the "Holy Roman Empire" was established in the year 800; but Emperor Napoleon I of France put an end to it in 1806. Actually the Roman Empire went through many changes but existed as the Sixth World Power for many centuries. However, in 1763, the British Empire, with colonies then in North America, gained the position of the "foremost commercial and colonial power of the world," as one historian remarks. It maintained this position and brought about the downfall of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1814. By then the United States of America had become established on the basis of former colonies of Great Britain. In many respects and ways it became an ally of Great Britain, to form a dual world power, the mightiest in human history, stronger and more world wide than any of the preceding six world powers.

So, according to history and the Bible, the dual feature of this world power arrived by the nineteenth century. John was told by the angel: "When he does arrive he must remain a short while." (Rev. 17:10) In view of the long duration of the sixth or Roman World Power, the seventh or British-American Dual World Power can remain only "a short while," now that the "kings of the entire inhabited earth" are being gathered to a place or situation Biblically called Har–Magedon for their destruction. Even if we measure from the above-mentioned date of 1763, 204 years ago, the time till the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" is comparatively a "short while." (Rev. 16:14, 16) By far most of this "short while" is in the past. Its marked end is near.

SEVENTH AND EIGHTH POWERS CONTEMPORARY

All the seven Biblical powers existed one after another, that is, each one was dominant for a time and relinquished its domination to the succeeding world power. But what about the eighth? Here lies a difference that helps us understand why world powers did not conclude with the seventh one as the complete number of world powers, for the Bible indicates that the seventh and eighth world powers exercise authority contemporaneously during the latter years of the term of the Seventh World Power. But how is it possible for these two world powers to exist at the same time?

The Bible shows that the Seventh World Power is the main promoter of the eighth, which is existing today in the form of the United Nations. Revelation 13:11-15 pictures the dual world power, represented by a wild beast having two lamb horns,

taking the lead in setting up the image of the earlier wild beast that came up out of the sea. This wild beast out of the sea had seven heads, representing Satan's complete political organization on the earth, which has been dominated by seven successive world powers. The "image" of the beast is the scarlet-colored beast, which has the same number of heads and horns and other similarities. The designers of this scarlet-colored wild beast intended it to be a sort of supranational government that would operate to keep peace among the nations without making the Seventh World Power or the other strong nations give up their sovereignty or domination over their own areas. This scarlet-colored wild beast, called an "eighth king," is said to spring from the seven. (Rev. 17:11) The United Nations of today contains as members the Seventh World Power and the national remnants of all previous world powers. So it owes its existence to those seven world powers and it springs from them. It has put its own military police force into the field of action. For these reasons it can be called an "eighth" king.

Since the Bible pictures the Seventh World Power as existing right along with the eighth up to the battle of Har-Magedon, does this mean that it will defeat the Communist world power to maintain *its position* of domination? No, and it shows that neither will the Communist world power defeat militarily the dual world power of Britain and America, but that both the Seventh World Power and the Communist bloc will be existing as strong rivals until the end,* with the eighth "king," the United Nations, making a futile effort to bring these kings together for a genuine peace that will be lasting.—Dan. 11:40-45.

* See the book *"Your Will Be Done on Earth,"* pages 264-307, published by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Learn by Contrast to Appreciate True Riches.
- The Haughty versus The Humble.
- The "Last Days"—What They Mean to You.
- A Political Union Doomed from Its Start.

A "DISGUSTING THING"

The prophecy in Revelation tells us: "The wild beast that was but is not, it is also itself an eighth king, but springs from the seven, and it goes off into destruction." (Rev. 17:11) Since God has foretold the destruction of Satan's entire political organization on earth by his Messianic kingdom, this would of necessity include the eighth king, for he is merely a reflection or image of the wild beast that came up out of the sea, Satan's worldwide political organization. He more or less constitutes a dummy that the other nations, like a ventriloquist, use as a sounding board for their ideas and ideologies. The eighth "king" contains all the elements of the other world powers and with them opposes God's kingdom and attempts to replace it.

The international peace-and-security organization, therefore, is an abomination, a disgusting thing to Jehovah God, just as much so as the golden image sixty cubits high and six cubits broad that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon set up for all provinces of his empire to worship and that he tried to get God's servants, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, to worship. (Dan. 3:1-15) Just as these faithful men refused to bow to the image of Nebuchadnezzar, so Jehovah's witnesses recognize the United Nations as disgusting to God, just as an idol is, and realize that God's anger will blaze against them if they worship it. On the other hand, the religious clergy of Christendom imitate those who rejected

Jesus Christ in 33 C.E. and who accepted the abominable pagan thing instead of their king, Jesus Christ, when they cried out to the Roman governor Pontius Pilate: "We have no king but Caesar." (John 19:15) The Seventh World Power, backed by the clergy, became the instrument for the "god of this system of things," Satan the Devil, in setting up the "image" of the wild beast, as foretold symbolically in Revelation 13:14, 15.

HUMAN RULE DISPLACED

Millions of people have suffered under the domination of the wild beast "with ten horns and seven heads" for centuries. (Rev. 13:1) Now the image of the beast is not helping the people or relieving them from the terrible things taking place in the earth, nor is it sheltering them from the worst disaster ever to come, namely, the destruction by Jehovah God at the battle of Har-Magedon. Many honest-hearted people see that man-rule has brought increasing grief to the people. As God foretells in the prophecy of Ezekiel, chapter 9, these are "sighing and groaning over all the detestable things" that are being done. Men of this kind listen with faith to the proclamation of the good news of the Kingdom, telling of the relief God brings by his kingdom, which will rule the entire earth in righteousness after the end of the last human government. Jesus Christ loves such ones as his "other sheep" and they come under his protective hand. (John 10:16; Isa. 49:10; Rev. 7:13-17) To such ones the Bible says: "Seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth, who have practiced His own judicial decision. Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger."—Zeph. 2:3.

Soon, after the terrible holocaust that will mean the wiping out of the last human government, we will see the establishment of righteousness in the earth and, while God will have princes in the earth, men of tested faith and dependability, it will not be human government, for these men will merely carry out the decrees of the heavenly government of Christ Jesus. Then it will indeed take place that "trueness itself will sprout out of the very earth, and righteousness itself will look down from the very heavens. Also, Jehovah, for his part, will give what is good, and our own land will give its yield." —Ps. 85:11, 12; 45:16.

LET THE PEOPLE HEAR THROUGH PREACHING

HOW important it is to let the people hear through our preaching! With Armageddon drawing on apace, more than ever before it is true that only those who 'call on the name of Jehovah will be saved.' But, as the apostle Paul so rightly observes, "How will they call on him in whom they have not put faith? How, in turn, will they put faith in him of whom they have not heard? How, in turn, will they hear without someone to preach?"—Rom. 10:13, 14.*

Clearly, here is stated your commission as dedicated Christians to preach so as to save lives. Because someone else preached, you have been able to get on the road to salvation by calling on the name of Jehovah. Are you now doing all you can so that others may do the same? The apostle Paul certainly did, and he himself urges us to 'become imitators of him, even as he is of Christ.'—1 Cor. 11:1.

Paul was an outstanding example of zeal in preaching. He made three extensive missionary tours, traveled literally thousands of miles in a day when travel on land was chiefly by foot and travel on sea was by sail,

* For details see *The Watchtower*, February 1, 1966.

established a number of congregations, participated in the work of the early Christians' governing body, wrote fourteen letters under inspiration, repeatedly was imprisoned and doubtless finally suffered martyrdom for his faithful preaching. While in most of these respects we could not think of imitating Paul, there are ever so many ways in which we can.—2 Cor. 11:23-33.

For example, Paul became all things to people of all sorts, that he might win some. Once a ruthless persecutor of Christians to the death, he became as gentle as a nursing mother in teaching others. We today likewise want to be gentle and become all things to people of all sorts, meeting people on their own level, and so win them by the good news and not by our personality or learning. —1 Cor. 2:2-5; 9:16-22; 1 Thess. 2:7.

Though Paul was able to preach effectively to learned philosophers and even kings, he did not neglect preaching from "house to house" and wherever he could find people willing to listen. Are we zealously doing the same?—Acts 17:17-34; 20:20; 26:28.

More than that, we read that Paul preached "with boldness," and that he preached "thoroughly." (Acts 14:3; 20:21) Are we ever alert to preach with boldness, or do we at times shrink back from an opportunity for incidental witnessing because of the fear of man? And are we thorough in our preaching; among other things, making faithful use of the house-to-house record? One brother, witnessing in a Brooklyn apartment building one Sunday morning last October, on the top floor found only one out of seven families home. Returning on Wednesday evening to call on the not-at-homes, he found five of the six at home and one of these subscribed for the *Awake!* magazine.

How do we respond to the usual run of objections met at the doors? Do we let them turn us aside or do we give a thorough witness by offering some tactful reply?

There are still other ways in which the apostle Paul set a fine example for us to imitate as we let people hear through our preaching. He worked night and day so as not to become an expensive burden to others, making tents to pay his expenses. More than that, in spite of all the hardships he had to endure, he never grumbled, complained or rebelled. He learned in whatever circumstances he might find himself to be self-sufficient, to be content. Do we avoid needlessly burdening others in one way or another? Have we learned to be self-sufficient, content?—Acts 18:1-4; Phil. 4:11-13; 2 Thess. 3:8.

Let us ever bear in mind as we let the people hear through our preaching that if the people believe the good news, not only will it be a means of their eventually gaining everlasting life, but, even now, by accepting the truth they will gain many blessings; they will find themselves living in a better moral climate, will know greater happiness and contentment, and will find that their relations with others are improving.—Prov. 10:22; Rom. 12:18; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Tim. 6:6.

So let us be diligent to let as many people as possible hear through our preaching in the few short remaining years before Armageddon, and to do so in imitation of the apostle Paul!

● How could Jesus promise, as recorded at John 11:26, that those exercising faith in him would never die, since Christians do die? —M. F., U.S.A.

As reported at John 11:25, 26 Jesus was, in effect, promising everlasting life. He said to Martha, the sister of dead Lazarus: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life; and everyone that is living and exercises faith in me will never die at all." The import of these words is similar to his earlier statement: "Most truly I say to you, If anyone observes my word, he will never see death at all."—John 8:51.

The individuals hearing Jesus could, if they faithfully served God, have the expectation of reigning with Christ in heaven. (2 Tim. 4:18; Rev. 20:4, 6) After Jesus' death and resurrection the call for members of the king-

dom of heaven class commenced. Of course, Jesus could not tell such ones that they would never see a physical death. If they were to reign with him in heaven, their fleshly bodies would have to die, just as he himself was going to die. (Matt. 16:21; Rom. 6:5; 1 Cor. 15:42-50) Only if they were faithful until death would they receive immortality. (Rev. 2:10) At the time, those hearers may not have fully appreciated this. But Jesus, "the resurrection and the life," was at least assuring them that they would "come to life," or be resurrected to everlasting life.

Then what death is it that they would "never see . . . at all"? They would never "see" or experience "second death." They would not die *forever* as would some. (Luke 12:4, 5; Rev. 21:8) As stated in Revelation 20:6 regarding those who would be with Christ in heaven: "Over these the second death has no authority." Christ did not, at that time of mourning over Lazarus, discuss all the details about the difference between the Adamic death that his anointed followers would suffer and the eternal or second death. Yet, by his concise statement he offered a sure promise of everlasting life to those who exercised faith in him.

While Jesus did not specifically have in mind persons living at the end of this system of things who might survive Armageddon, it is true that some alive now will never experience a fleshly death. But even those with earthly hopes who live through Armageddon will have to prove faithful throughout the millennium and the final test before they actually "come to life" or receive the grant of everlasting life.—Rev. 20:5.

It was the firm promise of eternal life, such as in Jesus' words at John 8:51 and 11:25, 26, that gave Christians the courage to face a temporary death. (2 Tim. 4:6-8; Phil. 3:8-11) They knew they were not dying forever, but just taking one more step on the way to everlasting life.

● Religious pictures of Jesus' death often show a sign over his head with various letters on it. What do these letters mean?—A. D., U.S.A.

The most common letters appearing on such pictures are I.N.R.I. This is an abbreviation of the Latin *Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudæorum,* meaning Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. A variation of this is I.N.R.J., *Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Judæorum* (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews). This abbreviation is based on what the apostle John says was on the sign placed on the torture stake, "Jesus the Nazarene the King of the Jews."—John 19:19.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIELD MINISTRY

In order for people to put faith in Jehovah God and his provision for salvation through Christ they need to hear the Bible's message and have opportunity to get their questions answered. During March, if one of Jehovah's witnesses calls at your home, it will be with the desire to help you personally to get satisfying Bible answers to your questions. He will gladly take time to show you the answers in your own Bible. As a further aid, he will encourage you to subscribe for this fine Bible journal, *The Watchtower,* for a year, for just $1.

DOES THE TRUTH REALLY "HURT"?

There is an old saying: "The truth hurts." But it really does not hurt nearly so much as ignoring it or misrepresenting it does. Proof can be found in the bad results of exaggerated advertising, misleading political promises and deceptive international relationships. How refreshing it is, then, to encounter truth in a form that can affect your future for good. That is what you find in the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. Are you availing yourself regularly of the benefits to be had from their dedication to this outstanding virtue? You can be! Receive both magazines for one year for only $2. Send now and receive free six timely booklets on Bible subjects.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

April 2: A God of Loving-Kindness. Page 137. Songs to Be Used: 37, 98.

April 9: Showing Kindness to Others. Page 143. Songs to Be Used: 50, 15.