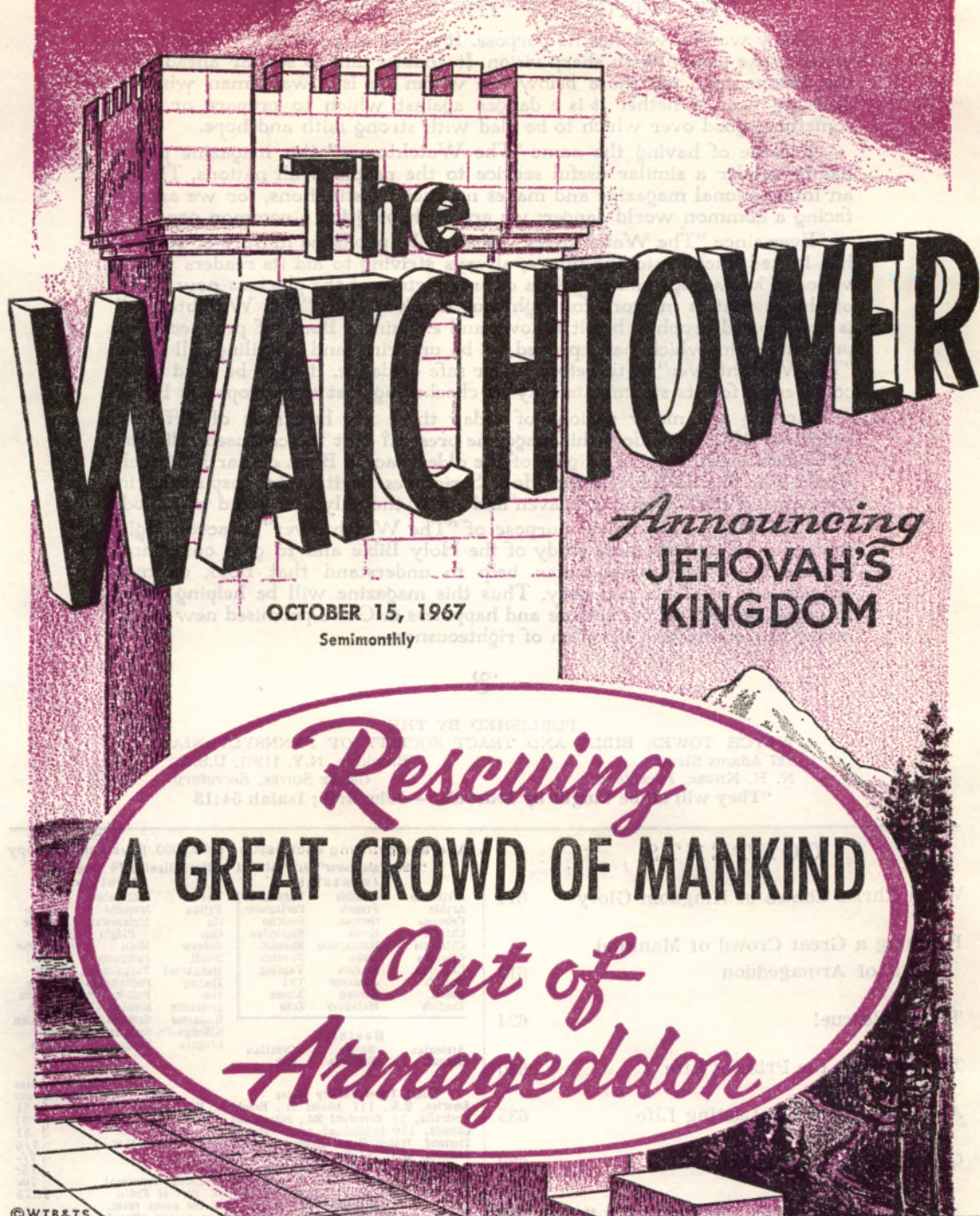




The WATCHTOWER

OCTOBER 15, 1967

Semimonthly

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

Rescuing
A GREAT CROWD OF MANKIND
*Out of
Armageddon*

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"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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AS - American Standard Version
AT - An American Translation
AV - Authorized Version (1611)
Dy - Catholic Douay version
JP - Jewish Publication Soc.
Le - Isaac Leeser's version
Mo - James Moffatt's version
Ro - J. B. Rotherham's version
RS - Revised Standard Version
Yg - Robert Young's version



Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

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When Christ Comes **IN KINGDOM GLORY**

MANY persons world wide are keenly interested in the time when Jesus Christ comes in Kingdom glory. For centuries God-fearing persons have looked forward to it. Jesus himself raised anticipation for his return by telling four of his disciples who had come to him on the Mount of Olives:

"When the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."—Matt. 25:31, 32.

Is there any way to determine the time for this momentous event? On his return Jesus obviously would not be seen with human eyes, since he is said to come with his invisible angels. So is there substantial evidence in the Bible that establishes the time when Jesus comes invisibly in Kingdom glory? Let us see.

"THE APPOINTED TIMES OF THE NATIONS"

That group of four disciples on the Mount of Olives had asked Jesus when the magnificent Jewish temple would be

thrown down, also what would be the sign of his second presence and the conclusion of the system of things, or "time of the end." (Matt. 24:1-3; Luke 21:5-7; Dan. 12:4) After discussing these matters at some length, and while talking about the destruction due to come upon Jerusalem, Jesus said: "They [the Jews] will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled."—Luke 21:24.

The period of time indicated by the expression "the appointed times of the nations" is really of vital significance, for Jesus closely connects it with the discussion of his second presence, in Kingdom glory. Actually it is a key, the understanding of which conclusively identifies the time of Jesus' coming in glory. Therefore, it is a matter deserving careful study.

MEANING OF THE GREEK WORD "TIMES"

The word "times" here used at Luke 21:24 comes from the Greek word *kairos* (plural, *kairoi*), which, according to one Greek authority, "signified a fixed or

definite period, a season, sometimes an opportune or seasonable time.”* Thus, *kairos* is used in the Scriptures with reference to the “harvest season,” “the season of the fruits,” and “the season of figs.”—Matt. 13:30; 21:34; Mark 11:13.

Interestingly, *kairos* is also used in connection with future times or occasions within God’s arrangement or ‘timetable,’ particularly as relates to Christ’s second presence and his kingdom. For example, the apostle Paul speaks of the “sacred secret” revealed by God “for an administration at the full limit of the appointed times [*kairon*], namely, to gather all things together again in the Christ.”—Eph. 1:9, 10; see also Acts 1:7 and 3:19.

In view of the meaning of the word “times” (*kairoi*), as used in the Bible, it can properly be expected that the expression “the appointed times of the nations” does not refer to something vague or indefinite. Rather, it has reference to a “fixed or definite period,” one having a definite beginning and a definite end.

But when do the “appointed times of the nations” begin? When do they end? And what occurs when this fixed period of time concludes? The answers to these questions are necessarily bound up in Jesus’ reference to the trampling upon of Jerusalem until the fulfillment of “the appointed times of the nations.”

JERUSALEM TRAMPLED ON BY THE NATIONS

The literal city of Jerusalem is obviously referred to in Jesus’ description of the destruction that was to come and did come upon Jerusalem in the year 70 C.E. On that occasion the Roman armies demolished the city and threw down the magnificent temple there. However, the statement concerning “the appointed times of the nations” carries the prophecy far

beyond that point. Many Bible commentators have noted this. For example, the well-known commentary by F. C. Cook says of this part of the text: “It serves to separate the strictly eschatological portion of the great prophecy [that is, the portion relating to Jesus’ second presence], from the part belonging properly to the destruction of Jerusalem.”

Thus, when Jesus spoke of “Jerusalem” as being trampled upon “until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled,” he was not simply referring to the literal city of Jerusalem as being trampled upon, but to something additional and greater. To what? To find out let us examine what significance the inspired Scriptures attach to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was the capital of the nation of Israel, whose kings of the line of David were said to “sit upon Jehovah’s throne.” (1 Chron. 29:23) Jerusalem, therefore, represented the seat of the divinely constituted government or typical kingdom of God operating through the house of David. With its Mount Zion, it was “the town of the grand King.” (Ps. 48:1, 2) Hence, Jerusalem came to stand for the kingdom of the dynasty of King David, much as Washington, London, Paris and Moscow represent the ruling powers of present-day nations, and are so referred to in news communiqués.

The trampling on that kingdom of the dynasty of Davidic rulers did not first begin with the Roman devastating of the city of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. It began centuries earlier with the overthrow of that dynasty in 607 B.C.E.* when the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and took captive the dethroned

* *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, by W. E. Vine, 1962, Vol. IV, page 138.

* According to a note in the Chronological Table prefacing *The ‘Holy Scriptures’ - A New Translation from the Original Languages*, (1949) by J. N. Darby: “Nebuchadnezzar reigns, at first conjointly with Nabopolassar—and carries away the Jews to Babylon. The ‘times of the Gentiles’ commence. Beginning of 70 years captivity in Babylon.”

king of David's line, Zedekiah, and the land was left desolate. (2 Ki. 25:1-26) This accorded with the prophetic words directed to Zedekiah at Ezekiel 21:25-27, that he should "remove the turban, and lift off the crown. This will not be the same. . . . A ruin, a ruin, a ruin I shall make it. As for this also, it will certainly become no one's until he comes who has the legal right, and I must give it to him."

The one who has the "legal right" to the Davidic crown lost by Zedekiah is demonstrated in the Christian Greek Scriptures to be Christ Jesus. Concerning this one the angel who announced his future birth said: "Jehovah God will give him *the throne of David* his father, and he will rule as king over the house of Jacob forever, and there will be no end of his kingdom."—Luke 1:32, 33.

Thus, with the dethronement of King Zedekiah in 607 B.C.E. and the desolation of Jerusalem and Judah, the Gentile powers exercised domination over the entire earth. The kingdom of the dynasty of King David suffered an interruption. Hence Jerusalem, which represented or stood for the "throne of David" that was to be given to the rightful one, Jesus Christ, would continue to be trampled on as long as God's kingdom, as functioning through David's house, was kept in a low, inoperative condition under the Gentile powers.

Jesus Christ did not assume his right to rule in Kingdom glory when he was a man on earth. Jerusalem was still being trampled upon by the nations in the first century. When, therefore, was the kingdom of Jehovah God by means of his anointed one, Jesus Christ, to be lifted up to assume power? When would Christ begin his glorious rule? The answer is found in the prophetic Bible book of Daniel, which Jesus referred to at least two times when giving the prophecy concerning his

presence in Kingdom glory.—Compare Matthew 24:15, 21 with Daniel 11:31; 12:1.

VISION OF THE SYMBOLIC TREE

In the book of Daniel we find a picture drawn of the domination of the earth by the Gentile powers during their "appointed times." This information is bound up in a symbolic vision that God gave to the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar.

The vision was of an immense tree that an angel from heaven commanded to be chopped down. The tree's stump was then banded with iron and copper. It had to stay that way among the grass of the field until "seven times" passed over it. As the prophecy said: "Let its heart be changed from that of mankind, and let the heart of a beast be given to it, and let seven times pass over it. . . . to the intent that people living may know that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind and that to the one whom he wants to, he gives it and he sets up over it even the lowliest one of mankind." (Please read the complete vision at Daniel 4:10-17.)

The vision definitely had a fulfillment in Nebuchadnezzar himself. He experienced seven years of madness and roved about as a beast of the field, after which he recovered. (Dan. 4:31-35) Therefore, some view the vision as having direct prophetic application only to him. They see in this vision merely the presentation of the eternal verity of God's supremacy over all other powers human or supposedly divine. And while they do acknowledge the application of that *truth* or *principle* beyond Nebuchadnezzar's own case, they do not see it as relating to any specific time period or divine schedule.

However, an examination of the entire book of Daniel reveals that the element of time is everywhere prominent in the visions and prophecies it presents. The world

powers and events described in the book are shown, not as isolated or occurring at random, with the time element left ambiguous, but, rather, as fitting into a historical setting or time sequence.—Compare Daniel 2:36-45; 7:3-12, 17-26; 8:3-14, 20-25; 9:2, 24-27; 11:2-24; 12:7-13.

Additionally, the Bible book of Daniel repeatedly points forward toward the conclusion that forms the theme of its prophecies: *The establishment of a universal and eternal kingdom of God exercised through the rulership of His chosen one, "the Son of man."* "See there!" one prophecy of Daniel says, "with the clouds of the heavens someone like a son of man happened to be coming . . . And to him there were given rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him. His rulership is an indefinitely lasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be brought to ruin." This one, of course, is the ruler of David's line, Jesus Christ, coming in Kingdom glory.—Matt. 25:31; Dan. 7:13, 14; 4:17; 2:44.

The book of Daniel is also distinctive in the Hebrew Scriptures for its references to the "time of the end," when Christ comes in glory.—Dan. 8:19; 10:14; 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9; Matt. 24:3.

In view of the above, it does not seem logical to evaluate the vision of the symbolic "tree" and its reference to "seven times" as having no other application than to the seven years of madness and subsequent recovery and return to power experienced by one Babylonian ruler. There are at least three strong reasons for believing that the lengthy vision and its interpretation were included in the book of Daniel because of their revealing the duration of the "appointed times of the nations" and the time for the establishment of God's kingdom of his Christ.

First, because of when it was given—at the critical point in history when God, the Universal Sovereign, had allowed the very kingdom that he had established among his covenant people to be overthrown. Second, because of the person to whom the vision was revealed, namely, to the very ruler who served as the divine instrument in such overthrow, and who thereby became the recipient of world domination by divine permission, that is, without interference by any representative kingdom of Jehovah God. And third, because of the whole theme of the vision, which is: "That people living may know that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind and that to the one whom he wants to, he gives it and he sets up over it even the lowliest one of mankind."—Dan. 4:17.

Also of important significance are the symbolisms used in this prophetic vision. Trees are elsewhere used to represent ruling powers, including that of God's typical kingdom of Jerusalem. (Compare Judges 9:6-15; Ezekiel 17:1-24; 31:2-18.) A stump's being caused to sprout, and the symbol of a "twig" or "sprout" are found a number of times as representing the renewal of rulership in a certain stock or line, particularly in the Messianic prophecies. (Isa. 10:33-11:10; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 6:12, 13) Jesus spoke of himself as both "the root and the offspring of David."—Rev. 22:16.

MEANING OF THE VISION

The fact is evident that the key point of the vision is Jehovah God's exercise of irresistible sovereignty in the "kingdom of mankind," and this provides the guide to the full meaning of the vision.

The tree is shown to have a first application to Nebuchadnezzar, who, at that point in history, was the head of the dominant world power, Babylon. Yet, prior to

Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem, the typical kingdom of God ruling out of that city was the agency by which Jehovah expressed his rightful sovereignty toward earth. But, by allowing that typical kingdom at Jerusalem to be overthrown, Jehovah permitted his own visible expression of sovereignty through the Davidic dynasty of kings to be cut down. The expression and exercise of world domination in "the kingdom of mankind," unhindered by any representative kingdom of God, now passed into the hands of the Gentile nations.—Lam. 1:5; 2:2, 16, 17.

In the light of these facts the "tree" is seen to represent, beyond and above its initial application to Nebuchadnezzar, world sovereignty or domination by God's kingdom.

God, however, here makes clear that he has not forever delivered up such world domination to the Gentile powers. The vision shows that God's self-restraint, represented by the bands of iron and copper around the "stump" of the tree, would continue until "seven times pass over it." (Dan. 4:16, 23, 25) Then, since "the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind," He would give world domination "to the one whom he wants to." Yes, to the glorified "Son of man," Jesus Christ! (Dan. 4:17; 7:13, 14; Matt. 25:31) Thus, the symbolic "stump," representing God's retention of the sovereign right to exercise world domination in "the kingdom of mankind," was due to sprout again in his Son's kingdom.—Ps. 89:27, 35-37.

But when exactly would this occur? When would the symbolic "seven times" or "appointed times of the nations" conclude? When would Jerusalem, or the kingdom of God functioning through David's house that is signified by "Jerusalem," cease to be trampled upon? Yes, when would the one who has the "legal

right" to the "throne of David" come in Kingdom glory?—Ezek. 21:27; Luke 1:32.

THE LENGTH OF THE "SEVEN TIMES"

In Nebuchadnezzar's personal experience of the vision's fulfillment the "seven times" were evidently seven years, during which he admits that he became mad and abandoned his throne to eat grass like a beast of the field. (Dan. 4:33-36) Notably, the Biblical description of the exercise of world domination by the Gentile powers is presented through the figure of beasts, which are in opposition to the holy people of God and their "Prince of princes." (Compare Daniel 7:2-8, 12, 17-26; 8:3-12, 20-25; Revelation 11:7; 13:1-11; 17:7-14.) And concerning the word "times" (from Aramaic *iddan*) as used in Daniel's prophecy, it is shown by lexicographers here to mean "years."^{*}

The duration of a year as so used is indicated to be 360 days. Confirmative evidence for this is found at Revelation 12:6, 14, where three and a half times are shown to equal "a thousand two hundred and sixty days." (Compare Revelation 11:2, 3.) If, now, three and a half symbolic "times" amount to 1,260 symbolic days, then twice three and a half (or seven) symbolic "times" would be twice 1,260 days, that is to say, 2,520 days. But in their greater fulfillment, in connection with the length of "the appointed times of the nations," these are not literal days. Then what are they?

That a specific number of days may be used in the Bible record to represent prophetically an equivalent number of years can be seen by reading the accounts at Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6. Only by applying the formula there expressed of "a day for a year" to the "seven times"

^{*} See *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, by Koehler and Baumgartner, page 1106; *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by Brown, Driver and Briggs, page 1105.

of this prophecy can the vision of Daniel chapter four have significant fulfillment beyond the now extinct Nebuchadnezzar's day, as the evidence thus far presented gives reason to expect. The "seven times," therefore, represent 2,520 years.

The results obtained from viewing the prophetic "seven times" as a period of 2,520 years perhaps provide the strongest proof that such is their true meaning. As has been demonstrated, the beginning of the "appointed times of the nations" dates from the overthrow and trampling of Jerusalem and the desolation of Judah, which was accomplished about the middle of the seventh Jewish lunar month, Tishri, or about October 1 of the year 607 B.C.E. Counting 2,520 years from that date (while taking into consideration that there is no "zero" year between B.C.E. and C.E.) we arrive at the fall of the year 1914 C.E. as the time for the completion of those "seven times" of Gentile domination by God's permission.

WHAT IT MEANS

This, therefore, means that "the appointed times of the nations" were fulfilled in 1914 C.E. At that time the trampling upon Jerusalem ended. God's kingdom, as functioning through King David's house, assumed power and began ruling. Yes, Jesus Christ, the one who has the "legal right," was then installed as king, being given "the throne of David his father."—Ezek. 21:27; Luke 1:32.

Contrary to the expectations of some, this did not mean that Jesus then began ruling in earthly Jerusalem. Instead, he began to rule in "the Jerusalem above." (Gal. 4:26) The long-looked-forward-to Messianic kingdom is a heavenly govern-

ment, a government whose seat is in what the Bible symbolically calls "a city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem." (Heb. 12:22) For this reason Jesus told the four disciples with him on the Mount of Olives that he would arrive in glory with all his angels with him, and would "sit down on his glorious throne."—Matt. 25:31.

Happily, therefore, we are now living at "the conclusion of the system of things," in "the time of the end." (Matt. 24:3; Dan. 12:4) What has taken place from and after the year 1914 is confirmative proof of this fact. In 1914 the first world war

in mankind's history erupted. It was the first conflict fought over the issue, not of the domination of Europe alone, nor of Africa, nor of Asia, but of *the domination of the world*. A comparison of this and the other striking features of the period that has followed 1914 with the context of Jesus' reference to the "appointed times of the nations" reveals an obvious fulfillment. Yes, the very things that Jesus and his apostles said would mark his second presence are everywhere in evidence!—Luke 21:7-33; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 2 Pet. 3:3, 4; Rev. 11:15-18.

This means that the rightful ruler Jesus Christ is now engaged in the work of separating "people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." He is marking you either for preservation to "inherit the kingdom prepared for you," or for destruction at the fast-approaching battle of Armageddon. What you must do to be among the great crowd of mankind rescued out of Armageddon you can learn by examining the following article.—Matt. 25:31-46.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- "Let God Arise, Let His Enemies Be Scattered."
- God's Ascent on High Above All Enemies.
- Are There Intelligent Creatures in Outer Space?
- How Clean Must a Government Be?

Rescuing

"These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation."—Rev. 7:14.

ARMAGEDDON, threatening though the name may sound, does not mean the wiping out of the race of mankind. The approaching war of Armageddon is, in reality, the forerunner of the happiest time for mankind in all human history. That is why a constantly increasing "great crowd" of people today is looking forward eagerly to the coming of this universal war of Armageddon. For good sound reasons they hope to live

1. Why is a growing crowd of people looking forward eagerly to the coming of the war of Armageddon?

a GREAT CROWD of MANKIND

through that war and see the prosperous, peaceful era that follows. We want you to be one of that happy, hopeful people.

²Armageddon is not something that we have imagined or invented. Armageddon, as the name of a battlefield, is more than eighteen hundred and seventy years old. The name occurs only once in a book of hundreds of pages that was completed just about that many years ago. Because of the connections that it has, the name strikes awe and wonderment into us when we read about it. It is not a name that we can lightly put out of mind. It stands for something that the race of mankind must eventually face. The time for us to face it and experience it is getting very near. We cannot now stop mankind's approach to it. It is a necessary calamity of world dimensions, but it is for mankind's everlasting good.

2. Why is Armageddon not something we have imagined, and why can we not lightly put it out of mind?

OUT OF ARMAGEDDON

³ Today mankind's life is threatened from two directions. No, we do not mean to say by this, from the Eastern bloc of communistic, totalitarian, dictatorial nations and from the Western bloc of democratic, imperialistic, capitalistic nations. Rather, we mean, from the direction of man himself and from the direction of the Creator of man. As regards creation, modern astronomy predicts that some distant day our Milky Way and other galaxies of the expanding universe are going to reverse the process and contract the universe and bring about its collapse in upon itself and thus crush our earth and its inhabitants. But not so! Our universe is in the control of its Creator, and in his loving and unchangeable purpose toward mankind he does not allow for such a catastrophe. How, then, is mankind threatened from the direction of God the Creator? On the other hand, how is mankind threatened from the direction of man himself? From which of these two directions will mankind be struck right soon, in a serious threat to the very existence of all mankind?

⁴ When we look in the direction of man, we see evidence piling up that man's mismanagement of the earth threatens his own existence. The certainty of this has become undeniable since the epoch-making year of 1914. Hundreds of millions of persons still living vividly remember how in that year the first total war seized the whole globe in its embrace. The ghastly destruction of human life and property by World War I shocked political and religious leaders into setting up an international organization to safeguard world peace and security, the League of Nations.

Total world war was not to occur again. Yet, despite the existence of an international peace organization, the nations thought it necessary to keep up strong defensive national armaments and to invent new weapons of warfare for mass slaughter of humankind. Finally, in less than twenty years, defiance was flung into the face of the League of Nations by ambitious rulers, and, in 1939, World War II began mowing down its fifty-six million victims.

⁵ When World War II ended in September of 1945, while the explosion of two atomic bombs still echoed around the world, there were still 2,139,958,919 people left. These thousands of millions and their offspring the world rulers now sought to preserve by a new organization for world peace and security, namely, the United Nations, in 1945. In the next two decades, despite minor but dangerous wars and revolutions, a population explosion was to take place, bringing the world population by the year 1967 up to 3,285,000,000. (*The World Almanac* for 1946, New York, page 377; for 1967, page 379) Such rapid population growth, without proper birth control, presents the world with a grave food problem. Men now foresee a half-starved world before the passing of many years, with all the effects, economic, social, political and religious, that this would surely mean. National boundaries are not expanding or widening out to make room for growing populations, and our earthly globe is not getting bigger for more people.

⁶ As in no previous century, the earth is becoming a place for machines and factories, employing chemical processes and,

3. From what two directions is mankind's life threatened, and why is astronomy's prediction of the fate of our universe not right?

4. In what way is man's existence threatened by man himself, and why did not the League of Nations lessen this threat?

5. When and for whose benefit was the United Nations set up, and why have those protected by it presented a problem in themselves?

6, 7. (a) Why have measures taken against pests produced a danger? (b) What has been said recently by competent authorities about the pollution of man's habitat?

more recently, atomic processes. Mankind has had to pay dearly for this, because pollution of air, land and water has reached critical proportions. The need for the use of chemical pesticides has increased, apparently, and with regard to this a magazine headline said: "There's Poison All Around Us Now." It bespeaks danger.

⁷ As regards air pollution, an American Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare recently warned that the peril from pollution is outpacing solutions at present, saying: "We are encouraged by the progress that we have made, but we have only begun to scratch the surface. The problem not only remains critical, it continues to grow at a faster rate than our efforts to cope with it." And a report made to the American government by the National Academy of Sciences declares that the time has come when mankind can be using the air, sea and land as his "trash basket" no longer. He will have to find ways to cycle his wastes, both solid and liquid, back into the economy. In certain respects, says the report on pollution, "the situation is unprecedented and becoming desperate."—*New York Times*, June 8, 1966, and April 1, 1966.

⁸ Yes, catastrophe from insufficient food production and the general pollution of man's habitat is slowly but surely creeping up upon mankind. But already worldwide danger exists of a sudden wave of violent destruction sweeping over the globe. Measured by the peacetime interval between World Wars I and II, our present world peace period since the close of World War II in 1945 has now "come of age," as one magazine article worded it. A hypocritical peace period it has been, for it has been a time of international preparations for

World War III, a war with horrifying chemical and pestilential means of mass killing, a war with radiation means of large-scale killing, a war exploding thunderous, blinding bombs that split atoms or fuse atoms, already stockpiled in such quantities that all mankind could be killed several times over, if they could repeatedly be restored from death to life.

⁹ It is becoming easier and cheaper and more generally known how to make atomic bombs. There is a recognized danger of the multiplying of nations with the atomic bomb, of their own design and manufacture. This multiplication would increase the likelihood of a last world war, one with nuclear bombs. Further making of such bombs must be stopped. By a treaty between the nations there must be a ban put upon the proliferation of bombs by new nations acquiring the bomb, so the authorities of nations already possessing the bomb feel. Their fear is real. All nations, whether nuclear or non-nuclear, are equally in danger. This is why the matter was laid before the seventeen-nation World Disarmament Conference of the United Nations, with increasing urgency.

¹⁰ In evidence of this the newspapers published the American proposal for an international treaty for a ban on the making of atomic weapons. When the World Disarmament Conference began sitting again in 1967 at Geneva, Switzerland, there was submitted to the Conference at its opening session on February 21 a written message from the American president. It was read by the head of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. In this message President Johnson dealt with objections raised by certain nations not having nuclear weapons

9. Why is the likelihood of a last war between men increasing, and how do some nations feel about it?

10, 11. (a) At the opening session of the World Disarmament Conference on February 21, what message from a head of government was read? (b) What "equity" shared in by all nations was warned of?

8. In contrast with the above, what danger is there of sudden catastrophe world wide, and why shortly?

to Washington's revised draft of a treaty forbidding the spread of nuclear weapons to additional nations. In the close of his message President Johnson referred to the equality of the common danger, an equality that shut out any choosing between the interests of those nations not having nuclear arms and the interests of those having such weapons.

¹¹ He said: "Plain sanity calls for a halt to the competition in nuclear arms. There is nothing to choose here between the interests of the nuclear and the non-nuclear nations: There is a terrible and inescapable equity in our common danger. I wish you Godspeed in your work."—New York Times, as of February 22, 1967.

¹² Those farewell words by the president suggested that God was interested in saving mankind by a ban on the spread of nuclear weapons or was using the seventeen-nation World Disarmament Conference to keep mankind from committing suicide by nuclear warfare. Even if he is wrong in this idea, the president felt the terribleness of the situation and he could wish that Almighty God would help to prevent world catastrophe. For one thing, Johnson's warning joins with all the other reasons given above in showing that mankind's life is threatened from the direction of man himself. Will mankind destroy itself before God ever does so? That would occur if, as some theologians claim, "God is dead."

THREAT FROM THE DIRECTION OF GOD

¹³ However, is the life of world society today really threatened from the direction of God? To learn the answer to this question, we have to go to God's Word,

12. (a) What did President Johnson's farewell words suggest? (b) What did his warning show about the threat to mankind's life?

13, 14. (a) As respects the threat to mankind from God, to what source of information should we go? (b) What cannot a scoffer deny about the world military situation today, and to what question does this lead?

the Holy Bible, as it sets forth prophecies for our day and our generation. Let no one scoff at the thought of going to the Bible for answers to modern-day questions. Scoffing will not turn aside the war of Armageddon about which the Bible speaks. Let the scoffer ask himself, Why does there exist today such a thing in the earth as a World Disarmament Conference? It is because the members of the United Nations feel that the nations should disarm. No scoffer can deny that never before have the nations been so heavily armed for warfare with the most destructive arms as now. Never before has so much of the money been spent by nations for armaments, some armaments-making nations supplying arms to smaller nations to help them to fight already raging wars or for future wars.

¹⁴ Never before has nationalism taken hold so strongly of all nations, even the newly emerging nations. The earth today is an armed camp, every nation in fear of all other nations or lacking confidence in them and even in the United Nations. Where are the world rulers and their armies marching, and why to that place?

¹⁵ The most widely distributed Book on earth today answers. Although completed nineteen centuries ago, that Book in its last chapters describes the worldwide situation of today and reveals where the rulers of the entire inhabited earth are leading their armed forces. In Revelation 16:13-16 this Book says:

¹⁶ "And I saw three unclean inspired expressions that looked like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the wild beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are, in fact, expressions inspired by demons and perform signs, and they go forth to the kings of the entire inhabited earth, to

15, 16. What kind of book answers that question, and what does it say in Revelation 16:13-16?

gather them together to the war of the great day of God the Almighty. . . . And they gathered them together to the place that is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon."

¹⁷ Propaganda that induces the kings of the earth to undertake a universal war is undeniably demonic, inhuman. But where is it that the demonized inspired expressions lead these rulers at the head of their armies? It is to a place or a situation that the Hebrew Christian, the apostle John, calls Har-Magedon (or, according to some translations, Armageddon). That is where the final war of these earthly rulers and their armies is to be fought to a finish. But who is their common enemy? Whom are they opposing? It is God the Almighty, for this is called the "war of the great day of God the Almighty." For whom will it be a great day? Not for these kings and their armies, but for God the Almighty! And because the war is waged at Armageddon, it is often called the war or battle of Armageddon.

¹⁸ Does anyone laugh at the idea that earthly kings and their armies will fight against the invisible God, the Creator of the universe? Such laughter can be squelched by cases in recorded human history of where men have fought God. Egypt's Pharaoh of the sixteenth century before our Common Era did it and suffered the consequences. King Sennacherib of the Assyrian Empire of the eighth century B.C.E. did it, and lost 185,000 of his troops in one night. So what about today? Well, today the earthly rulers and their armies are threatening the very existence of all men by modern-day scientific means. In this are they doing the will of God the Almighty? By keeping the whole human

race divided and full of mutual hostility by means of maintaining jealous national governments, are the world rulers, backed up by their armies, acting in harmony with God's will?

¹⁹ They may patriotically mouth the slogan, "For God and Country," but are the human rulers of the earth trying really to keep their country from getting into the hands of God? Do they deny to the Creator the possession of his own creation, our earth, all countries of it? As long as the nations are stoutly insisting upon their own national sovereignties, are they challenging God's rightful sovereignty over the earth? And by their armed forces are they trying to prevent a complete takeover of all the earth by its Creator God, the Universal Sovereign? Yes, and that is why they do not accept "this good news of the kingdom," which Jesus Christ said would be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations before the end comes on the present system of things.—Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10.

²⁰ Beyond all question of doubt, the kings and their armies are lining up to present a united front against God the Almighty at Armageddon. God's own Book, the Holy Bible, says that it is against him and his Son, earth's future King, that all earthly rulers, their armies and their supporters fight at Armageddon. The last book of the Holy Bible boldly declares that fact before the faces of the rulers of Christendom and of pagandom. If they refuse to read it and see the application of it to themselves, let us here read it:

²¹ "And I saw the heaven opened, and, look! a white horse. And the one seated upon it is called Faithful and True, and

17. (a) What kind of propaganda leads the kings and armies to the field of battle? (b) What is the war sometimes called, who is the common enemy, and for whom will it be a "great day"?

18. (a) Why is the matter of nations fighting against God not a subject for laughter? (b) In what important respects are nations not doing God's will?

19. (a) While mouthing the expression "For God and Country," what do nations do about their countries? (b) Hence, what witness do they not accept?

20, 21. (a) Against whom, then, does the Bible plainly say that rulers of Christendom and pagandom will fight? (b) In proof of this, what does Revelation 19:11-16 say?

he judges and carries on war in righteousness. . . . and the name he is called is The Word of God. Also, the armies that were in heaven were following him on white horses, and they were clothed in white, clean, fine linen. And out of his mouth there protrudes a sharp long sword, that he may strike the nations with it, and he will shepherd them with a rod of iron. He treads too the press of the wine of the anger of the wrath of God the Almighty. And upon his outer garment, even upon his thigh, he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. . . .

²² "And I saw the wild beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage the war with the one seated on the horse and with his army. And the wild beast was caught, and along with it the false prophet that performed in front of it the signs with which he misled those who received the mark of the wild beast and those who render worship to its image. While still alive, they both were hurled into the fiery lake that burns with sulphur. But the rest were killed off with the long sword of the one seated on the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth. And all the birds were filled from the fleshy parts of them." —Rev. 19:11-21.

²³ That is the final war of Armageddon, according to inspired Bible prophecy. The earthly rulers and their armies will get no glory out of it. The long sword of judgment out of the mouth of the victorious King of kings and Lord of lords will sentence them to destruction, and his angelic armies will execute that sentence. The destruction of the opposers of God's kingdom there at Armageddon will include not just the kings or rulers and their armies.

22. According to Revelation 19:17-21, what happens to those who do the fighting on earth?

23. How will the "great evening meal of God" be provided at Armageddon, and by means of whom will God be vindicated, and in what respect?

According to the words uttered by God's angel, it includes military commanders, strong men, horses and those seated on them, freemen and slaves, and persons small and great. Their unburied bodies will serve as the "great evening meal of God" that he will provide for creatures that live on carrion, because God is the One that is responsible for the slaughter. (Rev. 19:17, 18) Such a victory will mark the "great day" of God the Almighty. By means of Jesus Christ the King of kings and Lord of lords, Almighty God will vindicate his own universal sovereignty!

²⁴ In the light of that prophetic revelation, do we appreciate the seriousness of what is ahead? That coming war of Armageddon means the climax of a time of trouble such as never has afflicted mankind before. Earthly rulers are merely trying to avoid a major conflict among themselves. But they are not trying to avoid this major conflict with the Almighty God the Creator. Into what, then, are the human rulers leading their armies and the rest of mankind, under the propagandistic expressions inspired by demons? It is into a destruction the threat of which comes from the direction of God. There will be no escape for the present system of things and for those who support it. Is it any wonder that there is dire need for persons to be rescued out of Armageddon?

THE DIRE NEED FOR RESCUE!

²⁵ Jesus Christ, now resurrected from his sacrificial death and glorified in the heavens, is commissioned to fight that war of Armageddon. There this once sacrificed "Lamb of God" will prove himself to

24. (a) What kind of conflict are the nations trying to avoid today? (b) Why is there dire need for persons to be rescued out of Armageddon?

25, 26. (a) At Armageddon who will prove to be King of kings and Lord of lords, and how? (b) With what warning did he foretell this time of tribulation and its climax, in Matthew 24:19-39?

be King of kings and Lord of lords, for no earthly kings and lords will be able to stand against him and win. (John 1:29, 36; Rev. 17:14) As God's greatest Prophet he foretold this war of Armageddon, for God used him nineteen hundred years ago to deliver the Revelation that contains the name and description of Armageddon. (Rev. 1:1; 22:16, 20) Besides that, three days before his sacrificial death outside the walls of Jerusalem, he foretold this present period of world tribulation and its grand climax at Armageddon and called it an unequalled trouble. He said:

²⁶ "Woe to the pregnant women and those suckling a baby in those days! Keep praying that your flight may not occur in wintertime, nor on the sabbath day; for then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again. In fact, unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short. . . . Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father. For 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: 19-39.

²⁷ The great flood of Noah's day was, up till then, an unparalleled catastrophe for man. That was sixteen hundred and fifty-six years after man's creation. At that time earth's population was not as great as now, more than forty-three centuries after the Flood. Hence more human lives

are threatened, for, like the flood of Noah's day, the war of Armageddon will affect the whole earth. No country or place of this inhabited earth will be excepted. No opposers, no persons not on the side of God's kingdom and of his anointed King Jesus Christ, will be overlooked. The loss of human life will be without equal in man's history.

²⁸ There will be no confused, accidental, indiscriminate killing of earth's inhabitants as it would be in a third world war with tremendous explosives delivered by missiles, disease germs, chemical gases and poisons, and radiological means. At Armageddon Jehovah God will fight by means of his Warrior Jesus Christ against his enemies, against the friends of this misguided world, not against his own friends. Remember Noah and his family, eight human souls all together, in the ark during the watery cataclysm of forty days over all the earth! They are a picture of hope.

²⁹ Will there, then, be survivors on earth of the war of the great day of God the Almighty at Armageddon? Almighty God's own infallible written Word answers Yes! Jesus Christ compared the days of his second presence and of his coming to the war of Armageddon to the days of Noah in connection with the Flood. Correspondingly, if there were eight survivors of that flood, then there should be survivors of the second presence of the Son of man and the events marking it. The apostle Peter, whose two inspired letters are a part of the Holy Bible, says: God "did not hold back from punishing an ancient world, but kept Noah, a preacher of righteousness, safe with seven others when he brought

28. Will the killing off of people at Armageddon be indiscriminate?

29. (a) Jesus' comparison of the days of his second presence with the days of Noah indicates hope of what survival? (b) Why will the war of Armageddon remain without equal as a human catastrophe?

27. As to loss of human life, how do the flood of Noah's day and the war of Armageddon compare?

a deluge upon a world of ungodly people." (2 Pet. 2:5) The coming war of Armageddon will be worse than that flood or any other trouble or tribulation "since the world's beginning until now." There will

never occur again a tribulation like it, because there will be no need for it. As in Noah's day, any humans surviving the war of Armageddon will have to be rescued out of it. Some will be!

To the Rescue!

DO NOT laugh and treat what we say as a joke, in the way that the sons-in-law of the patriarch Lot thought that he was joking when he warned them that their city of Sodom would be destroyed the following morning by a rain of sulphury fire from heaven. We are not joking. The Bible is not joking. The worldly scoffers of this present system of things are doomed, for human society is facing Armageddon, "the war of the great day of God the Almighty." Persons who take the standpoint of the Bible and watch what is going on in the world can clearly see that all earthly kings and their armies are on the march to Armageddon, in defiance of Jehovah God and his Christ, "the King of kings." In Noah's day the people took no note. For your own sake, you take note now!

² What would you do if you were doomed to destruction and the army of executioners was headed in your direction and getting dangerously close? Would you show that you love life and so do your utmost to have your life spared, to be rescued

from the threatening destruction? Or is it that you just do not care and you are indifferent about living forever in a paradise earth in unspeakable happiness under a perfect government?

³ If God means anything to you, if pleasing him and worshipping him correctly means anything to you, if an opportunity for perfect life in endless felicity means anything to you, will you show the practical wisdom and take the urgent action of the people of ancient Gibeon in the Middle East? We refer to that ancient city because what happened there during the invasion of the land of Palestine by the Hebrews in the fifteenth century before our Common Era was prophetic, full of meaning for us today.

⁴ Testifying to that fact is the prophecy found in Isaiah 28:21, 22, which reads: "Jehovah will rise up just as at Mount Perazim, he will be agitated just as in the low plain near Gibeon, that he may do his deed—his deed is strange—and that he may work his work—his work is unusual. And now do not show yourselves scoffers, in order that your hands may not grow strong, for there is an extermination, even something decided upon, that I have heard

1. Why should people not treat as a joke what we say, and why should people take the Bible standpoint and take note of what is going on?

2, 3. (a) What two attitudes are there to take when one knows that one is doomed and the executioners are getting near? (b) Why do we refer to Gibeon of the fifteenth century B.C.E.?

4. How does the prophecy of Isaiah refer to the typicalness of ancient Gibeon, and so whom should people today imitate?

of from the Sovereign Lord, Jehovah of armies, for all the land." So to escape extermination, let people act like Gibeonites!

⁵ The Gibeonites knew that all the inhabitants of the land of Canaan were doomed to destruction, for they were squatters in the land that Jehovah God had promised to give to the descendants of the patriarch Abraham. Those Canaanites were a cursed people from after the flood days of Noah, and now their iniquity and immoral wrongdoing had come to the full. Jehovah God the Creator and Owner of all the earth had decreed destruction for these worshipers of false gods. Accordingly, he appointed the Hebrews under Joshua, the successor of Moses, to be the executioners of these cursed squatters in Canaanland.—Gen. 9:20-27; 15:12-21.

⁶ The cities of Jericho and Ai had already fallen to the advancing executioners, and their inhabitants had been exterminated. The Gibeonites attributed these smashing victories to the Almighty God Jehovah, and they recalled how He had even brought the Hebrews through the depths of the Red Sea, whereas the pursuing Egyptians were drowned like rats in its waters. The Gibeonites knew that they could not successfully resist the Almighty God and his executorial armies under General Joshua. The Gibeonites knew that they were in line for extermination, as soon as Joshua and his armies found their city and three neighboring cities.

⁷ The Gibeonites were not like many persons of today who just "don't care." The Gibeonites loved life. They preferred to live, even if it meant living as slaves

under the Hebrews and their God Jehovah, rather than to be dead as executed cursed Canaanites. Although the Gibeonites were not entitled to be admitted into a treaty with General Joshua for the preservation of their lives, they thought that they would at least try to bring about such a treaty. But how? By trickery! Not to the hurt of Jehovah's people, however. They sent ambassadors to Joshua, some twenty miles away at Gilgal near the Jordan River, and these pretended that their city lay outside the area of the doomed Canaanites and could therefore enter into a mere friendship treaty with the Hebrews.

⁸ The ambassadors said: "It is from a very distant land that your servants have come in regard to the name of Jehovah your God, because we have heard of his fame and of all that he did. . . ." (Josh. 9:9) Because the Hebrews were persuaded by the arguments of the Gibeonites' ambassadors, Joshua and his chieftains entered into a treaty of friendship with these plenipotentiary ambassadors of Gibeon. Three days later Joshua learned that he and his people had been tricked into this treaty. However, because they had sworn to the Gibeonites by the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, they kept the terms of that treaty. They did not destroy Gibeon and its neighbor cities, but they made the inhabitants thereof slaves with certain duties to perform, including the providing of firewood for Jehovah's altar of sacrifice.

⁹ Because the Gibeonites had arranged to become slaves of Jehovah God and his people, five kings of the south joined together and laid siege to Gibeon. The Gibeonites refused to surrender to these five pagan kings, for they knew that to do so would not spare them from extermination

5. What did those Gibeonites know about their standing before the God of the Hebrews?

6. Did the Gibeonites believe that they could successfully resist the executorial armies under Joshua, and by what was their belief guided?

7, 8. (a) What attitude did the Gibeonites take toward life, and hence what did they do at once? (b) After reaching the city of Gibeon days later, how did Joshua deal with the Gibeonites?

9. For this, who threatened the lives of the Gibeonites, and how was their rescue brought about?

at last by Jehovah's executioners. They sent to Joshua and called for help. Joshua and his army made a forced march by night all the way from Gilgal. They surprised the besiegers of Gibeon. Then Jehovah himself went into action and threw the besiegers into confusion. As they fled, Joshua's forces slaughtered some of them. Then, as the battle account reads, "Jehovah hurled great stones from the heavens upon them as far as Azekah, so that they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword."

¹⁰ The ordinary day was not long enough for Joshua and his men to pursue and kill all the enemy. So Joshua called upon Jehovah God to perform a miracle and lengthen the daylight. With full faith in the Creator of the sun, moon and stars, Joshua said: "Sun, be motionless over Gibeon, and, moon, over the low plain of Aijalon." In that remarkable command Joshua was scientifically correct, for the moon as well as the sun was involved in this rare miracle. Joshua 10:12-14 says: "And the sun kept standing still in the

10. (a) What miracle did Joshua ask to be performed at Gibeon, and why? (b) For whom was Jehovah fighting at that time?

middle of the heavens [from Joshua's standpoint on earth] and did not hasten to set for about a whole day. And no day has proved to be like that one, either before it or after it, in that Jehovah listened to the voice of a man, for Jehovah himself was fighting for Israel." But at the same time that he was fighting victoriously for the Israelite executioners, Jehovah was also fighting for the life of the Gibeonites who feared him and who chose to become his slaves.—Josh. 9:1 to 10:27.

A "GREAT CROWD" OF SURVIVORS

¹¹ That miraculous rescue of the Gibeonites was prophetic of the modern-day rescue of a "great crowd" of survivors out of the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Armageddon. (1 Cor. 10:11; Isa. 28:21, 22)* The only book in the Bible that names Armageddon describes also the earthly survivors of the world's greatest tribulation as a "great crowd." Just as those ancient Gibeonites, so all those in that "great crowd" need to do something to be rescued from destruction at Armageddon. The Gibeonites took time by the forelock and took advance steps in order to procure a treaty of sal-

* See pages 239 ¶14 to 244 ¶22 of Chapter 14 entitled "The Flight to Safety," of the book *You May Survive Armageddon into God's New World*, published in 1955 by the Watch Tower Society.

11. (a) What does the miraculous rescue of the Gibeonites picture? (b) What was first necessary on the part of the Gibeonites?



vation. If they had waited until Joshua and his executorial army found the location of their city and laid siege to it, that would have been too late to escape destruction.

¹² No less so, those who desire to be among the "great crowd" of Armageddon survivors need to take advantage of the present favorable time for entering into peaceful, friendly relations with the One who was foreshadowed by Joshua of ancient time, who acts as the great Executioner for Jehovah God. Who is that? The very name suggests him. Joshua, in the Hebrew Bible, is given in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures as Jesus. This is also what Joshua is called in the Greek Scriptures as written by the disciples of Jesus Christ. (Acts 7:45; Heb. 4:8) When he was revealing in advance the marching of the kings and their armies to Armageddon, this Greater Joshua, Jesus Christ, gave us this warning: "Look! I am coming as a thief. Happy is the one that stays awake and keeps his outer garments, that he may not walk naked and people look upon his shamefulness." (Rev. 16:15) His coming to the war of Armageddon will take the world by surprise, as the Flood took unobserving people in Noah's day by surprise.

WHAT THE "GREAT CROWD" DOES TODAY

¹³ What, then, should people today do? The revelation by the Greater Joshua, Jesus Christ, indicates this. The one seeing the revelation writes: "Look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white

robes; and there were palm branches in their hands. And they kept on crying with a loud voice, saying: 'Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.'"—Rev. 7:9, 10.

¹⁴ This unnumbered "great crowd" is a worldwide crowd, not having any racial discrimination among themselves. Unitedly they turn their attention, not to Washington, D.C., or London, England, or Moscow, Russia, or Paris, France, or any other national capital, but to God's throne, the seat of Government of heaven and earth. Similarly to what the ancient Gibeonites did, they publicly acknowledge God as the Universal Sovereign, and that he is the Source of their everlasting salvation. They also openly declare that this salvation comes to them from God through his once sacrificed Lamb, Jesus Christ, the Greater Joshua.

¹⁵ Instead of saluting any human creatures or emblems, they are waving their palm branches as they hail the great God who sits on the heavenly throne. To him they ascribe their salvation through his sacrificial Lamb, Jesus Christ. So they have a clean appearance in God's sight, for they are "dressed in white robes." How can they have such a clean appearance before God the Most Holy One? We are told in these words, in Revelation 7:14: "These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

¹⁶ They acknowledge the human sacrifice that Jesus Christ offered nineteen centuries ago, when he died on the execution stake outside the walls of Jerusalem. They recognize that Almighty God declared his Lamblike Son to be innocent by raising him from the dead on the third day and then inviting him back to heaven, where

12. (a) Likewise, what must those who want to be among the "great crowd" now do? (b) What warning with reference to his coming to the war of Armageddon did the Greater Joshua give?

13, 14. According to Revelation 7:9, 10, to what do the "great crowd" direct their attention, and what acknowledgment like that of the Gibeonites do they make?

15, 16. (a) Whom do the "great crowd" hail or salute? (b) How is their clean standing before God pictured, and how do they gain such a clean appearance?

he presented the value of his human sacrifice to God in behalf of all humankind, people of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues. Since they confess that they are born sinners and that the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ purifies them from the stain of sin, they dedicate themselves fully to God to be his slaves, purchased by the redeeming blood of Christ. This complete dedication of themselves forever to God they publicly declare by being baptized in water, as Jesus the Lamb of God himself was. People today who do not do these things pictured in the Holy Bible cannot identify themselves as part of that "great crowd."

¹⁷ We remember that the Gibeonites of Joshua's day had their lives spared to serve as slaves to fetch water and to collect firewood for the sacrificial altar in Jehovah's temple. A thousand and eighteen years after Joshua spared them, the Gibeonites were even privileged to join the Jewish Governor Nehemiah in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, in addition to their service at Jehovah's temple. (Neh. 3:7; 7:25) Quite agreeably with this it is said of the "great crowd," who were prefigured by the Gibeonites: "That is why they are before the throne of God; and they are rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple; and the one seated on the throne will spread his tent over them."—Rev. 7:15.

¹⁸ At the present time before Armageddon this "great crowd" must serve Jehovah God in connection with his spiritual temple, of which the Lamb Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone. Their service to God on his throne is of a sacred kind, for they render to God the things that are God's. (Matt. 22:21) As persons who owe

their salvation to God and his Lamb, they join in the worldwide work that Jesus Christ predicted for this time of the "conclusion of the system of things," as stated in Matthew 24:14: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." By taking part in this witness work they are, in effect, hailing God and his Lamb Jesus Christ with "palm branches in their hands."

¹⁹ Because of this worldwide witness work the ruling elements and the armies of this world put pressure upon those of this "great crowd" to make them surrender and quit being on the side of God's kingdom, just as the five kings of Canaan and their armies besieged Gibeon and tried to force them to break their treaty with Joshua and his God Jehovah. But this the faithful ones of the "great crowd" refuse to do. They know that earthly rulers and their armies cannot give them life everlasting, and can in no way protect them from extermination along with worldly rulers and armies at Armageddon. They do not want the carrion birds to pick their bones of their dead bodies on the battlefield of Armageddon. They are full of faith that God, by means of his Greater Joshua, Jesus Christ, can protect them through Armageddon's war, just as he did the Gibeonites in Joshua's day.

²⁰ The "war of the great day of God the Almighty" is not directed against *this* "great crowd" if they remain faithful. It is directed against the symbolic wild beast, the beastly political system, and the kings of the entire earth and their armies and all their backers who attribute salvation

17. What service were the ancient Gibeonites spared to do in Israel, and how does this agree with what is said in Revelation 7:15?

18. How do those of the "great crowd" serve God constantly in his temple and before his throne?

19. (a) Because of such service, what do worldly rulers and their armies attempt to do with the "great crowd"? (b) How, then, do those of the "great crowd" act like the Gibeonites?

20. Against whom is God's war of Armageddon, and what do the "great crowd" expect him to do there respecting them?

to this political, religious, social, economic, scientific system of things. Those who hail the enthroned Jehovah God as their Savior through his Lamb Jesus Christ look to Him to rescue them out of Armageddon. And, according to his promise, God Almighty will do so. Nothing less than that is meant in those words of Revelation 7:15, that "the one seated on the throne will spread his tent over them."

²¹ Quite in line with such a rescue it is said of this "great crowd," in Revelation 7:14: "These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation." The name "the great tribulation" well applies to this time of tribulation that has been upon mankind since the year of the outbreak of World War I, to wit, 1914, and that will mount up to its highest destructiveness in the war of Armageddon, completely exterminating this worldly system of things. Such a tribulation, without parallel since the beginning of the world, will never occur again on earth, said Jesus Christ when warning his disciples to flee to God's place of refuge before the worst and final stage of this great tribulation.—Matt. 24:20-22.

²² As in the case of the Gibeonites, there is no time to delay. The threatening situation calls for God-fearing action *now*, not before a third world war could break out, but before the "great day of God the Almighty" comes like a thief and the war of that great day breaks out at Armageddon. The choice is between two clear positions now: Choose the God Almighty Jehovah and his Lamb Jesus Christ and live! Or, choose world rulers and their armies marching under the influence of expressions inspired by the Devil and his demons and die! Let no fear and trembling

before men be a snare to your life. (Prov. 29:25) Take your stand with the "great crowd" and tremble and fear before God Almighty and, under cover of his protection, "come out of the great tribulation."

²³ "Come out of the great tribulation" to what? To an earth cleansed and freed from all disturbers of peace, even the superhuman Satan and his demons being bound! Come out to an earth delivered from those who are today ruining the earth, polluting air, sea and land! Come out to an earth over which the Universal Sovereignty of God has been completely reestablished and his promised kingdom by Christ reigns to bless mankind forever. Come out to an earth in which fear and selfishness will not prevail, but the survivors rescued out of Armageddon will love and help one another as brothers and sisters, adopted by the Lamb of God as their Eternal Father. (Isa. 9:6) Come out to an earth that these Armageddon survivors will begin restoring from its ruin and transforming thus delightfully into a paradise everywhere under the blessing of God's heavenly kingdom!

²⁴ This earth, destined to become a paradise like the original garden of Eden, will not remain one vast cemetery holding in its bosom the thousands of millions for whom the Lamb of God once lovingly laid down his life in sacrifice. His own resurrection from the dead by God Almighty's power is an unbreakable guarantee that those for whom he presented the value of his perfect human sacrifice in heaven will also be resurrected under his kingdom. (Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 15:20; John 5:28, 29) What a time of ecstasy those Armageddon survivors will experience when they

21. What is the "great tribulation" mentioned in Revelation 7:14, out of which the "great crowd" come?
22. (a) As in the case of the Gibeonites, what does the threatening situation call for? (b) What two clear positions are now open to take, and which one is the reader encouraged to take?

23. Into what will the "great crowd" finally "come out of the great tribulation"?

24. What time of ecstasy will the "great crowd" of Armageddon survivors experience with regard to the dead?

begin to receive back the dead to opportunities for eternal life in an earthly paradise under God's kingdom! Certainly this will redound to God's endless praise by Jesus Christ. It will justify God as having righteously brought this necessary calamity of Armageddon for his own vindication and for deliverance of all mankind.

²⁵ Dear Reader, is it worthwhile being rescued out of Armageddon? Do you as a lover of life answer Yes? Then join in this lifesaving work of helping people to the side of God's kingdom. It is work that leads to rescuing a great crowd out of Armageddon!

25. How can lovers of life show that they believe it is worthwhile being rescued out of Armageddon?



IT WAS in the early autumn of 1919. I took my place at the starting line for a 3,000-meter race. I did not think of winning or even receiving a prize, because I thought my fellow runners were better than I. When the starting signal was given I was left behind. It was very easy to run, and when we had gone two kilometers without the pace increasing at all, I decided to get closer to the leaders and see what was happening up front. Even though I reached the first group, they still kept running in the same slow way. I was greatly puzzled, but went on to take the lead, still not realizing that the others were just not able to run any faster, and here I was in my best form.

About 400 meters from the winning post I released all my running power and left them all behind, to become the winner. It was a real surprise to learn, too, that my time had been the record for that year in Finland. I rejoiced at the achievement

and thought: "Is a great time of success ahead of me and will I soon attain world records?" I still had no way of knowing that by the end of that year the opportunity of running on a better racetrack would open up to me.

EARLIER EVENTS OF MY LIFE

As a child I had always been interested in running, but I had also been interested in the more serious matters about which adults often spoke. When guests who spoke about serious things came to my home I would slip away from the other children, creep unnoticed into some hiding place and listen to the conversation. Some defended God and the Bible, others denied him. I heard them speak about a hell of eternal torment, spiritism and other topics. By the time I had reached eight to ten years of age I already debated in my

mind whether to serve God or not. When I awoke at nights and was afraid, the idea of hellfire would worry me.

When I was ten years old I gradually accepted the idea that the Bible was only the imaginings of men and that it had been an instrument used to rule and oppress men. Then when I got to be twelve I heard some young Evangelical-Lutheran missionaries speak on the subject of their departure for pagan lands. What they said deeply impressed me, so much so that I became "converted" and started to read the Bible. My schoolteacher, upon hearing this, was very pleased and promised to enroll me in the missionary school as soon as I was old enough. However, with the years came many changes. My teacher died. I had many problems, though I kept reading the Bible, without understanding too much.

Later I became so fond of sports that the subject filled my mind to the exclusion of practically everything else. Nonetheless, my conscience would bother me from time to time. "Would not missionary work be God's will for you?" it kept reminding me. I had prayed for that career for ten years already.

One day as I was about to leave for a race, a woman came to the house and offered religious literature. Had I not already agreed to be in the race I would have gladly heard all she had to say. As it was, I purchased the book *The Finished Mystery*, which, among other things, discussed the Bible book of Revelation. I read avidly, not in the least offended at the Bible's condemnation of Christendom's religions. On the other hand, "consecration" (dedication) to God seemed like too much of a step for me. I started to suspect that an application of Christian principles could result in one's giving up competitive sports. I felt I could never do that,

so discontinued reading the book altogether.

Soon after this I attended a public talk given in our village by a representative of the International Bible Students Association. It was far ahead of any sermon I had ever heard, but still no change took place with me; I kept on with sports.

ANOTHER RUNNING TRACK OPENS UP

One of my very good friends, one who shared my interest in sports, was practically an unbeliever. For this reason I had always hesitated about talking religion to him. I feared it might end our friendship. Meeting him again on one occasion after a long separation, I learned that he had changed his mind about marrying a certain girl. His five-word reply to my amazed questioning was: "I am a Bible Student" (as Jehovah's witnesses were then called). It seems that the girl he planned to marry did not approve of his new religion. He wanted to comply with the Bible's admonition to marry "only in the Lord," that is, marry someone of the same faith.—1 Cor. 7:39.

This man really had changed. I wondered how a person could give up even his dearest expectations just because of what the Bible had to say. The deep impression that this circumstance made upon me caused me to consider again the question of dedication. Again the question came to mind, Would I pursue my proposed career in competitive sports? The Bible pointed to a much more appropriate race: "Do you not know that the runners in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may attain it. Moreover, every man taking part in a contest exercises self-control in all things. Now they, of course, do it that they may get a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one."—1 Cor. 9:24, 25.

Before me were two racetracks, one offering fame and glory of the world, the other offering the winner God's approval and everlasting life. I could not run on both. My friend's experience was a wonderful lesson to me. I made the decision to dedicate my life to God and set about to learn all the rules of my new career.

THE STARTING SIGNAL FOR THE LONG RACE

Soon I procured all seven volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, published by the Watch Tower Society, and by early 1920 had read them all through. I was completely convinced that the Bible hell was no other than the common grave of all mankind, that instead of people possessing souls, each one is a soul. Many other Bible truths now shone forth clearly. In April of that year I submitted to water baptism as an outward symbol of the dedication I had made. To me that was like the starting signal for this new contest, the race for the prize of life.

Things were not easy. My father had died in 1914, and since I was the oldest of six children it was up to me to collaborate with mother to make the family living. It seemed that I would be tied down to this situation for a long time, while I longed to be sharing in missionary work. In those days Bible Students did not all share in house-to-house preaching; only certain full-time representatives of the Watch Tower Society did. However, I determined to have some share in spreading the knowledge I had acquired even though tied down by the small business we were operating. I placed Bible literature with many of our customers and had many interesting discussions. Still I was not satisfied.

During 1920 my aforementioned friend and I were associating with a small group of local Bible Students, mostly women. We

were quite shy and relatively new; so the women conducted the study sessions. They urged us to lead in prayer and to undertake the conducting of the meetings, but both of us at first felt that we were quite unequal to the responsibility. When I finally consented I found that it was up to me now to take the lead in the group. We started to do some house-to-house preaching and the congregation grew, first to twenty persons, and then it became so large that three separate groups had to be organized within a radius of ten kilometers (a little more than six miles).

Since our family's business was quite slack at the first of the year, I decided to spend January and February of 1921 in some distant territory where I could preach to people who had not yet heard about some of the Bible's marvelous promises. My sister undertook to care for things at home. The territory chosen was about 200 kilometers (120 miles) away. I determined to tell people as much as I could of the things I had learned from the Watch Tower Society's literature. People were very receptive, gladly talked about the Bible and willingly obtained literature.

Many were the happy experiences I had during those months, and a few quite strange. For example, I met a woman who was in the grip of demons and who threatened to paralyze me so that I would not be able to move. But any attempt to cast a spell was of no avail, and when I explained from the Bible about the demons and the bondage into which they bring humans, she broke down and cried.

NEW FIELDS OPEN UP

Back home after that wonderful two-month interlude in the missionary work, I received a surprising letter from the Helsinki branch of the Watch Tower Society. Could I become one of their special traveling representatives for two weeks,

travel the whole length of the land and give Bible lectures in villages, towns and even cities? Though hesitant at first, I reasoned that, if this was the Lord's will, then I would be able to count on his spirit to aid me. I agreed to accept and had the happy privilege of speaking to huge audiences on the subject "The Antichrist Has Come!—What? When? Where?"

The two weeks passed quickly, and I was back home again. But another unexpected message came from Helsinki, this time inviting me to become a regular traveling representative in what was then called "pilgrim" work. My responsibility to the family loomed as an insurmountable barrier, but, to my great surprise, the members of my family agreed to share the load and release me for the work in which I longed to participate. I was twenty-four years old at the time, and I managed to continue for five years, during the course of which I got to know practically all the Witnesses in Finland. At times I had audiences of up to a thousand. The work was most satisfying; indeed, it was thrilling to see people thus responding to the liberating message of the Bible.

Meantime, the situation at home brought joy too. My mother began to read *The Watch Tower* regularly. My sister also progressed to the point of dedication. In fact, that small congregation proved to be a training school from which experienced Witnesses left to engage in full-time preaching in other parts of the field. Some went as missionaries to Estonia, and several others, including my oldest friend, were invited into the "pilgrim" service.

At the end of five years I was invited to come to the headquarters office of the Society in Helsinki to assist in the many features of administrative work. Twenty years of such privileged activity I can now look back upon as a fine period of training. Most of all I appreciated the op-

portunity of observing at close quarters the direction of Jehovah's spirit in the affairs of his people on earth. Then, too, from that vantage point I could note the thrilling expansion that took place in Finland.

MORE JOYS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Marriage came when I was forty years of age, and though this would involve added responsibilities it was not to interfere with my full-time ministry. My wife was happy to help in my secular business. Soon we had four children, two boys and two girls. During this period I spent a lot of time at the Society's Helsinki branch. However, time was spent also with my family each week, training and aiding the young ones to grow up with appreciation for God's true worship. The two girls eventually became missionaries, as well as one of the boys. Even my wife, with all her added duties, found time to spend a whole month in house-to-house preaching every now and then. Jehovah surely blessed all our efforts.

In 1958, with the exception of one boy, the whole family had the privilege of attending the big international assembly held in New York. What an unforgettable experience that was! The memories and impressions received keep coming to mind again and again. It was refreshing stimulation for the portion of the race for life that still lay ahead.

The years had gone quickly, yes, even decades had rolled by. Twenty-seven years after our marriage, all four of our children were married, each one having chosen a partner dedicated to Jehovah. One of my daughters is still in full-time missionary work, and it is my hope that the others will yet choose that as their life's career.

Other things have happened too. President Knorr of the Watch Tower Society

visited Finland and made some new arrangements for the Kingdom work. I was privileged to serve again as a traveling representative, visiting and aiding congregations to increase and improve their ministry. This greatly contributed to my growth to maturity. I learned to understand the many varied and difficult circumstances in which Witnesses strive to please God. I observed how good example is often more valuable than words. I have rejoiced in the overflowing abundance of spiritual food, as the light upon God's written Word has shone brighter and brighter.

In 1958 I began to worry about the fact that with age my running in the race would begin to slow down. The Society's branch representative explained that it would be possible for me to continue in full-time service in one location, if I felt that my strength was no longer equal to the great amount of travel. I took the matter to Jehovah in prayer, for I did not want to take the easy way out at this stage of the race.

About this time the Society's president, N. H. Knorr, urged the Finnish branch to locate another place and build a new office and factory to care for the expanding work. I remembered an ideal spot for this purpose, and was happy to find my suggestion adopted. A beautiful new branch office and Bethel home was soon constructed. Just this little encouragement seemed to lift me out of that brief period of worry over health. I determined to continue with new wind, as it were. No interruption in purpose, no flagging of zeal until the winning post is reached—that is Jehovah's

will, and it is my greatest happiness to fulfill his will.

So once again I was a traveling representative of the Society, and it seems as if my race is going better than ever. And nine more years have gone by in this work at which I have been privileged to serve for twenty years. I am seventy years old now, and can say that I have been on the racetrack for forty-seven years all together.

Fellow Witnesses who know about this seemingly long race of mine often inquire: "Do you not get tired?" To me it seems that I could continue the race as a full-time preacher or in any other field of service open to me indefinitely. Of course, I realize that much depends upon my physical strength and health, and still more upon what God's will is for me.

I have now had the experience in two distinct running tracks, and so am able to explain to fellow Witnesses, as I often do, that the race for the prize of life differs radically from the physical race. In the physical race, apart from getting one's second wind, one's strength does not increase during the race. But in the race for the grand prize of life Jehovah keeps on giving faithful runners new strength. As Isaiah the prophet was inspired to declare for our encouragement: "He is giving to the tired one power; and to the one without dynamic energy he makes full might abound. Boys will both tire out and grow weary, and young men themselves will without fail stumble, but those who are hoping in Jehovah will regain power. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary."—Isa. 40: 29-31.



A Real Fountain of Lasting Life

FROM time immemorial men have sought a fountain of youth to restore themselves to the full vigor of sparkling health. This search has been made, not only by looking for such a literal fountain, but also by looking for a relief from sickness and old age through medicines, foods, dieting and other ways. These have brought a measure of success, but none has been able to lengthen man's life-span or his enjoyment of life to any significant degree. The reason is shown in the Bible to be that man has inherited imperfection. Mankind's original human father turned away from the fountain of life and lost perfection, being therefore unable to pass on real, full life to his offspring.

MORE THAN LITERAL WATER NEEDED

Some have understood and recognized the situation and have realized that not mere food, drink or the like can restore the life of mankind and have seen that the need goes deeper than man's physical makeup, to his spiritual nature—that there is a need for reformation there. Some have attempted to bring about this reformation by self-works, by living according to a standard or code established by themselves or someone else. The Jews tried to obtain it by living according to the Ten Commandments. Some persons in Christendom today follow this theory. But



more is required.

Man cannot work out perfection; he needs help from God, for "with [Jehovah] is the source [fountain, AV] of life."

(Ps. 36:9) Life originally was a gift of God to our forefather Adam, not a payment for works,

and no one can make himself worthy of life by mere works. The seeker of life must have help from the Giver of life, and that

help must be sought and obtained on the terms of life's Giver, not on the terms of the one receiving it.

In the book of Revelation God has shown us that the matter of getting life is assured to those who really desire it and seek it on God's terms. The same angel that gave John a vision of Jerusalem the holy city with its governmental arrangement went on to paint for him a beautiful picture of the restoration of lasting life to obedient mankind. John tells us what he saw and heard, saying:

"And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of its broad way. And on this side of the river and on that side there were trees of life producing twelve crops of fruit, yielding their fruits each month. And the leaves of the trees were for the curing of the nations."—Rev. 22:1, 2.

A similar vision was beheld by the prophet Ezekiel while in exile in ancient Babylon, in 593 B.C.E. Ezekiel was shown

a stream of life-giving water flowing out from the visionary House of Jehovah, past the sacrificial altar and on down to the salt-laden Dead Sea. (Ezek. 47:1-12) This stream of water must have issued forth from Jehovah God, who had entered into the Most Holy of the temple. In the vision of John the source of the water is the "throne of God and of the Lamb."

WHEN THE RIVER BEGINS TO FLOW

This description of the source helps us to establish the time when the waters would be due to flow, for Jehovah through his Messiah did not begin to take over his Kingdom power and begin to rule until the end of the Gentile Times in 1914 C.E. (Rev. 11:15 to 12:10) Therefore, it would be *after* this time that the river of the water of life would flow forth. However, it could not have been *at* that time, because between 1914 and 1918 the remnant of the 144,000 spiritual Israelites were still under much persecution and went into Babylonish captivity to the nations, being delivered only in 1919 from Babylon the Great. As we shall see later, the 144,000 have a definite place in John's vision in connection with the water of life and, therefore, would have to be established in their God-ordained places before the river could begin to flow.

Another factor marking the time is that the water flows down through the holy city, and this holy city, New Jerusalem, does not come down out of heaven from God as a bride adorned for her husband until after the "former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea is no more." In other words, the flowing here pictured does not begin until after the war of Armageddon and the abyssing of Satan have done away with all enemies of God both in heaven and in earth and the old system of things now controlling this earth is gone. The time would

be at the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Christ. It is then that the river can flow down the middle of the street of the holy city.—Rev. 21:1, 2, 9, 10, 21.

RIVER'S WATER MORE THAN TRUTH

What does the river of the water of life symbolize? Truth? No. Truth is in the Bible sometimes compared with water, for example, in Ephesians 5:26. But more is involved here than mere truth. Truth can guide a person in the way toward life, but it takes more than an understanding of the truth to restore life to man. God has provided the truth for mankind. He also demonstrated unparalleled love in giving his Son Jesus Christ. So the symbolic river pictures the entire provision Jehovah makes for obedient, believing mankind to have everlasting life through Jesus Christ the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This is in harmony with the fact that the river is flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, who is seated at the right hand of God his Father.—John 1:29; Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:32-36.

The river is as clear as crystal, which indicates that God's provisions are pure, free from all death-dealing contamination. Besides the purity of God's truth, the ransom sacrifice of the Lamb Jesus Christ and his administration to sinful mankind of the benefits of his sacrifice as Jehovah's high priest like Melchizedek are pure and clean and essential to the gaining of life. Throughout the entire thousand-year reign all men on earth, including those resurrected from the dead, must drink of the "river of water of life."

How will the water of life be made available to mankind and, since it is symbolic water, what will they have to do to get its benefits for themselves? By following the course of this river as described in Revelation we can understand. It is shown as going in a channel down the middle of

the golden broad way of the holy city. The holy city is the temple class, the "place for God to inhabit by spirit" and the Bride of the Lamb. All of these terms point to her as the body of the 144,000 members of the congregation of God, the spiritual brothers of Christ, who at this time will be enjoying Christ's heavenly rule as associate kings and underpriests with him. Being the administrative body, they will have the happy lot of bringing the benefits of Christ's ransom sacrifice to the people. The holy city, Revelation tells us, will bring light to the nations. These priests of God will therefore be teachers of God's purposes, his guiding rules, laws and instructions, and as the people obey this royal priesthood, it will actually bring literal, physical vitality to them commensurate with their spiritual progress. On the part of the people, the life restoration will not be automatic. They will have to exert themselves to conform to God's way and make over their personalities with the help of God's spirit and will have to show themselves vigorously desirous of righteousness. Jesus Christ and his 144,000 associates are the Seed of Abraham by means of whom all the families and nations are to be blessed, but the prophecy says that they will "bless themselves." This proves that action must come on the part of those being blessed. (Gal. 3:8, 16, 29; Gen. 22:17, 18) God desires that they receive the blessing arranged for through the sacrifice of his own Son. He is not stingy with his waters of life but sends them through a "broad way" of "pure gold, as transparent glass."

AN UNFAILING FOOD SUPPLY

How refreshing a cool clear glass of water is to one who is thirsty! How much more so is this crystal-clear water, which actually imparts life. But food is also necessary for life's sustenance, and God has

not neglected this. On each bank of the river that flows down the middle of its "broad way" there are "trees of life producing twelve crops of fruit." The vision does not say how many kinds of fruit grew on the trees but it does tell us that they never failed to produce a crop each month of the year. All year long they produced twelve crops in all so that in no season nor at any time was there any danger of anyone feeling the pangs of hunger.

These trees are watered by the river of the water of life. They picture a part of God's provision for eternal life for obedient, believing mankind. Since the 144,000 members of the Lamb's wife are inhabitants of the city and since they drink also of God's provisions for life through Jesus Christ, they may be pictured additionally by these trees. (Rev. 21:6) At Isaiah 61:1-3, the 144,000 are likened to "big trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah." Even before they receive their heavenly resurrection the 144,000 constitute God's spiritual nation who produce the fruits of the kingdom of God and therefore the nation to whom the kingdom is given. (Matt. 21:43) By the tremendous Bible educational work that they have been doing throughout the earth, they prove that they are producing these spiritual fruits continually without letup, figuratively, in all seasons and months of the year, even in the face of persecution. They are bringing certain fruits to mankind, the fruits of God's kingdom, by preaching and teaching about its birth in heaven. The fact that many are eating these fruits and being spiritually nourished with a hope to be partakers of the river of the water of life is an evidence that these fruit bearers are worthy to have a part after their death and resurrection to be with Jesus Christ in the heavenly fulfillment of the trees.

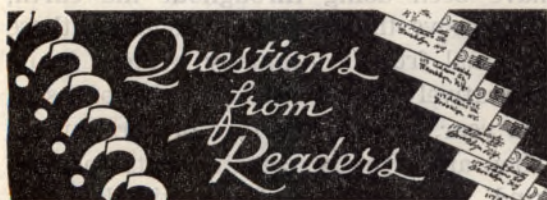
HEALING FROM ALL SICKNESSES

They are shown as producing not only fruit but also leaves that have a very beneficial effect, a curative power for the nations, just as plant leaves have often been the source of medicines for healing and curing. This gives us assurance that, not only will they receive water and food to sustain life, but they will actually get healing and restoration to completed health. The nations who will receive the curing are those nations who will walk by means of the light of the holy city, New Jerusalem.—Rev. 21:23, 24.

An additional happy thought that the vision brings to light is that for earthly humankind there will also be a very realistic aspect for them in connection with trees because the whole earth will be made a paradise and will be made to abound with trees and pure waters, everything good for food, just as was provided by God in the garden of Eden. The water flowing through the streams and rivers will no longer be contaminated but will be pure. These and all other things necessary for

maintaining perfect health and enjoyment of life will be present. With the wonderful physical delights, and, more important, with minds made over to be in complete attunement and harmony with God, what peace, health, happiness and love the inhabitants of the earth will enjoy!

Then there will be no search for fountains of youth, no calling on medical doctors and psychotherapists for the relief of ills, no quest for a proper diet to add a few years to one's life-span. Such temporary and short-term helps will not be needed. All who have been earthly survivors of Har-Magedon and also all men who have been resurrected from the dead and who have obediently partaken of these wonderful provisions will have life for how long? Seventy years? A thousand years? A million years? No—life everlasting. Moreover, this will be no monotonous existence, but a continual occupation of mind and body in progressive blessings that Jehovah God will bring forth for his people through his beloved city, New Jerusalem.



● Do Jesus' words at Luke 20:34-36 apply to the earthly resurrection or to the heavenly resurrection of the 144,000?—W. D., Australia.

We frequently receive inquiries on these verses, which read: "The children of this system of things marry and are given in marriage, but those who have been counted worthy of gaining that system of things and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. In fact, neither can they

die any more, for they are like the angels, and they are God's children by being children of the resurrection."

It is understandable that Christians might be concerned about marriage prospects in the resurrection, since the strongest human emotional ties are often with regard to one's mate. Many faithful servants of God who look forward to living forever on earth and whose mates have died would like to have support for their hope that they could be reunited as husband and wife in the resurrection. While not being callous to their sincere feelings, we must admit that apparently Jesus' words apply to the earthly resurrection, and they indicate that those resurrected will not marry or be reunited in a marriage relationship with former mates.

In order to appreciate why this position is held, it would be beneficial to consider the setting of Jesus' words. Matthew 22:23-33 could be read with profit. In an attempt to outwit Jesus the Sadducees posed a problem: A Jewish woman lost her husband before producing any children. In accord with the law of brother-in-law marriage given at Deuteronomy 25:5-10, she married her deceased husband's brother and progressed through seven brothers without producing children, each of the husbands dying. The Sadducees asked whose wife she would be in the resurrection.—Luke 20:28-33.

The Jews had knowledge and hope of an earthly resurrection, even though these opposing Sadducees did not accept the resurrection hope plainly set out in the Hebrew Scriptures. (Isa. 25:8; Job 14:13; Dan. 12:13) In his reply Jesus did not avoid answering their question by speaking about the resurrection to heavenly life. They had presented a problem involving Jews under the Mosaic law who died before Jesus opened the way to heavenly life, and Christ logically replied on this basis: "In the resurrection neither do men marry nor are women given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven."—Matt. 22:30.

Further showing that Jesus had in mind an earthly resurrection, as recorded at Matthew 22:31, 32 and Luke 20:37, 38, he referred to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and proved by the information that Moses was given at the burning bush that these patriarchs would be resurrected from the dead. Well, what Scriptural hope is there for these men? They will have an earthly resurrection, having died before Jesus opened the way to heavenly life or held out that hope for a small number of mankind. (Matt. 11:11; Acts 2:34; Heb. 10:19, 20) So the entire discussion here is about an earthly resurrection and not about a resurrection that results in life in heaven with the angels there.

This has long been understood and taught by Jehovah's witnesses. As far back as *The Watchtower* of November 15, 1904, page 345, we read in a discussion of these verses: "True the glorified Church will not marry, but there is no reference here to the Church class, the Bride class. The question did not refer to saints, but to any ordinary Jews under the Law.... Nothing in the illustration implied that either the woman or any of her husbands were followers of the Lord."

How, then, will those raised to earthly life be like the angels? The angels in heaven do not marry and procreate, producing angelic offspring. Yet they can enjoy satisfying association with myriads of other spirit creatures serving God. Similarly, those who in this present wicked system of things prove themselves worthy of gaining a resurrection in the new order or the coming system of things will not marry and produce offspring. (2 Cor. 4:4; Mark 10:30) Immediately upon resurrection they become "God's children by being children of the resurrection." Their heavenly "Father," the one giving them life by resurrecting them, has determined that they will not marry, though they will be in position to receive many other blessings at his hand, not the least of which will be the privilege of close and warm association with other earthly servants of God.

Additionally, the ones who are resurrected to earthly life and who prove their integrity to God through the millennium and the final test to follow will be recognized by God as being righteous and so will be given everlasting life. (Rev. 20:5, 7-10) When once Jehovah has declared them righteous by recognizing their human perfection and righteousness, no other person in heaven or on earth can destroy them without God's permission and according to his will. (Rom. 8:33) The angels are mortal, as proved by the fact that Satan and the demons will be destroyed. (Matt. 25:41) Despite their mortality the faithful angels live on forever. Those resurrected to earthly life who are declared righteous by God will live and be blessed by Jehovah forever even though they are mortal like the angels.

So while it is true that the 144,000 raised to heavenly life will not marry, evidently Jesus, in making the comments at Luke 20:34-36, was not speaking about this small fraction of those to be resurrected. But, rather, in accord with the question posed, he was speaking about the earthly resurrection and what will be the situation for the thousands of millions raised from the dead to earthly life.

As indicated by correspondence we have received, this conclusion is one difficult for some to accept because of the strong influence of human emotions. While we can sincerely sympathize with those who have lost mates in death, we must honestly admit that the conclusion discussed above is the one suggested in the Scrip-

tures. Since this is all God's Word says about it, when asked what the Bible indicates on this topic, we can but explain matters in this way.

If, though, this Scriptural conclusion seems hard for one to accept, is it wise to become upset over the matter and let this question interfere with one's faith? No, it would be far better to leave the matter in God's hands. Jehovah is a God of loving-kindness, understanding and mercy. (Ex. 34:6; Job 12:13; Isa. 60:10) He will not act unjustly toward those who have his favor. As Elihu said to Job, "for a fact, God himself does not act wickedly, and the Almighty himself does not pervert judgment." (Job 34:12) While humans might now think they will have certain needs and desires, we personally have never lived under the perfect conditions God has in store for mankind. He knows what perfect humans need, and we can be certain he will provide for all the needs of his "children of the resurrection," as well as the Armageddon survivors. We can rest assured that the inspired words at Psalm 145:16 will prove true then: "You are opening your hand

and satisfying the desire of every living thing." What God has promised for those who love him and serve him faithfully, everlasting life in peace, health, happiness and contentment, will be the possession of all who have his approval in the new order. What a joy it will be to fellowship with friends and relatives united by the bonds of Christian love and the service of Jehovah. That will truly be a rich and satisfying life!

The Bible does not provide all the details about the resurrection and how things such as family matters and child training will be arranged on the earth in the new system of things. We can be certain, though, that Jehovah is going to do what is loving and absolutely just. In fact, he is going to do what is perfect and right to a degree that our imperfect minds cannot even conceive. Thus we can in faith rely on Moses' words at Deuteronomy 32:4: "The Rock, perfect is his activity, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice; righteous and upright is he."



ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOW DID YOU COME TO BE?

Throughout the world the doctrine of evolution is taught as established fact. The origin of life and man is almost always presented in evolutionary terms in studies of science, philosophy, history and even religion. But does this doctrine really harmonize with the facts of science? What do you personally know about it? Read the 192-page hardbound book *Did Man Get Here by Evolution or by Creation?* It bears directly on your life and future. Send only 25c.

FIELD MINISTRY

Freedom is a prized possession. Those who are spiritually free want to help others to be released from captivity to superstitions and

false religious traditions. Jehovah's witnesses strongly feel this way, for they recognize the symbolic Babylon the Great of Revelation 18:2 as being the world empire of false religion, to which millions of persons are imprisoned. As Jehovah's witnesses preach a release to Babylon's captives during the month of October, they are offering to all interested persons a year's subscription for *Awake!* magazine, with three booklets, for \$1.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

November 5: Rescuing a Great Crowd of Mankind Out of Armageddon. Page 617. Songs to Be Used: 40, 6.
November 12: To the Rescue! Page 624. Songs to Be Used: 27, 1.