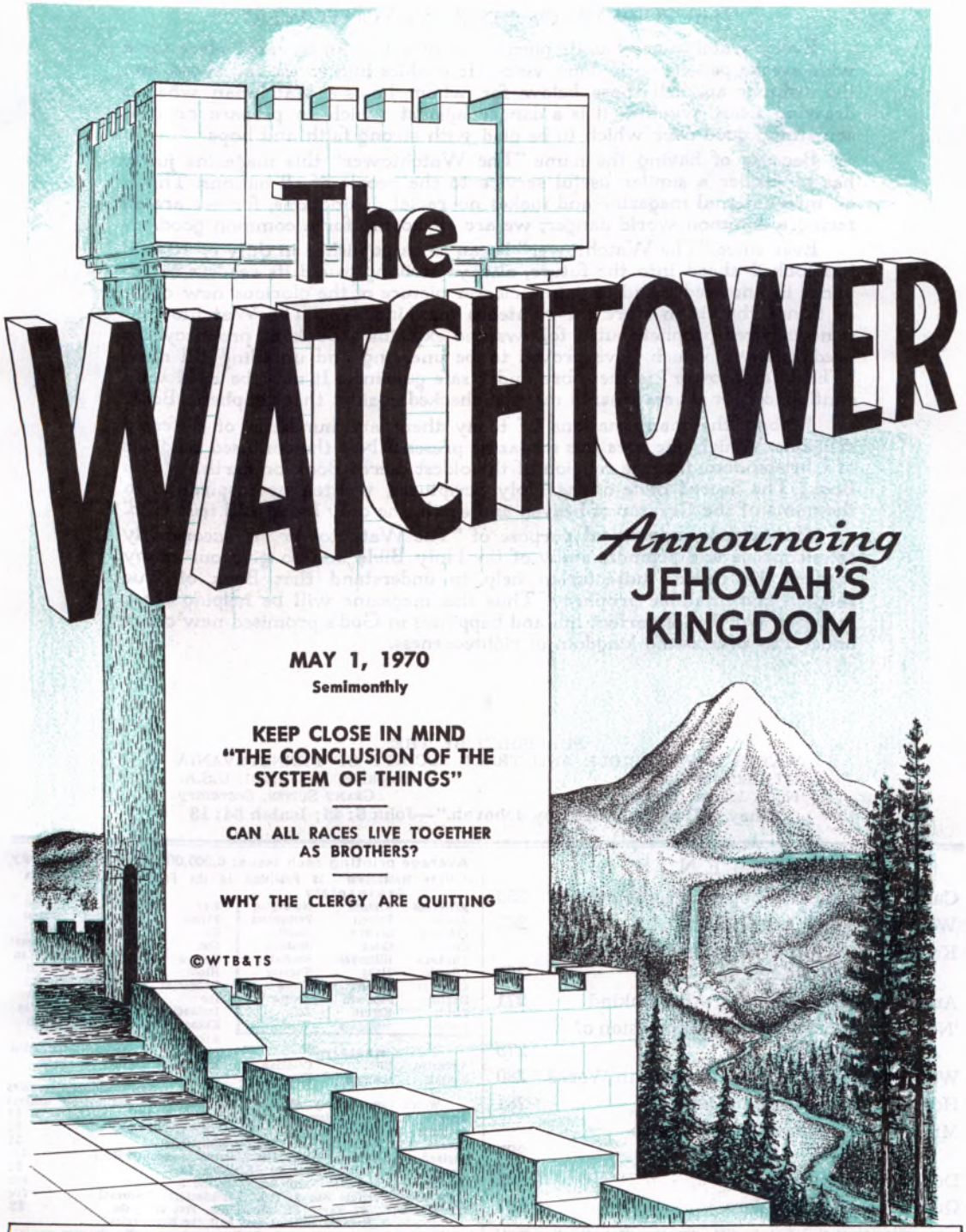

The WATCHTOWER

Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

MAY 1, 1970
Semimonthly

KEEP CLOSE IN MIND "THE CONCLUSION OF THE SYSTEM OF THINGS"

CAN ALL RACES LIVE TOGETHER AS BROTHERS?

WHY THE CLERGY ARE QUITTING

©WTB&TS

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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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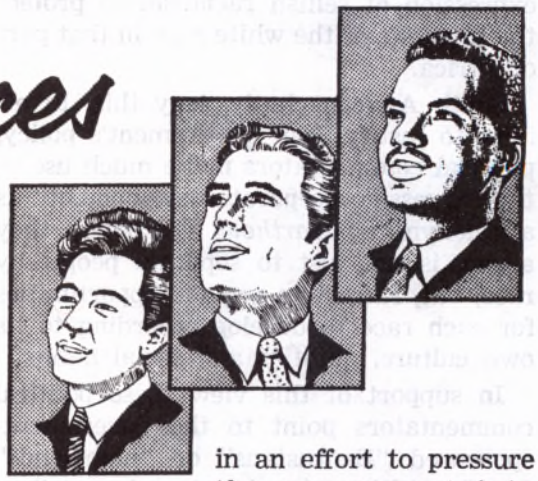
Can All Races Live Together as Brothers?



"IMPOSSIBLE," you say? If that is your reaction, your opinion is certainly shared by many people. And a hard look at those parts of the world where peoples of different races are brought into close proximity finds plenty of evidence to suggest that the possibility of all races living together as brothers seems remote, to say the least.

Countries that are committed publicly to a policy of racial integration are finding the going rough. The government of the United States finds itself with racial crises on its hands. It faces mounting pressure from extremists on both sides. On one hand, there is the clamor from an increasing section of the white population insisting that integration and advancement of the Negro is moving too fast. On the other hand, the militant voices of "black power" claim that progress is too slow. Some even go so far as to advocate guerrilla warfare in an effort to pressure the government into meeting their demands. In many cities the racial situation is tinder-dry, needing but a spark to touch off renewed racial violence.

Britain, where not so long ago racial strife was little heard of, now faces mounting problems in this area of human relations. Industrial cities in recent years have had an influx of immigrants from the West Indies and India. The question as to peoples of different races living together in peace as brothers has been forced upon the inhabitants of those cities, and the record does not supply a particularly encouraging answer. Due to mounting racial problems Britain has been forced to make controversial decisions affecting immigration of nonwhites.

Political commentators in the Republic of South Africa are not slow to draw at-

tention to the racial turmoil boiling up in other countries. In this they feel they find some justification for the South African policy of *apartheid,* an Afrikaans word literally meaning "separateness." However, in the minds of South Africa's critics, *apartheid* represents the last word in racial intolerance and injustice. They argue that *apartheid* is degrading and is but an expression of selfish racialism to protect the interests of the white man in that part of Africa.

South Africans hotly deny this. In efforts to justify their government's policy, political commentators make much use of the expression "separate development" as a synonym for *apartheid.* The policy, they argue, is not just to separate people by race, but, rather, to provide opportunities for each race to develop according to its own culture, abilities and social habits.

In support of this view these political commentators point to the government-sponsored "Bantustans" or "homelands" for the African people of various tribes. In these they can enjoy a large measure of internal self-government and develop almost as a state within a state. Efforts have been made to encourage white industrialists to establish factories on the borders of the "Bantustans" (called "border industries"). This would provide opportunity for employment in those areas that are mostly underdeveloped from the industrial viewpoint.

However, whatever its merits or demerits, the policy of "separate development" is seen by many persons as indicating that under present conditions it is not possible for all races to live together as brothers.

Government leaders in South Africa have, on a number of occasions, called on their people to develop good race relations, specifically calling on the European or white population to treat those of another skin color with dignity. Yet the question remains as to what effect such request has on the mental attitude of the majority of those persons.

Opponents of South Africa view any justification of the policy of *apartheid* or "separate development" as 'tongue-in-cheek hypocrisy,' and repeatedly call in question the sincerity of the policy. South Africans, on the other hand, retaliate very much in kind with similar charges against those Western nations who criticize South Africa's racial policies but who have in their own backyard, as it were, plenty of evidence of racial prejudice and discrimination.

CAUSES OF RACIAL PREJUDICE

The fact is that racial prejudice and discrimination are products of man's inherent imperfection and selfishness. No government of man, whatever its policy, can legislate a change in men's thinking on such matters.

What really produces racial prejudice? What factors contribute to the apparently insurmountable problem of different races living together as brothers?

Races differ in many ways in addition to skin color. That goes without saying. Different social customs, habits and manners mark the races. But these need not be a cause for friction and discrimination. There are people who have bad customs, bad manners, bad habits in every race, be they white, brown, black or yellow. But should that prejudice us against people of another race *in toto?* Doing so is often but an excuse to justify some more deep-seated reason for one's attitude.

Without doubt, one of the principal factors affecting racial or class prejudice is the economic one. In this regard some of the factors contributing to racial preju-

dice are similar to those that have produced class distinctions between persons of the same race. People who *have* are not, for the most part, anxious to share with the *have nots*. "Why should we be?" they may ask. "Our people (our race, our class) have worked for what we have; we have a right to it." This line of argument is commonly heard in defense of racial or class superiority.

People of all races are living together as brothers now in the Christian society of Jehovah's witnesses

Strong racial prejudices are often to be found in those areas where the group occupying the more favored position economically is a minority group racially. Also, it exists where the standard of living of a section of the community is threatened by the moving into the area of people of another race. They may also feel that these new ones will compete for their jobs at lower wages. Whether their fears are justified or not is another matter; the fact is that their *fear* of economic loss, their *fear* that the "standards" of the community will suffer, are powerful factors in producing racial tension. So, there are a number of factors involved in causing racial prejudice.

YOUR ATTITUDE IS IMPORTANT

When you first read the title of this article, "Can All Races Live Together as Brothers?" how did you react? Do not shrug the matter off as unimportant, especially if you claim to be a dedicated Christian. Your attitude toward persons of other races is important. In fact, it can affect your hope of receiving God's blessing and gaining everlasting life. That important? Most assuredly!

You may live in a country where the policy of government limits the areas of contact between the races and where one's willingness to accept a person of another skin color as a brother in a real sense is barely tested. Do you, then, conveniently dismiss the problem as having been nicely taken care of by the laws of the land? What, in fact, is your view of persons of another race? If you claim to be a Christian and a practicer of Bible principles, can you view those of another race, a so-called "inferior" race, as actually "superior" to you, as admonished by the apostle Paul? (Phil. 2:3) No, not in the sense of physical or mental accomplishment, but as persons, as to their standing before God. Can you, as opportunity affords, deal with such ones with the dignity and Christian love that the Bible calls for?

This does not require us to break Caesar's laws or to fight against them, whatever we may feel as to their rightness. Christians are required to "pay back Caesar's things to Caesar." (Mark 12:17) But this does not call for them to adopt the same negative attitude toward persons of another race as demonstrated by their neighbors or associates in secular employment—not if such attitude is opposed to Bible principles.

Some individuals whose perspective has been distorted by racial prejudice will go so far as to deny to people of other races the most basic of human qualities. But people of all races are capable of the same human qualities, the same human feelings —to have a sense of parenthood, love of children, concern for the welfare of others, to love what is good and hate what is bad.

No matter how primitive the environment, no matter how limited the education, people of all races can and are becoming dedicated Christians and turning away from the bad course of this old system of things. God's spirit is acting upon many individuals of all races today, causing them to produce in their lives the fruitage of his holy spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23) A true Christian could never deny God's ability to do that.

Do you allow yourself to rationalize your attitude toward persons of another race by dwelling on certain of their weaknesses, due no doubt to lack of education or opportunity or because of environmental factors? Or, do you, in Christian love, make allowances for such disadvantages, not looking at such ones according to what they are in the flesh, but according to the viewpoint of God, who is not partial toward people of any race or color? (Acts 10:34, 35) Searching questions, yes! The way you answer them can vitally affect your life.

LIVING TOGETHER AS BROTHERS NOW!

Even now it is being demonstrated by the Christian society of Jehovah's witnesses that people of all races can live together as brothers. How so? If you have ever attended a large international assembly of Jehovah's witnesses you have seen this in a striking way as people of all races, white, brown, yellow and black, associate together without discrimination of any kind in upbuilding Christian fellowship.

Even where human laws do not allow for such free association, as in South Africa, Jehovah's witnesses feel just as close an affinity for their Christian brothers and express this as opportunity affords. While, for instance, it is not possible in that country for different races to have large assemblies together, pre-assembly organization provides many opportunities for mutual cooperation and assistance, which are gladly seized on. This is not just an expression of "tolerance," but of genuine Christian love.

Certainly in God's new order under the long-promised kingdom of His dear Son, Jesus Christ, there will be no racial prejudice. Then, most definitely, all races will live together as brothers. No, not *all* people of all races, for not every person will receive the blessing of God and find life in that new order. But "all those calling upon him," irrespective of race, will be heard by God, "for there is no distinction" with him.—Rom. 10:12.

Even at this time in these closing "last days" of this present system of things "a great crowd . . . out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" are manifesting themselves as true worshipers of the Most High God, Jehovah.—2 Tim. 3:1-5; Rev. 7:9.

If such worshipers of Jehovah hope to live together as brothers in God's new order, should they not be doing so now as far as present governmental laws permit? Let your faith in God's promise to have all races live together as brothers be reflected in the way you treat persons of other races *now,* especially those who are dedicated Christians.

Why the Clergy ARE QUITTING

EVERY month now hundreds of priests and ministers are quitting. The exodus of the clergy has grown into a mighty torrent, shaking the churches to their foundations.

The **National Catholic Reporter** estimated that in the United States at least 2,700 Catholic priests left in just 1968. And **Time** magazine reports: "As many as 3,000 Protestant clergymen are leaving U.S. pulpits every year."

Other countries are experiencing a similar exodus.

THE MEN WHO ARE QUITTING

Who are the men that are quitting? Are they men lacking qualifications and ability?

Jesuit Sociologist Eugene Schallert, after completing a study of hundreds of departing Catholic priests, observed: "Those who are leaving are some of the best men in the church—some of the most intelligent, most enterprising. . . . They are occupationally top men, capable of holding down really good jobs."

An example is Charles Davis. Before his departure he was Britain's leading and best-known Catholic theologian. Last November Bernard J. Cooke also quit. He was one of the foremost Catholic theologians in the United States. Others who have recently quit include prominent Catholic bishops, James P. Shannon of the United States and Mario Renato Cornejo Ravadero of Peru. Also, the papal household was shocked when one of its elite members, Monsignor Giovanni Musante, quit last year.

Is it significant that many of the "best men" are leading the exodus? Yes, it is. For as former Catholic priest Alex MacRae explains: "Most priests aren't equipped to do anything outside, and this is what is keeping many of them in."

Now, however, a number of agencies have been set up to help former priests and ministers get adjusted and obtain secular employment. Thus, the exodus is gaining momentum. Why, just one of these agencies now handles about 165 new priest-clients a month—2,000 a year! John Wesley Downing, director of another such agency, predicts that more than half of the 450,000 Protestant ministers and Catholic priests in the United States will quit by 1975.

REASONS FOR QUITTING

But why are so many quitting? The celibacy law that forbids priests to marry is most frequently cited as the reason.

However, it would be wrong to conclude that the celibacy requirement is the only or fundamental reason for priests quitting. As Monsignor Myles Bourke of New York city observes: "Most of them get out because they're frustrated in their work. Many of the young people are treated like adolescents and feel restricted."

It is as young Charles W. Long, who quit the priesthood in 1966, writes: "I grew restless, not because of celibacy, but because I was becoming convinced that the service I could render men was being hampered rather than aided." He noted the "farce in a parish devoted to organizing Bingo games and conducting novenas." Do you feel the same way about such activities?

When Charles Wood left the priesthood in British Honduras last summer he observed: "We seem to have become bogged down in the ruts of rituals and tradition . . . even if I were given permission to marry tomorrow and remain as part of the set-up, I would still be resigning."

Departing priests often note that there is something basically wrong with the Catholic church. Former priest Herbert Hooven of Brooklyn, New York, writes: "There are so many fundamentals involved . . . I can make a very clear distinction between a truly Christian religious community and the typical Catholic parish."

When telling why he was quitting, Catholic theologian Charles Davis noted the basic problem. "The more I have studied the Bible," he said, "the less likely the Roman claims have become. . . . there is simply no firm enough biblical basis on which to erect so massive a structure as the Roman Catholic claim requires. . . . I find no attention to truth for its own sake. Reasons of expediency, above all, the preservation of authority, seem always to dominate."

He added: "The Church as an institution is turned in upon itself and more concerned with its own authority and prestige than with the Gospel message."

M. R. C. Ravadero, who became the youngest Catholic bishop in the world in 1961 and then quit last year, said: "In this atmosphere I felt suffocated. . . . I couldn't continue being a head of a Church I didn't comprehend." Have you considered quitting the church for similar reasons?

Protestant ministers also are quitting en masse, even though there are no restrictions on their marrying. To try to determine why, the United Church of Christ conducted a survey of 231 of its former ministers. The findings revealed that disillusionment and frustration with the church were the key reasons why the ministers quit.

One former minister explained: "When the church I was serving refused to declare church membership open to all (race issue), I resigned." Another stated bluntly: "As I search through the corridors of the institutional church, I find only an emotional and spiritual void."

In Canada, the former United Church minister George Doney explained what finally prompted him to quit: "I grew convinced that by staying I was perpetuating the false distinction between the clergy and the laymen." He said that in his graduating class of twenty-three ministers in 1961, five have already left the organized church and five more are ready to leave.

Thus, the spiritual void in their churches is causing religious leaders by the thousands either to step down or to leave the church entirely. Paul-Emile Cardinal Leger, Archbishop of Montreal for seventeen years, explained when he resigned his position in 1967: "Some may ask, and with reason, why I am leaving the ship at the moment when the storm is breaking. Yet in the final analysis, it is just this religious crisis which has led me to give up the position of command."

It causes one to ask: Why attend Christendom's churches when even the clergy are quitting en masse? Is there anywhere else one can go to be fed spiritually?

CLERGYMEN FIND BIBLE TRUTH

Some clergymen have begun a serious study of God's Word the Bible. In the eastern United States a Baptist minister obtained a copy of the Bible-study aid **The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life** in October 1968. He read it in two nights and recognized the ring of truth. His congregation agreed to consider the rich spiritual food contained in this Bible-study aid. They were delighted with what they learned. So, in time, the church building was sold and all families but one began studying with Jehovah's witnesses and now are attending meetings.

In December 1968, after a period of Bible study, a sixty-nine-year-old clergyman of the Nazareth Baptist Church in South Africa gave a farewell sermon, explaining that he was leaving the church because he had found the way leading to eternal life. He now shares in spreading the good news of God's kingdom with Jehovah's witnesses.

A Pentecostal minister in Uruguay showed interest in what the Bible said about the end of this system of things. After talking with one of Jehovah's witnesses, he attended their meetings. He was convinced he had found the truth, and was soon witnessing to others.

Examples like these are becoming more frequent. Many sincere clergymen and churchgoers recognize the spiritual void in the churches and are looking elsewhere for God's truth. If you really love God and his Word, is that not what you, too, should be doing?

KEEP CLOSE IN MIND

"THE CONCLUSION OF THE SYSTEM OF THINGS"

"Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?"—Matt. 24:3.

HARVESTTIME usually brings great joy as the fruitage of months of labor is reaped and the crops are gathered in to provide for the months ahead. However, there is one harvest, a figurative one, that brings, not only joy to some, but also sorrow and weeping to others. This harvest is a worldwide one to which Jesus referred when he stated: "The field is the world . . . The harvest is a conclusion of a system of things."—Matt. 13:38, 39.

[2] When you hear expressions such as "the time of the end," "the close of the age," or "the conclusion of the system of things," what is your impression of what will happen? Jesus was very emphatic that there would be an end to the present world system with all its troubles. He talked about the harvest as being a conclusion of a system of things. He told of the angels going out to separate the wicked ones from the righteous. He mentioned that the good news of the Kingdom would be preached and then the end would come. He told his disciples to continue preaching all the things he had commanded and that he would be with them until the conclusion of the system of things. But you may ask, What does it all mean? How can we identify "the time of the end," and why should it be of interest to us now?—Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20.

1, 2. (a) What harvest brings both joy and sorrow? (b) What did Jesus say about "the time of the end"?

[3] It is hard for many to imagine any marked change in the present system of things on earth. Yet this is just what Jesus spoke about. He told his disciples to pray for God's kingdom to come, for His will to be done on earth. For this kingdom to rule with power and authority will mean a great change. Thus at Daniel 2:44 it was prophetically foretold that this kingdom would crush and put an end to all other kingdoms existing world wide at the "time of the end" and that it would stand forever.

[4] We should not be surprised at what the Bible says about this. Why should we think that Jehovah God, the great Creator, would continue to let the earth be ruined and defaced, his name insulted and maligned, people saying, "Why doesn't God do something? Maybe there is no God. Maybe he is dead"? Why should the Creator of the universe continue to let Satan mislead the people by means of a multitude of false religions that teach doctrines out of harmony with his will and purpose? Rather than letting such conditions continue, the Bible shows definitely that God has set a time limit and that he has determined a conclusion to this system of things. Thereafter by his kingdom he has promised to bring a better system with

3. What changes will the end of this system bring? 4. What action will God take toward those defaming him?

untold blessings to men of faith.—Ezek. 6:10; 2 Pet. 3:9.

[5] In the meantime what do we see about us in the world? Troubles of all kinds—more and more crime and dishonesty. Many lands suffer from drought, hunger and plagues. People are afflicted by sickness, old age and death. War ravages many lands, with its resultant loss of life and property, its pitiful orphans and sorrowing widows. People are troubled by high taxes, poor housing, unemployment, inflation, and many other problems. Although Jesus foresaw such troubles, he confidently prayed to his heavenly Father and taught Christians to do the same, saying: "Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." How will this come about? Not by the conversion of the world, but rather, as the apostle Peter said, by the conclusion of this system of things and the ushering in of a "new heavens and a new earth" in which righteousness is to dwell. (Matt. 6:10; 2 Pet. 3:13) It is interesting to note that exactly the same hope was recorded by inspired penmen at Isaiah 65:17 and Revelation 21:1. All three of these Bible writers, Isaiah, Peter and John, were inspired by God; so we have God's definite promise that he is going to establish new heavens and a new earth—a new system of righteousness by means of his kingdom—and God does not lie.

PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

[6] There is good reason for rejoicing over the approach of this new system in view of the blessings and beneficial changes it will bring to mankind. As Proverbs 12:7, 28 says: "There is an overthrowing of the wicked ones and they are no more, but the very house of the righteous ones will keep standing. In the path of righteousness there is life, and the journey in its pathway means no death." Only Jehovah God, the great source of wisdom and power, can bring this about. He is described at Daniel 7:13, 14 as the Ancient of Days, the oldest one in the universe, the only one without beginning or end. To his Son Jesus he gives "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." With his rulership extending to the ends of the earth, there will be no more boundaries between lands or tribal or national divisions. All mankind will be subjects of their heavenly King. There will be no more war under the rulership of the Prince of Peace. No longer will poor living conditions foster revolutions or changes of government, as his rulership will be "indefinitely lasting," with security for the people.

[7] Among the benefits that will follow the establishment of the new system of things will be the eradication of slums and poverty. The prophecy at Isaiah 65:21, 22 tells how those living in the new system will build their own homes and plant their own gardens, not for someone else to benefit from their labors, but to enjoy themselves with their families. Perfect health will be enjoyed by all. The inhabitants of earth will no longer say, "I am sick." In fact, even death will no longer threaten faithful mankind. Those who have died will be resurrected to be given instruction in righteousness on a paradise earth with eternal life in view. There will be no food shortages in the new system. Psalm 72:16 tells us, "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth." And Psalm 67:6

5. How can we be sure that the troubles plaguing the world will soon end?

6. What prospects do we have before us, and how will they come about?

7. What are some troubles that will not exist in the new system?

adds: "The earth itself will certainly give its produce; God, our God, will bless us." —Isa. 33:24; Rev. 21:4.

[8] Even the animals will be peaceable. Imagine a calf and a lion or a cow and a bear feeding together! Parents will not have to fear if their child plays with a lion or leopard. In fact, the scripture at Isaiah 11:6-9 pictures a wolf and a lamb living together peacefully. With these blessings from God, no one will inquire any longer, "Who is Jehovah?" as did Pharaoh of old. Rather, the knowledge of Jehovah will fill the earth just as the waters cover the sea, and all people living will come to bow before him in pure worship.—Isa. 66:23; Ezek. 34:25-27.

HOW DO WE KNOW?

[9] But you may ask, How do we know these things will really come, that there actually will be a conclusion to this system of things? There are quite a number of proofs. Several events are recorded in history when earlier systems of things came to their end, those events being prophetic of our time. We also have Jesus' testimony and that of other inspired writers regarding the conclusion of this system. Bible chronology indicates the rapid approach of the end for this old system under the god of this world, Satan. Additional evidences include Bible prophecy now in course of fulfillment and the testimony of world leaders who show growing concern for the present system as they see no way out of its problems. So today the question that was asked Jesus by his disciples is especially appropriate: "Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?"—Matt. 24:3.

[10] In commenting on this, Jesus compared his second presence and the end of this system to the events occurring in Noah's day, which terminated with the flood. (Matt. 24:36-39) In those days the people were eating, drinking and marrying, oblivious to Noah's warning, until the flood swept them all away. Jesus commented: "So the presence of the Son of man will be." By this parallel Jesus indicated an end of the present system of things that began after the flood when wickedness again entered the earth and that will continue until the "great tribulation" and the abyssing of Satan. Jesus warned how important it is to be alert to this time of change. He said that two men would be in the field, one would be taken along and the other abandoned. So Jesus advised: "Prove yourselves ready, because at an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming."—Matt. 24:44.

[11] However, since Noah and his family lived through the cataclysmic end of that early system of things, there is hope to survive the end of this system also. Jehovah set a time limit for the end of the wicked system that prevailed before the Flood, but he also made provision for the protection of those serving him by the construction of an ark. Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah. He raised his sons in righteousness separate from the violence around them, and as a result they were spared with their wives to live through the end of that system.

[12] In order to survive the end of this system of things in our day we must keep Jesus' words of warning in mind and follow the faithful example of Noah. He served as a preacher of righteousness to his generation, and that is what Jehovah's people today must do. (2 Pet. 2:5) We must enter into the Christian system of things, which was pictured by the ark.

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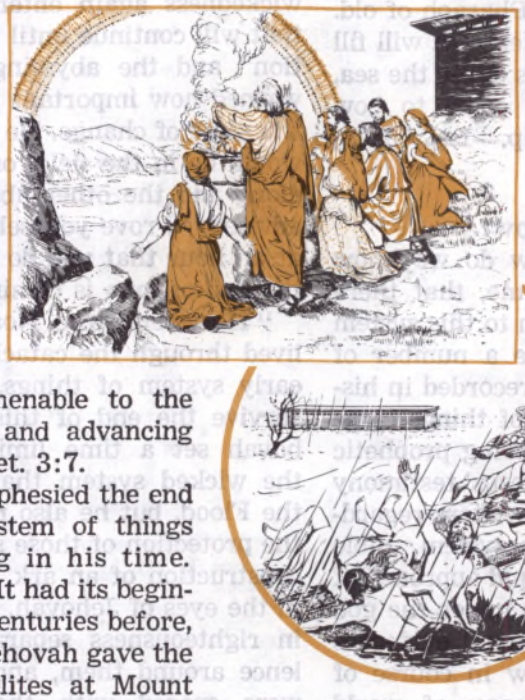
8. How will the knowledge of Jehovah affect all creation?
9. What evidences do we have of a coming change?
10. What comparison and warning did Jesus give regarding his second presence?
11. What hope does the example of Noah give us?
12. What is the modern-day "ark," and how can we hope to enter it?

This Christian system is being built by the Greater Noah, Christ Jesus, and has replaced the Mosaic system of things that ended legally when Jesus applied the value of his death on the torture stake. (Col. 2:14) This Christian system includes the pure worship of Jehovah, following the high standards of Christian conduct set forth by Jesus, such as being faithful to one wife and showing the fruits of God's spirit. It means cooperating in the building up of this Christian system just as Noah's sons helped in building the ark. No one can expect to be preserved through the end of this system unless he shows himself to be amenable to the Christian system and advancing its interests.—2 Pet. 3:7.



To survive the end of this system we must follow Noah's example. We must enter into what is pictured by the ark—the Christian system of things

[13] Jesus also prophesied the end of the Jewish system of things that was existing in his time. (Matt. 23:37, 38) It had its beginning over fifteen centuries before, at the time that Jehovah gave the Law to the Israelites at Mount Sinai. The Jewish system included the Law Covenant with its priesthood, sacrifices, tabernacle or temple worship and festivals, as well as a national system involving a human king. It came to its legal end in 33 C.E. when the establishment of the new covenant made the old obsolete. (Heb. 8:13) However, as history shows, the various priestly and sacrificial arrangements under the Law Covenant continued to be practiced by Israel until 70 C.E., when the Romans finally captured and destroyed Jerusalem.

[14] This matter is of particular interest to us because back there some Jews survived the end of a system of things as Christians. They had recognized the legal end of that system of things under the Law and that a new arrangement or system had been made possible by the death, resurrection and ascension to heaven of Jesus Christ. They appreciated that they had a new mediator, a new covenant and a new relationship with God as spiritual sons. They heeded Jesus' warning that when they saw Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies they should flee to the mountains. (Luke 21:20-22) So when the Romans withdrew after initially surrounding the city in 66 C.E., those who put faith in Jesus' words, and who recognized that the Christian system was in effect even though the Jewish was still operating outwardly, did leave Jerusalem and stayed out, showing faith and perseverance until Jerusalem was razed in the terrible slaughter of the year 70 C.E.

[15] Their flight to the mountains and re-

13. How did a system of things end in the first century?

14, 15. How did some escape the destruction of Jerusalem, and what meaning does that have for us?

maining at Pella in Peraea until Jesus' prophecy was fulfilled can be likened to the flight to safety of dedicated, spirit-begotten Christians from this present system of things with its politics and false religions to the place of protection that Jehovah has provided. It is in his spiritual system of things under the direction of Christ that Jehovah directs and protects his dedicated servants in the short remaining time before the old system is finally destroyed.

"TIME OF THE END" IN PROPHECY

[16] Just as Jesus' prophetic words proved true regarding Jerusalem, we can be sure his prophecy regarding the "conclusion of the system of things" would also be true, since these words "were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived." (1 Cor. 10:11) So consider now how Jesus' answer to the apostles' question about the sign of his presence helps us to identify with surety the generation marking the end of this system. To emphasize its importance, various features of the sign were recorded in the Bible at Matthew chapters 24 and 25, Mark 13, Luke 21, 2 Timothy 3 and Revelation 6. What did Jesus and his apostles tell us to look for? They mentioned one generation in particular during which there would be an increase of lawlessness with distress of nations, world war, earthquakes and pestilence. Jesus foretold the intensive preaching of the good news of God's kingdom coupled with hatred against those preaching it, that the love of many for God would cool off and that false prophets would arise. He warned of the establishment of something disgusting in God's sight that would cause desolation. He emphasized that there would be a time of trouble greater than any other from the beginning of the world until that time and than ever would occur thereafter. —Matt. 24:6-21.

[17] Despite all this, Jesus foresaw that God would have on the earth a "faithful and discreet slave" class serving as his channel of communication in providing spiritual food to his servants as they had need of it, and he also foresaw that there would be a gathering of the chosen ones in a great harvest work. Even from heaven there would be unusual displays. In addition, Paul spoke of the "last days" as "critical times hard to deal with," and warned that people would come to lack natural affection, showing more love for money, pleasure and personal interests than for God. He saw that they would be lacking in self-control, not open to any agreement, and that this would be reflected in disobedience of children to parents. But all these conditions as foretold in the Scriptures could not stop the work that God assigned to be done—the warning of the people so that some might escape destruction with this system and live right through to enjoy the blessings of the new system of righteousness. Jesus likened his work then to separating sheep from goats.

[18] Have we been seeing the fulfillment of these prophecies? The facts since 1914 C.E. indicate that we have. As Jesus foretold, international war reached peaks never before experienced so that historians labeled the conflicts World Wars I and II. (Rev. 6:4) However, the wars of this generation continue, almost without letup. *Time* magazine listed forty wars just from 1945 to 1965.

[19] Not only has unprecedented destructiveness been witnessed on an international scale, but it has also reached to the neighborhood scene as people have turned

16. What are some of the Scriptural signs marking the "time of the end"?

17. What are some of the evidences we see fulfilled in our time?

18, 19. Is there evidence that Revelation 6:4 is having fulfillment? Explain.

overnight against their neighbors, looting, burning and killing. In Indonesia it was estimated that over 400,000 were killed in the sanguinary 1966 purge of communists. Racial violence and deaths have taken their toll in countries as far apart as the United States and Mauritius. Indeed, with rioting and bloodshed throughout the earth we are reminded how close we are to the fulfillment of the words of Zechariah 14:13 (*AV*) that the hand of every man would be raised against his neighbor. —Ezek. 38:21.

[20] The black horse of Revelation 6:5 with a man holding a pair of scales as its rider can be seen more and more throughout the world as a result of the food shortages Jesus foretold. No longer is it just a matter of famine following war, but as *Science News* said, "Some experts say the Great World Famine has already begun." Mankind is currently doubling in population every thirty-five years. Already it has been estimated that at least three million people die each year from lack of protein foods. Dr. Ewell, an expert on food production, estimated that within ten to fifteen years there will be mass starvation.

[21] *Time* magazine reported that in the previous five years before its issue the world's population had increased twice as fast as its food production. It has been calculated that it took from the beginning of human history until the year 1800 for the population of the earth to reach one billion, 130 years more to reach 2 billion and just 36 years later the population had jumped to 3.28 billion. In recent years the United States has been feeding one out of twenty persons in Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia. It has been reported that India devoured a quarter of the United States' wheat crop in 1966 as compared to a fifth the year before and an eighth five years earlier. No wonder the book *Famine—1975!* reports there will be "a famine that will happen no matter what anyone does." Certainly a new system of things is needed to overcome the specter of mass starvation as the "black horse" continues its famine-striking course.

[22] To add to the troubles, earthquakes continue to rock the earth as Jesus forecast for this generation. Among the most deadly were the 1920 China quake when 180,000 lost their lives, followed by the 1923 Tokyo killer that took the lives of 143,000. Two thousand five hundred died in Turkey from earthquakes in 1966, and official statistics put the number dead in that country from quakes during the twentieth century at 40,000. In 1967 Colombia had its worst quake ever, with 75 dead and 300 injured; in France 1,100 were made homeless by an earthquake; in Indonesia 41 died, 370 were injured and 2,000 homes were destroyed. Sicily, Greece and Iran experienced quakes in the opening months of 1968. It has been reported that the severity and deadliness of earthquakes have increased markedly since the "time of the end" commenced for this old system in 1914. In fact, over 900,000 persons have died from earthquakes in this century, including close to 1,250 in the United States.

[23] What of the other evidences the Scriptures foretold: the increase of lawlessness, lack of natural affection and self-control? What do the facts show in recent years? United States FBI Director Hoover reported: "Crime during the 1960's outstripped our population growth by over 11 to 1." All categories of crime showed a marked increase, with rape, aggravated assault and robbery heading the list. No wonder our time has been referred to as

20, 21. What evidence is there of food shortages as foretold in Revelation 6:5?

22. To what extent have earthquakes affected this generation?

23. What evidence is there of an "increase of lawlessness"?

an "era of anarchy." Former U.S. Secretary of Defense R. S. McNamara commented, "In the last eight years alone there have been no less than 164 internationally significant outbreaks of violence." Truly no place on earth is safe from this "increase of lawlessness."

[24] Daily we read in the papers of prostitution, divorce, abortions, fornication, homosexuality. Increasing numbers of women are turning to abortions as the remedy for unwanted children, contrary to God's Word. A report from India estimates that in one year 180,000 women died of home-attempted abortions. A recent report from Japan shows that registered abortions average 3,000 daily. In the first nine months of 1967, 70,000 women in Czechoslovakia requested abortions. But did not the Scriptures foretell that particularly in this generation there would be a lack of self-control as people show themselves to be lovers of pleasure, without love of goodness and lacking in natural affection?

[25] The facts show that conditions have never before been so critical. So do not let yourself be found among those who ridicule the significance of the events of our time which are in such exact fulfillment of Bible prophecy. The very fact that so many are losing faith in God and in what the Scriptures say about the end of this system and the establishment of Jehovah's righteous new system only confirms the prophecy of Peter that "in the last days there will come ridiculers with their ridicule, . . . saying: 'Where is this promised presence of his?' " Despite such ridicule the facts indicate that this is the generation that will see the end of this system of things and the establishment of an entirely new earthly system under Jehovah's kingdom of righteousness.—2 Pet. 3:3, 4.

[26] Knowing the drastic changes in store for mankind, now is the time to show ourselves alert and awake to what is taking place. It is the time for us to share in the ingathering work before it is completed, so that we will be among the happy ones for whom "the conclusion of the system of things" brings, not weeping, but joy as survivors into Jehovah's new earth of righteousness.—Rom. 13:11.

24. What other indications do we have that we are living at "the conclusion of the system of things"?
25, 26. What is the attitude of many toward Bible prophecy, but what is the wise course to follow? Why?

An Ingathering AFFECTING ALL MANKIND

WITH alarming reports of riots, strikes, demonstrations, assassinations, guerrilla activity and financial unrest in all parts of the world, many people wonder what it all means. Like the rising bubbles of a boiling trough or fermenting dough, no one knows where the next outbreak is coming. It is highly significant that Bible chronology and prophecy both identify this generation as a climactic one

1. Why are many people alarmed, but what should make us happy?

for mankind, exactly the point that has been made in recent years by an increasing number of historians, scientists and men of world prominence. Not to be overlooked in a consideration of the significance of our times is Jesus' parable of a great harvest that would mark the end of the present structure of society. (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43) Before dismissing this account as just a story, something of no consequence to us, note Jesus' comment: "Where anyone hears the word of the kingdom but does not get the sense of it, the wicked one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart." Lest this happen to you, first examine the account to see if the facts do fit in our time. By so doing you may be found among those of whom Jesus said: "Happy are your eyes because they behold, and your ears because they hear."—Matt. 13:19, 16.

[2] Jesus' explanation of this parable to his disciples is found starting at Matthew 13:37: "The sower of the fine seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; as for the fine seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; but the weeds are the sons of the wicked one, and the enemy that sowed them is the Devil. The harvest is a conclusion of a system of things, and the reapers are angels. Therefore, just as the weeds are collected and burned with fire, so it will be in the conclusion of the system of things. The Son of man will send forth his angels, and they will collect out from his kingdom all things that cause stumbling and persons who are doing lawlessness, and they will pitch them into the fiery furnace. . . . At that time the righteous ones will shine as brightly as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let him that has ears listen."

[3] Over 1900 years ago Jesus planted good seed in the world of mankind when he established the Christian congregation. But soon Satan was active in sowing imitation, weedlike Christians in among the good seed. These weeds were permitted to grow along with the good seed during the intervening centuries until the time of harvest began in 1919 C.E. after Jesus' sign of the "last days" had commenced fulfillment in 1914. Since then under angelic oversight a separating work has been done. (Matt. 24:31) The distinction between true and false Christians has become clearly discernible as the angels have acted to gather out "all things that cause stumbling and persons who are doing lawlessness." (Matt. 13:41) Just as a harvest is short in comparison with the growing period, so the time of harvest and separation will be short until the "great tribulation" brings an end to the last ones of the crop of weedlike counterfeit Christians that have grown up during the centuries since the death of the apostles.

[4] If you would like to see the close of this system of things with the end of riots, crime, fighting and misery, then consider further the evidences that we are living during the time of fulfillment of this worldwide harvest which presages the end of this system of things. Note how Christ's anointed followers have already been shining "as brightly as the sun" in letting men know of the blessings that God's kingdom of righteousness will bring to all "men of good will" in marked contrast to the warring, discriminatory, crime-marked course of those claiming to be Christian, but who were well pictured as weeds originating with the enemy Satan. Note too the parallels between our time and events surrounding the end of the pre-Deluge system of things. By doing so we will not be among those wondering what is going to happen,

2. What events did Jesus mention in connection with the conclusion of this system of things?
3. What is the meaning of Jesus' harvest parable?
4. What contrast is there between true Christians and the false?

but we will be rejoicing at knowing the hope God holds out.

A CRITICAL TIME

[5] Everyone would like to know how much longer the present system will continue and when God's purpose will be accomplished on earth in the same full way as in heaven. Jesus answered that "this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth . . . and then the end will come." Here in the Greek Bible text he used the word *telos* or "end" to distinguish what he meant from the *syntéleia* or "conclusion" of the system of things, the harvest period, in which we now live. (Compare Matthew 24:3, 6, *Diaglott*.) How close we may exactly be to the end of the present divisive system of things cannot be predicted, as Jesus reported that even he did not know the day or the hour at the time of his earthly ministry. (Matt. 24:36) However, Bible chronology which indicates that Adam was created in the fall of the year 4026 B.C.E. would bring us down to the year 1975 C.E. as the date marking 6,000 years of human history with yet 1,000 years to come for Christ's Kingdom rule. So whatever the date for the end of this system, it is clear that the time left is reduced, with only approximately six years left until the end of 6,000 years of human history. (1 Cor. 7:29) This corroborates the understanding of Jesus' words that the generation alive in 1914 with the outbreak of World War I would not pass away until the end comes. Only a short time, then, remains for persons who love righteousness to show God that they want to be in his "ark" of protection and live to see the blessings of the new system of things. —Matt. 24:34-42.

5. (a) How did Jesus distinguish between the "conclusion" of the system of things and the "end" (*telos*)? (b) What does an understanding of Bible chronology indicate?

[6] World observers have also noted the ominous trends evident throughout the world. In fact *Time* magazine reported Jacques Piccard as saying that he was "seriously doubtful" whether mankind would last out the century, as modern technology "is little else than a widespread suicidal pollution affecting the air we breathe, the water we drink and the land we till." Similarly Professor Barry Commoner of Washington University argued that before long the earth will not be fit for habitation. He said we are nearing "a crisis which may destroy its suitability as a place for human society." Early in this generation historian H. G. Wells stated: "The urgent need for a great creative effort has become apparent in the affairs of mankind . . . It is manifest that unless some unity of purpose can be achieved in the world, unless the ever more violent and disastrous incidence of war can be averted, . . . the history of humanity must presently culminate in some sort of disaster, repeating and exaggerating the disaster of the Great War, producing chaotic social conditions, and going on thereafter in a degenerative process towards extinction." As James Reston commented in the New York *Times* of June 11, 1967: "This is even more appropriate today than when Wells wrote these prophetic words at the end of the First World War."

CHRISTIAN VIEWPOINT

[7] However, Christians do not accept the pessimistic view as expressed by Mr. Wells that the human family is headed for extinction. They are realistic and understand the critical meaning of the world events taking place in recent years; yet they have an assured hope for the future. They recall Jesus' words: "But as these

6. What do some commentators say about present world conditions?
7. How is the Christian view different, and what did Jesus say we should do?

things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near. But pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come in upon all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth. Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man."—Luke 21:28, 34-36.

8 They recognize that the basis for Christian hope and for all life in Jehovah's new system is Christ's ransom sacrifice. As Paul wrote the congregations in Galatia, "[Jesus] gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from the present wicked system of things according to the will of our God and Father." (Gal. 1:4) With the old system of which Satan is the god on its way out, and the new system under Christ's rulership coming in, it is imperative for us to turn aside from the course leading to destruction. As Paul wrote at Ephesians 2:2-7: "You at one time walked according to the system of things of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit that now operates in the sons of disobedience. Yes, among them we all at one time conducted ourselves in harmony with the desires of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and the thoughts, and we were naturally children of wrath even as the rest. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us, made us alive together with the Christ, even when we were dead in trespasses—by undeserved kindness you have been saved—and he raised us up together and seated us together in the heavenly places in union with Christ Jesus, that in the coming systems of things there might be demonstrated the surpassing riches of his undeserved kindness in his graciousness toward us in union with Christ Jesus."

9 So whether your hope is to be of the "little flock" united with Christ in heavenly places or of the "other sheep" who will enjoy life here on earth, by Jehovah's undeserved kindness you can look forward to the wonderful blessings to come in these coming systems of things. (Luke 12:32; John 10:16) Living now with the new system in view will not be easy. The same enemy, Satan, who has sown the troublesome, deceptive crop of weeds among the Christian congregation, will cause you trouble too. You may face family opposition or persecution as you share in reflecting the bright truth that Jehovah is making known through his organization. But many have overcome such pressures, even leaving home and family to preach the good news in foreign places before the end comes. There they have been blessed with hundreds of spiritual brothers and sisters, mothers and children, even homes, through fellowship with those of like faith in the New World society, with the prospect of everlasting life in the new system of things.—Mark 10:29, 30.

10 As to the fate in store for those who prefer the friendship of the world to the friendship of God, remember that "God . . . did not hold back from punishing an ancient world, but kept Noah, a preacher of righteousness, safe with seven others when he brought a deluge upon a world of ungodly people." (2 Pet. 2:4, 5) At that time all mankind who had not accepted Jehovah's arrangement for salvation were destroyed. Now, as Jesus foretold, conditions are as in Noah's day, and this system with all its supporters will

8. (a) What changes are necessary for those accepting God's Word? (b) How is Jehovah's undeserved kindness demonstrated?

9. Why is it not easy to serve God faithfully, but what prospects do those have who do so?

10. How does the "great tribulation" affect all mankind?

soon be destroyed in the "great tribulation," but once again those serving God with spirit and truth will survive. So now is the time for us to take action to ensure survival.—Rom. 10:13.

PROPHETIC PARALLELS

[11] As in Noah's time, so in Jesus' day, Jehovah not only had a warning given of coming destruction but also prepared those serving him for what was to follow. In Noah's time the ark was under construction. In Jesus' day a Christian system of things was in course of establishment. There was an overlapping of the Christian and Jewish arrangements. The temple was still standing in Jerusalem and the priests were still offering sacrifices, even after the new covenant had been established. Similarly now, although we are living in the midst of the old system of things under Satan's control, still those of Christ's "other sheep" who learn the truth come under the Christian system of things, which will serve as an ark of protection for them through the war of Armageddon. Then after Armageddon they will experience the benefits of the "coming systems of things." (Eph. 2:7; Mark 10:30) The present Christian system will continue until the last member of Christ's spiritual body completes his earthly course sometime after Armageddon. By that time Satan's present wicked system of things will have been replaced by Jehovah's new system, his new heavens and new earth in which righteousness will dwell. (Eph. 1:10) Though dedicated servants of Jehovah live in the last days of a system under Satan's control, they can enjoy the benefits of the Christian system of things that is still in operation. (Heb. 1:2) Our consciences are no longer burdened with guilt; we have a new spiritual temple with Jesus Christ as the foundation cornerstone, the benefits of his perfect sacrifice which actually cleanses away sins, a new law inscribed on our hearts, a new mediator, a new covenant and many other blessings in a spiritual way now. And these things are like a small-scale view of the blessings yet to come.

11. (a) How is the situation today parallel to that in Jesus' time? (b) What blessings can Christians now enjoy?

EDUCATION FOR LIFE

[12] Since 1935 C.E. the anointed wheat-like "sons [heirs] of the kingdom," who have been harvested, have been gathering in a "great crowd" of "other sheep." Thousands are being trained and educated for life in the earthly new system. In 1969 Jehovah's witnesses reported a peak of 1,336,112 persons actively engaged in preaching the good news of God's kingdom in response to the angelic announcement of Revelation 14:6, 7. Since Jesus foretold that this witness work would be accomplished in all the inhabited earth before the end would come, it is no surprise that it was carried on in 203 countries world wide and that 239,769,076 hours were devoted to this life-giving Christian ministry. There were 1,097,237 Bible studies regularly conducted with interested persons without cost. The prospects for growth in the work and for those associated with the New World society are seen by the excellent Memorial attendance of 2,719,860 as the anointed "righteous ones" continue to "shine as brightly as the sun" and let the light of truth beam forth. With a view to the continued expansion of the work this side of the "great tribulation" the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society has just purchased a very large factory building in Brooklyn, and additional housing space for the headquarters' staff now totaling 1,300 dedicated persons. New branch homes have just

12. What great work is now being accomplished, and why?

been built in Cameroun, Cyprus, Fiji and Puerto Rico as well as in Barbados, Brazil and Dahomey. So even though we are living in the "time of the end" for this old system, Jehovah's organization is moving ahead rapidly as long as the way is open to do so.

13 However, this work is not accomplished without opposition, for Satan knows that the time remaining for this old system is very short. (Rev. 12: 12, 17) In Cuba, Malawi, Zambia, Algeria, the United Arab Republic, and other places, officials have interfered with Jehovah's witnesses' attending Christian meetings. It is not uncommon to have Bible literature confiscated and Jehovah's witnesses beaten. In recent times many efforts have been made to coerce Christians to sign statements that they will renounce their faith, stop meeting together and agree to quit the Kingdom ministry. They know that such opposition was foretold and that Jehovah has permitted it for a test. (Matt. 24:9) However, they are determined to endure faithfully to the end to gain the crown of life.—Rev. 2:10.

14 In the meantime the fine educational work sponsored by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society is accomplishing its purpose. The Kingdom message is being preached throughout the earth. Thousands have been taught to read in congregational literacy schools, the understanding of the Scriptures is being made clear through home Bible studies, and captives are being freed from Babylonish religious captivity.

13. (a) What kind of opposition have Jehovah's witnesses faced? (b) What is their attitude toward this?
14, 15. (a) What beneficial effects are accomplished by the ministry? (b) What does Isaiah say about learning of righteousness?

THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Baptism of Those Who Are Disciples.**
- **Helping Children to Get Acquainted with God.**
- **Avoiding the Snare of Homosexuality.**

Family unity is being promoted and racial and tribal enmities are overcome. Thousands are gaining experience as teachers and servants. This is especially important now because in the new system the educational work of Jehovah's organization will gain momentum. That future course of instruction is mentioned briefly by Isaiah: "Righteousness is what the inhabitants of the productive land will certainly learn." (Isa. 26: 9) Of course, the response of the resurrected ones to this training in righteousness will vary.

15 Those who fail to recognize the sovereignty of Jehovah and his right as ruler, his eminence, will finally be cut off, sharing a fate similar to that of the weedlike element of Jesus' harvest parable. Righteousness will prevail in the new system, and only those who love life under righteous conditions will be permitted to continue enjoying it.

NEED FOR ACTION NOW

16 The time is very short now for further preaching and teaching of God's kingdom among the political nations. So it is important for us now to show that we are no part of the present system of things but that we are living for the new system and the blessings it will bring. If we want to live through this "time of the end" on the nations to enjoy Jehovah's righteous new system under Christ the King, then there is no time to be lost. Remember that not only the Bible but also world leaders have attested to the urgency of the times in which we live. The few remaining years of this generation do not

16. Why is there an urgency in serving Jehovah now, and what do we need to do?

give much time during which we can show Jehovah we truly want to be pleasing to him so that we will be privileged to enjoy life at his hand in the new system of *things*. We need to schedule our affairs to show him what really is first in our lives. We need to study his Word to keep our faith strong, to get to the Kingdom Hall to enjoy the meetings that have been prepared by the "faithful and discreet slave" class, and to share the truth with others, especially now as we "behold the day drawing near." Are you willing to do this? —Heb. 10:25.

17 Jehovah knows those who by their course of action show they belong to him, those that he will protect through the climactic end of this "time of the end" when the gathering out of all weedlike Christians will be irrevocably finished. No simple list of requirements to ensure salvation is recorded in the Scriptures, but the sincere student of the Bible knows what Jehovah requires of him and can follow the perfect example that Jesus set out during his life of dedication to his heavenly Father. A "public declaration" of the truth is one requisite for those who have the hope of salvation. (Rom. 10:10) Even though this brings hatred from those who are lovers of the pleasures of this old system more than lovers of God, we need not be surprised, because we know that Jesus warned his servants that they would be "objects of hatred by all people on account of my name; but he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved." —Matt. 10:22.

18 So now is the time to follow the good counsel of Zephaniah 2:2, 3: "Before there comes upon you people the burning anger of Jehovah, before there comes upon you the day of Jehovah's anger, seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth . . . Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger." There is no obligation on God's part; everything depends on his mercy. So if we make a real effort to seek Jehovah and to follow his Word and serve him so as to deserve his mercy, then probably, by Jehovah's undeserved kindness, we will be hid with those who live through the end of this system to enjoy all the blessings that men of faith will enjoy on the cleansed earth in the post-Armageddon system.

19 So when we see men today gathering in their crops at the time of harvest, we should be reminded of Jesus' illustration and realize that we are living in a time of ingathering, a time the Scriptures speak of as "the time of the end," "the conclusion of the system of things." However, we are thankful that this does not portend the end of all material things, but that we have a living hope, thanks to Jehovah's undeserved kindness; because at the end of this present wicked system of things Jehovah's incoming new order of righteousness will be firmly established with blessings for all who live to see it.

17. How can we show Jehovah that we are no part of the present system, but what should we expect as a result?

18. Why is seeking Jehovah's approval so important now?

19. Of what should the time of ingathering remind us?

'NOT GIVING HESITANTLY' in Expression of Thanks to God

JEHOVAH'S dealings with his people of ancient Israel abound with lessons for the benefit of Christians living today. They "were written for our instruction" is how the apostle Paul expressed it. (Rom. 15:4) So, in giving careful examination to the details of Bible history, we can confidently expect to gain deeper spiritual insight into God's will for his worshipers now.

For example, Jehovah called on each one to bring the firstfruits of produce to His priesthood at the central place of worship that he established. Included were the firstfruits of the womb (human and animal), the firstfruits of each harvest from the ground, yes, and even the first of the shorn wool from the flock. (Ex. 22:29, 30; 23:19; Deut. 18:4) These firstfruits were something distinct from the tithes or tenth parts that Jehovah required for the support of clean, acceptable worship.

Every male firstborn that opened the womb, among humans and animals, was to be sanctified to Jehovah. (Ex. 13:2) However, the firstborn males of humans and of those animals that were not acceptable for sacrificial use were to be redeemed by parent or owner on a minimum payment of five silver shekels, or slightly less than $2.40, United States funds. (Num. 18:15-17) The principle here indicated was later plainly expressed by God through his prophet Ezekiel: "All the souls—to me they belong."—Ezek. 18:4.

On the other hand, the firstborn bull or lamb or goat could not be so redeemed or purchased back. Their blood must be sprinkled on the altar. The blood of those animals represented the lifeblood of the man Jesus Christ, voluntarily offered as a sacrifice for sinful humankind.—Heb. 9:6-14; Rev. 7:14.

NO FIXED AMOUNT

As to the firstfruits of the ground, and the first shearings of the flock, it is noteworthy that Jehovah left it to each one to determine the quantity. The amount was left indefinite just as in the requirement to leave gleanings of their harvest for the benefit of the poor.—Lev. 19:9, 10.

Each family, each person who had a possession in the God-given land, was expected to bring or send these firstfruits as a recognition of their having received all from their God. The quantity's being left to each one's judgment introduced a test of their appreciation. Did they keep in mind that Jehovah their God had liberated them from slavery in Egypt? Did they bear in mind that he gave them a land with wells they had not dug, orchards they had not planted, everything essential for their physical well-being?

Yes, they had a generous God, one who was also concerned about their spiritual welfare, their attitude toward true worship. Referring to the offerings of the firstfruits, Jehovah cautioned them through his servant Moses: "Your full

produce and the overflow of your press you must not give hesitantly." (Ex. 22:29) It was not the amount given that was important, but rather the spirit in which the gift was presented. To be hesitant might well indicate a loss of appreciation on their part, a lack of appreciation for all the benefits conferred on them by God.

INSTRUCTION FOR US

What, then, can we glean from all of this, we who are not under the Mosaic law? There is a wealth of spiritual meaning in this matter of the firstfruits of the ground and of the womb. Does not the apostle Paul say that at his resurrection Christ Jesus became "the first fruits [to God] of those who have fallen asleep in death"?—1 Cor. 15:20.

Then, in an extension of the same thought, we learn that the twelve tribes of spiritual Israel, the anointed followers of Christ, are destined by God "to be a certain first fruits of his [redeemed] creatures." (Jas. 1:18; Rev. 14:1-4) Continuing faithful to death, these ones are raised as spirit creatures and given to God's great High Priest in the heavens, Jesus Christ, to be a priesthood under him. God's acceptance of those firstfruits is a grand guarantee that there will be a joyful harvest, a great host of humans who will eventually enjoy the blessings of everlasting life on a paradise earth. They will be earthly subjects of the heavenly rule by Christ and his 144,000 priest-kings.

Other lessons, too, may be learned from the firstfruit offerings. Is it not true that there are provisions and an organization for pure worship on earth today? Most assuredly. Through that organization come fine spiritual provisions. So it is appropriate that those who share such spiritual bounty give expression to their gratitude by means of their material things.

Notice that Jehovah lays no specific requirement on his worshipers as to these expressions of gratitude. It may be with many as it was with that impoverished widow whom Jesus observed dropping her 'two coins of very small value' into the contribution box for the temple. (Mark 12:42) Was it not her unhesitant generosity, her sincere desire to express gratitude to God that impressed Jesus?

SOMETHING MORE

Among the ancient Israelites the offering of the firstborn and of the firstfruits was a sanctifying of these representative gifts. Without that eager, unhesitant bringing of such gifts before Jehovah, how could there be an expectation of Jehovah's blessing on the subsequent family or on the harvesting of the crops?

God-fearing parents such as the parents of Samson and Samuel not only brought up their children "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah," but also gladly yielded up the firstborn son to even more direct service of Jehovah.—Eph. 6:4, *Kingdom Interlinear*.

Are Christian parents less appreciative in our time? No, for many parents are consistently bringing up all of their children to be genuine worshipers of Jehovah. They nurture in the young minds the desire to prepare themselves for a future life of devotion to God, for a career, perhaps, as full-time preachers of the good news. Is not that a wonderful way to apply the lesson of the typical firstfruits?

Today, too, Christian worshipers of Jehovah show the same unhesitating spirit in their giving of funds for the advancement of pure worship, a giving that reveals their conviction that all they have is from Jehovah and belongs to him. Here are some fitting remarks that accompanied gifts received either at the office of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society,

124 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, or one of its many branch offices around the world:

"Being up in years I cannot take this money with me when I die, and I cannot think of any better way to use it than to help publish the good news of the Kingdom."

"We experience great happiness and joy for all the things Jehovah has given us. All of us in this part of the country, though some distance from the Society's headquarters, continually appreciate the close communication with Jehovah through his congregation. We especially feel this way when we can have a share in helping expand the worldwide witness."

The Creator knows that the most appreciative, the most generous of his human creatures, are, in fact, the happiest of creatures. (Acts 20:35) So he inculcates this spirit in his children. He reminds us to keep on developing this fine quality, not by specific requirements, but leaving it to our own hearts largely. How clear this matter is made to us! Just consider these words of the inspired apostle:

"He that sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and he that sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. God, moreover, is able to make all his undeserved kindness abound toward you, that, while you always have full self-sufficiency in everything, you may have plenty for every good work. . . . In everything you are being enriched for every sort of generosity, . . . because the ministry of this public service is not only to supply abundantly the wants of the holy ones but also to be rich with many expressions of thanks to God." —2 Cor. 9:6-12.

Well-Pleasing to God by Faith with Works

What is faith?

Faith is all-important to pleasing Jehovah God. "Without faith it is impossible to please him well, for he that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." —Heb. 11:6.*

Dictionaries define faith as the mental acceptance of a proposition as true, based upon the authority of another, rather than upon one's own knowledge, reasoning or experience. But the Bible defines faith as "the assured expectation [*hypóstasis*] of things hoped for, the evident demonstration [*élegkhos*] of realities though not beheld."—Heb. 11:1.

Yes, faith is an expectation assured to such a degree that it is able to support, uphold one's confidence and to guarantee that what is hoped for will become a reality. Those with faith have proof or evidence that can be used to demonstrate or to back up, for example, their belief that a global paradise is soon to come. This evidence is so powerful that it is able to refute what seems to be the contrary. As noted in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. IV, page 352, "Substantially the words [*hypóstasis* and *élegkhos*] mean that faith gives to things future, which as yet are only hoped for, all the reality of actual present existence; and irresistibly convinces us of the reality of things unseen and brings us into their presence."

What are some of the factors that caused some 200,000 to lose faith in Jehovah in the last twenty years?

Among these persons were some rather newly acquainted with God's truth. These may have made a hasty dedication, based on a rather limited amount of knowledge, and then for various reasons fell away, even as Jesus showed in his parable of the sower.—Matt. 13:3-9, 18-23.

* For details see *The Watchtower*, January 15, September 1, 1969.

How can we strengthen our faith?

True faith must be built upon a knowledge of the Creator. Some of this knowledge is provided by his visible creation. (Rom. 1:20) But a far more solid and complete foundation for our faith is found in the inspired Word of Jehovah God. By studying it with the helps he has provided through his earthly organization, we can strengthen our faith in spite of the lack of faith and the prevalence of wickedness in the world.—Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 3:15-17.

To strengthen our faith we must also continue to associate with God's people who today are truly exercising faith by bringing the good news of God's kingdom to others. It is by such association that we have our faith, as well as our love and zeal, strengthened.

Preaching the good news and working at making disciples will also strengthen our faith, for by working at strengthening the faith of others we strengthen our own faith. Here also the proverb applies: "The generous soul will itself be made fat."—Prov. 11:25.

What must accompany our faith for us to be well-pleasing to Jehovah God?

To be well-pleasing to Jehovah God we must have not only faith but also determination, resoluteness. We must be persistent against the opposition or attempts on the part of others to dissuade or discourage us in our preaching the good news of God's kingdom and in making disciples. We must be fully resolved and determined that, come what may, we will continue to serve Jehovah faithfully.

HOLINESS Is Required by Jehovah

IS HOLINESS too much for God to expect from his servants? Is it possible for ordinary humans like ourselves to achieve holiness and then maintain that quality? If so, is it worth the effort? Who really are holy? Just what is holiness?

The English words "holy" and "holiness" are renderings of words drawn from a Hebrew root verb having the meaning, in a physical sense, *"to be bright, to be new* or *fresh, untarnished* or *clean."* In the Bible, however, these words are used mainly in a spiritual or moral sense. Accordingly, holiness carries the thought of sacredness, or moral and spiritual cleanness. It denotes also separation or sanctification to God, a state of being set aside to the service of God.

"HOLINESS BELONGS TO JEHOVAH"

Jehovah is the "Most Holy One," superior to all others in holiness. (Prov. 30:3) Jesus Christ acknowledged that the quality of holiness belongs to Jehovah, addressing him as "Holy Father." (John 17:11) Also, those in the heavens are shown declaring: "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of armies," attributing to him holiness, cleanness in the superlative degree.—Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8.

In ancient times the Israelites were frequently reminded that Jehovah is holy.

(Lev. 11:44; 19:2) For example, they were able to observe the words "Holiness belongs to Jehovah" that were engraved on the shining gold plate on the high priest's turban. This plate was called "the holy sign of dedication," showing that the high priest was set apart to a service of special holiness.—Ex. 28:36; 29:6.

That God's name Jehovah is sacred, and is to be held as holy and set apart from all defilement, the Israelites had forcefully impressed upon them. On one occasion the son of the Israelite woman Shelomith was heard calling down evil on God's name, thus abusing it. What penalty would be applied for this offense?

God himself instructed Moses on the matter: "In case any man calls down evil upon his God, he must then answer for his sin. So the abuser of Jehovah's name should be put to death without fail. The entire assembly should without fail pelt him with stones. The alien resident the same as the native should be put to death for his abusing the Name."—Lev. 24: 10-16.

Yes, disrespect for the sacred name of God merited the punishment of death. We are wise, therefore, to keep in mind the words of the psalmist, who said regarding Jehovah: "His name is holy and fear-inspiring." (Ps. 111:9) In appreciation for this fact, Jesus Christ, when teaching his disciples to pray to God, gave as the first petition: "Hallowed [Held holy] be thy name," or, as another translation says, "Let your name be sanctified." In keeping with this prayer, do you treat God and his name with the respect and reverence that they deserve?—Matt. 6:9, *AV, NW.*

HOLY THINGS

Since Jehovah God is the basis for all holiness, any thing or object that is holy becomes so because of its relationship to him and his worship. For example, Jehovah's active force or spirit is subject to his control and always accomplishes his purposes. It is pure, sacred and set apart for God's good use. Therefore it is called "holy spirit" and "the spirit of holiness." —Ps. 51:11; Rom. 1:4.

Just think of the privilege we have of receiving this holy force in our lives! This is possible, for Jesus said: "The Father in heaven [will] give holy spirit to those asking him!" Do you actually ask God for his holy spirit? We are invited to do so. —Luke 11:13.

In addition, since the Bible was written under the direction of God's spirit, it also is holy. It is called "the holy Scriptures," or "holy writings." (Rom. 1:2; 2 Tim. 3: 15) Do you treat the Bible as such? When you read it, do you consider what is said with the reverence and respect due God's "holy writings"?

Other things, too, by reason of their sanctification for Jehovah's service have been constituted holy. For example, under God's Law to the nation of Israel the first-born male of cattle, sheep or goats were counted as holy to Jehovah. (Num. 18: 17-19) Likewise the altar of sacrifice, the anointing oil, the special incense, the showbread and other things closely connected with God's worship were made holy by Jehovah's decree.—Ex. 29:37; 30:25, 35, 37; 1 Sam. 21:4.

This did not mean that these things had holiness of themselves, to be used as a charm or fetish. For example, one of the primary holy objects, the ark of the covenant, proved to be no charm when Eli's two wicked sons carried it into battle against the Philistines.—1 Sam. 4:3-11.

All things holy to Jehovah were sacred and could not be considered lightly by his Israelite servants, or used in a common or profane way. An example is the law regarding the tithe. If a man set aside the tithe, say, of his wheat crop, and then

he or one of his household unintentionally took some of it for home use, such as cooking, such a one was guilty of violating God's law respecting holy things. Was this a matter of little consequence, something that could be simply overlooked?

No, not at all. God's Law required that he make compensation to the sanctuary of an equal amount plus 20 percent, besides offering up a sound ram of the flock as a sacrifice. Thus great respect was engendered for the holy things belonging to Jehovah. (Lev. 5:14-16) Should not this impress upon us today the importance of treating with proper respect things that are used in connection with Jehovah's service?

JESUS AND CHRISTIAN "HOLY ONES"

By means of their relationship with him, Jehovah's heavenly angels are holy. (Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26) The chief one among these heavenly ones, however, is in a special sense God's Holy One. His holiness came from his Father when Jehovah created him as his only-begotten Son. (John 1:1, 14) Later, when announcing to Mary this one's coming birth as a human and that his name should be called "Jesus," the angel Gabriel also told Mary: "What is born will be called holy."—Luke 1:31, 35.

Not only was Jesus Christ holy while in heaven, but throughout his earthly life he maintained his holiness, even to a sacrificial death. (Acts 3:14; Heb. 7:26) Thus God made it possible for others on earth to attain holiness, to achieve a righteous standing with God such as Jesus held. The Bible speaks of ones formerly defiled by wicked works as achieving holiness, saying:

"Indeed, you who were once alienated and enemies because your minds were on the works that were wicked, he now has again reconciled by means of that one's fleshly body through his death, *in order to present you holy and unblemished and open to no accusation* before him, provided, of course, that you continue in the faith, established on the foundation and steadfast and not being shifted away from the hope of that good news which you heard."—Col. 1:21-23.

Holiness, therefore, does not belong to them through their own merit, but comes to them through Jesus Christ. (Rom. 3:23-26) They receive holiness as a result of their faith in the ransom sacrifice of Christ. (Phil. 3:9; 1 John 1:7) God applies the merit of Jesus' sacrifice in their behalf immediately, forgiving them all their sins, and, by judicial act on his part, imputes human perfection to them. They become Jehovah's anointed ones, the spiritual brothers of Jesus Christ, and are called "holy ones" or "saints."—Rom. 15:26; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 4:21; compare these verses in the *King James* or *Authorized Version.*

From the many Scriptural references to living members of the congregation as "holy ones" or "saints" it becomes clear that a person is not made a "holy one" or "saint" by men or by an organization. Neither does such a one have to wait until after death to be made a "saint." He is a "holy one" by virtue of God's calling of him to joint-heirship with Christ. He is holy in the eyes of God while he is on earth, with the hope of heavenly life in the spirit realm wherein dwell Jehovah God and his Son, along with the holy angels.—1 Pet. 1:3, 4.

HOLINESS OF OTHER FAITHFUL ONES

Other persons in the Bible are also spoken of as being holy. In pre-Christian times the entire nation of Israel was counted as holy because of God's choosing and sanctifying them, bringing them exclusively into covenant relationship as a special

property. (Ex. 19:5, 6) Thus the apostle Peter speaks about "the holy women who were hoping in God." (1 Pet. 3:5) These persons were counted holy due to being numbered among God's holy witnesses.

Similarly, there are a "great crowd" of faithful Christians today who are not included among those 144,000 "holy ones" who receive the "holy calling" to heavenly life. (2 Tim. 1:9) Nevertheless, this "great crowd," who have prospects of eternal life under the rule of God's heavenly kingdom, are pictured as having "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:3, 4, 9-15) This represents for them a standing before God, a counting to them of righteousness, that will tide them safely through the fast-approaching destruction of this wicked system of things.

However, unlike those with the heavenly hope, the "great crowd" do not have human perfection imputed to them and so are not reckoned in the Scriptures as "holy ones." Rather, they look forward eventually to attaining actual human perfection and holiness.

MAINTAINING HOLINESS

Both the anointed "holy ones" and the "great crowd" who receive a standing before God need to maintain a course of purity and cleanness before God. They need to "continue in the faith, established on the foundation and steadfast and not being shifted away from the hope of that good news" which they accepted. (Col. 1:23) This requires on their part continued regular study of God's Word of truth and the application of it to their lives. (1 Pet. 1:22) And since they are still imperfect and inclined toward wrongdoing, it also requires their responding to Jehovah's discipline.

The part that discipline plays in maintaining holiness the apostle Paul explains, saying: "We used to have fathers who were of our flesh to discipline us, and we used to give them respect. Shall we not much more subject ourselves to the Father of our spiritual life and live? For they for a few days used to discipline us according to what seemed good to them, but he does so for our profit that we may partake of his holiness." (Heb. 12:9, 10) Thus those "holy ones" who would partake of God's holiness must humbly accept and submit to discipline. And to maintain their standing before God the "great crowd" need to do the same.

Christians are admonished to cleanse themselves of "every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear." (2 Cor. 7:1) Are you doing this? If a Christian practices things that defile or damage his fleshly body, or goes contrary to the Bible in doctrine or morals, he is turning from a course of holiness and shows that he does not really love or fear God. This is a very serious matter.

Anointed Christians who have the "holy calling" to heavenly life become a holy temple of living stones for Jehovah. They constitute "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession." (1 Pet. 2:5, 9) So if a member of the temple class practices immorality, what then? Why, he is defiling and tearing down God's temple! And God says: "If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you people are." (1 Cor. 3:17) Yes, anyone misusing that which is holy to Jehovah will suffer punishment from God.

Jehovah's attitude toward profane use of his holy possessions can be seen from the severe punishment he meted out to the Babylonians for such an offense. King Belshazzar had profaned the holy vessels of Jehovah's temple by ordering them brought in and used by drunken banquet-

ers. In that very night Jehovah caused their sudden destruction. (Dan. 5:1-4, 22-31) This indicates the importance for persons now to heed the Bible counsel to treat kindly and lovingly Jehovah's "holy ones," the spiritual brothers of Jesus Christ. —Matt. 25:40, 45.

It is clear that Jehovah God expects both his anointed "holy ones" and the members of the "great crowd" to maintain a course of purity and cleanness. Such holiness of conduct is a requirement for all servants of God. You will, therefore, show wisdom if you strive to obey the Bible counsel: "As obedient children, quit being fashioned according to the desires you formerly had in your ignorance, but, in accord with the holy one who called you, do you also become holy yourselves in all your conduct."—1 Pet. 1:14, 15.

Missionaries Counseled to Hold to "The Way"

AMONG the happiest people in New York city on the morning of March 8, 1970, were upward of two thousand Christian witnesses of Jehovah. Why? Because they were privileged to attend the graduation of the forty-eighth class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead being held at Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall.

The program, which began at 10 a.m., was presided over by the president of the school as well as of the Watch Tower Society, N. H. Knorr. After hearing his warm words of welcome all joined in song and prayer and then listened intently to a series of brief talks given by those who had oversight of the missionaries as instructors and in other capacities during the past six months. T. Galfas noted that, even as Jesus' coming to earth showed great love, so now these missionaries could show love by serving in strange and distant lands. U. Glass told the missionaries that, when faced with a serious problem, they should follow the example of King David and strengthen themselves in Jehovah and consult those in a position to help them, such as branch servants and others.

E. Dunlap emphasized the need of loyalty in their assignments, while M. Larson made several apt analogies between the missionaries and a builder's use of blueprints, one being the need to follow instructions carefully. Next G. Couch reminded the missionaries that as a result of their training they now had a fine key of knowledge that they should use with patience in teaching others. Then M. Henschel read many of the greetings sent to the students from various parts of the earth.

These were followed by remarks by the vice-president of the Watch Tower Society, F. W. Franz. He elucidated a number of points relating to Bible prophecies nearing fulfillment. In particular he stressed the urgency of helping lovers of truth to flee now from Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, for Revelation 18:4 shows that when God's destructive plagues hit her it will be too late to flee.

N. H. Knorr gave the main talk of the morning, speaking on the subject "The Way." He noted that today there are two ways for people to choose from. There is the way of the world, which is the Devil's way. Dedicated Christians have chosen to walk in the right way, in Jehovah's way. It is possible to enjoy life to the full by walking in that way. To gain eternal life one must keep walking in that way.

The speaker next noted that Jesus Christ had opened The Way. He walked in the way his heavenly Father wanted him to walk, and it was a way based on love. God, through his Word and by such publications as *The Watchtower*, helps Christians today to walk in His way, even as He says: "Your own ears will hear a word behind you saying: 'This is the way. Walk in it, you people,' in case you people should go to the right or in case you should go to the left."—Isa. 30:21.

Jehovah God is interested in people; he loves people, the Society's president next emphasized. That is why he gave men the truth and showed them the way to walk. By paying more than the usual attention Christians will not stray to the right or to the left.

Christians should feel as did the psalmists who repeatedly refer to Jehovah's way. And in particular did the speaker comment on the plea found at Psalm 119:37: "Make my eyes pass on from seeing what is worthless; preserve me alive in your own way." He then asked: "Do we do that? Or do we let our heads turn to everything that is worthless, to the wicked things on TV," and so forth? It is easy to stray from the way, he warned, and this may especially be the case in their foreign assignments. He assured the missionaries that the whole organization is always ready to help them and in conclusion urged: "Do just as Jesus did. You are in the world but no part of it . . . Keep in mind: 'This is the way. Walk in it.'"

After these remarks N. H. Knorr handed each of the missionaries an envelope that contained the class picture, a gift from the Society and their diploma if they merited it. Then a resolution was read in which the students expressed their appreciation for the training received and determination to prove faithful to their trust.

After an intermission the program was resumed. Among the choice things heard and seen were a fine musical program of beautiful singing in six languages; a touching and strikingly beautiful Bible drama; reports of the fine progress being made in some of the lands to which the missionaries are going and a song by them especially composed for the occasion. Then all joined in song, and the school's president closed the program with heartfelt prayer.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Have you read the recent issues of *The Watchtower* carefully? If so, you should recognize these important points.

● Why is mildness needed if God's Word is to be implanted in an individual?

Because if the soil of an individual's heart and mind is so hardened by pride as to be like a rock it will not accept the implanting of the Word.—P. 16.*

● In its modern application, what is the "great tribulation" mentioned at Matthew 24:21, 22, and when is it to occur?

It is the destruction of the world empire of false religion (including Christendom) and the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Armageddon against the political allies of Babylonish religion. That "great tribulation" is yet ahead.—P. 53.

● Why is it not unreasonable to believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ?

The Bible reports it as fact, and it is in harmony with other Bible teachings such as the ransom. It is reasonable that the Creator, who designed woman and gave her the ability to produce children, could also cause a woman to become pregnant by means of holy spirit.—P. 79.

* All references are to *The Watchtower* for 1970.

● What is meant at Proverbs 21:2, "Jehovah is making an estimate of hearts"?

The heart represents what a person is deep inside. Jehovah observes, not only what we appear to be on the outside, but also what our hearts are.—P. 85.

● What is the distinction between "knowledge" and "understanding"?

Knowledge means acquaintance with facts, gained by observation, experience and study. Understanding means to see facts as they relate to one another. It involves seeing the whys of a matter.—P. 105.

● What is it good for young Christians to remember when they are tempted to do something bad in secret?

They should remember that there is nothing that a person can do in secret that can be hidden from God.—P. 149.

● According to 1 Corinthians 10:16, what special purpose does the Lord's Evening Meal serve for the anointed footstep followers of Jesus Christ?

By partaking of the bread and wine they indicate their oneness with their Master and their determination to continue faithful.—P. 163.

● What does the Bible mean when it says that man was created in "God's image"?

It means that man was created with the same attributes or qualities that are possessed by God, such as love, thinking ability, a sense of justice, and so forth.—P. 170.

● What is God's kingdom?

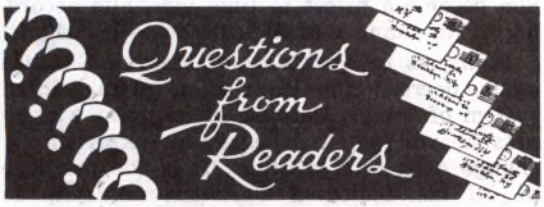
It is God's government in heaven with Christ Jesus as king. Its rule will transform the earth into a paradise of peace and happiness for mankind.—P. 196.

● Why is Christendom's failure no reflection on Jehovah God?

It merely demonstrates that men and organizations that reject God's Word are wrong. God has not changed.—P. 244.

● Why do Jehovah's witnesses call on people who already have a religion?

God commands that this work be done. Jesus Christ set the example.—P. 245.



● What does the Bible mean when it says, at Genesis 6:6, that "Jehovah felt regrets that he had made men in the earth"?—D. B., U.S.A.

First of all, let it be noted that older translations (*AV, AS, Dy*) state that God "repented" over his doing this or that. But the word "repent" carries the connotation of feeling sorry because of having committed a sin or a wrong. Jehovah God, being perfect in justice, simply cannot commit a sin or wrong requiring him to repent. That is why modern translations speak of him as feeling "sorry" (*Mo, RS*), or being "grieved" (*Ro*) or having regrets.—*AT, NW*.

At Genesis 6:6 the Hebrew word translated "felt regrets" is *na·hham'*, and, like many other words, it has several meanings. Forms of it have been rendered in the *New World Translation* as "felt regrets" (Gen. 6:6), "relieve myself" (Isa. 1:24) and "be comforted."—Jer. 31:15.

Regarding this Hebrew word *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 1, p. 225, states: "Generally translated 'repent' (in the passive form) 'comfort' (in the intensive form). Actually the word means 'to take a breath of relief.' . . . The word therefore has to do with 'change of attitude,' 'change of mind,' any other association being accidental. . . . When the word is translated 'repent,' as frequently of God, it means 'change of mind or intention.'"

When Jehovah God said, "I am going to wipe men whom I have created off the surface of the ground, . . . because I do regret that I have made them," what did he mean? (Gen. 6:7) That he regretted that he had created man in the first place, and that it was all a terrible mistake? By no means! Had he felt that way he would have wiped out all humankind. His regret applied only to the wicked pre-Flood generation, for immediately following we read, "But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah."—Gen. 6:8.

Clearly the thought is that Jehovah God had a change of mental attitude: He turned from the attitude of Maker or Creator of men to that of a destroyer of them because of his strong displeasure. To illustrate: A father may give his son an auto, but if the son misuses it, gets into trouble because of speeding, and so forth, the father may feel regrets and take the auto away from his son. He has a change of mind, but he had not necessarily made a mistake. The son is the one that made the mistakes and did things that were wrong. The son could have shown appreciation and so brought joy to his father by using the auto wisely.

And so with humankind. Had Adam and Eve taken a wise course, Jehovah's heart would have rejoiced. But since they took a wicked course, God had no pleasure in them; he felt regrets and was obliged to take away their lives. The same was also true of the wicked generation living at the time of the Flood. God changed his attitude toward them. In fact, it was absolutely imperative that he do so because of the developments. He was sorry that it involved a great destruction of life, and yet he was obliged to act to uphold his standards.

This feeling of regret on Jehovah God's part works both ways, as the Bible shows. If his creatures fail in his purpose for them, he feels regrets and they incur his wrath. But if

Jehovah purposes punishment to some of his creatures because of their wrongful course, and they truly feel sorry, repent for their sins and have not reached the point of no return, then Jehovah will have a change of mental attitude toward them and show them mercy; he will feel regrets. So instead of bringing affliction or further affliction upon them he will bring them relief.

Jehovah God did this with the Israelites during the time of their judges: "Jehovah would feel regret over their groaning because of their oppressors." (Judg. 2:18) So also in the case of the people of Nineveh. Jehovah had decreed their destruction because of their great wickedness. But when they sincerely repented upon Jonah's preaching to them, Jehovah "felt regret," changed his mind or mental attitude toward them "over the calamity that he had spoken of causing to them; and he did not cause it."—Jonah 3:8-10.

In view of the foregoing, how are we to understand the expressions found in the Scriptures to the effect that Jehovah God does not feel regrets?—Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Ps. 110:4.

These are to be understood as applying to certain specific cases under consideration. For example, Balaam was made to prophesy that Jehovah would not change his mind or feel regret regarding the prosperity he had purposed for the nation of Israel, in spite of all the efforts of King Balak to get Balaam to curse Israel. (Num. 23:19) When King Saul proved unfaithful, God's prophet told him that Jehovah "will not feel regrets" or change His mind about rejecting him. (1 Sam. 15:29) And Jehovah God swore so that he would not feel regret or change regarding his purpose to have his Son become a priest to time indefinite according to the manner of Melchizedek.—Ps. 110:4.

Today, as in Noah's time, Jehovah God has again decreed the destruction of a wicked system of things. Because of its great wickedness he will not feel regrets or experience a change of mental attitude. It is the privilege of all his dedicated Christian ministers to sound the warning to lovers of righteousness to separate themselves from this wicked system of things before it is too late, thereby receiving Jehovah God's mercy, even as did Noah and his family.—Zeph. 2:3.

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