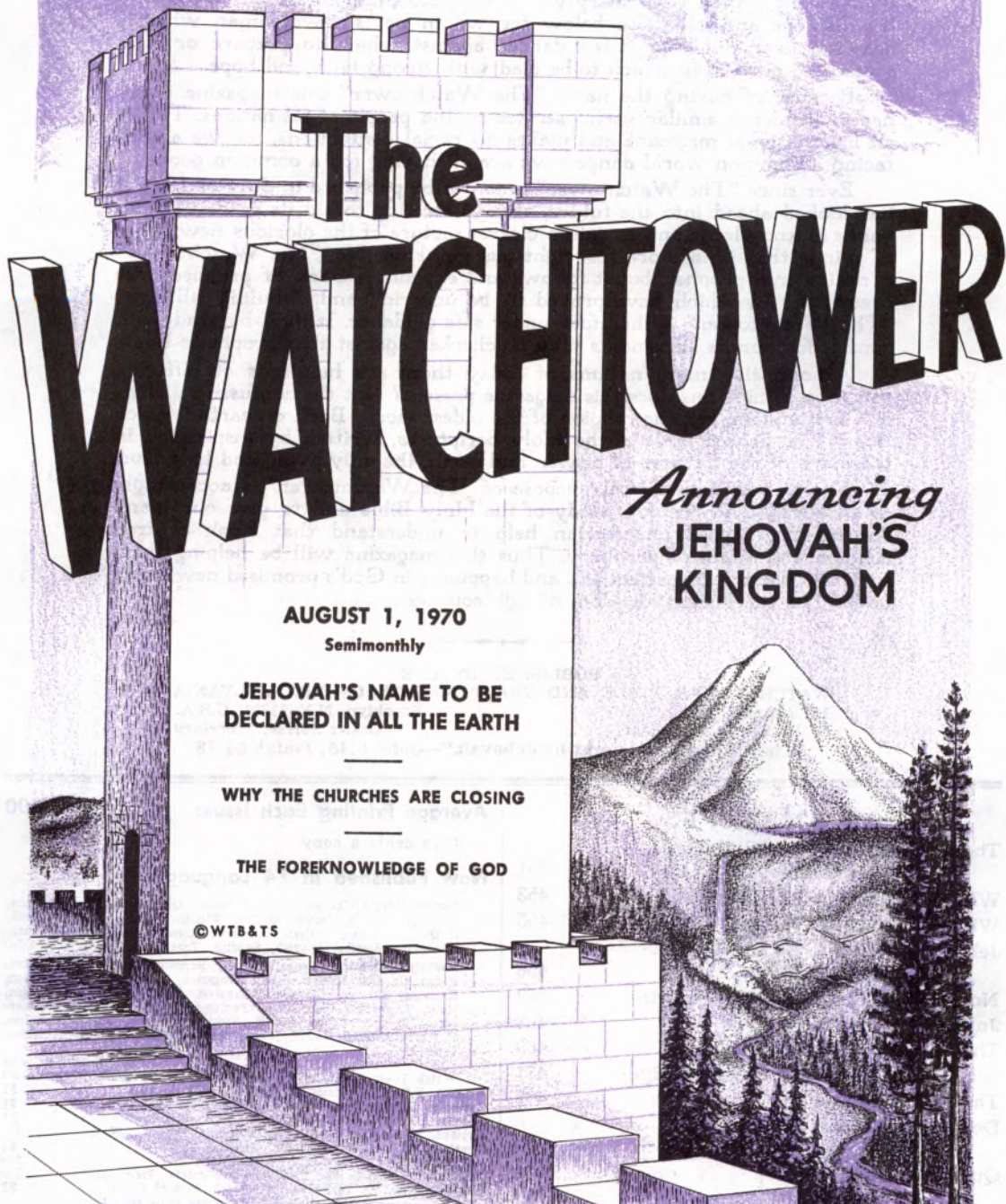




The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

AUGUST 1, 1970

Semimonthly

**JEHOVAH'S NAME TO BE
DECLARED IN ALL THE EARTH**

WHY THE CHURCHES ARE CLOSING

THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD

©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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Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

Vol. XCI

August 1, 1970

Number 15

EARLY this year French television viewers and newspaper readers could hardly believe their eyes and ears when they learned that thousands of churches and chapels in France, mostly Catholic, have shut their doors and that the buildings are either standing empty and falling into ruins or being used for a variety of surprising purposes.

Yet they had to bow to the facts, for this startling news came from a most authoritative source, none other than the French Minister of Cultural Affairs, Monsieur Edmond Michelet. Reporting on his disclosure, Paris Sunday newspaper *Le Journal du Dimanche* wrote the following, under the headline "18,000 Derelict Churches":

"Eighteen thousand churches, chapels and oratories in France have been or are about to be abandoned. This frightening figure was disclosed by Monsieur Michelet during the TV program 'Facing the Press.'"

"This means that sooner or later over half of the places of worship in France are doomed to dilapidation and plundering. Not since the Wars of Religion [1562-1598], if then, have the churches suffered so much. Never a week goes by without one hearing of a church being closed and either converted for some profane use . . . or falling into disrepair and even being plundered. This is happening more and more frequently.

"In some depopulated villages, abandoned

Thousands of

RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS CLOSING

in France

churches have been looted by passersby or specialized gangs.

In the little Basses-Alpes village of Clignon-Haut, children were found to be dressing up in magnificent eighteenth-century embroidered copes [ecclesiastical vestments] left in the vestry."—January 18, 1970.

Deploring the acts of vandalism committed against religious buildings in France, a French provincial news magazine stated, under the title "18,000 Churches for Sale":

"How many small rural chapels have been devastated! People started by taking away sacred objects, statuettes and taper stands. Then they began dismantling stained glass windows and fresco paintings. Finally they dismantled the sculptured stonework, the doors and the pews. Who worries? Who protests? Strangely enough, the ones who seem the most alarmed are laymen [not the clergy!]."—*Hebdo-St-Etienne*, May 10, 1969.

Although the vast majority of churches closed in France are Roman Catholic, reports show that quite a number of French Protestant Reformed churches and even some Jewish synagogues have ceased functioning and are being used for some secular purpose. The Church of Scotland has had to close its church in Menton, on the

French Riviera, and the Church of England has abandoned its churches in Hyères, near the Mediterranean coast, and in Évian, on the shores of Lake Geneva.

SEMINARIES, MONASTERIES AND CONVENTS

In addition to the thousands of churches and chapels abandoned throughout France, scores of other religious buildings are closing their doors or being sold and used for other purposes.

Even in such Catholic strongholds as Brittany, the seminary or training college for future priests in Quimper has had to close down. In Normandy, three big seminaries are being shut in Bayeux, Coutances and Sées. They will be replaced in October 1970 by a single training college in Caen. The huge Bayeux seminary has been training future priests since 1675, and the one in Sées was founded in 1653.

In the north of France, the seminaries in Cambrai and Arras are being closed down and, from October 1970 onward, candidates for the priesthood in these two dioceses will have to go to Lille. These examples, taken from the west and north of France, are typical of what is happening throughout the country. As one regional newspaper stated: "The North and West were the only regions which had not yet regrouped [their seminaries]."—*La Voix du Nord*, March 14, 1970.

Furthermore, a great number of monasteries, convents and abbeys are closing their doors. Some of these religious institutions, such as Senanque Abbey in southern France, had been in existence for eight hundred years or more.

STRANGE NEW USES FOR RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

Surprising indeed are the uses that some of these religious buildings are being put to after their deconsecration. In the Normandy city of Lisieux, a famous place of

pilgrimage, the fifteenth-century church of "Saint Jacques" is now used for flower shows and concerts. The tourist who happens to stop by for a meal at the "Restaurant Henry" in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, a few miles inland from the Riviera, will learn with surprise that he is wining and dining in what used to be "Our Lady of Lourdes" chapel! Not far away, at La-Colle-sur-Loup, the restaurant "Chez Joseph" is housed in an eleventh-century monastery.

In Gazinet, near Bordeaux, a Catholic chapel has been turned into a jujitsu school organized by the local priest! Quite a few French churches have been converted into cinemas and museums, and others into such unexpected things as garages, cow sheds, a butter market, public shower baths, wine cellars and wine-tasting rooms, a theater rehearsal hall, and so forth. Seminaries and church schools are being used as State schools and even post offices. Protestant churches have been turned into garages, a locksmith's shop and, of all things, a tobacco-drying loft! A synagogue in eastern France is now used as an auction room, and another as a warehouse for agricultural equipment.

Commenting on this state of affairs, an editorialist of a French left-wing news magazine wrote: "Of the five churches in Senlis [a town a few miles north of Paris], one is now used as a market, another is a garage, the third one is a cinema and the fourth, a dance hall. I realize religion must get modernized . . . but I cannot think that weekly dancing and selling vegetables are the best imaginable uses deconsecrated churches can be put to."—*Le Nouvel Observateur*, March 1, 1970.

Interestingly, just a few miles from Senlis, an ex-Catholic chapel is now being put to good use. It has been cleaned up and modernized by voluntary Christian workers and is now the Kingdom Hall of the Creil congregation of Jehovah's witnesses!

Why

the Churches Are Closing

THE previous article has informed you of a situation you may have been unaware of, but it has not dealt with the *reasons* why so many churches and religious establishments are closing in France.

WHY ARE THE SEMINARIES CLOSING?

Church authorities endeavor to explain away these shutdowns by saying that they reflect a necessary reorganization. Trying to justify the closing down of three big, long-established seminaries in Normandy, the Roman Catholic bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux stated: "A formula was sought which would make it easier to welcome young men who feel they have a calling for the priesthood."—*Ouest-France*, February 27, 1970.

But how can depriving two entire dioceses of their training schools for priests be said, by any stretch of the imagination, to facilitate things for young men there who wish to become priests? They will now have to travel to a third diocese whose spacious seminary is also being closed and transferred to another town, where the single seminary for the three dioceses will have to share a building with another Catholic institution. Would it not be more realistic to admit that dozens of seminaries are closing because there simply are not enough candidates for the priesthood?

Commenting on the regrouping of French seminaries, the provincial daily *La Voix du Nord* admitted that this had become necessary "mainly because of lack of candidates." A parish magazine in Brittany quotes the local bishop as saying: "One of the bishop's principal worries for

the present, and even more for the future, is the drop in the number of candidates for the priesthood and holy orders. This is something general, not limited to France. All our institutions are affected and all vocations: contemplative, teaching, hospital and missionary." Illustrating the bishop's remarks, the magazine printed the following figures for the Quimper seminary:

Year	Seminarists
1961	150
1964	103
1968	67

No wonder the article was headed "Quimper Seminary Is Closing Down"—*Kemper*, June-July 1969.

Showing just how serious the situation is, one of France's most widely read news magazines stated recently:

"Every year since 1961, it [the Catholic Church in France] has been losing the total number of priests required in such average dioceses as Bordeaux, Nice or Clermont-Ferrand, because losses due to deaths [about 900 a year] or desertions from the ministry are far from being made up. . . .

"The French clergy, one of the most numerous in the world, with over 40,000 priests, is an aged clergy. . . . In 1975, one third of its members will be over 60 years of age. . . .

"In a confidential report to his counselors, Cardinal Alexandre Renard, archbishop of Lyons, revealed earlier this month the gravity of this crisis. Last October, only 475 young men entered the [French] seminaries, which is 41 percent less than

the year before. For lack of students, the few remaining seminaries are now regional. The big gray barracks-like seminary in Issy-les-Moulineaux groups all the seminarians in the Paris area. . . .

"The way things are going, in less than a century, the clergy will have disappeared."—*L'Express*, January 5-11, 1970.

WHY ARE THE CHURCHES CLOSING?

The ecclesiastical authorities try to make out that the closing down of so many churches in France is a natural consequence of the shift of population from the small rural parishes to the towns and industrial cities where, they say, over a thousand new churches have been built during the past twenty-five years. This may be the reason why some small rural chapels have been shut down, but it certainly fails to explain why four out of five churches are closed in towns like Senlis, which has over 10,000 inhabitants! The real reasons lie elsewhere.

One is obviously the shortage of ministers. There are at least 18,000 Catholic parishes in France with no resident priest. A large number of priests have to minister to several parishes, and in many of these the church is opened only once a month or even less often, sometimes just for funerals or other special ceremonies. With the scarcity of priests becoming more and more acute, these days, when a priest marries or leaves his ministry for some other reason, the parish or parishes he was in charge of frequently have no alternative but to nail on the church door a notice saying "Closed until further notice," and more often than not the "further notice" never comes!

But perhaps the most significant reason for so many churches closing down is the increasing decline of interest in the traditional religions. Catholics who for years thought they belonged to the in-

fallible church of Christ have discovered that things they held sacred because their priests told them to do so are now said, by those same priests, to be unimportant or even harmful. Describing the effect these changes are having on many Catholics, *L'Express* wrote:

"Observances that were prescribed for generations of Christians are now considered to be out-of-date. By introducing the notion of change, the [Catholic] Church has also introduced the notion of relativity. Since the rules prescribed yesterday are no longer valid today, there is nothing to prove that today's rules will be applicable tomorrow."—*L'Express*, October 14-20, 1968.

General disgust with the part played by the traditional religions in the wars and conflicts between and within the nations is also alienating the people from the churches. Speaking recently in Geneva, Switzerland, Eugene Blake, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, admitted this, saying:

"Religions do not always contribute to peace, and we have witnessed the frightful consequences of modern religious fanaticism linked with capitalism, colonialism, white racialism and ancient feudal or tribal customs. Let us face it, relations between India and Pakistan have been worsened rather than improved by the religious factor. Nor has religion's role in Northern Ireland brought consolation to Catholics and Protestants."—*Le Monde*, April 2, 1970.

Since Eastern religions and the churches of Christendom have failed the people religiously and have even contributed to unrest and wars, it is understandable that they should reap what they have sown. The closing down of many of their churches is a sign that their days are numbered. Soon God will punish them for their crimes. (Read Revelation or Apocalypse,

chapter 18, where the world empire of false religion is symbolically called "Babylon the great.")

TRUE CHRISTIANITY IS NOT ON THE WANE

Let sincere persons take heart! True Christianity is by no means on the decline. It is flourishing as never before, as shown by the following press report printed by the selfsame French Sunday newspaper that announced the news about "18,000 Derelict Churches." In an article on the "Peace on Earth" Assembly of Jehovah's witnesses held near Paris last August, it stated:

"This afternoon . . . F. W. Franz will pronounce a closing discourse on the hope of a peace of a thousand years, a peace that will follow the battle of Armageddon and see billions of humans come back to life on a paradise earth. . . .

"Some will be tempted to shrug their shoulders. However, the greater number will be set thinking. The public discovered with astonishment that there are 30,000 'Witnesses' in France, a million in the world, and that during the past twenty years they have grown to an extraordinary extent: some 700 percent. People can think what they will, but this phenomenon merits our attention."—*Le Journal du Dimanche*, August 10, 1969.

Yes, the growth, zeal and devotion of

Jehovah's witnesses, in striking contrast with the decline and fall of Christendom's churches, are making many people have second thoughts about what they used to "describe as a sect." (Acts 24:14, *Jerusalem Bible*) Recently, a French Catholic weekly wrote the following:

"Not long ago 'good Catholics' felt obliged to . . . get angry when a 'Jehovah's witness' came to their door offering booklets and counsel.

"Today, the sight of these people who have the courage to act for their faith obliges us to think. Although he need not share their opinions, the Catholic is beginning to think and even to say: 'Hats off' to these men and women who are not afraid to face sarcastic smiles, name-calling and anger when they demonstrate their faith."—*L'Ami du Peuple*, February 15, 1970.

Some Catholics are saying: "The early Christians had no elaborate buildings, yet their communities were alive and faithful to Christ's teachings." (*L'Express*, December 22-28, 1969) Jehovah's witnesses will be glad to help all sincere people to study the Word of God and will be happy to welcome them to their increasingly numerous Kingdom Halls, where they will find Christian communities that are truly "alive and faithful to Christ's teachings."

Why the Trinity Is Taught

◆ A woman in Reidsville, North Carolina, began studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses. After studying it only one month she called on her minister to ask him several questions, some dealing with the Trinity doctrine. Their conversation about the Trinity went like this:

"Did the apostles teach the Trinity?" asked the woman.

"No," replied the minister.

"Then, did Jesus teach the Trinity?"

"No," answered the minister again.

"Why, then, do you teach the Trinity?" she asked. The clergyman's answer to this was that, since the church had adopted the teaching of the Trinity several centuries later, that was the reason why he taught it.

But the Bible says that 'everyone that does not remain in the teaching of the Christ does not have God.'—2 John 9.

Jehovah's Name

TO BE DECLARED IN ALL THE EARTH

"From the sun's rising even to its setting my name will be great among the nations."—Mal. 1:11.

THERE is an urgent need for God's name to be impressed upon the thinking of all nations of men. Today only a small minority of earth's population appreciate the name JEHOVAH and worship the God who bears it. (Ps. 83:18) The vast majority have put God out of mind, or at best offer only token worship. Giving free rein to their own passions and being engrossed with selfish goals, they no longer care to keep in mind a God who stands for truth, love and righteousness. They have substituted their own puerile fancies, gods that fit in with their own human ideas, useless gods that manifest the same imperfect characteristics as those of their makers.

² Even the so-called wise men of this generation, theologians, philosophers, psychologists, scientists, consider the pure truth of God's holy Book, the Bible, to be beneath them, too childish to believe, its moral standard too circumscribing to their aims and conduct. Instead, they worship themselves. They think of man as the great inventor, the civilizer, the one through whom all future progress and blessings must come. The nations have indeed forgotten God, and soon now they must meet up with the calamity foretold.—Ps. 50:22.

1. What earth-wide situation calls for Jehovah's name to be made great?
2. In what sense have nations forgotten God?

³ Christ's apostle Paul was inspired by God's spirit to describe the situation that has developed in all nations: "What may be known about God is manifest among them, for God made it manifest to them. For his invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship, so that they are inexcusable; because, although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God nor did they thank him, but they became empty-headed in their reasonings and their unintelligent heart became darkened. Although asserting they were wise, they became foolish and turned the glory of the incorruptible God into something like the image of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed creatures and creeping things."—Rom. 1:19-23.

⁴ Do today's nations, with all of their modern progress, really do these things? Notice how in each nation the attempt is made to have all citizens recognize the state as supreme. And remember, each and every one of those national rulerships is the work of imperfect and selfish creatures, and is well known to be corruptible. Each has its own national emblem, this one a lion, that one an eagle, still another a

3. In what terms did the apostle Paul accurately describe the condition today among the nations?

4, 5. Just how do nations today indulge in worship of corruptible man and the lower creatures?

dragon or serpent. To the state, as symbolized by a brute creature and as directed by sinful men, all citizens are called upon to do homage, to give unquestioning obedience, as though to an ultimate authority.

⁵ Forgotten is the fact that Jehovah God, the Creator of the sun and moon, and the Source of all the fresh air and water that continually revitalizes the whole earth, is the ultimate "Ruler in the kingdom of mankind." (Dan. 4:25) Instead, imperfect humans are transformed into heroes and benefactors and given the praise and expressions of gratitude, omitting those that are properly due to Jehovah.

⁶ In harmony with the above-quoted words of the apostle Paul, is it not obvious that the worldly-wise ones have become foolish? How empty-headed, how foolish to declare, as do some of their number, that "God is dead"! Or to claim that man and his earthly abode had no creator, but came into being through the interoperation of blind, unintelligent forces! How senseless to claim that man is master of his own destiny, when some slight weather development can throw his best-laid plans into wild confusion!

⁷ For his part, the "One telling from the beginning the finale" foresaw these global developments and declared that he would meet the situation positively, in a manner that would magnify his own great Name, and bring joy and peace to those loving his Name. As powerful evidence of his foreknowledge, he caused to be written in the Bible the record of his dealings with the mighty empire of the Pharaohs of 3,500 years ago, and then gave assurance that this same record portrayed future history.—Isa. 46:10.

6. What are the evidences that the world's professedly wise ones have become foolish?

7. How has Jehovah served notice that he will positively meet and handle this situation?

EGYPT "IN A SPIRITUAL SENSE"

⁸ Ancient Egypt had her god-ruler who was but a man, a descendant of sinner Adam. His empire had accumulated over the centuries so much of human wisdom that it is said that the Greeks borrowed most of their learning from this source. Militarily, Egypt was long noted and respected for her powerful army of horses and chariots. Her great public works were calculated to enhance the image of the state. They included vast tombs, an intricate canal system and lofty temples of religion.

⁹ The climate in which Pharaoh's people lived was unique. Rain was practically unknown. The sun and moon shone out of cloudless skies. The river Nile, constantly fed by the heavy rainfalls of Central Africa, regularly inundated the land, its rich sedimentary deposits producing rich crops. These features of life in Egypt moved one historian to speak of Egypt's "aspect of calm immensity," her "character of serene fixedness." It seemed that Egypt would be forever, that nothing could change.

¹⁰ There can be no doubt that Egypt portrayed something greater to come in the future, for the apostle Paul wrote: "All the things that were written aforetime [in the Scriptures] were written for our instruction." (Rom. 15:4) Then, too, we have the curious allusion by the apostle John to "the great city which is in a spiritual sense called Sodom and Egypt, where [our] Lord was also impaled." (Rev. 11:8) The context shows that such Egypt "in a spiritual sense" is the center of attention by "peoples and tribes and tongues and nations," by an international conglomeration of peoples.

8, 9. Describe some notable features of Egypt and her rulers, and the general impression received by people living in the time of the Pharaohs.

10. What do students of the Bible gather from such texts as Romans 15:4 and Revelation 11:8?

¹¹ Egypt and Sodom and the land of Judea (where Christ Jesus was actually impaled) all had something in common with the present international system of things known as Christendom.* They had forgotten God. Not so much because of faulty memory, but because they were anxious to blot him from their minds. They would rather forget the God who promulgated a universal standard of righteousness, for then their consciences would not smite them, continually reminding them of the full accounting that God declares he will make with all wrongdoers. They want to go on pleasing themselves, determining for themselves what is good and what is bad. As did Pharaoh, they say by their contemptuous course: "Who is Jehovah?"—Ex. 5:2.

¹² Egypt "in a spiritual sense," then, is a religious organization of selfish creatures who have come completely under the power of "the god of this [present wicked] system of things," the greater Pharaoh, Satan the Devil. (2 Cor. 4:4) That false god during the centuries has set up numerous religious systems, each one designed to instill in its devotees belief in the permanence of their religious and political institutions. Despite the facts of history, Egypt "in a spiritual sense," or Christendom, still deludes its subject peoples into belief that nothing will ever change, that "all things are continuing exactly as from creation's beginning."—2 Pet. 3:4.

¹³ No actual damage comes to the great Creator by all this religious system's ignoring him and banishing from mind his name. He could ignore it all and let men

and nations take their headlong course toward destruction. However, in behalf of those who love his name and those who yearn for truth and righteousness, God mercifully purposes to assert his power on the world scene, thereby making a name for himself in the sight of all nations. (2 Pet. 2:7, 8; Ezek. 9:4) Rulers and ruled 'will have to know that he is Jehovah.'—Ezek. 38:23.

OTHER STRIKING CORRESPONDENCIES

¹⁴ The Pharaohs of ancient Egypt styled themselves "Son of the sun," or light-giver and life-giver to all subject peoples. Ordinary mortals dared not stand up and look the Pharaoh in the face. Rather, on pain of death, they must avert their gaze and prostrate themselves on the ground as he passed by. His word, just or unjust, could doom any citizen who even merely displeased him.

¹⁵ Likewise, the "god of this system of things" is one who "keeps transforming himself into an angel of light." (2 Cor. 11:14) His religious systems, including those of divided Christendom, promote the mysterious element and befog the minds of worshipers lest they discern his origin as a mere spirit creature who rebelled against the rightful supremacy of his Creator.

¹⁶ God caused his prophet Ezekiel to reveal the attitude of the haughty Pharaoh and make record of this expression of that autocrat: "My Nile River belongs to me, and I—I have made it for myself." (Ezek. 29:3) Even so, "the ruler of this [wicked] world," Satan the Devil, ever since he deceived Eve and led Adam into rebellion against God, has claimed the human race as his own preserve. (John

* See page 273, ¶1, of "Then Is Finished the Mystery of God."

11. Why can Egypt, Sodom and faithless Judea be properly classed together?

12. What, then, is foreshadowed by Egypt and her ruler, and what similar attitude is seen in shadow and modern reality?

13. What comforting assurance does Jehovah give as regards all the ignoring of his name and sovereignty?

14, 15. What striking correspondence is to be noted when comparing ancient Egypt and Satan's religious organization of today?

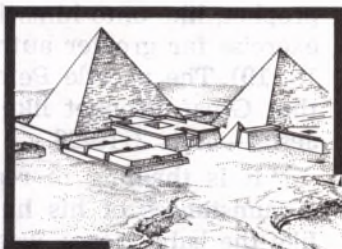
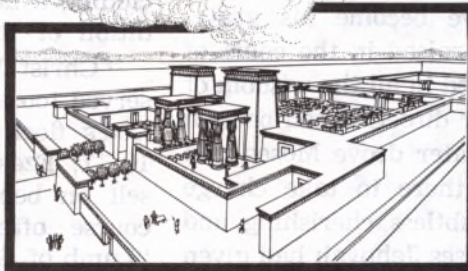
16, 17. How does Pharaoh's claim to creation and ownership of the Nile River find application on a vaster scale?

12:31) This representing of fallen mankind under symbol of the Nile waters is quite in keeping with Biblical symbolism, for under inspiration of God's spirit the apostle John was moved to transmit this angelic explanation of one of his visions: "The waters that you saw . . . mean peoples and crowds and nations and tongues." —Rev. 17:15.

¹⁷ Yes, Satan claims the kingdoms and empires of humankind as his very own, and they surely do reflect his spirit and attitude. Jesus, when tempted in the wilderness, offered no contradiction when the Devil implied that he had the right to confer the rulership among sinful men on whoever would comply with his requirements. (Matt. 4:8, 9) Furthermore, the Bible indicates that the source of ruling power and authority in the kingdoms of men today is the great Dragon—none other than Satan himself.—Rev. 13:2.

¹⁸ Just as Pharaoh depended on his military force for the maintenance of his power and position, so too in Egypt "in a spiritual sense" (or Christendom) military preparedness is prominent, even taking precedence over the urgent needs of the poor for food and clothing. Even the organization called the United Nations gives

18. Egypt's dependence on chariots and horses for her security points to what?



Egypt was noted for its powerful army, vast tombs and great religious temples. Egypt is a symbol of the world, of which Satan the Devil is the god

no guarantee of peace and security, for the smallest and newest of nations today soon become customers for military hardware that they cannot afford—guns, planes, missiles, and so on.

GOD'S UNCHANGING PURPOSE

¹⁹ That Egypt "in a spiritual sense," that is, this greatest religious system of Christendom, is to be subjected to the pitiless searchlight of divine truth and exposed as no better than the ancient Egypt of the Pharaohs, is made sure by God's dealings back there on the banks of the Nile. Before the patriarch Abraham's progeny were born, Jehovah directed these significant words to the faithful patriarch: "You may know for sure that your seed will become an alien resident in a land not theirs, and they will have to serve them, and these will certainly afflict them for four hundred years. But the nation that they will serve I am judging, and after that they will go out with many goods."

—Gen. 15:13, 14.

²⁰ Later, Jehovah said to Moses, the liberator whom he sent to lead Abraham's seed out of Egypt: "I, even I, well know that the king of Egypt will not give you permission

to go except by a strong hand. And I shall

19. What is guaranteed by Jehovah's dealings back there on the banks of the Nile?

20. Was Jehovah's determination to deal with and judge the land of Egypt and its ruler a sudden one?

have to stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all my wonderful acts that I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will send you out." (Ex. 3:19, 20) Thus Jehovah's purpose respecting Egypt was set out long in advance. He was going to make his own name great in Egypt and all subject territories.

²¹ That should convince us of the unavoidable exposure and fall that is to overtake Egypt "in a spiritual sense," Christendom, together with all her worldly associates. Yes, the Bible leads reverent students of its pages to the expectation of a great campaign of exposure that would lay bare the actual filthy, diseased and dying condition of Satan's world, especially Christendom. Indeed, all the evidence points to the fact that such a campaign even now perturbs the rulers and chief men of all nations.

ONE GREATER THAN MOSES

²² Moses was the man whom Jehovah chose to precipitate a great crisis in Egyptian affairs. His name means "drawn forth," and this is a reminder that Moses was, by Jehovah's supervision of events, drawn forth from the waters of the Nile, which were to have become his grave. (Ex. 1:22) He was raised in the court of Pharaoh and educated in all the wisdom of Egypt. God's further direction can be seen in the events that later drove Moses into Midianite country, there to take charge of flocks, while doubtless cherishing and reviewing the promises Jehovah had given to his forefather Abraham.—Ex. 2:10; 3:1; Acts 7:22, 30.

²³ Moses served faithfully as a mediator. Not only was he in complete harmony with Jehovah's righteous requirements for his

people, but he also had compassion for fellow Israelites on account of their inborn sin. He spent himself in their behalf, gladly at times offering his life for theirs. Indeed, the lamb slain on the night of Passover might well be viewed as substituting for Moses, who in this pictorial fashion was offered for the sins of the people—an arrangement that permitted him to live and carry out the liberation program that God had anointed him to accomplish. Just before completing his assigned work, Moses was inspired to prophesy about a future prophet, like unto himself, one who would exercise far greater authority. (Deut. 18: 18, 19) The apostle Peter later identified that Great Prophet like Moses as Christ Jesus.—Acts 3:19-26.

²⁴ It is thrilling to realize that by the circumstances of his human birth Jesus, like the babe Moses, was in danger of his life, at King Herod's hands, and was saved from death by his heavenly Father's intervention. (Matt. 2:1-18) Since the seed that made Mary pregnant was not from imperfect man, her child was "holy, God's Son." (Luke 1:35) To this One it was granted by God's holy spirit to have all the riches of wisdom and knowledge, including a deep insight into the true condition of fallen humankind.—Col. 2:1-3.

²⁵ Christ Jesus, the Greater than Moses, served too as the fine shepherd, keeper of God's flock of sheeplike humans. (John 10:11; Ezek. 34:31) He, too, spent himself on behalf of his flock, and in due course offered himself as the perfect "Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) On the third day Jehovah raised him out of death as a mighty spirit and seated him at his own right hand in heaven.—Acts 2:32, 33.

²⁶ In the case of Moses, Jehovah gave

21. Of what should this convince us today?

22, 23. Outline the record of Moses as God's prophet dispatched to Pharaoh, and as the mediator in behalf of the posterity of Abraham.

24, 25. What striking correspondence can we note in the record of Christ Jesus?

26. That Aaron became spokesman for Moses, points to what fact in the modern fulfillment?

him a spokesman. Yes, Aaron, his own fleshly brother, was made spokesman for Moses. (Ex. 7:1, 2) Christ Jesus, the Greater Moses, is also furnished an earthly spokesman, so to speak, one that is conveniently available on earth in view of Christ Jesus' ascension to God's right hand. That spokesman is a congregation of spirit-anointed followers of his, each one bearing to him the relationship of spiritual brother.—Heb. 2:11, 12.

²⁷ Can you see it all now? Moses and Aaron empowered with the rod of authority by the Most High God, Jehovah! Today, however, it is Christ upon his throne since the year 1914 C.E. and his anointed followers on earth, all together, who are empowered by holy spirit from God to perform service in behalf of Jehovah's name. God's name must be brought to prominence, and, despite all opposition, visible and invisible, it must be magnified before all nations.

A NEW ELEMENT IN WORLD AFFAIRS

²⁸ Perhaps you have wondered why, at their first appearance in the name of Jehovah, Pharaoh did not arrest and imprison and even kill Moses and Aaron. Jehovah had provided against that contingency by immediately giving proof before the whole court of Pharaoh that Moses was his empowered representative. Recall how "Aaron's rod [converted into a big snake] swallowed up their rods [also converted into snakes]"? (Ex. 7:12) Pharaoh knew that he was up against superhuman power, though still he hardened his heart.

²⁹ Similarly, though Satan and his henchmen would like to silence and destroy God's servers of notice, his Christian witnesses, and to attain that end are willing to bring

plenty of evil upon all of their enslaved subjects, yet Satan knows that Jehovah's hand of protection is over his people. And all the evil that Satan and his underlings can bring to bear upon all peoples is as nothing compared to the evil that Jehovah deals out. Certainly, when Jehovah commanded the Greater Moses, Christ Jesus, to "go subduing in the midst of your enemies" in the year 1914 C.E., the Greater Pharaoh and all his visible and invisible abettors felt the authority of Christ and his heavenly hosts. Though hardening their hearts, they realize that their time is short before the time of final accounting arrives.—Rev. 12:7-9, 12; Ps. 110:1, 2.

³⁰ For Satan and all of his system of things, including Christendom, there is more bad news and nothing but bad news. His whole empire is due to be swallowed up in a far vaster calamity that Jehovah will visit upon all nations inside and outside of Egypt "in a spiritual sense": "Look! A calamity is going forth from nation to nation, and a great tempest itself will be roused up from the remotest parts of the earth. And those slain by Jehovah will certainly come to be in that day from one end of the earth clear to the other end of the earth. They will not be bewailed, neither will they be gathered up or be buried. As manure on the surface of the ground they will become."—Jer. 25:32, 33.

³¹ But first, before that devastating display of Jehovah's power wrecks Christendom and the rest of Satan's system of things, the NAME of the Supreme Ruler is to be declared in all the earth, to be made prominent. Not when all enemies lie prone in the dust, but before their well-deserved execution, must Jehovah magnify his glorious Name and force upon the con-

27. How, then, do we see the stage set for the modern declaration of Jehovah's name?

28, 29. How in the ancient drama and in modern application do we understand the fact that Moses and Aaron were not quickly put out of business?

30. What vast calamity faces what is Egypt "in a spiritual sense"?

31, 32. According to the Scriptures, when, and when only, can the final devastation of Satan's whole system come?

sciousness of all those rebels that they are fighting a losing cause.

³² There is, then, no doubt about what must take place in fulfillment of the words Jehovah commanded Moses to transmit to Pharaoh in solemn warning: "For this cause I have kept you in existence, for the sake of showing you my power and in order to have my name declared in all the earth." (Ex. 9:16) So Jehovah's name has to be declared, to friend and foe alike, while at the same time the manifestations of his power will become progressively heavier and heavier upon, not just Christendom, but Satan's whole system and those who cling to it. People's minds, their attitudes, will be molded as by a Great Potter. Who, in the face of God's proclamations of warning, will stick with Egypt "in a spiritual sense" and share its doom,

and who will forsake it and all of Satan's organization and find deliverance with Jehovah's chosen, spiritual people?—Rom. 9:21-23.

³³ Back there in that ancient time Jehovah God was directing a real-life drama—a drama that must now be reenacted on a global scale. Today, too, Jehovah directs a modern Aaron class, Christ's anointed followers on earth, in a way that has much to do with shaping the future of multitudes, either for salvation or for destruction. As we observe the details of the unfolding reality of our day, let us exult in the conviction that soon now God's glorious name, Jehovah, will "be great among the nations."—Mal. 1:11.

33. What is the effect today of the modern activity of Christ's anointed followers and their companions, and in what attitude should lovers of righteousness view the sure outcome?

NONE LIKE JEHOVAH

"At this time I am sending all my blows against your heart and upon your servants and your people, to the end that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth."—Ex. 9:14.

CHRIST JESUS, on the throne of Kingdom power since 1914 C.E., has, since 1919 particularly, directed his anointed followers on earth to proclaim the "good news" of the established Kingdom to all nations. (Matt. 24:14) During the succeeding years and right up to the present, that message has indeed been "good news" to hundreds of thousands of men, women and children throughout all lands. They have welcomed the knowledge that soon now God's kingdom, already established in the heavens with Christ upon the throne,

1. What has been the effect of the message of the established Kingdom on multitudes of people?

IN ALL THE EARTH

will "crush and put an end to all [Satan's] kingdoms" and usher in a long reign of peace and prosperity.—Dan. 2:44.

² It thus happens that the "good news of the kingdom" has always been tied in with words of solemn warning, words of doom for those who insist on sticking to Satan's arrangement of things on earth, because of their being moved by his evil spirit. And how necessary this is! No one must be deceived into thinking that the grand promises of the Kingdom will be

2. Is the Kingdom message "good news" to all, and why do you so answer?

fulfilled through any part of this present wicked system of things. The Devil's earthly empire, commercial, political and religious, is doomed and already exposed as being incurably corrupt, diseased and filthy. People of honest heart should separate themselves from it and seek safety with Jehovah's true worshipers.

³ Let no one, therefore, be surprised to learn that the "good news of the kingdom" contains the very elements that Jehovah uses to deliver blow after blow against the proudhearted Greater Pharaoh, Satan the Devil, and against all his servants and supporters. Not in the hope that Satan and his demons and his conscience-seared visible representatives will repent is this message declared world wide. Rather, it is to prove Jehovah's unique and supreme position. It is to prove to Satan and his whole combination of powers, invisible and visible, that they are unable to halt or evade the torment and chagrin that this message produces. It is also purposed that even at this late date persons of honest heart and who have a love for what is right may yet separate themselves from Satan's system of things and throw themselves on the mercy of the great Giver of the "good news."

⁴ So where do you stand? Are you still tied in with one or more of the numerous sections of the Satanic earthly empire? Do you support its political schemes or its religious organizations that have deceived so many millions as to what is really the will of God? Are you motivated by the ultra-selfish spirit that Satan the Devil originated, a spirit that is mercenary, that has little concern for the welfare and rights of others, that produces rivalries, lying, cheating, violence and war?

3. How, then, does the Kingdom message relate to the application today of the "blows" against Pharaoh, his servants and his people?

4. What questions should thoughtful persons living in this vital era of history put to themselves, and with what in view?

How vital to take stock and determine where you stand in this decisive hour when people's hearts will be hardened or softened, hardened like Pharaoh's or softened like those of the vast mixed multitude that went forth into freedom with the sons of Israel!—Ex. 12:38.

BLOOD, FROGS, AND GNATS

⁵ Ever since the January 1, 1921, issue of this magazine, with its explanation of the symbolic beast of Revelation chapter 13, was published, the Kingdom message has continuously exposed the death-dealing spirit of selfish commercialism that permeates the whole of Satan's system of things, just as all the waters of the Nile and related canals became blood.* Living creatures in the Nile died and the waters stank as a result of this blow. The wide proclamation by God's witnesses on earth has offered ample proof that those choosing to remain with Satan's earthly empire will sicken spiritually and die. It does not take much discernment for people today to detect the rotten state of Satan's commercialized system of things. The stench is too great to be ignored.

⁶ During the whole remaining time of Satan's invisible rule over the nations, for the entire "seven days," the exposure of selfish commercialism must go on. (Ex. 7:25) It is not yet too late to get out of that organization that has the smell of death, and join in declaring the warning, that others too might be assisted to escape. How grand the privilege of those who share in such a bold proclamation to God's glory!

⁷ But what has the Kingdom message to

* See pages 370-372 of the Watchtower issue of July 15, 1965, under the heading "First Plague—Nile's Water Becomes Blood."

5. The Nile's waters being turned to blood and the effects of that event are fulfilled how in connection with the Kingdom message?

6. That the "blood plague" continued for seven days indicates what?

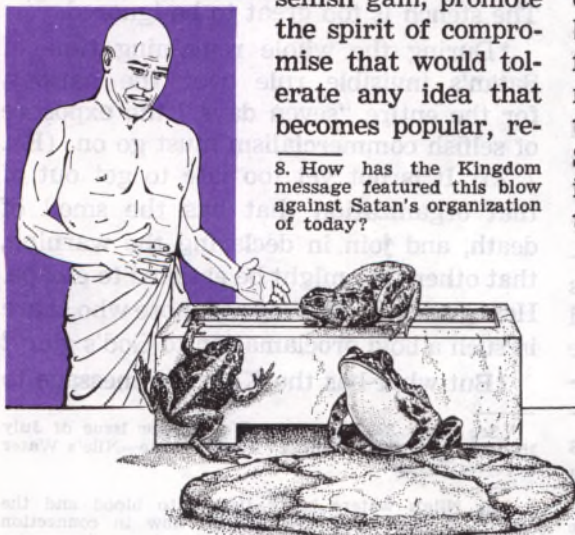
7. How do we connect the "frog plague" with the filthy, immoral conditions of Satan's system of things?

do with frogs? Well, frogs are slimy and unclean like the reptile, they advertise their disgusting presence by croaking, and they love to dwell in dank, marshy places. Christ Jesus gave his apostle John a vision wherein he saw "unclean inspired expressions that looked like frogs." (Rev. 16: 13, 14) These were identified as being "expressions inspired by demons." Demons or disobedient angels produced a terribly corrupt condition among men just prior to the Flood, and there can be no doubt that demons have much to do with promoting immoral thinking and acting today. (Gen. 6:5) Frogs overrunning Egypt well picture, therefore, the resulting filthy, debased, immoral condition of human society. In our time, by printed page, by radio, by movies and by television, the immoral froglike "croakings" are dispersed far and wide, to young and old.

⁸ The message proclaimed by God's witnesses on earth has had much to say about the unparalleled moral breakdown, the rising tide of delinquency, the criminal way in which commerce and religion, for

selfish gain, promote the spirit of compromise that would tolerate any idea that becomes popular, re-

8. How has the Kingdom message featured this blow against Satan's organization of today?



Ancient Egypt's being overrun with frogs pictures the filthy and immoral condition of human society

gardless of its moral status. The proclamation of these facts has embarrassed and chagrined Satan's agents. Those who share in such exposure of this world's filthiness declare plainly where they stand. Do you?

⁹ It has been easy for reform movements forming part of Satan's system of things to reproduce, even if only in a small way, the plaguing effects of God's message relating to "frogs" and "blood." They had only to protest some of the more blatant injustices and immoralities of Egypt as prefigured in Ezekiel, chapters 29-32. But when it comes to Jehovah's third blow against the Greater Pharaoh, his agents cannot in any degree duplicate it. Why? Because they dare not lose face and admit that the organization of which they form a part is in very deed "Satan's organization."

¹⁰ All the dry land of Egypt produced clouds of gnats, tiny verminous insects that lodged on the skin and painfully bit their victims. Even the priesthood of the Pharaohs who boasted of their cleanliness, dressed only in white linen, bathed frequently and even shaved their entire bodies—even they were attacked. That infested condition of all Egypt clearly signifies in modern times the unclean condition of a world-embracing society under Satan the Devil, a system of things that is clearly identified as "Satan's organization." True, such an epithet offends the susceptibilities of Satan's religious and political leaders, but they find themselves unable to silence the exposure. They are, like Pharaoh's magic-practicing priests, forced to conclude that no compromising deal can be made with Jehovah's witnesses in order to silence the distasteful message.—Ex. 8:19.

9. In modern fulfillment, how has it been easy for the agents of the Greater Pharaoh to duplicate in an insignificant way the blows featuring blood and frogs?

10. But why is it not possible for agents of Satan's system of things to duplicate the third blow?

JEHOVAH DISCIPLINES HIS OWN

¹¹ Those three punishing features of the Kingdom message brought to bear upon the Greater Pharaoh, his servants and his subject peoples, affected also those who make up the tribes of spiritual Israel. They, too, like worldlings, had once been motivated by the death-dealing spirit of selfishness or commercialism. They, too, had been mixed up with the immoralities of a wicked world of humans. (1 Cor. 6: 9-11) They, too, had shared in the uncleanness due to being part of Satan's lawless organization. They needed to be utensils 'sanctified, useful to their owner, prepared for every good work.'—2 Tim. 2: 15-21.

¹² Happily for them, Jehovah has extended to them a cleansing education by means of his Word of truth, so that there is now a clear separation between them and Satan's unclean earthly empire. The Kingdom proclaimers of modern times have undergone an Isaiah-like experience, an experience that has prepared their lips to proclaim boldly the additional judgment features of the Kingdom message. (Isa. 6:6, 7) What a marvelous privilege to be used by Jehovah in sounding out the doom of a wicked world!

GADFLIES, PESTILENCE, BOILS

¹³ Other judicial pronouncements of Jehovah as to the state of Satan's system of things were foreshadowed by the next three blows against Pharaoh. The Devil's helplessness and failure to evade and offset these blows offer continuing proof that there is none like Jehovah. The gadflies that stung and tormented man and beast had a decimating effect on the Egyptian

economy. (Ps. 78:45) So the Kingdom message's exposure of all the false doctrines and pagan mysteries of Satan's false religion has been destructive of the influence wielded by his religious organization among credulous multitudes. The falsity of teachings such as the triune deity, the divine right of kings, immortality of the human soul, transmigration of souls, tortures in literal fires of hell or purgatory, teachings that the clergy have always delighted to inculcate in the gullible masses, has now been laid bare. The widely published Bible truths on these matters have maddened the false shepherds of worldly religion, while the true source of the superstitious fears under which they have labored and been victimized is made plain to many.

¹⁴ The pestilence upon ancient Egypt particularly struck at her source of wealth, her beasts of burden. (Ex. 9:6) In Egypt as described in Ezekiel, chapters 29-32 the 'beasts of burden' are the human slaves who have been tyrannized into supporting and promoting Satan's system of things. Just as the pestilence caused all sorts of Pharaoh's four-footed burden bearers to die off, in the same way the Kingdom message has opened the eyes of multitudes slaving for Satan's organization, and they have died as far as being active supporters anymore. Indeed, many have separated themselves from the devilish organization and become willing burden bearers in connection with the Kingdom work directed by the Greater Moses, Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ The plague of boils and pus-filled blisters also points to still another punishing feature of the Kingdom message. How is that? The clue is noted in the words of

11. What do we see to be the reason for the Israelites' receiving the first three blows in common with the Egyptians, and what does this mean today?

12. Through what process have today's bold Kingdom proclaimers passed, thus fitting them for their service?

13. How have "gadflies" had a crippling effect on antitypical Egypt?

14. In modern application, who are the 'beasts of burden' and what pestilence has caused them to begin dying off, and just how can they be said to have died?

15. How do we detect the fulfillment of the epidemic of boils with blisters that came on Egypt?

Revelation 16:2, referring to the hurtful and malignant ulcers that came upon all those who angered Jehovah by worshipping and looking to mere human schemes for world betterment and salvation. Time after time this magazine and related publications have pointed to the incurable, poisoned condition of Satan's organization. Publishers of this message have had and are still having a wonderful share in spreading to all who will listen God's own view of a deathly sick system of things. It is not too late for others to join them. Soon, however, it will be too late.

HAIL, LOCUSTS, DARKNESS

¹⁶ No, indeed, the Kingdom message decreed by Jehovah to be loudly announced in all the earth is no suave, healing, soothing message to those who harden their hearts to righteousness and truth. It cuts and bruises and burns such ones, as did the "hail, and fire quivering in among the hail" that came upon Egypt. (Ex. 9:24) In the view of Satan's earthly representatives the waters of truth are like a downpour of chunks of ice that have the effect of 'sweeping away their refuge of lies.' (Isa. 28:17) Only those who forsake the Satanic system and heed the warning message of the Kingdom get relief.

¹⁷ Like the locusts, which devoured everything in Egypt having any promise of life and growth, the thorough and continual house-to-house ministry by God's witnesses in all nations with the denunciatory message of the Bible has exposed the false promises and the fiction of success claimed by Satan's lying religious and political agents. As greenery in typical Egypt became almost nonexistent, so to-

day in antitypical Egypt there are but few creatures left who have promise or hope of life. It is the final opportunity for any such to get out of the doomed organization while still there is time, before the coming "great tribulation" as foretold by Jesus Christ in Matthew 24:21, 22.

¹⁸ A little taste of that 'blackness of darkness forever' mentioned in the Christian Greek Scriptures was given ancient Egypt. (Jude 13) For three days the people could not stir from their dwellings because of the pall of "darkness [that] may be felt." (Ex. 10:21) Likewise today, Satan's organization and all who form part of it are plunged into spiritual darkness, its religious, political and scientific wiseacres having no clue to the real meaning of world trends and no hopeful message for the peoples. The apostle Paul long ago described the nations as being "in darkness mentally, and alienated from the life that belongs to God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the insensibility of their hearts. Having come to be past all moral sense, they [give] themselves over to loose conduct to work uncleanness of every sort with greediness." (Eph. 4:18, 19) How well deserved the modern plague of darkness, how just the judgments of Jehovah upon them!

FIRSTBORN FOR FIRSTBORN

¹⁹ Continually Pharaoh of old hardened his heart. He did so once too often, for now came Jehovah's time to carry out his long-delayed threat: "Israel is my son, my first-born. . . . Send my son away that he may serve me [without obstruction]. But should you refuse to send him away, here I am killing your son, your first-

16. How, in the view of Satan's agents today, does the Kingdom message appear like "hail, and fire quivering in among the hail"?

17. In what way may it be said that antitypical Egypt has suffered from the ravages of a locust invasion?

18. Just what is the nature of the "darkness" that enshrouds Satan's world today, and how is it evidenced?

19. What announced threat did Jehovah carry out as a tenth great blow against Pharaoh, his servants and his people?

born." (Ex. 4:22, 23) Pharaoh had presumed upon the long-suffering of God, and so on that night of the tenth great blow against Pharaoh, the anguished cries of parents arose all over the land. The firstborn of every man and beast had died. —Ex. 12:30.

²⁰ This telling blow, in modern application, is also implicit in the Kingdom message boldly declared by Jehovah's faithful worshippers. The firstborn in ancient times was looked to as the one to carry forward the family name. The first male child would ordinarily inherit the choicest portion of the estate and the position as family head and priest. The firstborn ones of antitypical Egypt evidently are the prominent favored ones of Satan's world, especially the religious leaders. The Kingdom message has mercilessly exposed that class to whom gullible ones looked hopefully for solutions to social and economic problems. The exposure leaves them as good as dead insofar as their claim to being divinely ordained ministers is concerned. And that goes for all of their supposed remedies also, including that greatest hoax of all, the United Nations.

²¹ Satan's ruling elements in all the world will never recognize the credentials of the true priests and witnesses of God and Christ, and, rather than listen to their Bible-backed counsel, they seek to undermine, belittle and silence the Kingdom message. They refuse to be enlightened. So, Jehovah acts to reveal his choice of the true priesthood under Christ, "the congregation of the first-born who have been enrolled in the heavens." (Heb. 12:23) His Kingdom proclamation shatters the reputation of the false religious ministers.

20. How has this tenth great blow in modern application been an element of the Kingdom message?

21. Why does it become necessary for Jehovah to take this drastic action?

²² In the past you may have been highly critical of that severe exposure of religious frauds, but today you are faced with a multitude of facts that prove the accuracy of Jehovah's appraisal of those hypocrites. It is obvious that God's favor is not upon the divided, discordant, tradition-laden, worldly-minded religious leaders of Satan's world. They are part of his world, Satan's world, and, like it, due to pass away soon. —1 John 2:17.

²³ In striking contrast, consider the condition of God's true worshippers today. From among them the lying, mind-tormenting doctrines of false religion have been purged. Rather than losing burden bearers, they see a growing host of willing ones pressing forward and seizing the opportunity to share the burden of the Kingdom work. No more are God's servants teased by false hopes and cast down by failures, for they have put their trust in God's sure promises. To them the Kingdom message is not like cutting hail, but rather like gentle dew and refreshing rain. No locust plague spoils their greenery of a hopeful future, and no darkness of a spiritual kind brings them foreboding of disaster. Kingdom truth has brought liberation from Babylon the Great to multitudes now, as well as promise of complete emancipation from Satanic oppressions soon.

AVOIDING FINAL EXECUTION OF JUDGMENT

²⁴ Jehovah was not yet through with Pharaoh. Even though the pressure of his fearful subjects moved him to let the Israelites depart, Pharaoh's proud heart soon dictated that he should pursue the escaping host and reduce them to servitude again or kill them all. That was his greatest mistake. It laid the scene for the

22, 23. Contrast the conditions of the spurious "first-born" class and the true "congregation of the first-born."

24. What was Pharaoh's greatest mistake, and why do you say so?

grandest demonstration of all—a demonstration proving that there was and is none like Jehovah in all the earth. God had prepared a gigantic trap for the very one who thought he had the Israelites entrapped between the desert and the sea.—Ex. 14:3.

²⁵ Just so in modern times the Greater Pharaoh, under his title “Gog,” will seek to undo all of Jehovah’s marvelous liberation work. But Jehovah assures all those who have fled to Him as their refuge that he is fully prepared to handle the situation. (Ezek. 38:14-16) Satan and his powerful servants and all his willing supporters will be the ones to suffer humiliating defeat and destruction, while the liberated slaves praise the strong hand and outstretched arm of the Supreme Sovereign, Jehovah of armies.—Ex. 15:1-21.

²⁶ Soon now the tremendous Egyptian disaster at the Red Sea will be dwarfed by the magnitude of the calamity that will engulf the Greater Pharaoh and all his supporters. That final execution comes at

25. What, then, may soon be expected of the Greater Pharaoh in connection with the great crowd who have been liberated from his power?

26. What grand victory are we justified in expecting on the basis of God’s dealings with Pharaoh?

and immediately after Armageddon. Not only will modern antitypical Egypt be brought to ruin like Sodom and faithless Judea, but the Greater Pharaoh will himself be chained and abyssed by the Field Marshal of God’s heavenly forces, Christ Jesus. (Rev. 20:1-3) What a victory that will be, worthy of the loftiest strains of praise and gratitude to the God who proves beyond all question of doubt that “there is none like [him] in all the earth”!

²⁷ But where will you be in that vital day of execution of judgment now drawing on apace? Will you have put off your flight from antitypical Egypt until too late? Or, will you be one of the mixed multitude that joined themselves to the marching, victorious throng of Jehovah’s liberated people? Will you from the heart be sounding the praises of the Liberator and boldly pronouncing the doom of Satan, the “god of this system of things,” and his whole world? May it be your lot to share the everlasting victory that God by Christ will achieve. It is yours to decide and to act in order to assure to yourself that happy future.

27. How may each one assure to himself a share in that grand victory?

Jonah Preached in Nineveh

ACCORDING to the Bible record, in the ninth century B.C.E. the Hebrew prophet Jonah traveled hundreds of miles to preach to the inhabitants of the ancient Assyrian capital of Nineveh. As a result of his preaching, “the men of Nineveh began to put faith in God.” Even “the king of Nineveh . . . covered himself with sackcloth . . . And the true God got to see their works, that they had turned back from their bad way; and so the true God felt regret over the calamity that he had spoken of causing to them; and he did not cause it.”—Jonah 3:1-10.

The Bible, however, is not the only source that testifies to Jonah’s visit to that ancient site of Nineveh. The *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Volume 16, page 461, 1946 edition, observes:

“The ancient capital of the Assyrian empire lay on the right bank of the Tigris opposite the modern city of Mosul. It consists of two great mounds, Kouyunjik and that on which today is the reputed tomb of the prophet Jonah (Nebi Yunus).” The name “Nebi Yunus” means “The Tomb of the Prophet Jonah.”

The books *Everyday Life in Ancient Times* by the National Geographic Society, and *Archaeology and Our Old Testament Contemporaries* by James Kelso, contain pictures of the mound and mosque built to one side of it. It is interesting to note that, throughout the ages, the people of that area have honored the memory of the one who enabled early inhabitants of Nineveh to escape destruction.

The FOREKNOWLEDGE of GOD

HOW we understand God's foreknowledge and his exercise of that amazing power can seriously affect our relationship to God. To view the matter correctly, however, certain factors must be recognized.

First, God's ability to foreknow and foreordain is clearly stated in the Bible. Jehovah himself sets forth as proof of his Godship this ability to foreknow and foreordain events of salvation and deliverance, as well as acts of judgment and punishment, and then to bring such events to fulfillment. (Isa. 44:6-9; 48:3-8) Such divine foreknowledge and foreordination form the basis for all true prophecy. (Isa. 42:9; Jer. 50:45; Amos 3:7, 8) God challenges the gods of the nations opposing his people to furnish proof of the godship that is claimed for their idol-gods, he calling on these gods to do so by foretelling similar acts of salvation or judgment and then bringing them to pass. Their impotency in this respect demonstrates their idols to be 'mere wind and unreality.'—Isa. 41:1-10, 21-29; 43:9-15; 45:20, 21.

A second factor to be considered is the free moral agency of God's intelligent creatures. The Scriptures show that God extends to such creatures the privilege and responsibility of free choice, of exercising free moral agency (Deut. 30:19, 20; Josh. 24:15), thereby making them accountable for their acts. (Rom. 14:10-12; Heb. 4:13) They are thus not mere

automatons or robots. Man could not truly have been created in "God's image" if he were not a free moral agent. (Gen. 1:26, 27) Logically, there should be no conflict between God's foreknowledge (as well as his foreordaining) and the free moral agency of his intelligent creatures.

Another factor that must be considered, one sometimes overlooked, is that of God's moral standards and qualities, including his justice, honesty and impartiality, his love, mercy and kindness, as revealed in the Bible. Any understanding of God's use of the powers of foreknowledge and foreordination must therefore harmonize with not only some of these factors, but all of them.

Clearly, whatever God foreknows must inevitably come to pass, so that God is able to call "things that are not as though they were." (Rom. 4:17) The question then arises: Is his exercise of foreknowledge infinite, without limit? Does he foresee and foreknow all future actions of all his creatures? And does he foreordain such actions or even predestinate what shall be the final destiny of all his creatures, even doing so before they have come into existence?

Or, is God's exercise of foreknowledge selective and discretionary, so that whatever he chooses to foresee and foreknow, he does, but what he does not choose to foresee or foreknow, he does not? And, rather than his determination's preceding

their existence, does God's determination of his creatures' eternal destiny await his judgment of their course of life and of their proved attitude under test? The answers to these questions must necessarily come from the Scriptures themselves.

PREDESTINARIAN VIEW

The view that God's exercise of his foreknowledge is infinite and that he does foreordain the course and destiny of all individuals is known as predestinarianism. Its advocates reason that God's divinity and perfection require that he be omniscient (all-knowing), not only respecting the past and present, but also regarding the future. For him not to foreknow all matters in their every detail would evidence imperfection, according to this concept.

But consider the implications of such a predestinarian view. This concept would mean that, prior to creating angels or earthling man, God exercised his powers of foreknowledge and foresaw and foreknew all that would result from such creation, including the rebellion of one of his spirit sons, the subsequent rebellion of the first human pair in Eden (Gen. 3:1-6; John 8:44), and all the bad consequences of such rebellion down to and beyond this present day. This would necessarily mean that all the wickedness that history has recorded (the crime and immorality, oppression and resultant suffering, lying and hypocrisy, false worship and idolatry) once existed, before creation's beginning, only in the mind of God, in the form of his foreknowledge of the future.

If the Creator of mankind had indeed exercised his power to foreknow all that history has seen since man's creation, then the full force of all the wickedness thereafter resulting was deliberately set in motion by God when he spoke the words: "Let us make man." (Gen. 1:26) These facts bring into question the reasonable-

ness and consistency of the predestinarian concept; particularly so since the disciple James shows that disorder and other vile things do not originate from God's heavenly presence but are "earthly, animal, demonic" in source.—Jas. 3:14-18.

The argument that God's not foreknowing all future events and circumstances in full detail would evidence imperfection on his part is, in reality, an arbitrary view of perfection. Ultimately, God's own will and good pleasure are the deciding factors as to whether anything is perfect, not human opinions or concepts.—2 Sam. 22:31; Isa. 46:10.

To illustrate this, God's almightiness is undeniably perfect and is infinite in capacity. (1 Chron. 29:11, 12; Job 36:22; 37:23) Yet his perfection in strength does not require him to use his power to the full extent of his omnipotence in any or in all cases. Clearly he has not done so, or, not merely would certain ancient cities and some nations have been destroyed, but the earth and all in it would have been obliterated long ago by God's executions of judgment, as at the Flood and on other occasions. (Gen. 6:5-8; 19:23-25, 29) God's exercise of his might is therefore not simply an unleashing of limitless power but is constantly governed by his purpose and tempered by his mercy, where merited.—Neh. 9:31; Ps. 78:38, 39.

Similarly, if, in certain respects, God chooses to exercise his infinite ability of foreknowledge in a selective way and to the degree that pleases him, then assuredly no human or angel can rightly say: "What are you doing?" (Job 9:12; Isa. 45:9; Dan. 4:35) It is therefore not a question of ability, what God *can* foresee, foreknow and foreordain, for "with God all things are possible." (Matt. 19:26) The question is what God *sees fit* to foresee, foreknow and foreordain, for "everything that he delighted to do he has done."—Ps. 115:3.

THE alternative to predestinarianism, namely, the selective or discretionary exercise of God's powers of foreknowledge, would have to harmonize with God's own righteous standards and be consistent with what he reveals of himself in his Word. In contrast with the theory of predestinarianism, a number of Bible texts point to an examination made by God of a situation then current and a decision made on the basis of such examination.

Thus, after wickedness developed at the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Jehovah advised Abraham of his decision to investigate (by means of his angels) to "see whether they act altogether according to the outcry over it that has come to me, and, if not, *I can get to know it.*" (Gen. 18:20-22; 19:1) God spoke of 'becoming acquainted with Abraham,' and after Abraham went to the point of attempting to sacrifice Isaac, Jehovah said, "For now I do know that you are God-fearing in that you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me."—Gen. 18:19; 22:11, 12.

Selective foreknowledge means that God could choose *not* to foreknow indiscriminately all the future acts of his creatures. This would mean that, rather than all history from creation onward being a mere rerun of what had already been foreseen and foreordained, God could with all sincerity set before the first human pair the prospect of everlasting life in an earth free of wickedness. His instructions to his first human son and daughter to act as his perfect and sinless agents in filling the earth with their offspring and making it a paradise, as well as exercising control over the animal creation, could thus be expressed as the grant of a truly loving privilege and as his genuine desire toward them—not merely the giving of a commission that, on their part, was foredoomed to failure. God's arranging for a test by means of the "tree of the knowledge of

Selective exercise of **FOREKNOWLEDGE**

good and bad" and his creation of the "tree of life" in the garden of Eden also would not be meaningless or cynical acts, made so by his foreknowing that the human pair would sin and never be able to eat of the "tree of life."—Gen. 1:28; 2:7-9, 15-17; 3:22-24.

To offer something very desirable to another person on conditions known beforehand to be unreachable, is recognized as both hypocritical and cruel. The prospect of everlasting life is presented in God's Word as a goal for all persons, one possible to attain. After urging his listeners to 'keep on asking and seeking' good things from God, Jesus pointed out that a father does not give a stone or a serpent to his child asking for bread or a fish. Showing his Father's view of disappointing the legitimate hopes of a person, Jesus then said: "Therefore, if you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will your Father who is in the heavens give good things to those asking him?"—Matt. 7:7-11.

Thus, the invitations and opportunities to receive benefits and everlasting blessings set before all men by God are bona fide. (Matt. 21:22; Jas. 1:5, 6) He can in all sincerity urge men to 'turn back from transgression and keep living,' as he did with the people of Israel. (Ezek. 18:23, 30-32) Logically, he could not do this if he foreknew that they were individually destined to die in wickedness. As Jehovah told Israel: "Nor said I to the seed of Ja-

cob, 'Seek me simply for nothing, you people.' I am Jehovah, speaking what is righteous, telling what is upright. . . . Turn to me and be saved, all you at the ends of the earth."—Isa. 45:19-22.

In a similar vein, the apostle Peter writes: "Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise [of the presence of Jehovah's day], as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance." (2 Pet. 3:9, 12) If God already foreknew and foreordained millennia before precisely which individuals would receive eternal salvation and which individuals would receive eternal destruction, it may well be asked how meaningful such 'patience' of God could be and how genuine his desire could be that 'all attain to repentance.' The inspired apostle John wrote that "God is love," and the apostle Paul states that love "hopes all things." (1 John 4:8; 1 Cor. 13:4, 7) It is in harmony with this outstanding divine quality that God should exercise a genuinely open, kindly attitude toward all persons, desirous of their gaining salvation, until they prove themselves unworthy, beyond hope. (Compare 2 Peter 3:9;

Hebrews 6:4-12.) Thus, the apostle Paul speaks of the "kindly quality of God [that] is trying to lead you to repentance."—Rom. 2:4-6.

Finally, it could not truly be said that Christ Jesus' ransom sacrifice was made available to all men, if the opportunity to receive its benefits were already irrevocably sealed off from some—perhaps for millions of individuals—by God's foreknowledge, even before their birth, so that such ones could never prove worthy thereof. (2 Cor. 5:14, 15; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6; Heb. 2:9) The impartiality of God is clearly no mere figure of speech. "In every nation the man that fears [God] and works righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35; Deut. 10:17; Rom. 2:11) The option is actually and genuinely open to all men "to seek God, if they might grope for him and really find him, although, in fact, he is not far off from each one of us." (Acts 17:26, 27) There is no empty hope or hollow promise set forth, therefore, in the divine exhortation at the end of the book of Revelation inviting: "Let anyone hearing say: 'Come!' And let anyone thirsting come; *let anyone that wishes* take life's water free."—Rev. 22:17.

Things

FOREKNOWN by GOD

THROUGHOUT the Bible record, God's exercise of foreknowledge and foreordination is consistently tied in with his own purposes and will. Since God's purposes are certain of accomplishment, he can foreknow the results, the ultimate realization of his purposes, and can foreordain them, as well as the steps he may

see fit to take to accomplish them. (Isa. 14:24-27) Thus, Jehovah is spoken of as 'forming' or 'fashioning' his purpose concerning future events or actions. (2 Ki. 19:25; Isa. 46:11) As the Great Potter, God "operates all things according to the way his will counsels," in harmony with his purpose (Eph. 1:11), and "makes all his works co-operate together" for the good of those loving him. (Rom. 8:28) It is, therefore, specifically in

connection with his own foreordained purposes that God tells "from the beginning the finale, and from long ago the things that have not been done."—Isa. 46:9-13.

When God created the first human pair they were perfect, and God could look upon the result of all his creative work and find it "very good." (Gen. 1:26, 31; Deut. 32:4) Rather than distrustfully concerning himself with what the human pair's future actions would be, the record says that he "proceeded to rest." (Gen. 2:2) He could do so since, by virtue of his almightiness and his supreme wisdom, no future action, circumstance or contingency could possibly present an insurmountable obstacle or an irremediable problem to block the realization of his sovereign purpose.—2 Chron. 20:6; Isa. 14:27; Dan. 4:35.

FOREKNOWLEDGE

CONCERNING CLASSES OF PERSONS

Cases are presented in which God did foreknow the course that certain *groups*, *nations* or the *majority of mankind* would take, and thus he foretold the basic course of their future actions and foreordained what corresponding action he would take regarding them. However, such foreknowledge or foreordination does not deprive the individuals within such collective groups or divisions of mankind of the exercise of free choice as to the particular course they will follow. This can be seen from the following examples:

Prior to the flood of Noah's day, Jehovah announced his purpose to bring about this act of destruction, resulting in loss of human, as well as animal, life. The Biblical account shows, however, that such divine determination was made after the conditions developed that called for such action. Additionally, God, who is able to "know the heart of the sons of mankind,"

made examination and found that "every inclination of the thoughts of [mankind's] heart was only bad all the time." (2 Chron. 6:30; Gen. 6:5) Yet *individuals*, Noah and his family, gained God's favor and escaped destruction.—Gen. 6:7, 8; 7:1.

Similarly with the nation of Israel; although God gave them the opportunity to become a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" by keeping his covenant, yet some forty years later, when the nation was at the borders of the Promised Land, Jehovah foretold that they would break his covenant and, as a nation, would be forsaken by him. This foreknowledge was not without prior basis, however, as national insubordination and rebellion already had been revealed. Hence, God said: "For I well know their inclination that they are developing today before I bring them into the land about which I have sworn." (Deut. 31:21; Ps. 81:10-13) The results to which such manifest inclination would now lead in the way of increased wickedness could be foreknown by God without making him responsible for it due to his foreknowledge, even as one's foreknowing that a certain structure built of inferior materials and with shoddy workmanship will deteriorate does not make that one responsible for such deterioration. Certain prophets delivered prophetic warnings of God's foreordained expressions of judgment, all of which had basis in already existing conditions and heart attitudes. (Ps. 7:8, 9; Prov. 11:19; Jer. 11:20) Here again, however, individuals could and did respond to God's counsel, reproof and warnings and merited his favor.—Jer. 21:8, 9; Ezek. 33:1-20.

God's Son, who also could read human hearts (Matt. 9:4; Mark 2:8; John 2:24, 25), was divinely endowed with powers of foreknowledge and foretold future conditions, events and expressions of divine judgment. He foretold the judgment of Ge-

henna for the scribes and Pharisees as a class (Matt. 23:15, 33), but did not say thereby that each individual Pharisee or scribe was foredoomed to destruction, as the case of the apostle Paul shows. (Acts 26:4, 5) Jesus predicted woes for the unrepentant populaces of Jerusalem and other cities, but did not indicate that his Father had foreordained that each individual of those cities should so suffer. (Matt. 11:20-23; Luke 19:41-44; 21:20, 21) He also foreknew what mankind's inclination and heart attitude would lead to and foretold the conditions that would have developed among mankind by the time of the "conclusion of the system of things," as well as the outworkings of God's own purposes.—Matt. 24:3, 7-14, 21, 22.

FOREKNOWLEDGE CONCERNING INDIVIDUALS

In addition to there being foreknowledge concerning classes, certain individuals are specifically involved in divine forecasts. These include Esau and Jacob, the Pharaoh of the Exodus, Samson, Solomon, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Judas Iscariot, and God's own Son, Jesus.

In the cases of Samson, Jeremiah and John the Baptist, Jehovah exercised foreknowledge prior to their birth. This foreknowledge, however, did not specify what their final destiny would be. Rather, on the basis of such foreknowledge, Jehovah foreordained that Samson should live according to the Nazirite vow and should initiate the deliverance of Israel from the Philistines, that Jeremiah should serve as a prophet, and that John the Baptist should do a preparatory work as a forerunner of the Messiah. (Judg. 13:3-5; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:13-17) While they were highly favored by such privileges, this did not guarantee their gaining eternal salvation or even that they would remain faithful until death (although all three did).

Thus, Jehovah foretold that one of David's many sons would be named Solomon and he foreordained that Solomon would be used to build the temple. (2 Sam. 7:12, 13; 1 Ki. 6:12; 1 Chron. 22:6-19) However, though favored in this way and even privileged to write certain books of the Holy Scriptures, Solomon nevertheless fell into apostasy in his later years.—1 Ki. 11:4, 9-11.

Likewise with Esau and Jacob, God's foreknowledge did not fix their eternal destinies but, rather, determined or foreordained which of the national groups descending from the two sons would gain a dominant position over the other. (Gen. 25:23-26) This foreseen dominance also pointed to the gaining of the right of the firstborn by Jacob, a right that brought along with it the privilege of being of the line of descent through which the Abrahamic "seed" would come. (Gen. 27:29; 28:13, 14) By this means Jehovah God made clear that his choice of individuals for certain uses is not bound by the usual customs or procedures conforming to men's expectations. Nor are divinely assigned privileges to be dispensed solely on the basis of works, so that a person may feel he has 'earned the right' to such privileges and that they are 'owed to him.' This point the apostle Paul stressed in showing why God, by undeserved kindness, could grant to the Gentile nations privileges once seemingly reserved for Israel.—Rom. 9:1-6, 10-13, 30-32.

Paul's quotation concerning Jehovah's 'love for Jacob [Israel] and his hatred for Esau [Edom]' comes from Malachi 1:2, 3, written long after Jacob and Esau's time. So the Bible does not necessarily say that Jehovah held such opinion of the twins before their birth. It is a scientifically established fact that much of a child's general disposition and temperament are determined at the time of conception, due

to the genetic factors contributed by each parent. That God can see such factors is self-evident; David speaks of Jehovah as seeing "even the embryo of me." (Ps. 139:14-16; see also Ecclesiastes 11:5.) To what extent such divine insight affected Jehovah's foreordination concerning the two boys cannot be said, but, at any rate, his choice of Jacob over Esau

did not of itself doom Esau or his descendants, the Edomites, to destruction. The "change of mind" that Esau earnestly sought

with tears, however, was only an unsuccessful attempt to change his father Isaac's decision that the firstborn's special blessing should remain entirely with Jacob. Hence, this indicated no repentance before God on Esau's part as to his materialistic attitude.—Gen. 27:32-34; Heb. 12:16, 17.

These cases of foreknowledge prior to the individual's birth thus do not conflict with God's revealed qualities and announced standards. Nor is there any indication that God coerced the individuals to act against their own will. In the cases of Pharaoh, Judas Iscariot, and God's own Son, there is no evidence that Jehovah's foreknowledge was exercised prior to the person's coming into existence. Within these individual cases certain principles are illustrated, bearing on God's foreknowledge and foreordination.

One such principle is God's testing of individuals by causing or allowing certain circumstances or events, or by causing such individuals to hear his inspired messages, the result being that they are obliged to exercise their free choice to make a decision and thus reveal a definite heart attitude, read by Jehovah. (Prov. 15:11;

1 Pet. 1:6, 7; Heb. 4:12, 13) According to the way the individuals respond, God can also mold them in the course they have selected of their own volition. (1 Chron. 28:9; Ps. 33:13-15; 139:1-4, 23, 24) Thus, the "heart of earthling man" first inclines toward a certain way before Jehovah does the directing of such one's steps. (Prov.

16:9; Ps. 51:10)

Under testing, one's heart condition can become fixed, either hardened in unrighteousness and rebellion as was the heart of the Pharaoh at

the time of the Exodus, or made firm in unbreakable devotion to Jehovah God and the doing of his will. (Ex. 4:21; 8:15, 32) Having reached such point of his own choice, the end result of the individual's course can now be foreknown and foretold with no injustice and no violation to man's free moral agency.—Compare Job 34:10-12.

The traitorous course of Judas Iscariot fulfilled divine prophecy and demonstrated Jehovah's foreknowledge, and also that of his Son. (Ps. 41:9; 55:12, 13; 109:8; Acts 1:16-20) Yet it cannot be said that God foreordained or predestinated Judas himself to such a course. The prophecies foretold that some intimate acquaintance of Jesus would be his betrayer, but did not specify which of those sharing such acquaintance it would be. Again, Bible principles rule against God's having foreordained Judas' actions. The divine standard stated by the apostle is: "Never lay your hands hastily upon any man; neither be a sharer in the sins of others; preserve yourself chaste." (1 Tim. 5:22) Evidencing his concern that the selection of his twelve apostles be wisely and prop-

THE NEXT ISSUE

- Is the World Puzzled at Your Course?
—It Should Be!
- How Important Is Prayer to You?
- Humility—a Help in Time of Adversity.

erly made, Jesus spent the night in prayer to his Father before making known his decision. (Luke 6:12-16) If Judas were already divinely foreordained to be a traitor, this would result in inconsistency in God's direction and guidance and, according to the rule, would make him a sharer in the sins that such one committed.

Thus, it seems evident that at the time of his being selected as an apostle, Judas' heart presented no definite evidence of a treasonous attitude. He allowed a 'poisonous root to spring up' and defile him, resulting in his deviation and in his accepting, not God's direction, but the Devil's leading in a course of thievery and treachery. (Heb. 12:14, 15; John 13:2; Acts 1:24, 25; Jas. 1:14, 15) By the time such deviation reached a certain point, Jesus himself could read Judas' heart and foretell his betrayal.—John 13:10, 11.

True, in the account at John 6:64, on the occasion of some disciples stumbling over certain teachings of Jesus, we read that "from the beginning ["from the outset," *Jerusalem Bible*] Jesus knew who were the ones not believing and who was the one that would betray him." While the word "beginning" is used at 2 Peter 3:4 to refer to the start of creation, it can also refer to other times. (Luke 1:2; John 15:27) For example, when the apostle Peter spoke of the holy spirit falling on Gentiles "just as it did also upon us in the beginning," he was referring to the day of Pentecost, 33 C.E., the "beginning" of the outpouring of the holy spirit for a certain purpose. (Acts 11:15; 2:1-4) It is therefore interesting to note this comment on John 6:64 in the *Critical, Doctrinal, and Homiletical Commentary* by Schaff-Lange: "['Beginning'] means, not metaphysically from the beginning of all things . . . , nor from the beginning of His [Jesus'] acquaintance with each one . . . , nor from the beginning of His collecting

of the disciples around Him, or the beginning of His Messianic ministry . . . , but from the first secret germs of unbelief [that produced the stumbling of some disciples]. So also He knew His betrayer from the beginning."—Compare 1 John 3:8, 11, 12.

THE MESSIAH

Jehovah God foreknew and foretold the Messiah's sufferings, the death he would undergo and his subsequent resurrection. (Acts 2:22, 23, 30, 31; 3:18; 1 Pet. 1:10, 11) The realization of things determined by God's exercise of such foreknowledge depended in part upon God's own exercise of power and in part upon the actions of men. (Acts 4:27, 28) Such men, however, willingly allowed themselves to be overreached by God's adversary, Satan the Devil. (John 8:42-44; Acts 7:51-54) Hence, even as Christians in Paul's day were "not ignorant of [Satan's] designs," God foresaw the wicked desires and methods his adversary would devise against his Anointed One. (2 Cor. 2:11) Obviously, God's power could also thwart or even block any attacks or attempts upon the Messiah that did not conform to the manner or time prophesied.

The apostle Peter's statement that Christ, as the sacrificial Lamb of God, was "foreknown before the founding [form of Greek *ka-ta-bo-le'*] of the world [*ko-smou*]" is construed by advocates of predestinarianism to mean that God exercised such foreknowledge before mankind's creation. (1 Pet. 1:19, 20) The Greek word *ka-ta-bo-le'*, translated "founding," literally means "a casting or laying down" and can refer to the 'conceiving' of seed, as at Hebrews 11:11, which refers to Abraham's throwing down human seed for the begetting of a son and Sarah's receiving this seed so as to be fertilized. While there was the "founding" of a world of mankind when

God created the first human pair, as is shown at Hebrews 4:3, 4, that pair thereafter forfeited their position as children of God. (Gen. 3:22-24; Rom. 5:12) Yet, by God's undeserved kindness, they were allowed to throw down (sow) and conceive seed and produce offspring, one of whom is specifically shown in the Bible as having gained God's favor and placed himself in position for redemption and salvation, namely, Abel. (Gen. 4:1, 2; Heb. 11:4) It is noteworthy that at Luke 11:49-51 Jesus refers to "the blood of all the prophets spilled from the founding of the world," and parallels this with the words, "from the blood of Abel down to the blood of Zechariah." Thus Abel is connected by Jesus with the "founding of the world," with that general time period.

The Messiah or Christ was to be the promised Seed through whom all righteous persons of all the families of the earth would be blessed. (Gal. 3:8, 14) The first mention of such "seed" came after the rebellion in Eden had already been initiated, but prior to the birth of Abel. (Gen. 3:15) This was over four thousand years before the revelation was made of the "sacred secret" of the administration to come through the Messiah; hence, it was, indeed, "kept in silence for long-lasting times."—Rom. 16:25-27; Eph. 1:8-10; 3:4-11.

In his due time Jehovah God assigned his own firstborn Son to fulfill the prophesied role of the "seed" and become the Messiah. There is nothing to show that that Son was "predestined" to such a role even before his creation or before rebellion broke out in Eden. God's eventual selection of him as the one charged with fulfilling the prophecies likewise was not made without prior basis. The period of intimate association between God and his Son previous to the Son's being sent to earth undoubtedly resulted in Jehovah's 'know-

ing' his Son to an extent that He could be certain of his Son's faithful fulfillment of the prophetic promises and pictures.—Compare Romans 15:5; Philippians 2:5-8; Matthew 11:27; John 10:14, 15.

THE 'CALLED AND CHOSEN ONES'

There remain those texts that deal with the Christian "called ones" or "chosen ones." (Jude 1; Matt. 24:24) They are described as "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God" (1 Pet. 1:1, 2), 'chosen before the founding of the world,' 'fore-ordained to the adoption as sons of God' (Eph. 1:3-5, 11), 'selected from the beginning for salvation and called to this very destiny.' (2 Thess. 2:13, 14) The understanding of these texts depends upon whether they refer to the foreordination of certain individual persons, or whether they describe the foreordination of a class of persons, namely, the Christian congregation, the "one body" (1 Cor. 10:17) of those who will be joint heirs with Christ Jesus in his heavenly kingdom.—Eph. 1:22, 23; 2:19-22; Heb. 3:1, 5, 6.

If these words apply to specific individuals as foreordained to eternal salvation, then it follows that those individuals could never prove unfaithful or fail in their calling, for God's foreknowledge of them could not prove inaccurate and his foreordination of them to a certain destiny could never miscarry or be thwarted. Yet the same apostles who were inspired to write the foregoing words showed that some who were "bought" and "sanctified" by the blood of Christ's ransom sacrifice and who had "tasted the heavenly free gift" and "become partakers of holy spirit . . . and powers of the coming system of things" would fall away beyond repentance and bring destruction upon themselves.—2 Pet. 2:1, 2, 20-22; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-29.

On the other hand, viewed as applying to a class, to the Christian congregation

or "holy nation" of called ones as a whole (1 Pet. 2:9), the texts previously cited would mean that God foreknew and foreordained that such a class (but not the specific individuals forming it) would be produced. Also, these scriptures would mean that he prescribed or foreordained the 'pattern' to which all those in due time called to be members thereof would have to conform, all this according to his

purpose. (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:3-12; 2 Tim. 1:9, 10) He also foreordained the works such ones would be expected to carry out and their being tested due to the sufferings the world would bring upon them.—Eph. 2:10; 1 Thess. 3:3, 4.

Thus the exercise of God's foreknowledge does not relieve us of the responsibility to exert ourselves to conform to his righteous will.

Deep Appreciation for Jehovah's Sacred Things

With whom should deep appreciation for what is sacred begin?

It should begin with Jehovah, who truly is The Sacred One. No moment passes in our lives when we are not personally benefiting from the loving-kindness of Jehovah God, the great Life-giver.—Ps. 27:4.*

We should have deep appreciation for Jehovah not only for the abundance of material blessings he has bestowed upon humankind but also for the countless spiritual good things, chief of which is his Word, the Holy Bible. By means of it we can appreciate God still more.—Ps. 107:1.

What are some of the sacred things of Jehovah for which we should have deep appreciation?

Such sacred things certainly include the truths found in God's Word, the Bible. Among these sacred things is the kingdom of Jehovah God by means of which he will vindicate his name, end wickedness and bless all mankind. The precious privilege of prayer is another, for by means of it we can praise Jehovah for his wonderful qualities. Also by means of it we can thank him for all his goodness toward us.

Jehovah's holy spirit by means of which Christians gain enlightenment and strength to accomplish their ministry is another sacred thing for which they should have deep appreciation. So also is the Christian congregation, which furnishes guidance and protection to those associated with it. There are also the privileges of dedication and baptism and the treasure of the Christian ministry, concerning

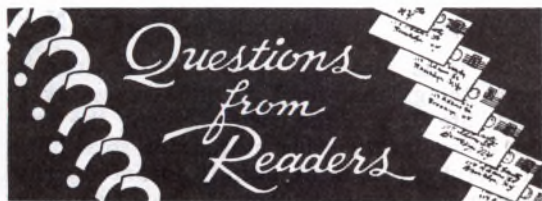
which the apostle Paul wrote: "I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, . . . because he considered me faithful by assigning me to a ministry."—1 Tim. 1:12.

How can we show that we have deep appreciation for Jehovah's sacred things?

By letting them serve Jehovah's purpose in our lives. We can show we have deep appreciation for the truths of God's Word by regularly feeding on that Word, obeying its commands and applying its principles in our lives. We show we have appreciation for Jehovah's sacred kingdom by giving our exclusive allegiance to it, by setting our hopes on it and by preaching its good news at every opportunity. We show our appreciation for the precious privilege of prayer by 'praying incessantly,' by 'persevering in prayer,' and by never being too busy to pray. (1 Thess. 5:17; Rom. 12:12) We show appreciation for Jehovah's holy spirit by asking God for it and by utilizing the various means by which we can obtain it, such as personal Bible study and assembling with fellow Christians.

And how can we show appreciation for the sacred privileges of dedication and baptism? On the one hand, by dedicating our lives to do Jehovah's will and being baptized in symbol of that dedication and then living up to that dedication. On the other hand, we can show our appreciation of these by aiding others to reach out for these same sacred privileges. As for showing appreciation for the sacred Kingdom ministry, this we can do by putting it first in our lives, by sharing regularly in it and by engaging full time in the preaching work if at all able to do so.

* For details see *The Watchtower*, February 1, 1969.



Questions from Readers

● Young Christians attending public school face many problems because of growing delinquency, immorality, nationalism, and so forth. Hence, when one has completed the minimum schooling required by law, would it be advisable to leave school and devote more time to the ministry, or should one finish the normal basic schooling?—D. B., U.S.A.

Customs and legal requirements about schooling vary from country to country. In some lands a set amount of schooling is compulsory for all children, with little or no provision for one to leave earlier. In other lands only a couple of years of schooling (or none at all) are compulsory, most education being left up to the individual to be obtained as circumstances allow.

In the United States of America a student usually attends elementary school for seven or eight years (differing from state to state) and then a secondary (high) school for about four years. The laws of most states rule that a youth must attend until he graduates from high school, or until age sixteen. However, even though one can leave school at sixteen if the parents approve, the majority of youths attend until graduation at about age eighteen. The following discussion will deal primarily with the United States of America, since that is what the questioner is interested in, but likely many of the points and principles presented will apply to some extent in other lands also.

Proper knowledge and education are fine things. Christian parents are interested in the education of their children. In accord with God's directions, they personally instruct and train their offspring in many fields, including the Bible, true worship, home responsibilities and proper conduct. (Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:6) The Theocratic Ministry School and other meetings in each congregation of Jehovah's witnesses have been invaluable aids to young Christians, developing in them abilities and poise that often make them above average for their age. But where there are public schools

available most Christian parents also want their children to get a reasonable secular education, feeling that the specialized training to read and write *well* and education in subjects such as geography and history may assist them as Christian ministers. Also, some secular education and training may prepare them for an occupation, something they may need to support themselves and their families.—1 Tim. 5:8.

'But how long should a child go to school?' persons might ask. The parents must decide that. (Prov. 6:20; 23:22; Eph. 5:22-24) If the law of the land requires a certain number of years of schooling, Christians know that they are to "be obedient to governments and authorities as rulers." (Titus 3:1) But if the legal minimum has been met, the parents have to determine what the child will do. Perhaps sickness or dire financial pressure in the family requires that a young man or woman get a job. On the other hand, the parents might direct the minor to attend the extra year or two of school so as to graduate and receive a diploma, as is the custom in the land. Parents and youths can discuss the matter, but the Bible gives the parents, particularly the father, the deciding voice, and the minor Christian should recognize that.—Col. 3:18, 20.

As indicated in the inquiry, many Christians realize that in some schools violence, immorality, use of drugs and disrespect for authority are increasing rapidly. Does this situation warrant removing a youth from school as soon as that is legally possible? A few parents have concluded, 'Yes,' and have done so. They are not to be criticized for their decision. Others have moved their children to another public school where such problems are not as bad. But we must face the fact that conditions in the world in general are getting worse. The only way to avoid such things altogether would be to get out of the world, and we cannot do that. (1 Cor. 5:10) Would leaving school and obtaining a secular job completely eliminate the problem? Likely not. Fellow employees may be considerably more experienced and proficient at seduction than fellow students. A Canadian report indicated that two-thirds of all employees are either basically dishonest or would be dishonest if given the opportunity. An American report said that three out of every four companies with fifty or more employees may have a drug-abuse problem. Consequently, all Christians—whether in school or not—have to strive to remain morally clean, to avoid situations

that might involve violence and to remain spiritually strong.

Numerous young persons have written to us expressing a commendable desire to expand their activity as Christian ministers in the last days of this system of things. (2 Tim. 3: 1; 4:5; 1 Tim. 4:16) Some have commented that if they left school early they might be able to do that as pioneer ministers. By self-scrutiny such ones can consider: Is it really a fuller share in the ministry that you want? Have you consistently demonstrated that this is your sincere, consuming desire by sharing in the ministry at *every* opportunity, including during holidays and vacations when you can serve as a vacation pioneer minister? A young Christian in school has a basically untouched field for witnessing about the Bible, because when Jehovah's witnesses in their house-to-house ministry meet a youth they usually ask for and speak to the parents if they are at home. So, do you *regularly* and *actively* witness about God to fellow students, expanding your ministry all you can in that way? The decision of whether you will continue in school rests with your parents, and primarily your father. But whatever the decision is, you can follow through on your desire to speak about God at every opportunity.

Youth is a time to serve Jehovah. (Eccl.

12:1) It is also the usual time for one to learn things that may be quite necessary in adult life. It was the custom among the Jews for every lad to learn a trade or some form of useful employment, even if advanced education in the Law was planned. The Jewish view was that he who failed to teach his child a trade was teaching the youth to be a thief. Thus Saul of Tarsus learned the trade of tent-making even though, before becoming a Christian, he was educated as a pupil of Gamaliel. (Acts 18:3; 22:3) Today the public schools are often the place where one begins to learn a trade or means of supporting oneself, whether it be carpentry, accounting, installation of electrical equipment, typing, printing, welding or some other occupation.

'But you have not pointedly said whether my youngster should complete his basic education in school or not,' someone might think. Precisely so, for it is not our place to do so or even to recommend either quitting or continuing in school. God has authorized the individual parents to direct their children in such matters, and we cannot ignore His authorization. This is a serious matter, and parents should make it a matter of prayer and should ponder it with care. (Phil. 4:6) Then they alone will have to make a decision as to what their own children will do.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

September 6: Jehovah's Name to Be Declared in All the Earth. Page 456. Songs to Be Used: 13, 8.

September 13: None Like Jehovah in All the Earth. Page 462. Songs to Be Used: 50, 81.