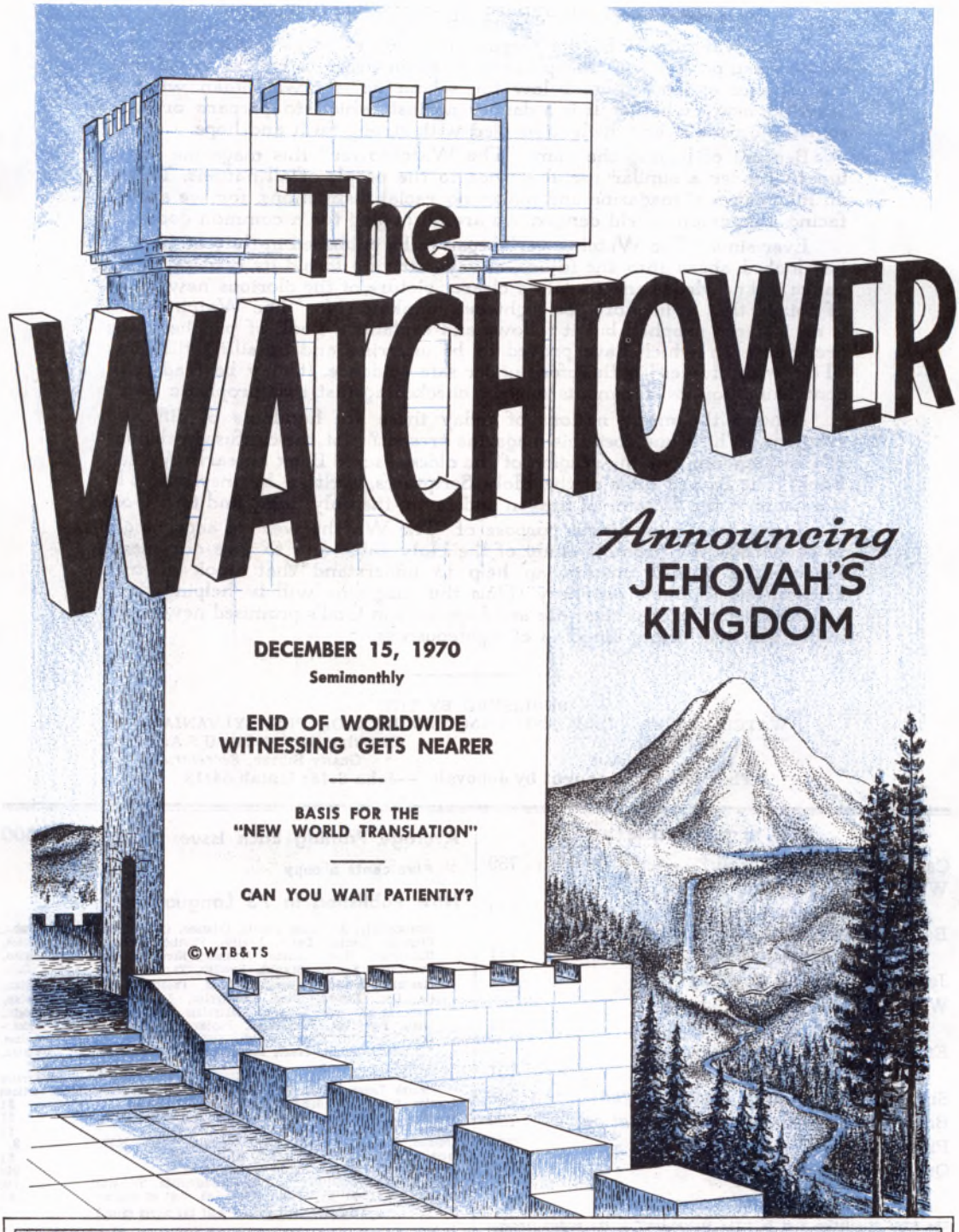

The WATCHTOWER

Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

DECEMBER 15, 1970
Semimonthly

END OF WORLDWIDE WITNESSING GETS NEARER

BASIS FOR THE "NEW WORLD TRANSLATION"

CAN YOU WAIT PATIENTLY?

©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.

PUBLISHED BY THE
WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA
117 Adams Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.
N. H. KNORR, *President* GRANT SUITER, *Secretary*

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

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The Bible translation used in "The Watchtower" is the modern-language "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). Write Watchtower, 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, New York 11201, U.S.A.

Average Printing Each Issue: 6,750,000

Five cents a copy

Now Published in 73 Languages

Semimonthly: Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chinese, Chishona, Cibemba, Cinyanja, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hiligaynon, Iloko, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Malagasy, Norwegian, Portuguese, Sesotho, Spanish, Swedish, Tagalog, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu.

Monthly: Armenian, Bengali, Bicol, Croatian, Efik, Ewe, Fijian, Ga, Gun, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Ibo, Icelandic, Indonesian, Kanarese, Kikongo, Lingala, Malayalam, Marathi, Melanesian-Pidgin, Motu, Pampango, Pangasinan, Papiamento, Polish, Russian, Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sango, Sepedi, Serbian, Siamese, Silozi, Sinhalese, Slovenian, Swahili, Tamil, Tswana, Tumbuka, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu.

Watch Tower Society offices	Yearly subscription rates for semimonthly editions
America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201	$1
Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135	$1
Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto 390, Ontario	$1
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London N.W. 7	9/-
Jamaica, W.I., 41 Trafalgar Rd., Kingston 10	$1
New Zealand, 621 New North Rd., Auckland 3	90c
South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandsfontein, Transvaal	70c
Trinidad, W.I., 21 Taylor St., Woodbrook, Port of Spain	$2

(Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to Brooklyn.

Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires.

Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y. Printed in U.S.A.

The WATCHTOWER
Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM
Vol. XCI December 15, 1970 Number 24

CAN YOU Wait Patiently?

HAVE you learned to wait—to wait patiently? That is a lesson that the Creator, Jehovah God, might be said to be wanting to teach us earthly creatures. And this he does both by his Book of Creation and by his inspired Book, the Holy Bible.

You cannot speed up the days, seasons or years. Nothing that you or anyone else on earth may do can accelerate the revolution that the earth makes around the sun in 365 and one-fourth days. Neither can anyone hasten the seasons or the pace at which the earth rotates on its own axis. Each day takes twenty-four hours.

The farmer sows his seed, but then he too has to wait. He cannot hurry matters much, if at all. For some crops he has to wait several years. His exercise of patience is set before Christians as an example for them by the disciple James: "Exercise patience, therefore, brothers. . . . Look! The farmer keeps waiting for the precious fruit of the earth, exercising patience over it until he gets the early rain and the late rain. You too exercise patience."—Jas. 5:7, 8.

Jehovah God himself sets us an example in waiting patiently. Thus the apostle Peter tells us that "the patience of God was waiting in Noah's days, while the ark was being constructed." Likewise God exercised patience with his ancient wayward people of Israel "until there was no healing."—1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Chron. 36:15, 16.

Jesus Christ, God's Son, also set a fine example of waiting patiently. He knew, as can be seen from the prophecies found at Revelation chapters 19 to 21, that it was God's purpose for him to wipe out all of God's enemies. And although upon his resurrection he had the will and the power to proceed against his enemies, he "sat down at the right hand of God, from then on awaiting until his enemies should be placed as a stool for his feet."—Heb. 10: 12, 13; Matt. 28:18.

Furnishing us another fine example of waiting patiently is David the son of Jesse. As a mere boy he was anointed by the prophet Samuel to be the future king of Israel. He showed himself to be Israel's chief warrior by single-handedly slaying the giant Goliath, and in battles against the Philistines he slew ten times as many as King Saul. When hunted like a dog by envious Saul, David had several opportunities to slay Saul and so take possession of the kingdom that God had assured to him. But no, David was willing to wait patiently until the time when 'Jehovah himself would deal Saul a blow.'

Waiting Patiently FOR AN END OF WICKEDNESS

THE matter of patiently waiting has a direct bearing on the question many lovers of righteousness ask: "Why does God permit wickedness?" There are some who argue that wickedness proves that God is not deserving of worship. According to them, either God is unable to stop wickedness and therefore is weak and so not deserving of our worship; or he is unwilling to stop wickedness and therefore is not just and good and so likewise does not merit being worshiped.

What about these objections? Are they sound, incontrovertible? By no means! Jehovah God has a due time to end wickedness. His Word tells us that he had a certain time to destroy the wicked in the flood of Noah's day. (Gen. 6:3) He had a certain time for freeing the Israelites from Egyptian slavery. That is why he did not at once destroy Pharaoh and his military might when that Egyptian king refused to let God's people go. As God himself told Pharaoh: "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.

Similarly, only when God's due time came did he send his Son to the earth: "When the full limit of the time arrived, God sent forth his Son . . . that he might release by purchase those under law." Truly, "for everything [God has] an appointed time, even a time for every affair under the heavens." How wise it is therefore for us to wait patiently for God's time for things to take place!—Gal. 4:4, 5; Eccl. 3:1.

ASSURANCES THAT WICKEDNESS WILL END

That God will, indeed, bring an end to wickedness he makes clear in his Word. Why, from the very beginning he gave a prophecy that righteousness would triumph, when he told the Serpent, Satan the Devil, that his head would be bruised by the seed of the woman, which seed proved to be Jesus Christ.—Gen. 3:15; Rev. 12:9; Rom. 16:20.

Thus God repeatedly assures us by means of his psalmists: "Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; . . . but the meek ones themselves will possess the earth." "Come, you people, behold the activities of Jehovah . . . He is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth." "All the wicked ones he will annihilate." And in the Bible's last book we read that Satan and all his agents will be destroyed and that, not only wickedness, but even sorrow, pain and death will be done away with.—Ps. 37:10, 11; 46:8, 9; 145:20; Rev. 20:1–21:4.

Not without good reason therefore does Jehovah God tell us to wait patiently for him: "Keep silent before Jehovah and wait longingly for him." Rather than rising up violently against wicked conditions, as so many are doing today, leave it to Jehovah to straighten out matters. As the prophet Jeremiah said after the destruction of Jerusalem: "Good it is that one should wait, even silently, for the salvation of Jehovah."—Ps. 37:7; Lam. 3:26.

AIDS TO WAITING PATIENTLY

What will help you to wait patiently for Jehovah to act and to end wickedness? One great aid is hope, based on faith. To the extent that our faith is strong our hope will be bright. To keep our hope bright we must keep refreshing our minds on God's promises regarding the future. Another aid is to appreciate the wisdom of waiting patiently. To chafe frustratingly or to take matters into one's own hands

can only make matters worse.—Rom. 8: 24, 25; 12:19.

Another great help is joy. "The joy of Jehovah is your stronghold." Joy gives one strength. It was joy that gave Jesus Christ the strength to wait and to endure. And even as hope is built on faith, so joy is built on appreciation. To the extent that you appreciate God's goodness, your present blessings, the pleasures of association with fellow Christians, the privileges of telling others the truths of God's Word as Jesus did, you will have joy and be able to wait patiently.—Neh. 8:10; Heb. 12:2.

Being Patient IN YOUR RELATIONS WITH OTHERS

THERE are other aspects of waiting. Waiting may well be the course of wisdom in one's everyday relations with others. A young man may be courting a young lady. Either he or she may be hasty about getting married. But wisdom would indicate not hurrying matters unduly. Courting gives couples fine opportunities to get to know each other better and to adjust to each other. As has well been said, "Married in haste, we may repent at leisure."

Then again, an employee may be very industrious and ambitious for advancement. Here again, instead of chafing impatiently, would it not be better to make the best of all opportunities that lie before one to prove one's worth and to increase one's skills? It often happens that when one no longer frets and chafes but becomes content, then a change for the better takes place.

Patiently waiting is also the course of wisdom in the family circle. Business matters, or other circumstances over which he may have no control, such as heavy traffic, may make a husband late in coming home. Instead of fretting impatiently, how much better for his wife to give him the benefit of the doubt!

On the other hand, in certain matters the wife may show herself slow, requiring the husband to learn to wait patiently. Being angry will not help. He may be able to help her to organize her affairs so as to be more punctual. But, when the schedule does not work as planned, rather than chafe impatiently, how much better for the husband to heed the advice of the apostle Peter and 'deal with his wife according to knowledge, assigning her honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one.' —1 Pet. 3:7.

Or it may be that a fellow Christian alongside whom you are obliged to serve has a weakness that grates on you and of which he might not even be aware. Or he may repeatedly trespass, requiring you to forgive him, as it were, "seventy-seven times." Here again it is well to learn to wait and have patience with him. He may not be making as rapid progress as you would like to see, but with the years there may be progress nevertheless. Also here God's Word has wise counsel, namely, 'with long-suffering put up with one another in love.'—Matt. 18:21, 22; Eph. 4: 2, 3.

Truly it is the course of wisdom to learn to wait patiently. It results in benefits to ourselves and to those about us. Jehovah God has his laws governing the universe, and he has his own timetable for fulfilling his purposes. He will not change his timetable to suit us, any more than we can cause him to change or hasten the days, seasons and years. Faith, hope, joy and appreciation will enable us to follow the wise course of learning to wait patiently.

JESUS TEACHES US *To Pray*

An article specially designed for parents to read with their children

DO YOU talk to Jehovah God? He wants you to talk to him. When you talk to God, this is called prayer.

Jesus often spoke to his Father in heaven. Sometimes he wanted to be alone when he talked to God. One time, the Bible says, "he went up into the mountain by himself to pray. Though it became late, he was there alone."—Matt. 14:23.

Where can you go to pray to Jehovah alone? Maybe you can talk to God alone before you go to bed at night. Jesus said: "When you pray, go into your private room and, after shutting your door, pray to your Father." Do you pray to God each night before you go to sleep? It is a good thing to do.—Matt. 6:6.

Jesus also prayed when other people were with him. When he had meetings with his disciples, Jesus would pray. You can go to Christian meetings where prayer is said. At these meetings usually an older person will pray. Listen carefully to what he says, because he is talking to God for you. Then you will be able to say "Amen" to the prayer.

Do you know what it means to say "Amen" at the end of a prayer? It means that you like the prayer. It means that you agree with it, and that you want it to be your prayer too.

Jesus also prayed at mealtimes. He thanked Jehovah for his food. Do you always pray before you eat your meals?

It is good for us to thank Jehovah for the food before we start eating. Your father may say the prayer when you eat together. But what if you eat by yourself? Or what if you have a meal with people who do not thank Jehovah? Then you need to say your own prayer.

Do you always have to pray out loud? No. Jehovah can hear your prayer even if you say it in your heart. So you can say a silent prayer to Jehovah when you are with people who do not pray to God. For example, you might say a silent prayer when you eat lunch at school.

Should you bow your head when you pray? Should you get down on your knees? What do you think? Sometimes Jesus bent his knees when he prayed. At times he would lift his head toward heaven as he prayed. And he also spoke about praying to God while standing up.

So what does this show? It shows that it does not matter what position you are in when you pray. God can hear you no matter what position you are in. But at times it is good to bow your head when you pray. At other times you may even want to get down on your knees as Jesus did. But, remember, you can pray to God at any time during the day or night and he will hear you.

The important thing in prayer is that you really believe that Jehovah is listening. Do you believe that Jehovah hears you? It is also important that you mean what you say to God. Do you really mean what you say in your prayers?

What should you say in your prayers to Jehovah? Tell me: When you pray, what do you talk to God about?

Jehovah gives us so many good things, and it is right to thank him for them,

isn't it? We thank him for the food we eat. But have you ever thanked him for the blue sky, the green trees and the pretty flowers? He made those too. He also made dogs that wag their tails, kittens that purr and beautiful birds that sing. There are so many things to thank him for!

Jesus' disciples once asked him to teach them how to pray. And the Great Teacher showed them what were the most important things to pray for. Do you know what these things are? Get your copy of the Bible and open it to Matthew chapter 6. In verses 9 through 13 we find what many persons call "the Lord's prayer."

Here we learn that Jesus told us to pray about God's name. He said to pray that God's name be sanctified or treated as holy. What is God's name? The Bible tells us that it is Jehovah, and we should love that name. Second, Jesus taught us to pray for God's kingdom to come. This kingdom is so important because it will bring peace to the earth and make it a paradise. Third, the Great Teacher said to pray for God's will to be done on earth just as it is done in heaven. That means that we should do God's will.

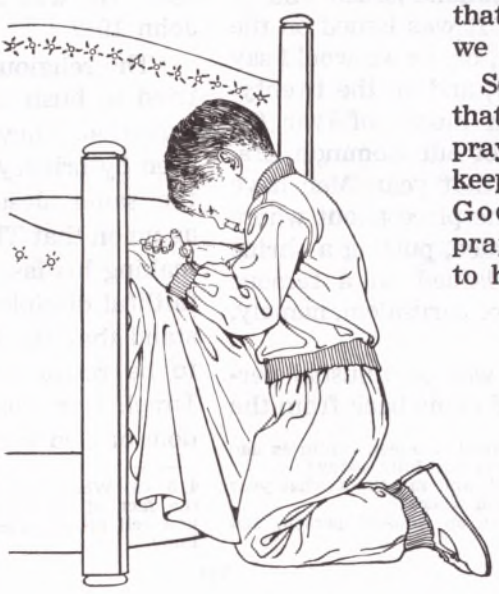
Jesus also taught us to pray for the food we need for the day. He said that we should tell God that we are sorry when we do things that are wrong. We should ask God to forgive us. But first we must forgive others if they do wrong to us. Do you do that? Finally, Jesus said, we should pray that Jehovah God will protect us from the wicked one, Satan the Devil. So, all of these are good things to pray to God about.

Jesus knew that some persons would forget to pray. They would give up in talking to God. So the Great Teacher told a little story about the need to keep on asking God for these right things and not to stop praying.

Jesus said to make believe that you have a friend who comes to visit you from far away. He comes in the middle of the night. Your friend is hungry after his long trip. But you do not have any food in the house and the stores are closed. What will you do?

Perhaps you decide to go to a neighbor to ask him to loan you some bread. But what if the neighbor says: 'Let me sleep. It is late. I am in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? What will you do then?

Jesus said that if you beg that man over and over again to get up, he will do it. Even if he did not want to, he will get up and give you some bread. God is not like that man. God wants us to come to him in prayer. But Jesus says that we should keep on praying in order to show that we really believe in God and that we really mean what we say.—Luke 11:5-9.



So we should believe that Jehovah hears our prayers and we should keep on asking him. Then God will answer our prayers. Jehovah likes to hear us pray to him. He is happy when we mean what we say in prayer and when we ask him for the right things. And he will give us these things. Do you believe that?

WORLDWIDE WITNESSING versus WORLD CONVERSION

LOOKING at a command more than nineteen hundred years after it was first issued, a person can determine to what extent the command has been carried out and how well. If it is a command that is bound to have an effect on the whole world of mankind, then it deserves our looking at it very carefully. What has been done about that command until now? The situation is real, for there is such a command of worldwide importance. The carrying out of the command has affected the world. Whether we like the situation or not, we are involved, even today.

[2] When was the command issued, and by whom and to whom? It was issued on the fifth day of the week, or, as we would say today, on a Thursday, and on the twenty-fifth day of the lunar month of Iyar (or Ziv), in the year 33 of our Common Era, in the springtime of that year. Men have even tried to mark the place about where the command was issued, putting a shrine over it, for it was issued on a famous mountain to the east of Jerusalem, namely, the Mount of Olives.

[3] The Commander was an unusual person, a person who had come back from the dead just forty days before that. Roman soldiers had been used to put him to death. He had been put to death because of the charge that his accusers made out against him, when they said to the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate: "This man we found subverting our nation and forbidding the paying of taxes to Caesar and saying he himself is Christ a king." In order to urge on the execution of him by the Romans, the accusers said further: "We have a law, and according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself God's son." From these accusations you will recognize the man. He was Jesus Christ.—Luke 23:2; John 19:7.

[4] The religious leaders of Jerusalem had tried to hush up the facts about his resurrection. They tried to falsify the facts, even by bribery. (Matt. 28:11-15) But, all the same, Jesus Christ was fully alive again on that Thursday, Iyar 25 of 33 C.E., making his last appearance in flesh to his faithful disciples. He gave them to understand that the kingdom of David was not to be restored to the earthly nation of Israel. Nor was it the time for the kingdom of God then to be set up in the hands

1. Why does a command issued nineteen centuries ago deserve our looking at it very carefully today?
2. On what day of the week and month of what year was that command issued, and where?
3. Why was the Commander an unusual person, and what was his name?

4, 5. (a) What had the enemies done with regard to the fact of Jesus' resurrection? (b) What did Jesus now tell his disciples to do as regards the facts about him?

of God's Messiah or Christ. Well, then, were the disciples to let the case of Jesus Christ drop? Were they to let the distorted facts about him be broadcast world wide by the instigators of his death and let all mankind get no benefit from the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Were they to keep mum about the things that they had seen and heard and shared in so personally? Absolutely not! They were to be empowered to do something about this, but starting at the right time, namely, the day for the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 to begin. So he said to them:

5 "You will receive power when the holy spirit arrives upon you, and you will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth."—Acts 1:8.

6 "Be witnesses!" That was what they were commanded to do, and they would be commissioned for this witnessing when the holy spirit of God was poured out upon them in fulfillment of Joel 2:28, 29, ten days later, on the festival of Pentecost of that same year, 33 C.E. They were to be witnesses of Jesus Christ, not just to the Jews who came to the festivals in Jerusalem from various lands inside and outside the Roman Empire and to all Judea and Samaria, but "to the most distant part of the earth." That is, to the Gentile nations.

6. So from when on were the disciples to be witnesses of Jesus, and to whom?

"You will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth."—Acts 1:8.

[7] This witnessing was not to be dropped when those disciples there on the Mount of Olives died within that first century of our Common Era. This witnessing concerning Jesus Christ, of worldwide importance, was of vital interest for all generations to come, be it even the last generation of the twentieth century. The witnessing was to be continued through the centuries, to be taken up by Christian disciples whom those disciples there on the Mount of Olives would yet make, and then by the whole chain of disciples that would follow, till indeed the most distant part of the earth was reached with the witness. And thus it has reached us today. We have got involved. We are interested.

[8] This worldwide witnessing was to be done under the invisible guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why so? Because, after issuing this command of such long-range, worldwide importance, Jesus Christ was seen by the disciples there present to ascend heavenward and disappear by God's miraculous power. The book of the Acts of the Apostles, chapter one, verses ten and eleven, informs us: "And as they were gazing into the sky while he was on his way, also, look! two men in white garments stood alongside them, and they said: 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus who was received up from you into the sky will come thus in the same manner as you have beheld him going into the sky.'" The Messiah was to come again!

WHAT PROGRESS TOWARD WORLD CONVERSION?

[9] But where is the world conversion today? Which "world conversion"? Why, do those words of command of Jesus Christ not mean the converting of the whole world of mankind to Christianity before the kingdom of God is set up in the heavens and the thousand years of Christ's reign begins? That is the way some Bible commentators on those and other words of Jesus Christ have understood them. For instance, Jesus' parable of the leavened dough: "The kingdom of the heavens is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three large measures of flour, until the whole mass was fermented." (Matt. 13:33) On this the comment in *A Commentary and Critical Notes* by Adam Clarke, LL. D., says:

[10] "Both these parables are *prophetic,* and were intended to show, principally, how, from very small beginnings, the Gospel of Christ should pervade all the nations of the world, and fill them with righteousness and true holiness."—Page 155, column 2.

[11] Regarding the stone that struck the metallic image that was seen in the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar, and that crushed the image and then became a great mountain filling the whole earth, Adam Clarke's Commentary says:

[12] "The stone began to *strike the image,* when the apostles went out into every part of the Roman empire, pulling down idolatry, and founding Christian churches. . . . But the great blow was given to the heathen Roman empire by the *conversion of Constantine,* . . . The conversion of Constantine took place while he was in Gaul, A.D. 312, . . . He terminated the reign of idolatry in A.D. 331, by an edict ordering the destruction of all the heathen temples. This made CHRISTIANITY the religion of the *empire.* . . . It is the *kingdom* which the *God of heaven sets up.* That this means

7. Was this witnessing to Jesus to cease with the death of those disciples, and how have we today got involved with it?
8. Under whose guidance was the worldwide witnessing to be done, and of what were the disciples assured concerning the departing Jesus?
9, 10. (a) Why does the question of world conversion here come up? (b) What does Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary have to say on the parable of the leaven?
11, 12. What does Clarke's Commentary have to say about the stone that struck the metallic image seen in Nebuchadnezzar's dream?

the whole dispensation of the gospel, and the moral effects produced by it in the souls of men and in the world, needs little proof; for our Lord, referring to this and other prophecies in this book, calls its influence and his gospel the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven; showing thereby that it is . . . a spiritual kingdom raised and maintained by the grace of God himself, in which he himself lives and rules, governing by his own laws, influencing and directing by his own Spirit; producing, not wars and contentions, but glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will among men."—Pages 3209, 3210, edition of 1836; Dan. 2:44, 45.

13 Less than a hundred years ago, in 1885, when the world's population was smaller and did not present so big a task, the Methodist Bishop Foster, addressing the M. E. Church Conference, on November 9th that year, said, as reported in the public press:

14 "There is a lack of information on the progress of Christianity. The facts are misstated daily in pulpits all over the country. Ministers hesitate to present the worst side for fear of causing discouragement. They create hopes that are never to be realized. We are not at the dawn of the millennium. Compared with the work to be done, the past is nothing. Our children's children for ten generations to come must labor harder than we are doing to accomplish the conversion of the world. The world's population is 1,500,000,000. Of these Christians number less than a third. Half of that third belong to the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestants number 113,000,000. They are divided into 500 sects. And this number of their strength includes also all the thieves, ex-convicts, the debased, besotted, the speckled and streaked in Christendom. . . . before us we have the great problem—the 1,100,000,000 of pagans to convert to Christianity. That is the solid rock that looms up in our path. Look at it; see what work has been done in 1800 years, and how much is yet to be accomplished. . . . It is a big loaf to be leavened and it has been a long time working." —See *The Watch Tower,* as of January 1886, pages 3-6, under "Blind Guides."

15 After World War II ended on September 2, 1945, it seemed as if Christendom was presented with the opportunity to expand its membership with a sudden spurt. On December 10 of that year the American General MacArthur as military supervisor of defeated Japan abolished Shintoism as the national religion. Later, freedom of religion was written into the postwar Constitution of Japan, this being patterned on the United States Constitution. Then on January 1, 1946, when the Japanese Emperor renounced the theory that he was a descendant from the sun goddess, so that he was not to be worshiped as a god, this further removed an obstacle to progress of Christendom in Japan. General Douglas MacArthur is reliably reported as having turned down an offer by Emperor Hirohito to make Japan a "Christian" country. The New York *Times* reports:

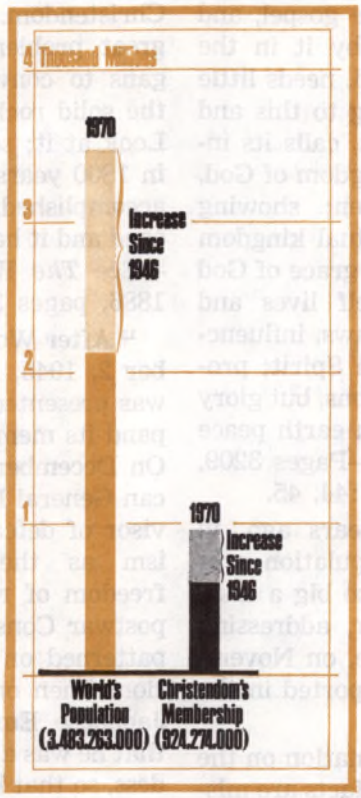
16 "The offer was rejected . . . because the general believed it was wrong to impose any religion on a people. General MacArthur . . . said that after the surrender of the Japanese the Emperor had privately declared his willingness to make Christianity the state religion. The general asked time to 'think about it,' . . . and after considering the proposal replied to the Emperor: 'Never. No nation must be

13, 14. Back in 1885 what did Methodist Bishop Foster have to say regarding the facts of the progress of Christianity and the work ahead for world conversion?

15, 16. (a) After World War II what obstacles were removed from the progress of Christianity in Japan? (b) Reportedly, what offer was made for making Christianity the state religion, and how was the offer treated?

made to conform to any religion. It must be done on a voluntary basis.' . . . General MacArthur rejected the Emperor's proposal, . . . asking the American people instead to send 10,000 missionaries. 'We responded with a handful of missionaries,' Mr. [Billy] Graham said."—N.Y. *Times*, as of April 7, 1964, under "General Told of Barring Offer to Create a Christian Japan."

[17] Japan then had a population of 73,110,995. The world population had increased to 2,139,958,919. Although tens of millions of church members of Christendom had killed off one another in World War II, the membership of Christendom was then reported as being 592,406,542, or about a fourth of the world population. Today, in 1970, Christendom's membership is rated at 924,274,000, which means less than a third of the world population of 3,483,263,000, with over one thousand million more non-Christians to be converted to Christendom than in the year 1946. Plainly, the growth of Christendom in its program of world conversion is not keeping up with the population explosion of the non-Christian world. Who, then, is wrong—Christendom or Jesus Christ and the Holy Scriptures of the Bible? The hard facts prove Christendom to be woefully wrong, but Jesus Christ and the Bible to be right.



17. In comparison of the growth of the world population, does Christendom's growth since that time prove her to be correct about world conversion or Jesus Christ?

[18] Jesus Christ and the Bible never did predict world conversion to Christianity before the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. They predicted worldwide witnessing before the "great tribulation" with which this entire system of things, including Christendom, will disastrously end shortly. In his prophecy on the conclusion of the system of things Jesus said: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matt. 24:3-14) In his final word to his disciples on the Mount of Olives he said: "You will be witnesses of me . . . to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) He did not say that Jerusalem or all of Judea and Samaria or the most distant part of the earth would be converted. They were not, and they have not been converted. He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, that befell her in the year 70 C.E., and also the end of this present system of things in the approaching "great tribulation," because they would not repent and be converted by the witness given to them. (Matt. 24:15-22) The witnessing world wide is still in progress.

WITNESSES OF WHOM?

[19] When Jesus Christ told his disciples, "You will be witnesses of me," did he

18. (a) What work did Jesus Christ and the Bible predict would be done before the complete end of this system of things? (b) He predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and of this system for what reason?
19. What impression have the clergy of Christendom given regarding the place of God's name in connection with the witness to Jesus?

mean to detract their attention from the Most High God? Did he mean that the name of God was thenceforth to be put in the background and that his own personal name was to be put to the fore and be used almost exclusively? The way in which the religious clergy of Christendom act tends to give the world the impression that that is what Jesus meant. But how could Jesus Christ ever tell his disciples not to be witnesses of the very One of whom he himself was a witness?

[20] In the very last book of the Bible, that is, in Revelation 1:5, he speaks of "Jesus Christ, 'the faithful witness,' 'The first-born from the dead,' and 'The Ruler of the kings of the earth.'" But in Revelation 3:14 the glorified Jesus Christ himself speaks and says: "These are the things that the Amen says, the faithful and true witness." The "faithful and true witness" of whom? Why, of no one else but God, and that is why in the very next phrase he gives further identification of himself by adding: "the beginning of the creation by God." And the message that is introduced with those words Jesus Christ ends up by saying: "To the one that conquers I will grant to sit down with me on my throne, even as I conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne." (Rev. 3:21) Jesus Christ thus bears witness to God, his heavenly Father, as being his Creator and Life-giver.

[21] Jesus was the Original One of God's creations. And some verses earlier, in Revelation 3:12, Jesus Christ says: "The one that conquers—I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will by no means go out from it any more, and I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which descends out of heaven from my God, and that new name of mine." In this promise he four times mentions "my God," to bear witness to this One as being his own God, whom he himself worships. He also calls attention to God as having a name different from his own name, to denote two separate individuals.

[22] Jesus could not possibly tell his disciples to put his own personal name before that of the God to whom he prayed. In his Sermon on the Mount he told his disciples: "You must pray, then, this way: 'Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified.'" Jesus prayed, not for his own name to be sanctified, but for the name of his Father and of their Father to be sanctified. (Matt. 6:9) In the spring of the year 33 C.E., after his triumphal ride into Jerusalem, Jesus prayed aloud in the hearing of a crowd of worshipers: "Father, glorify your name." Was there an answer to Jesus' prayer? The written account tells us: "Therefore a voice came out of heaven: 'I both glorified it and will glorify it again.'" (John 12:23-28) Several days later, after Jesus had introduced what is called "the Lord's supper," he prayed to God amid his eleven faithful apostles, saying:

[23] "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ. I have made your name manifest to the men you gave me out of the world. . . . Holy Father, watch over them on account of your own name."—John 17:3, 6, 11.

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20. In Revelation 3:14, 21, how does Jesus Christ bear witness to God as his Creator and Life-giver?

21. In Revelation 3:12, Jesus Christ mentions whom four times, and to indicate what relationship of this one to himself?

22, 23. (a) In his Sermon on the Mount and in the midst of worshipers at Jerusalem in 33 C.E., how did Jesus show whether his name was to be put before that of God? (b) In his prayer after inaugurating "the Lord's supper," what prominence did Jesus give to God's name?

24 After Jesus' resurrection from the dead, Jesus appeared to his disciples who had gathered together at a mountain in Galilee and said to them: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit." (Matt. 28:18, 19) Thus all the record goes to prove that Jesus Christ did not tell his disciples to shove aside the name of God, his heavenly Father, and put his own name, the Son's name, ahead of his Father's name. So, in his farewell words to his disciples on the Mount of Olives, he was not telling them to be, as he said, "witnesses of me," to the exclusion of being witnesses of God, his heavenly Father. We must remember that Jesus Christ, like those Jewish disciples of his, was born of a Jewish woman and "came to be under law," that is, the law given through the prophet Moses. (Gal. 4:4) Consequently, Jesus Christ, like his Jewish disciples, was part of the nation of Israel (or Jacob), to whom God spoke these words by the mouth of his inspired prophet Isaiah:

25 "And now this is what Jehovah has said, your Creator, O Jacob, and your Former, O Israel: 'Do not be afraid, for I have repurchased you. I have called you by your name. You are mine.' 'You are my witnesses,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'even my servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and have faith in me, and that you may understand that I am the same One. Before me there was no God formed [by idol-worshiping nations], and after me there continued to be none. I—I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no savior. I myself have told forth and have saved and have caused it to be heard, when there was among you no strange god. So you are my witnesses,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and I am God.'" —Isa. 43:1, 10-12.

26 Unavoidably, then, as natural-born members of the nation of Jacob or Israel, Jesus and his disciples there on the Mount of Olives were obliged to be God's witnesses, witnesses of Jehovah. Jesus, when in the flesh on earth, was a witness of Jehovah God, and so were his Jewish disciples. After his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ continued to be a witness of Jehovah. The very last book of the Bible, Revelation, which Jesus Christ was used to give the Jewish apostle John, shows the glorified Jesus Christ to be still witnessing to Jehovah God. Revelation 19:1-6 records four times the joyous cry, "Hallelujah!" which is a Hebrew expression meaning "Praise you Jah!" the name "Jah" being the abbreviation for Jehovah. —Rev. 1:1, 2.

27 To all eternity to come the heavenly Jesus Christ will be a witness of Jehovah God. Accordingly, by his words to his Jewish disciples, "You will be witnesses of me," Jesus Christ did not lift from his disciples the obligation to be witnesses of Jehovah God in fulfillment of Isaiah 43:1-12. This held true even after the holy spirit was poured out upon them at Pentecost, for first then they became spiritual Israelites under a new covenant with Jesus Christ himself as Mediator between God and men.—Acts 2:1-38; Gal. 6:16; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6; 1 Pet. 2:9.

24, 25. (a) What, then, does Jesus' command to his disciples in the mountain in Galilee indicate as regards his final command to them on the Mount of Olives? (b) According to Isaiah 43:1, 10-12, Jesus as a born Jew under the Law was obligated to be what toward Jehovah?

26. How does the last book of the Bible prove the resurrected Jesus to be still a witness to the name of Jehovah?

27. (a) By his command in Acts 1:8 did Jesus lift from his disciples the obligation to be Jehovah's witnesses? (b) Did this hold true even after they became spiritual Israelites at Pentecost of 33 C.E.?

End of WORLDWIDE WITNESSING Gets Nearer

THE WORLDWIDE witnessing on the part of the disciples of Jesus Christ has been going on now for more than nineteen centuries. When, on the Mount of Olives in the spring of 33 C.E., Jesus Christ said to his Jewish disciples, "You will be witnesses of me," he was speaking to natural-born witnesses of Jehovah. (Isa. 43:1-12; 44:8) But from then on, or from the outpouring of God's holy spirit upon them ten days later at Pentecost in Jerusalem, they were also to be witnesses of Jesus. Why this additional witness? Was this meant to take away anything from their being dedicated witnesses of Jehovah or even to take the place of their being witnesses of Jehovah God? Rather than detract from proclaiming God's name Jehovah and to put him in the overshadowed background, the bearing witness of Jesus was calculated to glorify Jehovah God yet more. It was to give more pointedness, more definiteness to the witnessing for Jehovah. It was to show that Jehovah had not lied, but that, after more than four thousand years, he at last had raised up his Messiah or Christ.

[2] Jehovah's providing of the long-promised Messiah or Anointed One was a matter of worldwide importance. It deserved to be made known to the whole world of mankind, even "to the most distant part of the earth." What Jehovah God himself did deserved to be imitated by his faithful witnesses on earth. What was that? Why, bear witness of the actual, historical Messiah or Christ, Jesus the Son of God. About the year 4026 B.C.E., Jehovah God had said to the Serpent that had brought about man's downfall in the Garden of Eden: "I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel." (Gen. 3:15) This was Jehovah's first reference to the Messiah or Christ.

[3] When God vindicated his word of promise by raising up his Messiah or Anointed One, it would be necessary for Him to identify his Messiah by bearing witness to him in a supernatural way. All mankind could repeat the request once made to him: "May Jehovah prove to be a true and faithful witness." (Jer. 42:5) Jehovah did do so.

[4] In the latter half of the year 29 C.E., after the baptism of his Son Jesus in the Jordan River, he gave a visible manifestation of his holy spirit descending upon the baptized Jesus, and John the Baptist heard God's words from heaven: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved." Thereafter John the Baptist, a Jewish witness of Jehovah, could bear witness of Jesus, that this one is the Messiah, as John himself said: "I have seen it, and I have borne witness that this one is the Son of God." (Matt. 3:13-17; John 1:29-34) John from then on bore witness to those who came to him to be baptized,

1. (a) What additional witnessing was given to Jesus' Jewish disciples from Pentecost of 33 C.E. onward? (b) What effect was this to have on their witnessing to Jehovah?
2. What provision, first referred to in the Garden of Eden, had now become of worldwide importance?
3. Hence what did Jehovah have to do in order to show his word to be vindicated in this regard?
4. How did John come to be a witness regarding Jesus to those who came to him for baptism?

desiring to be prepared to become disciples of Jehovah's Messiah or Christ.

5 Three years later, at the Mount of Transfiguration, Jehovah again bore audible witness to his Messiah, Jesus. Three disciples of Jesus, who saw this vision of his transfiguration with supernatural glory, heard God's voice from heaven say: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved; listen to him." After Jesus' being resurrected from the dead these three eyewitnesses told the vision to the other apostles of Jesus Christ. (Matt. 17: 1-9) Years later the Christian apostle Peter wrote: "For he [Jesus Christ] received from God the Father honor and glory, when words such as these were borne to him by the magnificent glory: 'This is my son, my beloved, whom I myself have approved.' Yes, these words we heard borne from heaven while we were with him in the holy mountain."—2 Pet. 1:12-18.

6 All through the public career of Jesus Christ on earth Jehovah bore witness to the fact that that one was the foretold Messiah by giving him the good news of the kingdom of God to preach and by bestowing upon him miraculous powers. Hence, when the apostle Peter was bearing witness to the first Gentile converts to Christianity, he could speak about Jehovah's Messiah thus:

7 "Jesus who was from Nazareth, how God anointed him with holy spirit and power, and he went through the land doing good and healing all those oppressed by the Devil; because God was with him. And we are witnesses of all the things he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem; but they also did away with him by hanging him on a stake. God raised this One up on the third day and granted him to become manifest, not to all the people, but to witnesses appointed beforehand by God, to us, who ate and drank with him after his rising from the dead. Also, he ordered us to preach to the people and to give a thorough witness that this is the One decreed by God to be judge of the living and the dead."—Acts 10:38-42.

8 Extraordinarily powerful was the witness that Jehovah God the Almighty gave to his Messiah by resurrecting him from the dead. Calling attention to this overwhelming divine testimony, the apostle Paul could write to the Roman Christians: "God's good news, which he promised aforetime through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who sprang from the seed of David according to the flesh, but who with power was declared God's Son according to the spirit of holiness by means of resurrection from the dead—yes, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we received undeserved kindness." (Rom. 1:1-5) Only God the Almighty could give such a witness to prove who was really Christ.

9 Jesus Christ himself depended upon the witness from God rather than on that of men. To the Jews who had remained unconvinced concerning his being the Messiah, Jesus said: "If I alone bear witness about myself, my witness is not true. There is another that bears witness about me, and I know that the witness which he bears about me is true. You have dispatched men to John [the Baptist, then in prison], and he has borne witness to the truth. However, I do not accept the witness from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. . . . But I have the witness greater than that of John, for the

5. Three years later, how and where did Jehovah again bear witness to Jesus, and how did Peter testify thereto in writing?

6, 7. (a) How did God bear witness to Jesus all through his public career? (b) How did Peter speak to Cornelius about the part that God took in connection with Jesus as the Christ?

8. What witness did God give to Jesus that was extraordinarily powerful, as spoken of by Paul in Romans 1:1-5?

9. Upon whom did Jesus mainly depend for a witness respecting him, and how did he explain this to the Jews?

very works that my Father assigned me to accomplish, the works themselves that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father dispatched me. Also, the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. . . . You are searching the Scriptures, because you think that by means of them you will have everlasting life; and these are the very ones that bear witness about me." (John 5:31-39) In this way Jesus depended upon the most powerful and irrefutable witness, namely, that of Jehovah God and of his inspired Word, the inspired Bible.

10 In law courts of today the judges and the jury are inclined to accept the witness given by mere men and women who are imperfect. Why should we not rather accept the witness of the perfect and nevermistaken Almighty God, Jehovah? Every legal reason exists for us to accept his infallible testimony. If we do not do so, it means that we are rejecting his testimony and we are making him a liar. This is the argument of the apostle John, in 1 John 5:9-12:

11 "If we receive the witness men give, the witness God gives is greater, because this is the witness God gives, the fact that he has borne witness concerning his Son. The person putting his faith in the Son of God has the witness given in his own case. The person not having faith in God has made him a liar, because he has not put his faith in the witness given, which God as witness has given concerning his Son. And this is the witness given, that God gave us everlasting life, and this life is in his Son. He that has the Son has this life; he that does not have the Son of God does not have this life."

10, 11. (a) How does the acceptance of testimony in human law courts contrast with accepting that of God? (b) If we reject God's witness, what do we make Him, as argued by John in 1 John 5:9-12?

12 What if the witness that God gives far exceeds that which man could give? That does not indicate that God is a liar and that his witness is impossible. It is only to be expected that God would do a thing that would be impossible for mere man to do; just as the angel Gabriel said to the Jewish virgin Mary concerning the virgin birth of her Son Jesus (a thing that more and more of Christendom's clergy claim it is impossible to believe): "With God no declaration will be an impossibility." (Luke 1:26-37) And it did not prove to be an impossibility. The future everlasting life of all mankind in a paradise earth in perfect happiness depended upon that virgin birth of the Son of God. So it is a matter of everlasting life or everlasting death for us according to whether we accept or reject the witness given by God.

13 Jesus Christ the Son of God pointed to God's law as given to the Jews by the prophet Moses and said: "In your own Law it is written: 'The witness of two men is true.' I am one that bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me." (John 8:17, 18) Here we have the mightiest basis for belief, namely, the concordant witness of the two greatest Personages in all existence, Jehovah God and Jesus Christ.

14 Certainly since Jesus Christ accepted and depended upon the witness given by his heavenly Father, Almighty God, all who want to be true Christians should also accept God's own testimony, in order to imitate Jesus Christ. More than that, Jesus Christ bore witness concerning the truth because God his Father did so: like Fa-

12. (a) Why is it unreasonable to take the attitude that God's witness is impossible for us to accept? (b) What future of mankind depends upon the virgin birth of Jesus?

13. According to John 8:17, 18, what is the mightiest basis that we have for believing the witness given?

14. In order to imitate Jehovah God and Jesus Christ, and to do what Jesus told his Jewish disciples, what must we as true Christians do?

ther, like Son. (John 18:37) And inasmuch as Jehovah God himself has borne faithful witness concerning Jesus Christ, then all those who would imitate God, all those who claim to be witnesses of Jehovah, all those who claim to be followers of Jehovah's only-begotten Son, should and must likewise do as Jesus Christ told his Jewish disciples on the Mount of Olives: "Be witnesses of me."

15 By the marvelous witness that He gives concerning his Son Jesus Christ, Jehovah God magnifies himself more than ever. He glorifies himself all the more as the Almighty and true God who both promised and produced the Messiah. He gives all the more reason for his name as the heavenly Father to be sanctified. (Matt. 6:9) His name, Jehovah, still ranks above that of his Son, Jesus. Those who become witnesses of Jesus Christ still remain witnesses of Jehovah. They are first witnesses of Jehovah God before witnesses of his Son Jesus Christ. They are the Christian witnesses of Jehovah with a more wonderful message and in a more privileged position than were those who were faithful witnesses of Jehovah before the coming of his Son Jesus Christ.—Heb. 11:1 to 12:2.

THE CONTENT OF THEIR TESTIMONY, THEN AND NOW

16 Those disciples of Jesus Christ who heard his final command on the Mount of Olives and who saw him ascend heavenward faithfully obeyed what he told them to do. They waited at Jerusalem till they received the holy spirit from God through Christ with which to bear witness to Jesus, exalting Jehovah God still more by this witness concerning his Messianic Son Jesus. Not in their own strength, but in the help of Jehovah's spirit they trusted in order to deliver their testimony, acting as Christian prophets. Just as the angel told the apostle John, in Revelation 19:10: "All I am is a fellow slave of you and of your brothers who have the work of witnessing to Jesus. Worship God; for the bearing witness to Jesus is what inspires prophesying." So, when violent opposition arose against their testifying, it was that spirit that powerfully moved them; just as we read, in Acts 4:31: "And when they had made supplication, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were one and all filled with the holy spirit and were speaking the word of God with boldness."

17 All those who became disciples of Christ back there in apostolic times during the first century C.E. were able to testify concerning Jesus Christ together with his heavenly Father, Jehovah God. Testify what? The written record that has the very thing that "inspires prophesying" tells us what they testified, what their testimony contained. It tells us that the resurrected Jesus said to his apostles: "Starting out from Jerusalem, you are to be witnesses of these things. And, look! I am sending forth upon you that which is promised by my Father [in Joel 2:28, 29]. You, though, abide in the city [of Jerusalem] until you become clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:47-49) True to those instructions, at Jerusalem, after the outpouring of holy spirit upon the disciples the apostle Peter said to more than three thousand Jewish celebrators at the feast of Pentecost:

18 "Actually David did not ascend to the

15. (a) By his witness to Jesus, what does Jehovah do respecting his own name? (b) How are true Christians more privileged as witnesses than the pre-Christian witnesses of Jehovah?

16. Why was it necessary for Jesus' Jewish disciples to wait in Jerusalem before entering in upon their work of bearing witness to Jesus?

17, 18. (a) From where were those first-century disciples to start testifying about Jesus Christ and Jehovah, and after receiving what? (b) What did Peter testify about Jesus at Pentecost?

heavens, but he himself says, 'Jehovah said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I place your enemies as a stool for your feet."' Therefore let all the house of Israel know for a certainty that God made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you impaled."—Acts 2:1-36.

19 The record for that day continues on to say: "And with many other words he bore thorough witness and kept exhorting them, saying: 'Get saved from this crooked generation.'" (Acts 2:40) Let it here be noted that the apostle Peter, while faithfully bearing witness of Jesus Christ, did at the same time continue acting as a witness of Jehovah, giving the greater glory to Jehovah God for what he had done in connection with his Messiah.

20 Regarding the province of Samaria, which bordered on the province of Judea, we read: "However, those who had been scattered [by the persecution under Pharisee Saul] went through the land declaring the good news of the word. Philip, for one, went down to the city of Samaria and began to preach the Christ to them. . . . when they believed Philip, who was declaring the good news of the kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ, they proceeded to be baptized, both men and women. . . . When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they dispatched Peter and John to them; and these went down and prayed for them to get holy spirit. . . . Therefore, when they had given the witness thoroughly and had spoken the word of Jehovah, they turned back to Jerusalem, and they went declaring the good news to many villages of the Samaritans." (Acts 8:4-25) The believing, baptized Samaritans received holy spirit when Peter and John laid their hands upon them. They received the witness of Jesus, but this was part of the preaching of the "kingdom of God." It was the spirit of God that they got.

21 Some time after that witness of Jesus was given to those circumcised Samaritans, the apostle Peter was sent to Caesarea at the northwestern tip of Judea to give the witness of Jesus to the Italian centurion Cornelius and his relatives and friends.

22 Later, in explaining to the disciples at Jerusalem why he had baptized those believing Gentiles, the apostle Peter said: "If, therefore, God gave the same free gift [of holy spirit] to them as he also did to us who have believed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I should be able to hinder God?" How did those disciples react to this report of the conversion of the uncircumcised Gentiles? The record says: "Now when they heard these things, they acquiesced, and they glorified God, saying: 'Well, then, God has granted repentance for the purpose of life to people of the nations also.'" (Acts 10:1 to 11:18) Thus the giving of the witness of Jesus to the uncircumcised Gentiles resulted in the disciples' giving glory to Jehovah God, the Father of the Lord Jesus the Messiah.

THE NEXT ISSUE

- Have You Entered the Great Contest of Faith?
- What Is the Kingdom of God?
- Make Friends with Those Who Love God.

19. While bearing witness of Jesus at Pentecost, Peter continued to act as what and with greater glory to whom?

20. How was the bearing witness to Jesus opened up in Samaria, and was it introduced without reference to God?

21, 22. How did the introduction of the witness to Jesus among the first Gentile converts result with reference to God?

[23] Thereafter the apostle Paul was sent forth as an "apostle to the nations." (Rom. 11:13; Acts 13:1-4; 16:6-12) Concerning his work in Corinth, Greece, we read: "Paul began to be intensely occupied with the word, witnessing to the Jews to prove that Jesus is the Christ [or, Messiah]." (Acts 18:5) When Paul was later held prisoner in Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus said to him: "Be of good courage! For as you have been giving a thorough witness on the things about me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness in Rome." (Acts 23:11) Two years afterward, when Paul was held in custody in Rome, what did he do? The record tells us: "He explained the matter to them [his visitors] by bearing thorough witness concerning the kingdom of God and by using persuasion with them concerning Jesus from both the law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening." (Acts 28:23) From there in Rome Paul could write, even about the year 61 C.E., to the Christian congregation in Colossae, Asia Minor:

[24] "The hope of that good news which you heard, and which was preached in all creation that is under heaven."—Col. 1:23.

[25] Thus, even back there in the apostolic days of the first century of our Common Era, the prophetic words of Jesus Christ had not proved to be false, namely, "You will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth." But that did not result in world conversion back there nineteen hundred years ago. Jesus' words were never meant to signify that. But so mighty was the witness that was given about him that the records of the existence and early activities of the Christian congregation were not overlooked by secular historians, but these non-Biblical historians have borne witness to the reality of Christianity nineteen centuries ago.

23, 24. (a) According to the record, concerning whom did the apostle Paul bear witness in Corinth and in Rome? (b) At the time of his imprisonment in Rome, how widely had the good news been preached?

25. (a) How did that fulfillment of Jesus' words in Acts 1:8 back there result as regards world conversion? (b) How did that worldwide witness back there result with regard to secular historians?

TWENTIETH-CENTURY WITNESSING WORLD WIDE

[26] How true, then, have the words of Jesus proved to be now, so long after he first spoke them? It is true and must be admitted that Christendom has spread the Holy Bible in hundreds of languages in more than two thousand million copies of all the Bible or parts of it. But has Christendom, in explaining those sacred Scriptures, given a true witness concerning Jesus Christ? The state of Christendom today, as well as the state of the world of which Christendom is a most powerful part, obliges honest examiners to answer, No!

[27] True Christianity is radically different from the confusing mixture of hundreds of sectarian religions that Christendom now practices. Nevertheless, the words of Jesus are being fulfilled today by the same class of disciples as the ones to whom he addressed his words back there on the Mount of Olives in 33 C.E. Those disciples back there were all witnesses of Jehovah God, and that is what those who today are bearing Scriptural witness of Jesus are, whether natural Jews or Gentile non-Jews.—Isa. 43:10-12.

[28] Today one's bearing witness of Jesus Christ means much more than it embraced nineteen centuries ago. History has not stood still. The fulfillment of Bible prophecy has not stood still. Today, according to the timetable of the Bible, the world of mankind is living in "the time of the end." (Dan. 12:4; 11:40) Consequently,

26. What has Christendom done about spreading the Bible message, and has she at the same time given a true witness to Jesus?

27. What, then, must be said about the carrying out of Jesus' words in Acts 1:8 in our time?

28. What time period ended in 1914 C.E., and so what does the bearing witness of Jesus Christ include today?

true witnesses of Jesus Christ have to bear witness of what has become true of Jesus Christ during this "time of the end" that began back in the year 1914, at the end of the Gentile Times, or "the appointed times of the nations," in that year. (Luke 21:24; Dan. 4:16, 23, 25, 32) There the time came for Jehovah God to put an end to the trampling by the Gentile nations upon the Kingdom right of his Messiah, Jesus Christ. This he did by enthroning his Son Jesus Christ and commanding him to go subduing among his enemies until they are finally broken to pieces in the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har–Magedon. (Rev. 16:14; Ps. 110:1-5; Heb. 10:12, 13) After his enthronement in heaven, World War I on earth was overshadowed by the fact that "war broke out in heaven" and Satan was cast down to the earth.—Rev. 12:1-13.

29 Who is it today that is witnessing world wide concerning that birth of God's Messianic kingdom and the victory of the newly enthroned King Jesus Christ over Satan the Devil and his demons? It is the Christian witnesses of Jehovah since the year 1914 C.E. Instead of consulting the *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* for 1970, let us turn to a secular channel for information about them. On page 448, column two, of *The New York Times Encyclopœdic Almanac* 1970, we read under "Jehovah's Witnesses" these words:

30 "It is the belief of Jehovah's witnesses that they adhere to the oldest religion on earth, the worship of Almighty God revealed in the Bible as Jehovah. . . . All of Jehovah's witnesses are considered to be ministers of the gospel. . . . such ministers preaching, teaching the people of all nations that God's word is true and that their only hope is in the Kingdom of Jehovah under Christ Jesus, which has been established to rule over earth and replace all governments."

31 Witnessing to Jehovah God and his Son Jesus Christ in 206 lands around the globe deserves to be called "worldwide witnessing," does it not? Certainly! Is the debased Satan the Devil pleased at this witnessing concerning God's Messianic kingdom? Revelation 12:13-17 indicates No, saying: "Now when the dragon [Satan] saw that it was hurled down to the earth, it persecuted the woman [God's heavenly organization] that gave birth to the male child [the Messianic kingdom]. . . . And the dragon grew wrathful at the woman, and went off to wage war with the remaining ones of her seed, who [1] observe the commandments of God and [2] have the work of bearing witness to Jesus."

32 Since World War I this persecution of these Kingdom witnesses has continued. For how much longer? Hardly much longer, for concerning the debased Dragon Satan the Devil the triumphant heavens have announced: "Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time." (Rev. 12:12) After the oncoming "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har–Magedon, where all his visible earthly organization will be destroyed, the Devil and his spirit demons reach the end of their "short period of time." Then they will be bound and removed from the vicinity of earth by being hurled into "the abyss," unable

29, 30. Who today are bearing witness to those events of this "time of the end," and how does a secular channel of information verify this?

31. (a) What indicates whether their work is a "worldwide witnessing"? (b) How does Revelation 12:17 show whether the Devil is pleased at their witnessing work?

32. (a) What indicates whether this persecution of these Kingdom witnesses will go on much longer? (b) What, then, was the worldwide witnessing to Jesus meant to accomplish?

to deceive and seduce the nations during the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ over the earth and its inhabitants. Thus the bearing witness to Jesus Christ world wide is not meant and never was meant to convert the world of mankind to Christianity. As a witness, it merely serves notice upon the political nations before their end comes at Har–Magedon. Thereby they have had their warning!

33 When God's war at Har–Magedon proceeds to destroy all such enemy nations, the worldwide witness will have served its purpose. It will end, just as Jesus Christ foretold, declaring: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matt. 24:14) "In all the nations the good news has to be preached first." (Mark 13:10) Were the "end" to come tomorrow, it could never be said by the nations that this prophecy has failed to be fulfilled. Evidently, though, the climax of this worldwide witnessing is yet to be reached. But all evidence is persuasive that the climactic end is near. When it does come, shortly, where will it find us? Lined up on the side of the unconverted nations? Or lined up on the side of the invincible kingdom of Jehovah God in the hands of his Son Jesus Christ? The decision is for each one of us to make now, before the end of the worldwide witnessing occurs according to God's will.

34 Happy will all those be who are then found on the side of the Kingdom, yes, all those who will have had an active share in giving this never-to-be-repeated worldwide witness to God's Messianic kingdom and to whom he can then say: 'You are my witnesses and the witnesses of my Son Jesus Christ, the King, and I am your God Jehovah.'—Isa. 43:12; Acts 1:8.

33. (a) What did Jesus' prophecy indicate as to whether there will be an end to this worldwide witnessing? (b) What decision is ours now to make before the worldwide witness ends?

34. Who will be the happy ones when the time for the worldwide witnessing ends?

She and the Children Had Changed!

A GREEK family moved to South Africa. While there the wife became very interested in the Bible's message of truth as presented by Jehovah's witnesses. Not much later she and her children had to return to Greece to help her sick parents. Before she left, her husband stressed to her that the children were to be brought up in the Orthodox church. While in Greece, however, the woman continued her study of the Bible and made rapid progress in her knowledge of its teachings. Glowing letters about what she was learning now began reaching her husband. So he decided to return to Greece "to put a stop to this whole business before it gets too far."

Upon his arrival there, he was met by a very happy family that had made great changes. Whereas his wife was formerly an incorrigible gossiper and troublemaker, he found that she was now liked and respected by all. And his children, who had been so unmanageable, had now become most respectful. Needless to say, he was pleasantly surprised by all this. Nevertheless, he felt that he still had to put his wife right about her religion.

So, taking her Bible, off he went to the village church to note the differences between it and the one in the church. He found no differences. In fact, in his investigation he found the name *Ieova* (Jehovah) in the church Bible, and he wondered why the priest had never mentioned it. He returned home very thoughtful. "This religion of yours is good," he said to his wife. "I know now that you will always be faithful to me as a wife and that my children are better than they have ever been. You continue in this religion and give me something to read." He then returned to South Africa, where he, too, began studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses.

BASIS FOR THE *New World Translation*

"ALL flesh is green grass . . . The green grass has dried up, the blossom has withered; but as for the word of our God, it will last to time indefinite." True to his promise, Jehovah God's Word has lasted throughout the many, many centuries since it was first penned, and that in spite of all the efforts of God's enemies to destroy his Word by ridicule and by persecution!—Isa. 40:6, 8.

In seeing to it that his Word was preserved, Jehovah could have performed a continuous miracle. He could have either preserved the original manuscripts or kept their copies free from transcribers' and translators' errors, but he chose to do neither. Rather, he saw fit to guide matters in such a way that, with few exceptions, no significant errors have crept into the text.

We can have confidence that the copies we have today are faithful copies of the original writings. This is to be seen from the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah. Authorities date this scroll as having been written before our Common Era. It bears eloquent testimony to the carefulness with which Bible copyists did their work. A comparison of it with the earliest Masoretic text, produced more than a thousand years later, shows that only very insignificant changes crept in during a thousand years of copying!

Many Bible lovers who have obtained copies of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* have wondered why they found differences between it and the Bible to which they had been accustomed, usually the *King James Version*. Why? As to the Christian Greek Scriptures, the differences are primarily because the *New World Translation* is based on the Westcott and Hort Greek text, whereas the *King James Version* was based on what is referred to as a *Textus Receptus* or "Received Text."

As students of the Bible are well aware, the Christian Greek Scriptures were originally written in what is known as *koiné* or "common" Greek during the first century of our Common Era. However, it was not until the beginning of the sixteenth century that a Greek "New Testament" was produced for general circulation. The printer of it was a man named Froben, of Basel, Switzerland. He commissioned Erasmus, a leading scholar of the time, to rush through a Greek "New Testament." This Erasmus did in ten months, and it appeared in 1516. Because of the haste with which he worked, its text was filled with errors. Many of these were gradually eliminated in further editions that appeared in 1519, 1522, 1527 and 1535.

In the preface of his text Erasmus wrote: "I vehemently dissent from those

[the Church of Rome] who would not have private persons read the Holy Scriptures, nor have them translated into the vulgar tongue," that is, into the language of the common people. While in his editions he also made critical remarks about the Roman Catholic clergy, Erasmus never summoned up sufficient zeal or courage to give the common people of Europe the benefit of God's Word by translating it into one of their own tongues.

THE "RECEIVED TEXT"

The text of Erasmus was a literary sensation. This, together with its reasonable price, resulted in its becoming the first Bible "best seller." In fact, it might be said that his editions really started something, for then one publisher after another brought out his own editions. Among these were the Parisian Stephanus, the Swiss Beza and the Dutch Elzevir; none of whose editions, however, differed greatly from Froben's Erasmus text. Luther used the 1519 edition of Erasmus for his own translation into German. Among the editions based on Erasmus' text was one that became the *Textus Receptus* or the Received Text for Great Britain and the basis for many English versions including the Christian Greek Scripture portion of the *King James Version*.

How good was this Received Text? There was no question about its being the Word of God. However, it did leave much to be desired as far as accuracy was concerned, and that for more than one good reason. First of all, Erasmus was able to consult only a handful of Greek manuscripts.* Even more serious was the fact that all of these were of late origin. As a rule, the older a handwritten manuscript is, the fewer copying errors it is likely to have. Then there was also the matter of the haste with which Erasmus did his work. He himself admitted that his edition was "rushed through rather than edited."

In spite of these unfavorable aspects of the editions by Erasmus, which applied with almost equal force to the Received Text, this text remained the standard for more than two hundred years. Among the first to bring out his own text was the German scholar Griesbach; although it is said that he did not rid himself entirely of the influence of the Received Text.

The first one to do so was Lachmann, a professor of ancient classical languages at Berlin University. As one authority put it, Lachmann "was the first to found a text, wholly upon ancient evidence; and . . . did much toward breaking the superstitious reverence for the *textus receptus*." After him came Tischendorf, a truly outstanding scholar who discovered the Sinaitic Manuscript in a monastery on the Sinai Peninsula. While Tischendorf was busy in Germany, Tregelles did very fine work in England, bringing out a text that J. B. Rotherham used for the first two editions of his *Emphasised Bible*.

WESTCOTT AND HORT

All this activity of refining reached its peak in the labors of two British Bible scholars, B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort. Like Tischendorf and Tregelles, these men were firm believers in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. This fact no doubt helped to account for both their zeal as well as their sound judgment.

Westcott and Hort worked on their Greek text for twenty-eight years, from 1853 to 1881. While working independently of each other, they continually compared notes. "They gathered up in themselves," as A. Souter puts it, "all that was most

* Of these there may have been as few as five; at the most eight. These, however, did not consist of the complete Christian Greek Scriptures but rather of one or more sections into which these Scriptures were generally divided for copying by hand: (1) the Gospels, (2) Acts and the general letters of James through Jude, (3) the letters of Paul, (4) Revelation.

valuable in the work of their predecessors." They took every conceivable factor and every pertinent probability into consideration.

Their work has been termed "the most important contribution to the scientific criticism of the New Testament yet made." Rotherham used it for his later editions, speaking of Westcott and Hort as "consummate masters of textual criticism." Goodspeed states in the preface of *An American Translation* (1923):

"I have closely followed the Greek Text of Westcott and Hort, now generally accepted. Every scholar knows its superiority to the late and faulty texts from which the early English translations from Tyndale to the Authorized Version were made." The text of Westcott and Hort also served as the foundation of the Greek Scripture portion of the *American Standard Version* (1901) and the *Revised Standard Version* (1946).

The translators of the *Revised Standard Version* also used a still later, very authoritative text, that of Nestle, which text the New World Bible Translation Committee also consulted. That Committee, as can be seen from their footnotes, made comparisons with many other fine texts, both in Greek and in other languages. For example, they consulted nineteen Hebrew versions of the Christian Greek Scriptures that served as a basis for their using the divine name Jehovah in many places in the Christian Greek Scriptures.

The Westcott and Hort Greek text is now available to all Bible lovers in *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*. One of the latest products of the New World Bible Translation Committee, it was released in 1969 at the "Peace on Earth" International Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses.

This scholarly work has on each page a wide column and a narrow one. In the wide column to the left there appears the Westcott and Hort text and under each Greek word the English equivalent, a word-for-word translation. In the narrow right-hand column appears an improved text of the 1961 *New World Translation*. This *Kingdom Interlinear Translation* also contains much valuable information in its introduction and appendix, and regarding the Greek language itself on the front and back endsheets.

The foregoing accounts for many of the differences between the *New World Translation* and the *King James Version* and other old versions. The more striking differences consist of things appearing in the older versions that are not found in the later ones or that are shown only in footnotes. Why is that? Because most copyists' errors are additions to the text rather than omissions. Thus Bible scholars today agree that the last twelve verses of the Gospel of Mark (16:9-20) and the first eleven verses of the eighth chapter of the Gospel of John were not part of the original writings. And neither were the words "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth," which are found at 1 John 5:7, 8 in the *Douay* and the *King James* versions.

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

The Hebrew Scriptures were produced by God's penmen from the time of Moses to Ezra's time. Today none of the original writings are known to be in existence; only copies of copies. However, from the beginning great care was exercised in their preservation, including authorized copies of them.

Because the Jews became a widely scattered people, from the time of their return from Babylon there was an increased demand for copies of the inspired Hebrew Scriptures. Such handwritten copies con-

tinued to be made particularly until the invention of printing from movable type in Gutenberg's time. Today in various libraries of the world there are 1,700 handwritten copies of various parts of the Hebrew Scriptures. Until recently there were no copies, save a few fragments, older than the tenth century. But starting with the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, many far older Hebrew Scripture scrolls have come to light. The most valuable of these is the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah, which, as already noted, experts date as being written before our Common Era.

The men who copied these manuscripts from the time of Ezra to the time of Jesus were the scribes or *sopherim*. These men felt compelled at times to make changes in the text, as when they thought the text implied some indignity to Jehovah God. Their successors were the Masoretes, the "lords of tradition." These were exceedingly scrupulous and not only refrained from changing anything but were careful to restore the changes that the *sopherim* made, in particular restoring the divine name Jehovah. The earliest and most reliable Masoretic manuscript that has been made available to modern Bible scholars is the Ben Asher Masoretic text of about 930 C.E.

This is the text that one of the leading Hebrew scholars of the twentieth century, Rudolf Kittel, and his associates and successors used in producing the third and later editions of the *Biblia Hebraica*. Its 7th, 8th and 9th editions (1951-1955) were used by the New World Bible Translation Committee in producing their version of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Committee also consulted other fine Hebrew texts, especially that of the eminent scholar D. Ginsburg, following his text as the main reading in a number of places.

The New World Bible Translation Committee also used for purposes of comparison leading earliest translated texts. The most important of these is the Greek *Septuagint*. It began to be produced in 280 B.C.E., reputedly by seventy scholars, from which fact it got its name. It is the version that was mainly used by the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures, as can be seen from both their direct and indirect quotations.

The Committee also consulted the leading Latin version, Jerome's *Vulgate*. He translated it from the original languages into the then common language of the people, for which reason it was called the *Vulgate* or "vulgar" version. Published at the beginning of the 5th century C.E., it also is referred to many times in the footnotes of the first and 1963 editions of the *New World Translation*.

Also consulted and deserving mention are the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Aramaic Targums. The Samaritan Pentateuch is actually a transliteration rather than a translation. That is, the Hebrew words were simply put in the characters of the Samaritan alphabet, making it possible for Samaritans to read but not necessarily understand it. It was produced during the fourth century B.C.E., although extant copies go back only to the tenth century C.E. The Aramaic Targums were the earliest translations, or more correctly stated, paraphrases of Bible books. But they were first put in writing at the beginning of the Common Era, until then being transmitted only by word of mouth.

The scholarly basis for the renderings found in the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, as noted in the foregoing, gives confidence in the accuracy of this translation. Further giving us confidence in it is the fact that the members of the New World Bible Translation Committee firmly believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, knowing that it is indeed the Word of God and that "the saying of Jehovah endures forever."—1 Pet. 1:25.

PIONEERING -a Way of Life

As told by John T. Hemmaway

MY WIFE and I are now in our seventies, elderly it is true, but possessed of a wealth of memories that we cherish and delight to pass on to those who will follow. (Ps. 78:6, 7) Why are these memories so precious? Because they have to do with things we were privileged to do by the undeserved kindness of Jehovah, "the Master of the harvest," and his fellow worker, Christ Jesus. Would you like to hear about some of them?

It was back in 1922, in the difficult post-World War I years, that my quest for some explanation of world turmoil led me to the shelves of our home library. I was drawn to a set of books with silver lettering entitled "Studies in the Scriptures." I had often seen them before, but now I decided to read them. And, do you know, I found in their pages just what I needed, what I wanted most in life.

My next step was to inquire for the meeting place of the Bible Students, as Jehovah's witnesses were then known. At the conclusion of the first meeting that I attended, there was a call for volunteers, and that very next Saturday I was out assisting in the distribution of booklets dealing with the Scriptural views on the dead and spiritism. That marked the beginning of a satisfying life that has produced untold spiritual rewards.

It was in that same year that I met my future wife, Daisy Manning. We do thank Jehovah for his kindness in keeping us together and permitting us to enjoy a life of teamwork in his service.

In that decade of the 20's there did not seem to us to be many who were paying attention to God's message for that time, but since then we have learned that there must have been many thousands who, in that period, commenced a life of dedication to God. Since entering the full-time preaching activity as "pioneers" in 1924, we have come to know and love many of them. Others we are looking forward to meeting at that grand assembly of "the congregation of the first-born" mentioned at Hebrews 12:23.

In 1928 we left England for America to attend the international convention of Bible Students in Detroit, Michigan. We learned that there was much territory to cover with the Kingdom message, and so decided we would continue our pioneer ministry on this continent. After temporarily serving with the Watch Tower Society's Canadian branch in Toronto, we applied for entry into the United States as permanent residents. From then on we pioneered or worked full time preaching God's kingdom in county after county and state after state until we had covered some thirty counties in eight states.

SOLVING PIONEER PROBLEMS

Yes, pioneering has its problems, but at least they do not include a grumpy boss, or unpleasant fellow employees, or bad work conditions, or work that is distasteful. The full-time ministry or pioneer service in those days kept one on the move, for it was mainly covering the territory with Bible literature, and stopping briefly to help people organize their own family

Bible study. We had to be ready to make many moves and cover vast distances.

We had heard that some pioneers were cutting down on expenses by building their own home on wheels, so a fellow Witness from Youngstown, Ohio, helped us to build one. It was nothing like the streamlined mobile homes of today. In fact, motorists had other names for it when they wanted to pass us on the road. It was seventeen feet long, seven feet wide, and the roof about seven feet from the ground. The roof was made of an old sail and the sides were of galvanized sheets, the whole mounted on an old Ford chassis. For almost fifteen years it served us as home, and certainly made it possible for us to stick with the full-time ministry.

At Matthew 7:7 the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* uses the forceful verb forms "keep on asking," "keep on seeking," "keep on knocking." Many pioneer ministers can relate that it has been necessary to do just those things when looking for a place to stay in some strange town. After searching and asking all day and on into the evening, it would usually happen that the only appropriate place in the community was finally located. Without persistence and trust that Jehovah through his angels was and is directing the interests of his Kingdom-preaching work on earth we would tend to give out easily.

RELIVING OUR EARLY PIONEER DAYS

Among the most thrilling experiences of our lives is the study of the Watch Tower Society's publications *"Then Is Finished the Mystery of God"* and *"Babylon the Great Has Fallen!" God's Kingdom Rules!* Why? Because as we read in them the historical facts that have been fulfilling the visions of the apostle John in the Bible book of Revelation, we actually relive events that we observed personally and in which we participated as full-time ministers.

In our early years, remember, all the congregations of Bible Students were made up of those who had a heavenly hope, who hoped one day to enter heaven as part of Christ's Bride class. (Rev. 21:2) But then, true to the Bible prophecies, the "other sheep" specifically mentioned by the Lord Jesus began to make their appearance. (John 10:16) A happy encounter with just this kind of people comes to mind.

It was in Clinton, Indiana, where we had prison experience in 1934. We were warned to get out and never return with our house-to-house preaching of God's Word. But the Society thought differently, and we were assigned to go back. This time things turned out very differently. An elderly couple, well known to the town officials and the townspeople, having read about our case in the newspaper, came with a property bond to set us free. We had never met them before, but, true to the description at Matthew 25:35, 36, they *did* visit us in prison and they *did* extend hospitality to us until our case was settled.

We have observed, too, the foretold great speedup in the Lord's great ingathering of sheeplike persons. What once took years to accomplish now takes but a few months. For example, a farmer we called on early one summer morning was up in his cherry tree, but not so high that we could not talk to him. The question of "hellfire" came up, as it often did. As he himself later declared: "While I was up in that tree I was a believer in 'hellfire,' but when I came down I was no longer a believer." That night he came in search of us 'just to see what kind of people we were.' The following Saturday he was on the street with us holding up *The Watchtower* to passersby. He never looked back. Both he and his sons entered the pioneer ministry, preaching God's truths full time.

Then more recently in Kentucky we had another joyous experience. We were preparing some land for our home close by the highway. We would be out there between six and eight each morning. A State trooper turned in one morning, faced his car to the road, the engine still running, and then came over. "I'm just curious about what you are doing," he said.

The conversation soon turned toward the Bible's message and, with one eye on the highway, he listened. He confessed that his being in a position to have to kill someone in line of duty or for self-protection was a matter on his conscience. He resumed his patrol, but came back later, and a study was arranged for both him and his wife. They made excellent progress. In due course he resigned from the force and is now at some other job in Texas, with a clear conscience. His wife was baptized recently, and he may follow her soon, we hope. They write to us as though we were closer than relatives.

Time would fail me to tell of all the wonderful things that have happened as a result of making the pioneer ministry our way of life. Time and again at assemblies we have people come up and say: "Don't you remember us? You were the first ones to bring the message of the Kingdom to our door." And if we had not been pioneers we would not have had the privilege of being appointed to the "zone service" in 1938. That service is now known as "circuit work," for it involves visiting a circuit of congregations as special representatives of the Watch Tower Society, with a view to aiding those congregations to progress in their service to Jehovah.

It was in this field of activity that we observed at first hand the marvelous expansion of the Kingdom interests and the inception and growth of many new congregations, especially after the appointment of overseers and ministerial servants in the congregations in a theocratic manner. Until then appointments had been made in the democratic manner of each one voting for his choice. Imagine what a long way we have come from those beginnings of theocratic organization to the present time, where we now have the invaluable handbook *"Your Word Is a Lamp to My Foot,"* and the monthly paper *Kingdom Ministry,* filled with suggestions for our ministry.

PIONEERING IN FOREIGN FIELDS

With the death of the Society's second president, J. F. Rutherford, and the election of its third president, N. H. Knorr, an era of expansion and ever greater privileges came for those who had made pioneering their way of life. What next opened up for us was the opportunity to attend the Fifth Class of the Society's Gilead School for missionaries. Upon completion of the five-month study course, we were assigned to British Guiana. How exciting! Yes, and how satisfying!

To sit down on the dirt floor of a palm hut and talk to the Hindu or Amerindian folk about God's kingdom, teaching them a really *new* way of life, gives a satisfaction that is beyond compare. Seeing those humble people respond to Bible teaching and then willingly dedicate their lives to God is an experience that will never fade from our minds.

While in Guiana (now Guyana) we usually spent so-called vacation periods witnessing to all we could meet in the bush of the Northwest District, 200 miles from the coast and bordering Venezuela. The inhabitants were Caribs and other Indian tribes, besides the mixture of six nations that make up the bulk of the country's population. Ferries, steamer bus, train and truck were used as required to get to our

destination. With us went provisions, literature, personal baggage and a bicycle —this last being essential for traveling the dirt roads to reach the Indian trails.

These trails lead in all directions and a person must use his memory or break off some twigs at the junctions of paths if he wants to be sure of a safe return. When any member of the cat family is encountered on the trail, it is customary to stand perfectly still and stare it down. Eventually the creature moves quietly out of one's way. Monkeys pass high in the treetops, screaming their protest at intruders, while the sloth, hanging upside down, will eye a person lazily as he passes by. One does not stop to pet him, for he has vicious claws, and that appearance of slow motion is just a cover-up. Here and there in the clearings one may get a glimpse of colorful toucan birds feeding on the fruit of the papaya tree.

As we look back, something that stands out in memory is the eagerness with which people came long distances to see our film of an international convention of Jehovah's witnesses. Picture for yourself a large compound in the forest, where official buildings, including the police station, were located. Here, outdoors, we had a great crowd of eager viewers. Then on the steamer, during the return trip downriver, on one occasion, there was a popular demand to see the film. With the captain's approval the screen was set up on deck and the projector was operated from a cabin window. Catholic and Anglican priests were on board. Though they had not condescended to see the film on land, they were now, perhaps unwilling, viewers on board. Indeed, it was from their cabin that we ran the film. The passengers later plied them with questions that only one of Jehovah's witnesses could answer.

Our fifteen years in Guyana passed all too quickly. There, too, we had many evidences of the Lord's blessing on the pioneer way of life, for we saw multitudes beam their appreciation of God's grand message of hope for all peoples. Ill health forced us to return to the United States, but we had seen the number of Kingdom preachers in Guyana grow from 50 to 800, and there are now well over one thousand joyous proclaimers of Jehovah's name in Guyana.

Yes, our way of life as pioneers has been filled to the brim and overflowing with the greatest joys, joys undimmed by the selfishness of secular life. We are grateful for the measure of health and strength we still retain, enabling us to carry on in the joy-producing pioneer ministry. Our way of life has helped us to feel a close personal relationship to Jehovah God and his Son, Christ Jesus.

Surely to the youth, to the unencumbered in all congregations of Jehovah's people, the call is loud and clear! The call to the pioneer way of life is urgent. Those who will respond and work diligently during the years immediately ahead will have the great satisfaction both of doing Jehovah's will and of laying up a store of precious memories that can be related to the children of the resurrection. If you do not have such memories, you certainly cannot relate them.

"Jehovah is the portion of my allotted share and of my cup. You are holding fast my lot. The measuring lines themselves have fallen for me in pleasant places. Really, my own possession has proved agreeable to me. I shall bless Jehovah, who has given me advice. . . . I have placed Jehovah in front of me constantly."
—Ps. 16:5-8.

● What is the "third heaven" and "paradise" to which 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4 refers?—R. B., U.S.A.

At 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 the apostle Paul describes one who was "caught away . . . to the third heaven" and "into paradise." Since there is no mention in the Scriptures of any other person having had such an experience, it seems likely that this was the apostle Paul's own experience. Whereas some have endeavored to relate Paul's reference to the "third heaven" to the early Rabbinical view that there were stages of heaven, even a total of "seven heavens," this view finds no support in the Scriptures.

When we examine the context, it becomes apparent that the apostle is not referring to the heavens within earth's atmospheric expanse or to outer space. The apostle wrote: "I shall pass on to supernatural visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in union with Christ who, fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know; God knows—was caught away as such to the third heaven. . . . he was caught away into paradise and heard unutterable words which it is not lawful for a man to speak." —2 Cor. 12:1-4.

It therefore appears that the reference to the "third heaven" relates to the spiritual heavens and indicates the superlative degree of the rapture in which this vision was seen. In this regard, one can note the way words and expressions are repeated *three* times at Isaiah 6:3, Ezekiel 21:27, John 21:15-17 and Revelation 4:8, evidently for the purpose of expressing an intensification of the quality or idea.

Caught away to the "third heaven," the vision-viewer entered "paradise" and heard unutterable words. A key to understanding Paul's description of the vision is found in the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures that relate to the restoration of God's ancient people. Throughout many of the prophetic books of the Bible divine promises are found regarding the restoration of Israel from the lands of its exile to its desolated homeland. God would cause that abandoned land to be tilled and sown, to produce richly and to abound with humankind and animalkind; the cities would be rebuilt and inhabited and people would say: "That land yonder which was laid desolate has become like the garden of Eden."—Ezek. 36:6-11, 29, 30, 33-35; compare Isaiah 51:3; Jeremiah 31:10-12; Ezekiel 34:25-27.

However, these prophecies also show that paradise conditions related to the *people* themselves. By faithfulness to God, they could now "sprout" and flourish as "trees of righteousness," enjoying beautiful spiritual prosperity like a "well-watered garden," showered by bounteous blessings from God due to having his favor. (Isa. 58:11; 61:3, 11; Jer. 31:12; 32:41) The people of Israel had been God's vineyard, his planting, but their badness and apostasy from true worship had caused a figurative 'withering away' of their spiritual field, even before the literal desolation of their land took place.—Compare Exodus 15:17; Isaiah 5:1-8; Jeremiah 2:21.

Thus the paradise envisioned by the apostle Paul could refer to a spiritual state among God's people, as in the case of fleshly Israel. This can be seen from the fact that the Christian congregation was also God's "field under cultivation," his spiritual vineyard, rooted in Jesus Christ and bearing fruit to God's praise. (1 Cor. 3:9; John 15:1-8) As such it had replaced the nation of Israel in God's favor. —Compare Matthew 21:33-43.

Paul's vision, nevertheless, must logically have applied to some future time. An apostasy was due to set in among the Christian congregation, was already working in Paul's day, and would result in a condition like that of a field oversown with weeds. (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43; Acts 20:29; 2 Thess. 2:3, 7; compare Hebrews 6:7, 8.) So, Paul's paradise vision would not reasonably apply while such was the case. Rather, it would evidently relate to the time of the "harvest season" when the genuine Christians would be gathered by the angelic reapers and would enjoy rich blessings and spiritual prosperity from God.

The anointed footstep followers of Jesus Christ who are living today are indeed enjoying a spiritual paradise, as can be seen from the spiritual prosperity now evident among them. In fact, the spiritual prosperity today under God's established kingdom is more glorious than that enjoyed during the apostolic days,

the initial period of Christianity. Sharing in today's spiritual prosperity are the "great crowd" of "other sheep" who look forward to enjoying a literal paradise here on the earth in the near future.—Rev. 21:1-4.

● On what basis is the prophecy at Ezekiel 21: 25-27 applied to Judean King Zedekiah?—A. S., U.S.A.

The prophecy in question reads: "As for you, O deadly wounded, wicked chieftain of Israel, whose day has come in the time of the error of the end, this is what the Lord Jehovah has said, 'Remove the turban, and lift off the crown. This will not be the same. Put on high even what is low, and bring low even the high one. A ruin, a ruin, a ruin I shall make it. As for this also, it will certainly become no one's until he comes who has the legal right, and I must give it to him.'"

The general agreement among Bible scholars, Jewish, Catholic and Protestant, is that this prophecy does indeed apply to the last king of Judah, Zedekiah, and not without good reason. Ezekiel tells that he began to prophesy in the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin, which began in 617 B.C.E. (Ezek. 1:2) King Nebuchadnezzar replaced King Jehoiachin with King Zedekiah, Jehoiachin's uncle. (2 Ki. 24:12-17) King Zedekiah was therefore ruling when Ezekiel began to prophesy. He certainly proved to be a "wicked chieftain."—2 Ki. 24: 18-20.

Chapter 21 of the book of Ezekiel begins with a prophecy directed against Jerusalem and "against the soil of Israel," and verses 20 and 21 tell that the king of Babylon would come against Judah and Jerusalem. Since King Zedekiah was the only, as well as the last, king of Israel that was ruling during the time that Ezekiel prophesied, it follows that Ezekiel 21: 25-27 must apply to him.

And this prophecy did indeed have fulfillment upon him and in his time. It said, "Remove the turban, and lift off the crown." This King Nebuchadnezzar did for him, taking off Zedekiah's royal turban and removing his crown by taking him into captivity in Babylon. The prophecy pronounced a threefold, that is, a thorough-going ruination, and that also took place with the utter desolation of Jerusalem and Judah. As a result of this the "low" pagan Gentile ruler Nebuchadnezzar was "put on high" and "the high one," King Zedekiah, sitting on David's throne, was brought "low."

Further, since King Zedekiah was the last of the line of King David to sit upon an earthly throne in Jerusalem, it was indeed true that after him "it will certainly become no one's until he comes who has the legal right, and I must give it to him." That one, as the virgin Mary was told by the angel Gabriel, was none other than the Son of God, Jesus Christ.—Luke 1:32, 33; 22:28-30.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

January 10: Worldwide Witnessing versus World Conversion, ¶1-27, and End of Worldwide Witnessing Gets Nearer, ¶1-4. Page 744. Songs to Be Used: 39, 117.

January 17: End of Worldwide Witnessing Gets Nearer, ¶5-34. Page 752. Songs to Be Used: 22, 93.