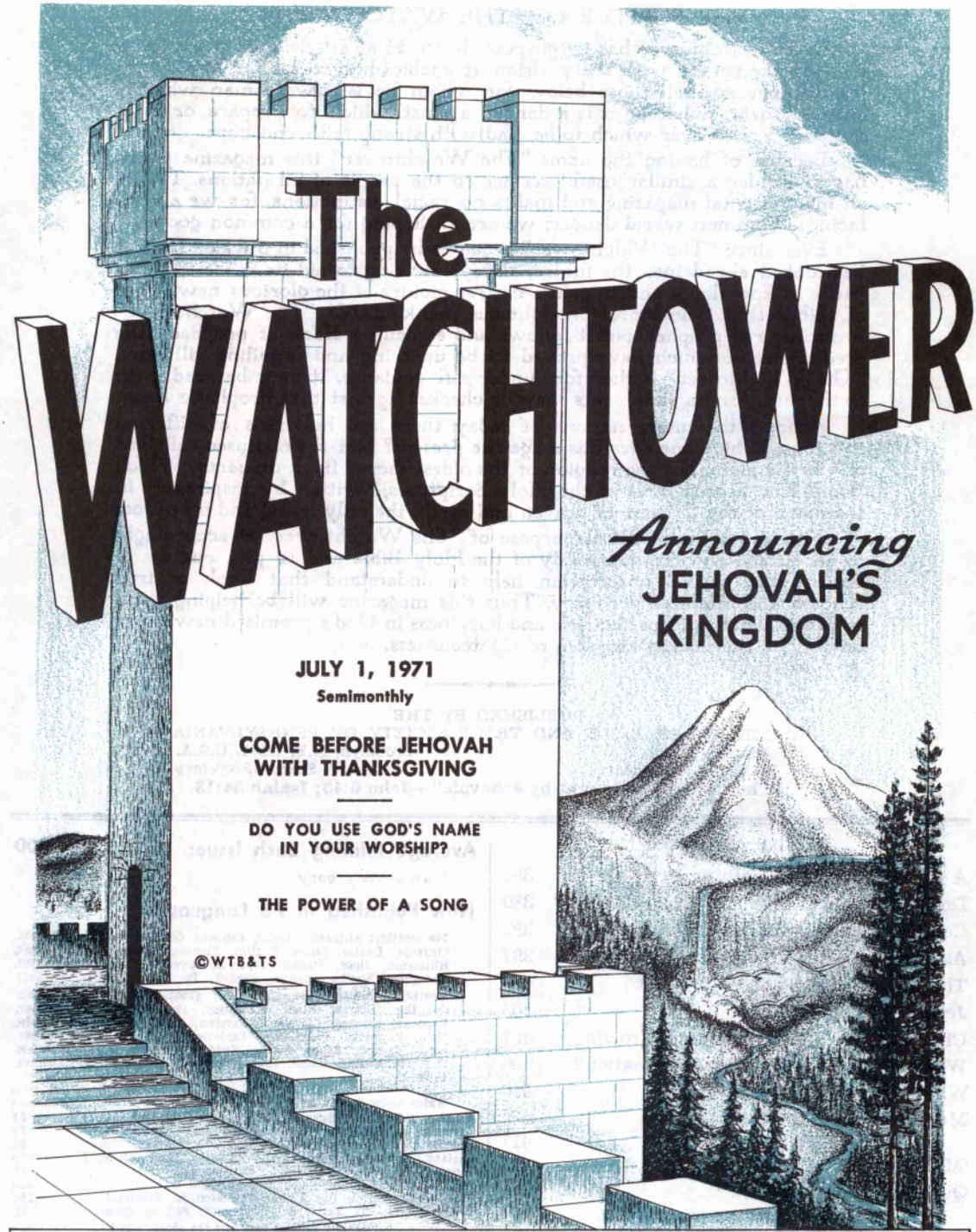


"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

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

CONTENTS

A Good Name Is Something Precious	387
Do You Use God's Name in Your Worship?	389
Come Before Jehovah with Thanksgiving	392
Assemblies After the Death of Christ	397
The Power of a Song	403
Jesus Gives a Sign	405
Church News Shows Problems Growing	407
Where Did Moses Get His Information?	409
What Rejecting Genesis Means	410
Mercy—What Part Does It Play in Your Life?	411
'My Future Is Bright'	415
Questions from Readers	415

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: 7,325,000

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	65p
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	75c
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. XCII July 1, 1971 Number 13

A Good Name IS SOMETHING PRECIOUS

"HE THAT filches from me my good name, robs me of that, which not enriches him, and makes me poor indeed." Thus speaks one of the characters in Shakespeare's famous play, *Othello, the Moor of Venice.*

As has well been noted, one's name might be likened to one's face—it is that by which one is known. But what makes a name good or bad? It is the person who wears that name. He gives it whatever quality it has by what he is, the life he leads, the things for which he stands. A good name, that is, a good reputation, is therefore something precious indeed. To lose a good name is truly to be made poor.

Recognizing the value of a good name, worldly governments have enacted laws to protect one's name or reputation from malicious slander (*oral* defamation) and libel (*written* defamation). In so doing these governments are but following the pattern set by the Bible in the ninth of the Ten Commandments, which stated: "You shall not give false evidence against your neighbour." Under that law, those who did, were punished with the same punishment they had intended to bring upon another by their false testimony.—Ex. 20:16; Deut. 19:16-21, *New English Bible.*

Yes, the Bible shows that we should rightly be concerned about having and keeping a good name. In it we read that "a good name is more to be desired than great riches." "A good name smells sweeter than the finest ointment." The importance of a good name within the Christian congregation is made clear by the Bible's requirement that overseers must have "a good reputation with the non-Christian public."—Prov. 22:1; Eccl. 7:1; 1 Tim. 3:7, *NEB.*

Jehovah God himself has set us an excellent example in being concerned about having a good name. First of all, he has given himself a very distinctive name, *Jehovah* or *Yahweh,* meaning "He Causes to Become." That name at once testifies to his Creatorship and that he is a God of purpose, One who carries out his will and fulfills his promises without fail. He considered this name so important that he caused it to appear in the Hebrew Scriptures 6,961 times. In fact, by that name he is identified more than by all other terms put together—terms such as Lord, God, Most High, and so forth. The name Jehovah he associates with his great works and deliverances, as when freeing the Is-

raelites from Egyptian bondage.—2 Sam. 7:23.

Perhaps the earliest allusion to the importance of God's reputation or name is that made by Abraham in connection with the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham questioned the justice of destroying the righteous with the wicked, asking, "Is the Judge of all the earth not going to do what is right?" The reputation of God was involved, that is, his name as a just God and Judge. Jehovah God agreed to spare those wicked cities if but ten righteous persons were found in them. But there were not ten, only Lot's family.—Gen. 18:24, 25; 19:15-29.

Jehovah spared his people Israel in the wilderness when they deserved to die, because of his name. And so in the centuries to follow, repeatedly we read of Jehovah's servants as pleading that He hear and answer their petitions because his name was involved, because his reputation was at stake.—Num. 14:13-19; Josh. 7:7-9; Isa. 37:14-20; Ezek. 36:16-23.

ACQUIRING A GOOD NAME

Since it is so desirable, how can we acquire a good name? By seeking to please men, by trying to be popular? No, but by doing what is right, by living in the fear of Jehovah God. Thus there was Job, who the Bible record shows had a fine name with God. Why? Because he was 'a man blameless and upright, who feared God and set his face against wrongdoing.' And he defended his good name against the efforts of his three hypocritical friends to besmirch it. In the end Job was vindicated and his three supposed friends were severely censured by Jehovah God.—Job 1:8; 42:7-10.

Those who bear the name of Jehovah as his witnesses have added reason to be concerned that their conduct is upright, for not only their own name, but also the name of the Christian congregation and the name of Jehovah himself are involved. Thus a Witness in Dahomey, Africa, working in a better-class hotel, found $1,600 in a pair of trousers he was given to take to the cleaners. He took the money to the hotel owner, who put it in a safe. When the guest discovered his loss he was greatly distressed and went immediately to the owner of the hotel bemoaning his loss, having no money with which to pay his bills, in fact, nothing except his airplane ticket back to France. The hotel owner was glad to be able to return the money and explained that it had been found by one of his employees. The guest asked to see this employee; meeting the man, he asked him what made him return the money. The employee replied that he was one of Jehovah's witnesses and that as such he lived by Bible principles. The guest, very much impressed, stated: 'I know Jehovah's witnesses are good people and when I return to France I am surely going to look them up, because I want to know more about them.'

The hotel owner, who previously had little time for the Christian witnesses of Jehovah, has changed his mind. Now he is glad to have one of them working for him. That honest deed not only gave the Witness involved a good name, but helped to enhance the name of Jehovah's witnesses as a people. More importantly, it served to glorify the name of their God, Jehovah.

Truly a good name is something precious. Happy are all those who have a good name, for it is better than great riches, finer than sweet-smelling oil.

DO YOU USE GOD'S NAME in YOUR WORSHIP?

THAT God has a personal name all persons well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures realize. True, he also is designated in the Scriptures by such descriptive titles as "God," "Lord," "Father," "the Almighty," "the Most High" and others. But his personality and attributes are fully summed up and expressed only in his personal name, one that is unique with him. God says: "I am Jehovah. That is my name; and to no one else shall I give my own glory."—Isa. 42:8; Ps. 83:18.

"Jehovah" is the best-known English pronunciation of God's name, although "Yahweh" is that favored by most Hebrew scholars. The oldest Hebrew manuscripts present the name in the form of four consonants, commonly called the Tetragrammaton (from Greek *tetra,* meaning "four," and *gramma,* "a letter"). These four Hebrew letters are the equivalent of our four English letters YHWH (some say YHVH or JHVH).

But if Jehovah is the name of God, someone may ask, why is that name so rarely used in the churches either by preachers or parishioners? Do you, for example, use God's name in your worship? Is it important that you do so?

SUPERSTITION HIDES THE NAME

A principal reason why so many are unfamiliar with God's name is because of a superstitious idea that arose among Jewish people many centuries ago. This superstition held that it was wrong to pronounce God's personal name. Just what caused the Jews to adopt this idea is not certain. Some claim the teaching arose that the name was too sacred for imperfect lips to speak. Another view is that the intent was to keep non-Jewish peoples from knowing the name and possibly misusing it. And still another claim is that the purpose was to protect the name from use in magical rites.

When did this superstition toward pronouncing God's name take hold? There is uncertainty about this. Many reference works have suggested that the name ceased to be used by about 300 B.C.E. They base this conclusion on the supposed absence of God's name in the Greek *Septuagint,* the first translation of the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek, begun in about 280 B.C.E. Was this the case?

True, the most complete manuscript copies of the *Septuagint* now known do consistently follow the practice of substituting the Greek words *Ky'ri·os* (Lord) or *ho The·os'* (God) for the name Jehovah (Yahweh). But these major manuscripts date back only as far as the fourth and fifth centuries C.E. Recently, however, much older copies, though in fragmentary form, have been discovered that prove that the *earliest* copies of the *Septuagint* did contain the divine name.

For example, there is the fragment of a papyrus roll, listed as Inventory Number 266 of the Fouad Papyri. It contains the second half of the book of Deuteronomy, and in it the Tetragrammaton is regularly presented, written in Hebrew characters. This papyrus is dated by scholars as of the second or first century B.C.E.,

four or five centuries earlier than the *Septuagint* manuscripts mentioned previously that do not contain the divine name.

Commenting on another ancient papyrus find, Dr. Paul E. Kahle says: "The papyrus containing fragments of Leviticus ii-v is written in a hand closely akin to that of Papyrus Fouad 266, characterized as already mentioned by the fact that the name of God is rendered by the Tetragrammaton in Hebrew square letters (יהוה) not by κύριος [*Ky'ri·os*] as later in Christian MSS of the Bible."—*The Cairo Geniza,* 1959 ed., pp. 222, 224.

So, there is sound evidence against the idea that the divine name, at least in written form, ceased to be used in the period before our Common Era.

WHEN THE SUPERSTITION TOOK HOLD

In the first century C.E., there first appears some evidence of the development of a superstitious attitude toward God's name. For example, Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian from a priestly family, after discussing God's declaring of his name to Moses, said: "It is not lawful for me to say any more." (*Antiquities of the Jews,* Book II, Chap. XII, par. 4) Josephus' statement, however, is vague. It does not clearly reveal just what the general attitude current in the first century was as to pronouncing or using the divine name.

The Jewish Mishnah, a collection of rabbinical teachings and traditions, is somewhat more explicit. Its compilation is credited to Rabbi Judah the Patriarch, who lived in the second and third centuries C.E. Some of the Mishnaic material clearly relates to circumstances prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 C.E. It must be acknowledged, however, that the historical value of the Mishnaic traditions is questionable. Nevertheless, certain Mishnaic traditions give insight into what were apparently Jewish attitudes toward the pronouncing of the divine name.

In connection with the annual Day of Atonement, *Yoma,* 6, 2, states: "And when the priests and the people which stood in the Temple Court heard the Expressed Name come forth from the mouth of the High Priest, they used to kneel and bow themselves and fall down on their faces and say, 'Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom for ever and ever!' "

Of the daily priestly blessings, *Sotah,* 7, 6, says: "In the Temple they pronounced the Name as it was written, but in the provinces by a substitute word."

Sanhedrin, 10, 1, in listing those "that have no share in the world to come," states: "Abba Saul says: Also he that pronounces the Name with its proper letters."

Yet, despite these last two negative views, one also finds in the first section of the Mishnah the positive injunction that "a man should salute his fellow with [the use of] the Name [of God]," the example of Boaz (Ruth 2:4) then being cited. —*Berakoth,* 9, 5.

Taken for what they are worth, these traditional views may reveal a superstitious tendency to avoid using the divine name sometime before Jerusalem's temple was destroyed in 70 C.E. There is no evidence that such superstition prevailed before the Common Era. The available evidence shows that this superstition began to develop at the earliest by the first or second centuries C.E. Thus, in Jesus' day it may well have been the general practice for many Jews to use the divine name.

The time did come, however, when, in reading the Hebrew Scriptures in the original language, the Jewish reader substitut-

ed either *'Adho·nay'* (Lord) or *'Elo·him'* (God) rather than pronounce the divine name represented by the Tetragrammaton. This is seen from the fact that when vowel pointing came into use in the sixth or seventh centuries C.E. the Jewish copyists inserted the vowel points for either *'Adho·nay'* or *'Elo·him'* when writing the Tetragrammaton, evidently to warn the reader to say those words in place of pronouncing the divine name. If using the Greek *Septuagint* translation of the Hebrew Scriptures *in later copies,* the reader, of course, found the Tetragrammaton completely replaced by the Greek titles *Ky'ri·os* and *ho The·os'*.

THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Deliverance from the Authority of Darkness.**
- **God's Children Imitate What Is Good.**
- **What Kind of Bread for a Hungry World?**

Translations into other languages, such as the Latin *Vulgate,* followed the example of these later copies of the *Septuagint.* The Catholic *Douay* translation of 1609 in English, based on the *Vulgate,* therefore does not contain the divine name. And the *King James Version* of 1611 customarily uses LORD or GOD in all capitals to represent the Tetragrammaton in the Hebrew Scriptures. However, in four places it does use the name "Jehovah," namely, at Exodus 6:3, Isaiah 12:2 and 26:4, and Psalm 83:18.

The translators of the *American Standard Version* (of 1901) forcefully expose the wrong basis for obscuring God's sacred name Jehovah, saying, in the foreword of that translation, "the American Revisers, after a careful consideration, were brought to the unanimous conviction that a Jewish superstition, which regarded the Divine Name as too sacred to be uttered, ought no longer to dominate in the English or any other version of the Old Testament, as it fortunately does not in the numerous versions made by modern missionaries. This Memorial Name, explained in Ex. iii. 14, 15, and emphasized as such over and over in the original text of the Old Testament, designates God as the personal God, as the covenant God, the God of revelation, the Deliverer, the Friend of his people;—not merely the abstractly 'Eternal One' of many French translations, but the ever living Helper of those who are in trouble. This personal name [Jehovah], with its wealth of sacred associations, is now restored to the place in the sacred text to which it has an unquestionable claim."

Yes, when we read God's own declared purpose to have his name "declared in all the earth" and that his name "will be great among the nations," how can we hold back from using that name in our worship because of some superstition? (Ex. 9:16; Mal. 1:11) The book of Malachi (3:16) describes a "book of remembrance" that began to be written up before God "for those in fear of Jehovah and for those thinking upon his name." Are you included in that "book of remembrance"? Do you not only 'think upon that name' but also express it in worship? Only thereby can any person be counted among the 'people for God's name' that the Christian disciple James spoke about at Acts 15:14-18. It means life everlasting for you to know God by his name, to treat that name with respect and to live in harmony with the things that he has had recorded in his Word over that Most Holy Name.

Come Before Jehovah with Thanksgiving

"It is good to give thanks to Jehovah."—Ps. 92:1.

GETTING to know Jehovah God has been the happy lot of only a minority of people. He is unknown to the majority. The apostle Paul observed this fact some nineteen hundred years ago during his visit to Athens, where, on an altar, it was publicly acknowledged that God was unknown. Today we can visit almost any place on the face of the earth and find existing a similar general lack of knowledge of Jehovah. Few are those who give thought to the true God. However, this is not because Jehovah God prevents people from having knowledge of him and his ways. Jehovah has provided a written word, the Bible, that now has become available to the majority of peoples throughout the world in their own languages. Also, he has sent out witnesses, such as Paul, drawing attention to his Godship. Failure to give attention is an individual responsibility.—Acts 17:23; Rom. 1:19-21.

[2] It is necessary to know a person and some of his good qualities before one can really appreciate him. Those who have known Jehovah and appreciated all that he has done for mankind have seen the privilege and duty to express themselves in reverence and with thanks. In ancient days Jehovah God chose the descendants of Israel as his nation and revealed himself to them, speaking to them through prophets, judges and priests. He did many good things for that chosen nation. Appreciation of Jehovah's greatness and majesty moved his worshipers to invite one another enthusiastically to come together and unitedly express thanksgiving. One example is Psalm 95:1-3: "O come let us cry out joyfully to Jehovah! Let us shout in triumph to our Rock of salvation. Let us come before his person with thanksgiving; let us with melodies shout in triumph to him. For Jehovah is a great God and a great King over all other gods." How is Jehovah here identified? First of all, it is by his name, Jehovah. He is the great God and King over all. Then the Psalm goes on to reveal him as the Creator; everything belongs to him. His greatness contrasts with the unworthiness of his earthly worshipers, and the alert ones who appreciate Jehovah therefore have good cause to express thanksgiving, to be joyful and to sing together the praises of God. Why? Because they have come to know the great Jehovah.

[3] Jehovah has interest in the human family. Whenever Jehovah has dealt with people, he has instructed them and caused them to assemble together in united worship and thanksgiving for their good and

1. (a) Do many people know who Jehovah is? (b) What provisions has Jehovah made to help mankind to know him?
2. (a) What results from knowing Jehovah? (b) What is the invitation in Psalm 95:1-3, and how do these verses identify Jehovah?
3. (a) What example shows that Jehovah is interested in having people congregate? (b) How was it beneficial to assemble in ancient times? Who benefited?

blessing. As recorded at Deuteronomy 31: 12, 13, God had the command given by his prophet Moses before the chosen nation of ancient days went into the land promised to them: "Congregate the people, the men and the women and the little ones and your alien resident who is within your gates, in order that they may listen and in order that they may learn, as they must fear Jehovah your God and take care to carry out all the words of this law. And their sons who have not known should listen, and they must learn to fear Jehovah your God all the days that you are living upon the soil to which you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of it." Who are involved here? This sweeping command takes in everybody in the land, the entire family plus the alien residents associated with them. So on occasions for worship the families should be together. There was no segregation of the children. All assembled together. Why? What should they do? It was a time to listen. It was a place to learn. If they faithfully did this, they would not forget God's law, and the children coming along would learn of their relationship to Jehovah.

[4] Ancient Israel as a nation, when faithful, remembered to come before Jehovah for thanksgiving and worship. One example of this was in the days of Joshua shortly after they entered the land promised to them. "And all Israel and their older men and the officers and their judges were standing on this side and on that side of the Ark in front of the priests, the Levites, carrying the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, the alien resident as well as the native, one half of them in front of Mount Gerizim and the other half of them in front of Mount Ebal, (just as Moses the servant of Jehovah had commanded,) to bless the people of Israel first of all. And after this he read aloud all the words of the law, the blessing and the malediction, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There proved to be not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read aloud in front of all the congregation of Israel, together with the women and the little ones and the alien residents who walked in their midst." (Josh. 8:33-35) So, this arrangement was not simply for the benefit of Jehovah, who was receiving their worship. The law was read aloud by Joshua for the good of everyone, including non-Israelites. By keeping familiar with God's law they were able to comply with God's requirements. And what were the results to them? Jehovah prospered the people in the days of Joshua, giving them many victories as they came to be settled in the land. Do you not think Jehovah God would do the same for his people today if they complied with his requirements?

4. What were some of the good things accomplished through assembling in the time of Joshua?

IN THE DAYS OF SOLOMON

[5] Centuries passed and Jehovah kept his people together as a nation. Eventually Solomon became the earthly king. A great responsibility was placed in Solomon's care, namely, oversight of construction of Jehovah's temple at Jerusalem. Never had there been such a temple of Jehovah; therefore, completion of the building must have been regarded as something special in the eyes of all, cause for united thanksgiving to Jehovah. The worship was organized as follows: "Solomon proceeded to congregate the older men of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chieftains of the paternal houses of the sons of Israel, to Jerusalem, to bring the ark of the covenant of Jehovah up from the city of David, that is to say, Zion." (2 Chron. 5:2) A multitude of animals were sacrificed. There was singing of praises to Jehovah, and

5. (a) How was Solomon used by Jehovah in connection with pure worship? (b) What did the people learn through hearing the prayer of Solomon?

finally a period of instruction as King Solomon stood and prayed aloud before the multitude. This prayer, recorded at 2 Chronicles chapter 6, helped the people to see how this temple would benefit them and it magnified Jehovah's greatness, his concern for man and His mercies. Jehovah was too great to dwell in this house that had been built, though it was a magnificent structure. The house was to be used as a center of worship and prayer. It also was a place for giving thanks. People could straighten out their ways and regain Jehovah's favor by their repentance and returning to worship Jehovah in connection with his temple. Foreigners could worship Jehovah too. After hearing the provisions to be made for the nation and the people by having this temple, everyone should have a heart filled with thanksgiving.

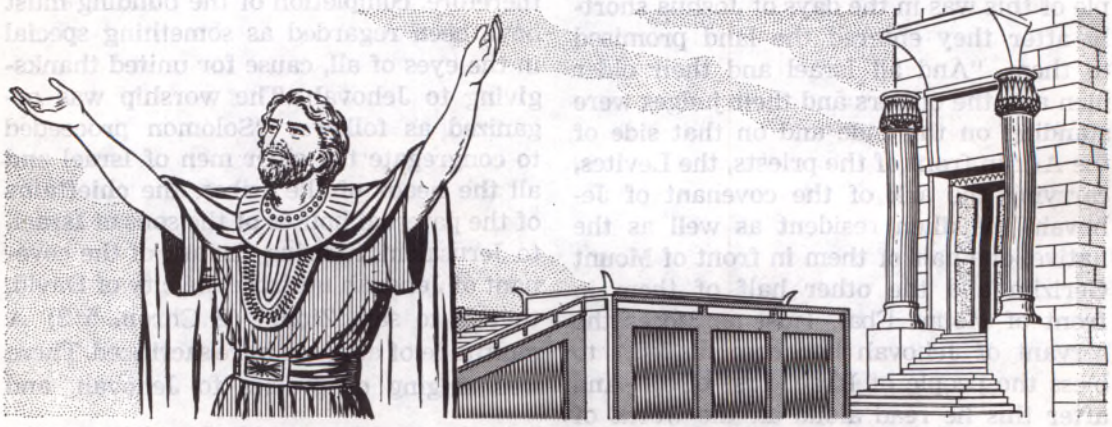
[6] When Solomon finished his prayer, Jehovah gave the people evidence that He was in harmony with the prayer and accepted the temple by sending fire from heaven to consume the offering and sacrifices, and his glory filled the house. Provision had been made for the entire nation to be united in his worship, coming before Jehovah with thanksgiving when praying toward the house that had been built in Jerusalem. (2 Chron. 7:1, 2) During Solomon's reign the nation enjoyed great material prosperity. It was a reign of peace as Jehovah had promised, giving ample evidence that when there is pure worship of Jehovah God blessings always follow.

6. (a) How did Jehovah answer Solomon's prayer? (b) What feature of Solomon's reign showed Jehovah's blessing?

OTHER KINGS

[7] Many years later Hezekiah became king at Jerusalem, and during his reign there were notable gatherings before Jehovah. Chapters 29 and 30 of Second Chronicles tell of efforts made to assemble the people for worship. Runners were sent out by the king, carrying invitations to people all through the land of Judah and also to people living under the ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel. Those who responded to the invitation received the benefits. "And there came to be great rejoicing in Jerusalem, for from the days of Solomon the son of David the king of Israel there was none like this in Jerusalem."

7. What are some of the notable events of Hezekiah's reign as recorded in 2 Chronicles chapters 29 and 30?



Completion of the temple was cause for united thanksgiving to Jehovah. Should there not be even more thanksgiving on the part of Christians?

(2 Chron. 30:26) What a pity that all through the years from the time of Solomon to Hezekiah the people had not always faithfully come before Jehovah with thanksgiving. What joy they missed! Those who were present in the days of Hezekiah had every reason to give thanks, because Jehovah was blessing their efforts to return to Him and His ways.

[8] Following the death of Hezekiah, pure worship broke down and troubles came to the people. After some years a good king named Josiah came to the throne and was a mere eight years of age when he began his rule. But he had a heart inclined toward God and searched for God. This is a fine Biblical example for youths of all generations; indeed, no age is too early to begin searching for God. By the time Josiah was nineteen years of age, he had learned many things about true worship and false worship so he embarked on a campaign to cleanse the land of all false worship. "And in the eighth year of his reigning, while he was still a boy, he started to search for the God of David his forefather; and in the twelfth year he started to cleanse Judah and Jerusalem from the high places and the sacred poles and the graven images and the molten statues. Further, they pulled down before him the altars of the Baals; and the incense stands that were up above he cut down from off them; and the sacred poles and the graven images and the molten statues he broke in pieces and reduced to powder, and then sprinkled it upon the surface of the burial places of those that used to sacrifice to them." (2 Chron. 34:3, 4) The center for pure worship and thanksgiving had to be put in order and so Josiah organized repairing of Jehovah's house.

8. (a) In his youth, how did King Josiah show respect for Jehovah God? (b) How is this an example for youths today?

[9] When about twenty-five years old, Josiah rejoiced that a copy of the book of God's law had been found. Consideration of the law revealed how far away from proper worship the people had fallen; the king understood what they should be doing. Annually they should have been holding a passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, so Josiah set about to celebrate a passover in the eighteenth year of his reign. How well this was done is summed up at 2 Chronicles 35:17, 18: "And the sons of Israel that were to be found proceeded to hold the passover at that time and also the festival of the unfermented cakes for seven days. And there had never been held a passover like it in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet, neither had any of the other kings of Israel themselves held a passover like that which Josiah and the priests and the Levites and all Judah and Israel that were to be found and the inhabitants of Jerusalem held." Going back to Samuel's day meant a period of more than four hundred years, even beyond the time of Solomon. So who will deny that the people on that occasion had cause for thanksgiving?

[10] It was Jehovah God who arranged that his people have periods of assembling for worship and giving thanks. If his covenant people kept the terms of their agreement, they always benefited and were blessed very much. But by far the majority of kings who ruled in the land of Israel and Judah turned away from Jehovah and his arrangements. This always led the people to unhappiness in many forms and disasters. Eventually even the capital city, Jerusalem, was destroyed, the temple was demolished, many people were killed, others were taken as exiles to faraway lands

9. (a) Did Josiah appreciate God's law? (b) What does 2 Chronicles chapter 35 show to be outstanding about the assembly organized by Josiah?
10. What troubles came to God's covenant people? Why?

and great suffering occurred.—2 Chron. 36:11-20.

[11] Jehovah had foretold through the prophet Jeremiah that Jerusalem would lie devastated for a period of seventy years, and, when that time ran out, Jehovah's mercy and loving-kindness were shown toward his covenant people in allowing a remnant of them to be freed from exile and return to the site of Jerusalem. This was for the purpose of rebuilding the city and its temple of worship so that eventually God's servants would come before him in thanksgiving there. (2 Chron. 36:21-23) The faith of those who engaged in the rebuilding work was put to the test by opposers. Efforts were made to frustrate the building campaign, so that God's servants had to put up a hard fight. For a time all construction work was stopped because of the enemy conspiracy. (Ezra chap. 4; Neh. 4:15-18) By making appeal to the highest authority in the empire God's servants succeeded in receiving an order from Darius the king that the building work might proceed and in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the temple stood completed at Jerusalem. Jehovah had blessed his servants with success, and the culmination was a joyful assembly for thanksgiving at the temple's completion. "And the sons of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the former exiles held the inauguration of this house of God with joy." (Ezra 6:16) These were faithful servants of Jehovah with many reasons for thanksgiving in ancient times. But what about our times? Should there not be more thanksgiving on the part of Christians?

IN CHRISTIAN TIMES

[12] Jesus Christ made it a practice to be with groups of people for the worship of Jehovah. He kept God's laws regarding annual celebrations such as the passover. He used opportunities to praise Jehovah God and call attention to God's purposes in the presence of groups or crowds of people. At Nazareth it was his custom to go to the synagogue each sabbath day, and there he read aloud from God's Word. He taught at the synagogues and the temple, all of which should have given the people reasons for expressing thanks to God.—Luke 4:16; John 7:14; 18:19, 20.

[13] Besides the synagogues and the temple, Jesus found other places to gather people together for teaching and instruction. Early in his ministry when crowds followed him, he went up on a mountain. What he said to his disciples is written in Matthew chapters 5 through 7. Today we enjoy reading of the happinesses with which he opened his sermon. He explained how to live with others, even with enemies, and he said a man should love his enemies just as God shows love. The gathered ones heard him tell how to pray, what forgiveness really means; the proper viewpoint on material things was also a subject for consideration, and stress was laid on seeking first the kingdom of heaven, laying up treasures in heaven. Outstanding too was the illustration about a tree and its fruit and how those who do the will of the Father will enter the Kingdom. What a wonderful experience it must have been actually to hear this sermon on the mountain!

[14] A small service assembly was held with the twelve apostles when Jesus sent them out to preach about the Kingdom. He described the things they would face, the experiences in going from house to house, how they would be taken care of,

11. (a) How was Jehovah's loving-kindness shown to those who survived the exile? (b) What were the outstanding reasons to come before Jehovah with thanksgiving at that time?
12. How did Jesus Christ assemble with others?
13. Give examples showing how it was beneficial to assemble with Christ Jesus on the mountain.
14. What were some outstanding points made by Jesus Christ in the service assembly described at Matthew chapter 10?

how they would have opposition. But they should not be afraid of those who can kill the body but cannot destroy the soul. He told how families would become divided because some desire to worship God and others do not agree.—Matthew chap. 10.

15 On another occasion, as recorded at Luke 22:19-30, the passover had concluded and Jesus instituted the Lord's evening meal with the bread and wine. He made a covenant with them for a Kingdom. Calmly and in a kind way he settled a heated dispute about who would be the greatest. This was an example for them to copy. Chapters 13 through 17 of John contain many of the good things Jesus told his assembled followers on that occasion. Here was given the new commandment to love one another. They were impressed with the importance of bearing fruit to the glory of Jehovah God. Jesus showed that as they were manifesting love and bearing fruit to God's glory they would be hated and persecuted even as he was. Jesus explained the Christian position of neutrality in chapter 15 and emphasized it again in his prayer in chapter 17. Truly, everyone present at that meeting should have had many reasons for expressing thanks to Jehovah God.

15. (a) As shown by Luke's account, what are some things that were learned at the time the apostles were assembled at the last passover with Jesus? (b) What outstanding teachings did John record in connection with the same occasion of assembly?

16 What Jesus was doing by gathering people together for teaching and instruction was the founding of the Christian congregation. It was a building work. He himself is the great foundation cornerstone, and the faithful apostles are part of the foundation as well. "You have been built up upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, while Christ Jesus himself is the foundation cornerstone." (Eph. 2:20) Christ Jesus is also designated as the head of this congregation or assembly. "He is the head of the body, the congregation. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that he might become the one who is first in all things." (Col. 1:18) Thinking about the wonderful organization that the Christian congregation is and the great building work Jesus did in assembling living stones to make up the building is sufficient to cause any person interested in God and his purposes to feel moved with thanksgiving, which he expresses to God in heaven. But someone may ask, "Where is that building of 'living stones' today?" You will see. But please read the next article and learn what happened since the death of Christ right up to our day.

16. What spiritual building work did Jesus do that should make us feel thankful to Jehovah?

Assemblies After the Death of Christ

THE faith of those who had been trained and selected by Jesus to be part of the Christian congregation was put to a severe test by events surrounding the death of Jesus and persecution of his followers connected therewith. Although at the time they were in considerable danger, the faithful ones did not fail in in-

1. (a) Did the death of Jesus Christ stop his followers from assembling? (b) How did Christ give encouragement at their meetings in difficult times?

viting one another to come together for worship and thanksgiving to God. So it was that, following his resurrection, Christ Jesus joined in some of the Christian assemblies. Because of the fear of the Jews, the disciples met together behind locked doors. Jesus came along to encourage and build them up. It must have been a thrilling experience to be there and have Jesus come into the room though all doors were locked and hear him speak again. This and other evidences of Jesus' resurrection received by the Christians could hardly pass without great thanksgiving on the part of the Christians. Jesus actually arranged for meetings with his disciples following his resurrection. On a mountain in Galilee Jesus told them: "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth. 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, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And, look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things."—Matt. 28:18-20; John 20:19-22.

[2] Acts of Apostles opens with a record of Christian meetings and instruction from Christ on what should be done in days to come. "And while he was meeting with them he gave them the orders: 'Do not withdraw from Jerusalem, but keep waiting for what the Father has promised, about which you heard from me; because John, indeed, baptized with water, but you will be baptized in holy spirit not many days after this.' When, now, they had assembled, they went asking him: 'Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?' He said to them: 'It does not belong to you to get knowledge of the times or seasons which the Father has placed in his own jurisdiction; but 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.' And after he had said these things, while they were looking on, he was lifted up and a cloud caught him up from their vision." (Acts 1:4-9) Thus this was the last earthly assembly at which Jesus Christ was visibly present.

2. What was learned at the last meeting Christ attended with them on earth?

REASONS FOR THANKSGIVING AT PENTECOST

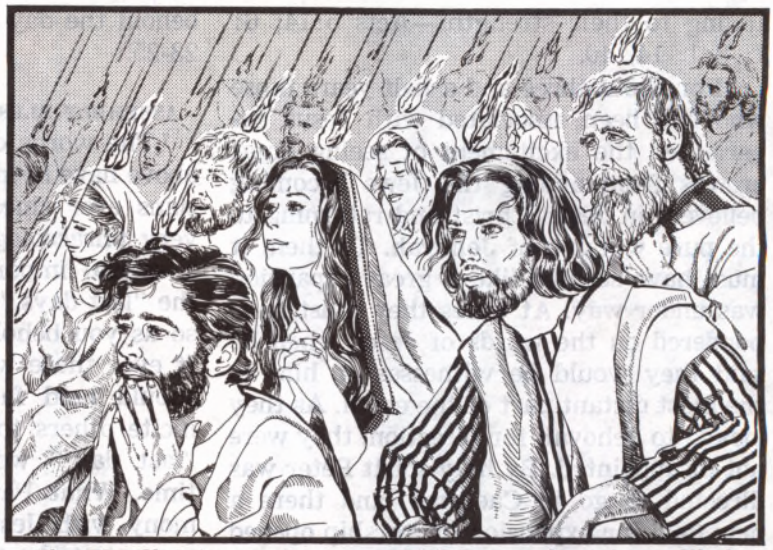
[3] After the ascension of Jesus Christ to the heavens, his faithful followers on earth continued meeting together for prayer and consideration of important spiritual things. The festival days of the Jews provided an opportunity for Christians to meet at one place, and as faithful Christians they seized the opportunity to congregate on the day of Pentecost in 33 C.E. Can you imagine what disappointment would have been experienced by any one of the Christians who failed to congregate on that occasion? The Bible does not indicate there was advance notice that anything special would occur at that particular occasion, but how glad they must have been that they were "all together at the same place"! It was a unique experience for about one hundred and twenty dedicated servants of Jehovah: "And suddenly there occurred from heaven a noise just like that of a rushing stiff breeze, and it filled the whole house in which they were sitting. And tongues as if of fire became visible to them and were distributed about, and one sat upon each one of them, and they all became filled with holy spirit and started to speak with different tongues, just as the spirit was granting them to make utterance."—Acts 2:2-4.

[4] Here Jehovah had sent his active force,

3. What unique experience was enjoyed by the Christians assembled on the day of Pentecost?

4. (a) What did God's spirit move his servants to do that day? (b) What were some reasons for thanksgiving then?

holy spirit, to move his dedicated servants into the witness work. Miraculous power from God caused the small assembly to bring about a great testimony to the honor of God's name. What the Christians spoke was in many languages understood by people then in the city of Jerusalem and it caused astonishment among those who understood. The occasion of this assembly opened an opportunity for a public discourse by Peter. The discourse provided instructive material for the assembly itself and also for those not Christians who were within hearing distance. Peter was moved by Jehovah God to use scriptures and powerful reasoning to convince the assembled ones that indeed Jehovah God had sent Jesus as Christ, that the powerful works Jesus did were of God, that Jesus had succeeded in gaining a resurrection from the dead and was now at the right hand of Jehovah in the heavens. Peter's speech contained motivation and exhortation to get saved. So convincing was Peter's presentation that the small group of Christians had a lot to do that day. The group of about one hundred and twenty was composed of men and women, so probably less than one hundred men got busy with the baptism of about three thousand new Christian praisers of Jehovah. Thus this spiritual feast on the occasion of Pentecost produced honor to Jehovah and signaled a giant step forward for the spreading of the good news. It would be difficult to imagine that anyone who was present on that occasion could fail to be filled with thanksgiving to Jehovah.—Acts 2:22-41.



The 120 Christians at Pentecost 33 C.E. must have been filled with thanksgiving to God and glad they were "all together at the same place"!

[5] From that time onward, with holy spirit guiding them, Christians energetically mounted a great educational campaign that spread throughout the whole Roman Empire and beyond. They continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles, to prayer, to meetings, and to praising God. They found favor with all the people. "At the same time Jehovah continued to join to them daily those being saved." (Acts 2:42, 46, 47) As time went on, congregations were formed all throughout the area called Palestine. God's servants continued to come before him with thanksgiving, watching with great interest and joy as the spirit of Jehovah moved the visible theocratic organization forward. As the expansion went on, persecution arose; however, Jehovah always carried his servants through it and kept

5. Mention some of the blessings that followed Pentecost.

adding to their strength.—Acts 5:14; 6:7; 8:1, 14, 40.

6 For about three and a half years those who had been associated with Jesus experienced the excitement of seeing great crowds from among the Jews becoming believers in Jesus Christ and returning to the pure worship of Jehovah. To them it must have seemed like a great expansion was under way. At times they must have pondered on the words of Jesus when he said they would be witnesses of him to the most distant part of the earth. As they looked to Jehovah for direction, they were not disappointed. By holy spirit Peter was directed to go to Caesarea, and there a new field for expansion of worship opened up as Jehovah accepted Cornelius and other Gentiles into the ranks of his dedicated servants. Thus the way opened up for Gentiles as well as the fleshly descendants of Israel to participate in assembling together for Christian worship of Jehovah. The next few years witnessed a tremendous growth in the Christian organization. (Acts 11:19-21) While the governing body maintained headquarters at Jerusalem, representatives were sent to all kinds of cities and provinces, and the assembling together of Christians became very widespread during the first century of our common era. The apostle Paul was privileged to have a considerable part in the theocratic expansion program, congregating people everywhere. (Acts 14:21-28) It is in his writing to the Hebrews that the exhortation occurs: "Let us hold fast the public declaration of our hope without wavering, for he is faithful that promised. And let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near."—Heb. 10:23-25.

6. (a) How did holy spirit direct extension of the expansion to include non-Jews? (b) What part was Paul privileged to have in assembling Christians?

ASSEMBLY BLESSINGS IN THE "LAST DAYS"

7 The words of the apostle Paul quoted above have been full of meaning for Christians ever since they were written. The very phraseology used by Paul indicates a special importance for those living in the "last days," for he says, "all the more so as you behold the day drawing near." If ever there would be a time when one should hold fast without wavering and incite others to love and fine works, the "last days" would especially be such a time. What Paul wrote was in full harmony with Jesus Christ, who urged his servants to be together. His expression at Matthew 18:20, "For where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst," indicates the benefits of being together with other Christians. Blessings come through Christ Jesus to those who gather together in his name. And while such blessings will come to two or three, they will also be found if there be two or three hundred, twenty or thirty thousand or even more. The Scriptures give ample evidence that Christ Jesus continues to look with favor upon those who come before Jehovah with thanksgiving.

8 As we have considered already, many blessings came to God's servants who assembled together in earlier days. We recall the good things the apostle Peter was able to express on the occasion of Pentecost or at the time when Cornelius was admitted into the congregation of Christians. The application of scriptures on such occasions proved to be cause for thanksgiving among those who assembled. But

7. Why is assembling of Christians in modern days so important?

8, 9. (a) What are some of the reasons for thanksgiving now? (b) What has come along in addition to increased understanding of the Scriptures that causes great joy in advertising the Kingdom?

now in this period which the Scriptures have designated as the "last days," there are even more causes for thanksgiving. Much more light has been shed upon God's purposes. Many of the events foretold in Bible prophecy have come to pass. The "times of the nations" which Jesus spoke of have run out; the year 1914 became a marked year so far as God's purposes are concerned, and Jehovah has lovingly let his witnesses see the facts showing the fulfillment of Revelation chapter 12 with the birth of the Kingdom in the heavens and the ousting of Satan and his demons from heaven, cast down to the earth. All of the evidence has accumulated to show that the end of wickedness is near and it is a time to lift up Christian heads and be full of joy because deliverance is at hand. —Luke 21:24, 28.

[9] Christians living in the "last days" are very thankful to Jehovah for a clear appreciation of the meaning of Matthew chapter 24. As the years have gone by since 1914, understanding of the significance of points mentioned by Jesus in Matthew's record has become clearer. From 1922 forward importance of advertising the King and the Kingdom has been well known and Jehovah God has opened up the way for the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy at Matthew 24:14. If the good news of the Kingdom is to be preached in all the world for a witness to all the nations, then people would have to do the preaching. Though the ranks of God's witnesses were few in the year 1922 compared to now, the blessing of Jehovah has indeed produced results so that there have been great increases in the number of individuals proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom. Jehovah God has not only raised up those of the "little flock," but in assemblies God's servants have come to understand the meaning of Revelation 7:9-17 and have identified a "great crowd." Preaching of the Kingdom good news has reached more than 200 lands now. The number of those sharing in this activity sometime ago passed the one million mark and keeps steadily increasing from year to year. When assemblies are held for special occasions of worship, such as the Memorial of the death of Jesus Christ, the numbers go up into the millions and are increasing from year to year. It is easy to find many reasons for coming before Jehovah with thanksgiving in these "last days."

[10] In addition to providing his servants with people to proclaim the good news, Jehovah God has graciously made available the material things necessary to carry on the tremendous activity required. Facilities are in the hands of God's dedicated servants for the production of Bibles and Bible literature, and millions of copies are going out each month, thereby speeding up the required activity of getting the good news spread all over the world. Individuals have been raised up by Jehovah to comprise the "faithful and discreet slave" whom Jesus foretold at Matthew 24:45-47, and so there has been a great flood of spiritual truths brought forth in these "last days." It is a time of much spiritual feasting on revealed truths; regular provisions of spiritual food are made for the congregation of God's servants throughout the earth.

[11] Regularly God's people assemble together to partake of this spiritual food. This has brought about a wonderful unity in the worship of Jehovah God world wide. Many times this has been demonstrated in the international assemblies of Jehovah's witnesses in recent years. The fact that such great assemblies have been possible

---

10. In connection with our spiritual food, what material things are we extremely thankful for now?
11. (a) How do large Christian assemblies add blessings? (b) Why are Christians thankful to see faithful brothers keeping integrity?

is in itself cause for much thanksgiving to Jehovah. Anyone who is able to participate in an assembly of God's people can look about him and see that he has many brothers and sisters. Among these are some who have already shared in this service of Jehovah for many years. The presence of such individuals is a blessed example and cause to thank God for those who endure in his service over the years. It is well known to those who serve God in these "last days" that endurance is necessary and that there are those who oppose the spreading of the good news. But it is today just as it was following Pentecost of 33 C.E. Jehovah keeps the way open. He keeps his hand of care and protection over his organized people and gives spiritual strength to his servants so they can endure under many varying circumstances and conditions. The Christian in modern times is full of thanksgiving to Jehovah for the theocratic organization He has built up in this period and we are moved to make expressions similar to the apostle Paul's in 2 Thessalonians 1:3-5: "We are obligated to give God thanks always for you, brothers, as it is fitting, because your faith is growing exceedingly and the love of each and all of you is increasing one toward the other. As a result we ourselves take pride in you among the congregations of God because of your endurance and faith in all your persecutions and the tribulations that you are bearing. This is a proof of the righteous judgment of God, leading to your being counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are indeed suffering."

[12] As the Scriptures foretold, all kinds of people make up the congregation of Jehovah God now. It is really a pleasure to be able to see and be with such a varied association of Christians. We are moved to thanksgiving by the fact that the new commandment Jesus mentioned in John 13:34, 35 is a reality. Although God's servants are from all nationalities, races and peoples, true Christian love binds them together. Each one shows interest in the other and not in himself alone. Jehovah has done this through the unifying force of his spirit and his Word. The rallying point for Christians in these "last days" is the united worship of Jehovah, and the opportunity is available regularly to join in such worship in the more than 26,000 Christian congregations now functioning around the world. As God's faithful ones in ancient times did, so too in these "last days" his servants desire to be united together in his worship and invite others, saying: "O come in, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasturage and the sheep of his hand."—Ps. 95:6, 7.

[13] The invitation is extended to all readers of *The Watchtower* to come regularly into the Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's witnesses throughout the world. There are vital reasons for everyone to join in worship and thanksgiving to Jehovah God. As you read on the previous pages about the blessings given to worshipers of Jehovah in both ancient times and our century, do you see the value in congregating with servants of God? Do you wish to receive and enjoy spiritual blessings now? and in the future? Those whose God is Jehovah and who are people of his pasturage are full of joy now and have assurance of everlasting life in happiness under his eternal rule. (Ps. 37:9-11) Be a worshiper of Jehovah. In unity with other worshipers

12. (a) How is Christ's commandment at John 13:34, 35 being kept now? (b) How does Psalm 95 encourage unity in worship of Jehovah?

13. Why are all readers of *The Watchtower* invited to join in assembling for worship of Jehovah?

of Jehovah, acknowledge with thanks your own faith in Jehovah and you will never be disappointed. "For the Scripture says: 'None that rests his faith on him will be disappointed.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for there is the same Lord over all, who is rich to all those calling upon him. For 'everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.'" —Rom. 10:11-13.

A song can cheer the heavy heart,
Can bring Jehovah praise;
A song can lighten daily loads,
And help us walk God's ways.

Yes, songs have power. Some have power for good and some have power for bad. Which kind of songs do you sing?

Never before has this earth heard so much singing of songs as today. Not only by individuals themselves—with or without instrumental accompaniment—but also by means of jukebox, radio and television, and by phonograph and tape recorder. And in particular is the production of popular songs a multimillion-dollar business. There are baroque rock, folk rock, hard rock, jazz, blues and many other kinds of popular music and songs.

In times past the religious theme played a leading role in the songs people sang. In fact, musicologists tell us that Germany's being such a musical nation is largely due to Martin Luther's insistence that all in the congregations join in singing praise to God. And the prominent role that religious music played in the lives of the early settlers of America is to be seen from the very title of a history of music in the United States: *From Jehovah to Jazz.*

Today there seems to be a slight trend toward religious themes in popular music, but it is irreverent, as can be seen by the most ambitious album featuring it: "Jesus Christ, Superstar." And we also read of the "New Rock: Bittersweet and Low." However, as regards the mainstream of popular music the counsel of a writer in the New York *Times Magazine* is still apropos: 'Parents, if you want to know what your kids think of war, drugs and sex, listen to the songs they sing.'

WHAT KIND OF SONGS?

Youth is impatient, it lacks the wisdom that knowledge and years of experience often bring. It wants to try everything, and it wants to do it now. The popular songwriters and singers give youths what they want, or what they think they want, namely, sex, drugs and rebellion.

Romantic love has ever been one of the dominant themes of songs, but can today's 'love' songs that encourage loose conduct be termed romantic? There are songs with such words as "Let's spend the night together." "He'll hold you in his arms till you feel his disease." "Tonight I'm yours."

Drugs have been made very popular by modern singers. Thus, last October radio executives attending a White House conference on drug abuse were told to listen to the words of some of the songs sung

over their own stations. Among the words they might have heard were: "I'm a real straightshooter, if you know what I mean." "One pill makes you larger, one pill makes you small, but the pill your mother gave you did nothing for you at all." Songs tell about taking a "trip" and use other language that unsuspecting parents would not recognize as having to do with drugs. Thus "*L*ucy in the *S*ky with *D*iamonds" refers to LSD.

Another theme with a bad effect that appeals to youths today is that of rebellion. Parents and police are ridiculed, taunted and mocked. Youths sing out: "We want the world and we want it NOW!" "We are the forces of chaos and anarchy."

THE TARGET—THE HEART

A song has power, for it appeals to both mind and heart. It involves both intellect and emotion. How can such songs, with music to match, have any other than a bad effect on the youths that sing them over and over again? When they repeatedly feed their minds on such themes, can their hearts be inclined otherwise? And does not the heart produce the motivation that leads to actions? As Jesus Christ said: "Out of the heart come wicked reasonings, murders, adulteries, fornications." And as one of his disciples showed: "Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire. Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin." When a person sings again and again, and with feeling, words that express a craving for that which is immoral, is he not cultivating and making fertile in his own heart the desire for such things?—Matt. 15:19; Jas. 1:14, 15.

We cannot escape it. God's Word is true: "Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap." Far from 'pummeling the body' to keep it under control, which is what the apostle Paul said he had to do, the singing of such songs feeds its low tendencies, and makes it still harder to do what is right. (Gal. 6:7; 1 Cor. 9:27) Singing of such popular songs, because of the influence on mind and heart, causes one to be "fashioned after this system of things," the very thing Christians are commanded not to do.—Rom. 12:2.

THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE

It is not as though there are no other songs available. There are. It is simply a matter of discriminating, even as one should do in regard to what one eats and what one reads. There are ever so many fine songs that express noble, idealistic sentiments in the field of folk, standard and semiclassical music that can be enjoyed by anyone.

Also let it be noted that the songs published by the Watchtower society, as they appear in their songbook, *"Singing and Accompanying Yourselves with Music in Your Hearts,"* are truly beautiful, of great variety and emotionally satisfying as well as spiritually upbuilding. They are a power for good, for by singing them you will at the same time be heeding the command to 'continue considering whatever things are true, righteous, chaste, lovable and virtuous.'—Phil. 4:8.

Just as parents have the obligation to see to it that their children are fed properly, and given moral guidance in harmony with God's Word, so too they have the obligation to safeguard their children against singing songs or playing music the words, mood and spirit of which run counter to Bible principles. By taking this matter seriously, by doing something about it, parents will save themselves many a heartache and regret and will safeguard the spiritual interests and well-being of their children.—1 Tim. 4:16.

JESUS GIVES A SIGN

TODAY we are going to talk about signs. It is good to know how to read signs. They can help us.

Some signs have words on them. They tell us where we can buy food. They may warn us not to cross the street when cars are coming. What signs have you seen?

An article specially designed for parents to read with their children

There are signs of another kind too. They may have no words. Some of them tell about changes in the weather. Clouds may cover the sun. Perhaps the wind starts to blow. Lightning flashes. There is thunder. When you hear and see these things, what do they mean? What is going to happen? Yes, there will probably be rain. It is not hard to read those signs, is it?

One day Jesus' apostles asked him for a sign. They had heard him say that people would not see him again until some future time. They wanted to know when that would be. What sign would there be that the time had come?

The Great Teacher knew that his followers would need a sign. He was going to go back to heaven to be with God. When he came again he would not be a human. He would be a spirit. And can you see a spirit?

So, how would anyone know that he had come again? Well, Jesus told them what to watch for. He told them about things that would happen right here on earth.

When Jesus was talking to them, they were close to Jerusalem. They could see it across the valley. And they could see its beautiful temple. So Jesus told them about things that would happen to Jerusalem and its temple. And those things did happen!

But Jesus also said that the same things would happen again later. This time they would happen to the whole world. And what would this mean? It would mean

that Christ had returned. It would mean that from heaven he had begun to rule in the kingdom of God. Soon he would destroy the wicked. Life would soon get much better here on earth.

Have we seen the sign that Jesus gave? I have. Would you like to hear about it?

As part of the sign, Jesus said: 'You are going to hear of wars and reports of wars. Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom.'

I have seen that in my lifetime. Whole nations have fought against other nations to destroy them. The trouble really began in the year 1914. Now we hear news reports about war almost every day. Have you heard those reports on the radio or on television?

Here is another part of the sign that Jesus gave. He said: 'There will be food shortages in one place after another.'

Not everyone has enough food to eat. Did you know that? I have heard that every day ten thousand people die because they do not have enough food. Jesus said that there would be food shortages.

Jesus also said: 'In one place after another there will be pestilences.'

Do you know what a pestilence is? It is a sickness or disease that kills many people. Right after the war that began in 1914 there was a very great pestilence. It was called the Spanish flu. About 500,000,000 persons went to bed sick from the flu in just a few months, and over 20,000,000 of them died. Just think of that! But the Spanish flu was not the only pestilence. There are still cancer, heart disease and other sicknesses that kill many thousands of persons every year.

This is another part of the sign that he gave: 'There will be earthquakes in one place after another.'

Do you know what an earthquake is? It makes the ground shake under your feet. Houses fall down and people often get killed. Since the year 1914 there have been many more earthquakes every year than there were before. These are things that have happened in my lifetime.

Jesus said that another part of the sign would be 'more and more lawlessness.' That is happening too. That is why people almost everywhere lock the door on their houses. They are afraid that someone might try to break in. And in many places it is not safe to walk on the street alone at night. Never before has it been as bad as it is now.—Matt. 23:39–24:22; Luke 21:5-36.

Some people may say that these things have happened before. But never before has it happened to so much of the world at the same time. All this has special meaning.

Remember, Jesus said that these things would be a sign. Can you read that sign? What does it mean?

Most people see only the trouble. It makes them unhappy. But if they knew what the sign meant, they would rejoice. Why?

Jesus said: 'As these things start to happen, lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near.' That means that we should be happy. Because in just a short time God will put an end to all the troubles on this earth. Life will be a real pleasure then.

Don't you agree that is good news? If we really believe it, we won't keep it only for ourselves. Other people need to know about it too.

"How comely upon the mountains are the feet of the one bringing good news, the one publishing peace, the one bringing good news of something better, the one publishing salvation, the one saying to Zion: 'Your God has become king!'"—Isa. 52:7.

Church News Shows Problems Growing

IN RECENT years, Christendom's churches have been buffeted by severe storms of criticism and opposition. Much of the dissent is internal, coming right from within the church systems themselves. The Roman Catholic Church especially has been undergoing inner struggle. The following recent news items show how these problems continue to mount with growing force.

GERMANS QUITTING CHURCHES

West Germans are formally quitting their churches at the rate of about 4,800 a week, says "Time" magazine. One reason why is that by taking this action they can escape the extra income tax that has for years been imposed on church members and which, since World War II, has been collected by the West German government. These taxes net Protestant and Roman Catholic churches more than one thousand million dollars a year. But more and more Germans are highly resentful of this forced taxation. Since the only way they can escape it is by officially quitting their church, they are doing just that. An estimated 480,000 have formally renounced their religion in just the past three years. Now, many of the new churches built with tax money during the last two decades are nearly empty most of the time.

POPE CRITICIZED BY ITALIAN NEWSPAPER, QUESTIONED ON WAR

"Il Tempo" of April 17, 1971, carried headlines reading "Shaggy Haired Pacifists and Girls in Hot Pants in Audience with Pope." The article criticized the pope for receiving members of several pop music bands in "scandalous clothing" after the Vatican had recently condemned sexy styles of dress. During the audience with Pope Paul VI, one of the young musicians asked him: "You who are so powerful that you can ban the pill, why don't you get busy and abolish obligatory conscription? Why don't you forbid Catholics to take part in wars and violence?" The pope answered: "It is not within our power."

VATICAN RULES AGAINST PRIESTS

The papal encyclical "Humanae Vitae," issued in 1968, reaffirmed the Catholic Church's ban on the use of contraceptives in birth control. Among the many priests who disagreed were about fifty who were disciplined by Cardinal O'Boyle of Washington, D.C. Nineteen of these priests took their case to the pope. They lost. The Vatican has now issued its ruling in the matter: the priests must uphold the ban.

BISHOPS CRITICIZE PRIESTS

Sometime ago American Catholic bishops authorized a study of the priesthood and its problems. It revealed a "potentially dangerous gap" between the bishops and most priests on all major Church issues. Especially did the priests disagree with the Church's stand that requires them to be unmarried. However, in their annual meeting this year the bishops criticized the report, and they greeted with applause a suggestion that the study be repudiated. Thus, the conflict between priests and the hierarchy of the Church gathers momentum.

CHURCH CHALLENGED IN IRELAND

For centuries Ireland has been one of the most conservative bastions of the Catholic Church in the world. But now, the Church in that country is coming under increasing attack from within and from without. It is being challenged on a variety of issues, such as church-state relations, priestly dissent, the alienation of young people, birth control and social morality. When Archbishop John McQuaid of Dublin issued a pastoral letter supporting the official ban on contraceptives, parishioners at two churches walked out when the letter was read. The primate of all Ireland, William Cardinal Conway, admitted: "There's a storm in Western civilization and the church is involved in it. Things are not all calm and peaceful."

CLERGY DROPOUTS

How many clergymen are quitting the ministry in the United States? Accurate figures are

difficult to obtain, but the Denver "Post" reports: "One estimate is that at least 3,000 Protestant ministers . . . and perhaps 2,500 Roman Catholic clergymen . . . are dropping out annually."

SEMINARY ENROLLMENT DOWN SHARPLY

The magazine "Christian Heritage," for May 1971, notes the following: "Since 1966, the number of young men studying for the priesthood [in the United States] has dropped nearly in half, according to statistics in Washington, D.C., by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. About 46,000 future priests were enrolled in the United States seminaries four years ago, . . . By October 1970 the number had decreased to some 24,000. The exact 1970 figure—23,822—reflects a decline in enrollment at every level, from high school through graduate theology."

Also, the Vatican says that during 1970 the number of new ordinations for the priesthood throughout the world dropped to 4,064. That represents a decrease of 12.5 percent from 1969.

PRIESTS SUPPORT MARXISTS

Eighty priests in Chile issued a document declaring: "We don't see any incompatibility between Christians and Marxists." They also said: "We categorically pronounce ourselves for a Socialist system, which constitutes the only way to escape from underdevelopment."

Similarly, Thomas and Marjorie Melville, a former priest and a former nun, wrote in the New York "Times": "It is worth noting that the Papal Nuncio to Cuba has publicly described Fidel Castro as 'politically a Marxist but ethically a Christian,' and that alliances are being built between Catholics—both lay and clerical—and Marxists, especially in Colombia, Brazil, Chile and Argentina."

'DOGMA BREAKING DOWN'

Toronto sociologist Martin Goldfarb states: "It is clear that some aspects of Catholic dogma are breaking down." When Catholics were asked if they would follow the pope's decrees or their own conscience in regard to birth control, 78 percent said they would follow their own conscience. And only 37 percent said they believed in the Church's teaching of obligatory celibacy for priests.

SERMONS NOT MEETING PEOPLE'S NEEDS

The president of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena says that many churchgoers are getting restless. Why? He states: "It's getting so it's sometimes hard to tell church services from Rotary luncheons. Many preachers have become political pundits, economic analysts, authorities on such subjects as the infield fly rule. . . . Very often, sermon content has been thin." He notes that "the spiritual comfort people need is not always there. They're tired of hearing about Vietnam; there's no personal encouragement, no joy, no celebration; nothing to get excited about." Yet, God's Word, the Bible, is filled with information that encourages those who love righteousness. And it tells of thrilling events that will affect mankind in the very near future and beyond.

TURNING TO A 'NEW GOD'

Catholic theologian Gregory Baum of Toronto says that modern religion is turning to a 'new God.' Instead of thinking about God as an invisible being who can be approached through prayer, Baum says the 'new God will be found through self-knowledge, through talking with other people and deciding through political and social growth what is right and what is wrong.'

But this is precisely what has been done already for centuries. Men have leaned on their own understanding instead of following God's wisdom as revealed in the Bible. They have decided for themselves what is right and what is wrong and have ignored what God says is right and what is wrong. The folly of leaning on human wisdom alone is evident to many now as the awful results of imperfect, often selfish, human rule and human thinking become more obvious daily. Long ago the Bible, God's Word, warned: "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding." "Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs."—Prov. 3:5; Ps. 146:3.

WHERE DID MOSES GET HIS INFORMATION?

THE testimony of none other than the Son of God, Jesus Christ, points to Moses as the writer of the first book of the Bible, Genesis. (Luke 24:27, 44) Since the events related in that book occurred before Moses' birth, the question arises, Where did he get his information?

As far back as the eighteenth century the Dutch scholar Vitringa pondered this question. Based on the use of the expression "this is the history," Vitringa concluded that each occurrence of this expression in the book of Genesis identified an already-existing document. In more recent years others have reached a similar conclusion. For example, archaeologist P. J. Wiseman, commenting on the expression "this is the history" (or, "these are the origins"), writes: "It is the concluding sentence of each section, and therefore points backward to a narrative already recorded. . . . It normally refers to the writer of the history, or the owner of the tablet containing it."—*New Discoveries in Babylonia About Genesis*, p. 53.

An examination of the contents of these histories, however, casts considerable doubt on the correctness of this view. For example, according to this view, the section beginning with Genesis chapter 36, verse 10, would conclude with the words of Genesis 37:2, "This is the history of Jacob." But nearly the entire record pertains to Esau's offspring and makes only incidental reference to Jacob and his family. Moreover, if the theory were correct, this would mean that Ishmael and Esau were the writers or possessors of the most extensive documents about God's dealings with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This does not appear to be reasonable, for it would make those who had no share in the Abrahamic covenant the ones who had the greatest interest in that covenant. It would be hard to conceive that Ishmael had such concern about events associated with Abraham's household that he put forth efforts to get a detailed record thereof, a record that spanned many years after his being dismissed along with his mother Hagar. —Gen. 11:27b–25:12.

Similarly, there would have been no reason for Esau, who had no appreciation for sacred things, to have written or been the possessor of an account dealing extensively with events in Jacob's life, events to which Esau was not an eyewitness. (Gen. 25:19–36:1; Heb. 12:16) Also, it does not seem logical to conclude that Isaac and Jacob would have largely ignored God's dealings with them, being content to have only brief records about someone else's genealogies.—Gen. 25:13-19a; 36:10–37:2a.

While the expression "this is the history" cannot in each case be reasonably linked with the writer or owner of such a history, this would not necessarily rule out Moses' getting some of his information from earlier written records, including accounts committed to writing before the flood of Noah's day. Though the Bible contains no definite references to pre-Flood writing, it should be noted that the building of cities, the development of mu-

sical instruments and the forging of iron and copper tools had their start long before the Flood. (Gen. 4:17, 21, 22) Reasonably, therefore, men would have had little difficulty in also developing a method of writing. And archaeological evidence indicates that writing existed for a considerable period before the time of Moses. It must be acknowledged, however, that direct testimony concerning the existence of pre-Flood writing is lacking.

It is true that Assyrian King Ashurbanipal spoke of reading "inscriptions on stone from the time before the flood." But these inscriptions may have simply preceded a local flood of considerable proportions or could have been accounts that purported to relate events prior to the Flood. For example, what is known as "The Sumerian King List," after mentioning that eight kings ruled for 241,000 years, states: "(Then) the Flood swept over (the earth)." Such record, clearly, is not authentic.

According to Bible chronology, the global flood of Noah's day occurred in 2370 B.C.E. Archaeologists have assigned dates earlier than this to numerous clay tablets they have excavated. But these clay tablets are not dated documents. Hence the dates that have been assigned to them are merely conjectural and provide no solid basis for establishing a relationship in time to the Biblical flood. None of the artifacts that have been excavated are definitely known to date from pre-Flood times. Archaeologists who have assigned items to the pre-Flood period have done so on the basis of findings that, at best, can only be interpreted to give evidence of a great local flood.

So there is no way to establish definitely that Moses got some of his information from pre-Flood and post-Flood records. Neither is there any basis for disproving that he did so, for writing has long been used for transmitting information. Nevertheless, the source for Moses' information did not have to be earlier written records. It is obvious that someone had to receive information relating to the events prior to man's creation by divine revelation. Thus Moses could have gotten this as well as the rest of his material by direct revelation from God. But, if revealed to someone other than Moses, this information and the basis for the remainder of the contents of the book of Genesis could have been transmitted to Moses by means of oral tradition. Due to the long life-span of men of that period, the information could have been passed from the first man Adam to Moses through just five human links, namely, Methuselah, Shem, Isaac, Levi and Amram. This would, of course, have required the last traditional link, Amram, to have the whole book of Genesis in his head.

At the present time, no definite conclusion can be reached as to the immediate source from which Moses obtained the information that he recorded. He could have received it through direct revelation, oral tradition or written records. Perhaps all three sources were involved. It should be remembered, however, that the important thing is, not the immediate source, but the fact that Jehovah God, by means of his spirit, guided the prophet Moses to write the reliable account preserved in the Genesis record.

What Rejecting Genesis Means

"Those who reject the Genesis account may not realize that by so doing they reject Christianity. Why? Because the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ became necessary as a result of what Adam himself did."
—*Is the Bible Really the Word of God?*, page 34.

DO YOU consider yourself a merciful person? Christ Jesus said: "Continue becoming merciful, just as your Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36) Are you doing that? How can you tell?

Mercy, to many, brings thoughts of showing "more kindness than justice requires," or "forbearance shown to an offender." Like Shakespeare they say, "Mercy seasons justice."

True, these *are* expressions of mercy, for it often does refer to being lenient in punishing an offender or showing clemency in judgment. But mercy involves much, much more than this. In fact, if we think of mercy only in those senses, we are missing the real meaning of mercy, taking too narrow a view of it. We could hardly become like our Creator if that is the sum of our understanding of mercy.

Look in a dictionary and you will see that mercy can also mean: "A blessing regarded as a manifestation of compassion" and "compassionate treatment of the unfortunate." Yes, and these definitions come closer to the basic meaning of mercy as that quality is expressed in the ancient languages used to write the Bible.

INVESTIGATING THE BIBLICAL MEANING

Describing God's personality, Psalm 145:8, 9 says: "Jehovah is gracious and merciful, . . . Jehovah is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works." To present God's wonderful quality of mercy the Hebrew writer here used the word *ra·hham'*. Of course, we know that Jehovah does show mercy when he forgives repentant wrongdoers and shows forbearance to opposers. (Compare Psalm 51: 1, 2; 103:3, 4; Daniel 9:9.) But is that the *basic* meaning of the word the psalmist used? Let us see.

Some Hebrew scholars believe the original source of *ra·hham'* is a word meaning basically "to be soft and gentle." They connect it with the word for "womb" (*re·hhem'*). So one Lexicon defines *ra·hham'* as meaning "to glow, to feel warm with tender emotion; . . . to be compassionate." How grand to know that this is a distinguishing quality of our God! He is merciful. And because mercy can be said to be the active expression of pity or compassion, this same Hebrew word is sometimes translated "pity."

For example, at Isaiah 49:15 God says: "Can a wife forget her suckling so that she should not pity [*ra·hham'*] the son of her belly?" What depth of feeling a mother normally has for the child of her womb! But what calls forth this quality as described in the Hebrew text by *ra·hham'?* Has her suckling infant committed an offense so that the mother has to decide whether to show clemency or not? Not likely. Evidently this merciful feeling is stirred by her baby's *need,* perhaps its being hungry, ill or experiencing some other cause of suffering. So she exercises tender compassion toward it. God shows mercy in similar expressions of compassion.

Take another example, that of Joseph

in Egypt. On their second trip to Egypt in search of food, Joseph's ten half brothers brought along Benjamin, his only full brother (from the same womb [*re·hhem'*] as Joseph was). On seeing Benjamin after so many years, Joseph's "inward emotions [plural of *ra·hham'*] were excited" toward his younger brother and Joseph left the room and gave way to tears. Was this a case of showing "compassionate treatment to an offender or adversary"—one of the meanings of mercy? No, for although Joseph's half brothers were guilty of personal offense, Benjamin was not. Instead, Joseph's act was one born of deep affection and merciful concern for this younger brother of his. What a richness this example gives to that Hebrew word that describes God's mercy as well!—Gen. 43:30; 37:12-28; compare 1 Kings 3:25-27.

So, then, are you merciful in the Bible sense? You can see that mercy is not expressed just by holding back—as when refraining from punishing to the limit another's offense or showing forbearance to an opposer. Rather it *primarily* relates to the compassion you feel *and express* toward those in difficulty, in need or at some disadvantage.

THE MERCIFUL WILL BE SHOWN MERCY

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said: "Happy are the merciful, since they will be shown mercy." (Matt. 5:7) Surely we want to be shown divine mercy. So we should want to know what is included in being merciful. That means finding out what the meaning of the word is as used in this text in the Christian Greek Scriptures.

Here the Gospel writer used forms of the Greek word *e'le·os* to describe mercifulness. We can see how closely it corresponds to the Hebrew word (just considered) by this definition in W. E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words:* "ELEOS (ἔλεος) 'is the outward manifestation of pity; it assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it.' " Other Greek words (such as *oi·ktir·mos'* and *splag'khnon*) convey the strong *feeling* of pity or warm kindness of which *e'le·os* ("mercy") is the *active expression.*

But, better than definitions are examples. What does Jesus' own example tell us as to the part mercy should play in our lives?

JESUS SETS EXAMPLE IN MERCY

Prominent among those calling forth Jesus' mercy were parents whose children were ill, the blind, the demon-possessed, the leprous. (Matt. 9:27-29; Luke 17:12-14) In response to their plea, "Have mercy on us," Jesus performed miracles to relieve them. And he did so, not in a routine, apathetic or condescending way, but "moved with pity."—Matt. 20:33, 34.

We can appreciate Jesus' strong feeling more by noting that, in this last phrase, the Gospel writer used a verb (form of *splag'khnon*) that literally means "to feel the bowels yearn." Yes, God's Son felt deeply moved inside on seeing the needs of others.

This same word describes Jesus' feeling upon seeing the crowds who gathered to hear him, for they were "skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; Mark 6:34) And that same merciful feeling caused Jesus to provide those crowds with food so that they would not "give out on the road" on returning home. (Matt. 15:32) In all this depth of feeling for people in distress or need, resulting in acts of mercy, Jesus was but reflecting his Father's wonderful qualities.—Compare Jeremiah 31:20.

It is not enough to *feel* compassion; we

must *express* it if we would be merciful. In Jesus' parable of the neighborly Samaritan, the Samaritan found a traveler lying beside the road, robbed and beaten. He was not only "moved with pity," but he also "acted mercifully toward him," treating his wounds and caring for him. Again we may note that no forgiveness of wrongdoing or judicial proceedings were involved. It was a case of feeling "sympathy with the misery of another, and especially sympathy manifest in act"—one of the definitions of the verb form of *e'le·os*.—Luke 10:33-37.

These few examples help us to appreciate how much is involved in being merciful. Must we wait until someone causes us some personal offense or until someone violates some rule or law to show mercy? By no means, but we can show it to any in need of help, to complete strangers as well as to friends and those we love. Mercy is indeed *compassion in action*.

SHOWING MERCY IN OUR DAILY LIVES

Today is a time like that foretold by Jesus, a time when, along with the "increasing of lawlessness," we see that 'the love of the greater number has cooled off.' (Matt. 24:12) As love for the true God diminishes, love for neighbor weakens. Selfishness, hardness, indifference to the problems and sufferings of others, even cruelty, have grown, and this seems especially true in cities and crowded areas. The modern industrial society, with its concern for mass production and big profit, has developed the "organizational man," and men are often viewed as mere parts in a machine.

In such a time, how refreshing is the quality of mercy! How important that we appreciate its wide range of expression and see the need to manifest it every day of our lives! But what can we do in practical ways?

The greatest need of people today is spiritual help. They are, in the majority, spiritually starved, blind, groping about in the confusing conditions that are upon us with no real hope for the future. They are "like sheep without a shepherd." Moreover, God's Word shows that a "great tribulation" is due to break soon upon all the earth and that those who would escape need to inform themselves now of his provisions. (Matt. 24:3-8, 21, 22, 36-42) What are we doing to show mercy to such ones? Jesus and his disciples were especially active in merciful giving of spiritual gifts of far greater value than material things. (John 6:35; Acts 3:1-8) They preached and taught the truth of God's Word to others. Do we do that?

Does such preaching and teaching, however, guarantee that we are fully satisfying the requirement of being merciful? Jesus said: "Give as gifts of mercy the things that are inside." (Luke 11:41) You may share in carrying the Word of life to others, perhaps going right to their homes. However, in doing this, *why* are you doing it? Do you feel that by doing so for a certain number of hours each month you thereby prove yourself righteous before God? Or are your efforts rather 'a gift of mercy that comes from inside,' an expression of mercy from a loving heart? And, while going to visit persons who are perhaps strangers to you, are you careful also to show mercy to those you know, your own family, those who are your brothers in the faith?

We may remember that the Pharisees of Jesus' day felt they had God's favor because they scrupulously paid tithes, made the required sacrifices and abstained from secular work on sabbath days. They were critical of any who did not measure up to

their idea of what obeying the Law meant. But Jesus told them: "If you had understood what this means, 'I want mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless ones.'" True, being under the Mosaic law they were required to observe those things mentioned, but not to the point of disregarding "the weightier matters of the Law," including mercy. —Matt. 9:1-13; 12:1-7; 23:23.

How about us? We may be endeavoring to serve God, regularly, even systematically and routinely; we may set aside certain time for performing services and worship and may make monetary contributions to advance God's pure worship. This is fine; but what is our motive? Could we be so concerned with gaining God's approval for ourselves that we fail to notice the needs of others around us?

For example, what of those with whom we meet for study of God's Word? Does our mercy come into play here? Many people in Christendom, as we know, are "churchgoers" but betray a shallow motive. They go to fulfill a 'religious duty,' for social benefits and conversation, or to enjoy a 'quiet atmosphere contributing to inner tranquillity.' Their interest is in themselves, not others. If we are merciful, however, our interest will be in others; not in what they can do for us as much as what we can do for them.

Do we notice any who seem to be in poor health and do we show concern for them? Do we upbuild them by expressing appreciation for their faith that moved them to come to the meeting? What of those who seem timid, lonely, worried or depressed? Do we feel for them so that we are moved to show interest in them and try to increase their happiness? What a fine spirit such mercy builds up in any group of God's servants!

MATERIAL "GIFTS OF MERCY"

But while giving in spiritual ways is the most vital, this by no means eliminates showing mercy in material ways. When, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke of "making gifts of mercy" he evidently referred to gifts to the needy, to those experiencing poverty, adversity, illness, or other causes of difficulty. True, Jesus condemned the hypocritical persons who used such gifts to bring praise to themselves. But he did not downgrade or depreciate the giving itself. To the contrary, he told his disciples: "But you, when making gifts of mercy, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, that your gifts of mercy may be in secret; then your Father who is looking on in secret will repay you."—Matt. 6:1-4.

Dorcas was a Christian woman who "abounded in good deeds and gifts of mercy." What did these consist of? When Peter arrived after Dorcas' death, "all the widows presented themselves to him weeping and exhibiting many inner garments and outer garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them." (Acts 9:36-41) Yes, she was a merciful woman. Whether she personally bore all the expense of making such garments for these widows, or whether she contributed her time, strength and talent only, the account does not say. Today, some of us may have little in the way of material means, but we can contribute time, energy and talent in performing deeds of mercy for others.

And, where our means allow, we can mercifully aid worthy ones in a financial way. The Law covenant specifically urged such mercy, warning against 'hardening one's heart or being closefisted toward poor brothers.' (Deut. 15:7-10; compare Proverbs 19:17.) Christian congregations in the first century kept lists of widows who were given material aid. Their worthiness to be on this list required that these

women also have a record of deeds of mercy, entertaining strangers, relieving those in tribulation, and similar good works. (1 Tim. 5:9, 10) Should we fear for the future and hesitate to use our funds to help the needy, thinking that we may ourselves come into need? The apostle Paul assured his brothers in Corinth that God would bless their 'cheerful giving,' supplying them with what they needed. —2 Cor. 9:6-14.

What a meaningful, satisfying and rich life the merciful lead! Happy are you if you are among them, for God will make you the object of his mercy, now and in the days ahead.

'My Future Is Bright'

● The London, England, branch office of the Watch Tower Society received a letter addressed "Dear fellow Christians." It said: "I am writing this letter to your office to express my gratitude to your people who called on me at my home and brought the wonderful message about Jehovah's kingdom. Though I have been associated with the Salvation Army for forty years, I have to admit that I was blind and ignorant about God and his true faith. But now, less than four months since I started to study the Bible with your publications, I have learned many truths about Jehovah God and his purposes. . . . I am 78 years of age, but the future for me is very bright. I am going every Saturday and Sunday in the preaching work and am looking forward to being baptized at the next assembly."

Having a bright future depends upon one's willingness to learn about and do God's will.

● What are the "elementary things of the world" mentioned at Galatians 4:3 and Colossians 2:8, 20?—U.S.A.

After showing that a child is like a slave because of being under the stewardship of others until he is of age, the apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, writes: "Likewise we also, when we were babes, continued enslaved by the elementary things belonging to the world." (Gal. 4:1-3) He then proceeds to show that God's Son came at the "full limit of the time" and released those Jews becoming his disciples from being under the Law in order that they might receive the "adoption as sons." (Gal. 4:3-7) Similarly, in his letter to the Colossians, Paul warned the Christians at Colossae against being carried off "through the philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ; because it is in him that all the fullness of the divine quality dwells bodily." They should have "died together with Christ toward the elementary things of the world."—Col. 2:8, 9, 20.

Being set in contrast with what such Christians now enjoyed, the "elementary things of the world" evidently are the *fundamental or primary principles followed by those who are not true Christians,* persons who are a part of the world alienated from God. *An American Translation* renders the Greek expression for "elementary things of the world" as "material ways of looking at things." Of course, the way a person views things is determined by the *principles* that he follows.

The text we are considering, Colossians 2:8, indicates that these primary principles or "elementary things" include the philosophies and deceptive teachings based on human standards, concepts, reasonings and myths, things in which the Greeks and other non-Jewish peoples reveled. Additionally, as evident from Colossians 2:16-18 and Galatians 4:4–5:4, the "elementary things" embraced the non-Biblical Jewish teachings calling for asceticism and "worship of the angels" as well as the teaching that Chris-

tians must observe the Mosaic law in order to gain salvation.

But was not the Mosaic law of divine origin? Certainly. How, then, could its observance be referred to as one's being enslaved to the "elementary things *of the world*"?

We must remember that the Law had been fulfilled in Christ Jesus. He was the "reality" to which the Law's 'shadows,' including the temple and the sacrifices there carried on, pointed. The Law had therefore served its purpose and so was no longer the standard for judgment. (Col. 2:13-17) Not only this, but these Christians to whom the apostle Paul wrote were called to heavenly, spirit life. The Law was for humans, was composed of "legal requirements pertaining to the flesh," even its tabernacle (and later temple) could be called "worldly" (Heb. 9:1, 10, *Kingdom Interlinear Translation;* "mundane," *Moffatt*) in the sense that it was part of the human sphere, something built and used in the world of mankind, not something heavenly or spiritual. But now Christians were called to the superior way of worship based on Christ Jesus, who had entered into heaven itself. (Heb. 9:11, 24) Of Jesus Christ, in a letter to the Colossians the apostle said that "all the fullness of the divine quality dwells bodily" in him. (Col. 2:9) That being so, then Jesus Christ—not humans and their principles or teachings, nor even the now fulfilled Mosaic law—was to be recognized as God's appointed standard for his servants, hence as the full means of measuring the truth with regard to any teaching or way of life.

As the apostle had counseled the Christians at Colossae, similarly he wrote those in Galatia not to be like children by voluntarily placing themselves under that which was likened to a 'pedagogue' or 'tutor,' namely, the Mosaic law. Their relationship with God was now like that of a grown son with his father. The Mosaic law had become "elementary," as compared with the Christian teaching. So it would have been wrong for Christians to turn back to the "weak and beggarly elementary things" of the human sphere. They possessed the full truth.

Similarly, today people forming the world alienated from God live according to certain philosophies of life and customs that are out of harmony with God's Word. But to them, this is the "practiced" way to life, a way typified by such expressions as: "The end justifies the means"; "It's a 'dog-eat-dog' world where it's 'every man for himself'"; "All's fair in love and war." They lack the wisdom from above, spiritual insight. (Jas. 3:13-18) As Christians we must exercise care that we do not slip into following worldly principles in conducting our family and business affairs and in dealing with others. A Christian does well to ask himself, Am I wholly guided by God's Word and by the example and teachings of his Son in everything that I do, or am I letting myself be influenced by the popular sayings of this world?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WAR EVEN IN HEAVEN

Usually people think of heaven as a peaceful place. But did you know that there was a war in heaven? It is mentioned in the Bible at Revelation 12:7. Would you like to know when it occurred and how mankind has been affected by the results of it? Would you like to know what it indicates for our future? If you would, you will enjoy reading the book *"Then Is Finished the Mystery of God."* This hard-covered book of 384 pages contains a detailed consideration of this heavenly war. It also discusses in detail the first thirteen chapters of the highly symbolic Bible book of Revelation. You may obtain a copy of this book from Jehovah's witnesses when they call at your home. During the months of July and August they will be offering this book, along with a booklet on a Bible topic, to the people in your area for a contribution of only 50 cents.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

August 1: Come Before Jehovah with Thanksgiving. Page 392. Songs to Be Used: 48, 43.
August 8: Assemblies After the Death of Christ. Page 397. Songs to Be Used: 102, 65.