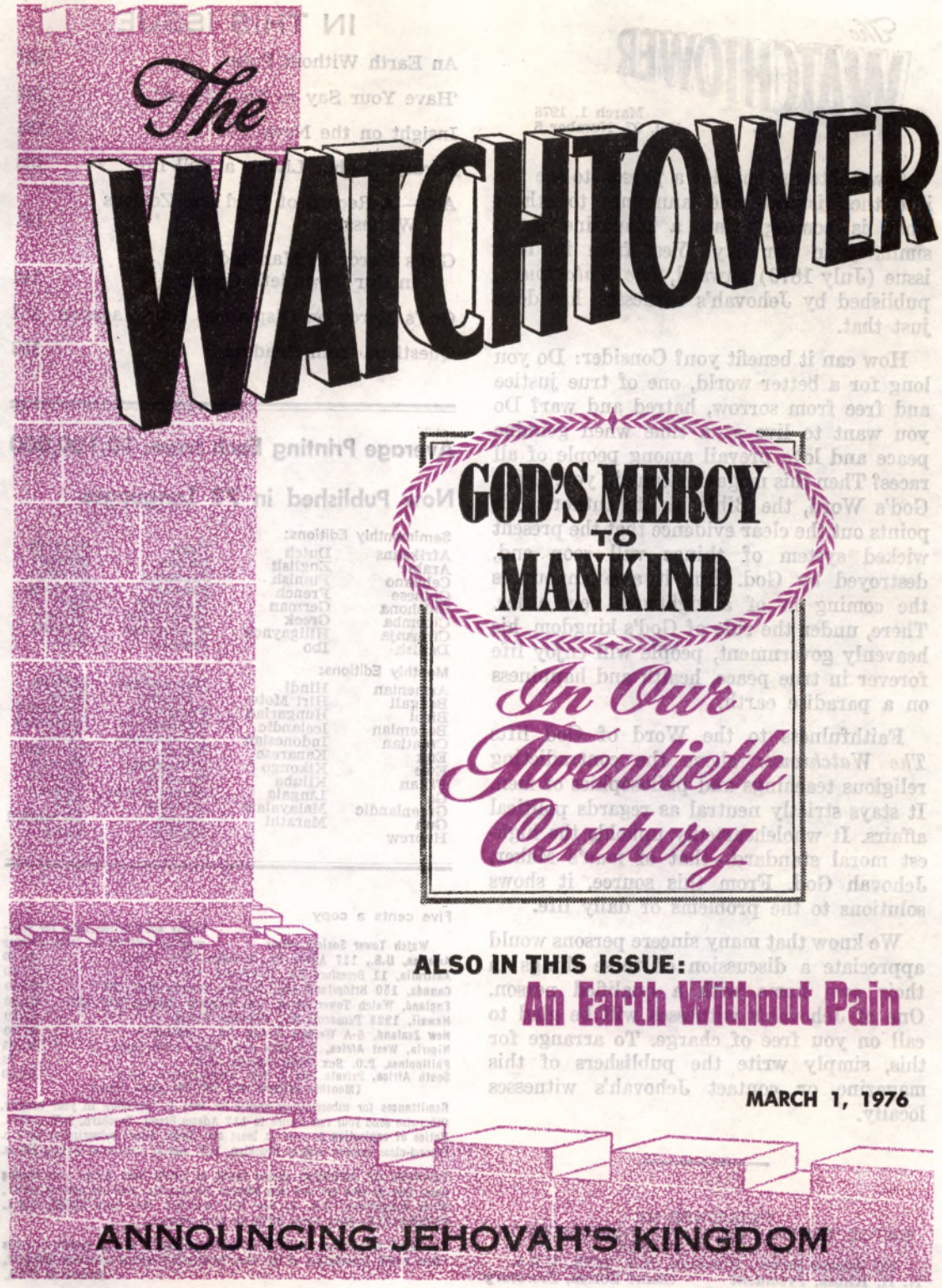

# The WATCHTOWER

## GOD'S MERCY TO MANKIND

## In Our Twentieth Century

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

**An Earth Without Pain**

MARCH 1, 1976

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

March 1, 1976
Vol. 97, Number 5

A watchtower enables a person to see far into the distance and announce to others what is coming. Can a magazine serve similarly in our day? Yes, from its first issue (July 1879) onward, *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's witnesses, has done just that.

How can it benefit you? Consider: Do you long for a better world, one of true justice and free from sorrow, hatred and war? Do you want to live at a time when genuine peace and love prevail among people of all races? Then this magazine can aid you. Using God's Word, the Bible, as its authority, it points out the clear evidence that the present wicked system of things will soon end, destroyed by God. But it also announces the coming in of a righteous new order. There, under the rule of God's kingdom, his heavenly government, people will enjoy life forever in true peace, health and happiness on a paradise earth.

Faithfulness to the Word of God lifts *The Watchtower* above the contradicting religious teachings and philosophies of men. It stays strictly neutral as regards political affairs. It wholeheartedly upholds the highest moral standard—that of man's Maker, Jehovah God. From this source, it shows solutions to the problems of daily life.

We know that many sincere persons would appreciate a discussion of these things in their own home with a qualified person. One of Jehovah's witnesses will be glad to call on you free of charge. To arrange for this, simply write the publishers of this magazine or contact Jehovah's witnesses locally.

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# AN EARTH WITHOUT PAIN

"'Neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away.' And the One [God] seated on the throne said: 'Look! I am making all things new.' "—Rev. 21:4, 5.

CAN YOU imagine living on earth without anyone's ever experiencing serious emotional or physical pain? 'That is too good to be true,' you may reason. Yet this is what man's Maker, Jehovah God, has promised. His Word, the Bible, speaks of a time when neither "outcry nor pain" will "be anymore." (Rev. 21:4) Just what will the fulfillment of that promise mean?

It will not mean that every physical sensation of pain will become a thing of the past. Why not? Because there is real benefit in having a sense of pain. For example, a girl peeling potatoes might cut herself slightly. If she had no sense of pain, she might make a deeper cut without even realizing that she had injured herself until blood began to flow. The sense of pain is thus seen to be valuable in enabling a person to act quickly in avoiding further contact with the source of pain, thereby limiting its hurtful effects.

The case of Jesus Christ well illustrates that bodily perfection includes having a sense of pain. Jesus experienced emotional pain in connection with the unmerciful attitude of his fellow countrymen. We read in the Scriptures that he was "thoroughly grieved at the insensibility of their hearts." (Mark 3:5) Regarding his feelings just prior to his betrayal, the Bible reports: "Getting into an agony he continued praying more earnestly; and his sweat became as drops of blood falling to the ground." —Luke 22:44.

Instead of requiring the removal of the sense of pain, the end of pain calls for the elimination of the causes of human suffering—oppression, crime, sickness, death and the like. How will this come about?

The first step in the removal of pain is the destruction of the present system of things that has made life so unpleasant for millions of earth's inhabitants. This means that all exploiters and ruiners of the earth must come to their end. The Bible indicates that this will happen. We read of the time when God will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Rev. 11:18) In the fullest sense, this will result in the fulfillment of Proverbs 2:21, 22: "The upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it."

After the destruction of all wicked elements, a righteous ruling body will start

directing all of earth's affairs. The prophecy of Daniel speaks of this as follows: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all [the existing] kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." —Dan. 2:44.

Through this kingdom of God all painful suffering will be abolished. No one will suffer on account of injustices, oppression or lawlessness of any kind. The principal ruler, Jesus Christ, will see to that. As to his manner of handling affairs, the Bible says: "He will not judge by any mere appearance to his eyes, nor reprove simply according to the thing heard by his ears. And with righteousness he must judge the lowly ones, and with uprightness he must give reproof in behalf of the meek ones of the earth."—Isa. 11:3, 4.

Along with his associate rulers, Jesus Christ will also be working for the removal of the pain resulting from sickness and death. The arrangement for doing this is symbolically described in the Bible as a river lined with fruit-bearing trees. We are told: "On this side of the river and on that side there were trees of life producing twelve crops of fruit, yielding their fruits each month. And the leaves of the trees were for the curing of the nations." (Rev. 22:2) By means of this provision humankind will be freed of all weaknesses and imperfection. Fully healed by such means, humankind will no longer experience the pains of sickness, old age and death. The divinely inspired promise is: "He will actually swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces." —Isa. 25:8.

The removal of sickness, old age and death will not give rise to other pains that might result if the earth were to become overcrowded and if people were to draw too heavily on its resources. The Creator, who is wise enough to abolish sickness, old age and death, by means of his kingdom in the hands of Jesus Christ, also has the wisdom and ability to control these matters in the best interests of the human family. His original purpose for the earth was that it 'be filled and subdued,' not overpopulated and ruined. (Gen. 1:28) That original purpose will yet be fulfilled.

But what about the billions now dead and others who may die before the destruction of the present old order? Will they have the opportunity to share in the blessings of an earth without pain? Most assuredly! Jesus Christ stated: "An hour is coming in which all those in their tombs shall hear his voice and come forth." —John 5:28, *New American Bible.*

The fact that God has in mind bringing about an earth free from pain lays responsibility upon us to act in a way that shows that we really want this. The apostle Peter urged fellow believers: "Since you are awaiting these things, do your utmost to be found finally by him spotless and unblemished and in peace."—2 Pet. 3:14.

If we really want an earth without pain, we must show it by striving hard not to cause others needless pain, emotional or physical. Humbly we should submit to God's will as he has revealed it to mankind in his Word, the Bible. If we do this, we can look forward with confidence to an earth without the terrible pain that has for many centuries brought grief to humankind. Yes, we can be among those who will benefit from the fulfillment of God's promise, either by surviving the end of the ungodly system or, if we should die before that, by experiencing a resurrection from the dead.

# 'HAVE YOUR SAY IN YOUR HEART'

AT TIMES the words and actions of others can make a person very angry. When faced with such provocation, what should you do? The Bible recommends: "Be agitated, but do not sin. Have your say in your heart, upon your bed, and keep silent."—Ps. 4:4.

There is real wisdom in this counsel. A person may rightly be disturbed. But it is especially then that self-control is needed. The danger exists that one will lash out against the person causing the disturbance, retaliating in kind and thus sinning against him. This could lead to a violent quarrel. In a state of great agitation people often do things that they later deeply regret. It is not uncommon these days to hear about people seriously injuring or even killing relatives and friends in a fit of anger. Yes, wise is the counsel for a person to calm his agitation during the quiet hours of the night.

So that we do not act rashly we need to give thought to the consequences of what we say or do. When God's servant David on one occasion failed to do this and got heated up against the man Nabal, he almost incurred bloodguilt. This is what happened:

David and his men had been as a protective wall around Nabal's flock and shepherds. Later, in view of the kindnesses rendered to Nabal, David sent messengers to him, wishing him well and asking for whatever material aid he might want to give. Disregarding the benefits that had come to him from David and his men, Nabal screamed rebukes at the messengers. Receiving report of this, David determined to kill Nabal along with all the males of his household. But Nabal's wife Abigail quickly got a supply of food ready, approached David and pleaded with him not to take matters into his own hands. —1 Sam. 25:5-31.

Her words reached David's heart, prompting him to say: "Blessed be Jehovah the God of Israel, who has sent you this day to meet me! And blessed be your sensibleness, and blessed be you who have restrained me this day from entering into bloodguilt and having my own hand come to my salvation."—1 Sam. 25:32, 33.

As in the case of David, keeping one's anger in check is not always easy. It does help greatly, however, to avoid taking oneself too seriously and not to have an exaggerated concern for one's name. This is well illustrated in the case of King Saul. When first chosen to be king of Israel, he was a modest and humble man. Prior to his anointing as king he said to the prophet Samuel: "Am I not a Benjaminite of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the most insignificant of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?" (1 Sam. 9:21) This modest attitude later helped him to avoid rash action when certain men talked disrespectfully about him. The Scriptures report: "Some worthless fellows said, 'How can this man save us?' And they despised him, and brought him no

present. But he held his peace."—1 Sam. 10:27, *Common Bible.*

Important, too, in calming one's agitation is remembering one's relationship with the Creator. Jehovah God does not look with favor upon those who rejoice over the disaster of an enemy, as such rejoicing reflects a vengeful spirit. At Proverbs 24:17, 18, we are cautioned: "When your enemy falls, do not rejoice; and when he is caused to stumble, may your heart not be joyful, that Jehovah may not see and it be bad in his eyes."

A person could jeopardize his standing with Jehovah God by permitting his agitation to grow to the point of harboring bitter animosity. Were he to do so, he would be claiming as his right something that God has reserved for himself. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says Jehovah." (Rom. 12:19) That is why Proverbs 24:29 counsels: "Do not say: 'Just as he did to me, so I am going to do to him. I shall repay to each one according to his acting.' " The person who thus takes matters into his own hands could forfeit the opportunity of receiving mercy from Jehovah God when he comes into judgment.

Failure to exercise self-control may also lead to loss of personal dignity. A Bible proverb puts it this way: "It is a foolish person that makes known his vexation in the same day, but the shrewd one is covering over a dishonor." (Prov. 12:16) One who gets overly excited about some personal affront and then acts rashly makes himself appear foolish in the eyes of others. But the wise person ignores provocative remarks and actions. By bridling his tongue and restraining his actions, he does not make a big issue about his being dishonored. The dishonor is allowed to die down as if it never occurred. The individual preserves his dignity as well as his peace of mind, and does not degrade himself by resorting to disgraceful words.

Furthermore, the one maintaining self-control gains a moral victory. This was certainly true of Jesus Christ. He could say to his disciples: "Take courage! I have conquered the world." (John 16:33) Though faced with threats and reviling, Jesus never adopted the wicked ways of the world. Regarding him, the apostle Peter wrote: "When he was being reviled, he did not go reviling in return. When he was suffering, he did not go threatening, but kept on committing himself to the one who judges righteously." (1 Pet. 2:23) Since the world did not succeed in getting Jesus to react in kind, it went down in defeat before him. He came off as the victor. Our gaining a like victory is something truly worth while.

At times even persons responsible for our becoming disturbed can be benefited by our remaining calm. The good effect that kindness can have on them is highlighted at Proverbs 25:21, 22: "If the one hating you is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. For coals are what you are raking together upon his head, and Jehovah himself will reward you." Because of his being treated kindly, the person responsible for needless agitation may become ashamed and start to think seriously about his words and actions. This may cause him to change and may bring out his better qualities. Even if this is not the case, the person who maintains self-control and does not retaliate can look confidently to the Creator to reward him.

Truly, we are wise when we have 'our say in our hearts' and maintain self-control. To this end, we do well to cultivate modesty and humility. We also need to be on guard lest we become hasty in our speech and actions. Thereby we will avoid jeopardizing our standing before Jehovah God, and we will preserve our dignity, and gain a moral victory, and may even aid those responsible for provocation to change their ways for the better.

# Insight on the News

**"Only One Solution"**

● "To Avoid a Nuclear War Within 25 Years, American Experts Have Found Only One Solution: That of Jehovah's Witnesses!" reads a recent headline in "La Nouvelle Gazette" of Charleroi, Belgium. How so?

Well, the newspaper noted that five prominent arms-control experts of Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are convinced that rapid stockpiling of nuclear weapons and their probable spread to irresponsible parties make atomic conflict inevitable. "A reasoned evaluation of where we may be in 25 years suggests that we will not be able to regulate nuclear weapons . . . any better than we can control [handguns], heroin or pornography today," they said in a recent issue of "Harvard" magazine.

According to the "Nouvelle Gazette," these experts believe that "the only remedy would be a major relinquishment of sovereignty by each country, a radical change in the life-style of mankind . . . in favor of a world government." "The American experts," continues the newspaper, "thus exactly unite with the proposition upheld by Jehovah's witnesses!" Jehovah's witnesses' "proposition" is the one held forth in the Bible: That God's universal Kingdom government—not man-made government—is "the only remedy." This world government "will shatter . . . all the previous kingdoms, and itself last forever."—Dan. 2:44, "Jerusalem Bible."

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**Church Support Backfires**

● Mozambique "was never far from the minds of delegates at the WCC's [World Council of Churches] Nairobi assembly," notes "Christianity Today" magazine, "since the Marxist government there is one which the council helped bring to power." Church funds were channeled to the now-ruling *FRELIMO* "when it was a liberation movement." Is the FRELIMO grateful for this past church support?

Apparently not. "The FRELIMO government has taken a hard line toward the churches and especially toward foreign missionaries," reports the magazine. A recent document circulating among Mozambique political leaders states: "The masses will be protected against all pressure or any obligation to attend church service, of practising religion . . . Once religion is no more a duty or an obligation, it will be slowly forgotten. . . . religion will be no more than an episode of the past, worthy of mention in the history of the world Communist movement."

Having shamelessly violated Jesus' command to be "no part of the world," the Church Council now finds herself much like a rejected prostitute in Mozambique. The Bible predicts a similar fate world wide for all spiritually adulterous religion: "The time will come when [all the beastlike nations] will turn against the prostitute, and . . . will eat her flesh and burn the remains in the fire."—Rev. 17:16, "Jerusalem Bible."

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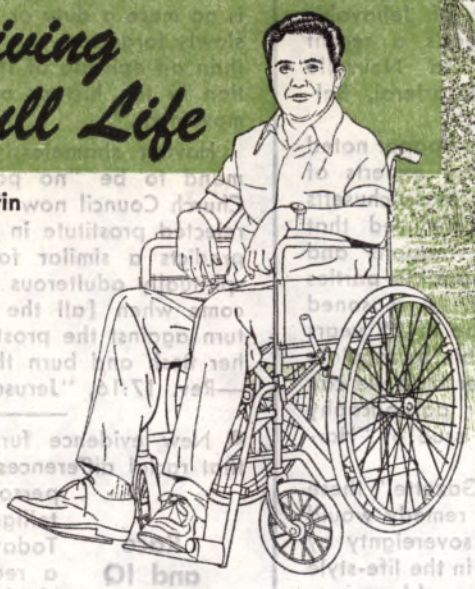
**Race and IQ**

● New evidence further supports the view that racial differences have little effect on a person's average measured intelligence or IQ. "Psychology Today" magazine reports on a recent study of adoptive children that indicates that "a culturally rich environment closes most of the black-white gap."

This study involved black children adopted by 101 white families of above-average education. It showed that these children "scored well above the national averages of both blacks and whites, especially if they were adopted early in life." The small remaining difference in average IQ scores between adoptive black and adoptive white children was said to be accounted for by the fact that the black children, on the average, were older when adopted. Consequently they missed some of the important personal care so necessary during early formative years. In the study, black children who were adopted at an early age scored almost identically with white youths.

Of course, this comes as no surprise to those who accept the scientifically accurate viewpoint on race found in the Bible: "[God] created every race of men of one stock, to inhabit the whole earth's surface." Hence, genuine Christians view other races as does "God [who] has no favourites, but . . . in every nation the man who is godfearing and does what is right is acceptable to him."—Acts 17:26; 10:34, 35, "New English Bible."

# PARALYZED
## -But Living A Full Life



**As told by Rodolfo Barin in the Philippines**

IT HAS been seven years since I was able to stand and walk unaided. Five years ago I could still write my name and feed myself, but for the past year even these simple tasks are impossible for me. When I read, someone has to turn the pages for me and, if I lean too far forward in my wheelchair, my head will fall onto my chest and I cannot raise it up again without help. I am suffering from that crippling paralysis known as multiple sclerosis.

Since I was a well-built, robust man of thirty-seven when the disease first struck me, you may wonder how I have been able to remain cheerful and active. How have I fought off the gloom of discouragement during my eleven-year battle with this relentless enemy? The answer goes back to the year 1957, when I dedicated my life to serve our Creator, Jehovah God.

### LEARNING RELIANCE ON JEHOVAH

Although it took over two years of study with Jehovah's witnesses before I was fully convinced of the truth of the Bible, yet, once convinced, I endeavored to make changes in my life. I had been the owner of a lucrative bar and nightclub and was a heavy drinker and a chain smoker. But after considering the Biblical counsel at 2 Corinthians 7:1 to "cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit," I cut off my bad habits. I sold the bar at a loss and tried to convince the girls working there to make over their lives by applying the counsel of God. Some responded and quit working in the nightclub. This proved a right decision, for their situation years later was far better than that of the girls who stayed.

As I uncompromisingly applied Bible principles, I soon experienced all manner of abuse from friends and associates. Though I held a responsible position in a large manufacturing firm in Manila, friends would taunt me for refusing to participate in business practices that violate God's Word. Their attitude hurt me, yet, looking back, I realize that I was drawn closer to Jehovah and strengthened by my reliance on him. This spiritual strength proved vital in the dark days that lay ahead for me.

Later, I left my secular job and formed

my own promotion service agency, which eventually prospered and became a nationwide operation. It now employs eighty persons regularly, and sometimes about twice that number. About 90 percent of my employees are Jehovah's witnesses.

Though relatively small, my office has often been given the more delicate promotional jobs by our client company. Sensitive promotions that involve large amounts of money have always been given to our agency. This is not because we charge less, but—I am proud to say—because our personnel, due to their religion, are known to be exceptionally honest. Thus the managers of our client company always request us to assign to jobs persons who are Jehovah's witnesses.

But, as is to be expected, sticking close to Jehovah's laws and principles has also brought trials. When I refused to promote a soap product that offered as premiums religious articles such as crucifixes, pictures and images, it drew the ire of one of the representatives of the company, who asked, "Why should you refuse to handle religious articles that are attractive to consumers?"

"Well," I said, "God detests the use of images, so we won't touch them."

When he sneeringly pointed out that we were of a different religion, I replied: "Yet, if I were in your religion, I would have even more reason to refuse. Certainly I would not so belittle my God by exchanging his picture for a few soap wrappers." After this conversation, we heard no more on the matter.

But there were similar experiences. Once, lottery tickets were, without my knowledge, included as prizes on some articles. When I later learned of it, I immediately objected, but my objection was answered with talk of breach of contract and a possible court case against me. However, I remained firm, telling them that I would be ready to face any consequences. What was the result? They yielded and withdrew the tickets.

On another occasion, in the middle of a promotional campaign in the southern Philippines, my Witness employees requested time off to attend a four-day district assembly. I unhesitatingly agreed. When our client company learned of this they became indignant, saying that they would not tolerate such disruptions in the future. I took the opportunity to tell them that, even if I wished them to miss their assemblies, the Witnesses would still not forsake such gatherings. I also reminded them that the company prefers our men because they are honest, hard working and neat. I pointed out that, since it is from these assemblies that our workers imbibe the knowledge and spirit that make them what they are, it would be against the company's best interests to keep them from attending. Again the strength of our position prevailed.

### EARLY BLESSINGS FROM JEHOVAH

But it was not only these tests of my faith that strengthened me. Almost as if I were being prepared to face my debilitating illness, Jehovah God blessed me with many privileges among his people. It was only a year after my dedication and baptism that I was appointed an overseer in the newly formed Roosevelt Congregation in Quezon City, very close to the Philippine branch office of the Watch Tower Society. Though I felt unequal to the task, I was lovingly encouraged by my Christian brothers, and also by the branch overseer, who was then associating with that congregation. How satisfying it was to see the congregation grow during the next few years! In 1964 it was possible to start a new congregation in a distant suburb of Quezon City to take care of twelve individuals who had difficulty in attending

meetings. I was appointed overseer of this newly formed Novaliches Congregation.

Since my residence was about twenty-five kilometers (15½ miles) away, I decided to move to Novaliches permanently so as to be near the new congregation. As it grew through the years from the original twelve to its present total of 200 Kingdom preachers, it was my privilege to help to construct a large Kingdom Hall on a lot right next to my house.

It was about three months after the formation of this new congregation that I felt the first effects of my illness, in June 1964.

### A BAFFLING DISEASE

It began with my seeing double, and my experiencing eye spasms as a result of a weakening of the eye muscles. The immediate effect was to make me exceedingly dizzy. After suffering through a day at the office I was forced to call a doctor, who gave me a prescription. Days passed with no marked change. Depression started to set in. The prospect of this disease impairing my Christian activity was hard for me to bear.

To reduce the dizzying effect of double vision, I covered one eye, then alternated with the other. In this way I was able to fulfill my congregational and family obligations, though with much difficulty. After two months I regained normal vision, and I am thankful that I can still see well. However, the problem with my eyes was only a prelude to the next stage of the disease. Soon I began to notice a weakening in my left leg, coupled with numbness. This reduced my walking to wobbling, staggering motions, which I initially corrected by using a cane.

I consulted different doctors, but their diagnoses were as varied as they were many. As the months went by and my sickness remained unidentified, I persistently looked beyond myself to the great Healer and Giver of life, Jehovah God. Firmly I decided that fear would never find a place in my heart, and I found much comfort in the inspired scripture at Psalm 55:22: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter."

By 1966 the disease had progressed so that my right leg began to give way, accompanied by a stiffening of my lower limbs. By 1968 I could no longer walk even with the aid of a cane, and I was forced to use a wheelchair. Now I was practically crippled and the impact was almost unbearable.

Until my illness I had been so strong and vigorous that it seemed impossible that this could be happening to me. Longingly I would think about how, only recently, house-to-house preaching of the good news had been a gratifying and rewarding work for me. How often I would recall the happiness of finding persons of a righteous disposition and renewing their faith in the only God who promises an entirely new system of things!

### HELP TO COPE WITH WORSENING CONDITION

An eminent doctor later diagnosed my illness as multiple sclerosis. The cause of this disease is unknown, and the course it might take is as unpredictable as it is incurable. Though there were periods of slackening off and retrieval, yet exposure to cold or infection or even emotional stress could trigger a relapse into an even worse condition. Such uncertainty as to the disease's next turn was enough to deplete me of any vestige of morale. But I placed my trust in Jehovah and, by constant prayers, I have bridged the many emotional gaps caused by my physical disability. At Psalm 46:1, 2, I found the reassuring words: "God is for us a refuge and strength, a help that is readily to be

found during distresses. That is why we shall not fear." These words have always been strengthening in my efforts to defeat discouragement and frustration.

Meanwhile my physical condition grew worse. By 1970 my arms were so weakened that I could no longer push myself along in the wheelchair. By 1974 my fingers had lost all control, so that I could no longer read, write or eat by myself. If a mosquito bites me, I can feel it, but cannot do anything to swat it. Now the disease has started affecting my neck muscles so that, if I were alone and my head were to drop forward, I would not be able to prevent myself from falling out of the wheelchair.

Yet, I have many things for which to be thankful. First, I am grateful that, despite the deterioration of my body muscles, my mind has remained sharp and active. Second, that my eyes have not been affected since the first bout with double vision eleven years ago. So I am able to read if someone will turn the pages for me. Also, my voice, though weakened, is still clear. This has enabled me to continue as an elder in the congregation, giving public Bible talks in the Kingdom Hall and at assemblies of Jehovah's witnesses. Thus I am still able to teach others about God's purposes.

I am even able to accept additional privileges in the Christian organization, such as being assembly overseer in our local circuit of Jehovah's witnesses. I also serve as food-service overseer at larger district conventions held in the city. It brings me much joy to be used in this way despite my physical disability.

My wife and four children have been a wonderful source of strength, encouragement and compassion to me during this difficult time. I have never felt alone. My oldest son has proved to be a good substitute for my arms and legs, aptly performing many of their functions as well as taking care of their various needs and maintenance. My family members have written down this story as I dictated it to them.

We have a family passenger van with a special air-cooled seat in it, and this enables me to get around quite a bit. My sons lift me from the wheelchair into the van, and put the folded wheelchair in the back. Traveling is my favorite recreation, and we often travel a hundred miles or more to visit fellow Witnesses in the provinces.

### KEEPING BUSY—THE BEST THERAPY

I like to keep a full schedule of activity. My day begins at 4:30 a.m., when, on awakening, I am given my massage. I need to be massaged before sleeping and on waking up to avoid a hardening of the leg and arm muscles. At 6 a.m. I accompany my two youngest children to their respective schools, and then I am driven to my office. I work there until noon. In the afternoon of every other day I conduct Bible studies with my office workers. All together, seven of them are now studying the Bible with me. Then I go home, which is about an hour's drive from my office.

Every Tuesday evening I conduct a congregation Bible study. On Wednesday evenings I have a home Bible discussion with a family of four. On Thursday evenings I conduct a Bible study with a group of three families living seventeen kilometers (10½ miles) from my home. This group is now holding regular congregation meetings and soon may qualify to be organized as a congregation of God's people. On Friday evenings we have our regular congregation meetings called the Theocratic School and the Service Meeting.

Saturday morning I go along with my Christian brothers in my van to share in the public preaching work. Although it is not possible for me to go from house to

house with my wheelchair because of the rough country roads and pathways, often the brothers will put me in a place where there are many people and I will strike up a conversation with them. Or I will sit in the van and, as people pass by, I will call them over and talk to them about the hope I have from the Bible. Saturday afternoons I spend preparing for congregation meetings and Bible talks. Sunday mornings I usually join with fellow Witnesses in preaching, and in the afternoon we have our regular public Bible lecture and Bible study using *The Watchtower*.

Sometimes well-meaning persons will approach me and suggest that I might be taxing myself too much with such a busy schedule. Invariably I reply that I will not relinquish any of my Christian privileges as long as I can carry them out. It is precisely because of these privileges and responsibilities that I have been able to avoid a negative and self-pitying attitude. They have kept my mind away from my ailment, and this has proved to be the best therapy I have had.

### THE HARDEST TEST

Perhaps the most difficult test occurred one day in 1972 when I felt an excruciating pain in my face muscles. When I tried to speak I couldn't utter a word. Neuralgia had struck me. The first time it did, I lost my power of speech for two days. It was extremely painful just to open my mouth a little. The gloom that this cast over me is too bleak to describe. Nothing could dishearten me more than to see my condition degenerate to the extent of losing my gift of speech. Discouragement plagued me; for a time I felt crushed.

Silently I prayed, urgently asking Jehovah to restore my speech so that I could continue to utter his praises. I was grateful that, after a short while, I regained my speech, though the pain along my nerves has continued intermittently. Increasingly I felt the presence of Jehovah, and this latest illness drew me even closer to him.

### REWARDS ALREADY RECEIVED

By now I am sure you realize what has helped me to overcome discouragement and physical weakness. Yes, it has been a close relationship with Jehovah God and my firm hope in his righteous new system of things, along with the love and support of my family and Christian brothers and sisters. To have much to do in the work of the Lord has helped me to feel that I am still needed and useful, and can aid others. Whenever I feel some discouragement, nothing uplifts me more than visiting my friends and brothers and discussing God's Word with them.

There is no joy on earth that can compare with the privilege I have had of aiding other persons to come to love Jehovah and serve him. Recently a family of six that I aided dedicated their lives to Jehovah and all were baptized at the same time! Many whom I have helped were merely curious at the start, noticing my debilitated state. But then they became absorbed with the new and marvelous things they were learning from God's Word and forgot my condition. They would later tell me that it was my zeal and confidence as I talked that aroused their interest. On hearing this, I would silently thank Jehovah for rewarding and encouraging me in this way.

Indeed, the joys of God's service far outweigh the physical anguish I feel. As I consider what I have been privileged to accomplish with the help of Jehovah, it helps to plug the holes through which a paralytic's will to live might leak out and desert him. Due to this help from Jehovah, no pain, no paralysis and no neuralgia could ever prevent me from praising his great and glorious name.

# ACTS

## —A Record of Bold and Zealous Witnessing

FOR about three and a half years Jesus Christ courageously preached the kingdom of God. Then he was put to death. Was Jesus Christ really the Son of God, as he claimed? According to the principle later enunciated by the Jewish scholar Gamaliel, if Jesus' work originated with himself, his death would have marked an end of it. But if his work was of God and he was indeed the Son of God, then his death would not stop it.—Acts 5:35-39.

The bold and zealous witnessing of his disciples, after Jesus had been raised from the dead, gave proof that Jesus was indeed the Son of God and that his work originated with his Father. In spite of all the bitter opposition that his disciples encountered, they were empowered to spread the good news of God's kingdom far and wide. All of this is told in the book of Acts.

Who wrote the book of Acts? The evidence, external as well as internal, points to Luke as the writer.* In Acts the disciple Luke shows himself to be not only a fair and an observant chronicler, but also an accurate and a well-educated historian.

Acts begins with Jesus' ascension and ends with Paul's Roman imprisonment. It covers some twenty-eight years, from 33 to 61 C.E. Most likely it was also written around 61 C.E., for it does not make mention of Paul's appearing before Caesar, or of Nero's persecution of Christians, which took place around 64 C.E. Since Luke was Paul's companion in Rome (Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11), it is also reasonable to conclude that Rome was the place where Luke wrote Acts.

The first twelve chapters of Acts deal chiefly with Peter's preaching work, the remaining sixteen with that of Paul. Too, Acts tells about the Kingdom witness first being given to the Jews, then to the Samaritans and then to the Gentiles. It also records the expansion of the good news, from Jerusalem to Rome.—Acts 1:8.

Of course, Jesus' disciples could not have done this in their own strength. It was God's holy spirit that enabled them to witness boldly and zealously. They witnessed about the resurrected Jesus Christ. But they also witnessed about Jehovah God and his kingdom. In fact, in Acts we find God mentioned twice as often as is Jesus Christ. And particularly when preaching to the Gentiles did they witness first of all

* For details, see *Aid to Bible Understanding*, page 32.

to the existence and goodness of the Creator, Jehovah God.—Acts 14:14-17; 17:22-31.

### PETER TAKES THE LEAD

The book of Acts begins with Jesus' farewell words to his disciples and his ascension into heaven. Matthias is chosen to replace Judas Iscariot, a step initiated by Peter. Then 120 disciples wait obediently in an upper room in Jerusalem for Jehovah God to pour out the promised comforter or holy spirit upon them, which He does on the festival day of Pentecost. This enables them to speak boldly and in the various languages of the Jews who have come from many different lands to celebrate Pentecost at Jerusalem. The apostle Peter again takes the lead, with the result that on that day 3,000 souls 'embrace the word heartily and are baptized.'—Acts 2:41.

Chapters 3 to 5 tell more of the apostles' bold and zealous witnessing about 'the only name under heaven by which we must get saved.' (Acts 4:12) The very outspokenness of Peter and John causes their opposers to recognize that they had been with Jesus. (4:13) Ordered to stop preaching, they boldly reply: "Whether it is righteous in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, judge for yourselves. . . . We cannot stop speaking about the things we have seen and heard." After being threatened and released they meet with "their own people" and report what had taken place. Then all with "one accord" pray that God grant them to "keep speaking [his] word with all boldness." Again ordered to stop preaching, they fearlessly answer: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—4:19, 20, 23, 24, 29, 31; 5:29.

In the next two chapters we learn about Stephen, one of the seven chosen to care for food distribution to the widows. With "graciousness and power" he performs great miracles and gives a telling witness that his opposers cannot gainsay. (Acts 6:8) Frustrated, they hale him before the Sanhedrin, where his bold witness so infuriates his opposers that they stone him to death, he thus becoming the first Christian martyr. Persecution increases, but does that stop the disciples? Not at all. Wherever they are scattered they keep on "declaring the good news."—8:4.

Chapter 9 tells how the bitter persecutor Saul of Tarsus is converted. How? By the resurrected Jesus when personally appearing before him in a blinding light. Upon having his sight restored, Saul, later known as Paul, also becomes a bold and zealous preacher and is himself now persecuted. Chapter 10 is outstanding in that it tells how God uses Peter to bring the good news to the first Gentile convert, the Roman army officer Cornelius.

Next we read of Herod's executing the apostle James to please the Jews and of his arresting Peter for the purpose of executing him also. God, though, has other things in mind for Peter and so an angel delivers Peter from prison. 'The word of Jehovah goes on growing and spreading.' —Acts 12:24.

### PAUL'S THREE MISSIONARY TOURS

Chapter 13 tells of Paul and Barnabas starting out on their first missionary tour. They travel hundreds of miles, visit many cities, performing many miracles and 'speak with such boldness' that 'a great multitude become believers.' Time and again they have to leave cities because of violent persecution. In one city Paul is even stoned and left for dead. Revived, he continues on, "strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to remain in the faith and saying: 'We must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations.' "—Acts 14:1, 3, 22.

A meeting of apostles and older men at Jerusalem to settle the question of cir-

cumcision is described in chapter 15. No, it is not required of Gentile converts, for "the holy spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you, except these necessary things, to keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication."—Acts 15:19, 20, 28, 29; 21:25.

For his second missionary tour Paul selects Silas as a companion and en route has Timothy join them. Being told in a vision to come over to Macedonia (in Greece today) to help, they come to Philippi. Again success in preaching results in an uproar and Paul and Barnabas are imprisoned. Due to an earthquake they are set free, which leads to the jailer's becoming a believer. Going on to Thessalonica and Beroea, they have much success but are forced to leave each place because of violent persecution. (Acts 16:9–17:15) Arriving at Athens, Paul preaches boldly in the marketplace, is haled before the Areopagus by philosophers, where he gives a grand witness to God the Creator, to the oneness of the human family, and concerning the resurrection of Jesus. (17:16-34) Going on to Corinth, he finds so much interest there that he stays for eighteen months.—18:1-17.

After returning to his home base in Antioch and spending some time there, Paul starts on his third missionary trip. He arrives in Ephesus and, entering a synagogue, 'speaks with boldness' there, and then in other places for a total of two years. (Acts 19:8-10) Many are the miracles he performs, and many become believers. Again his success results in an uproar, but without his needing to leave. On his way back to Jerusalem he calls for the older men of Ephesus to meet him at Miletus, where he points to his own unselfish course and gives them fine counsel: "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers." In conclusion he says: "I have exhibited to you in all things that by thus laboring you must assist those who are weak." He also tells them to remember Jesus' words: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—20:17-35.

### BEFORE RULERS AND IN PRISONS

The last eight chapters of Acts deal largely with Paul's prison experiences. They tell of his witnessing fearlessly to Jews and to the Roman rulers, Felix, Festus and King Agrippa. In making his defenses he tells how Jesus miraculously appeared to him and gave him the command to preach. To gain justice Paul appeals to Caesar.

The trip to Rome is interrupted by a great storm after which the ship runs aground and is totally wrecked, but, even as an angel had assured Paul, all aboard are able to swim safely ashore. Three months later Paul and his traveling companions set sail for Rome, and they find Christian brothers in the seaport Puteoli and thereafter they go on to Rome. In Rome he summons the principal men among the Jews and witnesses to them; some believe but many do not. For two years Paul remains in 'his own hired house and receives kindly those who come to him, preaching the kingdom of God to them.' —Acts 28:30, 31.

Truly the record made by these early Christians clearly demonstrates that the work begun by Jesus is of God and not of men. Directed by their resurrected Master and with the power of God's holy spirit, they were able to witness boldly, zealously and most fruitfully, this resulting in many thousands becoming believers. As the apostle Paul tells it in one of his letters, their zeal resulted in the good news being "preached in all creation that is under heaven."—Col. 1:23.

# GOD'S MERCY TO MANKIND IN OUR TWENTIETH CENTURY

"It is as he says also in Hosea: 'Those not my people I will call "my people," and her who was not beloved "beloved"; and in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," there they will be called "sons of the living God." ' "—Rom. 9:25, 26.

ALL OF US are glad that, at our birth, our parents had mercy upon us in our helplessness. Wives are glad when their husbands show them mercy in view of female ailments, emotional upsets and feminine foibles. Such wives can appreciate as something still proper for today the exhortation to mercifulness that was given nineteen centuries ago: "You husbands, continue dwelling in like manner with them according to knowledge, assigning them honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one, since you are also heirs with them of the undeserved favor of life."—1 Pet. 3:7.

[2] There are still persons who try to apply in their lives the words taken from the famous Sermon on the Mount: "Happy are the merciful, since they will be shown mercy." (Matt. 5:7) They are happy because of imitating the Creator of mankind in his display of mercy to our wayward race. Others, in increasing numbers, are questioning that mercy exists among the Creator's qualities. They complain: "If there is a God, why does he permit all this wickedness and such hard times in the earth? If he is almighty, why does he not show us some merciful consideration and put a stop to it all and let us enjoy life?" Such complainers open themselves to invasion by the shocking theory, "God is dead!" That is, "dead" as far as his merciful concern for mankind goes. They may conclude that they themselves are more merciful to others than such a "dead" God is. They see no evidence of God's mercy in our twentieth century.

[3] However, have we ever stopped to think that God's permission of wickedness and of such hardness of living might really be for a merciful purpose? For instance, if the wickedness was not tolerated, mercy could not be shown simultaneously by God. Has not wickedness existed here on earth for thousands of years before we were born? Yes! So, if God Almighty had put a stop to such wickedness before our time, would we be here and alive today?

[4] By checking authentic historical records we find that the Creator of heaven and earth put a stop to worldwide violence and wickedness more than forty-three centuries ago, in 2370 B.C.E. He brought a global deluge, through which only eight humans made their way safely and es-

1. For what mercy displayed by husbands can wives be glad today?
2. Why are some not happy about God's mercy today, thinking themselves more merciful than he is?
3. In what way has God's toleration of wickedness till now been for a merciful purpose toward us?
4. What eight humans do we have to thank for our being alive today, and why?

caped in a huge waterproof ark. As a result, all those tens of thousands of families that did not get into the ark built by Noah and his three sons had all possible lines of descent down till now cut off by that world catastrophe. It is Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth and their faithful wives whom we have to thank for our being alive today in this twentieth century.—Gen. 6:1 through 9:19.

5 Really, then, we can consider our personal existence today as being an evidence of God's mercy, can we not? Yes, "mercy" despite all the violence and increase of lawlessness that mark our twentieth century. But now the big question is: How much longer is God going to put up with this wickedness on a global scale just for the sake of those taking advantage of his patience and mercy? Not much longer, according to all Bible indications. So, let us not complain about divine permission of evil on earth. Rather, let us avail ourselves of divine mercy. If we do so, then, shortly, when God stops all the wickedness prevailing among mankind, he will not stop our living also. Mercifully He will usher us into a righteous, peaceful new order here on earth. Hence, let us take the balanced viewpoint of the Christian apostle Paul, when he wrote:

6 "What? Does not the potter have authority over the clay to make from the same lump one vessel for an honorable use, another for a dishonorable use? If, now, God, although having the will to demonstrate his wrath and to make his power known, tolerated with much long-suffering vessels of wrath made fit for destruction, in order that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he prepared beforehand for glory, namely, us, whom he called not only from among Jews but also from among [Gentile] nations, what of it? It is as he says also in Hosea: 'Those not my people I will call "my people," and her who was not beloved "beloved"; and in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," there they will be called "sons of the living God."'" —Rom. 9:21-26; note also 1 Peter 2:9, 10.

5, 6. (a) What question now arises with regard to the duration of God's mercy? (b) What balanced viewpoint does Paul give us in Romans 9:21-26?

### GOD'S OWN MARRIAGE PROBLEM

7 Who was that Hosea, from whose writings the apostle Paul made the above quotations? He was a prophet during the ninth and eighth centuries before our Common Era. The apostle Paul made his quotations from the Greek *Septuagint Version* renderings of Hosea 1:10 and 2:23. There we read: "But it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said to them, You are not My people, they shall be called children of the Living God." "And I will plant her for Myself in the land and love her who was not beloved; and to them who were not My people I will say, Thou art My people: and they will say, Thou the Lord art my God." —*The Septuagint Bible* by Charles Thomson.

8 It is Jehovah God who thus speaks through the Hebrew prophet Hosea as His mouthpiece. In saying, "I will . . . love her who was not beloved," or, "I will call . . . her who was not beloved 'beloved,'" Jehovah indicated that some problem had existed between him and her whom he did not love for a time. According to the way that Jehovah speaks about the matter, it was a marriage problem between him and her. He likens her to a man's wife.

9 Who is this one of whom Jehovah speaks as being married to him? She is not a literal woman, an individual human

7. Who was Hosea, and from what translation of his writings did Paul quote?
8. By his words through Hosea, Jehovah indicated that what kind of problem existed between him and the one not beloved?
9. Who is the one of whom Jehovah speaks as being married to him?

female. By his own statements Jehovah shows that she is a people, the nation of Israel that descended from the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So she is a national wife, an organizational wife. Jehovah was married to the organization of the twelve tribes of Israel. Just like a purchased wife of the Middle East, the nation of the twelve tribes of Israel was married to its God, Jehovah.

10 When did this marriage take place? It was in the year 1513 B.C.E., after Jehovah had purchased the twelve tribes of Israel. How? By liberating them from slavery in the land of Egypt. Then, under the visible leadership of the prophet Moses, Jehovah brought them to Mount Sinai on the Arabian Peninsula. There, through Moses as mediator between God and man, Jehovah proposed the forging of a bond of union between himself and the liberated Israelites. He proposed the making of a covenant between himself and them. This covenant was to be based upon a code of laws to which the nation of Israel would agree to be subject, just as in those days a woman was subject to the law of her husband. (Rom. 7:2) From atop Mount Sinai Jehovah said to the Israelites: "Now if you will strictly obey my voice and will indeed keep my covenant, then you will certainly become my special property out of all other peoples, because the whole earth belongs to me. And you yourselves will become to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Ex. 19:1-6) Being properly informed, the Israelites voluntarily entered into this covenant.

11 In this manner, out there in the wilderness of Sinai, a marriage took place between Jehovah as Heavenly Husband and the nation of Israel as his earthly organizational wife. This sacred relationship was established over the shedding of the blood of animal sacrifices. Part of this blood was sprinkled upon the book of God's law and part upon the people of Israel. (Ex. 24:1-8; Heb. 9:19, 20) From then on, for as long as the Law covenant continued in force, the Israelites were bound to be faithful and true to Jehovah their God, just as a woman should be faithful and true to her husband. According to the Ten Commandments, they were bound to worship Jehovah as their God without the use of any images. (Ex. 20:1-6) They had to consider themselves as his "special property," belonging to no other owner. They had to keep themselves as a nation that is holy to Jehovah, separate from the worldly nations. By this course they would keep the marriage tie binding, inviolate. —Jer. 2:2, 3; 31:31, 32.

12 Today it is not uncommon for legal marriages to break up, even though it is between two individuals, a male and a female. So, how would a marriage between Jehovah and an entire nation of millions of individuals fare? We today ought to be interested in this, since what happened to that marriage of old became prophetic of something to happen to a later marriage of that kind. What happened to Jehovah's marriage with Israel affected just a nation. But what happens to his later marriage affects the whole religious world, yes, it affects the entire human family. This means that we of today are affected. Hence, calamity is possible for all of us in the near future. This explains why it is so important for us to consider the ancient marriage between Jehovah and Israel and its modern counterpart.

### HOSEA USED IN ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

13 After some centuries the nation of Israel became dissatisfied with having only

10. When, where and how did this figurative marriage take place?
11. How was the nation of Israel to keep the marriage tie between itself and Jehovah binding?
12. Why is it important for us to consider the ancient marriage between Jehovah and the nation of Israel and the modern counterpart thereof?
13. Why was the kingdom over Israel transferred from Saul's family to David's family, and in whom was David's royal line of descent to end up?

Jehovah their invisible Heavenly Husband as their King. So, at their request in 1117 B.C.E., he authorized the anointing of Saul of the tribe of Benjamin to be their first human king. Saul proved unfaithful to Jehovah. Consequently the kingship over all Israel was not allowed to continue in his family. Jehovah transferred the kingdom to David the son of Jesse of the tribe of Judah. In 1077 B.C.E. David started on his kingly career. In 1070 B.C.E. he made Jerusalem his capital over all twelve tribes of Israel. Because David kept faithful to the right worship, Jehovah made a solemn covenant with him for an everlasting kingdom in his family. So David's royal line of descent would end up in the Messiah, who becomes an everlasting king.—Acts 13:20-24; 2 Sam. 7:1-17.

14 David's first successor, King Solomon, finally gave way to unwisdom in departing from pure worship of Jehovah as God. For a divine punishment, King Solomon's successors had their kingdom reduced to two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, this starting off after King Solomon's son Rehoboam came to the throne. Then ten tribes broke away and set up an independent kingdom with Jeroboam the son of Nebat as king. This rebel king established a religious worship separate from Jehovah's worship at Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. He turned the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel to the worship of two golden calves, one at Bethel and the other at Dan. In the days of Omri, the seventh king over the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, the city of Samaria was built and became the national capital.

15 In Samaria King Omri's son Ahab introduced the worship of the Sidonian god Baal and built a temple to Baal there. (1 Ki. 16:23-33) By this unfaithful course the ten-tribe kingdom adulterously forsook the Heavenly Husband of all Israel and immorally attached itself to the false god Baal as the national husband.—Hos. 9:10.

16 What about the kings of the two-tribe kingdom of Judah? They wavered between the pure worship of Jehovah and the attaching of themselves to false gods. King Ahaz, the twelfth king when counted from David, turned to false worship. He even shut the doors of Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem. But his son, King Hezekiah, reopened the temple doors and restored pure worship for the kingdom of Judah. Quite beneficially, down into King Hezekiah's reign, Hosea continued prophesying. This prophet found himself right in the thick of the things about which he was talking.

### A DISTASTEFUL ASSIGNMENT OF SERVICE?

17 How would any of us feel if, on becoming marriageable, we were told by our father as marriage maker to marry a woman who we were informed would prove unfaithful, giving herself over to adultery and finally leaving us for another lover? It might be somewhat distasteful, might it not? Yet something like this actually happened to Hosea. It is nothing imaginary, fictitious, mythical!

18 As a real historical person, Hosea tells us the facts in the prophetic book that bears his name. His truthfulness is backed up by the fact that he is quoted from for at least seven times in the later inspired writings from Matthew to Revelation.* He is quoted from even by the Founder of Christianity himself. So, when Hosea tells us about his assignment of service as a prophet of Jehovah, we have solid reason for believing that he is telling the pure

14, 15. (a) Why and when was the kingdom of King David's line of descent through Solomon reduced? (b) How did the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel turn adulterous, and to what god did it attach itself?

* Note Matthew 2:15; 9:13; 12:7; Luke 21:22; 23:30; Revelation 3:17; 6:8, 16, alongside Hosea 11:1; 6:6; 9:7; 10:8; 12:8; 13:14.

16. How did the kings of the kingdom of Judah down to Hezekiah conduct themselves religiously?

17, 18. What kind of assignment was Hosea given, and why do we know that what he tells us about it is nothing fictitious?

## KINGS OF JUDAH AND OF ISRAEL DURING HOSEA'S LIFETIME

(Showing Years of Accession)

| Kings of Judah | B.C.E. | Kings of Israel |
|---|---|---|
| | c. 843 | Jeroboam II |
| Uzziah (Azariah) | 829 | |
| | c. 792 | Zechariah |
| | 791 | Shallum |
| | c. 790 | Menahem |
| | 780 | Pekahiah |
| | 778 | Pekah |
| Jotham | 777 | |
| Ahaz | c. 761 | |
| | c. 748 | Hoshea |
| Hezekiah | c. 745 | |

truth, rather than relating to us some trumped-up story for the entertainment of readers of pornographic literature. Also, since the prophetic meaning of Hosea's course fits in with the historical outcome of a still-existing people, its truth becomes all the more convincing.

[19] Locating himself in a definite period in the documented history of the twelve tribes of Israel, Hosea introduces himself, saying first of all: "The word of Jehovah that occurred to Hosea the son of Beeri in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, the king of Israel." (Hos. 1:1) Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah were descendants of King David and reigned at Jerusalem over the two-tribe kingdom of Judah. Uzziah began to rule as king in 829 B.C.E. and Hezekiah ended his reign in 716 B.C.E. So the combined reigns of these kings embraced a period of 113 years. On the other hand, in the line of kings over the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, Jeroboam the son of Joash was the second to bear such name and hence he was Jeroboam II.

[20] This Jeroboam's great-grandfather was King Jehu the son of Nimshi. Jehu destroyed Baal worship out of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel. He had Queen Jezebel thrown out of a window to her death, as she had wickedly promoted Baalism in Israel. Later Jeroboam II came on the scene as king during the reign of King Amaziah over Judah. Jeroboam's reign overlapped onto the reign of Amaziah's successor, King Uzziah. Hence, during the time that Jeroboam's reign overlapped onto that of King Uzziah, or after 829 B.C.E., Jehovah God started Hosea off on his prophetic career.

[21] Can we imagine Hosea's reaction when what he next relates took place? "There was a start of the word of Jehovah by Hosea, and Jehovah proceeded to say to Hosea: 'Go, take to yourself a wife of fornication and children of fornication, because by fornication the land positively turns from following Jehovah.' "—Hos. 1:2.

[22] Do we feel shocked at Hosea's being started off on his prophetic career with such a command as that? However, *Jehovah* was not commanding Hosea to marry a woman who was already a whore. The woman whom Hosea is told to take to him-

19. In the reigns of what kings of Judah and of Israel does Hosea locate his prophetic work?

20. Whose great-grandson was Jeroboam II, and when during this king's reign did Hosea start on his prophetic career?

21. What kind of wife did Jehovah tell Hosea to take, and why?

22. In what way was the woman Hosea was to take a "wife of fornication," and how were her children to be "children of fornication," and why?

self as a wife is not called 'a fornicating woman (or, wife),' but Jehovah calls her a "wife of fornication [literally, fornications]." Furthermore, since this woman was to be used as an illustration of Jehovah's figurative earthly "wife," she would not fit the picture by being a wanton, whorish woman from the start. Jehovah married or took in marriage a morally clean, "virgin" wife for the purpose of bringing forth to Him legitimate children in a spiritual sense. So the expression "children of fornication" is prophetic of the kind of "children" that He would get in a spiritual way, the kind of "children" that they would turn out to be. Why so? "Because," as Jehovah says, "by fornication the land positively turns from following Jehovah." The "land" here meant was that of ten-tribe Israel.

[23] Although the marriage prospects were bad for the time being, Hosea obeyed the divine command. In such a way as this he entered upon his career as Jehovah's prophet. "And he proceeded to go and take Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, so that she became pregnant and in time bore to him a son."—Hos. 1:3.

[24] This son was Hosea's legitimate son, not a 'son of fornication' that had to be adopted by Hosea. On the eighth day from this son's birth, when he was to be circumcised, what was Hosea to name the boy? The boy's name was to be prophetic; and so Jehovah, who was directing the prophetic drama, named it for Hosea. The name was to point to one of Jehovah's purposes. "And Jehovah went on to say to him: 'Call his name Jezreel, for yet a little while and I must hold an accounting for the acts of bloodshed of Jezreel against the house of Jehu, and I must cause the royal rule of the house of Israel to cease. And it must occur in that day that I must break the bow of Israel in the low plain of Jezreel.' "—Hos. 1:4, 5.

[25] Thus calamity was foretold both for the royal dynasty of King Jehu after its fourth generation and for the whole ten-tribe kingdom of Israel. This kingdom was the larger part of the one-time united twelve-tribe kingdom of Israel. That original nation of Israel was spiritually married to Jehovah God in the wilderness of Sinai away back there in 1513 B.C.E. That was when the Mosaic Law covenant was established between Israel and Jehovah. According to the marriage contract, the twelve-tribe nation of Israel was to be faithful and true to Jehovah by worshiping Him alone as its God. Israel was not to become guilty of spiritual adultery by departing from him for the worship of false gods.

[26] Jehovah's marriage to Israel was pictured by Hosea's marriage to Gomer, whose name means "Completion." Logically, then, Gomer pictured the nation of Israel; but in Hosea's day Israel was represented by the ten-tribe segment thereof that became the kingdom of Israel of only ten tribes. After more than 150 years of this kingdom, it had become true of its "land" as Jehovah said: "By fornication the land positively turns from following Jehovah."

[27] In spite of Israel's pure beginning under the prophet Moses, the national situation had become as Jehovah inspired his prophet to say, in Hosea 10:1, 2: "Israel is a degenerating vine.* Fruit he keeps putting forth for himself. [A wanton vine was Israel, and lavishly he bore. (Mof-

23. Whom did Hosea take as his wife, and what did she bear to him?
24. What did Jehovah say to call the boy, and for what reason?

* See the word book or dictionary entitled "Lexicon In Veteris Testimenti Libros," by Koehler and Baumgartner, page 144, column 2, lines 9, 10.

25. (a) Thus calamity was foretold for what royal house and for what nation? (b) In what way was the nation of Israel not to commit spiritual adultery against Jehovah?
26. Whom did Hosea's wife picture?
27. In spite of Israel's pure beginning, how did the national situation become, according to Hosea 10:1, 2?

fatt's translation)] In proportion to the abundance of his fruit he has multiplied his altars. In proportion to the goodness of his land, they put up good pillars [sacred stones (*Moffatt*)]. Their heart has become hypocritical; now they will be found guilty."

### THE PROPHETIC THRUST OF THE NAME "JEZREEL"

[28] Because of the action that Jehovah purposed to take against spiritually adulterous Israel, Jehovah had Hosea call his firstborn son by Gomer by the name Jezreel. The name was very fitting. In Hosea's language, Hebrew, it meant "God Will Sow." Yes, "sow," but not in a beneficial sense. Here 'sowing' has the meaning of 'scattering, dispersing,' since, when one sows seed, one scatters it. Jehovah's acting against the royal "house of Jehu" with a scattering motion would mean its breakdown, its dissolution. Similar action against the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel would mean its dissolution, its disintegration.—Compare Luke 22:31.

[29] At the city of Jezreel was where King Ahab of Israel had a royal residence, although his capital was in the city of Samaria. The later dynasty of King Jehu also had its royal residence at Jezreel. In obedience to his commission from Jehovah God, Jehu had violently rooted Baal worship out of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel. Still, he kept up the worship of the two golden calves and ignored Jehovah's worship at Jerusalem. By such worship of graven images Jehu's house violated the Ten Commandments. They also violated the command not to murder.—Ex. 20:2-6, 13.

[30] Thus a record of bloodshed began to be made by the calf-worshiping dynasty of King Jehu, the royal residence of which was at Jezreel. The Giver of the Ten Commandments could not overlook this record. Accordingly he said: "I must hold an accounting for the acts of bloodshed of Jezreel against the house of Jehu." (Hos. 1:4) Exactly so, the dynasty of King Jehu over Israel was brought to a violent end after Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam II, had reigned for but six months. He was murdered.—2 Ki. 15:8-12.

[31] Thus the royal dynasty of King Jehu over Israel ended in 791 B.C.E. But the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel itself continued on for fifty-one years more, till 740 B.C.E. Then Jehovah 'caused the royal rule of the house of Israel to cease.' (Hos. 1:4) He used the Assyrian World Power to "break the [battle] bow of Israel in the low plain of Jezreel." The overthrow of Israel's capital city of Samaria brought the apostate nation low. The nation's power was scattered when the Israelite survivors were deported to the distant provinces of the Assyrian Empire, scattered like seed. The terrible experience matched the symbolical meaning of the expression "the low plain of Jezreel [God Will Sow Seed]." This was nothing like when the liberator of Israel, Judge Gideon, with but three hundred chosen warriors, scattered the marauding Midianites not far from Megiddo, near "the low plain of Jezreel." (Judg. 6:33, 34) But in 740 B.C.E., without a liberator and no longer able to battle for existence, the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel 'ceased,' perished.

[32] Do we catch the import of this for us today? We should do so, for, in our twentieth century, it is finding its fulfillment in the modern-day counterpart of the spiritually adulterous, unfaithful Israel.

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28. What does the name Jezreel mean, and, because of its prophetic significance, why was it a fitting name for Hosea's son?
29. What did King Jehu do about Baal worship, and what about calf worship, in violation of what commandments?
30. How did Jehovah hold an accounting against Jehu's house for its bloodshed at Jezreel?
31. How was the royal rule of the house of Israel made to cease, and how was it as if "the low plain of Jezreel"?
32. Why should we try to catch the import of the foregoing in our twentieth century?

That counterpart is Christendom, with nearly a billion church members all around the globe. In the face of Christendom's impending calamity, we may ask, Where, then, is the mercy of Jehovah God to be seen in operation? Our further consideration of Jehovah's dealings with his prophet Hosea will make this clear.

# God's Mercy ON DISPLAY AT HAR-MAGEDON

MARRIAGES between men and women have run into difficulties during the reign of sin and wickedness on earth. That is what happened to God's marriage with the ancient nation of Israel.

[2] God dramatized his own marriage affairs in those of his prophet Hosea. At God's command Hosea had married Gomer the daughter of Diblaim. This pictured Jehovah's marriage to ancient Israel by means of the Mosaic Law covenant at Mount Sinai in 1513 B.C.E. After King Solomon, the son of David, died in 997 B.C.E., the long-married nation of Israel was split up into two sections. The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin stayed together under the kingdom of Judah, the other ten tribes under the kingdom of Israel. The latter's first king was Jeroboam the son of Nebat of the tribe of Ephraim. Under this Jeroboam I the kingdom of Israel broke its marriage contract with Jehovah; it boycotted His worship at Jerusalem and set up its own national worship with idolatrous images, two golden calves, one at Dan and the other at Bethel. Thus, like the prophet Hosea's wife Gomer, the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel turned adulterous.

[3] After Gomer bore to Hosea a legitimate son named Jezreel, how did Hosea's marriage affairs go in illustration of Jehovah's affairs with the twelve-tribe nation of Israel? Hosea proceeds to tell the story, saying: "And she proceeded to become pregnant another time and to give birth to a daughter. And He [that is, God] went on to say to him [that is, to Hosea]: 'Call her name Lo-ruhamah, for I shall no more show mercy again to the house of Israel, because I shall positively take them [the Israelites] away. But to the house of Judah I shall show mercy, and I will save them by Jehovah their God; but I shall not save them [the Judeans] by a bow or by a sword or by war, by horses or by horsemen.' "—Hos. 1:6, 7.

[4] In the above case, Hosea does not say that Gomer bore "to him" a daughter. So it is generally understood that this daughter who was called Lo-ruhamah was a 'child of fornication.' (Hos. 1:2) Such a committing of adultery by Hosea's wife Gomer matched the course of affairs in the marriage relationship between Jehovah God and the nation of Israel. Of course, in Hosea's affairs, the vital thing here

1, 2. (a) In whose marriage affairs did Jehovah dramatize his own? (b) How did Israel turn adulterous in the days of King Jeroboam I?

3. What did Jehovah say to call Gomer's second child, and why?

4. Whom did Gomer's daughter have as her father, and against whom was her name prophetically directed?

is the meaning of the name given to Gomer's daughter—and the reason why Jehovah told Hosea to call her by that unpleasant, ominous name. The daughter's name Lo-ruhamah literally means "Not Pitied Female." Jehovah directed that name prophetically against the spiritually adulterous ten-tribe nation of Israel, with its royal residence at the city of Jezreel. For what reason?

5 In our twentieth century Christendom should listen to Jehovah's giving of the reason, because the name Lo-ruhamah applies now. The reason He gives applies to Christendom today: "For I shall no more show mercy again to the house of Israel." (Hos. 1:6) Christendom is now the one unpitied, the one not being shown mercy. Similar to the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, she is given over to spiritual adultery against Jehovah God, with whom she claims to be in marriage relationship by means of the "new covenant" that was mediated by Jesus Christ in the year 33 C.E. (Jer. 31:31-34; Luke 22:19, 20; Heb. 8:6-12) Because, from Hosea's day onward, Jehovah no longer had mercy upon the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, what resulted? The destruction of that spiritually adulterous kingdom in less than a century afterward, that is, in 740 B.C.E. Similarly, Jehovah's no longer having mercy upon Israel's modern-day counterpart will end up in Christendom's annihilation during the coming "great tribulation" that reaches its climax at Har–Magedon.—Matt. 24:21, 22.

6 At the time of his wiping out the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, was Jehovah totally heartless? Was there a total withdrawal of his mercy from all tribes of the nation that had originally entered into marriage relationship with him through the Law covenant at Mount Sinai? Jehovah himself answers these questions, saying: "But to the house of Judah I shall show mercy, and I will save them by Jehovah their God; but I shall not save them by a bow or by a sword or by war, by horses or by horsemen."—Hos. 1:7.

7 It will be good for us to note the cogent reason for which Jehovah chose to show mercy to the two-tribe kingdom of Judah, with its capital at Jerusalem. In Hosea 11:12 Jehovah makes plain his reason for divine mercy, in saying: "With lying, Ephraim has surrounded me, and with deception the house of Israel [which was represented by the dominant tribe, Ephraim]. But Judah is yet roaming with God, and with the Most Holy One he is trustworthy."* The house of Judah still "roamed" with Jehovah as the Most Holy One, its God. So, for the sake of his name, Jehovah was obliged to save the house of Judah. That is why he said: "I will save them by Jehovah their God."

8 Jehovah purposed to save the house of Judah at the same time that he took the ten-tribe kingdom away and caused the "royal rule of the house of Israel to cease." In order to do so, Jehovah had to have a confrontation with the Assyrian Empire. By highly militarizing itself, Assyria had become the dominant world power of that day. Under those circumstances, in order for Jehovah to save the house of Judah without a battle bow, sword, war, chariot horses and horsemen, he would be required to perform some extraordinary act.

5. In what did Jehovah's not showing mercy to the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel result, and how will Christendom's experience be similar?

6. According to Hosea 1:7, was there a total withdrawal of Jehovah's mercy from all Israel at the time of destruction of the ten-tribe kingdom?

* See also *An American Translation; Leeser; English Revised Version; Revised Standard Version.*

7, 8. (a) What was the reason for which Jehovah had mercy upon the house of Judah? (b) Because of the then dominant world power, what would Jehovah have to do in order to save Judah without war equipment?

### A FOREGLEAM OF DIVINE MERCY AT HAR-MAGEDON

9 In 740 B.C.E. Jehovah used the Assyrian World Power as his "ax" to chop down the adulterous, idolatrous "house of Israel." Its royal residence at Jezreel was emptied, its capital at Samaria was overthrown, the surviving Israelites were carried away into exile in distant provinces of Assyria. (Isa. 10:15) This produced a threat for Jerusalem, where King Hezekiah of the royal family of David reigned over the two-tribe kingdom of Judah. Eight years later the military hosts of Assyria invaded the land of Judah and began reducing its cities. The invading Assyrian king, Sennacherib, had plenty of bows, swords, war equipment, chariot horses and horsemen with him. In what way, now, would Jehovah's mercy to the house of Judah be shown? The situation became most challenging to Jehovah.

10 While besieging the city of Libnah, Sennacherib sent his God-defying ultimatum to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem, some twenty miles away. In indignation Jehovah inspired his prophet Isaiah to give a defiant message for the Assyrian delegation before Jerusalem's walls to take back to blasphemous Sennacherib. After this king got the warning message, Jehovah saved Judah to exalt his own name.

11 "And it came about on that night," as the record in 2 Kings 19:35-37 tells us, "that the angel of Jehovah proceeded to go out and strike down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. When people rose up early in the morning, why, there all of them were dead carcasses. Therefore Sennacherib the king of Assyria pulled away and went and returned, and he took up dwelling in Nineveh. And it came about that as he was bowing down at the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, themselves struck him down with the sword, and they themselves escaped to the land of Ararat. And Esar-haddon his son began to reign in place of him."

12 Was that not a preeminent display of Jehovah's mercy toward the kingdom of Judah that was then holding faithfully to its spiritual marriage relationship to Him? With comforting significance for us today, it was a foregleam of the mercy that Jehovah will display during the future war at Har-Magedon. (Rev. 16:14, 16) No divine mercy will be shown to the God-defying hordes on earth who will fight under Satan the Devil against the faithful witnesses of Jehovah during the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at what is called Har-Magedon.* Jehovah will save his faithful witnesses on earth without their resorting to bows, swords, warfare, horses and horsemen or other military resources.

13 That will be a time for the display of divine wrath upon the "vessels of wrath" and for the display of divine mercy upon the anointed remnant of Christ's joint heirs who are prefigured by "the house of Judah." (Rom. 9:22) These will be holding true to the new covenant, the covenant by which Jehovah is married to his spiritual Israel. The remnant being faithful spiritual Israelites, the name Lo-ruhamah (Not Pitied) does not apply to them as it does now to Christendom. (Gal. 6:16; Jas. 1:1; Rev. 7:4-8) It is "by Jehovah their God" that the spiritual remnant will be saved! They will survive!

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9. After Samaria's destruction, how did the situation become most challenging to Jehovah with respect to Jerusalem?

10, 11. How did Jehovah now save the house of Judah to exalt his own name?

12. Of what was that display of Jehovah's mercy toward the house of Judah a foregleam?

13. To whom will the name Lo-ruhamah then apply, and so who will survive the display of God's wrath upon the "vessels of wrath"?

* See the article "The Coming Deliverance from the Anti-Religious Ax," in the *Watchtower* issue of January 15, 1976.

[14] In ancient times, when King Sennacherib threatened Jerusalem, not only "the house of Judah" experienced Jehovah's mercy. Non-Jews known as Rechabites also did. They were the descendants of Jehonadab the son of Rechab the Kenite. When King Jehu of Israel was driving to Samaria to destroy Baal worship there in fulfillment of Jehovah's commission to him, he invited Jehonadab to ride with him and said: "Do go along with me and look upon my toleration of no rivalry toward Jehovah." (2 Ki. 10:15-27) Jehonadab did so.

[15] At Samaria's downfall in 740 B.C.E. the descendants of the Rechabite Jehonadab survived. They also survived Sennacherib's invasion of the land of Judah in 732 B.C.E. Later we find the Rechabites associated with the kingdom of Judah in the days of Jeremiah the prophet. That was during Jerusalem's last days before it was destroyed by the Babylonians in the year 607 B.C.E. Because of their faithfulness Jehovah promised the Rechabites his protection so that they would survive Jerusalem's destruction. (Jer. 35:1-19) Whom did those recipients of Jehovah's mercy picture? The "great crowd" of Jehovah's worshipers who are associated with the anointed remnant today. These also will survive through the coming "great tribulation," with a paradise earth as their hope.—Rev. 7:9-17.

### THOSE "NOT MY PEOPLE"

[16] Now, before the outbreak of the "great tribulation" in the near future, is the time for us to avail ourselves of Jehovah's mercy. Let us never forget: Christendom is to be shown no mercy during the coming tribulation. Hence, we should want to dissociate ourselves from her. At that time her being rejected as being no part of Jehovah's people will be made known beyond all denial. That will mean destruction for her! She is the Lo-ruhamah (Unpitied One) of today. (Hos. 1:6) Her total rejection was foreshadowed in the further marriage affairs of the prophet Hosea. He refers to his wife Gomer when he says: "And she gradually weaned Lo-ruhamah, and she proceeded to become pregnant and give birth to a son. So He [Jehovah] said: 'Call his name Lo-ammi, because you men are not my people and I myself shall prove to be not yours.'" (Hos. 1:8, 9) With those words the first chapter of Hosea's prophetic book ends in Jewish Bible translations and in editions of the Greek *Septuagint Version* of Hosea.

[17] The second son of Hosea's wife Gomer is also understood to be not of Hosea's fatherhood, but a child of Gomer's adultery. Hosea does not say that Gomer bore this second son to *him*. So there was good reason for Jehovah to have the boy called Lo-ammi, for the name means "Not My People." It had prophetic meaning. In explaining his reason for giving the boy such an ominous name, Jehovah addressed himself to the ten-tribe "house of Israel," when he said: "Because you men are not my people and I myself shall prove to be not yours." With such words Jehovah declared himself to be no longer the Heavenly Husband of the covenant-breaking "house of Israel."

[18] Jehovah let it plainly be known that he was no longer the God and spiritual Husband of the apostate "house of Israel." This Jehovah did when he permitted the capture of Israel's capital city Samaria

14, 15. (a) What experience did Jehonadab the son of Rechab have with King Jehu? (b) What national calamities did the descendants of Jehonadab survive, and whom today did those Rechabites picture?

16. (a) What will Christendom's rejection as being no part of Jehovah's people mean for her? (b) What was the second son of Hosea's wife called, and why?

17. Why was Lo-ammi a fitting name for Gomer's second son, and so what did Jehovah say to the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel in that connection?

18. When and how did Jehovah let it be known that the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel was not his people?

by the Assyrians in 740 B.C.E. Thus that "house of Israel" was no longer His people; it was, as he said, Lo-ammi, or, "Not My People." Like a divorced wife, that people went off into exile in Assyria. That spiritually adulterous "house of Israel" had despised the opportunity offered to it in the Mosaic Law covenant of becoming to Jehovah a "kingdom of priests."—Ex. 19:5, 6.

19 Jehovah's "new covenant," as mediated by Jesus Christ the Greater Moses, has a similar purpose. That purpose will not be realized in Israel's modern counterpart, Christendom. She has tried to reign on earth in this present system of things by serving as religious consort to political rulers of this world. Jesus Christ will let her know that she is not in line for joint heirship with him in the heavenly kingdom, when his words come true: "Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?' And yet then I will confess to them: I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness."—Matt. 7:21-23.

**HOPE OF DIVINE MERCY FOR INDIVIDUALS**

20 Christendom's ancient type, the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, was never again established on its God-given land in the Middle East. Nevertheless, individual members of that rejected "house of Israel" were allowed to avail themselves of Jehovah's mercy and return to him and become part of his approved people. This privilege would be theirs when Assyria's successor, the Babylonian World Power, would be overthrown. Then Cyrus the Conqueror would release the exiled worshipers of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Pointing forward to that, Jehovah continued on to say through his prophet Hosea:

21 "And the number of the sons of Israel must become like the grains of the sand of the sea that cannot be measured or numbered. And it must occur that in the place in which it used to be said to them, 'You men are not my people,' it will be said to them, 'The sons of the living God.' And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will certainly be collected together into a unity and will actually set up for themselves one head and go up out of the land, because great will be the day of Jezreel [God Will Sow]."—Hos. 1:10, 11.

22 A typical fulfillment of that merciful prophecy took place in 537 B.C.E., when Babylon's conqueror, Cyrus the Persian, let a faithful remnant of "the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah" leave, "go up out of the land" of Babylonian exile. In unity they went, under orders by Jehovah's servant Cyrus, to rebuild Jehovah's temple at Jerusalem. (2 Chron. 36:20-23; Ezra 1:1-11) Then, on their own land, the remnant could become populous again, like the unmeasured, unnumbered grains of sand on the seashore. In that way 'great would be the day of Jezreel.' Here the name Jezreel, meaning "God Will Sow," is to be fulfilled in a favorable manner. God sows the sons of his restored people like seed, multiplying them.

23 So, no longer would Jehovah say to

19. Jesus Christ will let Christendom know that she has no part in fulfilling the purpose of the new covenant, when what words of his come true?

20, 21. (a) When were individuals of the exiled "house of Israel" allowed to avail themselves of Jehovah's mercy, and how? (b) Jehovah pointed forward to that with what words at Hosea 1:10, 11?

22. A typical fulfillment of that prophecy took place when, and how did the "day of Jezreel" become "great" for them?

23. (a) After rejecting whom, and by what action of Jehovah, did the nation of Israel cease to be His people? (b) Upon whom of that rejected nation did Jehovah show mercy, and how?

them, Lo-ammi, or, "Not My People." In a typical way they would be called "The sons of the living God." With reference to the antitypical fulfillment of this in the realm of Christianity, the apostles Paul and Peter wrote in Romans 9:25, 26 and 1 Peter 2:9, 10. After the natural sons of Israel rejected Jesus as the Messiah in 33 C.E., they ceased to be Jehovah's people. He abolished his Law covenant by means of which he had been married to the twelve-tribe nation of Israel in Moses' day. But he mercifully accepted a believing remnant of the nation of natural Israel and brought them into the new covenant mediated by his Son, Jesus the Messiah. In such a way he founded a new nation, a spiritual Israel.—Gal. 6:16; Jas. 1:1; Rom. 2:28, 29; Rev. 7:4-8.

[24] Unhappily, not enough natural Israelites became Christians to make up the full "seed of Abraham" in whom all earthly nations are to be blessed. So Jehovah turned to those who had never been His people, persons "Not My People," Lo-ammi. He opened the way in 36 C.E. for such non-Israelite believers to become part of the spiritual Israel in the new covenant. These were made part of "Abraham's seed," which was to become like the sands upon the seashore.—Gal. 3:8-29; Gen. 22:18.

24. Why and when did Jehovah turn to those who had never been his people, and how did he make them his people?

## PROPHETIC PARALLELS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Hosea's marriage to Gomer | Jehovah's marriage to Israel in 1513 B.C.E. | Jehovah's marriage to spiritual Israel in 33 C.E. |
| "Fornication" | Immorally turning to worship of false gods | Becoming friend of world under its god, Satan |
| Jezreel (God Will Sow) | Jehovah to take scattering, destructive action against ten-tribe kingdom of Israel in 740 B.C.E. | Jehovah will destroy Christendom in the "great tribulation" |
| Lo-ruhamah (Unpitied One) | Unfaithful ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, rejected by Jehovah | Christendom, no longer to be shown mercy by God but to be destroyed |
| House of Judah saved | Jerusalem, capital of two-tribe kingdom, saved by Jehovah from Assyrian aggressors (Rechabites were also spared) | Remnant of spiritual Israel delivered by Jehovah at Har–Magedon ("great crowd" will also be spared) |
| Lo-ammi (Not My People) | Covenant-breaking ten-tribe kingdom of Israel | Christendom, unfaithful to Maker of "new covenant" |
| Formerly "not my people," but now "sons of the living God" | Israelites restored from Babylonian exile in 537 B.C.E. | Gentile believers become part of spiritual Israel, starting in 36 C.E.; spiritual Israelites restored in 1919 C.E. |
| "One head" | King Cyrus | Jesus Christ |
| "Great will be the day of Jezreel" | God multiplies restored Israelites | Since 1919 C.E., Jehovah has sowed his restored people, multiplying them |

[25] The "one head" that the "collected" spiritual Israelites "set up for themselves" is *Jesus Christ*, the now reigning King. By means of him as the Greater Cyrus, the repentant remnant was released from the power of Babylon the Great in 1919 C.E., after World War I. This remnant was used to restore Jehovah's pure worship on earth. Jehovah has made these liberated spiritual Israelites "the sons of the living God." According to his mercy they expect to be saved at the approaching "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har–Magedon, yes, to live through it to see his New Order start off. A "great crowd" of fellow worshipers, like the ancient Rechabites, also expect to share in God's mercy and to survive with the remnant.

[26] Do we ourselves today hope in Jehovah's mercy? If so, then we must recognize Christendom to be the spiritual fornicatrix that she is. By defiling herself with Babylonish religion, she has made herself part of Babylon the Great. Along with that world empire of false religion, she will be destroyed in the oncoming "great tribulation." We do not want to be any of her "children of fornication." As objects of Jehovah's mercy, we act as He now instructs us:

[27] "Say to your brothers, 'My people!' and to your sisters, 'O woman shown mercy [*Hebrew:* O Ruhamah]!' Carry on a legal case with your mother; carry on a legal case, for she is not my wife and I am not her husband. And she should put away her fornication from before herself and her acts of adultery from between her breasts, that I may not strip her naked and actually place her as in the day of her being born, and actually set her like a wilderness and place her like a waterless land and put her to death with thirst. And to her sons I shall not show mercy, for they are the sons of fornication. For their mother has committed fornication. She that was pregnant with them has acted shamefully, for she has said, 'I want to go after those passionately loving me, those giving my bread and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink.' " —Hos. 2:1-5.

[28] Obediently, then, let us back up Jehovah the Heavenly Husband as he carries on his legal case against Christendom, who hypocritically claims to be in covenant relationship with him as his wife. Let us point out before the Supreme Court of the universe that she is guilty of spiritual fornication, adultery, in making herself a friend of the world. (Jas. 4:4) She has gone after the prominent, influential, wealthy worldlings for them to satisfy her selfish, materialistic desires. Despite divine admonition she has stubbornly refused to put away her fornication from before her face and her adultery from between her breasts. Her religious children, her church members, are "sons of [spiritual] fornication." We shall heartily approve of it when Jehovah has her destroyed in the "great tribulation."

[29] Let us feel a brotherhood with those whom we Scripturally recognize to be Jehovah's people, of whom he says, "My people!" Let us feel a family relationship, like that of sisters, to the cleansed, faithful and true organization upon which Jehovah has shown mercy in this "time of the end" in this world's history before the impending "great tribulation." (Matt.

25. (a) Who is the "one head" whom the "collected" remnant of spiritual Israelites "set up for themselves," with what liberation accompanying? (b) Who expect to survive the war at Har–Magedon with them?

26, 27. (a) Those now hoping in God's mercy must recognize Christendom to be what spiritually, and why do they not want to be her "children"? (b) What does Jehovah instruct them to say with regard to those who are objects of his mercy?

28. It will now be the course of obedience to back up Jehovah in what legal case before the universe, and so we shall approve of what action taken by him in the "great tribulation"?

29. To whom should we make expressions of family relationship, and during what coming war may we hope for Jehovah's further mercy?

24:21, 22; Rev. 7:14) Let us recognize her as the modern Ruhamah and say to her, "O woman shown mercy!" (Hos. 2:1) For our sincerely doing this we may hope to experience Jehovah's further mercy, when he displays it to his worthy ones at the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at the place that is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon.—Rev. 16:14, 16.

*(To be continued)*

● Can an anointed Christian who is disfellowshiped later be reinstated and still have the heavenly hope?

Yes, that is possible. Of course, in each case Jehovah God is the one to determine whether he will extend forgiveness.

The fact that this is possible is borne out by what we read in the apostle Paul's letters to the Corinthian congregation. He wrote to Christians who had been anointed by holy spirit and given the hope of heavenly life. Paul addressed them as "you who have been sanctified in union with Christ Jesus, called to be holy ones."—1 Cor. 1:2; 15:49.

One of these anointed Christians began to practice fornication. When he evidently did not repent and stop his immorality, Paul directed the congregation to disfellowship him. (1 Cor. 5:1-5, 9-13) However, it seems that this disfellowshiped person thereafter did sincerely repent. He is understood to be the person whom Paul was referring to in his second letter when he advised the Corinthians to forgive and accept back the former sinner.—2 Cor. 2:6-11; 7:8-13.

When that man was reinstated into the congregation, what was his hope? Had he lost the heavenly calling, and had his hope now been changed to everlasting life on earth? No, for the earthly hope is not, as it were, a second-chance prospect. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and multitudes of other persons of outstanding faith had the hope of eternal life on earth, but this was not because they failed to measure up to the heavenly calling. They simply did not live in the time when the heavenly calling was in process according to Jehovah's will. (Heb. 10:19, 20) Comparable faith and integrity are required of all who will gain everlasting life, whether in heaven or on a paradise earth. A Christian who is anointed with holy spirit and made a joint heir with Christ must prove faithful to that calling if he is to receive eternal life at all.—Rev. 2:10, 11; Phil. 3:8-14; Rom. 8:14-17.

This, though, does not mean that while they are on earth anointed Christians never sin. In the flesh, they are still imperfect and consequently they sin, as do all humans, and may even commit gross sin. The Christian disciple and Bible writer James, certainly an anointed Christian, wrote: "For we all stumble many times. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man." (Jas. 3:2; 2:5) It appears that such unintentional sin resulting from imperfection is what the apostle John meant by "sin that does not incur death." (1 John 5:16) God can forgive such sins. John said: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous so as to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1 John 1:9.

But repentance is necessary. If an anointed Christian today practiced gross sin and did not manifest repentance, the congregation, out of obedience to God's counsel, would have to disfellowship him. If he subsequently repented, though, he could be forgiven and reinstated, as was the man in Corinth.

God does not, however, forgive all sin. According to what Jesus said in Mark 3:28, 29, those who willfully and knowingly blaspheme God's spirit can never be forgiven. And Paul wrote: "If we practice sin willfully after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left, but there is a certain fearful expectation of judgment." (Heb. 10:26, 27) Such unforgivable sin is evidently what John referred to as "sin that does incur death."—1 John 5:16.

If an anointed Christian sinned against the spirit, practicing willful sin without repentance and 'impaling the Son of God afresh,' God would completely and forever reject him. (Heb.

6:4-6) Not being repentant, he would not be reinstated. Jehovah would have to select and anoint another Christian as a replacement so that the full number of 144,000 would be kept complete. It might be compared to heaven's choice of Matthias to replace unfaithful Judas Iscariot so that there would be twelve faithful apostles of Jesus on which to build the Christian congregation.—Acts 1:23-26; Eph. 2:20.

Is this to say that if an anointed Christian is disfellowshiped, Jehovah then and there selects a replacement? No human can say that, for we cannot know if the disfellowshiped individual has committed the unforgivable sin. Jehovah knows, and so the matter can be left in his hands. Just how and when he chooses to select a replacement is for him to decide. He did not give a detailed discussion of the matter in the Bible. So rather than speculate on what He will do or try to guess whether a disfellowshiped person is beyond the possibility of repentance, we can leave the matter up to Jehovah, the righteous Judge.—Heb. 12:23.

If a congregation has had to disfellowship a person but he later repents and is reinstated, we can rejoice over Jehovah's mercy and forgiveness. (Luke 15:7) That is so whether the person professed the heavenly hope and continues to do so or had and continues to have hope of everlasting life on earth. All of us should take to heart the lessons learned from this—our own need to fight constantly against imperfection and sin, the importance of seeking forgiveness when we do sin and the necessity of enduring to the end so as to be saved. —Matt. 10:22.

● Was it God's original purpose that the woman be in subjection to her husband? Or was it only after Adam and Eve sinned and God told the woman that "your husband . . . will dominate you"?—Gen. 3:16.

It is evident from the Bible record that God's original purpose was for the man to be the head of his family and that the wife be in subjection to her husband.

Before Eve was created, Jehovah stated: "It is not good for the man to continue by himself. I am going to make a helper for him, as a complement of him." (Gen. 2:18) The man, therefore, would have the primary responsibility in the family and the woman would help him.

The apostle Paul, at 1 Timothy 2:11-14, refers to Adam's being created first, in showing that women in the Christian congregation should be in subjection to the men as overseers and that the woman should not "exercise authority over a man." Why? "For Adam was formed first, then Eve. Also, Adam was not deceived, but the woman was thoroughly deceived and came to be in transgression."

Eve should have carefully consulted with her husband regarding any important decision to be made. And especially should she have been alert to inquire of him when being tempted to eat of the forbidden fruit, since the serpent's enticement was to disobey God's previous command, given through her husband Adam, not to eat of the forbidden fruit. Recognizing her husband's headship in this way would have been a protection and a safeguard for her. Submission to his headship by consulting and cooperating with him would have greatly assisted her in obediently rendering proper worship to God.

In passing sentence upon Eve, Jehovah said: "I shall greatly increase the pain of your pregnancy; in birth pangs you will bring forth children, and your craving will be for your husband, and he will dominate you."—Gen. 3:16.

It does not appear that Jehovah directly brought these conditions into existence as a punishment on Eve and, by inheritance, on all her daughter descendants. Rather, by cutting off the woman as well as the man from divine favor, Jehovah was pointing to the consequences and abuses that would result. Childbearing would be very difficult under imperfect conditions. Jehovah foreknew that within the marriage arrangement now, imperfections


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would often lead to frustration, anxiety and turmoil. It would be a natural desire for a woman to crave a husband, not just for sexual satisfaction, but because of desiring a home and children, security and companionship. These desires would be very strong in a woman even though the fulfilling of them would mean domination by an imperfect husband.

Such husbandly dominating would be beyond the normal exercise of headship. It would sometimes result from the woman's attempting to usurp the headship of her husband, with the man resisting such usurpation. Also, the man would often tend to abuse his headship.

Even in Christian marriage, the apostle Paul warned that there would be occasions for "tribulation in their flesh." (1 Cor. 7:28) Nevertheless, under imperfect conditions, a good measure of happiness and success can be had in a Christian marriage. With love predominating and the husband and wife appreciating and fulfilling their respective roles, any tendency toward domination by the wife or toward abuse of headship on the part of the husband would be kept to a minimum. The Christian wife sees the wisdom of *subjecting herself* to her husband's headship with deep respect, and the Christian husband is conscious of loving his wife as he does his own body.—Eph. 5:21-23.

There is no need for a Christian wife to feel frustrated or unduly restricted because of subjecting herself properly to her husband. In the same way, those in the Christian congregation are submissive to the elders in the congregation who are taking the lead. (Heb. 13:17) The elders have greater responsibility, though not being superior to their brothers whom they serve. By the same token, the husband has the position of being head of his family, though this does not make him superior to his wife. They are fellow heirs of life.—1 Pet. 3:7.

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**"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS**

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