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THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



**A World Without Violence
—Is It Possible?**

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A WATCHTOWER enables a person to look far into the distance and announce to others what is seen. Likewise, this magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, aids the reader to see what the future holds. Since it began publication in 1879, "The Watchtower" has held faithfully to God's Word as its authority. It stays clear of all political involvement. It points to the Bible prophecies showing that Jesus Christ is God's means for restoring peace and harmony to this globe. It shows that this Son of God, on the basis of his shed blood, will release mankind from sin and death to enjoy eternal life in happiness on a paradise earth. Because Jehovah God will accomplish all this soon through his kingdom by Jesus Christ, "The Watchtower" announces that kingdom as the real hope for mankind.

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A World Without Violence —Is It Possible?

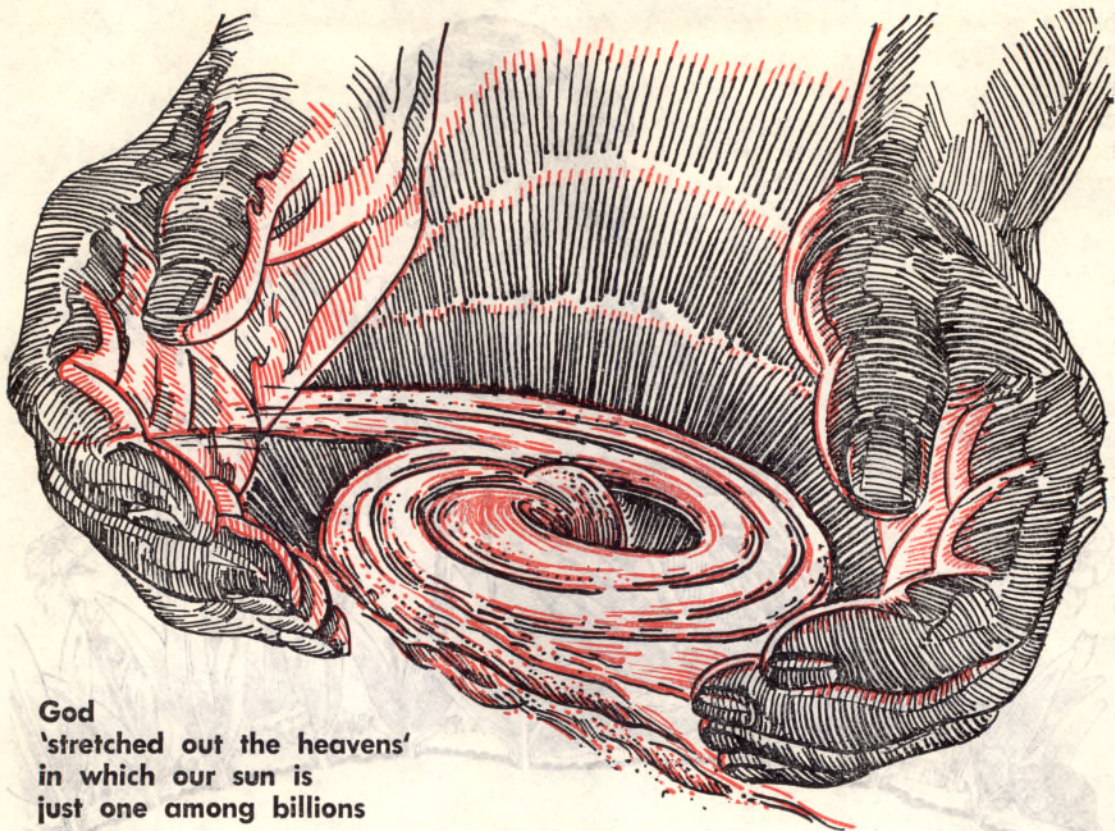
"Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give attention to his place, and he will not be. But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."

—Ps. 37:10, 11.

CAN you imagine it?—a world in which no one has to lock his doors, where people can walk the streets alone, day or night, without fear of crime or violence, and where there are no more wars. Surely you would welcome such a world!—a world where all mankind, the black, the white and the yellow, mingle as one united brotherhood, with everyone joyfully serving for the common good—a world where people show genuine care and love for one another, each one taking a

warm, personal interest in his neighbor's welfare—a world where no great gulf separates the rich from the poor, but where everyone is a joyful worker, delighting to share in earth's wealth—a world where those in authority do not lie, cheat or steal, but serve unselfishly for the benefit of all.

Could such a world be a possibility? Truly, yes! Indeed, it is much more than a possibility—it is a certainty, and that in the very near future! Let us explain why this is so.



**God
'stretched out the heavens'
in which our sun is
just one among billions**

Life today is beset by many problems. But the Bible assures us of a marvelous future. This will result from a kingdom rulership just as real as that of King David in times of old, but on a far grander scale. It will embrace all the earth, uniting the human race as one secure, happy family. Concerning the heartwarming benefits of that kingdom under its "Prince of Peace," the prophet Isaiah tells us:

"To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom in order to establish it firmly and to sustain it by means of justice and by means of righteousness, from now on and to time indefinite. The very zeal of Jehovah of armies will do this."—Isa. 9:7.

Yes, God, who commands the angelic armies, will be zealous to establish that reign of peace. And he can do it! For in

the eyes of the grand Creator, the nations of mankind are as a mere "drop from a bucket" and a "film of dust on the scales." (Isa. 40:15) This magnificent God tells us also through his prophet: "I myself have made the earth and have created even man upon it. I—my own hands have stretched out the heavens, and all the army of them I have commanded."—Isa. 45:12.

Let us reflect for a moment on those words. Do we appreciate how stupendous is that 'army of the physical heavens'? In our own galaxy, the so-called "Milky Way," there are said to be at least 100 billion stars, similar to our sun. If we could travel with the speed of light, it would take us 100,000 years to travel across this galaxy's expanse. But the Milky Way is estimated to be just one of more than 100

billion galaxies, each with its tens of billions of stars. How tiny our earth and mankind are by comparison! And yet, from creation onward, the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has had all this immensity of his creation under complete control. He has 'commanded all the army' of those bodies.

Also, on this earth, where man has not polluted it, a marvelous creation perpetuates itself according to divinely implanted laws. Its grandeur bespeaks the glory and wisdom of a loving Creator, who is deeply interested in mankind. He tells us: "This is what Jehovah has said, the Creator of the heavens, He the true God, the Former of the earth and the Maker of it, He the One who firmly established it, *who did not create it simply for nothing, who formed it even to be inhabited*: 'I am Jehovah, and there is no one else.'" (Isa. 45:18) Jehovah purposed this earth to be inhabited

by perfect, happy humans, not to be ruined as greedy men are doing today.

We can be glad that this almighty Creator has purposed "to bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Rev. 11:18) This means that he will remove from this earth, not only those who are willfully polluting its air, its fields and its waters, but also the warmongers, corrupt political rulers and religious oppressors who have made life hard for the people in so many lands. In place of violence and wars, Jehovah God will bring in security and peace, even as King David prophesied: "Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give attention to his place, and he will not be. But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Ps. 37: 10, 11.





The Agency For Restoring Peace

JEHOVAH GOD is "King of eternity," deserving of the worship of all nations of mankind. (Rev. 15:3, 4) As Sovereign Lord over the vast universe he has "the abundance of dynamic energy" to accomplish his will throughout the infinite reaches of space, and also here upon this earth. (Isa. 40:26; 55:11) Therefore we can be assured that, since he promises to do so, this mighty King will completely sweep wicked men and nations off the face of this

earth. (Jer. 25:32, 33) But how will he do this? What agency will he use? Let us turn to Daniel the seventh chapter for an answer. Here Jehovah God, the "King of eternity," is appropriately called "the Ancient of Days," and his spirit creation, the holy angels, are shown attending him. Says the prophet, at verses 9 and 10:

"I kept on beholding until there were thrones placed and the Ancient of Days sat down. His clothing was white just like

snow, and the hair of his head was like clean wool. His throne was flames of fire; its wheels were a burning fire. There was a stream of fire flowing and going out from before him. There were a thousand thousands that kept ministering to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand that kept standing right before him. The Court [this "Ancient of Days"] took its seat, and there were books that were opened."

From the words that follow we can understand that the judgment of "the Court" involves the taking away of beastlike "rulerships" from off this earth. (Dan. 7:11, 12) But who has the authority and qualifications to accomplish this?

"I kept on beholding in the visions of the night, and, see there! with the clouds of the heavens someone like a son of man happened to be coming; and to the Ancient of Days he gained access, and they brought him up close even before that One. And to him there were given rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him. His rulership is an indefinitely lasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be brought to ruin."—Dan. 7:13, 14.

Here, then, is the "kingdom" that will bring everlasting benefits to mankind on earth. But who is this "someone like a son of man"? And what relation does this king hold to Jehovah, the "King of eternity"?

IDENTIFYING THE "SON OF MAN"

At his appointed time, Jehovah sent to this earth his Son, the first one of all his heavenly creation, to be born as a perfect human, and, hence, as "a son of man." God accomplished this by transferring the life of this spirit Son to the womb of a Jewish virgin, Mary. Just prior to this, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her: "Look! you will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and you are to call his name Jesus. This one will be great and will be called Son of the Most High; and Jehovah God will give him the throne of David his father . . . and there

will be no end of his kingdom."—Luke 1:31-33; Rev. 3:14.

After growing to adulthood, Jesus was baptized and anointed by God's spirit, and then he proceeded to do God's will for him here on earth. This included sacrificing his perfect human life, so that, after returning to heaven, he might use this as a ransom price in releasing mankind from the sin and death that they had inherited from the first man Adam. (Matt. 20:28) Also, by Jesus' unswerving obedience and loyalty to his Father, in proclaiming God's kingdom in the face of persecutions, even to the death, he showed that he was fully qualified to be the chief executive in God's kingdom for the everlasting benefit of mankind. The "Son of man" would rule in a very special kingdom operating within the Sovereignty of Jehovah as "King of eternity." This kingdom would cause opposers of God to "beat themselves in lamentation." It would destroy all of such and open the way to restore God-rule throughout the earth.—Matt. 24:30.

This kingdom of the "Son of man," Christ Jesus, is actually an extension of Jehovah's universal sovereignty. It is the Messianic kingdom, serving for a particular purpose. The prophet Daniel describes it as 'a stone cut out of the mountain' of Jehovah's sovereignty, and hurled against a huge image picturing the "kingdoms" (governments) of earth. We read:

"In the days of those kings 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 these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Dan. 2:44.

Moreover, as the prophecy states, this stonelike kingdom will then become 'a large mountain that fills the whole earth.' (Dan. 2:31-45) Through this kingdom, God's sovereignty will again be extended over mankind, bringing untold benefits. But when?

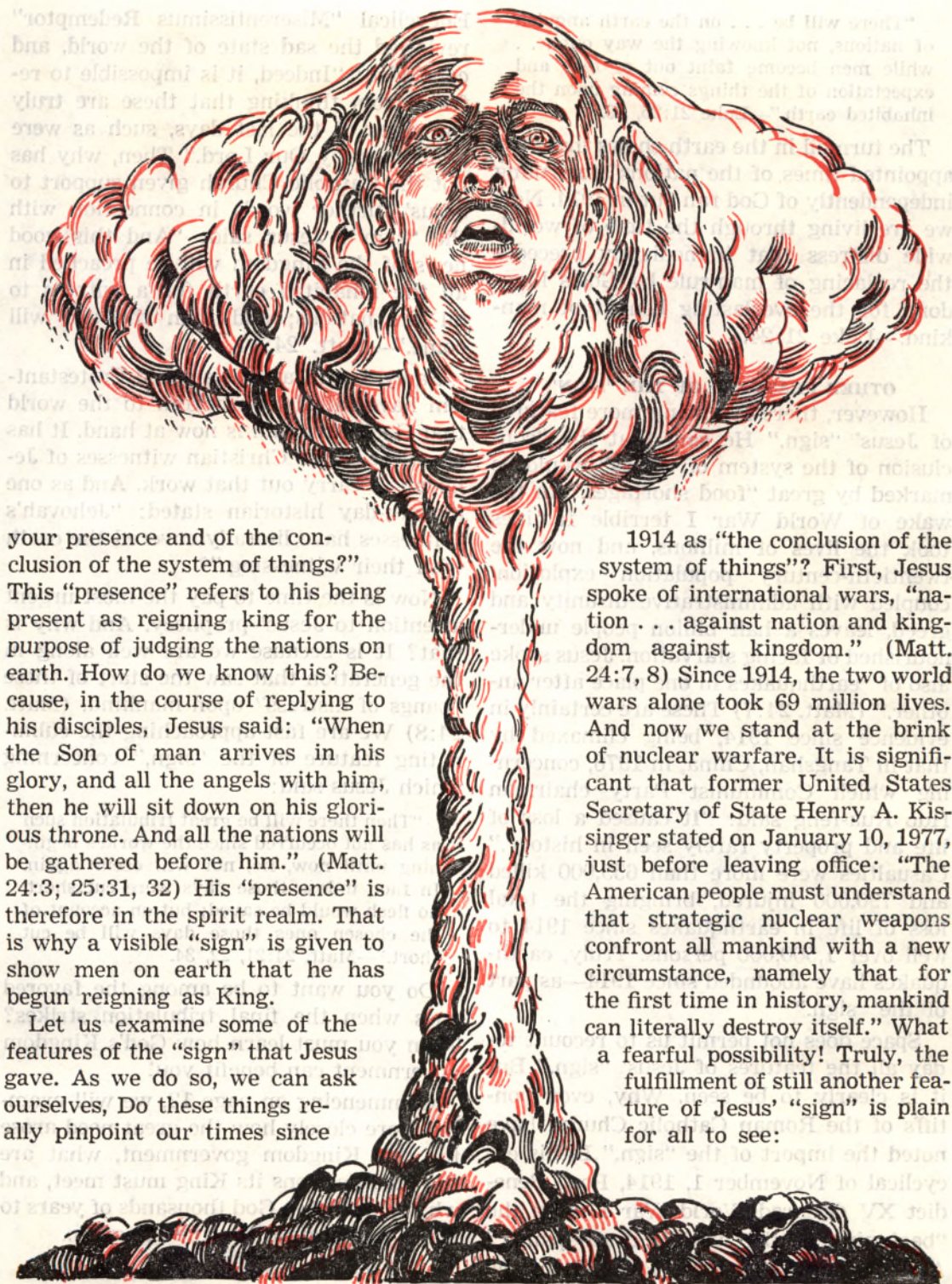


A Kingdom "Sign" Fulfilled

WHAT A JOLT! In 1914 C.E. this earth was struck by a shock wave from which it has never recovered. For World War I catapulted mankind into critical times that continue till this day. As the English philosopher, Bertrand Russell, expressed it: "Ever since 1914 the world has been reeling drunkenly toward disaster." And more than 50 years after 1914, statesman Konrad Adenauer of Germany reflected: "Thoughts and pictures come to my mind, . . . thoughts from before the year 1914 when there was real peace, quiet and security on this earth—a time when we didn't know fear. . . . Security and quiet have disappeared from the lives of men since 1914."

What a turning point that year 1914 proved to be! As the leading nations of earth became locked in total warfare, existing forms of government were shaken to the foundations. Until that time, much of the earth had been ruled by kingdoms with real kings. But one after another these kingdoms tottered and fell. Russian czarism received its deathblow, and was soon replaced by atheistic Communism. Socialistic governments were on the ascendancy.

But what does all of this have to do with God's kingdom? When Jesus was here on earth, his disciples were most interested in that kingdom. On one occasion they asked him: "Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of



your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" This "presence" refers to his being present as reigning king for the purpose of judging the nations on earth. How do we know this? Because, in the course of replying to his disciples, Jesus said: "When the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him." (Matt. 24:3; 25:31, 32) His "presence" is therefore in the spirit realm. That is why a visible "sign" is given to show men on earth that he has begun reigning as King.

Let us examine some of the features of the "sign" that Jesus gave. As we do so, we can ask ourselves, Do these things really pinpoint our times since

1914 as "the conclusion of the system of things"? First, Jesus spoke of international wars, "nation . . . against nation and kingdom against kingdom." (Matt. 24:7, 8) Since 1914, the two world wars alone took 69 million lives. And now we stand at the brink of nuclear warfare. It is significant that former United States Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger stated on January 10, 1977, just before leaving office: "The American people must understand that strategic nuclear weapons confront all mankind with a new circumstance, namely that for the first time in history, mankind can literally destroy itself." What a fearful possibility! Truly, the fulfillment of still another feature of Jesus' "sign" is plain for all to see:

"There will be . . . on the earth anguish of nations, not knowing the way out . . . while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth."—Luke 21:25, 26.

The turmoil in the earth shows that "the appointed times of the nations" for ruling independently of God ran out in 1914. Now we are living through the time of worldwide distress that immediately precedes the replacing of man-rule by God's kingdom, for the everlasting benefit of mankind.—Luke 21:24.

OTHER FEATURES OF THE "SIGN"

However, there are many more features of Jesus' "sign." He said that the "conclusion of the system of things" would be marked by great "food shortages." In the wake of World War I terrible famines took the lives of millions, and now the twentieth-century population explosion, coupled with administrative disunity and greed, leaves a half billion people undernourished or facing starvation. Jesus spoke also of "earthquakes in one place after another." (Matt. 24:7) These are certainly in evidence since 1914, being climaxed by that in Tangshan, China, in 1976, concerning which Communist Party chairman Huo Kua-feng said: "It caused a loss of life and property rarely seen in history." Casualties were more than 655,000 killed and 790,000 injured, bringing the total loss of life in earthquakes since 1914 to well over 1,500,000 persons. Truly, earthquakes have abounded since 1914—as part of the "sign."

Space does not permit us to recount today all the features of Jesus' "sign." But it is clearly to be seen. Why, even pontiffs of the Roman Catholic Church have noted the import of the "sign." In his encyclical of November 1, 1914, Pope Benedict XV declared World War I to be the "beginning of the world's death pangs." And his successor, Pope Pius XI, in the

Encyclical "Miserentissimus Redemptor" reviewed the sad state of the world, and concluded: "Indeed, it is impossible to refrain from thinking that these are truly the signs of the last days, such as were announced by Our Lord." Then, why has not the Catholic Church given support to Jesus' further words in connection with the "sign"? Jesus said: "And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come."—Matt. 24:14.

Sadly, both Catholicism and Protestantism have failed to proclaim to the world that God's kingdom is now at hand. It has been left to the Christian witnesses of Jehovah to carry out that work. And as one modern-day historian stated: "Jehovah's Witnesses have literally covered the earth with their witnessing."*

Now is the time to pay the most urgent attention to Jesus' prophecy. And why is that? It is because we are well along in the generation that saw the start of these "pangs of distress" upon mankind. (Matt. 24:8) We are fast approaching the culminating feature of the "sign," concerning which Jesus said:

"Then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again. In fact, unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short."—Matt. 24:21, 22, 34.

Do you want to be among the favored ones when the final tribulation strikes? Then you must learn how God's Kingdom government can benefit you!

Commencing on page 12, we will examine more closely how the great need arose for this Kingdom government, what are the qualifications its King must meet, and why it has taken God thousands of years to make preparation for the Kingdom.

* C. S. Braden, *These Also Believe*, 1950.

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

- Youth psychotherapist Christa Meves believes that "the 'West's crisis in child training' is one of the basic causes of terrorism in Germany,"

'Threat to the State'

states the German newspaper "Schwäbische Zeitung." She also feels that "we have only seen the beginning of the crisis," says the paper, for in her estimation present mistakes will not become evident until the children grow up, or after the year 1990.

In the meantime, the problems will increase, becoming a "threat to public health and to the constitutional state," contends Mrs. Meves. In fact, she emphasized that "this is just the tip of a dreadful iceberg."

A feared "threat to public health and to the constitutional state" is of no little consequence. But parents need to do more than passively worry about what may happen when their children grow up. "Chastise your son while there exists hope," says a divinely inspired proverb. (Prov. 19:18) Do this, imparting accurate Scriptural instruction to a son or daughter, and you have reason to believe that he or she "will bring you rest and give much pleasure to your soul." Yes, "train up a boy according to the way for him," we are told, and "even when he grows old he will not turn aside from it."—Prov. 22:6; 29:17.

- "Federal lawmen tell us that a disturbing number of Congressmen maintain backdoor contacts with underworld figures," wrote U.S. columnist Jack Anderson in "Parade" magazine. He further stated: "Gangsters also need political protection simply to survive."

Crime and Government Corruption

'Organized crime can't exist,' one top lawman told us tersely, 'without corruption at all levels of government.' Another explained that the mob 'thrives on its ability to neutralize effective government.'

Despite any noble intentions on the part of a person entering political life, it is not

unlikely that he will be confronted by some unwholesome pressures. In fact, many informed people believe that corruption of some sort is bound to occur in government. But is that necessarily true?

The Bible describes a corruption-free heavenly government that will have earthly administrators of the highest integrity. When that government alone holds sway, "a king will reign for righteousness itself; and as respects princes, they will rule as princes for justice itself." (Isa. 32:1; Dan. 2:44) While awaiting that Messianic kingdom under Jesus Christ, true Christians render proper subjection to present-day governmental "superior authorities."—Rom. 13:1-7.

- A United Press International dispatch from Beirut says that "youths comprised the

When 'They Learn War'

overwhelming majority of Palestinian and Lebanese rightist militias" participating in Lebanon's civil war that ended in November 1976. The dispatch said that "thousands of adolescent murderers" dominated that 19-month conflict. Now, according to one psychiatrist, "deprived of the omnipotence of firearms, Lebanon's child killers will turn either criminal or neurotic in peacetime Beirut."—"Bulletin Today," Manila, Philippines.

Many psychological problems now exist among young and old in Lebanon—so much so that, according to the press report, psychiatrists say that the country "is beginning to pay the mental price for the war, and the adolescents may pay a good part of the bill." But, then, is that not to be expected when 'they learn war'?

Soundness of mind and a happy outlook are being enjoyed by true Christians in Lebanon, however. This is because they recognize the authority of God's heavenly government. Consequently, they pursue peace and enjoy the tranquillity it brings. In whatever nation they reside, Jehovah's Witnesses have 'beaten their swords into plowshares and they learn war no more.'—Isa. 2:4; 1 Pet. 3:10-12.

How God's Kingdom Can Benefit You

"Jehovah is guarding the inexperienced ones. . . . What shall I repay to Jehovah for all his benefits to me?"

—Ps. 116:6, 12.

REALLY, should it not be the purpose of a government to work for the benefit of its subjects? The well-known American George Washington said that "the happiness of society," that is, of the people, "is, or ought to be, the end [the objective] of all government." Over the centuries mankind has lived under hundreds of governments. None have truly satisfied the needs of all the people. Whatever the complaints made, however, the fact remains that some sort of government is clearly better than no government at all. Without government there would be no order; it would be no less than mob rule. And if you have ever seen a mob in action you know what that would mean—for in a mob people take the opportunity to vent hatred, greed and viciousness, feeling that no one will identify them for punishment.

² The God of heaven knows this. And because government by man is far better than anarchy, God has permitted earthly governments to operate for thousands of years. For the most part, this has benefited people with a measure of security, protection and order and an opportunity to earn a livelihood. God made man with a

desire for order and with a conscience to distinguish right from wrong. He has also made known his own righteous principles through the Bible, and, as a result of this, most of the nations of earth have embodied some of these principles in their constitutions. In the Bible book of Romans, chapter two, verses 14 and 15, we read: "Whenever people of the nations that do not have law [that is, a law direct from God] do by nature the things of the law, these people, although not having law, are a law to themselves. They . . . demonstrate the matter of the law to be written in their hearts, while their conscience is bearing witness with them."

³ That is why most governments have generally set out with good intent. They have tried to serve for the benefit of the people. They have written constitutions containing fine ideals and principles. And yet, whatever their measure of success, governments everywhere today recognize that the human race is far from enjoying a world of security and peace. Why? God's Word, the Bible, gives the answer and, far better, it gives the promise that the joyful living conditions of a united world are certain to come, by means of God's own kingdom, his government for all mankind.

1. (a) What ought to be the purpose of government?
- (b) Why is government necessary?
2. (a) To what extent have human governments benefited mankind? (b) What provisions from God have aided man with regard to government?

3. (a) How have most governments shown good intent?
- (b) But what does the Bible say about the real hope for security? (Matt. 6:10)

Men Not Created to Dominate Men

4 After thousands of years of human existence, why do we not see the peaceful, prosperous and happy world that people everywhere long for? Not just *humility*, but *reality* and honesty oblige us to admit that it is because all men are imperfect. The fault lies, not just with those who rule, but also with those who are ruled. That is why human efforts to make this earth a joyful home for all mankind fall so far short of what God promises by means of his own rulership. The Bible, in the prophecy of Jeremiah, chapter 10, verse 23, says about this: "To earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step."

5 Right in the Bible itself we find proof of this statement in the history that it gives of the government of the ancient nation of Israel. That nation had a perfect law, given by God himself. (Rom. 7:12) At first it had God alone for its invisible King, with prophets and judges representing him to the people. But the people came to want a human king, one whom they could see and who would give them prestige in the eyes of other nations. God made it clear to them that this would lead to many problems, including the loss of much freedom. That proved to be exactly the case. (1 Sam. 8:9-18) Even one of Israel's own kings, a man who seriously studied life and its problems, spoke of 'man dominating man to his injury.'—Eccl. 8:9.

6 Why does it work out this way? The Bible shows that it is because, in the beginning, God did not purpose for humans to rule over other humans. In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, chapter one

and verse 28, God told the first human pair to "be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the *fish of the sea* and the *flying creatures of the heavens* and every living creature that is moving upon the earth." Only over the animal creation was man to exercise dominion. But men went beyond this and assumed domination over other men. Friction, violence and wars have resulted, with contending sides struggling for domination.

7 The ancient nation of Israel serves as a pattern to teach mankind the lesson that human rule can never bring the kind of life that people everywhere seek. In that nation the rulers often did well for a while. But as time went on and difficult problems arose, these rulers began to look to sources other than God for wisdom, ignoring the law that he had given them to solve their problems. They began to rely on their own wisdom and to listen to men, who had only human wisdom. Often these men were seeking their own selfish interests, and they wrongly advised and misled the ruler. They failed to bring the true situation to his attention. Some, through a desire to gain his favor or because of fear, became worthless "yes-men." Others even conspired against their ruler.—Compare 1 Kings 12:8-19.

8 So rulership over other men proved to be too much for any man or body of men, even though those men had God's perfect law. The people's interests began to be forgotten. A few honest rulers tried to bring in sweeping reforms. But they found that they could only partially correct the situation.

9 Today, what do we find? Instant communication and fast transportation have "shrunk" the size of the world, so that there is an interlocking of interests, and

4. Why do we not see a happy world today? (Prov. 20:24)

5. What change in rulership brought problems to Israel?

6. What rulership did God purpose humans to exercise, and what has resulted from man's going beyond this?

7, 8. How does Israel serve as a pattern showing what results from man-rule? (Mic. 7:2, 3)

9. What changes have taken place in the world, and how does Ecclesiastes 1:15 apply today?

no nation can be an isolated, totally independent unit. What happens in one place affects people everywhere else. Governments can make some minor moves to adjust matters and make conditions a little better for the people. But such help proves to be only superficial and temporary. One of the wisest rulers that ever lived, King Solomon, said, as recorded at Ecclesiastes 1:15: "That which is made crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot possibly be counted." It is true that there is such a twisted maze of problems, conflicting factions and interests, and unknown quantities that no human agency, however sincere, can straighten out the world's entanglement.

Requirements for a World Ruler

¹⁰ What hope, then, is there of seeing a truly just and altogether good government? What would it require? First of all, the ruler would have to possess *absolute authority*, not being obliged to reconcile the conflicting opinions of a body of imperfect men. He would need a *perfect law* to follow, one that is just and fair in every respect. *Wisdom* and *love* would be needed in order to follow and apply the law for everyone's benefit. What human today could fill such requirements?

¹¹ A successful ruler would also need a *complete knowledge of every detail*, not only of *human nature*, along with all the situations and problems of the people, but also of the *whole creation*. Why? Because some of the biggest and most vexing problems today involve the earth's food production, pollution and the ecology. The good ruler would have to be concerned

with *every individual* and be interested in the personal welfare of everyone.

¹² Furthermore, for his administration to be one of happiness, accomplishment and productivity, the ruler would need to *know what is in the minds and hearts of people*, because he would have to reach their hearts to bring about their full cooperation. For individual interests also become community interests, and a government cannot bring contentment and happiness unless the people as a whole act in harmony. (Prov. 14:28) For the state to have peace, there must be a condition of peace and unity among individuals. Is it not obvious that no human can possess all the knowledge and ability needed to accomplish this?

¹³ Truthfully, then, only an all-powerful One, namely, the Creator, Jehovah God, can bring about the government that mankind needs. As to God's knowledge of the human makeup, the psalmist wrote at Psalm 139:3, 4, 16: "You have become familiar even with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but, look! O Jehovah, you already know it all. Your eyes saw even the embryo of me, and in your book all its parts were down in writing, as regards the days when they were formed and there was not yet one among them." Only the Creator knows the minds and hearts of men. "As for Jehovah, he sees what the heart is." (1 Sam. 16:7) God is concerned and interested in every one of us. "The eyes of Jehovah are in every place, keeping watch upon the bad ones and the good ones," says the inspired proverb. (Prov. 15:3) Just how much does he care about people? Jesus Christ said: "Do not two sparrows sell for a coin of small value? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's knowledge. But the very hairs of your head are all

10. What is required for an altogether good government? (Prov. 29:2)

11. What knowledge and interest would a successful ruler need to have?

12. Why is it so important for the ruler to know the minds and hearts of the people? (Prov. 3:3, 4)

13. (a) Who only can bring about desirable government, and why? (Ps. 127:1) (b) What shows that God is concerned and interested in each one of mankind? (Matt. 6:26)

numbered. Therefore have no fear: you are worth more than many sparrows.” —Matt. 10:29-31.

¹⁴ Someone, however, may say, ‘But by what means could God, running this immense universe of which the earth is only a speck, be close enough and interested enough to correct all problems and bring the things every human needs?’ The answer is, He can do this by the Kingdom under his Messiah, Jesus Christ. How? The Bible helps us to understand.

¹⁵ In the beginning, God was Ruler directly over mankind. Adam worshiped God in a Father-son relationship. (Luke 3:38) Adam needed no temple located on earth in order to worship God. Neither did he need an intermediary through whom to make an approach to God. As a son of God he had intimacy with Him, evidently receiving daily communication. (Gen. 3:8) But this man rebelled and became unclean and unfit to stay a member of God’s family and was expelled from his garden home as a rebel. This alienated mankind from God. God, however, was not limited in his means to correct this. He chose to set up a special Kingdom arrangement to act for him. That kingdom would reestablish his relations with humankind and bring them back into proper orbit in his universal government, as they were at the first.

God’s Kingdom —Why So Long in Coming?

¹⁶ Do any of us impatiently ask: ‘But why has God’s purpose been so long in

developing?’ In answer we need to raise related questions: How long would it take to establish a government that would rule the earth in righteousness and full justice? How long would it take to select and train the rulers of such a government? Further, how would that kingdom be made identifiable as a government of righteousness from God? How could men be given enough evidence to have faith in such a government—to see that it was beneficial in all its structure and principles—something to which they would be willing to entrust their lives? The Bible shows that God does not suddenly impose his kingdom upon people by use of devastating power as in a lightninglike coup d’etat. Instead God has regard for the feelings and rights of those he governs, and so he first educates them in his way, building up their faith in his righteous rulership.

¹⁷ That is why the bringing in of God’s kingdom has taken time. Rather than being idle or merely waiting, as some suppose, Jehovah God has been making progressive moves toward the complete establishment of this kingdom ever since mankind rebelled at the first. (Gen. 3:15) He is now nearing the complete end of these progressive preparations. Consider these facts:

¹⁸ Jehovah has promised that he will govern the entire earth, bringing in peace and unity. But he is not going to rule simply by force. His purpose is to have people enlightened and educated to know him and to submit willingly to his administration. With this in view, it has taken time to establish a foundation for the entire world of mankind that will live under his Kingdom rule. God graciously provides a knowledge of the standards and principles of his righteous administration and how it operates.—John 17:3.

17. In line with Genesis 3:15, why can it not be said that God is idle?

18. Why is much time involved in God’s bringing in peace?

14. How does God show interest in earth’s affairs? (Acts 17:26, 27)

15. (a) In the beginning, how did God govern? (b) By what means will God restore proper government over humankind? (Dan. 4:17)

16. (a) What questions are involved in the Kingdom’s having been a long time in coming? (b) Why does not God impose his kingdom by a lightninglike coup d’etat? (2 Pet. 3:9)

¹⁹ But Jehovah is an invisible God. (1 Tim. 1:17) So, how would he make men of flesh and blood understand? Not by a mere display of power, speaking in awe-inspiring tones from heaven. No, God would take the time to reveal his principles and qualities by having *dealings with people*. How much more instructive, convincing and moving, not only to hear and read God's declarations, but, additionally, to see in the Bible's historical record the proof that what he *says* he also *carries out* in righteousness and justice.

Laying a Solid Foundation

²⁰ Thus, in laying the foundation for his government over the earth, Jehovah has first given us the benefit of these necessary things: (1) *a firm basis for faith in the administration* that he would provide, (2) *a knowledge of the principles of his government*, (3) *a demonstration of his qualities as universal Ruler* and (4) *a sure and unmistakable identification of the Messiah*, the One who would be mankind's Deliverer and the King ruling in Jehovah's name. (Gal. 3:24) At the same time a comparison with man's rule and its results over thousands of years has clearly demonstrated the superiority, deservedness and rightness of God's rulership.

²¹ What means did God use in laying such a foundation? First, he selected one people, the offspring of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—the nation of ancient Israel. Jehovah revealed himself in his marvelous qualities of justice and wisdom when he chastised Israel for their sins. (Rom. 10:21) But he also exhibited his qualities of

love, mercy and long-suffering toward them whenever they repented.

²² Bible history tells us that God dealt exclusively with the nation of Israel for centuries. They had his law; they had the principles of true worship of Jehovah. By dealing closely with Israel he held them together and preserved his truth in the earth, while the other nations went their own way, following all kinds of false beliefs and superstitions. God also provided a living demonstration of the right principles of his government and laid a foundation for the King of that government to appear, namely, the Messiah. During this time He did not deal with the other nations unless they in some way touched upon the affairs of his chosen nation. Many of these nations bitterly opposed God's worship and the Israelite nation. They did not realize that *God was working through Israel for their own eventual welfare* and that in due time he would turn to dealing with them also.

²³ Then came the Messiah, the one whom God would use to head the Kingdom rulership. This one did not appear on earth on his own, or, as it were, 'out of the blue,' declaring himself to be the Messiah. No, rather, God's Son had the unmistakable credentials of the Hebrew Scriptures identifying him clearly as the one that was to come as the great Prophet of Jehovah and as the King. Since *faith* on the part of men was required, these credentials had to be provided, based on God's dealings with men from his first prophecy in Eden, and on through 1,500 years of Israelite history. Therefore God had not wasted time. Jesus' earthly life proved that he was from God. His resurrection proved that he was raised to power in the heavens, to take over Kingdom authority in due time.

19. How has the invisible God revealed himself to men? (Ps. 145:3-5)

20. (a) Jehovah has given us the benefit of what necessary things? (b) After thousands of years of man-rule, what has been clearly proved?

21. In laying a foundation, for what purpose did God use Israel?

22. (a) What did Jehovah accomplish by dealing closely with Israel? (b) How would even opposing nations benefit?

23. How did the coming of the Messiah prove that God had not wasted time?



In Japan, in Germany, in Nigeria—in fact, all around this earth—God's kingdom is being proclaimed

²⁴ But God purposed to have more than one person as ruler in the Kingdom. Christ would possess full, complete power, but the Bible shows, as stated at Revelation 14: 1-3, that God purposed to have 144,000 others with Christ as associate kings and administrators. Just as any ruler, before going into office, is concerned about those whom he will associate with in his rule, Jesus was selective in choosing his apostles, those who would become secondary found-

24. Why has it taken much time to select Christ's associate kings?

ations of the new government. Using these men, he caused the kingdom of God to be preached throughout all Israel, and later, after his death and resurrection, to all nations. In the long period of time until now God has been selecting the 144,000 persons who will be associate kings. These have to meet the highest qualifications, as Revelation 14:4, 5 states: "These are the ones that keep following the Lamb [Jesus Christ] no matter where he goes. These were bought from among mankind as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb, and no falsehood was found in their mouths; they are without blemish."

²⁵ What do we see as a result? Today, we observe the good news of the Kingdom proclaimed in virtually every corner of the earth, and we see many more than 144,000 persons, in fact, over two million persons, gathering together in peace and unity in true worship of God. These are proclaiming the "good news" to still others. Where do these fit into God's purpose? The Bible tells us that they are a "great crowd" who will survive the crushing of

25. (a) What do we see as a result of God's patience? (b) What benefits are enjoyed by the millions of the "great crowd"?

the governments of the earth by the Kingdom "stone" mentioned by Daniel, to become the foundation for the "new earth." (Dan. 2:34, 35, 44) They will be the first to enjoy the rulership of the Kingdom over earth, and they will be on hand during Christ's 1,000-year reign to welcome back millions of dead persons by a resurrection and to help them to learn and practice the true worship of God.—Rev. 7:9-17.

²⁶ Even this brief résumé of God's progressive preparations for righteous rule of earth demonstrates that God has not idly let time pass, but has built his government upon sure foundations and has given sufficient evidence so that men can identify that government and place faith in it. But this becomes even clearer as we examine the Bible more fully. What benefits motivate people to become willing subjects of this government, God's kingdom under Jesus Christ?

The Law of the Kingdom

²⁷ Like all governments, the heavenly kingdom operates according to law. However, the law of that kingdom is far different from the oppressive laws that have been enforced in many man-made kingdoms down through history. Uninformed persons might fear that the law of the Kingdom would be restrictive, that it would deprive them of certain freedoms. But will the Kingdom legislate to rob its subjects of the joys of life? Will it place burdensome restrictions on them, or, rather, will they find genuine happiness in submitting to its rule?

²⁸ When the King, Christ Jesus, was here

26. How does the foregoing résumé benefit us with regard to faith? (Jude 20, 21)

27. What questions arise regarding the law of the Kingdom?

28. (a) How did Jesus show this to be a law of love? (b) What commandments did Jesus give God's people, and are they restrictive?

on earth, he showed by his words and his actions that the law of the Kingdom would be a law of love. He proved that he had, in perfect and complete measure, the qualities needed for one who could be entrusted with full authority. Jesus made it plain that it was because "God loved the world [of mankind] so much" that he sent "his only-begotten Son," to this earth. (John 3:16) And Jesus, speaking of his own sacrifice on behalf of mankind, said: "No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his soul in behalf of his friends." (John 15:13) He encouraged his disciples to cultivate the same quality of self-sacrificing love. (John 13:34, 35) To an inquirer, Jesus said: "'You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. The second, like it, is this: 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments the whole Law hangs." (Matt. 22:37-40) Are these commandments restrictive? Surely, they could restrict God's people only from doing harm or suffering harm from others. What heartwarming benefits are to be derived from obeying this law of the Kingdom!

²⁹ This spirit of self-sacrificing love already abounds among true Christians, marking them as Jesus' disciples. It makes unnecessary a law code with a long list of rules to nudge them into line. The law of love is upbuilding and beneficial. Contrast it with the thousands of restrictive statutes in the law books of the nations, many of which are used to police unwilling citizens. These raise the question as featured on the cover of *Newsweek* magazine last year: Is there "Too Much Law?"

29. In contrast with the nations, why does not the Kingdom provide a law code with many rules? (Compare Romans 6:14.)

Displaying the Spirit's Fruitage

³⁰ Already, today, Jehovah's Witnesses are making diligent efforts to apply the law of love as best they can in their imperfection. This does not mean that they fail to obey the laws of the nations in which they live. Not at all! In fact, in many places they have been described as the 'most law-abiding' citizens. And why is this? It is because the law of the Kingdom, the law of love, is written on their hearts. For conscience' sake they respect and obey the "superior authorities" of the nations and their laws, but their highest allegiance they give to the supreme authority of Jehovah God and his kingdom by Christ Jesus. No, God's kingdom does not load them down with oppressive rules and restrictions, for the prophet Micah writes appreciatively concerning the Sovereign Lord Jehovah: "He has told you, O earthling man, what is good. And what is Jehovah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be modest in walking with your God?"—Mic. 1:2; 6:8.

³¹ These words remind us of faithful men who 'walked with the true God' in ancient times—Abel, Enoch and Noah. (Heb. 11:4-7; Gen. 4:4; 5:22; 6:9) Hebrews chapter eleven shows that they pleased God well by their faith. Later, the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had laws on the sanctity of blood and on circumcision. (Gen. 9:4; 17:9-14) But it was their faith manifested by obedience to the commands of God that showed them to be worthy of a place as subjects of the Kingdom. (Gen. 18:18, 19) The apostle Paul tells us: "By faith Abraham . . . obeyed . . . and

dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the very same promise. For he was awaiting the city having real foundations, the builder and maker of which city is God." (Heb. 11:8-10) No more than when they first lived on this earth, over 3,500 years ago, will these patriarchs need a host of restrictive laws for proving their faith when they are resurrected to serve as "princes" in a paradise earth.—Ps. 45:16.

³² From all of this we can appreciate a fundamental difference between God-rule and man-rule. The rule of God's kingdom is based on a moral appeal, and those who respond obey that rule because of their love for God and neighbor. This is a unifying rulership. It really works among those who give allegiance to that heavenly kingdom. It is beneficial. You can see this in the loving harmony so apparent at assemblies of Jehovah's Christian witnesses. On the other hand, man-rule is based on codes of restrictive laws, which in themselves may have some good, but which are obeyed, very often not out of love, but grudgingly or out of fear of punishment. If they can 'get away with it,' many persons will flout the law, and in recent years these lawbreakers have at times included high government officials—the very ones who should be first to obey the laws.

³³ People of the world have often been deeply impressed by the benefits accruing to Jehovah's Witnesses because of their obeying the law of God's kingdom. For example, an article in the *Des Moines Register*, Iowa, in describing the "Sacred Service" Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses in that city during the summer of 1976, had this to say:

"An observer who had been conditioned by a lifetime of negative comments about

30. (a) Why are true Christians described as 'most law-abiding' citizens? (b) What does Micah show with regard to Jehovah's requirements?

31. (a) Why did the patriarchs not need a code of written laws? (b) Will their position be different in the resurrection?

32. In what ways is God-rule more beneficial than man-rule?

33. How has the world taken note of benefits derived by God's people from their obeying the law of God's kingdom? Cite any examples.

[Jehovah's Witnesses] attended the recent gathering of some 8,000 Witnesses at the formerly out-of-bounds Veterans Auditorium.

"He was impressed by such happenings as:

"● The total racial equality and deep sense of communion among people from all walks of life.

"● The friendliness and warmth of Witnesses who, though convinced they had the truth and the only truth, sought lovingly to convince rather than condemn.

"● The efficiency and organization of the enterprise, with some 2,200 volunteers signed up for tasks ranging from a complete scrubdown of the building to the cooking of meals. . . . A favorite phrase, 'We always try to leave a building in better condition than we found it.'

"● The presence of hundreds of children of all ages sitting quietly through the long, long meetings while parents—with Bibles and notebooks in hand—soak up the . . . lectures."

³⁴ This remarkable unity, distinctively observed among Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the earth today, is one of the rewarding benefits that they enjoy due to giving prior allegiance to God's kingdom and following its law of love. It is a foretaste of the harmony and the love that will flourish among the entire world of mankind under the rule of the heavenly kingdom.

³⁵ When that thousand-year Messianic kingdom has accomplished its purpose in raising mankind to perfection in the global paradise, then these words concerning the Christ will be fulfilled: "Next, the end, when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father . . . that God may be all things to everyone." (1 Cor. 15:24-28) For continued existence, all creation will then depend on obedience to the Sovereign Rule of the King of eternity.

34. Why are Jehovah's Witnesses enjoying a remarkable unity, and of what is this a foretaste?

35. How will all creation come to depend directly on Jehovah's sovereign rule? (Rev. 4:11)

Enjoying Kingdom Benefits Today

³⁶ Even now, in advance of its thousand-year rule over earth, the heavenly kingdom is providing innumerable benefits for its loyal supporters, who acknowledge Jesus as their King. No longer are these divided by nationalistic pride or hatred. Tribal feuds and racial prejudices are things of the past. Just how the law of the Kingdom works is illustrated by what happened in two villages in Mexico. Some years ago the villagers were armed with pistols and rifles for use during feuds, and there were frequent slayings. The police could do nothing about it. Then one family accepted a Bible study with a visiting minister of Jehovah's Witnesses. Eventually, practically everyone in the village began studying and embraced the Bible truths. Hostile attitudes were soon replaced with friendly ones. The villagers sold their weapons and used the money to purchase Bibles. Thus they became lovingly united under God's kingdom.

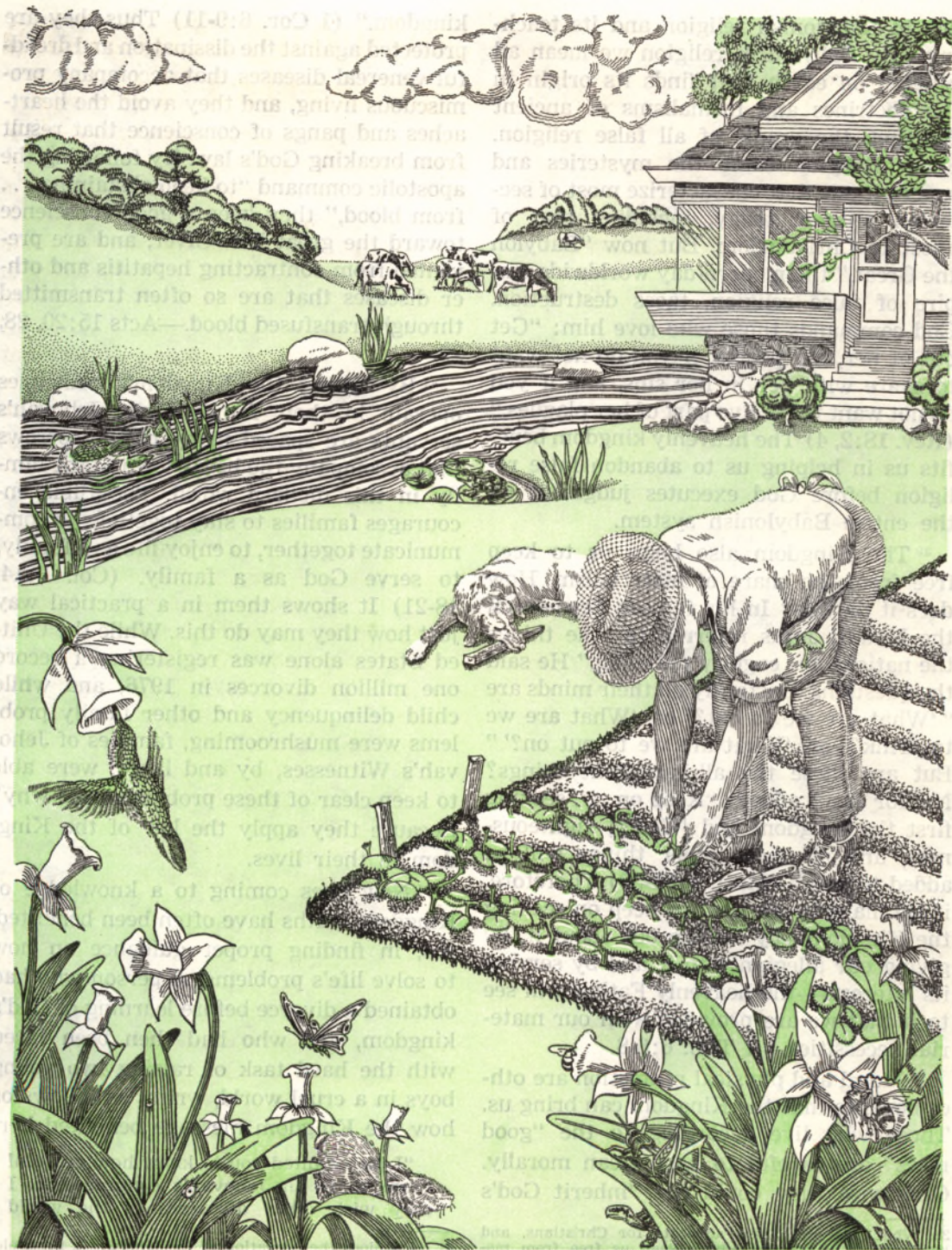
³⁷ True Christian unity and its benefits are made to stand out when the nations of earth become locked in fratricidal war. In the clergy-blessed conflicts of this twentieth century, Catholic has often slain his fellow Catholic, Protestant his fellow Protestant, and Buddhist his fellow Buddhist. But this has not happened among Jehovah's Witnesses. Their unity has been real, and has testified to the reality of God's kingdom as the only government that can unite peoples of all nations and races into a harmonious whole.—Isa. 2:2-4.

³⁸ The Kingdom has also freed multitudes of honest-hearted persons from slav-

36. How has the power of God's kingdom to unite people in love been demonstrated? (Rom. 13:10)

37. Especially in this century, how have the benefits of Christian unity been demonstrated?

38. How has the Kingdom benefited those formerly enslaved to Babylon the Great?



**Besides present Kingdom benefits, there is the hope
of a tranquil life in God's new order**

ery to Babylonish religion and its teachings. By Babylonish religion we mean all religion on earth that finds its origin in the doctrines and formalisms of ancient Babylon, the cradle of all false religion. From Babylon came the mysteries and superstitions that characterize most of sectarian religion today, including that of apostate Christendom. But now "Babylon the Great," the modern-day worldwide empire of false religion, faces destruction. God commands those who love him: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues." (Rev. 18:2, 4) The heavenly kingdom benefits us in helping us to abandon false religion before God executes judgment on the entire Babylonish system.

³⁹ The Kingdom also helps us to keep free from the snare of materialism. How does it do this? In his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus referred to "the things the nations are eagerly pursuing." He said the questions constantly on their minds are "What are we to eat?" or, "What are we to drink?" or, "What are we to put on?" But are these the all-important things? No, for Jesus added: "Keep on . . . seeking first the kingdom and [God's] righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matt. 6:31-33) Therefore, if we make it our goal to keep on seeking the Kingdom—by finding out about it, by giving our allegiance to it and by serving its interests—the heavenly Father will see to it that we are provided with our material necessities.—1 Tim. 6:6-8.

⁴⁰ Moral and physical protection are other benefits that the Kingdom can bring us. Those who live according to the "good news" are careful to keep clean morally. Otherwise they could not "inherit God's

kingdom." (1 Cor. 6:9-11) Thus they are protected against the dissipation and dreadful venereal diseases that accompany promiscuous living, and they avoid the heartaches and pangs of conscience that result from breaking God's law. By following the apostolic command "to keep abstaining . . . from blood," they keep a good conscience toward the great Life-Giver, and are prevented from contracting hepatitis and other diseases that are so often transmitted through transfused blood.—Acts 15:20, 28, 29.

⁴¹ By letting the Kingdom's principles operate in their family lives, Jehovah's servants are spared many of the sorrows that accompany the breakdown of the family in this modern world. The Bible encourages families to stay together, to communicate together, to enjoy life as a family, to serve God as a family. (Col. 3:14, 18-21) It shows them in a practical way just how they may do this. While the United States alone was registering a record one million divorces in 1976, and while child delinquency and other family problems were mushrooming, families of Jehovah's Witnesses, by and large, were able to keep clear of these problems. And why? Because they apply the law of the Kingdom in their lives.

⁴² New ones coming to a knowledge of Kingdom truths have often been benefited, too, in finding proper guidance on how to solve life's problems. A person who had obtained a divorce before learning of God's kingdom, and who had then been faced with the hard task of raising two young boys in a cruel world, writes as follows on how the Kingdom message benefited her:

"I just wanted you to know how grateful I am to be in Jehovah's congregation. I only wish other divorcees in the world

39. What goal did Jesus advocate for Christians, and how will following his advice keep us free from materialism?

40. What protection does the Kingdom teaching provide with regard to morals and health?

41. How does the operation of the Kingdom's principles in family life help in a practical way?

42. Cite any examples to show how the Kingdom message helps with life's problems.

would come to know Jehovah and realize there's someone who will return your love a thousand times over, who gives you a reason to want to go on living. There's nowhere else in the world where you find such wonderful loving people as at a Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. And the sister who came to my door seven years ago, I thank Jehovah every day for guiding her there, for allowing the preaching work to continue, for *not* bringing the great tribulation sooner. How do you thank someone for saving your life?"

Kingdom Togetherness

⁴³ Keeping together as a family and as a Christian congregation can bring benefits in many ways. Back in the days before the flood, did Noah work all on his own? No, it was a family project. They worked together as a family, they survived as a family and as a family they gave thanks to Jehovah. (Gen. 8:18, 20) When Moses parted the waters of the Red Sea, did he then pass through alone? No, the entire congregation of Israel was journeying with him, and as a congregation they passed through under Jehovah's protection. (Ex. 14:29-31) Similar benefits may be enjoyed today as families and congregations keep together in the loving association that God's Word encourages.—Compare Acts 2:46, 47.

⁴⁴ In time of crisis or persecution, such togetherness brings special benefits. Here is an example: During the civil war in Lebanon, Jehovah's Witnesses in that land kept together, and they had remarkable experiences. During a district assembly, 117 of the Witnesses assembled in a private home. Just after the last sister had entered, a rocket exploded right outside the door. But everyone within was safe.

43. How can togetherness as a family or as a congregation bring benefits?

44. What special benefits may we enjoy by continuing to assemble together in time of crisis?

Throughout the meeting, rockets and mortar fire fell around them like rain, shaving off lampposts and peppering the surrounding buildings with shrapnel, but not a single thing hit the apartment where they were gathered. On another occasion, the homes of two families of Jehovah's Witnesses were in an area that was undergoing shelling. They debated whether they should risk going out to the meeting, but decided not to 'forsake the assembling of themselves together.' (Heb. 10:25) When they returned home it was to find that one house had been completely destroyed by a bomb, and the other house had been so sprayed with shrapnel that no one could have survived in it. They had lost all their material possessions, but—most important—they themselves were still alive!

⁴⁵ Does this mean that Jehovah's Witnesses will always have physical protection, under all circumstances? Not necessarily so. At least two of Jehovah's Witnesses were killed by sniper fire in Lebanon, and there have been times, too, when they have died in disasters such as earthquakes. But, in general, their prayerful reliance on Jehovah, their togetherness as a congregation and their calmness under pressure have worked to their benefit. (Phil. 4:5-7) Often this has served as a foretaste of the protection that God promises his people during the "great tribulation," when the Kingdom goes into action to destroy the opposing nations.—Matt. 24:21, 22; Dan. 2:44.

⁴⁶ How the Kingdom will perform that miracle of protection, we do not yet know. But God's prophets assure his obedient people that their complete trust in Jehovah will be to their everlasting benefit. Thus, through his prophet Isaiah, Jehovah extends the invitation: "Go, my people,

45. How may we benefit by association now and during the "great tribulation"?

46. What protection may God's congregated people expect when Jehovah executes judgment, and why? (Zeph. 2:3; 3:8)

enter into your interior rooms, and shut your doors behind you. Hide yourself for but a moment until the denunciation passes over. For, look! Jehovah is coming forth from his place to call to account the error of the inhabitant of the land against him, and the land will certainly expose her bloodshed and will no longer cover over her killed ones." (Isa. 26:20, 21) Jehovah's righteous judgments are certain of execution, and his salvation is sure.—Ps. 119:155, 156.

Lasting Kingdom Benefits

⁴⁷ Now a "great crowd" of people recognize Jesus Christ as their King. He has shown them how to live clean lives and how to be joyful workers in the interests of his Father's kingdom. He has led them into a most precious relationship with his Father, who says to them: "I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk." (Isa. 48:17) Through his prophetic Word Jehovah shows his people how they may walk safely during these days just preceding the "great tribulation."

⁴⁸ There is an urgent need for all who seek God to flee out of today's wicked "system of things," and to stay out of it! Though we cannot yet get out of it bodily, we can show our separateness by avoiding its selfish, materialistic ways of life. This is vital to our survival. In concluding his great prophecy, according to Luke's account, Jesus warns us: "Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly

that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come in upon all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth. Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man."—Luke 21:34-36.

⁴⁹ Mark's account of Jesus' prophecy gives these concluding words: "Keep on the watch, . . . in order that when he arrives suddenly, he does not find you sleeping. But what I say to you I say to all, Keep on the watch." (Mark 13:35-37) And Matthew's report adds this: "Prove yourselves ready, because at an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming."—Matt. 24:44.

⁵⁰ The "Son of man," Christ Jesus, says that, in a time when the nations are in great fear and anguish, they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. He tells us: "As these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near." (Luke 21:28) Yes, deliverance by God's kingdom out of the wicked "system of things"! Deliverance by God's kingdom into a paradise earth—where the Kingdom will shower blessings on mankind for a thousand years! And the benefits of those Kingdom blessings will endure into all eternity.

⁵¹ But the Bible states that God's purpose is to restore his *original direct rule* over humankind. It shows that the Kingdom "stone" mentioned by Daniel was "cut out" of the "mountain" of God's sovereignty for the express purpose of vindicating his universal sovereignty and reestablishing this *original close relationship* over the earth. How, then, will this come about? How will all men be again

47. In line with Isaiah 48:17, what promised benefits do God's people now enjoy?

48. (a) What is urgently necessary for all of God's people today? (b) What warning of Jesus should we now take to heart, and why?

49. How do the accounts of Mark and Matthew add force to Jesus' warning?

50. Why should we 'lift our heads up' even in fearful times?

51. What original relationship between God and man is to be restored?

like Adam—sons of God, with direct approach to him?

⁵² God's Word at 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 reveals that when the Kingdom has vindicated God's sovereignty over the earth and all the universe as righteous and just, Christ then turns this Kingdom back to Jehovah, that "God may be all things to everyone." Jehovah then has further service in store for Jesus and his 144,000 associates. Those on earth who thereafter pass the decisive test of their loyalty to Jehovah's Universal Sovereignty will forever honor Jesus as God's chief agent in restoring the earth to its proper place in the universe, as they serve Jehovah in pure, clean worship.—Rev. 20:7-15.

⁵³ In view of all these grand accomplish-

52. What prospects are held forth for God's people as indicated by 1 Corinthians 15:24-28?

53. (a) What must we conclude as to the benefits that God's kingdom will provide? (b) What stand are we encouraged to take, and with what glorious prospect in view?

Reaching Out to Help in Central America

● After her great earthquake, new construction and high coffee prices resulted in an improved economy for Guatemala City, Guatemala, but very little has filtered down to the poorer sections of the country. Full-time workers of Jehovah's Witnesses, called special pioneers, continue carrying their free Bible study work to many such people.

One couple serving in a very isolated section drew on their small personal expense account to purchase a gasoline lamp for use at their meetings, since there was no electricity. Their heartfelt desire to help these economically disadvantaged people is also reflected in another request for a withdrawal from their account:

"To reach our distant territory we have to walk, carrying our own bedding so as to be able to spend the night in villages where there are no hotels or other lodging. We request a withdrawal of sixty dollars in order to purchase a burro. These 'burritos' are very gentle

In Coming Issues

- **Maintaining the Family Circle**
- **Your Maker Deeply Cares About You**
- **"An Excellent Woman" Displays Loyal Love**

ments, could anything benefit you more than God's kingdom? Surely there is every reason to thank Jehovah for this most loving provision. May you take your stand now firmly and loyally on the side of God's kingdom by Jesus Christ and enjoy its benefits to all eternity!

and easy to maintain and, if our request is granted, it will lighten our burden."

● Similarly, from up in a mountainous area of El Salvador, an interested person invited a circuit representative of Jehovah's Witnesses to come and give a public talk. The speaker and his wife traveled by bus to the last stop, and then they walked the rest of the way, about 10 miles (16 kilometers) on foot. Their efforts were rewarded when 30 persons showed up to hear the talk.

The man who had invited the speaker so appreciated the self-sacrificing devotion of this couple that he got up and spoke to the audience, saying: "Remember when we invited the Evangelist minister, he would come only on the condition that we pay him 30 colones (\$12.00) and provide him with a horse for the trip. But since we did not have the means to pay him, he did not come. This time we invited Jehovah's Witnesses and they didn't ask for money or horses, but came walking; therefore, they must be the true religion."



Brazil's CATHOLIC CHURCH in CRISIS

"THE CHURCH IN SEVERE CRISIS" "SHEEP WITHOUT SHEPHERDS."

Headlines and expressions like these in Brazilian newspapers are sounding an alarm for the Roman Catholic Church in Brazil. This is ironic, for, according to the Portuguese-language *Enciclopédia Mirador*, Brazil is understood to have "the largest number of [Roman] Catholics in the world."

What gives rise to this "severe" church crisis? Why the lack of spiritual shepherding of Brazil's Catholics?

A LOOK AT THE CRISIS

Simply a glance at the religious situation in this land will reveal the elements

of crisis. In the last 10 years alone, 2,300 Brazilian priests have abandoned their vocation. Earlier this year a newspaper carried an advertisement requesting a priest for a certain area. Though the ad prom-

ised "fine working conditions" and other benefits, only two individuals responded.

Lack of spiritual care by the Catholic Church has caused many Brazilians to leave the Church and take up other forms of worship. Oriental religions are growing in popularity. Young persons frequently find the rigorous monastic way of life advocated by these Oriental religious systems attractive. There is also a spread of cults that stem from Africa and pose an alarming threat of leading the entire country into spiritistic worship.

Pointing to the seriousness of this threat are comments in the weekly publication *Manchete*:

"Today many consider *Umbanda* [a Brazilian form of spiritism/voodoo] as the nation's real religion. Its Deliberative Body counts on 300 thousand cult centers in all Brazilian states. The number of *Umbandistas* [practicers of the cult] in the country is estimated at more than thirty million."

Additionally, there are millions more who practice other forms of voodoo. The grand total is estimated at 70 percent of Brazil's population of more than 110 million.

Since the Portuguese brought the Catholic religion to Brazil and there remain close ties between the two nations, a look

at the state of affairs in Portugal is proper. Regarding the grave lack of Catholic clergy in Portugal too, the following comments appeared in the magazine *Opção*, published in Portugal:

"At the moment, there are about 4,908 diocesan and priests in the whole country. But their number tends to decrease considerably. In 1970, the patriarchate had a total of 525 diocesan; five years later there were only 377 . . . The main factor in all of this is the considerable decrease of students in the seminaries. In fact, it is rare to find even one of these seminaries functioning. This is due to the opening of technical schools in the rural areas where parents are now placing their children. So since 1974 there have been no ordinations in the patriarchate and until 1979 not more than six are foreseen.

"The situation is such that some priests feel they are the survivors of a species on its way to extinction. A great number of these simply celebrate mass on Sunday and during the week go to university or have regular jobs. They fear that from one minute to the next they may be obligated to find a new way of life. . . .

"Could it be, as the bishops affirm, a passing crisis that the Church is going through? Or could it be a grave structural crisis? The Church has been suffering too long for this to be called a 'passing crisis.'"

IN SEARCH OF A CAUSE

That is the situation of the Church in Portugal. But what has brought the Catholic Church in Brazil to such a critical state? Among the causes, one stands out sharply. In recent years, sincere Catholics have shown bewilderment at the ever-increasing cry for social reform on the part of priests and bishops. In the agricultural and cattle-raising states of Mato Grosso, Goiás and Pará, with their hosts of destitute farmhands and Indians, some priests have been arrested, accused of fomenting uprisings.

Commenting on political involvement by the Catholic clergy, a military high official stated: "Instead of acting as representatives or spokesmen for the squatters, the priests and bishops have tried to take the

law into their own hands, inciting groups of farmhands to illegal actions, such as invasion of the land." In clashes of this type, two priests lost their lives.

Have genuine benefits come about from the Catholic Church's meddling in politics? Not according to São Paulo's *Jornal da Tarde*. "Abandoning her mission in order to devote herself to a course of action which is none of her business," this journal remarked, "the Church is becoming empty and has nothing to offer to those whom she hopes to woo and who are, in effect, the politicians. At the same time, the [Catholic] faithful find themselves in the position of sheep without shepherds and, following their inherent religiousness, go after syncretic [Afro-Catholic] cults."

Behind the Church-sponsored political agitation is a peculiar change of thinking on the part of many of Brazil's Catholic clergymen. In his book *O Diabo Celebra a Missa* ("The Devil Celebrates Mass"), Catholic author Salomão Jorge presents this statement of Archbishop Dom Geraldo Proença Sigaud: "There is an ever greater and more dangerous infiltration of Marxist and communist ideas in seminaries and convents." This materialistic philosophy has caused much unrest among impoverished people.

"THOUSANDS OF KILOMETERS OFF"

Brazil's National Bishops' Conference, on February 8 to 17, 1977, held its fifteenth General Assembly in Itaici, near São Paulo City. Was the agenda of a spiritual nature that would reinforce the faith of Brazil's Catholics? That it would not be was evident from opening remarks delivered by Dom Aloísio Lorscheider, president of the conference, who stated: "We should let ourselves be guided and taught by the Holy Spirit. The great question is: What does the Holy Spirit say to the Church in Brazil at this exact moment in history?" In view of this, we reasonably ask: How

can persons who do not know the answer to that question properly care for the spiritual needs of churchgoers? An editorial in *O Estado de S. Paulo* sounded this note of sadness:

"Nothing justifies the hope that the great number of assembled bishops would make able decisions to avert the serious crisis of the Church in the country or the lack of guidance that torments the consciences of countless faithful [Catholics]. . . . The distinguished members of Brazil's National Bishops' Conference are unable to resist the temptation of making political issues the main object of their attention. The desire to direct civil affairs and solve temporal problems takes priority at their meetings, while the House entrusted to their care and pastoral concern is sinking more and more into disorder and chaos."

As expected, this assembly of bishops focused on political issues. After much debating, they drafted a document on "Christian Requirements for a Political Order," which appeared a week after the 10-day meeting. Article 25 of this document declared: "A primary duty of the State is to stimulate conscious and responsible participation in the political, social, cultural and economic processes. . . . Through her divine mission, the Church has bestowed upon her the right and duty to cooperate in this task." In view of this, an editorial writer for *O Estado de S. Paulo* commented: "It may be asked if . . . the National Bishops' Conference does not find itself some thousands of kilometers off the course it should follow."

GETTING THE SCRIPTURAL VIEWPOINT

What is the Biblical view of Christians agitating for political issues? In prayer, Jesus Christ said concerning his true followers: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:16) When questioned about his possessing kingly authority, Jesus replied to the Roman governor Pontius Pilate: "My kingdom is no part of this world. If my

kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought that I should not be delivered up to the Jews. But, as it is, my kingdom is not from this source." —John 18:36.

Do you remember how Jesus reacted when certain men, recognizing his miraculous powers, tried to get him to rule over them? We read in the Bible: "Therefore Jesus, knowing they were about to come and seize him to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain all alone." (John 6:15) In spite of the fact that Jesus had the power to benefit mankind greatly, he refused to become a political leader. Why? Because he knew that God's kingdom was, not earthly, but heavenly.

It is interesting to note how this Scriptural view affected Christians early in the Common Era. We read in the book *Christianity and the Roman Government*:

"The Christians were strangers and pilgrims in the world around them; their citizenship was in heaven; the kingdom to which they looked was not of this world. The consequent want of interest in public affairs came thus from the outset to be a noticeable feature in Christianity."

Rather than urging his followers to get involved in civil-rights movements and other political activities, Jesus taught them to pray: "Our Father in the heavens, . . . Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matt. 6:9, 10) According to the Bible, that heavenly kingdom will soon "crush and put an end to all these [present earthly] kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." (Dan. 2:44) Hence, it is not man, but God, who will act to rid the earth of social injustice and all other woes.

Ignoring these Scriptural teachings, the Roman Catholic Church, and other churches of Christendom, have pushed ahead and tried to correct world problems in their own way. It is largely this that has led these churches into a state of crisis.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Its Background And Setting

THE Sermon on the Mount is the most famous sermon ever preached. Phrases from it are in the hearts and on the lips of hundreds of millions of persons throughout the earth. Does this discourse of Jesus Christ, presented nearly 2,000 years ago, have a message for people today?

Well, are people still striving to find happiness? Are humans yet in need of right principles as a guide for their conduct toward one another? Are there persons today who wish to know what God requires in the way of acceptable worship?

Individuals desirous of truthful information on these matters are more numerous than ever before. Since these are the very things discussed in the Sermon on the Mount, it is as up-to-date in the twentieth century as on the day it was uttered. It will therefore be beneficial for

us to examine what Jesus said in that famous sermon.

But before we do that, let us take a look at the background and setting of this great discourse.

TWO HARMONIOUS ACCOUNTS

The Sermon on the Mount appears apparently in two Gospel accounts. (Matthew, chapters 5-7; Luke 6:20-49) Matthew's account of the sermon is about four times as long as Luke's. There are only five and a half verses in Luke's presentation that do not appear in that of Matthew. Where the two accounts run parallel they often differ considerably as to wording. Should this give rise to doubts as to the authenticity of the sermon as it appears in our Bibles?

Regarding an objection arising from the fact that Luke omits large portions of the sermon as it appears in Matthew, A. T. Robertson writes in *A Harmony of the Gospels for Students of the Life of Christ*: "This leaves out of consideration the several large portions of the same matter which Luke has placed elsewhere, or which Jesus repeated on other occasions ([compare] Matt. 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4; Matt. 6:25-34 and Luke 12:22-31). Jesus often repeated his sayings on other occasions as all teachers do and ought to do. . . . Nor need we be surprised that Luke, writing generally for all Christians, omits large portions towards the beginning of the sermon that were designed especially for Jews (see Matt. 5:17-27; 6:1-18)." Robertson then adds:

"Moreover, to offset these variations, which admit of explanation, it ought to be remembered that the two discourses begin alike and end alike, that they have a general similarity in the order of the different parts, and that they show a general likeness and often absolute identity of expression."

WHEN AND AT WHAT LOCATION?

When during his earthly ministry did the Son of God present this sermon? The Scriptures report that Jesus interrupted his first tour of Galilee to observe "a festival of the Jews" (probably the Passover of 31 C.E.) at Jerusalem. (John 4:46-5:1) Luke relates that after arriving back in Galilee Jesus drew rebuke from the Pharisees for healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. (Luke 6:6-11) Shortly thereafter he "went out into the mountain to pray, and he continued the whole night in prayer to God. But when it became day he called his disciples to him and chose from among them twelve, whom he also named apostles."—Luke 6:12, 13.

Following this, Jesus "came down with them and took his station on a level place, and there was a great crowd of his disci-

ples, and a great multitude of people from all of Judea and Jerusalem and the maritime country of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him and be healed of their sicknesses. Even those troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all the crowd were seeking to touch him, because power was going out of him and healing them all. And he lifted up his eyes upon his disciples" and spoke the Sermon on the Mount.—Luke 6:17-20.

Hence, the Sermon on the Mount was given shortly after Jesus had chosen his 12 apostles. This was evidently in 31 C.E., at about the halfway point of his three-and-a-half-year-long earthly ministry. Although "a great multitude of people" from all over Palestine heard the sermon, the Scriptural record indicates that Jesus spoke mainly for the benefit of his disciples.—Matt. 5:1, 2; Luke 6:17, 20.

What was the location of Jesus' discourse? There have been many conjectures about this. Some have suggested a high mountain in Galilee, such as Mount Tabor. Others favor a location called "the horns of Hattin," which is between Mount Tabor and Capernaum. The Scriptures, however, do not specify the exact location of the Sermon on the Mount. In this regard, *A Dictionary of the Bible* edited by James Hastings points out:

"The Sermon was spoken in Galilee, the scene of the main ministry of Jesus (cf. Mt 4²³⁻²⁵, Lk 6¹⁷). If there is an indication in Mt 8⁵, Lk 7¹ that the place of the event was near Capernaum, the precise locality would not even then be defined. . . . The mountain referred to in Mt 5¹ 8¹, Lk 6¹² is not named and cannot be identified. We may suppose, however, that the scene of the Sermon was in the region to the west of the lake, not far distant from the thickly-populated shore."

JESUS' METHOD OF TEACHING

Have you ever noticed how the method of teaching found in the Sermon on the Mount differs from the way worldly in-

lectuals give instruction? The same reference work by Hastings says of Jesus' method of teaching:

"As He taught the multitudes, in their synagogues, upon the highways, along the seashore, and on the hillsides of Galilee, He put His religious truths and ethical principles into concrete popular sayings, contrasting His ideal of life in many simple ways with the conventional notions and practices, and illustrating His teaching from the ordinary avocations, experiences, and environment of His hearers. Entirely free from the scholasticism and intellectualism, . . . He did not teach these subjects in the manner of the ancient or modern schools. He put His ideas in such a way as to make His knowledge universal. He spoke with a simplicity, insight, and fervour which would appeal to all serious listeners."

How familiar to you are the truths contained in the Sermon on the Mount? Prob-

QUESTIONS from READERS

● What is meant by "the great city which is in a spiritual sense called Sodom and Egypt" mentioned at Revelation 11:8?

The "great city" of Revelation 11:8 is Jerusalem, and so Revelation is referring basically to what ancient Jerusalem symbolized.

The eleventh chapter of Revelation presents the apostle John's vision of "two witnesses" of God. They are mentioned in a context of comments about Jehovah God's having 'taken his great power and begun ruling as king.' Jehovah's Witnesses understand that to have occurred in 1914 C.E. (Rev. 11:17, 18) The figurative language in Revelation says that the two witnesses are conquered and killed "and their corpses will be on the broad way of the great city which is in a spiritual sense called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was also impaled."—Rev. 11:8.

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ably you are acquainted with some of its maxims, such as the Model Prayer, or "Our Father," and the statement that has come to be known as the "golden rule," where Jesus said: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." (Matt. 6:9-13; 7:12) But what about the rest of Jesus' presentation? Would you enjoy considering it in greater detail?

Coming issues of *The Watchtower* will provide a series of articles covering the entire Sermon on the Mount. Why not prepare to benefit fully from this material by reading carefully the entire sermon right now or at your earliest convenience? Read it carefully. Meditate on what Jesus said. You will find doing so a delightful experience.

That, obviously, meant Jerusalem, for Jesus was condemned to death in Jerusalem and was impaled just outside the walls of that city. Jerusalem's inhabitants at the time reflected the characteristics of ancient Sodom as well as Egypt. (Compare Isaiah 1:10, 21.) The ancient Egyptians, for example, were satisfied with their own pagan religious practices and they rejected the true God in the days of Moses and the first Passover. Similarly, the Jews of the first century C.E. rejected Jesus "the Lamb of God," holding instead to their religious traditions. (John 1:29; Matt. 15:3-9; 23:13-26) As Jehovah's Witnesses have long pointed out, the modern-day counterpart of ancient Jerusalem is Christendom. Most of her members also claim to be worshiping God correctly but, in general, display the same attitude as the Jews who rejected Jesus.

Accordingly, the book *"Then Is Finished the Mystery of God"* (1969) said, in part: "Because of its religious oppression and enslavement of Jehovah's own people, unfaithful Jerusalem could 'in a spiritual sense' be called Egypt. Just as the first Passover lamb was slain down in Egypt in the prophet Moses' day, so Jesus Christ, as the antitypical Passover Lamb, was killed at unfaithful Jerusalem." Then regarding modern times, the book added that "the

expression 'the great city' must mean the antitypical unfaithful Jerusalem, namely, Christendom."—Pp. 272, 273.

But why did *The Watchtower* of May 15, 1977, refer to Revelation 11:8 regarding the worldwide political system that now exists?

Ancient Egypt was an outstanding political power in its time. Ezekiel chapter 31 contains a warning directed to "Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to his crowd."* In discussing Ezekiel chapter 31, *The Watchtower* of May 15, 1977, appropriately referred to Revelation 11:8. It did so mainly to show that it is Scripturally correct to attach a spiritual significance to "Egypt." The literal land of Egypt is not what is meant in the modern antitypical fulfillment of Ezekiel chapter 31. Rather, the application

* In part, Ezekiel 31:3 says: "Look! An Assyrian, a cedar in Lebanon." It is worth noting that some translations (AV, AS, etc.) here read: "Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon" This had led to the understanding that the huge "tree" pictured ancient Assyria. But "was" is not found in the original Hebrew. And the context shows that the warning was to Pharaoh and his crowd, who is said to resemble "an Assyrian" and also to resemble "a cedar in Lebanon." Evidently, then, the reference to "an Assyrian" was simply to convey the idea of a great military power, which is what ancient Egypt was.

is to the worldwide political system of things of our day. How so? Ancient Egypt was a prominent military power that, like a huge tree, was trying to spread its dominating influence world wide so as to affect all peoples. Comparably, there is today a worldwide political organization that can be likened to a tall cedar on the mountainside of Lebanon, under which many nations take refuge.

So, whereas the context of Revelation 11:8 shows that its modern-day fulfillment is in Christendom specifically, this verse could appropriately be referred to in showing that it is fitting to look for a modern-day spiritual application of the "Egypt" referred to in Ezekiel chapter 31.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

February 19: How God's Kingdom Can Benefit

You, ¶1-15. Page 12. Songs to Be Used: 74, 92.

February 26: How God's Kingdom Can Benefit

You, ¶16-35. Page 15. Songs to Be Used: 1, 84.

March 5: How God's Kingdom Can Benefit You,

¶36-53. Page 20. Songs to Be Used: 80, 119.

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