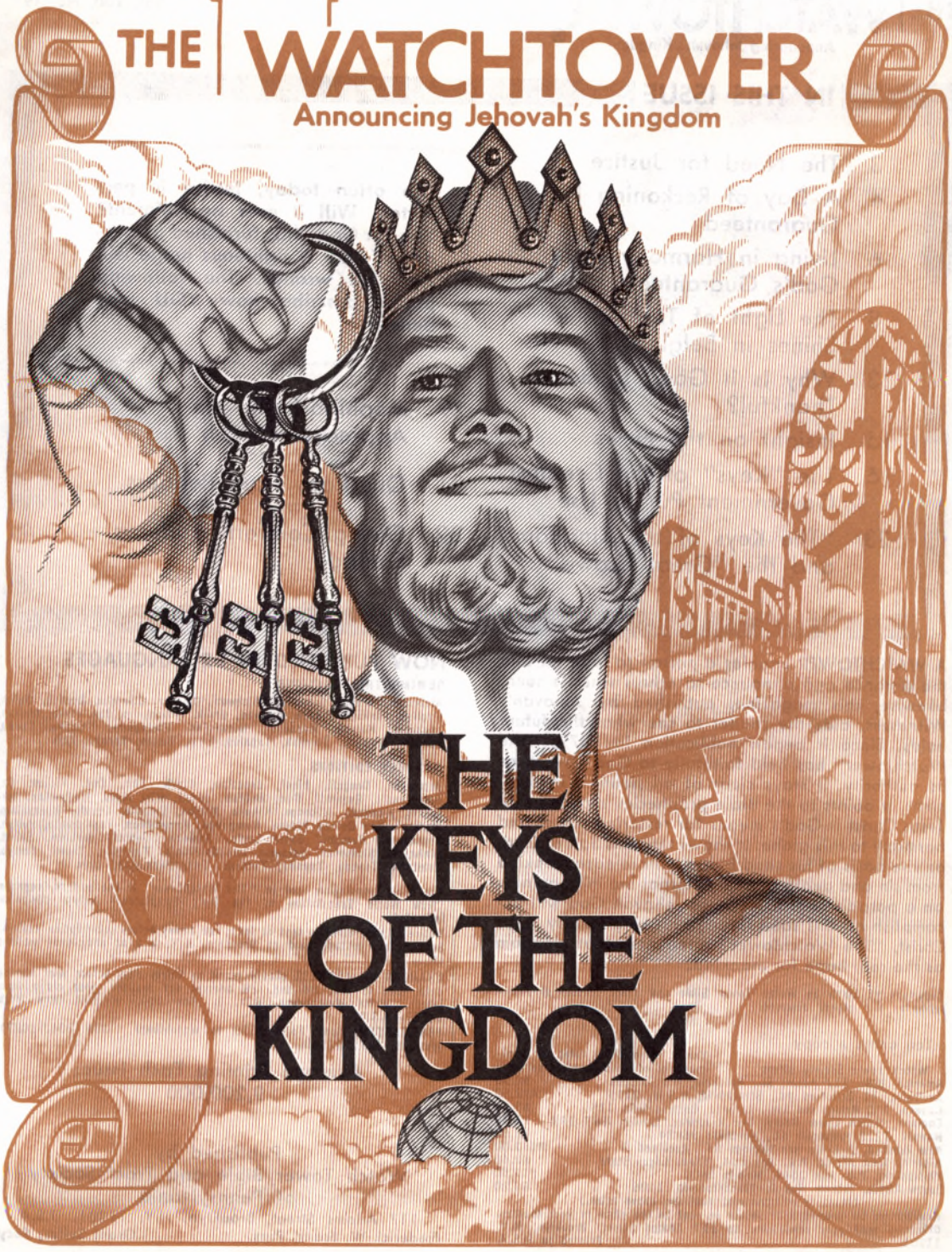
OCTOBER 1, 1979

THE WATCHTOWER
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

THE WATCHTOWER®
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

October 1, 1979
Vol. 100, No. 19

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Too often today, justice is perverted. Will it ever be different? Yes, for God "has furnished a guarantee" that a righteous judge will right all wrongs. The following pages describe how YOU may benefit

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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The Need For JUSTICE

FOR thousands of years, men have wrestled with the problem of maintaining law and order. A multitude of regulations have been formulated to protect the person and property of individuals. To bring violators of law to justice, law enforcement bodies and judicial systems have been created. Despite man's well-meaning efforts, however, no arrangement has been able to secure complete justice for all.

While many principled men have done their best to uphold human rights, others have profited from practicing injustice. For example, some years ago one North American judge was found guilty of receiving over $600,000 for judicial favors. Through legal loopholes known criminals have escaped punishment. Certain criminal lawyers have become wealthy by creating false alibis for their guilty clients and by using unscrupulous means to call into serious question the testimony of truthful witnesses.

Corruption is not the only obstacle that stands in the way of administering justice. At times the problem is outright incompetence. Cases have been handled by judges who were intoxicated, too bored to listen, too tired to keep from dozing during the trial or so ignorant of the law that their secretaries actually wrote the decisions.

Because of corruption and incompetence in high places, untold numbers of people have suffered. They have been wrongly confined to asylums and prisons or have even been sentenced to death. Women have been deprived of their husbands' financial support. Children have been taken away from their parents. Entire estates have been lost to the rightful heirs.

Not infrequently lawless men never come to trial. In the present system of things, there simply is no way to rectify all the injury caused by backbiting, slander, gossip, fraud, scheming, half-truths, exaggerations and other ethical wrongs.

Truly, there is a need for balancing the scales of justice. An outstanding jurist of the 20th century alluded to the manner in which this could come about. When describing the "spirit of true liberty," he stated that this spirit "has never quite forgotten that there may be a kingdom where the least shall be heard and considered side by side with the greatest." But will there really be such a judgment? What reason do we have for believing that it will take place? How should this affect our lives even now?

A Day of Reckoning is Guaranteed

OVER 1,900 years ago a man who was well educated in the law of his nation expressed his belief in a future day of reckoning. He did so on foreign soil before the court of the Areopagus in ancient Athens. The man was a Christianized Jew, the apostle Paul.

For a while his audience listened to what he had to say about God. But, then, with reference to the Creator, Paul made this startling declaration: "Because he has set a day in which he purposes to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and he has furnished a guarantee to all men in that he has resurrected him from the dead."—Acts 17:31.

The apostle was unable to continue speaking, for ridiculers began to raise their voices. However, the truths that he had expressed were the means by which the Almighty God opened up the hearts of some who heard Paul's defense. As the apostle left, these persons "joined themselves to him and became believers."—Acts 17:32-34.

We may ask: Who is the man by means of whom God will judge the inhabited earth? Why can we be confident that justice will be executed? How sure is the guarantee respecting a day of reckoning?

The man whom God has chosen is the Son who emptied himself of his heavenly glory and then by divine power began to develop as a perfect baby in the womb of a Jewish virgin named Mary. (Luke 1:30-35; Phil. 2:7) This Son came to be known as Jesus Christ.

Regarding his judicial authority, Jesus declared: "The Father judges no one at all, but he has committed all the judging to the Son." (John 5:22) "I cannot do a single thing of my own initiative; just as I hear, I judge; and the judgment that I render is righteous, because I seek, not my own will, but the will of him that sent me."—John 5:30.

A JUDGE WHO CARES

As to the kind of judge Jesus would be, it was stated prophetically: "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) Jesus Christ will not be impressed by an imposing personality or outward handsomeness or attractiveness. He can look beyond surface appearances, discerning the real heart motivation of the individual.

(Rev. 2:23) Clever words and arguments will not prevent him from arriving at the facts of the case and rendering an impartial judgment. No matter how lowly persons may be, Jesus Christ will deal justly with them. "Their blood will be precious in his eyes."—Ps. 72:14.

We have every reason to be confident in the complete impartiality of Jesus' judgment. He proved his concern for humankind by the greatest act of self-sacrificing love, willingly laying down his life. Calling attention to what he would do in this regard, he had told his disciples: "No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his soul in behalf of his friends."—John 15:13.

AN EXALTED JUDGE

Of course, a dead person could not act in the capacity of judge, and the apostle Paul made it clear that God's appointed Judge had been resurrected from the dead. This resurrection stands as an unchangeable guarantee regarding the future day of reckoning. It is no ordinary guarantee. Upward of 500 witnesses saw the resurrected Son of God. So that there would be no question as to the reality of the resurrection, Jesus Christ spoke with his disciples, asked them to feel him and ate food in their presence. (Luke 24:36-43) The Bible reports: "By many positive proofs he showed himself alive after he had suffered, being seen by them throughout forty days." (Acts 1:3) Because the proofs were undeniable, the disciples courageously bore witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the face of physical abuse, reviling and the threat of death.

Not only were disciples of Jesus Christ witnesses concerning his resurrection, but they were also witnesses as to his ascension to heaven. Ten days after this ascension about 120 disciples received the evidence that the Son had been exalted to the right hand of his Father. What proof did they receive? Before his ascension, Jesus Christ had instructed his disciples: "Do not withdraw from Jerusalem, but keep waiting for what the Father has promised, about which you heard from me; because John, indeed, baptized with water, but you will be baptized in holy spirit not many days after this." (Acts 1:4, 5) Therefore, when, on the day of Pentecost in 33 C.E., approximately 120 disciples received the promised holy spirit and were empowered by it to speak in foreign languages to Jews and proselytes who had come to Jerusalem from distant places to attend the festival of Pentecost, those disciples *knew* that the Son was with the Father.

That is why the apostle Peter could declare to thousands on that day: "This Jesus God resurrected, of which fact we are all witnesses. Therefore because he was exalted to the right hand of God and received the promised holy spirit from the Father, he has poured out this which you see and hear."—Acts 2:32, 33.

THE SURE EXECUTION OF DIVINE JUSTICE

The well-attested events that took place in connection with Jesus Christ in the first century stand as an unchangeable guarantee that a day of reckoning for all the nations must occur. It was to this day for executing divine justice that faithful disciples of Jesus Christ looked forward with eager anticipation. The Christian apostle Paul pointed to this in one of his letters to the Thessalonians, writing:

"It is righteous on God's part to repay tribulation to those who make tribulation for you [believers], but, to you who suffer tribulation, relief along with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels in a flaming fire, as he brings vengeance upon those who do not know God and those

who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus. These very ones will undergo the judicial punishment of everlasting destruction from before the Lord and from the glory of his strength, at the time he comes to be glorified in connection with his holy ones and to be regarded in that day with wonder in connection with all those who exercised faith." —2 Thess. 1:6-10.

The coming of Jesus Christ in the capacity of executioner of divine justice will begin a time for righting all wrongs. God through Christ will judge even "the secret things of mankind." (Rom. 2:16) While we do not know the day and hour when that longed-for day will be here, we do have God's guarantee that it will come and that it is drawing ever closer. This should stir us to live in harmony with his guarantee. But what does this require of us?

Living in Harmony with God's Guarantee

IF WE have absolute faith in God's guarantee regarding the coming judgment, there should be works to prove our faith. The Bible says: "As the body without spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead."—Jas. 2:26.

Clearly, if we expect the judgment of Jesus Christ to be totally impartial, we should shun favoritism. This would mean according all persons the dignity that they deserve, not looking down on others because of their lowly position or their limitations, nor giving special preference to individuals just because they are rich or prominent. Then, too, we will want to avoid unduly favoring ourselves. How inconsistent it would be to be distressed about the ethical wrongs that others may commit while selfishly seeking our own advantage at every turn!

We do well to keep in mind that divine judgment through Jesus Christ is not only for our fellowman. It is for us personally. The Scriptures state: "If you are calling upon the Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, conduct yourselves with fear during the time of your alien residence." (1 Pet. 1:17) When we have a wholesome fear of or regard for our Creator and his appointed Judge, we will be less inclined to look at what others may or may not be doing. Rather, we will be careful about the way in which we conduct our own affairs of life. Recognizing that only Jehovah God through Jesus Christ can set all matters straight, we will be restrained from becoming unduly disturbed about injustices and from flaring up in anger to the point of taking matters into our own hands. The Bible tells us: "Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says Jehovah.' "—Rom. 12:19.

At the same time, if we can help others to come to appreciate the importance of living in harmony with God's guarantee of a coming judgment, we certainly would want to do that. This may be done by responding kindly toward those who are unjust toward us. The Bible recommends: " 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if

he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by doing this you will heap fiery coals upon his head.' Do not let yourself be conquered by the evil, but keep conquering the evil with the good." (Rom. 12: 20, 21) A kind response may make the unjust person feel ashamed, causing him to regret his course of action. Thus the kind treatment could have a refining effect on him, bringing out his better qualities.

Of course, our exemplary conduct would not be enough to make others aware of the need to harmonize their lives with God's guarantee. We need to inform them about the divine will and purpose. To the people of Athens, the apostle Paul stated: "[God] is telling mankind that they should all everywhere repent." (Acts 17:30) Since the day of executing divine justice has not yet arrived, this is still the message that needs to be proclaimed far and wide. Rightly the proclaimers should be persons who have accepted Jesus Christ as Jehovah's appointed Judge. Those who truly have faith in God's guarantee cannot help but speak, for 'out of the heart's abundance the mouth speaks.'—Matt. 12:34.

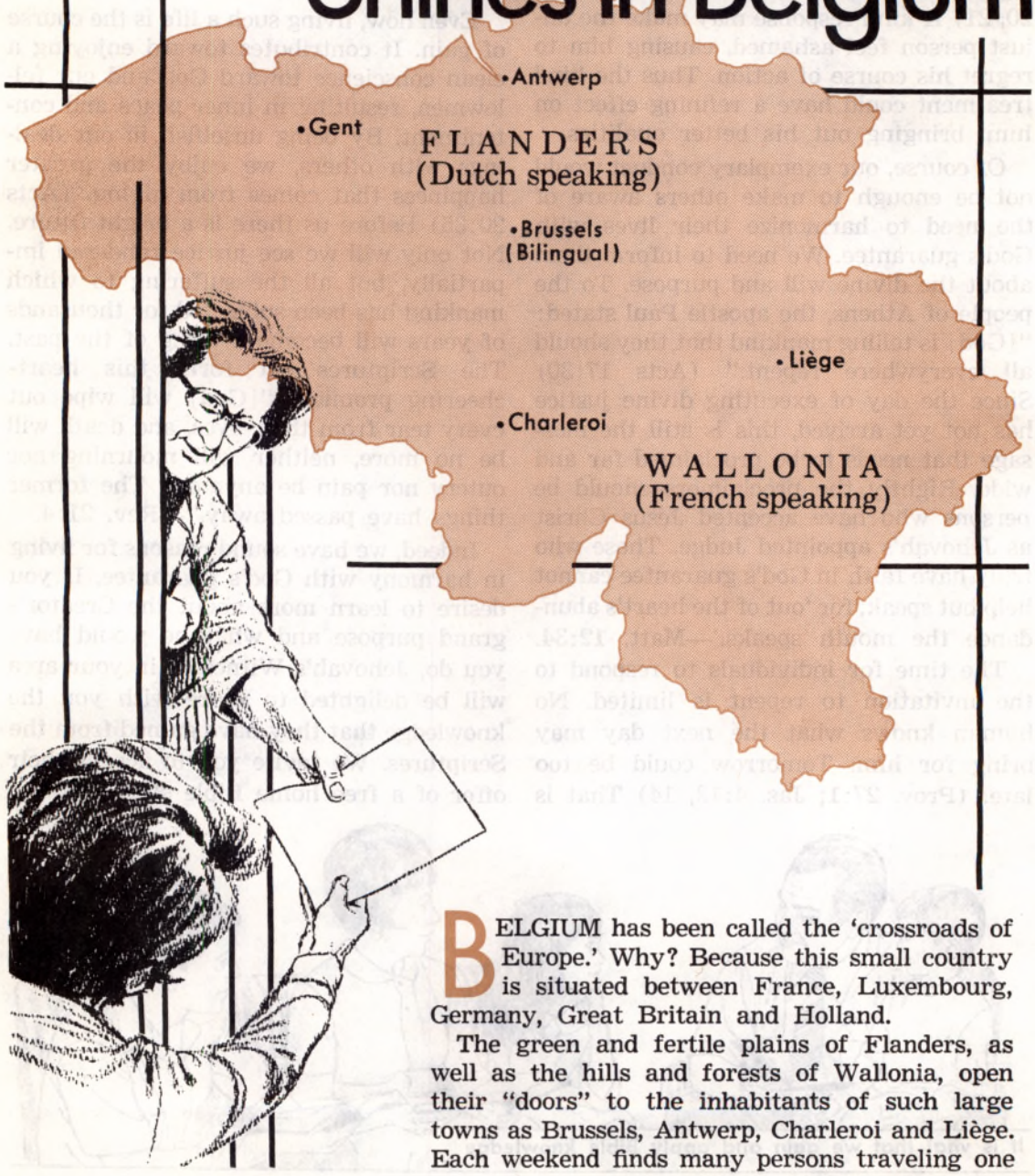
The time for individuals to respond to the invitation to repent is limited. No human knows what the next day may bring for him. Tomorrow could be too late. (Prov. 27:1; Jas. 4:13, 14) That is why persons who do not delay in responding to God's invitation to repent, and who start living a life that gives evidence of faith in the execution of divine justice, are truly wise.

Even now, living such a life is the course of gain. It contributes toward enjoying a clean conscience toward God and our fellowmen, resulting in inner peace and contentment. By being unselfish in our dealings with others, we enjoy the greater happiness that comes from giving. (Acts 20:35) Before us there is a bright future. Not only will we see justice rendered impartially, but all the suffering to which mankind has been subjected for thousands of years will become a thing of the past. The Scriptures set forth this heart-cheering promise: "[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."—Rev. 21:4.

Indeed, we have sound reasons for living in harmony with God's guarantee. If you desire to learn more about the Creator's grand purpose and what he would have you do, Jehovah's Witnesses in your area will be delighted to share with you the knowledge that they have gained from the Scriptures. We invite you to accept their offer of a free home Bible study.

It is vital that we gain and apply Bible knowledge

The Light of Truth Shines in Belgium



BELGIUM has been called the 'crossroads of Europe.' Why? Because this small country is situated between France, Luxembourg, Germany, Great Britain and Holland.

The green and fertile plains of Flanders, as well as the hills and forests of Wallonia, open their "doors" to the inhabitants of such large towns as Brussels, Antwerp, Charleroi and Liège. Each weekend finds many persons traveling one

of Europe's finest highway networks. These roads are even illuminated at night so that motorists can profit from what "nature" offers.

Belgium is also a country of contrasts and often of problems for the two communities making up this nation. Dutch is spoken in Flanders and French in Wallonia. Brussels is situated right in the center of these two cultural and linguistic groups. But the most remarkable contrast is seen in the 18,000 Jehovah's Witnesses who work together in peace and unity to provide spiritual aid for some 9,800,000 inhabitants.

FIRST ECHOES OF THE "GOOD NEWS"

Motivated by deep love for fellow humans and a keen desire to declare the "good news" to all kinds of people, Charles Taze Russell visited Belgium in the autumn of 1891, during a tour of Europe. Russell, the first president of the Watch Tower Society, realized the people's need for spiritual freedom, as they were still in dense religious darkness. For most of them, Bible reading was forbidden, and they lived in fear of hellfire and in reverential awe of the parish priest.

Ten years later, a lover of justice living in the region of Charleroi began to brave the superstitious dread associated with reading God's Word. As soon as he had obtained the first two volumes of *Millennial Dawn,* this man, J. B. Thilmant, organized a family Bible study. Soon the "good news" was spreading to other towns and even to France, thanks to the courageous work of the Thilmant family.

JEHOVAH BLESSES THE HUMBLE ONES

Neither imposing religious processions nor splendid cathedrals struck fear into Jehovah's humble servants. After World War I, a man named Joseph Poelmans, who worked in the coal mines at Liège and was well-versed in the Dutch language, regularly cycled 75 miles (120 km) to Antwerp in order to declare the "good news" in that city. Antwerp cathedral, with its spire jutting some 400 feet (122 m) into the sky, houses famous paintings by Rubens, among them "The Resurrection of Christ." But something else was needed to help those living in Antwerp to understand the significance of this event, which guaranteed that Jesus was the one appointed by Jehovah to "judge the inhabited earth in righteousness." (Acts 17:31) Brother Poelmans' humble work was abundantly blessed and today 19 congregations are firmly established in Antwerp.

After World War I our work also made great progress in the region of Liège. Ernest Heuse and Léonard Smets, two service companions of Brother Poelmans, started house-to-house witnessing in that city. They endured great hardships during the two world wars. However, "the good news of peace" touched the hearts of many people, so much so that today there are more than 30 congregations in that region. —Eph. 2:17.

FACING A BAN

On March 30, 1940, the Minister of Home Affairs declared a ban on all our publications. Hardly a month later, Belgium was transformed into a battlefield, and quickly it fell to Hitler's armies. What would the 218 witnesses of Jehovah do? They continued to announce God's kingdom as the only hope for peace. Hunted down by the Nazi Gestapo, many Witnesses were arrested, deported and placed in Nazi concentration camps. Some did not survive the terrible torture inflicted upon them.

Brother François Hankus especially was very busy in Jehovah's service at Charleroi, where he was arrested because of hiding Brother André Wozniak, who was being pursued by the Gestapo. Because

Brother Hankus refused to reveal the names of fellow believers, Hitler's agents beat him and transported him, unconscious, to a detention center. After his arrest, handfuls of his blood-clotted hair were found in his home. He never completely recovered from the brutal treatment that he suffered during the years of his detention. However, he served Jehovah with all his soul up until his dying breath in 1954. Today, there are 26 congregations in Charleroi.

The Watch Tower Society has no printing plant in Belgium. But during the Nazi occupation, with the cooperation of a printer in Brussels, the brothers were able to publish 6,000 copies of the Bible aid *Children*. When the war ended, more than 700 courageous Kingdom publishers emerged from underground activity, and these served as a springboard for unprecedented expansion. Brother Ernest Heuse, Jr., left Liège and took up residence in Brussels. At that time, there were only two congregations in the capital city (one French and the other Flemish- or Dutch-speaking) for more than 1,000,000 inhabitants. Today, there are over 40 congregations in Brussels.

Brother Wozniak, who had escaped from many traps set for him by the Nazis, traveled all over Flanders. He was a courageous house-to-house preacher. The discovery of coal brought many workers to the region known as Kempenland, and towns such as Genk, Eisden and Waterschei became fertile fields for declaring the "good news." Little by little, lovers of justice and truth were liberated from the many traditions that had kept them in captivity, and they accepted the truth, so much so that today 115 congregations are located in Flanders. In days gone by, it was a common sight to see the parish priest going from house to house. Why? To collect and destroy publications left by the brothers.

GIVING A COMPLETE WITNESS

A visitor to the heavily populated areas of Belgium may be surprised to hear Italian spoken, as well as Spanish, Greek, Arabic, Turkish and English. In the capital city, Brussels, more than 500 international organizations have offices. Foreigners make up about one fifth of the population, and the largest foreign-speaking community is Italian. During our international assembly held at Charleroi in 1965, N. H. Knorr (then the Society's president) arranged for the branch office to organize foreign-language congregations in Belgium. To an audience of 725 Italian brothers, he announced that 10 Italian congregations could be formed. Today throughout the country there are 30 Italian congregations.

While working in a coal mine, a certain Italian received one of our books and assumed that it had considerable value because of its binding and gold lettering. So he tried to sell it; but no one in the mine would buy the book. Finally, the man decided to read the publication himself because he wondered why no one wanted to buy it. That was how he found the truth. He now serves as an appointed elder in an Italian congregation and his son is in the circuit work.

Another Italian accepted a Bible study and saw the need of acquainting his family with the Kingdom message. Although a Catholic priest tried to discourage him from continuing to study the Bible, the cleric's philosophical arguments were no match for the truth. The man's determination to continue studying could not be undermined even by his father's threat: "If you don't quit that new religion, I'll break your legs!" But nothing of the sort happened, and in time this Italian had the joy of helping his wife and other members of his family to appreciate Bible truth. This produced a chain reaction that

spread throughout Belgium and into Switzerland and Italy, to such an extent that today more than 70 members of this brother's family, including his parents, are in the truth.

The local brothers also have been able to find many sheeplike individuals among the Spanish-, Greek-, English- and Turkish-speaking population. Without knowing how to read an interested person's native tongue, Kingdom publishers often conduct Bible studies with the help of two books (one in the language spoken by the Witness and the other in that of the student). Jehovah has truly caused the seeds of truth to grow. Today, in Belgium, there are nine Greek congregations, seven Spanish and three English. Economic problems have obliged many Italian, Greek and Spanish families to return to their homelands, but this has turned out to be a blessing because these Witnesses continue to serve in their respective countries where the need is much greater than it is in Belgium.

OVERCOMING INDIFFERENCE

Going from house to house today in Belgium, Jehovah's servants meet growing indifference among the people. The present generation is absorbed with the desire to increase their material possessions and is not interested in religion. Catholics are disappointed by what is taking place in their own religion. Some say: "Nothing goes right in our church." And others remark: "It's the end of the Catholic Church." In times past, the Catholic Church was proud to be able to say that Belgium was almost 100 percent Catholic. But more recently a priest in Brussels has said that only 10 percent of Catholics in Belgium now practice their religion and, of these, only 10 percent are considered "good Christians." Hence, we must put forth considerable effort to find persons sincerely interested in the Bible. But our effort is being blessed, and during the past two years, more than 1,600 persons have been baptized in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah God.

The Kingdom-preaching work is so well known in Belgium that it is not rare to hear people talking about Jehovah's Witnesses. One day at his place of employment a brother overheard a very heated conversation that went like this: 'You must admit that when you take time out to talk to one of them, there is some truth in what they say.' His curiosity aroused, the brother asked about whom they were talking. Back came the reply: 'Jehovah's Witnesses, of course. Haven't you ever had them at your door?' At that, the brother introduced himself as a Witness and this led to a Bible study with one man and his wife. The following week, another couple was present for the study, and by the week thereafter a young woman had joined the group. During the study, her husband quietly sat on the couch, reading a worldly magazine. At another time, he stayed in the kitchen. During the fourth study, he again kept his distance. But when a question was asked about which year marked the beginning of the "last days" and there was a moment's hesitation, he whispered to his wife, "1914!" (2 Tim. 3:1) Unknown to the others present, he had already finished reading our book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*. After that, the man attended the study regularly. All together, the three couples decided to stop smoking and to dress with modesty. Rapid spiritual progress was made and all six are now baptized Christians.

YOUNG PERSONS ACCEPT THE TRUTH

The failure of Christendom has brought about religious apathy and violence. Being freed from restraint and superstition, many young people have turned their attention to other things, including drugs

and debauchery. But many young couples have been helped to straighten out their lives by adopting true Christianity.

A 15-year-old youth became associated with a motorcycle gang that often fought with other gangs. In time, he went to Amsterdam to try different drugs. Then he busied himself with prostitution in Belgium, persuading girls to work in brothels. Hunted by the police because of his illegal activities, at the age of 21 the young man concluded that life had no purpose. Having become disgusted with such an existence, he prayed, asking God, if He really existed, to help him to get out of the mess in which he found himself. Later, he discovered that his elder brother had become one of Jehovah's Witnesses and that his father, who had been a drunkard, brawler and gambler, had put a stop to these practices and was attending a Bible study. The young man also began studying the Bible and realized that he had received an answer to his prayer.

In time, this young person gave himself up to the police. The girl with whom he had been living and who had participated with him in illegal practices also accepted the truth, and they got married. Because of the changes that the young man had made in his life, the tribunal acquitted him of his past misdeeds. This resulted in a powerful witness in that region, and the couple now live exemplary Christian lives.

WE WIN RESPECT

As regards our work, matters have changed greatly in Belgium during the last few years. Radio, television and the press all have emphasized our exemplary Christian way of life. These comments have not passed unnoticed and have helped many persons to become worshipers of Jehovah. The "Divine Victory" International Assembly held at Brussels in 1973 left a deep impression on the populace. Brothers from Spain and Portugal who then did not enjoy the liberty of freely gathering together came to Brussels for that assembly, the total attendance on the last day being 53,199. A stirring witness was given in Brussels, and even today people talk about that gathering.

Even Catholic priests cite Jehovah's Witnesses as examples. One day, a fervent Catholic came into possession of a Bible. While reading it, he realized how confused he was. Wanting to know where the truth could be found, he prayed to God night and day. One Sunday, while attending Mass, the man heard the priest tell the four persons present that the true Christians are Jehovah's Witnesses because they go from house to house to preach God's message. What a revelation that was—and it had come straight from the priest's mouth! Still speaking to the same four persons, the priest added: "And you, you don't even make the effort to come to church." These statements moved the man to abandon the Catholic Church and seek the truth. Just at that time, he was invited to attend the Memorial of Jesus Christ's death and was very much impressed with the speaker's use of the Scriptures. The man's heart was touched and he asked the Witnesses for a Bible study, which finally helped him to dedicate his life to Jehovah.

Indeed, times have changed if one recalls the early days of the Kingdom-preaching work in Belgium. However, the harvest is not yet completed, judging by the 36,383 persons attending the Memorial here in 1979—more than double the number of Kingdom proclaimers in Belgium.

There is still much witnessing work to be done in Belgium, when a person considers the density of the population, one of the most concentrated in the world. Like Jesus Christ, we feel pity for these crowds because, spiritually speaking, they are "skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." Yes, the "harvest" still is great in Belgium.—Matt. 9:36, 37.

WHY IS IT GOOD TO BE THANKFUL?

THE Holy Scriptures time and again encourage us to prove ourselves to be thankful persons. An appreciative spirit builds up others, promotes peace and adds to our own happiness. How different it is with thankless persons! Their many complaints and their selfish spirit give rise to discouragement and hurt feelings.

The thankful spirit that we should strive to cultivate is portrayed in Psalm 92. This psalm also reveals why cultivating an appreciative spirit is right and beneficial. We read: "It is good to give thanks to Jehovah and to make melody to your name, O Most High; to tell in the morning about your loving-kindness and about your faithfulness during the nights, upon a ten-stringed instrument and upon the lute, by resounding music on the harp. For you have made me rejoice, O Jehovah, because of your activity; because of the works of your hands I cry out joyfully."—Ps. 92:1-4.

The very first statement of Psalm 92 presents a powerful reason for being thankful to Jehovah. It is "good," that is, right, fitting, appropriate. The Most High deserves our gratitude, for he is our Life-Giver and has provided what is needed for sustaining life and securing our eternal happiness and welfare. Also, an appreciative spirit has a wholesome effect on us. Ingrates are never happy.

Besides expressing thankfulness when praying, we can also lift up our voice in song to the accompaniment of music. Thus we make melody to God's name, that is, to the One represented by that name.

It is indeed appropriate to start our day with an expression of gratitude for Jehovah's loving-kindness, his active compassionate concern. Before us is another day of life, in which we can praise our heavenly Father. When we rise in the morning with such an appreciative spirit, this can help us to use the day in bringing praise and honor to Jehovah. We will then strive to heed the Biblical admonition: "Whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God's glory." (1 Cor. 10:31) During the wakeful periods of the night and before retiring to bed, we do well to remember Jehovah's "faithfulness," his trueness, his dependability as a fulfiller of his word of promise. We can thank him for the blessings of the day that confirm his being a God of faithfulness. Such an appreciative attitude at the end of the day and during the night can calm us, contributing to our enjoyment of peaceful sleep. Of course, not only the daily blessings

provide an occasion for praising Jehovah God, but all of his activities or dealings with his people give reason for rejoicing. Included in God's works, in which we should find delight, are his creative works and his saving acts.

Commenting on Jehovah's works and thoughts, the psalmist continues: "How great your works are, O Jehovah! Very deep your thoughts are." (Ps. 92:5) Both Jehovah's creative works and his saving acts are great, inspiring wonderment. Because his thoughts are deep, they are not easy to comprehend. It takes more than just looking at the surface appearance of things. When it comes to the reasons for what Jehovah God does and permits, persons who are unreasoning like animals or who are morally corrupt simply cannot understand. It is as the psalmist stated: "No unreasoning man himself can know them, and no one stupid can understand this."—Ps. 92:6; Jude 10.

While righteous persons may suffer for a time, the Almighty is working out his grand purpose to bless them. Note how this is emphasized in verses 7 to 15 of Psalm 92, where we read:

"When the wicked ones sprout as the vegetation and all the practicers of what is hurtful blossom forth, it is that they may be annihilated forever. But you are on high to time indefinite, O Jehovah. For, look! your enemies, O Jehovah, for, look! your own enemies will perish; all the practicers of what is hurtful will be separated from one another. But you will exalt my horn like that of a wild bull; I shall moisten myself with fresh oil. And my eye will look on my foes; my ears will hear about the very ones who rise up against me, the evildoers. The righteous himself will blossom forth as a palm tree does; as a cedar in Lebanon does, he will grow big. Those who are planted in the house of Jehovah, in the courtyards of our God, they will blossom forth. They will still keep on thriving during gray-headedness, fat and fresh they will continue to be, to tell that Jehovah is upright. He is my Rock, in whom there is no unrighteousness."

Nothing escapes the notice of Jehovah God who resides in the highest heavens. The time will come when the wicked will no longer "blossom forth," flourish or prosper, but will come to their end. Evidently the psalmist speaks for God's servants as a whole when he says that his "horn," his power, will be exalted by Jehovah and that he would rub himself with oil, representative of refreshment and joy. While the wicked perish, the appreciative workers of righteousness would flourish luxuriantly like palm trees and mighty cedars of Lebanon. Planted, as it were, in the house of Jehovah, they are his devoted worshipers. From him, as from the sacred soil of the sanctuary, they draw their sustenance. Even in old age they will thrive like trees that live a long time. They will, in effect, be fat and fresh, enjoying vigor and health. During their lifetime they will bear witness to Jehovah's uprightness, his faithfulness to his word of promise. The Most High is a dependable "Rock," a place of stability, security and protection. He is completely righteous.

May we, therefore, prove ourselves to be grateful to Jehovah. This will lead to our enjoying a happy and contented life now, with an eternal future in view.

In Coming Issues

- **The Millennium —What Is It?**
- **Neutrality in a Mixed-up World**
- **Jonathan—"One Man in a Thousand"**

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

"Spirit of the Age"

● After three years' work the Methodists in England have produced a report on sex by their Division of Social Responsibility and its Faith and Order Committee. The report urges the British Methodist Church to change its attitude toward homosexuality. The study considers "stable permanent relationships" a suitable way of expressing homosexuality. This view would regard "homosexual relationships as not being intrinsically wrong." The conclusions of this study were said to be based on "the Bible, reason, the traditional teaching of the church, the personal and corporate experience of modern Christians, the understanding provided by the human sciences and what may be called the 'spirit of the age.' "

The Bible the basis for such conclusions? Hardly! The Bible makes clear God's view of homosexuality. (Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Lev. 18:22) The truth is that the basis for such conclusions is really, as even they call it, the "spirit of the age," or, as the Bible terms it, "the spirit of the world," which is the invisible force activating human society in its pursuits, or in its style of life.—1 Cor. 2:12; Eph. 2:2.

"Making People Deaf"

● Pete Townshend, the guitar-playing songwriter for the rock group The Who, recently commented on the loss of hearing that he is experiencing. Describing his visit to a hearing specialist, the 34-year-old Townshend is quoted in "Newsday" as saying: "By 38, I would probably begin having difficulty understanding what people were saying to me, and I would go deaf between 40 and 50." He was advised to learn how to lip-read, since the damage to his hearing was substantial and could not be treated. The shock of this pronouncement made him ponder the effect of rock music on those attending concerts of The Who and other rock groups. "It's a bit of a status symbol to leave a concert and say, 'my ears are ringing,' " he explained. "When that happens, that means you have sustained damage! If you keep it up, you won't be able to hear your grandchildren, you won't be able to hear music. This great rock and roll nation is going to create thousands of people like that."

As for his own hearing loss, the songwriter said: "I worry about it slightly. I can't afford to worry too much, because I couldn't keep playing." Besides, he added, he owns two firms that make PA equipment (public-address systems), and "I make a lot of money out of making people deaf."

Much of what passes as entertainment today displays imbalance, extremism—extremes of sound and sensuality. The Bible's counsel to be "moderate in habits" includes entertainment.—1 Tim. 3:2.

"Genuine Suffering"

● Visitors to oil-rich Saudi Arabia report tremendous changes taking place there. For example, two new industrial cities are being planned, even though the cost will be about $70,000,000,000 (U.S.). There is much preoccupation with business and money. Said the "New York Review of Books": "Visitors to the desert kingdom maintain that the business mentality is so predominant there that it is impossible to hold a conversation with the Saudis without its turning to speculation, buying and selling within just a few *minutes*. . . . Some of [the leading businessmen] have already accumulated more wealth than they and their descendants could spend in five generations. Yet they continue to earn more."

The effect of this preoccupation with money and the tempo of change there is noticed by the foreign physicians who have gone to that Arab land to practice medicine. "Nowhere, they report, are psychosomatic ailments as common as in Saudi Arabia—ailments which cause genuine suffering but are not caused by any demonstrable failing in the physical organism. There are, they say, young people who give every sign of being elderly, and old people who behave like juveniles."

This illustrates the truth of the Bible's observation that "a mere lover of silver will not be satisfied with silver, neither any lover of wealth with income," and that such persons will suffer from "many pains."—Eccl. 5:10; 1 Tim. 6:10.

THE "KEYS" OF THE GREATEST GOVERNMENT PUT TO USE

IS THERE a janitor or concierge up in heaven? In ancient Roman mythology Janus, the god of gods, was the supreme janitor in heaven and on earth. The temple of Janus still stands on the north side of the Roman Forum, near the Curia, but he is no longer worshiped. Nevertheless, what about the historical personage, Jesus Christ, now glorified in heaven at the right hand of the true "God of gods," Jehovah? (Deut. 10:17) About the year 96 C.E., when dictating a letter to be sent to the congregation in Philadelphia in Asia Minor, this glorified Jesus said to the apostle John:

[2] "And to the angel of the congregation in Philadelphia write: These are the things he says who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens so that no one will shut, and shuts so that no one opens, 'I know your deeds—look! I have set before you an opened door, which no one can shut—that you have a little power, and you kept my word and did not prove false to my name.'" —Rev. 3:7, 8.

[3] Counting from David, the first Jewish king of Jerusalem, Jesus Christ is the 43rd in the royal line of descent from that famous king. With Jesus Christ that royal line ends, because he became the permanent heir of the kingdom of David. (Luke 3:23-31) For that reason Jehovah God gave to his glorified Son "the key of David." The kingdom of David was a typical theocracy, a typical king-

1, 2. (a) In ancient Roman mythology, who was the supreme janitor in heaven? (b) Historically, what may be said for Jesus Christ as the holder of a key?

3. (a) What relationship did Jesus Christ bear to David? (b) Why did Jehovah give to Jesus Christ "the key of David," and how does he use it?

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you may bind on earth will be the thing bound in the heavens, and whatever you may loose on earth will be the thing loosed in the heavens."
—Matt. 16:19.

dom of God. (1 Chron. 29:23; 2 Chron. 13:5, 8) In the hands of the glorified descendant of David, Jesus Christ, this kingdom becomes a real, antitypical kingdom of God. As rightful holder of "the key of David," he opens up or shuts down privileges and opportunities to persons on earth with reference to the kingdom of God.

[4] Looking forward to opening up privileges of service to his faithful apostle Simon Peter, Jesus once said to him: "You are Peter [Greek: *Petros;* Latin, *Petrus*], and on this rock-mass [Greek: *tautēi tēi petrai;* Latin: *hanc petram*] I will build my congregation, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you may bind on earth will be the thing bound in the heavens, and whatever you may loose on earth will be the thing loosed in the heavens." —Matt. 16:18, 19.

[5] Jesus said those historic words some time after the Passover of 32 C.E., in the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi, near the headwaters of the Jordan River. —Matt. 16:13-17.

WHEN GIVEN AND USED

[6] Like "the key of David," the "keys of the kingdom of the heavens" were not literal, material keys of an earthly kind. They were spiritual keys, namely, the privilege, honor, assignment and authority to initiate or open up a program of information, instruction and personal intervention with respect to the kingdom of the heavens. By means of this, those persons who chose to seek first the kingdom of the heavens could take advantage of the provision that God then made available through Jesus Christ, the Heir of the heavenly kingdom. Thus they entered into something not open to them before.

[7] Two years earlier, at Jerusalem, Jesus had revealed to a ruler of the Jews, a Pharisee named Nicodemus, certain basic conditions that a believer had to fulfill to gain entrance into the heavenly kingdom of God. Jesus said: "Most truly I say to you, Unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." What, "born again" from his same human mother? No, but Jesus said to Nicodemus: "Most truly I say to you, Unless anyone is born from water and spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. What has been born from the flesh is flesh, and what has been born from the spirit is spirit."—John 3:1-6.

[8] So, could a person who was not himself already "born from water and spirit," not already a baptized, spirit-begotten Christian, possess and use the "keys" to open up to others the entryway into God's heavenly kingdom? This would hardly be logical. Thus the "keys of the kingdom of the heavens" were not given to John, even though he baptized Jesus and was the first to preach: "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near."—Matt. 3:1, 2.

[9] Well, then, was the apostle Peter spirit-begotten when Jesus Christ gave him the

4, 5. Near Caesarea Philippi, what privileges did Jesus Christ say that he would confer upon faithful Peter?
6. Those "keys of the kingdom of the heavens" were of what kind, and what did they represent?
7. Earlier, at Jerusalem, Jesus had revealed to Nicodemus what basic conditions for anyone to enter into the heavenly kingdom of God?
8. Would it be logical for anyone not already a baptized, spirit-begotten Christian to possess and use such "keys," and what example do we have in this regard?
9. How do we know whether Peter was spirit-begotten when he was given the first of the "keys," and what about the circumcised Ethiopian proselyte mentioned in Acts 8:27, 28?

first of the "keys" to use? Yes, for, on the day of Pentecost of 33 C.E., Jehovah God used the glorified Jesus to baptize with the holy spirit about 120 disciples, including Peter, who were waiting in an upper room in Jerusalem. First after Peter had thus been begotten by God's spirit, he rose up to speak to more than 3,000 Jews and circumcised proselytes who gathered to witness how the prophecy of Joel 2:28, 29 had begun to be fulfilled. If the circumcised Ethiopian proselyte who is mentioned in Acts 8:27, 28 was among the "reverent men" then dwelling in Jerusalem on that day of Pentecost, he did not get over from the temple to hear Peter. (Acts 2:1-12) But he got his opportunity later on.

[10] Peter forthrightly told those thousands of observers that they had committed a crime as a religious community by impaling Jesus Christ 52 days previously. Then those conscience-stricken "reverent men" asked: "Men, brothers, what shall we do?" Peter was the one to answer: "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the free gift of the holy spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all those afar off, just as many as Jehovah our God may call to him." Peter continued on. "And with many other words he bore thorough witness and kept exhorting them, saying: 'Get saved from this crooked generation.' " (Acts 2:14-40) Thus the spirit-begotten Peter used the first of the "keys."

[11] Did any of those natural Jews go in through the now open entryway as Jews to whose forefathers Jehovah God had made the promise of Joel 2:28, 29? Acts 2:41, 42 answers: "Therefore those who embraced his word [Peter's word] heartily were baptized, and on that day about three thousand souls were added. And they continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to sharing with one another, to taking of meals and to prayers." Through their getting baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ and thereafter receiving the free gift of the holy spirit, they were "born again," "born from water and spirit."—John 3:3, 5.

10. When and how did Peter use the first of the "keys"?
11. How did thousands of those listening to Peter get "born again" or "born from water and spirit"?

FOR WHOM THE SECOND KEY WAS USED

[12] Peter had been promised, not one key, but "the keys of the kingdom of the heavens." This meant at least two keys. So, when was he given the second key, and in behalf of whom? If Peter had needed only one key, then only natural Jews and circumcised Jewish proselytes would make up the 144,000 whom Jesus Christ builds upon himself as the rock-mass to be his complete spirit-begotten congregation. (Matt. 16:18; Rev. 7:4-8; 14:1-3) But was the heavenly salvation to be *limited to* only those admitted by Peter's use of a key on the day of Pentecost? Well, what did Jesus say just before he ascended to heaven on the 40th day from his resurrection? On that day, in the vicinity of Jerusalem, he said to his disciples:

[13] "In this way it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from among the dead on the third day, and on the basis of his name repentance for forgiveness of sins would be preached in all the nations—starting out from Jerusalem, you are to be witnesses of these things. And, look! I am sending forth upon you that which is promised by my Father [in Joel 2:28, 29]. You, though, abide in the city until you become clothed with power from on high."—Luke 24:46-49.

[14] However, according to Acts 1:8, Je-

12, 13. (a) If Peter had needed to use only one key, what would this have meant? (b) However, what did Jesus say about this to his disciples just before his ascension to heaven?
14, 15. According to Acts 1:8, how did Jesus make distinctions with regard to extending the preaching of repentance to "all the nations"?

sus went into more detail as to how the preaching of repentance on the basis of his name was to be extended progressively to "all the nations." There he said: "But you will receive power when the holy spirit arrives upon you, and you will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth."

15 Here Jesus divided off Samaria from "all Judea." For that matter, all along through his earthly ministry he distinguished between circumcised natural Jews and circumcised Samaritans.

16 After the Passover of 30 C.E., during the first year of his public activity, he had to pass through Samaria on his way from Judea to Galilee. In that connection it was observed that "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans." (John 4:9) However, at Jacob's fountain near the city of Sychar, Jesus chose to talk to a Samaritan woman. She proved to be, in fact, the first person to whom Jesus confessed that he was the Messiah or Christ. Was this because she was not a Jewess? (Matt. 16:20) Moreover, at the invitation of the Samaritan residents of Sychar, he and his apostles stayed with the Samaritans for two days and talked to them. A number of them believed and said to the Samaritan woman who had borne witness to them: "We do not believe any longer on account of your talk; for we have heard for ourselves and we know that this man is for a certainty the savior of the world."—John 4:39-43.

17 Yet, even after this, Jesus continued to draw a difference between Jews and Samaritans, despite the belief of some Samaritans in him. Did Jesus call for any of those believing Samaritans to be baptized in water with John's baptism? No! This was significant, inasmuch as immediately before the account of Jesus' visit to Samaritan Sychar, it is written: "When, now, the Lord became aware that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John—although, indeed, Jesus himself did no baptizing but his disciples did—he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. But it was necessary for him to go through Samaria. Accordingly he came to a city of Samaria called Sychar near the field that Jacob gave to Joseph his son. In fact, Jacob's fountain was there."—John 4:1-6.

18 Did things go so favorably for Jesus two years later? He and his disciples were going in the opposite direction, to attend the Jewish festival of the booths at Jerusalem. Then Jesus' messengers "went their way and entered into a village of Samaritans, to make preparation for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set for going [whither?] to Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this they said: 'Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and annihilate them?' But he turned and rebuked them. So they went to a different village." (Luke 9:51-56) Had Jesus yielded to the violent temper of James and John, this might have prejudiced the Samaritans against Christianity.

19 Even a year earlier, before the Passover of 32 C.E., when Jesus sent out the apostles to preach by twos, he said to them: "Do not go off into the road of the nations, and do not enter into a Samaritan city; but, instead, go continually to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, preach, saying: 'The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.'" (Matt. 10:5-7; Luke 9:1-6) Months later, after the festival of the booths of 32 C.E., Jesus sent

16. How did it come about that on his way back to Galilee Jesus spent two days with the residents of the Samaritan city of Sychar?
17. What position did Jesus take toward those believing Samaritans and water baptism?
18. Two years later, when Jesus was passing through Samaria on his way to Jerusalem, what attitude did Samaritan villagers show?
19. (a) When Jesus sent out the 12 apostles by twos, what instructions did he give concerning Samaria? (b) According to John 8:47, 48, what was the attitude of Jews in general toward Samaritans?

out the 70 evangelizers and gave them instructions like those given to the 12 apostles. The villages and cities in which they preached God's kingdom were probably in Judea, not in Samaria. (Luke 10:1-24) They made no report of visiting Samaritan places. They went to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Why so? Because those evangelizers were not given authority greater than that of apostles. The general attitude of the Jews toward Samaritans was betrayed when Jesus told the unbelieving Jews that they were not from God, and they retorted: "You are a Samaritan and have a demon."—John 8:47, 48.

[20] Jesus made a distinction between Samaritans and Jews when he said to the Samaritan woman: "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, because salvation originates with the Jews." (John 4:22) Jesus classified a Samaritan as a "man of another nation" or, more literally, "of another race." (Luke 17:16-18; see word-for-word reading of *Kingdom Interlinear Translation.*)* The Samaritans, who worshiped at Mount Gerizim, did not attend the Pentecost in Jerusalem in 33 C.E. So they got no benefit from Peter's use of the first of the "keys of the kingdom of the heavens." (Acts 2:5-11) When, therefore, did the 12 apostles give Samaria their attention after the holy spirit had been poured out at Jerusalem that they might share in what Jesus foretold in Acts 1:8?

[21] After Pentecost many things hap-

20. Why did the Samaritans not get any benefit from Peter's use of the first of the "keys of the kingdom" at Pentecost in Jerusalem, and so what question arises?

* See *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* Vol. 1, p. 266, under *allogenēs'*.

21. How did Philip the evangelizer come to be in Samaria, and why did much joy result from his presence?

pened to the Christian congregation in Jerusalem. Persecution that followed the martyrdom of Stephen scattered all the members of the congregation from Jerusalem except the 12 apostles. (Acts 8:1-5) Not by apostolic orders and instructions, but because of the persecution, Philip, a close fellow worker of Stephen, and other Jewish Christians fled north to the district of Samaria. (Acts 6:1-6; 21:8) There Philip, who had been favored with the gift of miracles by God's spirit, preached the good news about the resurrected and glorified Jesus Christ and performed many miraculous signs in the way of healings. "So there came to be a great deal of joy in that city."—Acts 8:8.

[22] What was the effect of this? "When they believed Philip, who was declaring the good news of the kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ, they proceeded to be baptized, both men and women." This included a certain magician named Simon who "had been practicing magical arts and amazing the nation of Samaria." (Acts 8:9, 12, 13) At this point the question arises, Were those believing Samaritans born "from water and spirit"? Well, the water of baptism had entered into the matter, but what about the spirit? If they had become spirit-begotten after their water baptism, then Philip was the one who opened the way for this new group, Samaritans, into the "kingdom of the heavens." But did he really do so, although he was not one of the 12 apostles? What does the inspired record show?

[23] This Philip was not one of the apostles to whom Jesus said: "Whatever things you may bind on earth will be things bound in heaven, and whatever things you may loose on earth will be things loosed in heaven." (Matt. 18:18; 16:19; 10:2-4; John 1:43-48) So Philip is not reported as making any promises of the gift of the holy spirit to the Samaritans in connection with their water baptism. He was not authorized to say, as Peter did to the Jews on the day of Pentecost: "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the free gift of the holy spirit."—Acts 2:38.

[24] The Samaritans were not in the Law covenant Moses had mediated for the Israelites at Mount Sinai, even though the Samaritans viewed the first five books of Moses, the Pentateuch, as God's Word and observed a Passover and a Pentecost at Mount Gerizim in the district of Samaria. (2 Ki. 17:29, 30; John 4:19, 20) So their circumcision of the flesh did not of itself make them Jewish proselytes. The Samaritans were not implicated in the impalement of Jesus and so did not need to be baptized in water for God's forgiveness of such a gross sin for which there should be repentance. But the Samaritans got baptized at Philip's hands in the name of Jesus Christ as being the Messiah (Christ) and "the savior of the world." (John 4: 25, 26, 28, 29, 42) Did they, on this account, become "born from water and spirit"? No! For they did not then get the holy spirit.

[25] Why was this? Acts 8:14-17 tells us: "When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they dispatched Peter and John to them; and these went down and prayed for them to get holy spirit. For it had not yet fallen upon any one of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they [Peter and John as apostles] went laying their hands

22. Because of the water baptism of many Samaritan men and women at the hands of Philip, what question comes up?

23. Why is Philip not reported as making any promise of the holy spirit to the Samaritan candidates for baptism in Jesus' name?

24. (a) Did the Samaritans, by getting circumcised and keeping feasts set out in Moses' writings, get into the Mosaic Law covenant? (b) After water baptism in Jesus' name, were they at once born "from water and spirit"?

25. How does Acts 8:14-17 show why the baptized Samaritans had not been born from water and spirit?

upon them, and they [the baptized Samaritans] began to receive holy spirit." This does not mean simply miraculous spiritual gifts.

[26] Here first the baptized Samaritans became "born" from spirit as well as from water and were qualified to enter God's heavenly kingdom. (John 3:5) The activity of the spirit here was like that reported later in Acts 10:44-46 and 11:15-17. Thus in behalf of the believing baptized Samaritans the apostle Peter used the second of the "keys of the kingdom of the heavens." True, the apostle John was there with Peter, but, earlier, on the day of Pentecost, 11 other apostles were with key-bearing Peter.—See also Matthew 18:1, 18.

[27] Peter's priority is borne out by what Acts 8:18-23 next tells us: "Now when Simon [the magician] saw that through the laying on of the hands of the apostles the spirit was given, he offered them money, saying: 'Give me also this authority, that anyone upon whom I lay my hands may receive holy spirit.' But Peter said to him: 'May your silver perish with you, because you thought through money to get possession of the free gift of God. You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not straight in the sight of God. Repent, therefore, of this badness of yours, and supplicate Jehovah that, if possible, the device of your heart may be forgiven you; for I see you are a poisonous gall and a bond of unrighteousness.' " This indicates that Peter was taking the lead as Christ's principal agent on this occasion. As the one to whom the keys of the Kingdom had been committed, he spoke.

[28] From then on the same opportunity could be presented to others in the district of Samaria. Accordingly, Acts 8:25 tells us: "Therefore, when they [Peter and John] had given the witness thoroughly and had spoken the word of Jehovah, they turned back to Jerusalem, and they went declaring the good news to many villages of the Samaritans." Now the baptized, spirit-begotten Samaritans began to worship their heavenly Father, Jehovah, neither on Mount Gerizim nor at Jerusalem, but in his great spiritual temple.—John 4:21.*

[29] Philip and other Jewish Christians had been obliged to flee down to Samaria because of the persecution promoted by the Pharisee Saul of Tarsus. But after Saul himself was converted to Christianity, things changed for the congregation in Palestine. "Then," according to Acts 9:31, "indeed, the congregation throughout the whole of Judea and Galilee and Samaria entered into a period of peace, being built up; and as it walked in the fear of Jehovah and in the comfort of the holy spirit it kept on multiplying." Philip, however, finally settled down in the seaport city of Caesarea, where the Roman governor of the province of Judea had his headquarters and where an Italian band of soldiers was stationed.—Acts 8:40; 21:8; 10:1; 23:23-35.

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* All of this took place during the latter half of the final week of the "seventy weeks" of years foretold in Daniel 9:24-27a. During that 70th "week" Jehovah God was keeping in force toward the natural Israelites the Abrahamic covenant in which the Israelites found themselves by natural descent from Abraham. (Gen. 12:1-3; 22:18) In contrast with Philip who fled from the persecution to Samaria, Acts 11:19 tells us: "Those who had been scattered by the tribulation that arose over Stephen went through as far as Phoenicia and [the island of] Cyprus and Antioch [in Syria], but speaking the word to no one except to Jews only." The 70th "week" of special favor to the natural Jews because of the Abrahamic covenant ended in early autumn of 36 C.E., it having begun with Jesus' baptism and anointing in 29 C.E. So the admittance of the baptized Samaritans to the heavenly Kingdom privileges did not open the way for all other non-Jews "to the most distant part of the earth" or spearhead the great inflow of such uncircumcised Gentiles into the spirit-begotten Christian congregation.

26. Thus the baptized Samaritans became qualified for what privilege, and Peter, in the presence of John, made use of what instrument?
27. How does Acts 8:18-23 show Peter taking the lead in dealing with Simon the former magician?
28. To whom else was the Kingdom opportunity then open, and where did the spirit-begotten Samaritans begin worshiping?
29. After Saul's conversion to Christianity, what happened to the spirit-begotten congregation in Judea, Galilee and Samaria, and where did Philip settle down?

"THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM" AND THE "GREAT CROWD"

IN THE year 36 C.E. a marked event in Christian history took place in Caesarea on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Whether Philip the evangelizer had settled there by that year we do not know for certain. If he had done so, then why was he not used in connection with a certain army officer of the Italian band of soldiers then stationed there? Philip had preceded the apostle Peter in Christian activity in Samaria, so why not now in Caesarea in 36 C.E.? The inspired Scriptures give us the answer.

[2] The Law covenant that Moses had mediated between Jehovah God and Israel at Mount Sinai in Arabia was abolished on the basis of the impalement of Jesus Christ, the descendant of Abraham and King David. That was three years and a half from the water baptism and spirit-anointing of Jesus back in 29 C.E. Nevertheless, Jehovah continued to give preferential treatment to the natural Jews and Samaritans also during this period for three years and a half more, to fulfill the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27a. This "week" or period of seven years terminated in the seventh lunar month (Tishri) of 36 C.E. From then on the Israelite descendants of Abraham would be put on the same spiritual level as the people of the non-Jewish nations, the uncircumcised Gentiles. After that no more preferential treatment to the Jews by the God of Abraham! How was this demonstrated in 36 C.E.?

[3] About this time, upon urgent request from the Christian congregation in the seaport city of Joppa, Peter had come and raised up the benevolent Jewish Christian Dorcas from the dead. There he stayed a few days with Simon the tanner. (Acts 9:36-43) At that time an uncircumcised Gentile was undesirable as an associate of a Jew, just as much so, indeed, as a person disfellowshiped from the congregation of God's people. (Matt. 18:17) So, up to this time, the Jewish-Christian Peter had never voluntarily entered into the house of an uncircumcised Gentile. (This was doubtless true of the evangelizer Philip also.) Consequently, when, later, the circumcised Jewish Christians at Jerusalem heard that Peter had finally entered a Gentile home, they criticized him, saying that "he had gone into the house of men that were not circumcised and had eaten with them."—Acts 11:3.

[4] Even Peter, although he had been a Christian apostle for some years now, said to the householder into whose house in Caesarea he had hesitated to set foot: "You well know how unlawful it is for a Jew to join himself to or approach a man

1. In view of Philip's final move to Caesarea, what questions arise about him regarding 36 C.E.?
2. When was the Mosaic Law covenant abolished, and yet for how long was preferential treatment to circumcised Jewry continued?
3. (a) Where was the apostle Peter at this time, and why? (b) Why did Peter come to be criticized by the circumcised Jewish Christians at Jerusalem for his unusual action?
4. How did the Jewish Christian apostle Peter explain his feelings after he stepped into a Gentile home in Caesarea?

of another race." (Acts 10:28, *NW; Jerusalem Bible; The New English Bible*) Gentile races were considered to be defiled or unclean.

[5] In defense of himself, Peter had to state the facts to the apostles and other circumcised Jewish Christians at Jerusalem. What were the facts? These: That Peter had not initiated this action of his own accord. He had acted in obedience to Jehovah God.

[6] When Peter was at the house of Simon the tanner in Joppa, God sent Peter a vision to make known that what God had now cleansed Peter should not keep on calling unclean. Then three men who were sent by the Italian centurion Cornelius of Caesarea called at the house to inquire about Peter. God now told this Jewish-Christian apostle to go with them, "not doubting at all, because I have dispatched them." Six of the circumcised Jewish Christians of the Joppa congregation went along with Peter up the seacoast to Caesarea. The next day, when they entered the house of the Gentile centurion Cornelius, he explained that God's angel had appeared to him and told him to send for Peter at Joppa, "and he will speak those things to you by which you and all your household may get saved."—Acts 10:1-33; 11:14.

[7] Unaware of what was about to happen, Peter proceeded to give the message about the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, his death and his resurrection from the dead by God's almighty power. In his speech Peter got along as far as to say: "This is the One decreed by God to be judge of

5, 6. What facts did Peter set forth in defense of his criticized action in Caesarea?

7. How far along did Peter get with his speech to the Gentiles in the house of the Italian centurion Cornelius?

the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone putting faith in him gets forgiveness of sins through his name."—Acts 10:34-43.

[8] At this point Jehovah God gave the proof that he was now admitting believing Gentiles, though uncircumcised, into the congregation of spirit-begotten Christians, for we read: "While Peter was yet speaking about these matters the holy spirit fell upon all those hearing the word. And the faithful ones that had come with Peter who were of those circumcised were amazed, because the free gift of the holy spirit was being poured out also upon people of the nations. For they heard them speaking with tongues and glorifying God." —Acts 10:44-46.

[9] When giving his own account of this at Jerusalem, Peter said: "But when I started to speak, the holy spirit fell upon them just as it did also upon us in the beginning [at Pentecost, 33 C.E.]. At this I called to mind the saying of the Lord, how he used to say, 'John, for his part, baptized with water, but you will be baptized in holy spirit.' If, therefore, God gave the same free gift to them as he also did to us who have believed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I should be able to hinder God?"—Acts 11:15-17.

[10] So what did Peter now do? "Then Peter responded: 'Can anyone [of the six Jewish Christians who accompanied Peter] forbid water so that these might not be baptized who have received the holy spirit even as we [circumcised Jewish Christians] have?' With that he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."—Acts 10:46-48.

8. While Peter was yet speaking, what proof did God give that he was now admitting uncircumcised believing Gentiles into the spirit-begotten congregation?
9. In his account at Jerusalem, how did Peter describe the action of the holy spirit at Caesarea, and with what did he compare it?
10. What did Peter now command to be done with these uncircumcised Gentiles, and why?

[11] Thus "God for the first time turned his attention to the [uncircumcised] nations to take out of them a people for his name." (Acts 15:14) On this occasion, in the house of the uncircumcised centurion Cornelius in Caesarea, Peter used another of the "keys of the kingdom of the heavens," the third key. From then on, the spirit-anointed disciples of Jesus could be witnesses of him "to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) What God had opened up by means of the key-holder Peter remained open for an earth-wide witness. In agreement with this, God's holy spirit "fell upon" (Greek: *epipipto*) three distinct classes of believers, (1) on the baptized 120 disciples and, afterward, about 3,000 converted Jews, all at Jerusalem on Pentecost of 33 C.E.; (2) on the baptized Samaritans, but only after the arrival and services of the apostles Peter and John; and (3) on the believing Gentiles gathered in the house of Cornelius in Caesarea, in 36 C.E.—Acts 1:15; 2:1-4, 38, 41; 8:15-17; 10:44, 45; 11:15, 16.

OPENING UP A WAY TO THE "GREAT CROWD"

[12] Down through the centuries since then Jehovah has been taking out a "people for his name" from among circumcised Jews, circumcised Samaritans and uncircumcised Gentiles. (Amos 9:12) This people for Jehovah's name was to number just 144,000, who were to be united with Jesus in his heavenly kingdom.—Rev. 7:4-8; 14:1-3.

[13] In September of 1881 the Watch Tower publication *Food for Thinking Christians* was issued. Later, in 1886, the book *The Divine Plan of the Ages* was issued. These two publications showed that the spiritual nature and the human or earthly nature are separate and distinct. Accordingly, the salvation of the spirit-begotten congregation of 144,000 to heaven would be different from that of redeemed humanity to life on a paradise earth. Yet, the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ would be basic to both salvations.

[14] On February 24, 1918, amid World War I, J. F. Rutherford as president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society delivered a public talk in Los Angeles, California, U.S.A. It was entitled "Millions Now Living May Never Die." After World War I the material of this astounding talk was published in book form. This presentation emphasized that there would be righteously disposed persons on earth who would be spared alive during the coming day of God's wrath. They would survive into God's new order and have the opportunity never to die off the earth transformed into a paradise.

[15] Again in Los Angeles, in 1923, a convention was held and the Society's president talked on Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats. By Scripture he established the fact that the symbolic "sheep" of this parable are those who now, during this "time of the end," do good in various ways to Jesus' spiritual or "born again" brothers. In reward for this such doers of good would be preserved through the coming battle of Armageddon, and the glorified "Son of man," the heavenly King Jesus Christ, would usher them into the earthly realm of his kingdom of a thousand years. (Matt. 25:31-46) This brightened the earthly hopes for many sheeplike persons who did good to Christ's "brothers" as if they were doing it directly to him.

[16] However, a climax of this development of Bible understanding came 12

11. (a) From then on, the spirit-begotten Gentile believers were free to act in what capacity? Why? (b) How was the action of the holy spirit the same on three occasions, with three distinct groups?
12. Since then Jehovah has been taking out what class from among whom?
13. What did *Food for Thinking Christians* and *The Divine Plan of the Ages* show about natures and the salvations involved?
14. What did the public talk given in Los Angeles, California, on Sunday, February 24, 1918, emphasize?
15. What did the talk in 1923 at Los Angeles, on Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats, set forth?
16, 17. When the climax in this development of Bible understanding came 12 years later, why was it no ordinary occasion?

years later. This proved to be no ordinary occasion in human history. The great economic depression was by then in its sixth year. The Roman Catholic "Holy Year" of 1933 had failed to bring the promised "peace and prosperity." Due to clashes with the Ethiopian Empire, Fascist Italy was preparing for war and on October 3, 1935, Italian troops invaded the Empire. Adolf Hitler was in the third year of his dictatorship over Germany, and was savagely persecuting Jehovah's Witnesses. On October 4, 1934, he had been warned by hundreds of cablegrams from all over the earth that, if he did not desist from persecuting them, Jehovah would destroy both him and his Nazi party. But goatishly he determined to exterminate this "brood" of unpolitical Christians from the German Reich.

[17] During 1935, America's president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, was running into difficulties in connection with the institution that he fathered, the NRA (National Recovery Administration), and the national government was yielding to the pressure of Catholic Action. Soviet Russia was under "strong man" rule by Joseph Stalin. Imperial Japan, as an aggressive opposer of Communism, was veering toward the ill-fated "Triple Alliance" with Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, to form the Axis Powers. World War II was in the making!

[18] Critical though governmental affairs world wide were in 1935, it proved to be an exceptionally thrilling time for Jehovah's Witnesses. They held a convention in America's national seat of government, Washington, D.C., on May 30 through June 3. The public lecture given on Sunday, June 2, was entitled "Government" and was radiocast into Great Britain, Europe, Africa and the islands of the sea. —See the issue of August 29, 1935, of *The Golden Age*.

18. Where did Jehovah's Witnesses hold a convention in the spring of 1935, and what was the subject of the public talk?

[19] Earlier, on Friday afternoon, May 31, a stirring address was delivered to the conventioners. Due to its importance, it was broadcast simultaneously over two radio stations. Sheeplike persons interested in everlasting life on an earth in a paradise state were especially invited to attend the convention. The interest of all the conventioners was captured by the theme misunderstood up till then, namely, the "great multitude" seen in vision by the apostle John according to Revelation 7:9-17, *Authorized Version*. To the particular delight of the visible and invisible audience, the members of that "great multitude" were identified. They are not a heaven-bound, "born again" class of Christians. They are the earthly "sheep" class of Jesus' parable recorded in Matthew 25:31-46. They survive on earth and in this way "come out of the great tribulation."—Rev. 7:14.

[20] These come under the obligation to commit themselves to Jehovah's Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ. They show their commitment by "consecrating," or dedicating, themselves to Jehovah through Christ. Scripturally such a dedication should be attested to by water baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the holy spirit. (Matt. 28:19, 20) So, if any desired to be prospective members of the "great multitude," they should logically dedicate themselves now and symbolize their dedication by water baptism. (*The Watchtower*, August 15, 1934, p. 250, par. 34) It was not to be expected that, following their baptism, God's spirit would 'fall upon' them and beget them to a heavenly life that they were not seeking.

[21] The disclosure was electrifying, es-

19. On Friday afternoon, May 31, the members of what class were identified, and what was to be the experience of this class as regards the "great tribulation"?

20. What commitment were those who wanted to be prospective members of the "great multitude" obliged to make, and, after publicly attesting to it, what were they not to expect the spirit to do?

21. By this disclosure, what were hundreds moved to do the next day, and into what "flock" did they stream?

pecially for those sheeplike ones who were longing for a definite understanding of their position in Jehovah's arrangement. So they were galvanized into action by the identification of the "great multitude." The following day, Saturday, June 1, was programmed so as to offer an opportunity for water baptism. Great was the joy of 840 candidates, most of whom were immersed with the hope of being classed by Jehovah with the prospective "great multitude." It proved to be an outstanding baptismal event. It was as if the floodgates had been opened up, and throngs streamed through into a publicly confessed relationship with Jehovah, entering into the "one flock" of the Fine Shepherd to associate with his spiritual "brothers."—John 10:16; Matt. 25:34.

22 It was as if the "faithful and discreet slave" class had used a "key of knowledge" (Matt. 24:45-47; Luke 11:52) and had unlocked the door for prospective members of the "great multitude" to enter into wonderful privileges. Taking hold of these would work for them to "come out of the great tribulation" and enter into the cleansed earth under its new world government by Christ. Their attention was directed to that government on the following day by the public address on the subject "Government," a subject so well adapted to the then existing world situation. To the large visible audience and to a vastly larger radio audience, the address gave early warning of the destruction impending over all the earthly governments of worldly men in God's war at Armageddon. Furthermore, the address magnified Jehovah's theocratic government by Christ as being the only hope for all mankind. This was the divine government for the "great multitude," or the "great crowd," to acclaim as their glorious hope!*

23 However, by such use of the "key of knowledge" had the door that admits suitable believers to the heavenly kingdom been simultaneously locked? No, for Jesus Christ is the One who has "the key of David" and he alone can shut such a door. Admittance was still possible to certain ones according to God's will. As an evidence of this, certain members of the anointed remnant of Jehovah's Witnesses were baptized in water in years subsequent to that momentous disclosure about the "great multitude" in the spring of 1935 and the publication of this disclosure in the issues of August 1 and 15, 1935, of the *Watchtower* magazine.—Rev. 3:7; Luke 11:52; Matt. 23:13.

24 Only the outbreak of the "great tribulation" can block further entrance of humans into the ranks of the sheeplike ones who will make up the "great multitude," or "great crowd." (*New World Translation*) The way of escape from destruction with this doomed system of things will then be a lost opportunity for salvation. For all these years since 1935 the door

22. (a) What "key" had been used, and with what effect? (b) To what government was their attention directed next day, and for them it was theirs to hail as being what?

* The hundreds of newly baptized witnesses joined in the response of the visible audience when the public speaker submitted a resolution at the close of his talk and said: "And now my good friends of this audience, of the invisible as well as the visible, I suggest everyone of you who desires a righteous government, who desires to see a government in which peace, prosperity and happiness shall come to all who obey, arise and say Aye."

Concerning what followed this suggestion, the Washington newspaper *Herald* said:

> "Like a tidal wave that mighty throng in and around the auditorium swept to its feet. Arms raised aloft, Jehovah's witnesses at the top of their lungs shouted their affirmation. Windows in the auditorium rattled as the sound wave beat against them, and the voice of the throng, police estimated, could easily have been heard for a mile."

Similar scenes were enacted at the same moment in London, Belfast, Glasgow, Copenhagen and hundreds of other places in many parts of the earth.—*The Golden Age*, issue of June 19, 1935, p. 598; see also the *Year Book of Jehovah's Witnesses for 1936*, p. 62, par. 3.

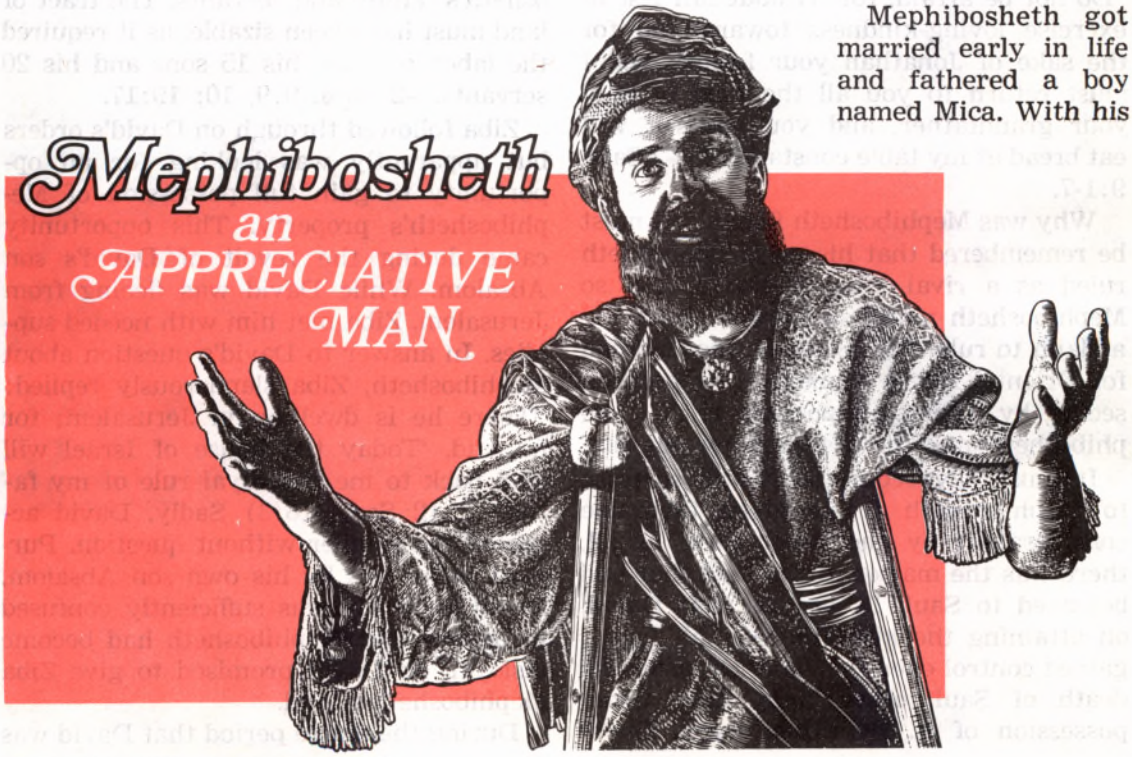
23. (a) By use of the "key of knowledge," had the door to believers suitable for the heavenly kingdom been closed? (b) What may be given as evidence in this regard?

24. (a) What will block the entry of further ones into the "one flock" under the Fine Shepherd? (b) In what capacity is the Shepherd admitting "sheep" into the "one flock"?

into the Fine Shepherd's "one flock" has stayed open. Reportedly, more than two million have gone in. The Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ, said: "I am the door of the sheep." (John 10:7-9) As such, he is still admitting the friends of his spiritual "brothers" and separates them from the "goats" who will never survive the "great tribulation" and its "war" at Har–Magedon. All those who now want to, let them listen to the Fine Shepherd's "voice" as it is now expressed through his spiritual "brothers" yet on earth. (John 10:16) O how grand their privilege is to enjoy the safety of the "one flock" under the "one shepherd"!

Mephibosheth an APPRECIATIVE MAN

MEPHIBOSHETH or Merib-baal was the son of Jonathan and the grandson of King Saul. However, his being a member of Israel's first royal family gave him no promise of a glorious future. He was born after his grandfather Saul had forfeited the kingship. Then, when Mephibosheth was five years of age, his father and grandfather were killed in battle. On hearing the news about this, Mephibosheth's nurse became panicky and fled, taking the boy with her. During the course of the flight, Mephibosheth fell and became crippled for life, lame in both feet. About seven years later, his uncle Ish-bosheth was murdered in cold blood. (2 Sam. 4:4-8) Truly, Mephibosheth was a victim of tragedy. But this did not make him bitter. He grew up to be an appreciative man.



Mephibosheth got married early in life and fathered a boy named Mica. With his

family, Mephibosheth made his home with Machir, a prominent, wealthy man residing at Lo-debar, a city in Gilead. —2 Sam. 9:4, 12; compare 2 Samuel 17: 27-29.

In time, this son of Jonathan was given favorable attention by King David. After David had been firmly established in the kingship over all Israel for a number of years, he gave thoughtful consideration to the oath-bound promise that he had made to his friend Jonathan. (1 Sam. 20: 42) For the sake of Jonathan, David desired to extend kindness toward anyone who might remain of Saul's house. From Saul's servant Ziba, David learned about Mephibosheth and did not delay in summoning the son of Jonathan. In humility, Mephibosheth prostrated himself before David. "Then David said: 'Mephibosheth!' to which he said: 'Here is your servant.' " Likely the voice of Mephibosheth reflected fear, for David immediately assured him: "Do not be afraid, for without fail I shall exercise loving-kindness toward you for the sake of Jonathan your father; and I must return to you all the field of Saul your grandfather, and you yourself will eat bread at my table constantly."—2 Sam. 9:1-7.

Why was Mephibosheth fearful? It must be remembered that his uncle Ish-bosheth ruled as a rival king of David, and so Mephibosheth might be viewed as having a claim to rulership. Since it was common for Oriental rulers to make their position secure by killing all possible rivals, Mephibosheth may have feared for his life.

It must have come as a real surprise to Mephibosheth to be given favorable consideration by the king. First of all, there was the matter of the land that had belonged to Saul. It may be that David, on attaining the kingship over all Israel, gained control over this land. Or, after the death of Saul, others may have taken possession of it. In either event, David determined that the estate should be returned to the rightful heir, Mephibosheth. But this was not all. Mephibosheth was to enjoy a position of honor in the court of David. It was to be his privilege to eat regularly at the royal table. This was a favor usually bestowed, not on helpless cripples, but on men who distinguished themselves by deeds of valor.

Deeply appreciative, Mephibosheth prostrated himself before David, saying: "What is your servant, that you have turned your face to the dead dog such as I am?" (2 Sam. 9:8) He was overwhelmed by David's kindness. In his own estimation, Mephibosheth was totally undeserving of this. And in speaking of himself as a "dead dog," he was acknowledging that he occupied the lowest possible position.

David then arranged for Ziba to cultivate the field that was being returned to Mephibosheth. The produce was to serve as the means for supporting Mephibosheth's family and servants. The tract of land must have been sizable, as it required the labor of Ziba, his 15 sons and his 20 servants.—2 Sam. 9:9, 10; 19:17.

Ziba followed through on David's orders but apparently was looking for an opportunity to gain full possession of Mephibosheth's property. This opportunity came during the revolt of David's son Absalom. While David was fleeing from Jerusalem, Ziba met him with needed supplies. In answer to David's question about Mephibosheth, Ziba slanderously replied: "There he is dwelling in Jerusalem; for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will give back to me the royal rule of my father.' " (2 Sam. 16:3) Sadly, David accepted the slander without question. Pursued as he was by his own son Absalom, David evidently was sufficiently confused to believe that Mephibosheth had become disloyal. So David promised to give Ziba Mephibosheth's land.

During the entire period that David was

forced to live away from the capital city, Mephibosheth, in expression of grief over David's distressing plight, neglected his personal appearance. After Absalom's revolt was crushed, Mephibosheth, in this obvious state of mourning, met David at Jerusalem. He was greeted with the words: "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?" (2 Sam. 19:25) In view of what Ziba had said, it was natural for David to ask this question. Mephibosheth replied:

"My lord the king, it was my servant that tricked me. For your servant had said, 'Let me saddle the female ass for me that I may ride upon it and go with the king,' for your servant is lame. So he slandered your servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king is as an angel of the true God, and so do what is good in your eyes. For all the household of my father would have become nothing but doomed to death to my lord the king, and yet you placed your servant among those eating at your table. So what do I still have as a just claim even for crying out further to the king?" —2 Sam. 19:26-28.

On hearing this, David must have realized his wrong in accepting Ziba's words, and this evidently irritated him. He did not want to hear anything more about the matter, for he said to Mephibosheth: "Why do you yet keep speaking your words? I do say, You and Ziba should share in the field."—2 Sam. 19:29.

Mephibosheth did not take offense at David's handling matters in this way. He was not concerned about material loss. To him the important thing was that David had returned unharmed to Jerusalem. Hence, Mephibosheth said: "Let [Ziba] even take the whole, now that my lord the king has come in peace to his house." —2 Sam. 19:30.

While Mephibosheth could have been bitter about his lot in life, he appreciated life itself. In view of the circumstances of the time, he could have been killed by David. This made him deeply grateful to be privileged to eat at the royal table, and he humbly and loyally submitted to the decisions of King David. Mephibosheth thus is a sterling example of a man who valued what he had and did not bemoan what he did not have. May we, too, be appreciative like Mephibosheth.

QUESTIONS from READERS

● Why was the tree stump in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream banded with two bands?

Nebuchadnezzar received a prophetic dream of an immense tree that was cut down and banded. Concerning the stump, we read: "Leave its rootstock itself in the earth, but with a banding of iron and of copper, . . . and with the beasts of the field let its portion be until seven times themselves pass over it."—Dan. 4:23, 15.

The prophet Daniel explained that in its first application this dream meant that Nebuchadnezzar would be cut down from his ruling position for seven times (evidently seven years). We understand this dream to apply also to the "seven times" of Gentile rulership during which Jehovah would not exercise universal sovereignty through a kingdom with a ruler in the line of David. See *Our Incoming World Government—God's Kingdom* (1977), pp. 71-89.

The stump's being banded would mean that the "tree" would be kept in check for the seven times. As Job 14:7-9 shows, under normal conditions a tree stump might sprout and begin to grow again; but not this one. When Nebuchadnezzar was given this dream, iron and copper were among the strongest metals available. (Compare Psalm 107:10, 16; Job 40:18.) So the binding of the stump with a band of iron and a band of copper would doubly confirm that the "tree" would not grow again until the bands of divine restraint were removed.

Giving Comfort Produces Fruitage

A witness of Jehovah in Portugal was the client of a Baptist hairdresser who had adamantly refused to listen to the Bible's promise of everlasting life on earth under God's kingdom. (Luke 23:43; John 17:3) One day, however, the hairdresser was extremely despondent because of serious family problems. In a kind way, the Witness pointed out to her from the Bible the importance of showing the fruitage of God's spirit—love, joy, peace, and so forth. (Gal. 5:22, 23) Not only did the hairdresser express appreciation for such kind and helpful information, but, on returning home, she applied the counsel.

Her husband was amazed at his wife's good disposition and asked: "What happened to you?" He wondered why she had "changed so much," and he was pleased to learn that one of Jehovah's Witnesses had helped her.

The very next week, the Christian woman offered the hairdresser a home Bible study, which she gladly accepted on the condition that her husband could also attend. On the evening of the first study, numerous relatives were present, evidently all keenly interested in seeing how the Witnesses handled a Bible discussion. The arrangement surprised them and a regular study was under way with no difficulty.

Three months later, the newly interested couple were involved in a serious accident and were forced to make a decision on whether to accept a blood transfusion or not. They showed respect for God's law regarding the sanctity of blood, holding fast to their Bible-trained conscience and refusing a blood transfusion. (Acts 15:28, 29) They have been richly blessed, indeed, for 10 persons in that particular family are now baptized witnesses of Jehovah. And it all started with informal witnessing by a Christian woman who sought to provide comforting and helpful information from the Word of God.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

November 11: The "Keys" of the Greatest Government Put to Use. Page 16. Songs to Be Used: 1, 68.

November 18: "The Keys of the Kingdom" and the "Great Crowd." Page 23. Songs to Be Used: 92, 6.