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THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

Festival to be Celebrated by Billions

THE WATCHTOWER®
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

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OUR COVER: Everyone enjoys a festival. The Israelites kept the "festival of booths" with joy, each waving the "lulab" palm branch before Jehovah. In the prophetic fulfillment, billions are to be gathered from all nations to rejoice in God's salvation through Christ

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Could You Be Your Own Enemy?

"A calm heart is the life of the fleshly organism, but jealousy is rottenness to the bones."—Prov. 14:30.

A WOMAN began experiencing serious hearing problems. Her personal physician was unable to find anything that pointed to an organic cause. Why was she going deaf? Because of frequent loud arguments with her daughter, she simply had begun to tune out sounds. In this way, she apparently sought to defend herself against an unpleasant situation. Once she recognized the problem, her hearing returned to normal.

A 29-year-old man began feeling pain around his heart. For a period of 10 years the discomfort persisted and intensified. This occurred despite considerable medical care and extensive periods of rest. The health problem interfered with his work and deprived him of happiness.

Did he actually have heart trouble? No. At the age of 21, he had contracted a serious illness from which he had recovered completely. However, based on personal reading and the comments of others, he had become convinced that the illness had brought on a heart condition. As a result, although he had no organic disease, he suffered from the symptoms just described. Later, when he received professional help that came to grips with his emotional problem, the man's pain disappeared and he began leading a productive life.

As a member of a family in which back problems were common, a young woman began experiencing backaches. She became deeply troubled about this but was afraid to go to a doctor, expecting the worst. The more she worried, the greater the pain became. Finally, she went to a physician, only to be told that he could not find any reason for the problem. What was wrong? The initial backache started when this woman received heavier responsibility in connection with her job. She became concerned about possible failure. Then the worry over the pain worsened the backache. After coming to realize the source of the difficulty, this woman stopped being anxious about it, and the pain ceased.

These are but a few of many examples illustrating that emotional factors can have a strong bearing on an individual's physical well-being. Without even realizing it, a person may be his own enemy. According to the *Encyclopedia Americana* (1977 edition, Vol. 22, p. 732), "an estimated 50% of all medical patients have illnesses that can be classified as wholly or partly psychosomatic," that is, "precipitated or sustained by emotional factors." The heart seems to be especially susceptible to emotional stress.

Not until the 20th century have physicians come to accept the view that emotional problems may be at the root of many ailments. However, the Maker of man, Je-

hovah God, revealed this in his Word, the Bible. For example, therein we read: "A calm heart is the life of the fleshly organism, but jealousy is rottenness to the bones." (Prov. 14:30) While a calm spirit has a wholesome effect on the heart, the harboring of jealousy toward others can be destructive to a person's physical frame.

Since certain emotional factors can be injurious, we need to keep them in check. Acting in harmony with the Scriptures can help us. But how?

Sure Help From God's Word

A PERSON needs strong motivation to resist yielding to damaging emotions. The Bible does provide such motivation, aiding the individual to deal successfully with feelings of guilt, jealousy, anxieties over making a living and a host of other emotional factors that could be injurious to health.

DEALING WITH GUILT FEELINGS

Often, feelings of guilt cause or aggravate certain ailments. A person may have become involved in conduct that troubles his conscience. His experience may be like that of David, an Israelite king who lived about 3,000 years ago. Describing the effect of his guilt feelings, David wrote: "My bones wore out through my groaning all day long. . . . My life's moisture has been changed as in the dry heat of summer." (Ps. 32:3, 4) These words suggest that David's efforts to suppress the naggings of a guilty conscience made him weary. Like a tree deprived of needed moisture during a drought or a very hot, dry summer, David was sapped of his strength or vitality. How did he gain relief?

He made complete confession of his sins to God and, in faith, accepted divine forgiveness. That is why David could write: "Happy is the one whose revolt is pardoned, whose sin is covered. Happy is the man to whose account Jehovah does not put error."—Ps. 32:1, 2.

The Bible reveals that anyone who turns to God in sincere

repentance, on the basis of the sin-atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, can be forgiven his sins. The Christian apostle John wrote: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous so as to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. . . . [Jesus Christ] is a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, yet not for ours only but also for the whole world's."—1 John 1:9; 2:2.

Of course, if a person does not believe that God has forgiven his sins, he will continue to experience the hurtful effects of a troubled conscience. Hence, it is vital that the individual strengthen his faith in God's willingness to forgive sins. This he can do by reviewing what the Bible says about divine forgiveness and the persons whose transgressions were pardoned.

For instance, the Israelites were told: "Though the sins of you people should prove to be as scarlet, they will be made white just like snow; though they should be red like crimson cloth, they will become even like wool." (Isa. 1:18) Since the Most High was willing to forgive the sordid acts of unfaithful Israelites, we can rest assured that he will grant similar pardon to sincerely repentant ones today. The Bible tells us: "I am Jehovah; I have not changed."—Mal. 3:6.

Consider another example. King Manasseh "did on a large scale what was bad in Jehovah's eyes, to offend him. And there was also innocent blood that Manasseh shed in very great quantity, until he had filled Jerusalem from end to end." (2 Ki. 21:6, 16) Later, he was taken captive to Babylon. This bitter experience brought Manasseh to the point of humbling himself before God. The Most High granted forgiveness to the repentant king and "restored him to Jerusalem to his kingship." (2 Chron. 33:11-13) Few persons have made as bad a record of sin as did Manasseh. Yet, because he was repentant, he was forgiven. What encouragement this can give to individuals who are plagued with feelings of guilt!

Another case in point is that of the man who became the Christian apostle Paul. Before his conversion, he was "a blasphemer and a persecutor and an insolent man." (1 Tim. 1:13) "Nevertheless," Paul wrote, "the reason why I was shown mercy was that by means of me as the foremost case Christ Jesus might demonstrate all his long-suffering for a sample of those who are going to rest their faith on him for everlasting life." (1 Tim. 1:16) How faith-strengthening it is to contemplate what God, through Christ, did in connection with Paul! Though he had viciously persecuted Christ's followers, had acted in an arrogant manner against them and had blasphemed God unknowingly, Paul was forgiven when he repented. Thereafter he was used marvelously in aiding others to become Christians and in strengthening fellow believers. Moreover, he had the inestimable privilege of writing more of the inspired Christian Scriptures than any other man.

Individuals may at times feel condemned at heart, fearing that their sins are just too bad to be pardoned. Nevertheless, what the Bible states provides a firm basis for faith in God as the Forgiver of sins. This is forcefully expressed in the following statement of the apostle John: "We shall assure our hearts before him as regards whatever our hearts may condemn us in, because God is greater than our hearts and knows all things." (1 John 3:19, 20)

What fine relief from guilt feelings can confidence in these inspired words mean for us!

RESISTING JEALOUSY

Besides feelings of guilt, bitter jealousy toward others may cause or aggravate a physical affliction. Jealousy may prevent a person from sleeping, may cause certain muscles to be tense and painful, and may lead to digestive troubles or other health problems. As the Bible can help a person to be freed from destructive guilt feelings, it can also aid him to overcome jealousy or deep resentment. First, though, the individual must recognize that he does have a problem with harboring feelings of resentment.

According to the Bible, the quality of love is needed in order to triumph over jealousy. The Scriptures tell us that "love is not jealous." (1 Cor. 13:4) To overcome resentment, we need to accept and act in harmony with this Bible truth. We may find it helpful to put forth the effort to become better acquainted with those whom we may resent, striving to see their good qualities. Clearly, no individual can do everything, and all persons have faults. Hence, we wisely exercise care not to overrate our own abilities, appreciating that much can be done when, instead of just one person, many qualified people can give of their abilities and knowledge in doing worthwhile work.

The Bible makes it clear that we depend on others. Using the human body as an illustration of what should be true of the Christian congregation, the apostle Paul wrote: "For the body, indeed, is not one member, but many. If the foot should say: 'Because I am not a hand, I am no part of the body,' it is not for this reason no part of the body. And if the ear should say: 'Because I am not an eye, I am no part of the body,' it is not for this reason no part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If it were all hearing, where would the smelling be? But now God has set the members in the body, each one of them, just as he pleased." (1 Cor. 12: 14-18) In harmony with these words, we do well to think about what we can do to build up others instead of looking with envy upon their abilities, standing or accomplishments.

Individually, we have nothing over which to boast. We did not give ourselves the capacity for developing certain talents or abilities. The Scriptures set matters in a proper perspective, saying: "For who makes you to differ from another? Indeed, what do you have that you did not receive? If, now, you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as though you did not receive it?" (1 Cor. 4:7) Furthermore, what really counts is not our abilities but the kind of persons we are. Of what value are exceptional talents if the possessor of them is rude, selfish and hateful? So, rather than giving in to feelings of jealousy, we do well to follow the Bible's encouragement to pursue the way of love, proving ourselves to be persons who willingly and eagerly respond to the needs of fellowmen. (1 Cor. 14:1) It would surely be unwise to harbor jealousy, thereby jeopardizing our physical well-being and failing to be the kind of persons who could be a source of uplift and encouragement to others.

AVOIDING UPSETS OVER INJUSTICES

It is not easy to endure being made the victim of injustice or to be powerless when seeing fellow humans subjected to oppression or exploitation by corrupt men. This can cause damaging emotional upsets. Here, too, what the Bible says can be an aid in avoiding the inner upheavals that can be injurious to health.

The Scriptures make it plain that often

there is little that we can do. So many things are defective in the world that man simply cannot straighten out everything. The Bible is very realistic in telling us: "That which is made crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot possibly be counted." (Eccl. 1:15) A person's getting upset over the injustices that may be committed by others does nothing to alter the situation or relieve the problem for anyone. Of course, if we can further the cause of justice in a positive way, this would certainly be proper. We would not want to close our eyes callously to needless human suffering.

However, in the case of situations that must simply be accepted and endured, we can take comfort in the Bible promise that Jehovah God will set all matters straight. Regarding a future day of reckoning, the Scriptures tell us that 'God through Christ Jesus will judge the secret things of mankind.' (Rom. 2:16) Because there is a day of judgment, no injustice that we may experience in this world can result in permanent harm. When we have faith that the Creator will set all things straight, we spare ourselves many serious emotional upsets.

WORRIES ABOUT MAKING A LIVING

For many people, worry over making a living is a tremendous burden. This burden can be so great that it leads to serious health problems. In this regard, what helpful counsel does the Bible offer? "Never be anxious and say, 'What are we to eat?' or, 'What are we to drink?' or, 'What are we to put on?' " said Jesus Christ. "For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you. So, never be anxious about the next day, for the next day will have its own anxieties. Sufficient for each day is its own badness."—Matt. 6:31-34.

Surely, no amount of anxiety or worry will make it easier for us to make a living. Each day, as the Bible says, has "its own badness," its own problems. There are enough problems in one day without worrying about difficulties that might crop up the next day. Jehovah God will not let those loving him suffer needlessly or purposelessly, but he will respond to our requests for aid. If we continue to exercise faith in God as a Provider while doing our part in procuring the necessities of life through honest work, we will have what we need. Our experience will be like that of David, who wrote: "A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread." —Ps. 37:25.

TURN TO THE BIBLE

Regardless of what kind of pressure or stress you may face, there is information in the Bible that can aid you. Therefore, examine the Scriptures, making their superb guidelines a working part of your fund of knowledge. Then, by applying Bible principles in your daily life, you can continue to enjoy a good conscience and can resist yielding to emotions that could injure your health. More importantly, you will be walking in the way that leads to an eternal future. "He that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:17.

Joyful Festivals

"You must become nothing but joyful."—Deut. 16:15.

WHO is there that does not enjoy a festival? Throughout the centuries the peoples of earth have enjoyed festivals. This was true of the people who got their national laws from man's Creator through his prophet Moses. But their festivals were different; they were prophetic of good things to come. Joyfulness is likewise the portion of the modern-day counterpart of those ancient celebrators in the Middle East, for these enter into the fulfillment of those prophetic festivals. From the standpoint of the Sacred Bible, these present-day celebrators are spiritual Israelites, and they prove to be the happiest people on the face of the earth.

[2] In the inspired books written by Moses, three festivals were provided for. In this fifth book, entitled Deuteronomy, chapter 16, verse 16, we read: "Three times in the year every male of yours should appear before Jehovah your God in the place that he will choose: in the festival of the unfermented cakes and the festival of weeks and the festival of booths, and none should appear before Jehovah empty-handed."

[3] Verse 17 says: "The gift of each one's hand should be in proportion to the blessing of Jehovah your God that he has given you." At the time those words were spoken, the Israelites were living in tents, on their way to the Promised Land of Canaan.

Sheaf of firstfruits from the barley harvest pictures resurrected Jesus

FESTIVAL OF UNFERMENTED CAKES

[4] The first of the annual festivals, that of unfermented cakes, was held right after the observance of the Passover supper on Abib or Nisan 14. The festival of unleavened cakes was held for seven days, from Nisan 15 to and including Nisan 21. The first day of this festival was the Sabbath day that followed the keeping of the Pass-

1. Who today prove to be the happiest people, and why?
2. In Deuteronomy 16:16, how many festivals were provided for, and what were they?
3. When the added words of Deuteronomy 16:17 were spoken, what was the situation of the natural Israelites?
4. What was the first festival, and, on its second day, what did the high priest offer to Jehovah?

over supper. On the second day of the festival, or Nisan 16, the Israelite high priest at Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem would offer to Him a sheaf from the newly ripened barley harvest.—Lev. 23:11-16.

[5] There is a historic account of a 12-year-old male who was taken from Nazareth to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. The boy was Jesus, the son of Mary. Eighteen years later, in 29 C.E., that male Israelite, now the Lord Jesus Christ, became the "Lamb of God," which was typified by the Passover lamb. (Luke 2:41-52; John 1:29-37) Three and a half years later he was actually sacrificed on a tree at Calvary, outside Jerusalem, on Friday, Nisan 14, 33 C.E. That Friday night Nisan 15 began, and along with it the festival of the unfermented cakes, but Jesus himself did not join in the rejoicing that marked such an occasion. He was dead and buried. Whereas the Jews in general at Jerusalem rejoiced at the start of their festival, the disciples of Jesus did not do so. They sorrowed at what seemed to them to be the permanent loss of their Leader. But on the next day, Sunday, Nisan 16, their sorrow was turned to a rejoicing that was not equaled by that of the Jews celebrating the festival.

[6] Why so? Because their Leader, Jesus Christ, was resurrected from the dead by the almighty power of his heavenly Father, Jehovah. Interpreting what this meant, the Christian apostle Paul, when writing about the resurrection, said: "Now Christ has been raised up from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep in death." (1 Cor. 15:20) Thus the sheaf of firstfruits from the barley harvest that the Jewish high priest at the temple waved before Jehovah on Sunday, Nisan 16, pictured an individual, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, the first to be resurrected out of death completely to life eternal. So he alone was the one who could be called "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep in death." This miracle marked the second day of the festival.

Two symbolic loaves have Jehovah's recognition in heaven from Pentecost

[7] During the seven days of the festival, no leaven was to be found in any quarters of the Jews, because leaven represented that which is out of harmony with God, sin. This festival really memorialized that, because of having to leave Egypt in haste, the Israelites did not

5. Why did Jesus not celebrate the festival on Nisan 15, 33 C.E., and when did his disciples enter into an unequaled joyfulness?

6. In the light of 1 Corinthians 15:20, what did the sheaf of barley grain waved by the high priest on Nisan 16 picture, and why?

7. Why was leaven forbidden within Jewish quarters during the seven-day festival, and what did this memorialize?

have enough time to let their dough be leavened. Hence, they had to eat unleavened bread, just as they had done on Passover day.—Ex. 12:11-34; Deut. 16:2-4.

[8] Just as the festival of unfermented cakes followed the Passover and lasted for seven days, so the antitype of this festival must follow the sacrifice of the "Lamb of God," Jesus Christ, on Friday, Nisan 14, 33 C.E. Since the number of days of the festival, seven, pictures perfection, completeness, so the antitypical festival has continued on down through the centuries until now, and those Christians who are spiritual Israelites, Jews inwardly, are obligated to observe it. In 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, the apostle Paul refers to the antitypical festival as he writes:

[9] "Do you not know that a little leaven ferments the whole lump? Clear away the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, according as you are free from ferment. For, indeed, Christ our passover has been sacrificed. Consequently let us keep the festival, not with old leaven, neither with leaven of badness and wickedness, but with unfermented cakes of sincerity and truth."

[10] That was written about 55 C.E., or 22 years after Christ's sacrificial death. Today, the spiritual Israelites who read those words of the apostle Paul more than 19 centuries later are duty-bound to keep the antitypical festival, namely, with sincerity and truth. As the anointed remnant of spiritual Israelites do so, they can catch the spirit of the ancient typical festival and be "nothing but joyful." Why? Because the faithful observance of the antitypical festival makes for a clean, theocratic organization on which Jehovah can express his approval.

8, 9. Corresponding to the type, what provision must the antitypical festival of unfermented cakes follow, and how does Paul confirm this?
10. Why and how must the antitypical festival be celebrated today, and why can the celebrators be "nothing but joyful"?

FESTIVAL OF WEEKS

[11] The second of the obligatory festivals of ancient Israel was the festival of weeks. Why was it called so? For the reason that the Israelites were to count seven weeks from Nisan 16, the day that their high priest presented to Jehovah the sheaf of newly ripened grain as the firstfruits from the barley harvest. This count of time would run up to 49 days, and on the 50th day they were to celebrate the festival of weeks. In the Greek language into which a group of Jews translated their Bible, the word for 50th (day) is *pentecostē'*. Hence, the Greek-speaking Jews called the festival of weeks Pentecost. What was to be featured on this day?

[12] In answer, Leviticus 23:15-21 says: " 'And you must count for yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day of your bringing the sheaf of the wave offering, seven sabbaths. They should prove to be complete. To the day after the seventh sabbath you should count, fifty days, and you must present a new grain offering to Jehovah. Out of your dwelling places you should bring two loaves as a wave offering. Of two tenths of an ephah of fine flour they should prove to be. . . . And the priest must wave them to and fro along with the loaves of the first ripe fruits, as a wave offering before Jehovah, along with the two male lambs. They should serve as something holy to Jehovah for the priest. And you must make a proclamation on this very day; there will be a holy convention for yourselves. No sort of laborious work may you do. It is a statute to time indefinite in all your dwelling places for your generations.' "

[13] This prophetic festival of weeks, or Pentecost, was fulfilled upon the congrega-

11. What was the second of the obligatory festivals, and why was it given that name?
12. According to Leviticus 23:15-21, what was to be featured on this festival day?
13. When did the antitypical Pentecost go into effect, and how was that occasion marked?

tion of Jesus' disciples at Jerusalem on the 50th day counted from his resurrection from the dead. So the antitypical festival of weeks, or Pentecost, began to go into effect on the sixth day of the third lunar month, that is, on Sivan 6, of the year 33 C.E. At that time the glorified Jesus Christ was in the Most Holy of Jehovah's great spiritual temple, namely, in the personal presence of Jehovah in heaven, to which he had ascended on the 40th day from his resurrection. While the Jews were celebrating the typical festival of weeks, or Pentecost, at Herod's temple in Jerusalem, about 120 disciples of the spiritual High Priest, Jesus Christ, were met together in an upper room in that city. Then, before the third hour of the day (9 a.m.), the Lord Jesus Christ poured down holy spirit from the Most Holy of Jehovah's spiritual temple. This resulted in their being spiritually begotten by their heavenly Father, Jehovah, and their being anointed with holy spirit by means of their High Priest, Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:1-36) Thus the two symbolic loaves of fine flour got Jehovah's recognition in heaven, in his Most Holy. —Heb. 9:24.

[14] In the typical festival of weeks, or Pentecost, why were *two* loaves made of grain from the newly ripened wheat harvest presented to Jehovah? This typified that there would be more than one individual involved in the fulfillment. The two typical wheat loaves were baked with leaven. This indicates that those upon whom the fulfillment of the festival is realized are leavened with sin, by natural birth, which was the case with the 120 disciples of the sinless Jesus, waiting in Jerusalem on Sunday, Sivan 6, 33 C.E. There being two loaves may also indicate that those who become spirit-begotten, anointed disciples of the Messiah Jesus would be taken from two groups on earth, first from the natural circumcised Jews and later from all the other nations of the world, the Gentiles. Together, the two groups would constitute one antitypical wave offering to Jehovah.—Eph. 2:13-18.

[15] Looked at from the latter viewpoint, the first of the antitypical loaves, as meaning the circumcised Israelites, was presented by the High Priest Jesus to Jehovah God right on time, on Sivan 6, which was the same day when the Jewish high priest waved the two typical loaves before Jehovah in Herod's temple in Jerusalem. As those two wheat loaves were no longer necessary as a type, Jehovah did not recognize them, and so the Jews celebrating at Herod's temple did not receive the gift of the holy spirit. Those Jews who wanted to realize the fulfillment of Joel 2:28, 29 upon them had to come away from that typical temple and get in touch with the 120 disciples of Christ upon whom the prophecy had already come true. Thus about 3,000 of them became part of the antitypical wave loaf on that twofold day of Pentecost, 33 C.E.

[16] The second symbolic loaf, as meaning the Gentiles, or non-Jews, began to be waved before Jehovah later with the admission of the believing Samaritans to the Christian congregation and afterward the admission of the uncircumcised Gentiles

14. (a) The fact that the two wheat loaves were leavened pictures what? (b) What reasons might be assigned to why there were two loaves?

15. When was the loaf as representing a Jewish loaf presented to Jehovah, and how was his recognition shown?

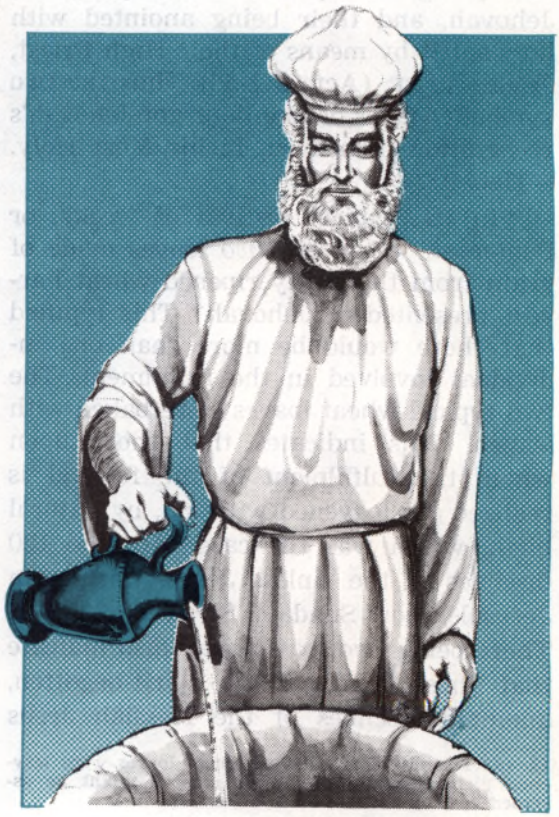
16. When was the second symbolic loaf presented to Jehovah, and till when have the two symbolic loaves been in process of being completed?

or peoples of the nations in general. This latter is understood to have taken place in autumn of 36 C.E. (Acts, chaps. 8 and 10) The two antitypical loaves have been undergoing completion during these past 19 centuries. The facts show that some have been added to be part of the "loaves" in recent times, these having been prefigured by Ruth the Moabitess and ancestress of Jesus Christ and by Queen Esther, the cousin of the Jew Mordecai who became the prime minister of the Persian Empire.—See the book *Preservation,* published in the year 1932 and reproducing the material in the series of articles appearing in the *Watchtower* issues of 1931 and 1932.

17 The completing of the membership of the two antitypical Pentecostal loaves during the now more than 1,900 years has been a cause for great rejoicing on the part of those spiritual Israelites celebrating the antitypical festival of weeks. Just as the two typical loaves represented the firstfruits in the harvest month of Sivan, so those making up the antitypical loaves are firstfruits to Jehovah God through Jesus Christ, since they take precedence over the rest of the world of mankind, getting a heavenly inheritance as the first benefits of the sacrifice of the "Lamb of God."—Jas. 1:18; Rev. 14:4.

FESTIVAL OF BOOTHS

18 The final great festival of the Jewish sacred year occurred in the seventh month, the month of Ethanim, or Tishri. (1 Ki. 8:2) It was outstanding in certain respects. Most frequently it was called the festival of booths, but two times it is called the festival of ingathering. (Ex. 23:16; 34:22) For instance, Exodus 23:16, 17 states: "Also, the festival of harvest of the first ripe fruits of your labors, of what you sow in the field; and the festival of ingathering at the outgoing of the year, when you gather in your labors from the field. On three occasions in the year every male of yours will appear before the face of the true Lord, Jehovah." Also, Exodus 34:22 speaks of "the festival of ingathering at the turn of the year." Deuteronomy 16:13-15 mentions it as the festival of booths and says: "The festival of booths you should celebrate for yourself seven days when you make an ingathering from your threshing floor and your oil and winepress. And you must rejoice during your festival, you and your son and your daughter and your man slave and your slave girl and the Levite and the alien resident and the fatherless boy and the widow, who are inside your gates. Seven days you will cele-



17. (a) The process of completing the membership of the two symbolic loaves has been a cause for what on the part of the festival celebrators? (b) For what reason are those making up the symbolic loaves a kind of "firstfruits"?

18. What was the final festival of the Jewish sacred year called, when did it occur, and who were to take part in it?

brate the festival to Jehovah your God in the place that Jehovah will choose, because Jehovah your God will bless you in all your produce and in every deed of your hand, and you must become nothing but joyful."

[19] For the most part, this festival is called "the festival of booths." During its seven days the Jews who were assembled at Jerusalem dwelt in booths or tabernacles, true to the name of the celebration. It began five days after the Day of Atonement, which took place annually on Tishri 10 and by which the nation of Israel was restored to peaceful relations with Jehovah God. So the festival of booths began at a most propitious time, and lasted from Tishri 15 to Tishri 21, a complete number of days.

[20] It was without equal in the rejoicing that marked it. According to historical records, at daybreak of each festival day a priest would take a golden pitcher that could contain three log measures, or two pints, of liquid and he would descend from Jerusalem down to what came to be called the Pool of Siloam. Those of our readers who have visited today's Jerusalem will recall how, when they left the city by the Dung Gate at its southeast corner, they came down to what was called the Virgin's Well, or the Well of Gihon. From this well, King Hezekiah dug a tunnel during the threat of an Assyrian invasion. Stouthearted visitors will recall how, after feeling their way through the darkness of this tunnel for some time, they came out into the Pool of Siloam.

[21] Not through Hezekiah's tunnel, but followed by a great procession, including a band of musicians, the priest with the golden pitcher would go to the Pool of Siloam. After filling the pitcher with water, the priest would return to the city and would go to the courtyard where Jehovah's altar of sacrifice was situated. On the altar's southern side two basins had been installed, each with a hole at the bottom. The basin at the altar's southwest corner was for the water from the Pool of Siloam. When the priest poured in the water, it would flow through and fall at the altar base. On this occasion the observing Jews rejoiced greatly. This may have reminded the joyful celebrators of Isaiah, chapter 12, which describes the pleasure experienced by the Israelites on being released from exile in Babylon in 537 B.C.E. Isaiah 12:3 says: "With exultation you people will be certain to draw water out of the springs of salvation."

[22] Jehovah God was the heavenly Source of their salvation. He was the One who delivered their forefathers from the 70 years of exile in pagan Babylon where they had thirsted for salvation to come after Babylon's overthrow in 539 B.C.E. (Isa. 44:28 through 45:7; Jer. 2:13) The remembrance of this deliverance was a cause for rejoicing during the festival of booths. An ancient Jewish proverb says: 'He who has never seen the rejoicing at the pouring out of the water of Siloam has never seen rejoicing in his life.'

19. (a) Why was this festival true to its name in the way it was celebrated? (b) Why was the time when it was held a most favorable one for the celebrators?
20. According to historical records outside the Bible, what would a priest do each morning of the festival?
21. (a) How would the priest get to the Pool of Siloam, and what would he do with the water of Siloam? (b) The rejoicing at this time would remind the Jews of what words of Isaiah's prophecy?
22. (a) How was Jehovah the Source of water of salvation for the forefathers of the Jewish celebrators? (b) How was the rejoicing at the pouring out of the water of Siloam described?

Festival Illumination

THE festival of booths was an occasion for special illumination of "the city of the great King," Jehovah. (Matt. 5:35) Nightly in Herod's temple, in the Courtyard of the Women that lay to the east of the altar, there was an unusual display. Four giant candelabra were installed there. Each had four large basins. In order to fill the basins with combustible oil, ladders had to be used to reach them. Castaway garments of the priests were used as wicks for the basins of oil. The light cast by these 16 basins of burning oil was strong enough to illuminate all Jerusalem by night. Under this magnified illumination, the Israelite men in the Courtyard of the Women would dance or do acrobatics, while the womenfolk looked down upon the scene from their balcony. Singers entoned the 15 Psalms of Ascent to musical accompaniment by the Levites. This rejoicing kept on till daybreak.

[2] Uncircumcised Gentiles attending the festival were restricted to the Courtyard of the Gentiles, separated from the Courtyard of Israel by the Stone Barrier and the Outer Courtyard.—Note Acts 21:28, 29, to illustrate restrictions on Gentiles at the temple.

[3] In view of the prominent features that were added to the celebration of the festival of booths, we can appreciate some pertinent remarks of Jesus Christ at the festival. He celebrated this festival for the last time in the autumn of 32 C.E. Because Jews at Jerusalem were seeking to kill him, Jesus left Galilee by himself and went up inconspicuously to the festival. About the middle of it, say, Tishri 18, he stood forth openly and began to teach the people, the throngs of celebrators in the temple.

[4] The last day of the festival, Tishri 21, was called "the great day of the festival." On that day Jesus likely reminded the people of the pouring out of the water of Siloam when he said: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He that puts faith in me, just as the Scripture has said, 'Out from his inmost part streams of living water will flow.'" On what Jesus there said, the apostle John makes this comment: "However, he said this concerning the spirit which those who put faith in him were about to receive; for as yet there was no spirit, because Jesus had not yet been glorified."—John 7:37-39.

[5] Those marvelous words began to come true on the day of Pentecost of the following year, when about 120 disciples, assembled in an upper room in Jerusalem, received the outpouring of the holy spirit. From them, indeed, streams of living water began to flow forth when, in many miraculously given languages, they spoke "the magnificent things of God" to the astonished thousands of Jews that gathered together to witness the spectacle.—Acts 2:1-41.

[6] On the seventh and last day of the festival of booths, Jesus made a further remark that may have reminded his disciples of the special illumination that featured the celebration, namely, that of the

1. How did Jerusalem receive special illumination during the festival of booths, and how did Jews act under this illumination?
2. Where were the Gentiles who attended the festival located at this time?
3, 4. (a) How did Jesus attend the festival in autumn of 32 C.E., and what did he there say that could remind Jews of the water of Siloam? (b) According to John 7:39, to what was Jesus there referring?
5. When did those marvelous words begin to come true, and how?
6. On the last festival day, what did Jesus say that may have reminded his disciples of the special temple illumination?

four tall candelabra in the temple's Courtyard of the Women. Jesus said: "I am the light of the world. He that follows me will by no means walk in darkness, but will possess the light of life."—John 8:12.

[7] Jesus' calling himself "the light of the world" was very appropriate at this festival of booths, inasmuch as the festival took on the characteristics of a world festival. How so? Because in God's law the "alien resident" within the gates of the Israelites was named as having the right to take part in the festival, with rejoicing along with God's chosen people. —Deut. 16:14.

[8] According to Numbers 29:12-34, an unusual number of bulls were offered in sacrifice. On the first day 13 bulls were offered, and on the succeeding six days one less bull was offered each day, down to seven bulls offered on the seventh and last day, on which day Jesus said: "I am the light of the world." Thus by the last day of the festival 70 bulls had been offered up. The number 70 is a multiple of 7 and 10, both of these numbers representing completeness, perfection, 7 spiritual perfection and 10 secular completeness. On Tishri 10, the Day of Atonement, only one bull had been offered up as an atonement sacrifice. But during the seven-day festival of booths, Tishri 15-21, 70 bulls were offered. As a type, these would provide enough blood for the cleansing and salvation of the whole world of mankind. This corresponds with what is set out in Genesis chapter 10. There the personal names of family heads and of nations are given, beginning with Noah and running down through his three sons to the names Mesha and Sephar. These amount to 70 designations, and they appear to cover the world population of that post-Flood period.

[9] So, at the suitable time, it was most fitting for Jesus Christ to announce, "I am the light of the world," not merely the light of his anointed footstep followers. As regards the benefit of light, we remember that it was after God said, "Let light come to be," and after he created the sun, the moon and the stars and made it possible for them to beam light down upon our earth, that he created animals and finally the perfect man and woman, to enjoy the light of life. Today, in this world bedarkened by sin and alienation from God, all persons stand to benefit from the light that streams forth from Jesus Christ, "the light of the world." All of them need "the light of life."—John 8:12; Gen. 1:3.

ANTITYPICAL FESTIVAL OF BOOTHS

[10] Like the two preceding festivals ordained by God for his chosen people, the festival of booths should have an antitypical meaning for our times. Happily it does have an antitypical fulfillment. Well, then, when did this begin? How are we to determine this? By means of factors typical and antitypical, historical.

[11] In Matthew, chapter 13, Jesus Christ gave us a parable in which the ingathering of the fruitage of the field was featured. This was the parable of the wheat and the weeds or tares (darnel). In explaining the features of the parable, Jesus said: "The harvest is a conclusion of a system of things." (Matt. 13:39) Bible prophecy and timetables, as well as historical events, establish that the conclusion of today's system of things began in 1914 C.E., in the autumn of which year "seven times" ended for Gentile domination of the earth

7. Why was Jesus' calling himself the light "of the world" very fitting at the festival of the booths?
8. (a) What was unique about the sacrificing of bulls at the festival of the booths? (b) As to number, how does this correspond with what is set out in Genesis chapter 10, indicating what?
9. Of whom did Jesus say that he was "the light," and what is it that all mankind needs for gaining life?
10. In what respect is the festival of booths like the two preceding festivals, and what factors do we here need to consider?
11. What do the historical facts show as to whether the "harvest" mentioned in Matthew 13:39 began in the year 1914, or not?

without interference by God's Messianic kingdom. (Dan. 4:23-25) Did the "harvest" or ingathering of the "wheat" class of true Christians begin in that year? No, because history shows that Jehovah's dedicated Christian worshipers were dispersed during World War I that began in 1914. Their worldwide organization was broken up by the enemies of Jehovah's Messianic kingdom, the heavenly kingdom that was zealously being proclaimed by those spirit-begotten, anointed disciples of Jesus Christ, the reigning King. The organizational breakup finally reached even the headquarters of Jehovah's dedicated people in Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A., in 1918.

[12] In Jesus' prophecy on the "sign" of his presence and of the conclusion of this system of things, he said, in Matthew 24:31: "And he will send forth his angels with a great trumpet sound, and they will gather his chosen ones together from the four winds, from one extremity of the heavens to their other extremity." Those words foretold a gathering together of Christ's "chosen ones" from all the places to which they had been scattered or isolated. This gathering began taking place in the post-war year of 1919, immediately after members of the headquarters staff of the Brooklyn center were released, after suffering nine months of imprisonment in the federal penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A., on March 25, 1919. Thus it was in that memorable year that the antitypical festival of ingathering, or of booths, started going into effect. This was marked by tremendous joy on the part of the anointed remnant of Christ's "chosen ones" world wide.

[13] To confirm this, we must recall a number of weighty things. When Jesus said, "The harvest is a conclusion of a system of things," about what was he talking? About the ingathering of "the sons of the kingdom," that is to say, the spirit-begotten heirs of the heavenly kingdom. That is a spiritual anointed class, symbolized by the wheat, and their ingathering did indeed start in the spring of 1919. In course of time more were gathered in besides those heirs of the Kingdom who were scattered by World War I events. In the period from 1919 onward thousands of others took their stand for God's established kingdom and dedicated themselves to Jehovah, got baptized, were begotten spiritually and were anointed with God's spirit, and these were added to the ranks of the original remnant. These newly added ones were, as a class, prefigured by outstanding characters in pre-Christian Bible dramas. These illustrious characters were Ruth the Moabitess, who became the loyal companion of the Jewess Naomi, her mother-in-law, and also Queen Esther, the cousin of the Jew Mordecai, who became the prime minister of the Persian Empire under Emperor Ahasuerus, or Xerxes.

[14] Both Ruth and Esther became connected with the royal line of David and with its preservation down to the first coming of Jesus, the "son of David." (Matt. 1:1, 5; Ruth 4:18-22; Esther 4:13, 14) The gathering in of the Ruth and Esther class, along with the original anointed remnant, marks the opening of the antitypical feast of ingathering, or of booths.

[15] Another thing: In pre-Christian times it was the natural Jews who celebrated the typical festival of booths. They were the ones commanded by Jehovah through Moses to celebrate it. So at the time of the autumn ingathering they flocked to Jerusalem and dwelt there in booths. Even

12. When did the gathering foretold by Jesus in Matthew 24:31 start, and the beginning of what festival was marked by this?
13. (a) When Jesus spoke of a harvest in Matthew 13:39, he was speaking about the harvesting of what persons? (b) Who of such ones were harvested after 1919?
14. Thus, what marks the opening of the antitypical festival of ingathering, or of booths?
15. The autumn festival was whose festival, and who were commanded to dwell in booths during the celebration?

Gate
Colonnades
Gate
Royal
Gate
Court of the Gentiles
Stone Barrier
Outer Court
Temple
Court of Israel
Court of Priests
North Colonnade
Court of Women
Gate
Colonnade
Solomon's Colonnade

the permanent residents of Jerusalem did so. This festival of booths was a reminder of something earlier. What? Leviticus 23: 42, 43 answers, saying: "It is in the booths you should dwell seven days. All the natives in Israel should dwell in the booths, in order that your generations may know that it was in the booths that I made the sons of Israel to dwell when I was bringing them out of the land of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God." *Native* Jews did so.

16 Of course, the "vast mixed company" of non-Israelites that threw in their lot with the Israelites and "went up with them" had to dwell in tents also on the way to the Promised Land. (Ex. 12:38) But the command to celebrate the festival of booths was not directed to the "vast mixed company" but was given to Israel. Neither was the Promised Land given to the "vast mixed company" to cultivate, but was divided up among the 12 non-Levitical tribes of Israel, and the law of the Jubilee restoration of land applied to the Israelites. So the festival of ingathering would be specially for the Israelites. Graciously the "alien resident" was allowed to join in. During the celebration in the days of Jesus Christ, the non-Jews, or Gentiles, were limited to the Courtyard of the Gentiles, the Stone Barrier and the Outer Courtyard dividing them off from the Courtyard of Israel. Their place was on the lowest level of the entire structure of Herod's temple.

THE CELEBRATORS WHO CARRIED THE BRANCHES

17 In the celebration itself it was the Israelites who carried the so-called "lulabs" and the *ethrogs* (citrons). To gain some idea of what it must have been like in Jesus' day, we may read the description of the Jewish celebration as given in Nehemiah 8:14-18. The lulab was a cluster of branches from various trees and was carried in the hand of the Jewish celebrator. The idea of it is said to be drawn from Leviticus 23:40:

18 "And you must take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, the fronds of palm trees and the boughs of branchy trees and poplars of the torrent valley, and you must rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days."

19 The components of the lulab were (1) a shoot of the palm tree in its folded state, (2) three twigs of the myrtle with whorls of leaves in these, and (3) two willow-tree branches, the wood of which is reddish and the branches of which are long and entire. The Israelites carrying the lulabs waved them and disposed of them at the close of the festival. The lulab and the *ethrog* (a citrus fruit like a lemon but without the nipple that the lemon has at one end) were carried in procession around the altar in the Courtyard of Priests, with one circuit on each of the first six days and seven circuits on the seventh and last day. After that the *ethrog,* or citron, was eaten. Along with the procession, Psalm 118:25 would be chanted: "Ah, now, Jehovah, do save, please! Ah, now, Jehovah, do grant success, please!" Gentiles, in their own courtyard, could not share in all of this.

20 At the festival of booths in Nehemiah's day, he as governor said to the Israelites who had returned from exile in Babylon: "This day is holy to our Lord, and do not feel hurt, for the joy of Jehovah is your stronghold." (Neh. 8:10) The spiritual Israelites of today should have the same attitude as that since their being delivered

16. (a) En route to the Promised Land, how did the "vast mixed company" live along with the Israelites? (b) In Herod's temple in Jesus' day, how was a distinction maintained between the Gentiles and the Israelites?

17, 18. Who were the ones that carried the "lulabs," and from what scripture is the idea of it said to be drawn?

19. (a) Of what was the "lulab" composed? (b) In what kind of procedure did the Israelites carry the lulab, and with what chant?

20. In Governor Nehemiah's day he told the Israelites at Jerusalem to be of what spirit at their festival of booths?

from Babylon the Great in the year 1919 C.E.

[21] It is evident that the fulfillment of the festival of booths began in that postwar year. In view of their earlier expectations before that year, the spiritual "sons of the kingdom" were somewhat puzzled on being ushered into the postwar epoch. But they rejoiced exceedingly when deliverance from Babylon the Great came in the spring of 1919. They at once addressed themselves to the work of ingathering that now lay ahead of them. At first they thought it would be merely a "gleaning work." Regarding this, see the *Watch Tower* of May 1, 1919, and its article "The Harvest Ended—What Shall Follow?," page 138, paragraph 1. However, instead of a gleaning work, it turned out to be a full-scale harvest.

[22] The anointed remnant of harvesters lived, as it were, in "booths," for they were not setting their affections on earthly things. They were not looking forward to living in an earthly paradise for all time to come. They were looking forward to entering their heavenly inheritance with the glorified Lord, Jesus Christ. Hence, their view of things was like that set out in Hebrews 13:13, 14: "Let us, then, go forth to him outside the camp, bearing the reproach he bore, for we do not have here a city that continues, but we are earnestly seeking the one to come." In the face of that fact, they look upon themselves as being pilgrims, "aliens and temporary residents" amid this system of things, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.—1 Pet. 2:11; Gen. 47:9; Ex. 6:4; Heb. 11:13; Ps. 119:54.

[23] For the anointed remnant who had

begun to enter into the modern antitype of the festival of booths, spiritual illumination from Jehovah's heavenly temple beamed forth. It was during the gathering in of the spiritual class prefigured by Ruth and Esther that Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats, as recorded in Matthew 25:31-46, was given special illumination for the enlightenment of their understanding. At the 1923 general convention that was held in Los Angeles, California, U.S.A., the president of the Watch Tower Society, now free for four years from imprisonment in the Atlanta (Ga.) penitentiary, discussed the illustration of the sheep and the goats. It did not have to wait until the millennial reign of Jesus Christ for fulfillment to begin. The sheeplike class was already then forming. Members of it were already on the scene and were doing good to the remnant of the spiritual "brothers" of the glorified Jesus Christ. The public lecture theme "Millions Now Living Will Never Die" used to be applied to them. They belonged to the "other sheep" whom Jesus mentioned in John 10:16.

[24] At the time of the explanation of the parable of Matthew 25:31-46, no special effort was made to gather in those "other sheep." But appreciation was expressed for the kindnesses that they were rendering to the remnant of Christ's spiritual "brothers." Further spiritual illumination during the antitypical festival of booths was awaiting the due time.

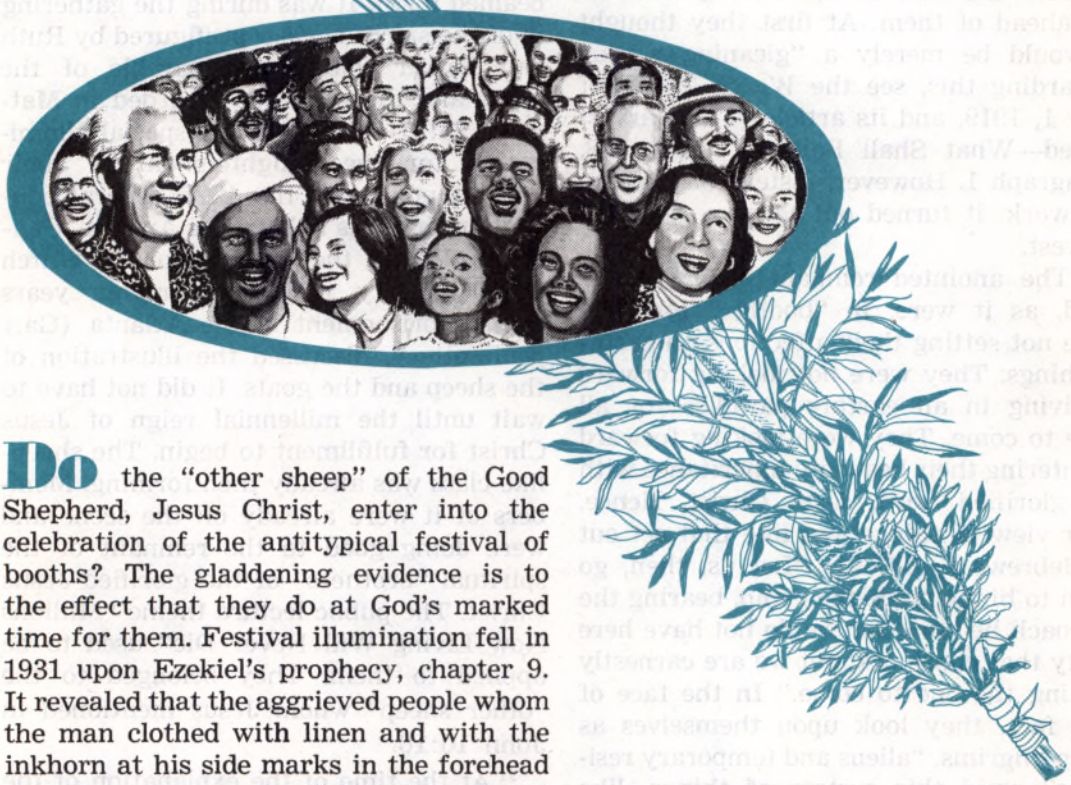
21. (a) Why did the remnant of spiritual Israelites rejoice in the spring of 1919? (b) What kind of work did they think then lay ahead, but what did it turn out to be?

22. Did the anointed remnant plan on settling down in the paradise earth forever, and how do they view themselves amid this system of things?

23. (a) Was the remnant's celebration of the antitypical festival of booths brightened with spiritual illumination in 1923? (b) How was the parable of Matthew 25:31-46 seen to apply?

24. Was there then any special effort made to gather in those doers of good to Christ's spiritual "brothers"?

Festival to be Celebrated by Billions



Do the "other sheep" of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, enter into the celebration of the antitypical festival of booths? The gladdening evidence is to the effect that they do at God's marked time for them. Festival illumination fell in 1931 upon Ezekiel's prophecy, chapter 9. It revealed that the aggrieved people whom the man clothed with linen and with the inkhorn at his side marks in the forehead are the same as the "sheep" in Jesus' parable at Matthew 25:31-46. Further festival illumination revealed in 1932 that this same "sheep" class had been prefigured by Jonadab the son of Rechab, who became the friend of Jehovah's executioner, King Jehu of Israel.—2 Ki. 10:15-28; Jer. 35:1-19.

1. What evidence in favor of a share by the "other sheep" in the antitypical festival of booths came to light in 1931? And in 1932?

[2] Let us remember that Jesus gave the parable at Matthew 25:31-46 as being part of the "sign" that would *denote* his invisible "presence" and the "conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 24:3) In this way Jesus foretold that there would be a gathering of others besides the "chosen

2. (a) In Jesus' prophecy on the "conclusion of the system of things," what other gathering was there to be during this time besides that of Matthew 24:31? (b) In 1935, what gave much impetus to this gathering work?

ones" of Matthew 24:31 during this "conclusion of the system of things." Such a gathering in of those doers of good to the "chosen ones" began in the spring of 1935. What gave tremendous impetus to the ingathering was the speech given on Friday, May 31, 1935, at the widely advertised convention of Jehovah's Witnesses held in Washington, D.C., to which the so-called Jonadab class was particularly invited.

[3] On that day the president of the Watch Tower Society spoke on the theme "The Great Multitude" and discussed the prophecy of Revelation 7:9-14, *Authorized Version*. He identified the "great multitude" as being the same as the "sheep" in Jesus' parable at Matthew 25:31-46. This explanation was hailed with joy by both those of the anointed remnant and those of the Jonadab class. The next day a baptism was held, and there were 840 that symbolized their dedication to Jehovah God by water immersion. The majority of these proved to be of the "sheep" who befriend the spiritual "brothers" of the King Jesus Christ. This now became part of the "sign" that proves the reigning Jesus Christ to be invisibly present and also that we are living in "the conclusion of the system of things."

[4] This information was broadcast throughout the earth to all the sheeplike ones by its being published in the *Watchtower* issues of August 1 and 15, 1935. So then the ingathering of the Jonadab class went forward with authorization granted by Jehovah God.

[5] Despite all the impediments caused by World War II of 1939 to 1945 and the terrific persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses during those fiery times, the ingathering of the "other sheep" has expanded to an activity in more than 200 lands and island groups. However, the ingathering of those of the "great crowd" did not stop the gathering of any further members of the Ruth and Esther class. No, but more "branches" worthy of becoming part of the Christ "vine" kept on being gathered. (John 15:1-8) More "branches" continued to be gathered for being "grafted" into the symbolic "garden olive tree," as described in Romans 11:17-24.*—Deut. 16:13.

[6] So from 1919 onward it has verily been an antitypical festival of ingathering, marked by a joyousness that was a special feature of the ancient festival of booths. Jehovah's words concerning the celebrators of the festival of booths became the order of the day: "You must become nothing but joyful." (Deut. 16:15) Here let us not forget that the festival of booths and the festival of ingathering are one festival, the one festival not starting after the other has already begun long before. The festival of ingathering ran concurrently with that of dwelling in booths. In the ancient type the festival of seven days during the seventh lunar month was given two designations simply because the dwelling in booths was to take place at the harvest-time of the seventh month, Tishri (Ethanim). Since, in the ancient type, the harvest was that of the Israelites, it was fitting for the fulfillment of the festival of ingathering to begin in 1919 with the harvesting of those who were typified by the natural Israelites, namely, a remnant of spiritual Israelites.—Compare *The Watchtower,* July 15, 1967, pages 441, 442.

3. (a) The speech then given was on what subject, and how many got baptized afterward? (b) Fulfillment of Matthew 25:31-46 now became part of what "sign"?

4. How was that information broadcast to all the "sheep," and what gathering work now went forward?

5. (a) Since then the ingathering work has expanded on what scale? (b) But what prior ingathering work was not stopped?

* See annual Memorial reports of numbers of partakers from 1945 to 1977.

6. (a) What did Jehovah say was to be the disposition of the people during this festival of the seventh lunar month? (b) Were the festival of booths and the festival of ingathering two distinct celebrations, each beginning at a different time?

THE FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR THE FESTIVAL

7 What are the prospects for the antitypical festival of booths, or of ingathering, into which we have already entered? Fine! Why? Because the oncoming "great tribulation" and the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har–Magedon will not quiet down the joyousness of our festival. (Matt. 24:21; Rev. 16:14, 16) Bible prophecies show that the antitypical festival will continue on unbroken into the New Order that Jehovah God will introduce by means of his victorious Warrior-King, Jesus Christ. The survivors of Jehovah's war at Har–Magedon, namely, the anointed remnant and the "great crowd" of the "other sheep," will continue the festival in the righteous New Order.*

8 For how long the anointed remnant will stay on earth in the functioning New Order as "temporary residents" until their glorification in the heavenly kingdom, they do not now know. But their present joyful outlook on celebrating the festival during their further residence on earth is well based on Jehovah's prophetic Word. For instance, in Zechariah 14:16-19 these celebrators of the antitypical festival of booths at the present time are multiplied:

9 "And it must occur that, as regards everyone who is left remaining out of all the nations that are coming against Jerusalem, they must also go up from year to year to bow down to the King, Jehovah of armies, and to celebrate the festival of the booths. And it must occur that, as regards anyone that does not come up out of the families of the earth to Jerusalem to bow down to the King, Jehovah of armies, even upon them no pouring rain will occur. And if the family of Egypt itself does not come up and does not actually enter, upon them also there shall be none. The scourge will occur with which Jehovah scourges the nations that do not come up to celebrate the festival of the booths. This itself will prove to be the punishment for the sin of Egypt and the sin of all the nations that do not come up to celebrate the festival of the booths."

10 Who, now, is the person described as "everyone who is left remaining out of all the nations that are coming against Jerusalem"? Neither the anointed remnant of spiritual Israelites, nor their associates, the "great crowd" that comes out of all the nations and takes up Jehovah's worship before the nations make their assault upon the antitypical Jerusalem. The remnant and the "great crowd" are the very ones who come under the combined attack made by the nations because they remain loyal to the "heavenly Jerusalem." (Heb. 12:22) The preceding verses (Zech. 14:1-15) describe how God wars against the attacking nations and how he confirms his kingship or sovereignty over our earth. Revelation 19:11-21 depicts how the nations will, without exception, attack those on earth who adhere to the "heavenly Jerusalem," and that no one of those nations will survive the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har–Magedon. Not even will

* For further information on the extension of the "festival of booths" into the time of the millennium, see the book *Paradise Restored to Mankind—By Theocracy!*, chapter 22, and particularly pages 400 to 402; compare also pages 53-57, 79-90 and 106-115. The Christian reality foreshadowed by this festival started to be fulfilled from the day of Pentecost, 33 C.E. The joy of the congregation was eclipsed when the great apostasy set in. However, with the release of spiritual Israel from Babylon the Great in 1919, after World War I, the ingathering, first of the anointed remnant and then of the "great crowd," was resumed, and with it the antitypical "festival of booths." This is an ongoing festival, celebrated "from year to year," on through the time of the resurrection of the dead. It will end only after the final test of perfected mankind, when all who successfully meet the test become at last permanent residents on earth. See also *The Watchtower*, 1967, pages 440-443; 1972, pages 710-723; 1977, page 541, and *Aid to Bible Understanding*, pages 573 to 576.

7. Why are the future prospects for the festival of booths fine?

8, 9. How long will the surviving remnant remain on earth, and what outlook does Zechariah 14:16-19 give them on the festival of booths?

10. When all the nations make their final attack on antitypical Jerusalem, who will be left alive on earth and who will not?

those, who, so to speak, stay at home but who give their backing to their armies at the front, survive, especially with total mobilization of the people.

[11] From God's war at Har–Magedon all such enemies will suffer everlasting destruction, without provision for their resurrection. (Matt. 25:31, 32, 41-46; Isa. 66:23, 24; Rom. 6:9; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10) Their corpses will be like bodies left on a battlefield as carrion food for scavenger birds to eat. (Rev. 19:17-21) After that, what?

[12] Here now comes the opportunity of the one who is meant by "everyone who is left remaining out of all the nations that are coming against Jerusalem." (Zech. 14:16) Who now could that be? Scripturally, it would be "everyone" of the billions of human dead who died before the foretold "great tribulation" and its "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har–Magedon and for whom there is hope of an earthly resurrection.* Jesus Christ spoke of a time of resurrection for "all those in the memorial tombs." (John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:12, 13) Unnumbered former Egyptians will be among those raised from the dead, but there will then be no land division called Egypt, nor any other national divisions of former times.

[13] Under Christ's millennial kingdom all those resurrected on earth will be taught the one true religion. Will all conform to it? For anyone to gain eternal life he will have to come to Jehovah's spiritual temple that is associated with the "heavenly Jerusalem." He will have to celebrate the antitypical festival of the booths in the temple's earthly courtyard where the "great crowd" of Har–Magedon survivors already find themselves. (Rev. 7:9-15) He will have to recognize the "princes in all the earth" whom the King Jesus Christ will "appoint" to supervise earth's affairs. (Ps. 45:16) Above all, those resurrected on earth must recognize Jehovah as God and Universal Sovereign, as "king over all the earth" by means of Jesus Christ. (Zech. 14:9) Otherwise, the Great Rainmaker Jehovah will not pour down his blessings upon them through Christ. (Zech. 10:1) For such unblessed individuals this will be like existing in a drought-stricken area, this meaning eventual death.

[14] There will also be at Jehovah's disposal the "scourge" similar to that with which he smote the nations that warred against his "heavenly Jerusalem." (Zech. 14:12-15) His smiting such stubborn opposers of true worship will spell death eternal for them, even if this occurs before the end of Christ's 1,000-year reign. Such scourged sinners will not make it to the end of Christ's millennial rule and thereafter have the opportunity to be justified by Jehovah God to endless life on a paradise earth. Their temporary residence under Christ's kingdom fails of its objective.

[15] When the New Order sets in, the surviving remnant of spiritual Israelites will still be tenting like "temporary residents"

* See *Paradise Restored to Mankind—By Theocracy!*, chapter 22, under subheading "Advisability for Nations to Join in the Festival," pages 398-401.

11. At Har–Magedon all the enemies will suffer destruction to what extent, and why?
12. Scripturally, then, who is meant by "everyone who is left remaining out of all the nations that are coming against Jerusalem"?
13. Under Christ's kingdom, what proper recognition of things must those resurrected on earth make, or, otherwise, what will happen to them?
14. What will it mean for anyone to be scourged by Jehovah during Christ's millennial reign?
15. Whose loyal cooperation will the surviving remnant of spiritual Israelites have during their sojourn in the New Order?

on the earth. They will be looking forward to their transfer from the earthly scene to their heavenly inheritance, to be with Christ and his associate kings and priests. (Rev. 20:4-6) But during their post-Har–Magedon sojourn on earth they will have the loyal cooperation of the "chieftain" class, the "princes in all the earth," in supervising the antitypical festival of the seventh month, that of the booths.*—Ezek. 45:17, 25.

[16] Members of the "chieftain" class will be taken from among the "great crowd" of sheeplike ones who survive the "great tribulation" with the spirit-begotten remnant. (Rev. 7:1-15) These will witness the resurrection of the billions of human dead and their gathering into the earthly courtyard of Jehovah's spiritual temple for the celebration of the festival of booths in antitype. What a joyful experience it would be for the spiritual remnant to keep residing on earth till the beginning of that miraculous ingathering as envisioned in Zechariah 14:16-19! With unspeakable joyfulness they would join in the worldwide celebration with all of these who have been redeemed with the precious blood of the "Lamb of God," "Christ our passover."†—Ezek. 44:3; 45:7–46:18; 48:21, 22.

[17] The celebration of the festival will not prove to be in vain, for, by the close of the 1,000-year reign of Christ, all those yet alive on earth will be bowing down to Jehovah, worshiping him in the earth-wide courtyard of his great spiritual temple that is connected with the "heavenly Jerusalem." He will then have the "kingdom" handed over to him by his Son Jesus Christ, who will have successfully completed his reign for the allotted millennium. (1 Cor. 15:24-28) This will be the earthly situation to which all the dwellers on earth will have been traveling, like tenters.

[18] At this juncture comes the final, determining test of their integrity toward Jehovah as the Universal Sovereign. Those then failing under the test will be destroyed forever. Those who vindicate Jehovah by successfully passing this supreme test will gain the right to inhabit the Edenic earth eternally. No longer will they be tenters, "temporary residents," in the land. Their residence in the paradise earth will be permanent. (Rev. 20:7-15) Their joyfulness that was experienced during their celebration of the antitypical festival of the booths will continue forever on this earthly footstool of the happy God-King, Jehovah. —1 Tim. 1:11.

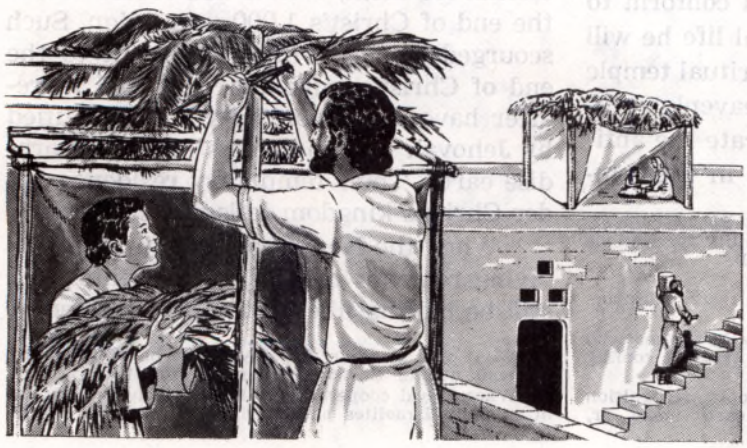
* See the Watch Tower Society's publication *Vindication*, Volume III, under the subheading "Earth's Princes," pages 285-293.

† See *Paradise Restored to Mankind—By Theocracy!*, page 401, par. 17.

16. (a) Many members of the "chieftain" class will be taken from among whom? (b) It would be a special joy for the surviving remnant to experience what privilege with them?

17. (a) Why will the celebration of the festival during the millennial reign of Christ not prove to be in vain? (b) What will be the situation to which the dwellers on earth, still alive, will have been traveling like tenters?

18. What will be the portion of those passing Jehovah's final test?



THE BOOK OF PROVERBS —ABUNDANT WISDOM IN FEW WORDS

IS YOUR life free of problems and frustrations? Few would say theirs is. And efforts to solve problems often backfire, leaving people in difficulties even worse than their former circumstances. Is there a source of counsel on which people can rely to improve matters?

There is an especially fine source of such guidance in the Bible book of Proverbs. Though written in the Middle East more than 2,500 years ago, the brief maxims of Proverbs apply to all people and are still up-to-date.

The Bible indicates that most of the proverbs originated with King Solomon. (Prov. 1:1; 10:1; 25:1) Though the Scriptural record does not directly say that Solomon *wrote* them, it strongly implies that he did so. It says that he *spoke* thousands of proverbs and that "he pondered and made a thorough search, that he might *arrange* many proverbs in order."—1 Ki. 4:32; Eccl. 12:9.

The style of expression in this Bible book is Hebrew poetry that consists not of rhyming verses but of parallel thoughts. Very often the parallel lines form a contrast, as in the case of Proverbs 10:28, which says: "The expectation of the righteous ones is a rejoicing, but the very hope of the wicked ones will perish." In other cases, the parallel expressions are synonymous, as noted in these words of Proverbs 18:15: "The heart of the understanding one acquires knowledge, and the ear of wise ones seeks to find knowledge."

A LOFTY PURPOSE

The purpose of the book of Proverbs is explained right at its beginning, where we read: "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, the king of Israel, for one to know wisdom and discipline, to discern the sayings of understanding ["words of deep meaning," *The Jerusalem Bible*], to receive the discipline that gives insight, righteousness and judgment and uprightness, to give to the inexperienced ones shrewdness, to a young man knowledge and thinking ability."—Prov. 1:1-4.

The book of Proverbs directs much counsel to young, "inexperienced" persons whose hearts are open to every type of influence and who are easily led astray. They must come to appreciate "wisdom," which involves seeing things as they actually are and knowing how to put that knowledge to practical use. "Discipline," too, is necessary, both as self-restraint and as chastisement imposed by others.—Prov. 1:1-4; 2:7, 10-13; 4:1, 5-7, 13.

The proverbs afford special help for developing mental faculties in a right way. There is much encouragement to gain insight and "shrewdness," that is, expertness and sound judgment in all areas of life. (Prov. 1:4; 8:5) This education is never completed. "A wise person will listen and take in more instruction, and a man of understanding is the one who acquires skillful direction, to understand a proverb and a puzzling saying, the words of wise persons and their riddles." (Prov.

1:5, 6) Biblical proverbs often take the form of puzzling sayings and "riddles," which are perplexing, knotty statements that require unraveling. Understanding them takes time and meditation. The abundant wisdom of Proverbs is accessible only to those who are willing to dig for it. This becomes clear from these words of Proverbs 2:1-5:

> "My son, if you will receive my sayings and treasure up my own commandments with yourself, so as to pay attention to wisdom with your ear, that you may incline your heart to discernment; if, moreover, you call out for understanding itself and you give forth your voice for discernment itself, **if you keep seeking for it as for silver, and as for hid treasures you keep searching for it,** in that case you will understand the fear of Jehovah, and you will find the very knowledge of God."

Let us consider some examples of the wise counsel available in the book of Proverbs.

THINGS GOD HATES

People who desire to know what is right and wrong face a bewildering mass of different opinions. Proverbs can help clear up the confusion. For example, in just the four brief verses that follow, we learn of certain mental attitudes and corresponding actions that God hates:

> "There are six things that Jehovah does hate; yes, seven are things detestable to his soul: lofty eyes, a false tongue, and hands that are shedding innocent blood, a heart fabricating hurtful schemes, feet that are in a hurry to run to badness, a false witness that launches forth lies, and anyone sending forth contentions among brothers."—Prov. 6:16-19.

The intensification of a number by the next one higher is used many times by Bible writers. (Job 5:19; 33:29; Prov. 30: 15, 16, 18, 19, 21-31; Isa. 17:6; Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6) At Proverbs 6:16-19, the numbers are not to be understood literally, as if to say that God hates only six or seven things. The seven categories are basic and will cover all types of wrongful acts. The first six focus on three categories of wrongdoing—*in thought* ("lofty eyes," "a heart fabricating hurtful schemes"), *in word* ("a false tongue," "a false witness that launches forth lies") and *in deed* ("hands that are shedding innocent blood," "feet that are in a hurry to run to badness"). Especially hateful is the seventh type of individual mentioned. He takes keen delight in kindling strife among persons who otherwise would dwell together peacefully. The increase from six to seven suggests that humans ever keep multiplying their evil deeds.

When a person comes to appreciate that the Creator views pride, scheming and lying on a level with bloodshed and other violent acts, he should be moved to make vital changes within himself. The consequence will be improved relationships with others and greater joy in everyday life.

COPING WITH ANGER

One of the most frequent causes of distress among people is uncontrolled anger. Some may feel that flying into a rage is an evidence of strength. But the Word of God states just the opposite, saying: "He

In Coming Issues

- **Are You Content with What You Have?**
- **Living Up to Our Choice**
- **Creation's Hope—Awaiting Its Realization**

that is slow to anger is better than a mighty man, and he that is controlling his spirit than one capturing a city." (Prov. 16:32) Though warriors who capture a city display much fortitude, controlling one's temper requires even greater strength and courage.

How can an individual progress in getting his temper under control? Proverbs offers these fine guidelines:

> "Do not have companionship with anyone given to anger; and with a man having fits of rage you must not enter in, that you may not get familiar with his paths and certainly take a snare for your soul."—Prov. 22:24, 25.
>
> "An answer, when mild, turns away rage, but a word causing pain makes anger to come up."—Prov. 15:1.
>
> "The beginning of contention is as one letting out waters; so before the quarrel has burst forth, take your leave."—Prov. 17:14.

All these statements encourage fleeing anger-arousing situations *right at the outset*. The reason is well expressed in these further words: "If you have acted senselessly by lifting yourself up, and if you have fixed your thought upon it ["if you have hatched a scheme," *An American Translation*], put the hand to the mouth. For the churning of milk is what brings forth butter, and the squeezing of the nose is what brings forth blood, and the squeezing out of anger is what brings forth quarreling."—Prov. 30:32, 33.

All people foolishly tend to exalt themselves on occasion. They may make undue demands upon others or perhaps say or do something insulting. At such times a person should "put the hand to the mouth," restraining any additional words or actions that would provoke further the one who has become offended. Just as butter requires churning and a nosebleed usually the squeezing or striking of the nose, a full-fledged quarrel happens only when people give free rein to angry feelings and keep on inciting one another to rage.

AVOID LAZINESS

The book of Proverbs both commends hard work and discourages laziness. The inspired writer states: "The lazy one has said: 'There is a lion outside! In the midst of the public squares I shall be murdered!' " (Prov. 22:13) To avoid working, the lazy person will invent fantastic excuses, such as claiming that a lion has gotten into the city and might kill him if he goes outside. Three additional proverbs highlight how an individual unwilling to work affects himself and others:

> "The lazy one is showing himself desirous, but his soul has nothing. However, the very soul of the diligent ones will be made fat."—Prov. 13:4.
>
> "Because of winter the lazy one will not plow; he will be begging in reaping time, but there will be nothing."—Prov. 20:4.
>
> "As vinegar to the teeth and as smoke to the eyes, so the lazy man is to those sending him forth."—Prov. 10:26.

THE NEED FOR DISCIPLINE

Since humans are imperfect and incline toward the way of least resistance, most people balk at discipline. The book of Proverbs encourages a different attitude, saying: "Do bring your heart to discipline and your ear to the sayings of knowledge." (Prov. 23:12) Discipline here means both self-restraint and correction administered by others. Often it is provided through "sayings of knowledge," that is, statements that originate with a knowledgeable person and serve to inform others. At times, however, discipline must be firmer than mere words. "Bruising wounds are what scours away the bad; and strokes, the innermost parts of the belly." (Prov. 20:30) When accepted in the right spirit, firm discipline not only restrains acts of wrongdoing but also motivates people to make internal changes for the better.

Concerning discipline of children by parents, we read: "Do not hold back discipline from the mere boy. In case you beat

him with the rod, he will not die. With the rod you yourself should beat him, that you may deliver his very soul from Sheol itself." (Prov. 23:13, 14) "The one holding back his rod is hating his son, but the one loving him is he that does look for him with discipline."—Prov. 13:24.

Of course, discipline must always be administered with self-control and not in a burst of anger. And it will not be necessary to use physical punishment at all times. In numerous instances, merely a few words of wise counsel are sufficient. "A rebuke works deeper in one having understanding than striking a stupid one a hundred times."—Prov. 17:10.

SHUN SEXUAL IMMORALITY

The book of Proverbs condemns sexual immorality. Consider, for instance, these words of warning:

> "The commandment is a lamp, and a light the law is, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life, to guard you against the bad woman, against the smoothness of the tongue of the foreign woman. Do not desire her prettiness in your heart, and may she not take you with her lustrous eyes, because in behalf of a woman prostitute one comes down to a round loaf of bread; but as regards another man's wife, she hunts even for a precious soul." (Prov. 6:23-26)

Those who engage in immoral sex acts often come to poverty. Persons who seek sexual pleasure with "a woman prostitute" or who otherwise practice fornication may pay also with loss of health as they succumb to painful and crippling venereal diseases. The danger is even greater when an individual seeks intimacies with someone else's marriage mate. An adulteress endangers the "precious soul," or life, of her illicit partner. Concerning this, the inspired Bible writer adds:

> "Can a man rake together fire into his bosom and yet his very garments not be burned? Or can a man walk upon the coals and his feet themselves not be scorched?

> Likewise with anyone having relations with the wife of his fellowman, no one touching her will remain unpunishable. . . . Anyone committing adultery with a woman is in want of heart; he that does it is bringing his own soul to ruin. A plague and dishonor he will find, and his reproach itself will not be wiped out. For the rage of an able-bodied man is jealousy, and he will not show compassion in the day of vengeance [against the one committing adultery with his wife]. He will have no consideration for any sort of ransom, neither will he show willingness, no matter how large you make the present." (Prov. 6:27-35)

Marital unfaithfulness can result in irreparable harm to the individuals and families concerned.

BEWARE OF 'THE SWEET LIFE'

Throughout history the main pursuit in life for numerous individuals has been pleasure-seeking. While the Bible does not discourage having a good time, it stresses the need to get a more balanced view of pleasure activities. "Is it honey that you have found? Eat what is sufficient for you, that you may not take too much of it and have to vomit it up." (Prov. 25:16) Just as the overeating of literal honey can make a person ill physically, so overindulgence in the pleasure-oriented 'sweet life' can lead to physical and also spiritual sickness. Furthermore, overemphasis on pleasure often leads to dire circumstances of poverty. "He that is loving merriment will be an individual in want; he that is loving wine and oil will not gain riches." —Prov. 21:17.

What about the determination to amass wealth? The book of Proverbs cautions

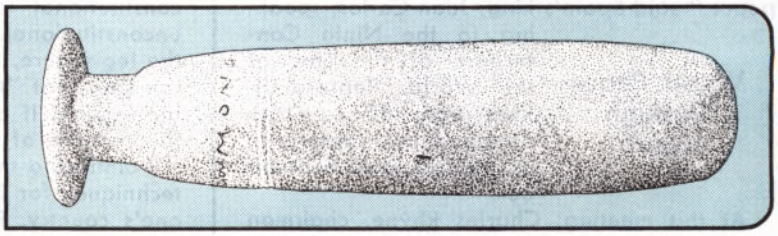
that riches are not dependable and can disappear suddenly. We read: "Do not toil to gain riches. Cease from your own understanding. Have you caused your eyes to glance at it [wealth], when it is nothing? For without fail it makes wings for itself like those of an eagle and flies away toward the heavens." (Prov. 23:4, 5) Because vast fortunes can be lost quickly due to poor management or unforeseen circumstances, the Scriptures admonish people to steer their efforts toward something more dependable than the pursuit of riches. Note carefully this counsel:

> "You ought to know positively the appearance of your flock. Set your heart to your droves; for treasure will not be to time indefinite, nor a diadem for all generations. The green grass has departed, and the new grass has appeared, and the vegetation of the mountains has been gathered. The young rams are for your clothing, and the he-goats are the price of the field. And there is a sufficiency of goats' milk for your food, for the food of your household, and the means of life for your girls."—Prov. 27:23-27.

Neither material wealth ("treasure") nor a position of prominence ("a diadem") guarantees real security. Time, effort and money invested in a business deal are often lost due to failure of the venture. Unexpected occurrences can cause both wealth and a respected position to disappear suddenly. On the other hand, efforts put forth to care for livestock do not result in decrease, but usually in *increase* for the owner. God provides freely "vegetation" for feeding domestic animals. Throughout human history diligent caring for livestock consistently has proved to be more dependable as a means of acquiring food, clothing and income than have riches or prominence. Hence, the wise counsel: "You ought to know positively the appearance of your flock." The principle in these words can be applied to diligent labor in any dependable field of employment today.

The book of Proverbs, though committed to writing thousands of years ago, contains peerless guidance for people alive today. Read these inspired words regularly. Meditate on their lessons. Though each proverb has only a few words, their abundant wisdom can make your life lastingly secure and happy.

What was "an alabaster case"?



On two occasions, Jesus Christ was anointed with perfumed oil. This happened once at the house of a certain Pharisee in Galilee (Luke 7:37, 38) and again in the home of Simon the leper at Bethany. (Matt. 26:6, 7; Mark 14:3) In each instance, the costly oil was poured from an alabaster case.

Such small flasklike perfume vessels originally were made of a stone found near Alabastron, Egypt. The stone itself is a form of calcium carbonate (not to be confused with modern alabaster, a hydrated calcium sulfate). Usually the original alabaster is white, but sometimes it has streaks of other colors, since it is a stalagmite formation.

Depicted here is an ancient Hellenistic alabaster flask from Egypt. The women who anointed Jesus on the occasions just mentioned each had "an alabaster case" of expensive perfumed oil. Those vaselike containers may well have been similar to this one bearing the inscription "cinnamon."

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

● Italian government art experts are said to be "90 percent sure" that a sculpture recently found in a monastery in Lebanon is the work of the famous Italian artist Michelangelo. The small wooden carving is said to be worth $2.5 million (U.S.) if it actually is Michelangelo's work. According to an Associated Press report, "the figure is unusual because it represents Christ with his hands stretched out above his head instead of to the side, as he usually is depicted on the cross."

Michelangelo and the Cross

Whether the wooden sculpture is the work of the 16th-century artist Michelangelo or not, it illustrates that the impalement of Christ on a cross frame has not always been so certain as Christendom's leaders today would have people believe. For example, the 16th-century Roman Catholic scholar Justus Lipsius illustrated impalement on an upright stake in his book "De Cruce Liber Primus." This fits the meaning of the Greek word used in the Bible to describe the impalement of Christ—"stauros"—which "denotes, primarily, an upright pale or stake."—"An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words," W. E. Vine.

● "Law is the instrument that must guarantee peace," said Spain's king, Juan Carlos, speaking to the Ninth Conference of the Law of the World. Representatives from 85 countries attended the conference in Madrid last September.

World Peace Through Law?

At this meeting, Charles Rhyne, chairman of the World Peace Through Law Center, urged "everybody in the world to help us to build a system of laws so universally acceptable that it would have sufficient force to avoid war and make peace durable." A few days later, at the Vatican, Pope John Paul II held an audience with some of the conference delegates and called for "an unprecedented effort to be mastered by man" in this direction.

Yet, even before the conference ended, its chairman, Spain's public prosecutor, Juan Manuel Fanjul Sedeño, said: "It is very difficult to attain peace by the exercise of Law and Justice." Why? He answered: "Because of a false and narrow sense of nationalism, there is no nation that is ever ready to make a useful gesture of humility and renunciation for the good of others. Nobody is willing to give way." How true those words!

The record of human failure throughout the centuries illustrates the truth expressed in the Bible at Psalm 146:3: "Don't put your trust in human leaders; no human being can save you." ("Good News Bible") The Holy Scriptures indicate that God will bring peace in his own way, by means of his heavenly kingdom under his "Prince of Peace," Jesus Christ. (Isa. 9:6) Then, when God's law is lovingly applied, "the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." —Ps. 37:11.

● Last year the Illinois State legislature passed a bill that required schoolchildren to begin their day with the flag-salute ceremony as of January 1, 1980. When Illinois Governor James Thompson signed the bill into law, he wrote admitting that "it is clear that under present constitutional law, this legislation is plainly unconstitutional." And during argument in the legislature, Representative Richard Mugalian said that "this is by far the worst bill of the session. If one listens well, one will hear the cadence of [a dictator's] jackboots."

"The Cadence of Jackboots"

Pointing to the weakness of such parrotlike techniques for instilling true appreciation for one's country, Representative Glen Schneider observed: "I don't think 15 seconds of the Pledge of Allegiance contributes to an understanding of what this country is all about."

The Joliet, Illinois, "Herald-News" quotes a local spokesman for one group affected by the law as saying: "Jehovah's Witnesses, not only in this country but throughout the world, always take a neutral stand towards the government. It's not that we don't have respect for this country. It's just that you won't find Jehovah's Witnesses saying a pledge of allegiance to any country."—John 17:16.

QUESTIONS from READERS

● What is meant at Amos 5:5, which says, "Do not search for Bethel"?

The Israelites of the northern kingdom were very zealous in their pursuit of false worship. This is evident from the words directed to them through the prophet Amos: " 'Come, you people, to Bethel and commit transgression. At Gilgal be frequent in committing transgression, and bring your sacrifices in the morning; on the third day, your tenth parts. And from what is leavened make a thanksgiving sacrifice to smoke, and proclaim voluntary offerings; publish it, for that is the way you have loved, O sons of Israel,' is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah."—Amos 4:4, 5.

Bethel was a center of false worship. It was there that Jeroboam, the first king of the northern kingdom, set up a golden calf. (1 Ki. 12:28-30) Gilgal, too, must have become a site for apostate worship. Therefore, Israel's offering sacrifices at Bethel and Gilgal was really a transgression against Jehovah.

It is noteworthy that in their idolatrous worship the Israelites also adopted other practices that would have been contrary to the Law. The Law stated: "No grain offering that you will present to Jehovah should be made a leavened thing." (Lev. 2:11) Yet apostate Israelites offered leavened items as a "thanksgiving sacrifice." Similarly, the whole spirit behind voluntary sacrifices was that they not be advertised. Idolatrous Israelites, however, gave them publicity. They loved their false worship, but Jehovah hated it.

Hence, by continuing in their unfaithful course, the Israelites could not escape the execution of Jehovah's judgments. Only by abandoning false worship and repentantly returning to Jehovah could they hope to escape. That is why the prophet Amos was inspired to declare: "This is what Jehovah has said to the house of Israel, 'Search for me, and keep living. And do not search for Bethel, and to Gilgal you must not come, and to Beer-sheba you must not pass over [that is, pass over to this enclave city of Simeon]; because Gilgal itself will without fail go into exile; and as regards Bethel, it will become something uncanny [evidently a desolate ruin that would fill passersby with a superstitious fear]. Search for Jehovah, and keep living, that he may not become operative just like fire, O house of Joseph [the ten-tribe kingdom, descendants of Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh being the major part], and it may not actually devour, and Bethel may not be with no one to extinguish it.' "—Amos 5:4-6; Josh. 19:1, 2.

It was not by making pilgrimages to Bethel, Gilgal and Beer-sheba, all these being cities of the northern kingdom of Israel, that the Israelites could hope to escape calamity. Searching for divine favor at these places would only bring God's wrath upon the people. Bethel, Gilgal and Beer-sheba, along with their sanctuaries, would come to nothing. Israel's only hope was to "search for Jehovah," to return to him with a complete heart.

Likewise today, no matter how zealously people may pursue religious practices, if such are not in harmony with the truth of God's Word, they are of no benefit.

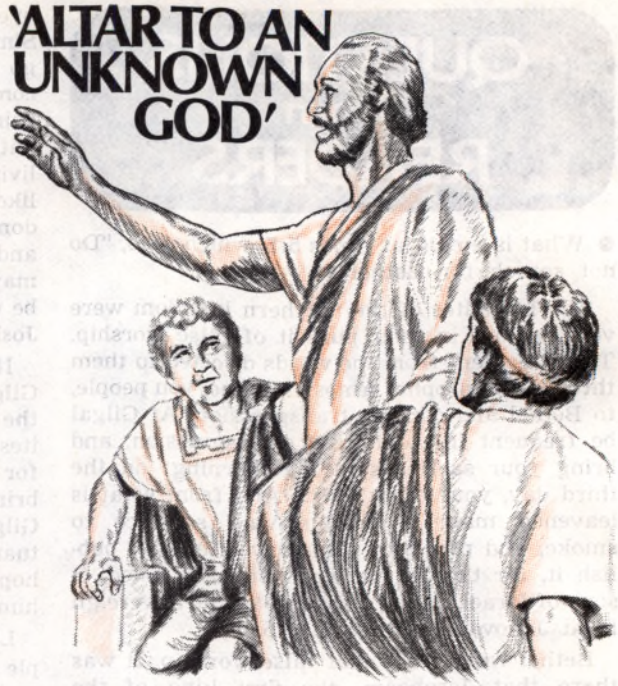
"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

March 16: Joyful Festivals. Page 8. Songs to Be Used: 58, 6.

March 23: Festival Illumination. Page 14. Songs to Be Used: 2, 32.

March 30: Festival to Be Celebrated by Billions. Page 20. Songs to Be Used: 29, 64.

'ALTAR TO AN UNKNOWN GOD'



When the Christian apostle Paul declared the "good news" in Athens during the first century C.E., Epicurean and Stoic philosophers spoke with him controversially. To some of them he seemed to be "a publisher of foreign deities." So they seized Paul and led him to the Areopagus, or Mars Hill. There the apostle opened his wise witness concerning the true God, Jehovah, with these words:

"Men of Athens, I behold that in all things you seem to be more given to the fear of the deities than others are. For instance, while passing along and carefully observing your objects of veneration I also found an altar on which had been inscribed 'To an Unknown God.' Therefore what you are unknowingly giving godly devotion to, this I am publishing to you."—Acts 17:16-23.

At places other than Athens, some inscriptions have been found that are comparable to the one Paul mentioned. For example, the ruined altar below, discovered at Pergamum, bears such an inscription in Greek. Also, the well-preserved altar depicted at the right was discovered on the Palatine Hill in Rome, Italy. According to the Latin inscription on this altar dating from about 100 B.C.E., it was held "sacred to a god or goddess."

Have you drawn close to the God about whom Paul preached? Great present and future blessings are assured for those worshiping Jehovah, the Most High God.—Ps. 83:18.