

The WATCHTOWER

DECEMBER 15, 1968

Semimonthly

"YOUR DELIVERANCE IS
GETTING NEAR"

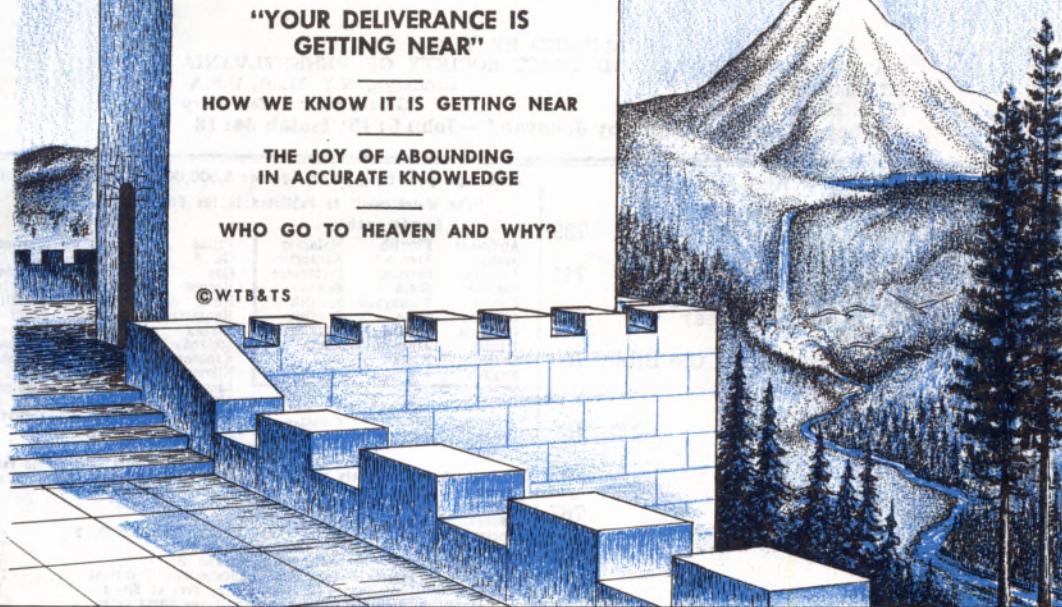
HOW WE KNOW IT IS GETTING NEAR

THE JOY OF ABOUNDING
IN ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE

WHO GO TO HEAVEN AND WHY?

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Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**



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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Every watchtower has its purpose. It serves as an elevated place for a wide-awake person with sharp vision. It enables him to see far ahead into the distance and tell those below for whom he is a watchman what is drawing near, whether it is a danger against which to prepare or it is something good over which to be glad with strong faith and hope.

Because of having the name "The Watchtower" this magazine justly has to render a similar useful service to the people of all nations. This is an international magazine and makes no racial distinctions, for we are all facing a common world danger; we are all hoping for a common good.

Ever since "The Watchtower" began to be published in July of 1879 it has looked ahead into the future, always striving to aid its readers to advance in knowledge and to gain a clearer picture of the glorious new order of things that is in store for righteous mankind. No, "The Watchtower" is no inspired prophet, but it follows and explains a Book of prophecy the predictions in which have proved to be unerring and unfailing till now. "The Watchtower" is therefore under safe guidance. It may be read with confidence, for its statements may be checked against that prophetic Book.

Among the many nations of today there are hundreds of differing religions. Which one does this magazine present? Not the confused religions of Christendom, but the religion of the oldest sacred Book on earth. Which Book? The Sacred Bible of the Holy Scriptures, written by inspiration in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth, the only living and true God.

The sacred, nonpolitical purpose of "The Watchtower" is accordingly to encourage and promote study of the Holy Bible and to give our many readers the needed unsectarian help to understand that Book of true religion and infallible prophecy. Thus this magazine will be helping them to prove worthy of perfect life and happiness in God's promised new order under His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.

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"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6: 45; Isaiah 54: 13

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AT — An American Translation
AV — Authorized Version (1611)
Dy — Catholic Douay version
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Le — Isaac Leeser's version
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Announcing
Jehovah's
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True Love Is Loyal

HAVE you ever found yourself in deep trouble or suffering adversity of some kind or another? And then have you had the comfort of some friend's coming to your aid, standing by you and giving you the much needed moral or material support?

If such has been your experience you have much for which to be thankful. And what is more, you have experienced first-hand that true love is loyal. As the inspired Word of God so fittingly puts it: "There exists a friend sticking closer than a brother." Yes, "a true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress."—Prov. 18:24; 17:17.

In the Bible is found the beautiful record of such a friendship, namely, that of David and Jonathan, who lived some three thousand years ago. Well has the account of this friendship been termed by archaeologist Albright "a jewel of the purest water." The Scriptures explain that "Jonathan's very soul became bound up with the soul of David, and Jonathan began to love him as his own soul." (1 Sam. 18:1) No doubt this was because of keen appreciation for David's fine qualities.

What a true and faithful companion Jonathan proved himself to be—loving all

the time! He even took the side of David against his own father Saul, who was being consumed by a burning, murderous hatred for young David. When Saul gave expression to his murderous intentions against David, Jonathan pleaded in behalf of David: "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?"—1 Sam. 20:32.

Yes, although Jonathan knew that his father was right in saying that David would replace him as the next king of Israel, Jonathan did not envy David. He was loyal, even though his taking the side of David nearly cost Jonathan his own life, because his father Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan for his speaking well of David. Without a doubt Jonathan's loyalty was a source of comfort and strength to David.—1 Sam. 20:24-34.

Of course, if we but reflect for a moment we will see that we must apply this principle of loyal love first of all toward our Creator, the God of the Bible. Certainly we are under obligation to love him and therefore to be loyal to him. True Christians give proof of their love for him by coming to his defense when he is maligned. That he is widely maligned was strikingly noted by an American in public affairs, Senator Frank Carlson. Com-

menting on the trend of our day to "trust nobody—believe nobody—have faith in nothing," he went on to say: "You cannot pick up a paper, a magazine, or a book that is not in and of itself critical of something or somebody, even including among its victims almighty God Himself. In truth, the criticisms of God rank well above almost all other criticisms of the hour. More people—in more ways and more occasions—cast doubt, hurl darts, and throw charges against God such as this country has never seen in all of its history."—*U.S. News & World Report*, July 1, 1968.

True Christians can and will show that God truly does exist, that he is the Supreme Being, the One deserving of our love and worship. They gladly make known why he has permitted wickedness until now and that soon he will put an end to it.—Ps. 83:18.

As for human creatures, time and again you may have the opportunity to stand up for a friend if he is ill spoken of. For example, the receptionist at the headquarters of the Watchtower Society once was approached by a stranger who began to hurl intemperate charges against a Christian Witness. The receptionist, himself a Christian Witness, interrupted the speaker, saying: "I do not intend to listen to such talk. If you have a complaint against anyone, go to him directly, as commanded by Jesus Christ at Matthew 18:15-17." That was showing both loyalty and wisdom.

Yes, be slow to believe serious charges made against a friend or fellow believer. Before you do, find out if the accuser has all the facts; it may be a case of misunderstanding and you might be able to remedy matters by explaining. But if the facts do bear out a serious accusation, then it would be mistaken loyalty to take the side of a liar, thief or apostate as is

the common practice. Loyalty to God and to principle must come ahead of human friendships. Besides, should these not be based on principle?

However, it could be that your friend actually made a mistake, came short in a certain respect, yielded to an inherited weakness, or acted unwisely because of immaturity. Here again, unless the matter is of truly serious consequence, you can show loyal love by coming to his defense. You can make allowances, minimize the grievance and point out to the aggrieved one or the gossiper the fact that we all are imperfect and that we are to "speak injuriously of no one." Especially should your loyalty preclude your telling others about such shortcomings. Rather, remember that, as the wise kingly writer of Proverbs expressed it, "Love covers over even all transgressions."—Titus 3:2; Prov. 10:12.

How heartwarming it is when we hear of a friend's coming to our defense! Truly such is a case where "love builds up"! (1 Cor. 8:1) It builds up not only the one being defended but also the one coming to our defense by reason of the courage and loyalty displayed. Surely here also it is true that "the one freely watering others will himself also be freely watered."—Prov. 11:25.

Opportunities to show that true love is loyal continually present themselves if one is alert. Thus the dedicated Christian will ever find opportunities to come to the defense of his God when associating with strangers in places of business or employment. Also, within one's family circle, by reason of close association, there are ever so many opportunities for its members to come to the defense of one another.

Would you have others show you loyalty in time of need? Then remember, "Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them."—Luke 6:31.

YOUR DELIVERANCE IS GETTING NEAR!"

IMAGINE yourself reading the headlines in the newspaper:

² "Vatican City Has Been De-

stroyed! The Tremendous Crater Left in the Earth by the Blast of the Nuclear Bomb Has Left No Trace of the Reputed Tomb and Bones of St. Peter!"

³ Would such headlines in the newspapers of the world mean anything to Roman Catholics, or, in fact, to all religious denominations of Christendom? Would such an event mark the end of a long epoch for them, with great uncertainty as to how to proceed in the future? Yes!

⁴ Also: "Mecca Has Been Wiped Out by Missiles from the Air! The Sacred Shrine Incorporating the Revered Black Stone Has Vanished amid the Explosion!"

⁵ Would such headlines in the world press mean anything to the Islamic world? Would it signify the end of an era to them, leaving an unfillable blank in their outlook for the future? On top of that:

⁶ "The Mosque 'The Dome of the Rock,' Second Most Holy Place in the Moslem Realm, Blasted Out of Existence! The

"But as these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near."—Luke 21:28.

Sacred Rock of the Prophet M o h a m m e d D e -
stroyed!"

⁷ Would such further news head-lines add to Moslem

convictions that an era had ended for them, leaving a big religious void? Yes!

⁸ Visitors to Rome, Italy, who pass through the triumphal Arch of Titus on the way between the Roman Forum and the Coliseum, see sculptures commemorating the destruction of a world-renowned city and its holy shrine in the year 70 of our Common Era. It is the city of Jerusalem and its temple built by King Herod the Great, the ruler appointed by the Roman Senate over the province of Judea. Did the destruction of that famous city and its temple mean anything to the millions who worshiped there? Did it mean the end of a national and religious epoch to them? Indeed, it did, as profane history testifies. When this very destruction was predicted, thirty-seven years in advance, did the four men who heard the prediction think that it would mean such a thing to their people, their nation? Evidently they did. The question that they asked the Prophet as a follow-up to his startling prediction indicates this.

1-7. (a) What would news headlines announcing destruction of Vatican City mean to religionists of Christendom? (b) What would headlines regarding destruction of the two leading shrines of Islam mean to Mohammedans?

8. (a) What did destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 C.E. mean to those worshiping there? (b) How is such a meaning to worshipers indicated?

⁹ No less so will the approaching end of an important era of human history be marked by an astonishing event similar to that of the year 70 C.E. The need of deliverance becomes very evident and now very urgent. Hundreds of millions in Christendom will be affected by this coming event, an event that itself will be the forerunner of something so universal in its proportions as to affect all mankind. We need deliverance from such a world disaster!

¹⁰ This is something on which the world does not count; otherwise we might reasonably expect it to do something about it. But you the reader can do something about it, if you really desire to enjoy the deliverance that is possible according to an unbreakable promise that comes from the highest authority. The greatest world trouble of all human experience is on its way toward us, but the deliverance is also on its way for those who not only long for it but who take the right, prescribed steps to attain to it. From year to year the signs keep multiplying about us to indicate that deliverance is getting near! Its arrival will mean that the ones delivered will come under a world government superior to that of man, and perfectly able to bless all mankind instead of doom them.

¹¹ What observant person today can doubt that we are approaching the end of an epoch? This age of violence into which the world of mankind was suddenly plunged by World War I in the year 1914 cannot fail to reach its grand climax in disaster, unless it is stopped sooner by superhuman power. The repeated proofs of inability of men and nations to rule themselves are bound to lead to a state

of world frustration and perplexity where mankind will have no human way out from the resulting chaos. The ferment in all the main fields of human interest, in politics, in education, in moral and social life, in racial relations and in religion, will follow psychological laws and thoroughly corrupt man's sense of true human values and distort the former pattern of things. No human standards will any longer be respected, recognized and followed. The acceleration in the movement of things is increasing, speeding up the onrush of the end of this epoch in all its features. What then? Is there any reason to believe that man can hope for some miraculous new and better order to come from man, arising from the ashes of his burnt-out old order? No!

¹² Dislike the idea as much as the anti-religious people may dislike it, yet help for our race simply has to come from a source higher than man, from a friendly heavenly source rather than from a devilish heavenly source. It has to come from the one source that was pointed to by the great Prophet, who spoke about deliverance to four of his followers as they sat on the Mount of Olives with the city of Jerusalem and its temple within full view. The Prophet had his enemies there at Jerusalem who were bent on killing him, just as he has his enemies today. Each reader can determine for himself whether he also is an enemy or not by how he reacts to the mention of the name Jesus Christ! His four followers, his friends, who heard his encouraging words about deliverance were four fishermen from the Roman province of Galilee, namely, Peter and his brother Andrew, and James and his brother John. Why was deliverance a welcome thought to them? Why was it that they spoke to the Prophet about the

9. How will the end of an important era of human history be similarly marked, and hence there is need of what?

10. Why is deliverance possible, and what will it mean for the ones delivered?

11. Why should there be no room for doubt that we are approaching the end of an epoch, and is there any hope for a better order to come from man thereafter?

12. (a) From where must this deliverance come? (b) This source was pointed to by whom, and with what effect on his hearers?

end of an epoch, "the conclusion of the system of things"? Three reliable historians show why, and in doing so they give us today much food for thought.

¹³ It was just three days before the spring festival that celebrated the deliverance of the nation from further oppression by the mighty world power, Egypt of the Pharaohs, in the year 1513 before our Common Era. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims were streaming toward Jerusalem, to an area that has since become sacred also to Arabs and all the Islamic realm. The Prophet Jesus and those four fishermen disciples were among those pilgrims. So on Tuesday, the eleventh day of the spring lunar month of Nisan, Jesus and his disciples visited the temple that King Herod the Great had built at the place where now stands the Mohammedan Mosque, the Dome of the Rock. The temple was so magnificent that some of the disciples could not help but remark about the precious stones that adorned it. That Herodian temple seemed destined to stand there in its glory for centuries to the honor of the God who was worshiped there. But the facts of history prove that Jesus was a true prophet when he said to those temple admirers:

¹⁴ "Do you not behold all these things? Truly I say to you, By no means will a stone be left here upon a stone and not be thrown down."—Matthew's account, chapter 24, verses 1 through 3.

¹⁵ Such a solemn prophecy would follow as a logical consequence to the terrible prophecy that he had made just two days before this. As he rode amid a jubilant multitude down the Mount of Olives toward Jerusalem, he halted and wept as

he said to her: "If you, even you, had discerned in this day the things having to do with peace—but now they have been hid from your eyes. Because the days will come upon you when your enemies will build around you a fortification with pointed stakes and will encircle you and distress you from every side, and they will dash you and your children within you to the ground, and they will not leave a stone upon a stone in you, because you did not discern the time of your being inspected." (Luke 19:41-44) The phrase "a stone upon a stone in you" would include the temple stones. The Roman general Titus, who was used to fulfill this dire prophecy, would not be able to have even the sacred Herodian temple preserved. The prophetic words of Jesus had to come true.

¹⁶ Total destruction to the holy city of Jerusalem and her temple! What could that mean to those four disciples of Jesus but the end of an era for their nation? That would be the second time that Jerusalem and her temple were destroyed by pagan armies. The disciples remembered the first destruction of Jerusalem and her temple by the armies of Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar, in the year 607 B.C.E., and how this had meant the end of their nation as an independent theocratic kingdom under the rulership of the royal descendants of King David the son of Jesse of Bethlehem. Jerusalem was then left lying desolate for seventy years, under which circumstances Jerusalem indeed began to be trampled on by the pagan Gentile nations. Even though at the end of the seventy years a worshipful remnant of the nation returned from their exile in Babylonia and reoccupied the land of Judah, no kingdom in the hands of a royal descendant of David was reestab-

13, 14. (a) Why were Jesus and his four followers then in that neighborhood? (b) What did Jesus say about the Herodian temple to the admirers of it?

15. (a) That prophecy followed what earlier prophecy as a logical consequence? (b) Stones in that earlier prophecy included what?

16. From what former experience of Jerusalem could those disciples reason that her coming destruction meant the end of an era?

lished. Only a governor, Zerubbabel, was appointed by the new world power of Persia to administer the land of Judah. The Davidic kingdom with throne in Jerusalem kept being trampled on by the Gentiles.

¹⁷ True, in the second century B.C.E. the nation did gain an independence from the Gentiles and set up a kingdom, but this was in the hands of the Maccabees. These Maccabean kings were of the tribe of Levi and were priests and were not of the tribe of Judah and of the royal family of David. In the year 63 B.C.E. this Maccabean Levite kingdom came to an end, when the Romans under General Pompey took over the rule of the country. So now deliverance from the domination of the world power of Rome became the desire of the oppressed people of Judah. When John the Baptist and thereafter Jesus came proclaiming, "The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near," this was welcome news to many humble persons in the land of Galilee and of Judea. (Matt. 3:1-4; 4:12-17) To many of the oppressed people this meant deliverance from the Roman yoke and the restoring of the theocratic kingdom in the hands of a rightful heir of King David at Jerusalem.—Acts 1:6.

GENTILE TIMES MUST CONTINUE TO THEIR END

¹⁸ However, Jesus made no promise of deliverance from the Roman yoke. Contrariwise, he foretold the ruin of the nation by the Roman world power and the continuation of the trampling on Jerusalem's dynasty of Davidic kings by the Gentile world powers. He being born into

17. (a) Why was the Maccabean kingdom not an interruption of the trampling down of the Davidic kingdom? (b) What did the proclamation, "The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near," mean to many humble people in the land?

18, 19. (a) By the message, "The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near," what did Jesus mean and what did he not mean? (b) So what did Jesus say to the people about their "house"?

the human family as a member of the royal house of David, Jesus was the rightful heir of the theocratic kingdom of David. So because he was anointed with God's spirit and was present among the oppressed people, the "kingdom of the heavens," the "kingdom of God," had drawn near. (Luke 17:20, 21) Jesus did not mean that the heavenly kingdom of God for delivering all mankind from oppressive world powers was then at hand. Instead, the Gentile Times for trampling on the rights of the kingdom of God in the hands of descendants of King David had to keep on to their appointed end. Jerusalem and her holy house of religious worship would not be spared. Consequently Jesus said to the people:

¹⁹ "Look! Your house is abandoned to you. For I say to you, You will by no means see me from henceforth until you say, 'Blessed is he that comes in Jehovah's name!'"—Matt. 23:37-39.

²⁰ Two days previously when the jubilant crowd was accompanying Jesus on his kingly ride into Jerusalem they said those very words of prophetic Psalm 118:26, but the religious leaders of Jerusalem did not feel like the people nor feel that Jesus was the foretold "Blessed" One that came in Jehovah's name. (Matt. 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-19) No wonder, therefore, that Jesus would not present himself again in the flesh to them as the rightful anointed heir to the kingdom of David at Jerusalem! He would go away and no more be seen by them in the flesh. And yet the day would arrive when he would come into the kingdom and sit on the throne at the right hand of Jehovah God. Then those who would discern the evidence showing that he had come into his kingdom and was present on the throne would see him with

20. (a) When had those very words as quoted from Psalm 118:26 been used regarding Jesus? (b) When and by whom would those words again be used?



Christians in Jerusalem fled to safety before its destruction in 70 C.E.

eyes of faith. They would discern it to be the due time to say: "Blessed is he that comes in Jehovah's name!" (Ps. 110:1-6; Acts 2:34-36) They would be disposed to call him "blessed," because his coming into his kingdom would mean deliverance from their enemies.

²¹ Hearing his words about his coming again in Jehovah's name, and hearing shortly afterward his prophecy about the casting down of the stones of Jerusalem's temple, the four fishermen disciples of Jesus asked him: "Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?"—Matt. 23:38 to 24:3.

²² The disciples' words, "these things," undeniably included the predicted destruction of Jerusalem then in view of the disciples seated on the Mount of Olives. In the course of the prophecy that Jesus then gave in answer to their question he definitely spoke of the coming destruction of that Jerusalem by the Roman legions in the year 70 C.E., then only thirty-seven years away. (Matt. 24:15-20) In his account of Jesus' prophecy Doctor Luke speaks of Jerusalem's destruction in great detail (Luke 21:20-24) and says:

²³ "Furthermore, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near. Then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains, and let those in the midst of her withdraw, and let those in the country places not enter into her; because these are days for meting out justice, that all the things written may be fulfilled. Woe to the pregnant women and the ones suckling a baby in those days! For there will be great necessity upon the land and wrath on this people; and they

21. According to Matthew's account, what question did those prophecies of Jesus call forth from his four disciples?

22, 23. To what did the disciples' words "these things" refer, and how is this shown to be correct by Jesus' answer?

will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled."

²⁴ Before this prophecy was fulfilled in 70 C.E. and even before the Jews revolted in the year 66 C.E. and brought on Jerusalem's second destruction, the disciples Luke, Matthew and Mark had written their accounts of Jesus' prophecy. Thus the inspired records were there for any Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and Judea to consult and then to act upon after the Roman general Cestius Gallus tried to deal with the revolt promptly but suddenly lifted the siege and withdrew after surrounding Jerusalem with his armies encamped upon the holy precincts round-about the city.*

²⁵ Before the Roman armies under a new general, Titus, could return, the faithful Jewish Christians fled from doomed Jerusalem and the province of Judea. For the most part they sought refuge on the eastern bank of the Jordan River in the province of Perea. Their obedient action spelled deliverance for them when later the Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem and then swept through the province of

* On the first attack on Jerusalem in 66 C.E. by Cestius Gallus, Josephus' *Wars of the Jews*, Book II, Chapter XIX, gives the most complete account. In section 1 he states that Cestius Gallus drew to within "fifty furlongs" of Jerusalem at the time of the celebration of the feast of the tabernacles (Ethanim [or Tishri] 15-21) which in that year should have run from about October 19-25 (Gregorian calendar). The Jews attacked and did some damage to the Romans; then, after mentioning a wait of "three days," Josephus says Cestius Gallus brought his army up to Jerusalem and on the thirtieth of Tishri (about November 7) he brought his army into the city. (Sec. 4) In section 5 he says that the Romans made an attack on the temple wall for five days and on the sixth day undermined the wall. Then, for no reason, he retired from the city and was pursued by the Jews. (Sects. 6, 7) According to the *Interpreter's Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 2, p. 866, Vespasian arrived in Palestine early in 67 C.E. and first endeavored to get the rest of the country under control. He became emperor in 69 C.E. and left his son Titus to carry out the attack on Jerusalem.

24, 25. (a) Before that prophecy went into fulfillment why were Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and Judea equipped to act obediently? (b) How did they act, and what did this mean for them?

Judea destroying cities and killing off Jews by the tens of thousands and at last leading off 97,000 surviving Jews into captivity and slavery.

²⁶ In 73 C.E., with the fall of the fortress of Masada about midway west of the Dead Sea the whole province of Judea was subjugated, cleared of all rebels, by the Roman armies. In the five-month siege of Jerusalem, from Nisan 14 until Elul 6 (September 6, Gregorian time calendar), when the city was taken by General Titus, the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus estimates that 1,100,000 Jews died. If the earlier days of the first destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 607 B.C.E. were days of divine vengeance, the days of this second destruction of Jerusalem were no less days of divine vengeance, "days for meting out justice" from heaven, just as Jesus had predicted three days before he was murdered outside the walls of the bloodguilty Jerusalem.

²⁷ Certainly, with these events the then Jewish system of things with its homeland and capital city and temple of worship came to a conclusion. (1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 9:26-28) But was the desolating of Jerusalem and Judea the farthest point in history to which Jesus' prophecy as recorded in Matthew 24:3 to 25:46; Mark 13:3-37 and Luke 21:7-36 extended and had application?

²⁸ Well, when Jerusalem and her temple were destroyed in 70 C.E. and all Judea was subjugated by the year 73 C.E., did the surviving Jewish Christians have reason to believe that the kingdom of God had come? No! Did they by faith see Jesus in his Messianic kingdom and did they say: "Blessed is he that comes in Jehovah's name"? No! Had the promised "de-

liverance" come, more particularly deliverance from the Roman world power, the desolator of Jerusalem and Judea? No! For at that time the Christians were still largely to be found inside the territory of the Roman Empire, although there were Christians outside the empire in Parthia, India, Scythia, Ethiopia, and elsewhere. Why, for more than two centuries after the Jewish disasters of 70-73 C.E., the Christians suffered terrible persecutions at the hand of the Roman Empire, yes, even after the days of Emperor Constantine.

²⁹ The Roman Empire was the fourth of the Gentile world powers that had trampled on Jerusalem's kingdom in the hands of the royal heir of King David; first, Babylon; second, Medo-Persia; third, Greece (Macedonia); and fourth, Imperial Rome. So complete was the desolation of the Roman province of Judea that the Roman Emperor Vespasian sold pieces of land therein as real estate to Gentile buyers. Hence Jesus' words as given on the Mount of Olives in 33 C.E. had to reach out far beyond the destruction of Jerusalem and her temple in 70 C.E., for, when telling of her siege and fall, Jesus predicted: "And Jerusalem will be trampled on by the [Gentile] nations, until the appointed times of the [Gentile] nations are fulfilled." (Luke 21:24) Even after the Roman Empire lost its grip over the Middle East, the land where King David and his royal successors used to reign continued under the domination of Gentile political powers. No Messianic kingdom in the hands of a rightful heir of King David could come into power until those "appointed times of the [Gentile] nations" ended in God's own prefixed time.

26. How severe was the vengeance of those days, or the meting out of divine justice?

27. What question now arises as to the extent of the application of Jesus' prophecy?

28. Had deliverance by God's kingdom come with the fulfilment of Jesus' prophecy on literal Jerusalem and Judea?

29. (a) When had Jerusalem begun to be trampled on by the Gentile nations? (b) So, as regards this, what did Jesus prophesy to show that his prophecy reached out beyond 70 C.E.?

"GREAT TRIBULATION"

³⁰ The siege and destruction of Jerusalem and the subjugation of all Judea by the Roman legions was indeed a time of "great tribulation" for the Jewish people. But certainly this did not measure up to the proportions of the tribulation that Jesus foretold farther along in his prophecy of the "sign" of his presence and of the "conclusion of the system of things." Although his prediction of the "great tribulation" followed right after his description of the siege of ancient Jerusalem, yet the language that he used appears to make it apply to something far greater than Jerusalem's destruction, something like it but future from it. In Matthew's account of Jesus' prophecy his language reads: "For then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again. In fact, unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short."—Matt. 24:21, 22.

³¹ In John Mark's account of Jesus' prophetic language it reads: "For those days will be days of a tribulation such as has not occurred from the beginning of the creation which God created until that time, and will not occur again. In fact, unless Jehovah had cut short the days, no flesh would be saved. But on account of the chosen ones whom he has chosen he has cut short the days."—Mark 13:19, 20.

³² Later on in his prophecy Jesus spoke of Noah and the flood of Noah's day, and so we ask, Was Jerusalem's destruction in 70 C.E. a tribulation greater than that of the Flood 1,656 years after man's creation? Was Jerusalem's destruction by the Roman armies the worst tribulation that

30, 31. The way that Jesus described "great tribulation" right after telling of Jerusalem's siege and fall indicates what?

32. Because of the language used in connection with "great tribulation," what questions do we properly ask about tribulations?

occurred till then since the beginning of God's creation of mankind, not even leaving out the Noachian flood? In the 1,898 years since Jerusalem's destruction has no disaster occurred that equals it or surpasses it? Has no "great tribulation" occurred again since 70-73 C.E. that compares with the Jewish disaster of those years or that far exceeds it? What about the destruction of human lives and cities in World War I of 1914-1918 and in World War II of 1939-1945? The desolating of Jerusalem and Judea in the first century was only a small-scale affair in comparison with those global conflicts. Well, then, did Jesus make a mistake in calculating the disastrous proportions of the Jewish disaster of 70-73 C.E.? Such a thing could not be true of Jesus. So how shall we take his language?

³³ Jesus was not exaggerating here the measure of the devastation of Jerusalem and Judea. He foreknew and foretold that the Gentile Times for trampling on the rights of the Davidic kingdom would continue on after Jerusalem's destruction. He compared the days of his return-presence with the days of Noah in which the global flood destroyed all mankind but Noah's family inside the ark, thereby suggesting something far worse than Jerusalem's destruction. He spoke of "all the tribes of the earth," not just the twelve tribes of Israel, beating themselves in lamentation at what they see coming. (Matt. 24:30) All this in that one and the same prophecy on the "sign" of his presence and the "conclusion of the system of things."

³⁴ Furthermore, in the Revelation that he gave to his apostle John twenty-six years after Jerusalem's destruction Jesus spoke of the "kings of the entire inhabited earth" as being gathered to the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at

33, 34. What further parts of the prophecy would keep Jesus from using extravagant language about the devastation of Jerusalem and Judea?

Armageddon and he thereafter described the enormous slaughter to be wrought in that war of Armageddon. (Rev. 16:13-16; 19:11-21) This would keep Jesus from using extravagant language.

³⁵ It is therefore evident that Jesus was here using Jerusalem's destruction as a prophetic illustration, speaking of it not only in a literal way but also in a typical way, as typical of something far greater. So he had a greater unfaithful doomed Jerusalem in mind, and he was in fact prophesying about the destruction of the larger unfaithful Jerusalem and the world disaster of which it will be the initial part. He was prophesying about the antitypical Jerusalem and Judea, namely, Christendom, which, according to the statistics of today, numbers close onto a thousand million members world wide.

³⁶ Christendom claims to be the spiritual Israel that is in the new covenant with God by the mediation of Jesus Christ. She claims to be the spiritual Zion or Jerusalem, to whom God's promises belong or apply. Christendom's pope at Vatican City is revered as being the vicegerent or vicar of the heavenly Jesus Christ who is "the lion of the tribe of Juda." (Rev. 5:5, *Dy*) The bringing of Christendom into existence was indicated in Jesus' parable of the wheat and the weeds, and in that same parable he foretold the destruction of Christendom and her weedlike Christians, the antitypical unfaithful Jerusalem and Judea.—Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43.

WORLD DISTRESS SINCE END OF GENTILE TIMES

³⁷ Jesus' prophetic words in Matthew 24:21, 22 and Mark 13:19, 20 being viewed

from this standpoint, we can see that his prophecy applies down here to these last days of the antitypical unfaithful Jerusalem and Judea, Christendom. Jesus' prophecy about the things that were due to occur certainly extended itself down to the year 1914 C.E. and beyond 1914, even beyond this present year. How so? By the fact that Jesus said: "And Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled," and then added more. (Luke 21:24) We need not here repeat the proof that the Gentile Times, "the appointed times of the nations," ended around October 1, 1914. History proves it!

³⁸ Since that marked year of 1914 Christendom along with the rest of the world of mankind has had fulfilled upon her Jesus' words near the beginning of his prophecy, namely: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be great earthquakes, and in one place after another pestilences and food shortages; and there will be fearful sights and from heaven great signs." —Luke 21:10, 11.

³⁹ Matthew's parallel account reads: "For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another. All these things are a beginning of pangs of distress." (Matt. 24:7, 8) When nation rose against nation and kingdom against kingdom in 1914-1918, twenty-four out of the twenty-eight nations involved were nations of Christendom, the antitypical unfaithful Jerusalem and Judea. Unavoidably, then, for Christendom especially, the first world war and the notable food shortages, pestilences and earthquakes meant a "beginning of pangs

35. Evidently, then, Jesus was speaking of Jerusalem from what standpoints?

36. Why can Christendom be said to be the antitypical unfaithful Jerusalem and Judea?

37. How can we see that Jesus' prophecy extends down to here in connection with Christendom and even beyond this present year?

38, 39. (a) Since what year have the earlier words of Jesus' prophecy been fulfilled particularly upon Christendom? (b) What did that "beginning of pangs of distress" indicate for Christendom?

of distress." Those "pangs of distress," as serious as those of a woman in childbirth, did not mean that Christendom was about to give birth to a new Christian order, but meant that she was nearing her painful death. But true Christians were nearing deliverance!

HOW WE KNOW IT IS

NOTE that Luke's account of Jesus' prophecy predicted "fearful sights and from heaven great signs."

(Luke 21:11) After describing Jerusalem's destruction and her being trampled on by the Gentile nations until their "appointed times" are fulfilled, Luke's account goes on to say: "Also, there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth anguish of nations, not knowing the way out because of the roaring of the sea and its agitation, while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."—Luke 21:25-27.

² Have not all these predicted things already come true in large measure, although not altogether to their fullest measure? Have not the "powers of the heavens" been shaken, with an effect upon sun, moon and stars?

³ Till this twentieth century the heavens have been the dominion of the birds and flying creatures, with the exception of some kites, balloons and dirigibles sent aloft by men. More than thirteen thou-

a world converted to Christianity, but meant that she was nearing her painful death. But true Christians were nearing deliverance!

GETTING NEAR

sand years ago, on the fifth creative day God created the creatures of the sea and the flying creatures to "fly over the earth upon the face of the expanse of the heavens." (Gen. 1:20-23) But with the successful flying of the airplane on December 17, 1903, man really began to invade the domain of the living flying creatures and to go above their realm into outer space. From then on the airplane was improved and was put to use in World War I in shooting and bombing from the air. Rain, snow and hail were thenceforth not the only things to be poured down from the heavens. With the expanding of aviation in war operations and in peacetime transportation the balance of man's natural environment was due to be shaken, upset, unsettled.

⁴ During World War I the German "Big Bertha" cannons were used from a distance of thirty miles to heave shells into Paris, France. Thereafter rocketry was specially pushed by the Germans. Rockets were used to carry explosives from the European continent across the English Channel and down upon London and other English cities, in addition to airplane bombing raids. Near the close of World

1. As regards "fearful sights and from heaven great signs," what did Jesus prophesy right after telling of Jerusalem's being trampled on by the nations to the end of their appointed times?

2, 3. To what extent have the "powers of the heavens" been shaken by the advent of aviation?

4. How is rocketry causing an invasion of the heavens?

War II atomic bombs of devastating explosive power were introduced into warfare and exploded over Japan. In short order there followed the invention of the still more terrible nuclear bomb. A number of leading nations developed the know-how, so that today there are five nuclear nations. The first atomic bombs were dropped from speedy airplanes, but now rocketry has been applied in behalf of the nuclear bomb. Now the world of mankind shudders in fear of the ICBM's, the intercontinental ballistic missiles, which streak through the outer space of the heavens across the formerly protective oceans to strike the enemy targets. Man is trying to outdo the lightning bolts of the heavens.

"ANGUISH OF NATIONS"

⁵ What, though, about the foretold "signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth anguish of nations, not knowing the way out because of the roaring of the sea and its agitation, while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth"? (Luke 21:25, 26) Could it mean anything different from what happened on May 19, 1780, when the sun was darkened? This produced a nightlike darkness that extended over 329,000 square miles of New England, United States of America, this being followed on the subsequent night by the darkening of the moon, when at its

full, and also of the stars. Also, on the early morning of November 12/13, 1833, there occurred a meteoric shower in which millions on millions of starlike meteors fell over North America and which covered 11,000,000 square miles, a heavenly phenomenon so impressive that it caught the attention of scientific men. Yet not long ago, early on November 17, 1966, there was an awesome meteoric shower that rained on the upper atmosphere of southwestern United States, from Texas to Arizona.

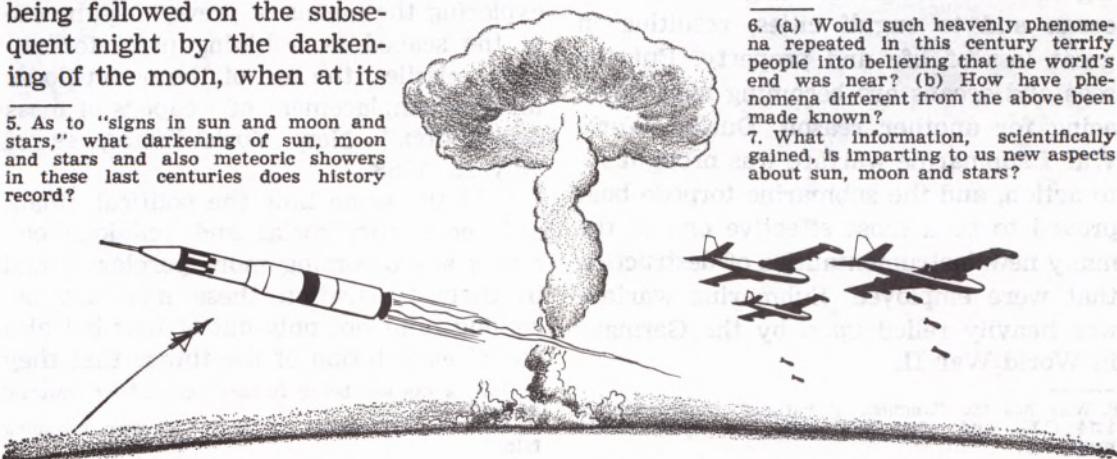
⁶ Well, in our twentieth century of scientific advancement nothing like such strange celestial phenomena would terrify most people into believing that the "end of the world" was near. True, but today the science of astronomy, telescopic and radio, has made such advancement as to detect more phenomena about sun, moon and stars and their effect upon the earth and its inhabitants.

⁷ Now we are informed of how those great flares of nuclear energy producing so-called sunspots send out streams of powerful electronic particles that not only cause disruption in the field of shortwave radio and magnetic areas but also affect people to an abnormal extent, a new cycle of sunspots due to reach its peak in 1970. The earth is continually being bombarded with cosmic rays. Great belts of ionized

6. (a) Would such heavenly phenomena repeated in this century terrify people into believing that the world's end was near? (b) How have phenomena different from the above been made known?

7. What information, scientifically gained, is imparting to us new aspects about sun, moon and stars?

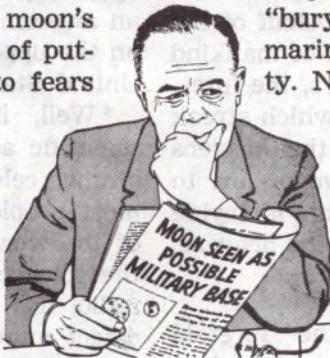
5. As to "signs in sun and moon and stars," what darkening of sun, moon and stars and also meteoric showers in these last centuries does history record?



particles encircle the earth and endanger astronauts maneuvering in outer space. Tremendous quasars, which are sources of radio waves, are being discovered; and radio telescopes are picking up signals from invisible heavenly bodies. Rockets have released capsules that have given a soft landing to radar cameras on the surface of the moon, transmitting back to earth closeup pictures of the moon's terrain. The scientific projects of putting men on the moon lead to fears that the moon will be made a military base from which to control the earth.

⁸ Our awareness of such "signs" in sun, moon and stars as produced by modern scientific findings only adds to the "anguish of nations." Their difficulties have constantly multiplied since 1914 C.E., both inside nations and between nations. The anguish is made worse because of their "not knowing the way out" by means of human remedies and solutions. It is "because of the roaring of the sea and its agitation, while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the earth." Of course, submarine earthquakes have occurred, causing tsunami waves to lunge across the ocean and to engulf cities, resulting in great loss of life and property. But the seas and oceans are becoming more menacing for another reason. During World War I submarine warfare was brought into action, and the submarine torpedo boat proved to be a most effective one of the many new instrumentalities of destruction that were employed. Submarine warfare was heavily relied upon by the Germans in World War II.

8. Why has the "anguish of nations" worsened since 1914 C.E., and what new area has become truly menacing?



⁹ More effective use of the sea in warfare is now being pushed by powerful nations. The Communist giant of Soviet Russia is vastly increasing its merchant marine and submarine fleet. The United States is being reminded of the Communist threat to "bury" democratic America, and the fear is being expressed publicly that the Communists will

"bury us" in the sea by their submarine and surface ship superiority. Nuclear engines have successfully been installed in submarines, enabling them to go around the world without surfacing. Submarines are being armed with missile-shooting equipment capable of firing from underwater long-range missiles carrying

atomic warheads, causing destruction to roar up out of the sea, aimed at distant targets on dry land. Even surface warships are being outfitted for missile warfare. Indeed, the sea is suffering agitation from all these deadly prowlers of the briny deep. In fear of further agitation of the sea, the American president, L. B. Johnson, in July of 1968, urged the seventeen-nation Disarmament Conference, at the start of its new session in Geneva, Switzerland, to start exploring the means of preventing the use of the seabed as a hiding place for nuclear missiles, the use of the ocean floors for the "emplacement of weapons of mass destruction."—*New York Times*, as of July 26, 1968.

¹⁰ At the same time the political, financial, economic, social and religious elements are becoming more perplexed, and in their frustration these men are becoming faint not only out of fear but also out of expectation of the things that they

9. How is the sea being further agitated by powerful nations?

10, 11. Why, as foretold by Jesus, are men becoming faint?

can calculate are bound to come upon the earth. World famine is predicted for the year 1975. Appeal is being made to the United Nations organization to prevent the spreading of atomic and nuclear weapons into the hands of nations outside the Big Five nuclear powers of today. The missile gap between America and Russia is closing; Russia is nearing equality with the United States. There is great insistence that outer space must not be used for warfare.*

¹¹ Also, defoliation of enemy hideouts by means of herbicides and chemicals needs to be studied as to its long-range effects on man's environment. Modern industry and even jet-propulsion aircraft are fatally hurting the balance of man's natural surroundings, in view of which one magazine article headlines and discusses the subject "Can the World Be Saved?" (*New York Times Magazine*, March 31, 1968) Will our earth shortly become uninhabitable for the exploding world population? Such are real, valid fears indeed!

¹² Yet it is at God's prefixed time, not man's, that the great climax comes, just as the next words of Jesus' prophecy indicate: "And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." (Luke 21:27) This refers to his coming to destroy Babylon the Great, the world empire of false Babylonish religion, and then to the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Armageddon. (Rev. 16: 13-16) Invisible in the spirit he

will be as if hidden "in a cloud," but the nations will discern that it must be the foretold "Son of man," because of the power that is exercised beyond that of man. Christendom will not share then in his "great glory," but will be destroyed despite all her hypocritical prayers to God. Neither will there be any glory for the former political lovers of Babylon the Great, for after her these political ruling elements will be annihilated, going down in inglorious defeat because of fighting against earth's rightful King, the glorified Lord Jesus Christ. They will see, appreciate, that their destruction comes from a source higher than human.

ENCOURAGEMENT AND WARNING

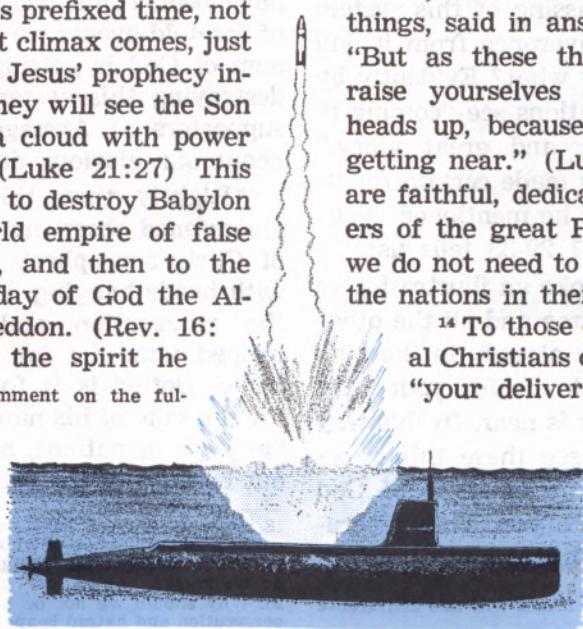
¹³ Well, now, what about us? What does all this mean for us? Should we share in the present "anguish of nations" and their not knowing the way out, their becoming faint, their fears and terrifying expectations? We do not need to do so. Jesus

Christ, after detailing all the foregoing things, said in answer to his disciples: "But as these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near." (Luke 21:28) So, if we are faithful, dedicated, baptized followers of the great Prophet Jesus Christ, we do not need to be bowed down with the nations in their anguish and fears.

¹⁴ To those of us who become real Christians of that kind the words "your deliverance" should have a stirring, encouraging sound, as

* For corresponding comment on the fulfillment of Luke 21:10, 11, 25-27 see the book entitled "Your Will Be Done on Earth," pages 319-323, as published by the Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society of Pennsylvania in 1958.

12. However, at what time will the great climax to all this come, and how?



13. What did Jesus say about our attitude while the nations are bowed down with anguish and fear?

14, 15. The deliverance to which we are getting near is from what?

they did to the disciples to whom Jesus Christ spoke. Why should not the words be encouraging, rousing, since they tell of being freed from persecutors and haters? For, before telling of the deliverance that is getting near, Jesus said: "But before all these things people will lay their hands upon you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, you being haled before kings and governors for the sake of my name. It will turn out to you for a witness. . . . Moreover, you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death; and you will be objects of hatred by all people because of my name."—Luke 21:12-17.

¹⁵ Our deliverance is from people who not merely persecute and hate us but who hate Jesus Christ, as it is because of *his* name that they persecute and hate us. Such haters of Him are part of this "system of things," and it is thus also from this entire system of things that we persecuted, hated ones are delivered.

¹⁶ What will the passing of this system of things mean? Deliverance from it will come by whom or by what? Evidently by the one whom the nations see "coming in a cloud with power and great glory." (Luke 21:27) This is made certain for us by Jesus' words after he mentioned "your deliverance." Luke 21:29-33 tells us:

¹⁷ "With that he spoke an illustration to them: 'Note the fig tree and all the other trees: When they are already in the bud, by observing it you know for yourselves that now the summer is near. In this way you also, when you see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I say to you, This generation will by no means pass away until all

16, 17. By whom or by what means will this deliverance come?

things occur. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.' "—Compare Matthew 24:32-35; Mark 13:28-31.

¹⁸ "These things," as foretold by Jesus in his prophecy, we who are of "this generation" have seen occurring since the year 1914, in which year the "appointed times of the nations" ended. Sooner would heaven and earth literally pass away than for Jesus' words to pass away unfulfilled. Therefore Jesus' words are so worthy of our accepting and believing.

¹⁹ Hence, from seeing these things occurring, what do we know? We know that the divine agency for our deliverance, "the kingdom of God," is near. What should we do, then, to prove that we do believe this? Jesus said: "But as these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near." (Luke 21:28) We of "this generation" have seen these foretold things "start to occur" in 1914, and now for the last fifty-four years we have seen them occurring. So our convictions have been confirmed. From a long train of foretold events we know that the kingdom of God is getting near to its act of destroying this system of things and its supporters at Armageddon and bringing about our glorious deliverance.

²⁰ Rightly, then, this is no time for us enlightened observers of these fulfillments of Christ's prophecy to be bowed down, with heads hanging dejectedly, because of the persecution and hatred that are heaped upon us for the sake of Jesus' name. Better is it for us to suffer thus for the sake of his name than to suffer the "anguish of nations, not knowing the way out because of the roaring of the sea and

18. Since what year have we seen "these things" occurring, in verification of whose words?

19. From seeing these things occur as foretold, what do we know?

20. Why should we not be bowed down because of the persecution and hatred heaped upon us?

its agitation, while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth." Worldly men and nations are suffering such things because they are opposing the kingdom of God, but we are suffering at their hands because of proclaiming "this good news of the kingdom" in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations before their end comes. (Matt. 24:14) They face eternal destruction. We face eternal deliverance. Why not, then, raise ourselves erect and hopefully lift our heads up, also lifting up our voices as we keep on proclaiming God's kingdom?—Mark 13:10.

²¹ Now especially we should never become bowed down and let our heads drop and nod in slumber and drowsiness because of our overindulging ourselves with the worldly nations in their efforts to forget and ignore the things taking place since 1914. Because it is now so late and is so far along in the current of world affairs, it is the time of all times for us to keep alert to what is taking place in the world's speedy approach to the unavoidable climax, and then to act as servant, understanding Christians. We dare not ignore what Jesus included as a warning in his prophecy: 'But pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come in upon all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth. Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man.'—Luke 21:34-36.

²² A snare is triggered to snap in on its victim in a fraction of a second before he

can escape. So for us to have that day suddenly be upon us in an instant like a snare means to be caught beyond all chance to work ourselves loose and means death for us. That ensnaring day is fast coming in "upon all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth," just as surely as day follows night. We are all of us bound to enter into that day since it will arrive suddenly earth wide, no dweller on earth being out of its reach. We must all face it. But how? Doing like the people of Noah's preflood days, eating and drinking to excess and giving way to the "anxieties of life," including the anxieties over seeking pleasures? This is what the "evil slave" class does. (Matt. 24:38, 39, 48-51) These are not the things to set our hearts upon, letting our hearts be weighed down with these things and growing fatty, thick and unresponsive to Christ's call to Kingdom service. In this destiny-determining time we need to pay attention to ourselves in order to avoid such a heart condition.

²³ It is a time for us to keep our full powers and faculties awake, active in God's service, a time for us to make supplication, because we cannot do this in our own strength. Without God's help we cannot succeed. Only in this way shall we escape sharing in the anguish, fear and dreaded expectation of the worldly nations and being ensnared in destruction with them at Armageddon.

²⁴ What we are striving to do with all our hearts is to stand before the Son of man who comes "with power and great glory" to the execution of divine judgment upon this system of things and its backers. Let all of Christendom, the antitypi-

21. Because of what other things, as mentioned in Jesus' warning, should our heads not be bowed down?

22. (a) What will it mean for those caught by that ensnaring day? (b) What heart condition should we avoid?

23. To "succeed in escaping all these things," how should we keep ourselves mentally, and with the aid of what?

24. Our purpose, along with our strong supplication, is to do what, and fulfilling this purpose will bring us what?

cal Jerusalem and Judea, fall condemned to destruction before this Son of man whom she hypocritically has claimed to serve. Our purpose, along with our making strong supplication, is to stand approved before the Son of man as his true followers who have kept ourselves raised erect, with our heads lifted up, constantly awake and never looking back at Christendom and Babylon the Great, from which we have fled. Erect in the full dignity of our service as free, dedicated servants of the Most High God, we shall keep our heads up, obediently proclaiming the kingdom of our heavenly Father, Jehovah God, and serving its interests. (Rom. 14: 4) This active, faithful course will shortly bring us the grand reward of our being delivered from this wicked system of things into God's blessed new order, there to worship and serve him at his imperishable temple forevermore.



ASSYRIA'S HISTORICAL RECORDS

and The Bible

DURING the many centuries the names of prominent Assyrian rulers such as Sargon, Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser and Sennacherib have been passed on to generation after generation of Bible readers. With a sense of reality unmatched by any secular record, the Bible related their dealings with the people of Judah and Israel. In the case of Sargon, modern secular historians for long were not even sure of his identity.

Then, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came the era of the archaeologist. Diggings in mounds or tells of Mesopotamia produced startling finds. Specifically referring to work undertaken by archaeologist Paul-Emile Botta, author C. W. Ceram, in *Gods, Graves and Scholars*, writes on page 225: "Hitherto only the Bible had had anything pertinent to say about the land between the two rivers, and for nineteenth-century science

the Bible was a collection of legends."

But now those warrior-kings of Assyria lived again, as their own annals, their palaces, their "display" inscriptions and their "king lists" came to light. Assyriology became an accepted science, and its students delved into the mass of unearthed data to build up a history of a little known empire. The facts related in the Bible about Assyria and her rulers were now recognized to be authentic, but modern students began to challenge the chronology or dating of events in Assyrian history as found in the Bible.

So the question now arises, Do the specialists in Assyriology have reliable material on which to base their supposed corrections of the Book that for so many centuries kept alive knowledge of those ancient names and the events connected with them? Have the records and monuments wrested from the dusty mounds of

the Near East provided such a solid basis that Bible chronology may now be relegated to a position of inferiority? If so, then we should expect to find in those records a high degree of accuracy and credibility. What are the facts?

THE ASSYRIAN RECORDS

The records left by the Assyrians themselves, and unearthed in comparatively recent times, are made up of "display" inscriptions, such as are found ornamenting the walls of palaces; royal annals, written by royal or priestly scribes for the glory of the ruling king; "king lists" such as those dug up at Khorsabad, and the *limmu* or eponym lists—lists of prominent officials, presumably one for each year, with the outstanding event of the year shown alongside. All these, together with certain ancient astronomical data, constitute the raw materials out of which Assyriologists have woven their history.

But what of those "display" inscriptions and annals? Are they accurate enough to accept as a basis for chronology? Here is what Professor Olmstead, until his death in 1945 one of the foremost authorities on the ancient Near East, had to say: "We may . . . use the Display inscription to fill gaps in the Annals [royal chronicles listing events annually], but it has not the slightest authority when it disagrees with its original." "Equally serious," says the professor, "is it that they ['display' inscriptions] rarely have a chronological order. . . . That they are to be used with caution is obvious."

Of the annals, Professor Olmstead writes: "We have here a regular chronology, and if errors, intentional or otherwise, can sometimes be found, the relative chronology at least is generally correct. . . . But it would be a great mistake to assume that the annals are always trustworthy. Earlier historians have too gen-

erally accepted their statements unless they had definite proof of inaccuracy. In the past few years, there has been discovered a mass of new material which we may use for the criticism of the Sargonide documents. . . . Add to this the references in foreign sources such as Hebrew and Babylonian, and we hardly need internal study to convince us that the annals are far from reliable."—*Assyrian Historiography*, University of Missouri Studies, Social Science Series, Vol. II, pages 5, 6.

Note, too, the testimony of Professor D. D. Luckenbill: "One soon discovers that the accurate portrayal of events as they took place, year by year, during the king's reign, was not the guiding motive of the royal scribes. At times the different campaigns seem to have been shifted about without any apparent reason, but more often it is clear that royal vanity demanded playing fast and loose with historical accuracy."—*Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, Vol. I, page 7.

As a king's reign progressed the royal annals often underwent drastic revision. Later editions apparently managed to juggle earlier facts and figures to suit the king's fancy. For example, Professor Olmstead makes reference to the "cool taking by [Ashurbanipal] of bit after bit of the last two Egyptian campaigns of his father until in the final edition there is nothing that he has not claimed for himself."—*Assyrian Historiography*, pages 7, 8.

It is quite apparent that the ancient annalists were far from being impartial recorders of the facts and times as they really occurred. Historians say they were not above listing a vassal king as paying tribute, even though other records showed such king to be dead at the time. There is thus strong evidence of carelessness, dishonesty and simple confusion in their

compilations. But, are matters different with the eponym lists?

ASSYRIA'S EPONYM LISTS

Modern chronologers generally hold that the *limmu* or eponym lists have somehow escaped the corruption of annals and inscriptions, and that they are virtually impeccable as to accuracy. They claim those lists provide the soundest basis for the chronology of those times. To aid in our appraisal of these lists, here is a sample section from one of them:

Bel-harran-bel-usur	(governor) of Guzana	against Damascus
Shalmaneser	took his seat on the throne	
Marduk-bel-usur	(governor) of Amedi	in the land
Mahde	(governor) of Nineveh	against [Samaria]
Assur-ishmeani	(governor) of [Kakz]	against [Samaria]
Shalmaneser	king of Assyria	against [Samaria]

As can be seen from this example, no actual dates are given, though it is assumed that each name on the list represents a year, thereby allowing for a year-by-year count. It is as though, in modern parlance, the "man of the year" was listed against some outstanding event of the same year. Since the names of Assyrian kings appear on these eponym lists, historians count from one king to the next in order, so as to determine the length of any one king's reign. Then they compare this count with whatever figures are obtainable from Assyrian "king lists."

Claim has been made for a great degree of regularity in the eponym arrangement as a whole, with a set order being followed in listing the eonyms or officials, starting with the king and, in succeeding years, listing such officials as "field marshal," "chief cupbearer," "high chamberlain," and so on. Investigation, however, shows that this order is not consistently followed, and that in later periods the high officials no longer appear under

these titles. And after Sennacherib's time, even the names of new kings fail to appear on the lists.

Nor do historians of our day hold consistently to the view that the length of a king's reign can be determined by counting the number of eonyms from his name up to that of the next king. They state that Shalmaneser V ruled for only five years, yet according to the actual count down to the name of his successor on the eonym list his reign should be eight years in length. In explaining away some of the apparent inconsistencies, some historians suggest that Sargon (Shalmaneser's successor) made a change in the arrangement, having himself declared eonym in his third regnal year instead of in his first. And, though Sargon would seem to have reigned for thirty-two years according to the eonym list, they credit him with only seventeen!

Due to the brevity of the information provided in these lists, it is obvious that the means for detecting error is considerably diminished. Yet, despite this and the evident weaknesses they manifest, modern historians prefer to charge error to the royal annals whenever these fail to agree with the eonym lists. Certainly there is a great deal of vagueness about these lists.

THE BIBLE THOROUGHLY CREDIBLE

That the chronology developed by modern Assyriologists is at odds with that found in the Scriptures may be noted from the following: According to the Bible count of time, King Menahem of Israel ruled from about 791 to 780 B.C.E. and King Ahaz of Judah reigned from 761 to 745 B.C.E. Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III, called also Pul in the Bible, exacted tribute from Menahem and was bribed by Ahaz. (2 Ki. 15:19, 20; 16:7, 8) But Assyriologists place Tiglath-pileser III's

reign about 744-727 B.C.E., and therefore after the deaths of Menahem and Ahaz. Similarly, their dates for the fall of Samaria and Sennacherib's attack on Judah in Hezekiah's fourteenth year differ by twenty to thirty years from the Bible's placement of these events.—2 Ki. 17:3-6; 18:9, 10, 13.

So what are we to think of the discrepancies? Do Assyrian historical records show up as being so accurate and consistent with themselves as to inspire confidence? Understandably, the Assyriologists today are proud of their achievements in piecing together the puzzle of Assyrian history. Yet the picture that has resulted has many gaps and inconsistencies, so that allowance has to be made for a wide margin of conjecture on the part of the modern historians.

True, some of the apparent contradictions in the pagan records may be due to the inability of the modern researchers to understand correctly the ancient methods employed, even as there are points in the Bible chronology that are at times misunderstood. But the unbiased reader who makes an honest comparison cannot but note the contrast between the one-sided, obviously exaggerated, and generally disconnected history of the Assyrian cuneiform tablets and the remarkably clear, factual, and coherent record of events the Bible gives.

Read, for example, the record of the kings of Judah and Israel as related in the Bible books of Kings and Chronicles. The Bible writers set down with notable consistency the length of each Judean king's reign, giving his age on taking the throne and again at death, the name of the contemporaneous king or kings in the rival northern kingdom of Israel, the major events of the king's reign, his faithfulness or unfaithfulness, his good deeds

and his bad ones, the name of each king's successor and the successor's relationship (if any) to the deceased king. That some minor problems must be resolved in the chronology is acknowledged; yet this record definitely has no equal in any of the pagan histories.

The candor of the Bible writers gives genuine cause for accepting with confidence the chronological data these same writers provide, even though pagan records may not appear to coincide. Where, for example, do we ever find among the boastful Assyrian records any admission of the defeats sustained in battle by those self-styled invincible kings? Yet the recorders of Biblical history honestly set down the humiliating experiences and defeats the Israelite kings met at the hands of other nations, including the Assyrians. We can read about Israelite king Menahem's paying tribute equivalent to over \$1,000,000 to avoid conflict with Assyrian emperor Tiglath-pileser (III) and of fearful King Ahaz of Judah bribing the same emperor to attack Syria and Israel so as to lift their pressure from Judah. (2 Ki. 15:19, 20; 16:5-9) Shortly thereafter we learn of the northern kingdom's complete ruination after a three-year siege of Samaria by the Assyrian army and of Israelite king Hoshea's imprisonment. (2 Ki. 17:1-6; 18:9-11) No effort is made to gloss over the facts or paint them other than as they really were.

Engraved in stone or inscribed in clay, the ancient Assyrian documents may seem very impressive. But does this ensure their correctness and freedom from falsehood? Which would you say are the important factors that give sound basis for confidence in historical matters: the material used for writing? or the writer, his purpose, his respect for truth, and his devotion to righteous principles? Obviously it is the latter.

Because the Bible records were evidently written on perishable papyrus or vellum, their continued use and the deteriorating effect of weather conditions in much of Palestine doubtless explains why we have no original copies of those manuscripts today. Yet, because it is Jehovah's

inspired Book, the Bible has been carefully copied and preserved in full form until now. (1 Pet. 1:24, 25) Divine inspiration, by which the Bible historians were able to set down their records, assures the reliability of Bible chronology.

—2 Pet. 1:19-21.



THE JOY of abounding in ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE

DADDY," said pretty little Ingrid, "Paula's mother said Paula can't come out because she has mumps. What's mumps, Daddy?" Karl smiled. When his four-year-old daughter asked questions, she always looked so serious. But sensing that she really wanted to know, he lovingly set her on his lap and explained simply: "The mumps . . ."

Later, when Ingrid was seven, Karl faced another of her many questions. As she happily sucked some chocolate-covered nuts she said: "These are good, Daddy! But where do they get chocolate?"

Now that she could read, Karl decided to help her learn to find answers. "I could tell you, Ingrid," he said, "but let's look up 'chocolate' in our small encyclopedia and see what it says. You'll see how interesting it is to look up answers."

When she was sixteen, the eye doctor at school told Ingrid that she was slightly farsighted and might soon need glasses. On the way home she stopped at the library. After enjoying the material in the

large encyclopedia under "Glasses" and "Eye" she asked the librarian: "I'm interested in learning more about eyes and glasses. I looked in the encyclopedia. Could you suggest some books I could take home?"

After Ingrid married, she was thinking of covering her hallway floor. "Which is best, tile or carpet?" she thought. By reading some pamphlets she obtained from the store and by speaking with some of her friends, she got a fair idea about the advantages and disadvantages of each. Yet she realized that her husband must make the final decision as the head of the household.

If you were one of Ingrid's parents would you not have received much satisfaction from watching her advance toward physical, mental and emotional maturity? When she was just a young child, her father was happy to answer her questions. Then as she progressed in ability, he helped her to see how she could find information herself. What fine training! And imagine the pleasure it must have

brought Ingrid herself to become more able and equipped.

How sad it would have been if Ingrid, as she gained ability, had remained a babe, as it were, asking her parents things that she was qualified to find out herself. That would have implied laziness and lack of initiative. She would have lost much of the joy that comes from seeking and finding knowledge.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

As Christians, we are aware of another type of growth to maturity, spiritual growth. Much of what is illustrated in Ingrid's case takes place in a spiritual way with one who studies the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses. And that is true whether the person is young or old. The goal he should have is growth to spiritual adulthood or maturity. The apostle Paul prayed that such progress would be continued even by Christians, "asking that [they] be filled with the accurate knowledge of [God's] will in all wisdom and spiritual discernment, in order to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him."

—Col. 1:9, 10.

Whether you are already one of Jehovah's witnesses, or are working toward that goal, can you see this advancement manifest in your life? 'But,' you might wonder, 'how can I determine the extent of my progress?' One gauge, and there are a number of them, is the way you react when a question comes up. What do you do to get information? Do you ask someone without personally trying to find an answer? Or do you do research yourself?

Let us examine some of the steps a person takes in making spiritual progress. You can compare yourself with what you learn. If you see room for personal improvement, you can be sure that you will

find real satisfaction in applying yourself to making such improvement. And even if you are already quite "grown up" spiritually, you may see more specialized areas where you can make advancement and so become a light bearer who brings even greater praise to God.—Matt. 5:14-16.

WHEN QUESTIONS COME UP

We can continue to use Ingrid as a good example. Recently she began to study the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses. She had much to learn about it. Each week when Karen, the Witness who was studying the Bible with her, came, Ingrid was full of questions. Realizing that Ingrid was a spiritual babe, Karen was quite willing to answer. She found pleasure in helping Ingrid to find the joy of abounding in accurate knowledge of God.

After they had been studying the Bible for a couple of months, Ingrid mentioned to Karen: "I was reading Matthew 12:8. Jesus used the expression 'Son of man.' Why did he call himself that?" Karen said that she would prefer to check further before answering. During the week Ingrid wondered how her teacher was going to find the answer. Ingrid knew that there were many ministers in the local congregation of Jehovah's witnesses that had considerable knowledge of the Bible. Would Karen ask one of them?

At the next study, Karen directed attention to pages 220 and 221 of "*Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie*," a Bible-study aid that Ingrid had recently obtained. It showed that Jesus was not just a materialization; he had not materialized a body as some angels had done. Rather, he was actually a human, and the expression "Son of man" emphasized that fact. (Gal. 4:4) Thus he could serve as a suitable ransom and pay back what the man Adam had lost.

"Did you ask someone in the congregation where to find the answer?" asked Ingrid.

"I'd only ask if I couldn't find the answer myself," replied Karen. "I'm sure the brothers there would have been happy to make some suggestions if I'd asked them. But, instead, I did personal research. In fact, I brought along today the *Index* to the publications of the Watch Tower Society for the years 1961 to 1965. Let me show you how to use it. As questions come up in the future we can practice using such *Indexes*. You'll see how quickly and satisfactorily most questions can be answered on a personal basis."

USE OF THE "INDEX"

Can you see the difference in the way Ingrid and Karen reacted to a question both of them wanted answered? Karen did not just ask someone else, but she took the initiative to do personal research. What would you have done? In order to help Christians do personal Bible research and thus find the joy of abounding in accurate knowledge, the Watch Tower Society produces each year an *Index* of its publications.* This is divided into a Subject Index and a Scripture Index. By using the *Index* one is able to locate subjects or Bible texts discussed in *The Watchtower*, *Awake!* and other publications produced each year for the education of Christians. Let us illustrate how one can effectively use the *Index*.

Karen looked in the Subject Index section of the *Index* for 1961-1965. She wanted to know about the expression "Son of man." Under that heading there are two subheadings, "identified" and "meaning of term," with references provided after each. One reference was to "im 220-1." Checking the list at the bottom of every

even-numbered page, she saw that the reference was to the '*Impossible to Lie*' book. On pages 220 and 221 she found the information presented above.

But what if you wanted information on a certain subject and there was no listing for the word you had in mind? For example, maybe you recalled reading something about the number of times that humans heard Jehovah's voice. When were those occasions? Where should you look in the *Index*? Well, remember that the first section of the *Index* is a *subject* listing. What is the subject? You are thinking about Jehovah and his voice. So why not look under the heading "Jehovah"? In the *Index* for 1961-1965, under the heading "Jehovah," there is the subheading "voice" and you are referred to page 28 of *Awake!* of August 8, 1962. Looking that up, you will find that there seem to have been three occasions when humans heard Jehovah's own voice, and they were all when Jesus was down on earth. We read of these occasions at Matthew 3:17; 17:5 and John 12:28.

What if the question you have is on a particular Bible verse? For instance, possibly you read in Judges 16:28 that blinded Samson prayed to Jehovah: "Let me avenge myself upon the Philistines with vengeance for one of my two eyes." Why just one eye? Here is where the Scripture Index section is useful. The first place to look would be in the most recent *Index*, the one for 1967, under Judges 16:28. You will find a reference to page 117 of *The Watchtower* for 1967; that is in the February 15 issue. At that location you will find the comment that apparently Samson considered that the loss of one of his eyes was because of a lack of wakefulness on his part in his dealing with Delilah. The other eye, though, he charged to the Philistines and so asked that Jehovah help

* In its foreign-language publications an index is provided in the back of most books and in the final issue of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* every year.

him avenge that and thus uphold true worship.

If you add to your theocratic library on a regular basis by keeping the issues of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* as they come out, or obtaining the bound volumes of these magazines at the end of each year, as well as collecting the Society's books, you will over the years accumulate a valuable storehouse of knowledge. Then you can draw on this accumulated knowledge when questions arise. But if you look in the *Index* and are referred to a publication you do not have, what can you do? At most Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's witnesses there is a library that one can use before and after meetings. Why not consult the publication there? Or maybe someone in the local congregation who has been adding to his personal library for many years has the publication in his library. It would undoubtedly bring him satisfaction to know that he could help you, and the two of you might well share pleasant moments of Christian association.

Does that sound as if effort is required? It is! But is not one thing that distinguishes a mature adult from a babe the way in which the mature person is willing to use initiative and persistence in pursuing something worth while? God's Word says: "The heart of the understanding one acquires knowledge, and the ear of wise ones *seeks to find knowledge.*" —Prov. 18:15.

PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

Do you remember what Ingrid did after she did personal research but felt that she needed some suggestions as to where to obtain more information? She asked someone who was qualified to assist. How does that apply locally when one seeks accurate knowledge of God?

Speaking about a Christian overseer, 1 Timothy 3:2, 6 shows that he is to be

"qualified to teach" and "not a newly converted man." So if you have done all the personal research you are able to do, and you still have not answered your question, why not ask one of the many qualified individuals in the local congregation? The overseer and ministerial servants have had years of experience and are recognized as ones who are especially able to teach. They may be able to make a suggestion as to some places where you could find the information you seek or join you in doing research.

Also, it is good to analyze the question or problem. Is it one for which you are responsible to make a decision? Maybe someone else actually bears that responsibility. As in Ingrid's case, if a wife is involved, the question may be one that the husband must decide, after he considers the Bible principles that bear on the matter. (Titus 2:4, 5) Questions pertaining to congregation activities are to be handled in the local congregation by those appointed by holy spirit to decide such matters.—Acts 20:28.

INCREASING IN ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE

As already noted, the apostle Paul prayed that Christians *continue increasing* in accurate knowledge. This is a possibility even for those who have studied the Bible for years, for Jesus indicated that there would be a group of anointed Christians on earth to dispense spiritual food at the proper time. (Matt. 24:45) Jehovah's witnesses have experienced the fulfillment of this, having received rich spiritual food over the years in the publications of the Watch Tower Society.

Since this is so, if one wants to know how a particular scripture or subject is understood by Jehovah's witnesses, he can consult the publications where it has already been explained. True, some matters have not yet been discussed. Would

it be advisable, then, to write to the Watch Tower Society and request a special advance personal explanation? No, that is not the way God provides spiritual "food at the proper time." He furnishes it for his people as a group. When the prophetic significance of some portion of the Bible is available, that information is published for the benefit of all.

Christians can expect spiritual light of understanding to get "lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established." (Prov. 4:18) So we can patiently wait for information on points that have not yet been discussed, joyfully receiving with ap-

preciation the advancing and increasing light of truth of God's Word.

But, as we have seen, one can likely locate information on most Scriptural questions locally by consulting available publications or discussing the matter with the experienced Christian ministers in the congregation. Thus he will find the answer quickly and get much personal satisfaction for his efforts.

Let the joy Ingrid received be just a small illustration of the great joy you will receive as you keep spiritual maturity as your goal and as you seek to abound in accurate knowledge!



WHILE Jesus Christ was yet with his followers here on earth he spoke to them about heavenly life. For example, the night before his death he told them: "In the house of my Father there are many abodes. Otherwise, I would have told you, because I am going my way to prepare a place for you. Also, if I go my way and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you home to myself, that where I am you also may be."—John 14:1-3.

Millions of persons have set their hearts on such heavenly life. To them it has represented a prospect of relief from the troubles of this life. But do you know why God has arranged for some persons to go

to heaven? Do you know what they will do there?

IN HEAVEN AS KINGS AND PRIESTS

During his earthly ministry Jesus often spoke of the "kingdom of the heavens" or "kingdom of God." (Matt. 10:7; 13:44-47; Luke 4:43; 8:1) That kingdom is a heavenly rule or government that Almighty God will use to accomplish his purpose. Jesus taught his followers to pray that, by means of the Kingdom, God's will would be done here on earth. (Matt. 6:9, 10) Thus, under the rule of God's kingdom, the earth will become a delightful home for all mankind.

This helps us to understand what Jesus meant when he said to his faithful follow-

ers: "Have no fear, little flock, because your Father has approved of giving you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32) Yes, God would give this "little flock" a share in the heavenly government over all mankind.

At Revelation 20:6 we read concerning those who would be resurrected to heavenly life: "They will be priests of God and of the Christ, and will rule as kings with him for the thousand years." Jesus Christ is the principal king and the high priest, and these faithful ones

taken from the earth serve with him. As the Bible says: "They will rule as kings over the earth."—Rev. 5:9, 10.

Why are they chosen from the earth for such a work? Because it was here at this earth that Jehovah God's rulership was challenged. It was here that the faithfulness of men to God could be put to the test under opposition from the Devil. It was here that Jesus proved his full loyalty to God under test and gave his life as a ransom for mankind. So it was from this earth that Jehovah arranged to take a "little flock" of persons to be associated with his Son in the heavenly kingdom.

Those taken from earth to serve as heavenly kings and priests are persons who show full faith in God's provision for salvation through Christ. They are ones whose lives prove the Devil a liar when he charged that men serve God only for selfish advantage. Jehovah has marvelously purposed to use them for his glory. (Eph. 1:9-12) Under the direction of God's own loyal Son they will have a further part, from heaven, in clearing God's name of reproach as he brings this present wicked system of things to its end.—Rom. 16:20; Rev. 2:26, 27.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- "You Must Not Forget."
- "Do Not Forget All His Doings."
- Lovers of God's Name.

As kings and priests under the direction of Jesus Christ, they will serve from their heavenly positions in carrying out Jehovah's will toward mankind. How wonderful it will be to have as rulers those who have proved faithful to God! (Rev. 20:4) And how loving of God to put in office those who have experienced the problems common to humankind! Surely, they, like Christ, will deal in an understanding way with their subjects.—Heb. 2:17, 18.

What a blessing it will be to the inhabitants of earth as these heavenly

priests apply to them the benefits of Christ's ransom sacrifice, healing them spiritually, mentally and physically until they reach perfection! In this way, Almighty God will fulfill toward his earthly subjects his grand promise to "wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be any more. The former things have passed away."—Rev. 21:2-4.

HOW MANY GO TO HEAVEN?

Those who are called by God to share in heavenly service are few in number. As Jesus said, they are a "little flock." Years after his return to heaven, Jesus made known the exact number in a vision to the apostle John, who wrote: "I saw, and, look! the Lamb standing upon the Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand . . . who have been bought from the earth."—Rev. 14:1, 3.

The "Lamb" referred to here is, of course, Jesus Christ; and this "Mount Zion" is not on earth, but in heaven where Jesus is. (John 1:29; Heb. 12:22) So the 144,000 are persons who die on earth as humans and are resurrected to heavenly

life as spirit creatures, as Jesus was. (Rom. 6:5) When compared with the thousands of millions of persons who live on earth, they are, indeed, a "little flock." Even single cities that have more than 144,000 residents are common on earth today.

However, the "little flock" who go to heaven are not the only ones who receive salvation. As we have seen, they will have a vast number of happy earthly subjects. Jesus referred to these as his "other sheep," of whom "a great crowd" are even now serving God faithfully.—John 10:16; Rev. 7:9, 15.

What is your hope? Is it to receive eternal life with Christ in the heavens? Or is it to enjoy the blessings of the Kingdom rule as one of its earthly subjects?

AN EARTHLY DESTINY OR A HEAVENLY ONE?

Members of the "little flock" know that God has called them to heavenly life. How? By means of the operation of God's spirit, which implants and cultivates in them the hope of heavenly life. The apostle Paul, as one of the "little flock," wrote: "The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children. If, then, we are children, we are also heirs: heirs indeed of God, but joint heirs with Christ, provided we suffer together that we may also be glorified together."—Rom. 8:16, 17.

The operation of God's spirit changes the entire outlook of such a person, so that his thoughts and prayers are centered upon serving God with the heavenly hope in view. Being with Christ in heaven is more important to him than any earthly ties. The witness of the spirit is unmistakable.

No doubt you have thought about this matter, and perhaps you have wondered whether you are one who will receive heavenly life. Before one can properly

analyze his situation, he needs an understanding of what the Bible teaches on this matter. Why? Because God's holy spirit that bears witness that one has been called to heavenly glory is the same spirit that directed the writing of the Bible. (2 Pet. 1:21) With this in mind, let us examine the situation.

In the past did you believe that all good persons go to heaven? If so, and if you endeavored to live a good life, you may well have expected to be included among them. You may also have hoped in this way to be reunited with your loved ones whom you had lost in death. But when you had that expectation, did you know that the Bible says that such faithful servants of God as King David and John the Baptist did not go to heaven? Yes, the Bible clearly says: "David did not ascend to the heavens."—Acts 2:29, 34; Matt. 11:11.

Also, at that time did you know that only 144,000 chosen from among mankind over the past nineteen centuries would gain heavenly life? And did you know then that the Bible holds out hope of eternal life under righteous conditions here on earth for all others who would become faithful servants of God? "The righteous themselves will possess the earth," the Bible promises, "and they will reside forever upon it."—Ps. 37:10, 11, 29.

When you were then thinking about heavenly life for yourself, did you believe in the immortality of the human soul? Then, understandably, you may have hoped that your soul would go to heaven. But if you had such a hope it was not because God's spirit was bearing witness to you. To the contrary, as God's inspired Word clearly says: "The soul that is sinning—it itself will die." So those who die must depend on God to resurrect them to whatever place he wills for them.—Ezek. 18:4; 1 Cor. 15:35-38.

In this matter, then, we must look to the Scriptures for guidance and not let emotions, or a background of unscriptural beliefs, confuse our thinking. Those who receive heavenly life are not persons who choose it for themselves; God is the one who does the choosing. (2 Thess. 2:13, 14) They are called on to leave behind close family members and friends and all earthly things for the privilege of sharing as assistant kings and underpriests with Christ and as part of his "bride." (Rev. 21:2) That is what God has set before them, and they show deep appreciation for it.

However, it is not necessary to be of that heavenly group to gain relief from the troubles of this life. God loves his

earthly "other sheep" too. He promises that he is going to make this earth a paradise, where pain and sorrow will be no more and where it will be possible to enjoy life to the full. The facts show that it is principally to such an earthly hope of life that God has been pointing persons in recent years.

Truly, Jehovah God has made marvelous arrangements for blessing obedient mankind. How grand is His purpose to take from among humankind 144,000 tried and faithful persons to share with his Son Jesus Christ in ruling over the earth! And what a wonderful prospect God has provided for the rest of obedient mankind to live forever in happiness on earth under the rule of His heavenly kingdom!

Tampering with the Bible Text

◆ *The Watchtower* has previously said that the text of the Greek Septuagint Version of the Hebrew Scriptures was tampered with from about the third century of the Common Era, resulting in the removal of the divine name. Further evidence that the name was being tampered with at an early date has now come to light in the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered during the years 1947-1953. These scrolls take us back earlier than the time of Christ, and the Isaiah Scroll shows that scribes were making substitutions for Jehovah's name (YHWH, יהוה in the Hebrew) even at that time. As an example, the text of Isaiah 3:16-20, illustrated on page 1256 of Douglas' *New Bible Dictionary*, shows scribal alterations of 'adonay (אדונֵי) to YHWH (יהוה), and of YHWH to 'adonay. Evidently the text had already been tampered with, and the scribe was in doubt as to whether the divine name should be used in these places. The bulk of testimony of the ancient manuscripts is that Jehovah's name rightly appears in both instances.



- Why, after his resurrection, did Jesus tell Mary Magdalene not to touch him? He later told Thomas to touch him.—P. P., Haiti.

The extent to which John 20:17 creates a problem in correct understanding depends largely on the Bible translation one uses. Both

the Catholic *Douay* and the *King James Version* represent Jesus as telling Mary not to "touch" him. The *Douay* reads: "Jesus saith to her: Do not touch me, for I am not yet ascended to my Father." (John 20:17) Yet, according to this translation, Jesus later said to Thomas: "Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side."—John 20:27.

This same problem, Jesus' telling Mary not to touch his materialized body and later urging Thomas to touch him, occurs in translations in various languages. In German the *Elberfelder* and *Luther* translations carry the

thought at John 20:17 of not "touching" Jesus. This is also the case in the French *Crampou* and *Liénaert* Bibles, in Italian with *Riveduta* and *Diodati* and in Spanish in the *Moderna*, *Valera*, and *Nácar-Colunga* translations.

However, "touch" is just one of the meanings of the Greek word *ha'pto*. Another of the many significances of this Greek word is "to cling to, lay hold of." (*An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, by W. E. Vine, Vol. IV, p. 145) Accordingly, *The New English Bible* presents Jesus as saying at John 20:17: "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father." The statement is similarly translated in *An American Translation* and the Catholic *La Bible de Jérusalem (The Jerusalem Bible)* in French and English. The Spanish *Ediciones Paulinas* uses "*Suélteme*," meaning "Let go of me."

So the situation in the case of Mary Magdalene appears to have been that she was greatly disturbed that by his death Jesus had left his followers. When she saw him in his

materialized body after his resurrection, she clung to Jesus as if she were about to lose him and never see him again. Jesus' statement would work to correct her misunderstanding of the situation, showing her that she did not have to clutch him fearfully as if to prevent his vanishing. In time he would ascend to heaven and from there send the holy spirit to help and strengthen his disciples. The *New World Translation* appropriately presents Jesus as saying to Mary: "Stop clinging to me. For I have not yet ascended to the Father. But be on your way to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father and to my God and your God.'"—John 20:17.

A few days later, before his ascension to heaven, Jesus invited Thomas to touch his materialized body momentarily so as to convince Thomas that he, Christ, had actually risen from the dead. (John 20:27) This was not inconsistent with what Jesus had said earlier.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

What takes first place in one's life? Is it one's family, secular work, some hobby or perhaps sports? It may be that one has several

interests in life, each taking a relative position according to the importance placed upon it. To Christians, however, the kingdom of God comes first in their lives. And during the month of December Jehovah's witnesses will be putting first the preaching of the Kingdom good news by engaging in their house-to-house ministry and conducting free home Bible studies. (Mark 13:10) They will also be offering to interested persons a copy of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* along with an appropriate booklet for \$1; or they may combine the Bible and a copy of the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, for \$1.25.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS
January 5: "Your Deliverance Is Getting Near," ¶1-32. Page 741. Songs to Be Used: 11, 36.

January 12: "Your Deliverance Is Getting Near," ¶33-39, and How We Know It Is Getting Near, ¶1-24. Page 748. Songs to Be Used: 25, 57.

FIELD MINISTRY

What takes first place in one's life? Is it one's family, secular work, some hobby or perhaps sports? It may be that one has several