

The WATCHTOWER

OCTOBER 15, 1964

SPECIAL

Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

"Peace
Among Men
of
Good Will"
OR
ARMAGEDDON
-WHICH?



"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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Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

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A SOCIETY *Practicing Righteousness*

THE desire to belong is inherent in the human family. Basically man is a sociable creature. He wants to share his life and interests with others. Today, in a morally degenerate and warring world, the longing of many is to belong to a society of people practicing righteousness, a society in which there is warmth and friendship, and wherein there is complete trust and interdependence among all its members. Is there such a society?

Amid the many societies on earth there is one earth-wide society that is so different from all others as to make it truly unique. What makes it so? Not its numbers, which run into upward of a million, for many societies can boast that many and more. Not the great wealth of its members either, for among them are to be found people of every financial level, from rich to very poor. Nor is it unique because of the great learning of those belonging to it, for among them there are not only research scientists but also those who first learned to read and write after becoming associated with this society. Neither is a particular skin color or nationality or language the distinguishing feature, for its

this society of people to be noted for peculiarity of dress. To the casual observer they in no way differ in appearance from the people among whom they reside.

What, then, does make this society different, unique? The fact that its members have given God the first place in their lives. How? By taking seriously and applying in their lives the plain counsel of God's Word, the Holy Bible, expressed in the following and many other like passages: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind." "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (Matt. 22:37; John 17:3) This is the solid, rocklike foundation for their unity and peace. Closely tied in, of course, is their common acceptance of the Bible as the written Guide for a proper way of life, for all its members fully agree with the application of Jesus' words to all sixty-six of its books: "Your word is truth." —John 17:17.

This society's members adhere strictly to the high moral standards set forth in

membership
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es, nations and
tongues. Nor is

the Bible. Not content with that, they also recognize and accept the responsibility of following the example of Jesus, who was a faithful and tireless preacher of the kingdom of God. So this society is truly distinctive in that all its members, young and old, male and female, are Christian ministers. Among them there is no division into clergy and laity. When they come together, each one, as opportunity affords, shares in 'holding fast the public declaration of his hope, inciting his fellows to love and fine works.'—Matt. 24:14; Heb. 10:23, 24.

The kingdom that they preach, the same kingdom for which Jesus taught his followers to pray, is the only government to which they give unqualified allegiance. While proving to be peaceful and law-abiding citizens in the various countries in which they find themselves, when faced with a conflict between human laws and divine requirements, they put obedience to God first. (Acts 5:29) Appreciating Jesus' words, "My kingdom is no part of this world," and, "You are no part of the world," they do not mix in politics, and, among themselves, pay no attention to national distinctions. In this respect they are truly a unique society, the only really international one.—John 18:36; 15:19.

Because of the current rising tide of nationalism in many parts of the earth, such as in Africa with its many newly proclaimed independent states, members of this society have encountered terrible persecution. Not fully comprehending their Biblical stand of neutrality toward all this world's national and political factions, governments and lawless elements have dealt out to its members cruel punishment. Their meeting places have been burned down, hundreds of homes destroyed, their crops ruined, and countless other indignities have been heaped upon them in an

effort to break their loyalty to God and his kingdom. Nevertheless, these faithful believers in God's kingdom have withstood such onslaughts and maintained an uncompromising stand for God and for righteousness.

Unique also is the fact that this society's members have truly 'beaten their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears.' They do not fight among themselves, and they strive to "be peaceable with all men." Even under provocation, such as when violent and unjustified action is taken against them, they have refused to retaliate or strike back.—Isa. 2:4; Rom. 12:18.

Cleanliness is another characteristic of this society. The members keep physically clean and neat, avoiding such filthy habits as smoking, chewing and spitting tobacco. They keep morally clean by refusing to lower the high Bible standards of sex relationships, honesty in financial and all other matters, and so forth. They keep religiously clean by refusing to make common cause with non-Christian groups or with so-called Christian groups that fail to adhere to the written requirements of God's Word. Consistently they comply with the inspired counsel: "Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear." —2 Cor. 7:1.

What is the name of this truly different society, this society of people practicing righteousness, the kind of society to which honest persons have longed to belong? It is the society of Christian witnesses of Jehovah. As revealed in the Bible, JEHOVAH is the personal, self-given name of the only true God, and this society of people are dedicated to the work of bearing witness to his supremacy and worthiness to be served and worshiped by every creature in the universe.—Isa. 42:8; 43:10.

~~IN THE WORLD~~ UNDER *Righteous Rule*

EVERY society must be under some sort of rule. Members cannot be each one a law unto himself, for that would spell anarchy and not society. There must be some code of behavior to which all subject themselves, and certain members to whom is committed authority to see that all understand and comply with the requirements. Consider, then, in this respect the society of Jehovah's Christian witnesses.

A central authority, consisting of a group of older and mature Christian men who are wholly dedicated to God and to his kingdom's interests on earth, who are anointed with his spirit and who may be referred to as the governing body, gives recognition to congregations of the Witnesses throughout the world. From its headquarters the governing body furnishes to every congregation material for well-planned Bible study as well as counsel on how to preach the Kingdom message most effectively in the territory allotted to the congregation.—Matt. 24:45-47.

From each congregation the names of suitable and capable men are submitted in recommendatory form to the governing body. Having passed upon and approved such recommendations, the governing body authorizes the men selected to supervise and regulate the activities of the congregation. In all of this there is no selfish competition or ambitious politicking for position. The Scriptural requirements for such men are clearly understood and followed: "Ministerial servants should likewise be serious, not double-tongued, not giving themselves to a lot of wine, not

greedy of dishonest gain, holding the sacred secret of the faith with a clean conscience. . . . Let ministerial servants be husbands of one wife, presiding in a fine manner over children and their own households." "Capable men, fearing God, trustworthy men, hating unjust profit; and you must set these over them as chiefs over thousands, chiefs over hundreds, chiefs over fifties and chiefs over tens. And they must judge the people on every proper occasion." (1 Tim. 3:8, 9, 12; Ex. 18:21, 22) Congregations may embrace ten, fifty or a hundred or more persons, and a group of congregations, in what is called a circuit, may well include a total of a thousand or more Witnesses.

The function of these appointed men is not to boss or exert undue authority over members of the society, for it is always kept in mind that each one freely volunteered to be a witness for Jehovah. No, rather, their work as *servants* is to be continually available to assist any members who require help in the carrying out of their dedication to perform God's will. When members fall into sickness, extreme want, or into severe trials and persecutions because of their faith, these servants endeavor to be prompt to visit and aid them, comforting them and encouraging them to maintain Christian loyalty despite the troubles that assail them. Like good shepherds, they are truly concerned about the flock, not viewing it as their own, but as the flock of God entrusted to their care.—Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3.

These loving overseers are also responsible to guard against any infiltration of evil

men or wicked works into the society of Christians. So correction must at times be administered, firmly, but always in love. As directed by God's Word, these servants must "admonish the disorderly, speak consolingly to the depressed souls, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all. See that no one renders injury for injury to anyone else, but always pursue what is good toward one another and to all others." (1 Thess. 5:14, 15) When circumstances require it they must also be prepared to "reprove before all onlookers persons who practice sin, that the rest also may have fear." (1 Tim. 5:20) Christian purity must be maintained.

By reason of such righteous rule the climate for cultivation of the fruitage of God's spirit in every member of the society is made possible. Says the apostle Paul: "The fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." (Gal. 5:22, 23) With these qualities abounding among the members of this society there results a degree of productivity in the kingdom-preaching work that is noted and marveled at by those on the outside.

This righteous and beneficial rule of the society of Jehovah's Christian witnesses in all the earth should not, however, be credited to some man or men. God alone is the One who long ago made provision for it and caused his prophet to write about it for our benefit: "Look! A king will reign for righteousness itself; and as respects princes, they will rule as princes for justice itself. And each one must prove to be like a hiding place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rain-storm, like streams of water in a waterless country, like the shadow of a heavy crag in an exhausted land." (Isa. 32:1, 2) Who is this king? He is the foreordained one whose "name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father,

Prince of Peace. To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end." (Isa. 9:6, 7) He is no other than Christ Jesus glorified in heaven, God's choice of king for all the earth.

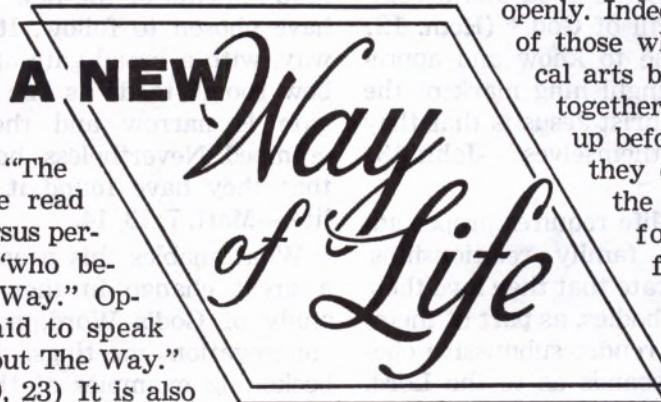
Bible chronology shows that the year 1914 C.E. marked the time when Christ Jesus commenced his kingdom rule with authority from his heavenly Father. With that just and mighty Ruler directing the society of Christian witnesses from his heavenly throne, we can well understand why princes, or chiefs, or appointed servants in the organization have come to be protectors and refreshers for every member as they strive to serve God amid a hostile and barren system of things. Year by year they have been helped to see more clearly God's will for his people on earth, and this society under righteous rule has never hesitated to move forward and make the changes that would bring them into closer conformity to God's purposes. They constitute a happy and purposeful society, grateful that Jehovah has placed them under the direction of a Righteous Ruler who supervises the organization for good and gives them positive and godly leadership in work that is satisfying and beneficial.

How wonderful to be able to pray with confidence as did the psalmist: "Let the pleasantness of Jehovah our God prove to be upon us, and the work of our hands do you firmly establish upon us. Yes, the work of our hands, do you firmly establish it!" (Ps. 90:17) No wonder members of this society under righteous rule are represented in the Scriptures as joyously shouting out: "To the one sitting on the throne [Jehovah God] and to the Lamb [Christ Jesus] be the blessing and the honor and the glory and the might forever and ever." (Rev. 5:13) To them has been opened up an entirely new way of life.

TO THE members of the society of Jehovah's Christian witnesses, religion is a serious matter. It means more than membership in a religious denomination and attending some church service on Sunday when convenient. Religion for them is the most important thing in their lives. It represents for them a new way of life.

In its infancy Christianity was known as "The Way." Thus we read that Saul of Tarsus persecuted those "who belonged to The Way." Opposers were said to speak "injurious about The Way." (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23) It is also called "the way of Jehovah," "the way of God" and "the way of the truth," since it constitutes the way marked out by God in his Word for all true worshipers to follow. (Acts 18:25, 26; 2 Pet. 2:2) That "The Way" must indeed be a new way of life for those who embrace it is clear from the Scriptural examples.

It meant a radical change in morals for some in the very wicked city of Corinth who were converted to Christianity, for the apostle Paul says to them: "What! Do you not know that unrighteous persons will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom. And yet that is what some of you were. But you have been washed clean, but you have been sanctified, but you have been declared righteous in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the spirit of our God." —1 Cor. 6:9-11.



Following "The Way" also meant a complete change of attitude for those who had been practicing magic, spiritism and such-like. Apparently there were many such in Ephesus, a very religious city, for we read about them: "Many of those who had become believers would come and confess and report their practices openly. Indeed, quite a number of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them up before everybody. And they calculated together the prices of them and found them worth fifty thousand pieces of silver. Thus in a mighty way the word of Jehovah kept growing and prevailing."—Acts 19:18-20.

But perhaps no one experienced a more sweeping change from an old to a new way of life than the apostle Paul. As Saul of Tarsus he had been, by his own confession, "a blasphemer and a persecutor and an insolent man," and 'the foremost of sinners.' But after his conversion he could write: "You are witnesses, God is also, how loyal and righteous and unblamable we proved to be to you believers. In harmony with that you well know how, as a father does his children, we kept exhorting each one of you, and consoling and bearing witness to you, to the end that you should go on walking worthily of the God who is calling you to his kingdom and glory."—1 Tim. 1:13, 15; 1 Thess. 2:10-12.

What was true of those who accepted Christianity in the days of the apostles is true also of those today accepting and following "The Way." They adopt a new way of thinking, of believing, of speaking, of acting, a new way of life entirely. Every aspect of their lives is affected. People

with whom they formerly associated are amazed at the change that has come about. They have truly heeded the counsel of the apostle: "Quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12: 2) They have come to know and appreciate that the distinguishing mark of the true followers of Christ Jesus is that they 'have love among themselves.'—John 13: 34, 35.

The new way of life requires proper adjustment in their family relationships. Husbands demonstrate that they love their wives as their own bodies, as part of themselves, while wives render submissive obedience to their husbands as to the Lord. Parents, though firm when the occasion requires, treat their children with loving consideration. They do not needlessly irritate and exasperate them, but, rather, bring them up "in the discipline and authoritative advice of Jehovah." Children following this new way of life heed the Bible's command to obey their parents in union with the Lord in everything.—Eph. 5:22-26; 6:1-4; Col. 3:20, 21.

Those following "The Way" are likewise guided by Bible principles in dealing with their neighbors. They manifest no prejudice because of race, nationality or language. They practice the teaching of Jesus: "Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them." (Luke 6:31) Toward employers they act honestly, giving an honest day's work for a day's wages. They do not come in late and quit early if they think that they can get away with it. They do not loaf when no one is supervising, nor do they purloin their employer's merchandise, cash or equipment even when this might be done without detection. "Let the stealer steal no more," is the command that they obey.—Eph. 4:28.

Followers of "The Way" do not defraud the government under which they live in the matter of taxes. They engage in no political or social demonstrations or upheavals, no rowdyism, no gambling. Rather, they are intent upon living up to the requirements of the new way of life they have chosen to follow. It is not an easy way, with a broad gate and plenty of "elbow room" to do as one pleases, but the gate is narrow and the way itself is cramped. Nevertheless, how glad they are that they have found it, for it leads to life.—Matt. 7:13, 14.

What enables this people to make such a great change in their lives? Diligent study of God's Word, personally and in congregation meetings, brings to view beckoning examples of those who in the past chose to give up the old and selfish way of life and adopt the new. They learn that faithful adherence to Bible standards brings peace and satisfaction now, and also opens up an endless vista of life in a new system of things that God has promised as a reward to those who remain faithful. They discover that God's requirement for those who gain life in his new order beyond Armageddon is that they conscientiously endeavor to live according to the new way of life NOW.

Confidently these members of the Christian society of Jehovah's witnesses lay hold of and cherish the grand promise of their God: "And I will give them one heart and one way in order to fear me always, for good to them and to their sons after them. And I will conclude with them an indefinitely lasting covenant, that I shall not turn back from behind them, for me to do them good; and the fear of me I shall put in their heart in order not to turn aside from me. And I will exult over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land in trueness with all my heart and with all my soul."—Jer. 32:39-41.

A People WITH A Purpose

PERHAPS the greatest cause for apathy in religious matters is the feeling shared by multitudes of persons that there is among their religious organizations no real direction, no single worthy purpose for which to labor, nothing to become enthusiastic about. Their organizations hold out no hope of converting the world. In fact, there is every indication that godlessness is gaining ground throughout the earth.

Even religious leaders share the uneasiness and feeling of uselessness, as may be noted by this expression of a clergyman: "In our moments of humility we know we are failing, although we do not know why. We want to be used by God in His reconciling work in the world, but *we are involved and caught in the purposelessness of our time.* We too are being strangled by the cords of our own vested interests, and we struggle in vain to deliver ourselves from this body of death. We know that we are dry bones. . . . We are the hollow men. We have the physical equipment, but we lack the Spirit." (Italics added.)

What a refreshing contrast to find that there are today people with a purpose, people who are enthusiastic about their faith, who work whole-souled at spreading it, and who are confident about the future! Yes, we are speaking about the society of Jehovah's Christian witnesses. No matter where you find them around the world, they are noted as a people whose lives revolve about one vital activity, the preaching of the good news of God's kingdom from house to house, and that to the glory of God and the blessing of their fel-

lowmen. (Acts 20:20) They are truly happy. "Oh, how I wish I could be like that," some are heard to say. If you really want to, you can be like them.

THE PARAMOUNT PURPOSE

First, you must learn what is the paramount purpose that actuates this people. To reform and improve governments or living standards is not their aim. Their objective is not that of converting the world. They are followers of Jesus Christ, looking always to him as the pattern for their course. Jesus set the example in purposeful living some 1,900 years ago when he said: "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." "I have come down from heaven to do, not my will, but the will of him that sent me." As he came to the close of his earthly ministry he could truthfully say in prayer to his heavenly Father: "I have glorified you on the earth, having finished the work you have given me to do." (John 4:34; 6:38; 17:4) So the sustaining force that kept Jesus going was the conviction that all his activities were in line with his Father's purpose. He permitted no other consideration to distract or deter him from that course.

It follows that when creatures devote themselves first and foremost to the doing of God's will they are in effect making God's purpose their purpose, and since God's purpose is certain of accomplishment, they can always be certain of satisfying achievement. And what is God's purpose? Let the words of Holy Scripture

answer: "It is according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself for an administration at the full limit of the appointed times, namely, to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth." (Eph. 1:9, 10) So it is God's unalterable purpose in his own appointed time to put an end to all the divisive, warring elements throughout the universe, and forever unite obedient creatures under the peaceful administration of his chosen king, Jesus Christ.

The almighty Creator can achieve his purpose at any time he wishes. Today or tomorrow he could snuff out the lives of all who, for selfish gain, set themselves against his purpose and promote political and social divisions and factions amid the human family. First, however, he mercifully provides time for an earth-wide proclamation of his purpose so that people may intelligently align themselves with him or with his enemies. So it is that the society of his dedicated witnesses diligently busies itself about the work that is Jehovah's will in these days, a work that is clearly foretold in Jesus' words: "And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matt. 24:14) The good news of the kingdom is actually a message that recommends Jehovah God as the one true and sovereign God, as the One who is worthy to be served and worshiped, as the One who can and will bring to meek and reverent creatures their heart's desires.

The fact that Jehovah's witnesses have a purpose in life, namely, Jehovah's purpose, makes them noticeably different and dynamic. This is why they are so cheerful and free from the fears of this system of things. Each dedicated, baptized member of their society is a minister, a preacher of good news. So dominant is this pur-

pose in their lives that the individual Witness will avoid anything and everything that threatens to interfere with it, even if it should mean seeking some other secular employment. Promotion and high position in secular activity are frequently sacrificed in behalf of the preaching work. So all-consuming is this one purpose in their lives that at times entire families will move from one country to another where there may be greater need for gospel preaching. This same zeal and enthusiasm moves men with families to support and women with children to raise to make time in their lives to preach the good news to all they can reach. Regularly they call at the homes of others as they share in the ministry.

Many other persons have a purpose in life, but often they do not achieve it, or, if they do, they are somehow disappointed in its realization. Subjecting ourselves and our lives to Jehovah's purpose brings happiness and certainty of success. How foolish and frustrating to be immersed in the petty purposes and objectives of men and nations when they fly in the face of the announced purpose of the Almighty God! At the latest, all such movements and their supporters who are not for God and the accomplishment of his purpose will meet their end at "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" when Jehovah rises to execute judgment upon his enemies. (Rev. 16:14) Wise persons will now seek to make peace with God, dedicate their lives to him and share with the society of his Christian witnesses in proclaiming his purpose to all who will hear.

You too can share the happiness and usefulness of this people by associating and serving with them in imitation of Christ. 'Vessels for an honorable purpose,' they are, 'sanctified, useful to their owner [Jehovah God], prepared for every good work.'—2 Tim. 2:20, 21.

TRUE PROSPERITY *comes from God*

PROSPERITY is often erroneously measured in terms of financial worth, or of political and social success. Yet everyone should know that there can be no true prosperity without peace and prospect of life. Aptly, Jesus raises the question: "What benefit will it be to a man if he gains the whole world but forfeits his soul?" (Matt. 16:26) The answer is obvious. Favor and life from God are vital ingredients of true prosperity.

Measured correctly, then, there is no evidence of true prosperity among the nations of the world. No, not even among those nations that enjoy the highest living standards. Material success and increase of leisure time have produced a host of evils including adult and juvenile delinquency, an attitude of independence toward God from whom all things come, and selfish concentration upon materialistic aims and fleshly pleasures. Add to the foregoing the precarious international situation, the latent dangers of which haunt both rich and poor.

Where is true prosperity to be found? How is the society of Jehovah's witnesses faring? Are they prospering? To obtain the accurate answer, we must take more than a cursory glance at their experiences of the past fifty years. It is true that they have suffered the hatred of all nations through two world wars, as foretold by Christ Jesus. (Matt. 24:9, 10) They have been unjustly outlawed in country after country, they have been violently beset by mobs, they have been the targets of

all kinds of lying accusations, they have been ostracized. Even today in many circles the men-

tion of the name "Jehovah's witnesses" is sufficient to produce expressions of ignorant intolerance from people otherwise very polite.

A closer look at Jehovah's witnesses, however, reveals some very striking facts. They alone of all the religious organizations have been able to train and equip all their members to be active ministers of God and preachers of the kingdom. They have been able to achieve something the United Nations with its 112 member states has been unable to do, namely, draw together in peace and cooperation peoples of every nation and language and race. Unlike so many other organizations, they have been able to maintain among their members the high Bible standards of morality in every field of human relationship. Outstandingly, they have retained the strong ties of family, with the result that multitudes of youthful persons are seriously embracing the true Christian way of life and sharing in the spreading of the good news of the Kingdom. Surely these are marks of true prosperity! But there are many more.

In August of 1923 the spokesman for Jehovah's witnesses addressed a throng of 2,500 assembled in convention at Los Angeles, California. At the close of the discourse that audience enthusiastically rose to adopt a Resolution that, in effect, bound them to share unstintingly in the work of proclaiming the Kingdom, so that sheeplike and goatlike persons might be divided in harmony with Jesus' illustra-

tion. (Matt. 25:31-46) Forty years later, in September 1963, in Pasadena, California, came the concluding meeting of a round-the-world series of "Everlasting Good News" Assemblies of Jehovah's Witnesses, assemblies that were held for three to eight days in twenty-four principal cities of the world, and which were attended by a total crowd of 580,509 persons. The passage of the years between those two assemblies was obviously filled with progress and global expansion as sheeplike ones were assembled to the fold of God.

INCREDIBLE EXPANSION

The modern history of Jehovah's witnesses has more startling figures to offer. In 1918 the number of Witnesses who spent time each month preaching the good news with *Studies in the Scriptures* was around 7,000. Ten years later the number of preachers had climbed to 44,080. Twenty years later it was 59,047, thirty years later 260,756. Forty years later, in 1958, the number had swelled to 798,326. Now, in 1964, the figure has reached the amazing peak of 1,064,387. During the decade 1942-52 the number of Jehovah's witnesses doubled in North America, multiplied five times in Asia, more than six times in the Pacific Islands, about seven times in Europe and Africa, more than twelve times in the Atlantic islands, and almost fifteen times in South America. From 1953 to 1963 they more than doubled in hours devoted to preaching earth-wide. The one branch office outside the United States in 1900 is now supplemented by 91 other branches around the world. The headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, now directs the preaching work in 194 lands, and literature is published in 162 languages. Since all this has to do with the unselfish work of spreading the good news of God's kingdom, we can say without hesitation that it is true prosperity.

No man or organization of men can take the credit for this marvelous record of expansion achieved despite the hurdles of World War II and Fascist and Communist persecutions. Even today in thirteen countries where Jehovah's witnesses are forced to work underground and under extreme difficulties, there are upward of 101,400 ministers who are faithfully and consistently doing what God has commanded them to do. What, then, is the secret of all this striking prosperity amid national and international opposition? It can be nothing other than the spirit of Jehovah God, who promised: "Any weapon whatever that will be formed against you will have no success, and any tongue at all that will rise up against you in the judgment you will condemn. This is the hereditary possession of the servants of Jehovah, and their righteousness is from me." (Isa. 54:17) Spiritual prosperity brings great peace and happiness to Jehovah's people.

To endeavor to obstruct the work and purpose of the Almighty God is not only a futile but a deadly business. And to persecute his ministers is to court disaster. counseled law teacher Gamaliel in the first century: "Men of Israel, pay attention to yourselves as to what you intend to do respecting these men. . . . Do not meddle with these men, but let them alone; (because, if this scheme or this work is from men, it will be overthrown; but if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them;) otherwise, you may perhaps be found fighters actually against God." (Acts 5:35-39) The fruitless efforts on the part of men and governments to stop the preaching of God's kingdom only adds to the proof, already strong, that the prosperity of this work is from God. "My own counsel will stand," he says, "and everything that is my delight I shall do." —Isa. 46:10.

"Peace Among Men of Good Will"

ARE you a man or woman of good-will? If you are, then you are one of those about whom an army of heavenly angels spoke in unison, almost two thousand years ago. Why did those angels appear and speak? Because an event had occurred that will yet result in eternal peace to you right here on this earth that is now menaced with a third world war.

² The event was the birth of a baby boy in the Middle East. What happened on that occasion is no fairy tale, fable or myth, but it was witnessed by a number of hard-working men in the hill country. It was proved to be true by a medical doctor who, in his "statement of the facts that are giv-



OR

ARMAGEDDON — WHICH?

"Glory in the highest unto God!
And on earth peace, among men
of good-will."—Luke 2:14, Ro.

en full credence among us," says that he had "traced all things from the start with accuracy, to write them in logical order . . . , that you may know fully the certainty of the things that you have been taught orally." The writer was Doctor

Luke. He wrote more than nineteen centuries ago and his statement has been preserved in thousands of handwritten

copies in a number of ancient languages till the invention of printing in the fifteenth century. You can therefore take very seriously today what the angels said about you as a person of goodwill so long ago.—Luke, chapter one, verses one to four.

³ In medical history the birth of this baby boy is most important, for it is the only birth on record of a child from a vir-

1. Why is it interesting now to identify oneself as among the "men of good will"?
2. What was this important event, and why can we take very seriously today what Doctor Luke wrote about it?

3. Why was the birth of that boy important in medical history, and how was the fatherhood of that boy publicly witnessed to?

gin girl. The conception of the child in her was therefore from no man but was from a heavenly father. If this had not actually been the case, the angels of heaven would not have interested themselves in the child's birth. If it had been an illegitimate baby whose human father kept himself hidden in shame so as to shirk his responsibility, the holy angels would not have debased themselves to bear witness to its birth. There would be no reason to rejoice over the birth of such an unwanted boy, from whom no good could come to all mankind. In proof that the boy's birth was a miraculous, honorable, beneficial one from a clean virgin, the army of heavenly angels appeared to men and made known who the father of the newborn boy was. The angels gave glory to God, and thus they revealed the heavenly Father of the remarkable baby.

⁴ At that time the Roman Empire was holding down the peace in the Middle East. The Arabs had not yet become Mohammedans. In the Roman Province of Judea the boy had been born in the city of Bethlehem, and because of the crowded housing conditions in the city his mother Mary had to lay him in a stable manger. The time was about the middle of the Jewish month of Tishri, or about October the first, a season of the year when people could turn out for tax registration and when shepherds could be out in the fields all night to look after their sheep. Doctor Luke collected interesting details of what then occurred. For the benefit of all "men of good will" he writes (Luke 2:8-20, *New World Translation*):

⁵ "There were also in that same country shepherds living out of doors and keeping watches in the night over their flocks. And

suddenly Jehovah's angel stood by them, and Jehovah's glory gleamed around them, and they became very fearful. But the angel said to them: 'Have no fear, for, look! I am declaring to you good news of a great joy that all the people will have, because there was born to you today a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in David's city. And this is a sign for you: you will find an infant bound in cloth bands and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there came to be with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: 'Glory in the heights above to God, and upon earth peace among men of good will.' So when the angels had departed from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another: 'Let us by all means go clear to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which Jehovah has made known to us.' And they went with haste and found Mary as well as Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger.

⁶ "When they saw it, they made known the saying that had been spoken to them concerning this young child. And all that heard marveled over the things told them by the shepherds, but Mary began to preserve all these sayings, drawing conclusions in her heart. Then the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all the things they heard and saw, just as these had been told them."

⁷ At that time, almost two thousand years ago, the angels gave glory in the heights above to God as the Most High or Supreme One. The faithful shepherds became eyewitnesses and also gave glory to God for what he was doing in behalf of mankind by sending the promised Messiah or Christ the Lord, the royal descendant of King David, for Mary was a descendant of David. So glory in the heights above to God was not lacking at that time.

4. Where and under what local circumstances was the boy born, and what was the season of the year?

5. 6. (a) What information did angels bring, and to whom? (b) How did these become eyewitnesses of the birth, with what effect on them?

7. In harmony with what the angels said back there, what was not lacking at that time?

⁸ But what about the 'peace on earth'? Certainly those shepherds were "men of good will," and so were Joseph and his wife Mary. Likewise, the old man Simeon and the old prophetess Anna, for they both saw the baby Jesus when Joseph and Mary brought him into the temple of Jerusalem on the fortieth day from his birth in Bethlehem. Both of those old persons thanked God for what he was doing. There was peace among all these persons as "men of good will." But the king of Jerusalem was no man of goodwill. He was, by Rome's appointment, Herod the Great, an Edomite. So he had no peace, but tried to destroy the young child Jesus when about two years old. Shortly afterward King Herod died of a loathsome disease, but Jesus escaped and grew up to be "Christ the Lord."—Luke 2:25-40; Matt. 2:1-23.

A QUESTION FOR TODAY

⁹ "Upon earth peace among men of good will"—that has been a famous quotation for the past nineteen hundred years. But what has been its effect upon the world of mankind? As far as international affairs are concerned, the years of world peace have been few since angels first said those soothing words. In this respect the world situation was not changed by the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. He himself stirred up the opposition of the religious leaders of his country, who finally had him put to death by the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate in the year 33 C.E. Centuries later many persons claimed to be his followers but they had great religious disputes with one another. Those who pretended to be Christians fought bloody wars with the Mohammedans, and also killed off thousands of Jews. These professed Christians

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8. What individuals enjoyed the 'peace on earth' then, as shown by the happenings back there?
 9. During the centuries since then, did the quoting of the words "Upon earth peace among men of good will" make those who pretended to be Christians more peaceful, and what are the facts?

even fought fanatical wars among themselves, not only over religious disagreements, but more often over politics of this world. These so-called Christians have been anything but peaceful; they have not been a real force for world peace.

¹⁰ Investigators of wars have made a survey of world peace and war during the long period from 1481 before our Common Era down to the end of World War II. In that year of 1481 B.C.E. the militarized nation of Egypt was the dominant world power. At that time the prophet Moses and his people were away out in the wilderness of the Arabian peninsula, living according to the Ten Commandments that Moses had received from Jehovah God. During all the 3,426 years since then to the end of World War II in 1945 there have been only 268 years of world peace. Thus more than three thousand years were years of war, in which upward of 8,000 international peace treaties were broken. Thus there was one year of peace to twelve and eight-tenths years of war during all that time. But what now about world peace since the year 1945 and the establishment of the United Nations for international peace and security? World peace is in danger as never before!

¹¹ For over a thousand years it has been very easy for Christendom to sing "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will" at her Christmastime. But history shows that this has not promoted or established world peace. Since Christmas was introduced into her religion in the fourth century Christendom has miserably failed in making this a warless world. Today, after sixteen centuries of Christmas celebrations, responsible men of

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10. According to statistics presented by investigators, how have the years of world peace compared with those of war since in the time of the prophet Moses?
 11. What theme has Christendom adopted at her Christmastime, and yet today, after sixteen centuries, what threat do men of Christendom talk about?

Christendom talk of the threat of Armageddon.

¹² Under date of May 6, 1962, and mentioning well-known names, the editorial writer of the *New York Times* wrote: "Armed with a good cause and the shield of defensive military might made more potent by our nuclear tests, President Kennedy is now engaged in a new effort to find some sort of accommodation with Soviet Russia to avert an atomic Armageddon. In this effort he follows the course pursued by Presidents Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower."

¹³ Earlier, on September 16, 1961, ex-President Eisenhower spoke at a dinner in Chicago, Illinois. There he said that, because the destruction now threatening us was by nuclear warfare, it put Chicago "but thirty minutes from Armageddon."

¹⁴ Under the heading "Conference in Moscow" the *New York Times* of November 6, 1960, said in its editorial columns: "Perhaps the most fundamental difference in the attitude of the two capitals [of Russia and of China] is the fact that Moscow has made clear it understands fully the enormous havoc hydrogen bomb warfare would wreak on all humanity, while Peiping talks at times as though it did not fear even a nuclear Armageddon."

¹⁵ Because of now having at hand the terrible hydrogen bomb, the third world war is talked of as a "thermonuclear Armageddon."*

¹⁶ Concerning the continual "cold war" between the Eastern and Western military powers, an editorial writer says: "It is no

* *New York Times* as of October 26, 1961, under the editorial article "The Issue in Moscow."

12-14. What references were made to Armageddon (a) by a *New York Times* editorial writer in 1962? (b) by ex-President Eisenhower in 1961? (c) by an editorial writer at the time of the Moscow Conference in 1960?

15-17. (a) Because of the hydrogen bomb, what is World War III referred to as going to be? (b) Editorially, how has the "cold war" been described as to its climax? (c) According to a writer on Foreign Affairs, to what is the drift of world affairs?

philosophic campaign for a visionary future. It is against all the forces of evil in the world, a kind of Armageddon, the outcome of which will be victory or defeat not for a single nation or a single alliance but for the whole race of man."†

¹⁷ One columnist writer on Foreign Affairs warns us: "We cannot afford to drift toward Armageddon simply because nobody bothers to face the obvious problem. If the obvious problem is not swiftly studied, the future is bound to produce catastrophe."‡

¹⁸ The fiftieth year from the outbreak of World War I started off with a big peace offensive by the leading politicians of the world. Even the Pontifex Maximus of Vatican City made a pilgrimage to places of religious interest in the Middle East, a trip that was said to be in the interest of peace and unity. On January 21, 1964, the Disarmament Committee of the United Nations reassembled and dragged on for months—but no disarmament. The two terrifying Red giants of Communism continued to show no increase in love for each other, whereas the noncommunist democratic world was assured that there would be no end of the cold war between Communism and capitalistic nations "in our time." So prayers continue to be offered in the religious churches of Christendom and Jewish synagogues in behalf of the United Nations in its role of peacemaker. There is good reason to fear a third global conflict.

¹⁹ In all their warnings about Armageddon the men of religion, politics, militarism and science continually overlook some-

* *New York Times* as of October 18, 1959, under the editorial "The Road to Disarmament."

† C. L. Sulzberger on the editorial page of the *New York Times* as of June 1, 1960.

18. Despite the promising beginning to the fiftieth year from World War I, why is there good reason to fear a third world conflict?

19. To be true, what meaning must be given to the word "Armageddon," and what is to be expected of the "men of good will" there?

thing. What is that? It is what Armageddon really will be. Those speakers and writers have borrowed the name from the Holy Bible, the same book that also tells us about how an army of angels appeared at the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and brought the message of glory to God and peace among men of goodwill. Armageddon must therefore be given its Bible meaning, not the meaning put upon it by worldly-wise men. They like to picture it as a final battle by some unnamed forces of good against unnamed forces of evil, a real military fight between divisions of mankind. They like to think of themselves as being among the forces of good that will win. However, the Bible plainly points out the opposing forces that will be engaged in the battle of Armageddon. In that battle the "men of good will" are to have no part in the fighting, for their God will fight from heaven in behalf of what is right.

²⁰ To keep this matter straight in our minds, let us read the prophetic Bible account of this coming war of Armageddon. Only once does this dynamic word "Armageddon" (or, Har-Magedon) occur in the Holy Bible, and that is in its last book, called Revelation or Apocalypse. This final book was given by inspiration to the Christian apostle John to show to faithful Christians "the things that must shortly take place." The prophetic preview of Armageddon is given in connection with the sixth of a series of seven plagues. These symbolic plagues are said to be "the last ones, because by means of them the anger of God is brought to a finish." (Rev. 1:1; 15:1; 16:12) When the sixth plague is poured out, it reveals something that brings down the anger of God. Here is what the apostle John sees when the sixth plague is poured out:

20. How many times does the word "Armageddon" occur, where, and in what connection?

²¹ "And I saw three unclean inspired expressions that looked like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the wild beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are, in fact, expressions inspired by demons and perform signs, and they go forth to the kings of the entire inhabited earth, to gather them together to the war of the great day of God the Almighty. . . . And they gathered them together to the place that is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon."—Rev. 16:13-16.

²² Does that expression "the kings of the entire inhabited earth" leave out any of the political rulers of today? No; regardless of whether they are kingly, presidential, democratic, communistic or neutralist rulers of today. All of them are gathered to the place called Har-Magedon for war. But war over what issue? Not for war between themselves, with at least some of these political rulers and armies on the side of God the Almighty. Why not? Because the apostle John saw the "kings of the entire inhabited earth" gathered to this war by the *enemies* of God the Almighty. The kings are gathered by expressions inspired by demons, and demons are no friends of God the Almighty. In proof of this the Christian disciple James wrote to Christians who only pretended to believe: "You believe there is one God, do you? You are doing quite well. And yet the demons believe and shudder."—Jas. 2:19.

²³ Under the unseen influence of such demons, who shudder at the thought of the Almighty God, the "kings of the entire inhabited earth" (including Christendom) permit themselves to be gathered to Ar-

21. In Revelation, chapter sixteen, what does John see in his vision concerning Har-Magedon?

22. Who are gathered to Armageddon, and why is it evident that not even some of them are on the side of God the Almighty?

23. In behalf of whom are the "kings of the entire inhabited earth" gathered to Armageddon to fight?

mageddon, to fight for these demons, of course. That means also to fight for the invisible "ruler of the demons," that is to say, Satan the Devil. (Matt. 12:24) In the Revelation to John, Satan the Devil is pictured by the Dragon, out of whose mouth one of those froggish "inspired expressions" hopped for gathering political rulers to the war at Armageddon.

²⁴ One of these demonized expressions also hopped out of the mouth of the symbolic wild beast. Revelation, chapter thirteen, verses two through seven, tells us that the Dragon Satan the Devil gives this "wild beast" its power, throne and great authority, which authority it would wield over every tribe, people, language and nation. Thus the "wild beast" is the visible political organization on earth, under the unseen domination of Satan the Devil.

²⁵ A third demon-inspired expression hops out of the mouth of the "false prophet." The very name of this prophetic organization betrays that it is false and hence is no prophet of God the Almighty on political affairs. Naturally the prophetic propaganda out of its mouth helps to lead the earthly kings on to Armageddon.

²⁶ Close students of the Bible are watching for the fulfillment of its prophecies in modern events and situations. They see all the political rulers and their fighting forces being gathered together irresistibly to the "war of the great day of God the Almighty," at Armageddon. This does not necessarily mean that they are being gathered to a "thermonuclear Armageddon," a third world war. On the surface of things at least, all human efforts of today by

24. What is the symbolic wild beast out of the mouth of which one of the froggish "inspired expressions" comes?

25. What kind of organization is the symbolic false prophet?

26. (a) Does the "war of the great day" to which they are being gathered mean a "thermonuclear Armageddon," and what appears to be opposed to such a thought? (b) However, what will their being gathered there at last really mean?

means of the United Nations organization, the World Peace Foundation, the Peace Corps, and other peace agencies seem to be in one direction, to just one worldwide situation where the people will say with self-assurance, "Peace and security!" (1 Thess. 5:3)* Despite these efforts toward international peace, the demon-maneuvered gathering of earth's kings to Armageddon goes right ahead and will mean at last a war against Almighty God.

²⁷ Regardless of how much the religious clergymen of Christendom may object to what we say about earth's kings who are members of their churches, the inspired Scriptures leave no doubt about this march to Armageddon. So turn, please, to the next chapter of the Revelation, chapter seventeen. It tells us about Babylon the Great, with whom the kings of the earth are said to commit fornication in a religious way. It says that Babylon the Great not only enjoys union with earth's kings but also sits down on "peoples and crowds and nations and tongues." (Rev. 17:1, 2, 15) And quite understandably so, for Babylon the Great is the world empire of false religion, this religion being based on that of ancient Babylon. It is therefore false. Truly the empire of false Babylonish religion is worldwide today. It is a hopeless religious confusion.

* On April 22, 1964, the American President L. B. Johnson opened the New York World's Fair at its site. In the course of his Dedication speech he said: "But, unless we can achieve the theme of this Fair—'Peace through Understanding,' unless we can use our skill and our wisdom to conquer conflict as we have conquered science, then our hopes of today, these proud achievements—will go under in the devastation of tomorrow.

"I prophesy peace is not only possible in our generation; I predict that it is coming much earlier. And if I am right, then, at the next World's Fair, people will see an America as different from today as we are different from 1939. . . .

"All of these dreams and these hopes and these expectations depend upon a world that is free from the threat of war. . . ."—See the New York Times, as of April 23, 1964, page 26.

27. What does Revelation, chapter seventeen, show about the relations of earth's "kings" with Babylon the Great?

THE DECISIVE FIGHT

²⁸ All the "kings of the entire inhabited earth" are associated with religion. Hence the unsuspecting person might think that this association of religion with politics would lead nations to God. The popular idea is that people are all worshiping one and the same God, only under differing external forms with different religious names. This idea hurts nobody's feelings, but is it correct? What does Revelation, chapter seventeen, verses thirteen and fourteen, say about these kings with whom Babylon the Great has religious ties and unions? It says: "These have one thought, and so they give their power and authority to the wild beast. These will battle with the Lamb, but, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings, the Lamb will conquer them." Who is the person there called "the Lamb" and who is Lord of lords and King of kings? It is the heavenly Jesus Christ, who was once born as a human in Bethlehem.

²⁹ He is also called "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) This Lamb died sacrificially on earth, but Almighty God raised him from the dead to immortal life in heaven as a spirit person. God has now made the glorified Jesus a heavenly King with right to the rulership of all the earth. When he was down here on earth Jesus Christ never committed religious fornication with Babylon the Great as the "kings of the entire inhabited earth" have done. So when such kings under the influence of Babylon the Great fight against the Lamb, does it mean fighting for Almighty God or against Him? The only answer is, Against him!

³⁰ The fight by the kings of the earth at

28. Despite their religious connections, against whom do these earthly "kings" fight, according to Revelation 17:13, 14?

29. Why is this one appropriately called "the Lamb," and, when fighting against him, against whom do the kings really fight?

30. How is the Lamb of God pictured in Revelation 19:11-16?

Armageddon is merely mentioned in Revelation 17:14. The description of it is given in Revelation 19:11-21. There the apostle John tells us how, in the opened heaven, he sees the Lamb of God now like a warrior mounted on a white horse. And, says John, "the name he is called is The Word of God. Also, the armies that were in heaven were following him on white horses, and they were clothed in white, clean, fine linen. And out of his mouth there protrudes a sharp long sword, that he may strike the nations with it, and he will shepherd them with a rod of iron. He treads too the press of the wine of the anger of the wrath of God the Almighty. And upon his outer garment, even upon his thigh, he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords." This One fights for God. But against whom?

³¹ In the battle report the apostle John tells us, saying: "I saw the wild beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage the war with the one seated on the horse and with his army." In that battle action those earthly kings and their armies are at Armageddon, gathered there by the expressions inspired by demons. Who, now, wins the ensuing war of Armageddon, this "war of the great day of God the Almighty"? John tells us:

³² "And the wild beast was caught, and along with it the false prophet that performed in front of it the signs with which he misled those who received the mark of the wild beast and those who render worship to its image. While still alive, they both were hurled into the fiery lake that burns with sulphur. But the rest were killed off with the long sword of the one seated on the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth. And all the birds were filled from the fleshy parts of them."—Rev. 19:11-21.

31, 32. Against whom does he fight, and who wins the fight, according to Revelation 19:17-21?

³³ That leaves no doubt about the war of Armageddon, which lies just ahead of all mankind. Nineteen centuries ago, in prophetic vision, John saw who would win the war. That makes it certain now who will win the "war of the great day of God the Almighty." It will be God's Warrior, the King of kings and Lord of lords, and his heavenly angelic armies. The political systems on earth, as pictured by the wild beast and its image and the false prophet, will be destroyed as thoroughly as if they were pitched into a lake of fire and sulphur. No more will there be international unity by means of the present-day alliances. The political rulers and their fighting forces, civilian and military, will be killed off by the heavenly forces. They will be given no honorable burial in memorial tombs but will become food for scavenger birds. The slaughter of them will be by the symbolic "long sword" of execution that protrudes out of the mouth of the King of kings. And on earth the "men of good will" are going to be eyewitnesses of this.

³⁴ Let us, then, not fool ourselves. For any one of us to get involved in the war of Armageddon means to get involved with God the Almighty, for it is a war by the political rulers of this world against God and against his Son, Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Such involvement would mean our certain destruction, without hope of our being resurrected from the dead under the victorious kingdom of God during the thousand years of rulership by his triumphant Son Jesus Christ.

THE ALTERNATIVE COURSE

³⁵ When we see who make up the two

sides in this showdown fight at Armageddon (or, Har-Magedon), we can also see that the fight is over the issue of the sovereignty of the earth. The question that is up for settlement at Armageddon is, Who has the right to rule all the earth? Who will, in fact, rule the earth now and forever—the political rulers of this corrupt system of things or the Son of God, Jesus Christ? When World War I was fought in 1914-1918, mainly between the nations of Christendom, it was over the question of who will dominate the earth politically and commercially. World War II of 1939-1945, which was also chiefly between the nations of Christendom, was over the same question. By all the tokens observable today any third world war would be over the same issue. In agreement with that fact, the human rulers of our earth now yield to the unseen demonic influence of God's enemies and refuse to hand over the sovereignty of the earth to God's appointed King, Jesus Christ. Unavoidably God is obliged to use violence at Armageddon. The nations thus bring destruction upon themselves at the hands of God the Almighty at Armageddon, in the worst time of trouble ever in human history.—Matt. 24:21, 22.

³⁶ Consequently, we should seriously ask ourselves, Do we desire to suffer destruction with the nations in that "war of the great day of God the Almighty"? Do we desire to be found at war with God the Almighty at Armageddon? If we do not desire that to happen to us, then what can we do about it? There is only one alternative course that we can take. What is that? The Holy Bible, God's Word, answers, Seek the "peace among men of good will."

³⁷ The words "Upon earth peace among

33. What, therefore, will happen to all the political systems and the rulers and their fighting forces at Armageddon?

34. What would one's getting involved in that war mean to one, and why?

35. (a) At Armageddon, what is the issue that is up for settlement? (b) Why is God obliged to use violence there?

36. What questions should we seriously ask ourselves, and what is the Bible answer?

37. By whom is this "peace among men of good will" offered, and what does our enjoying it mean as to consequences?

men of good will" were said by the heavenly army of angels. But first they said: "Glory in the heights above to God." Manifestly, then, this peace is no peace established by means of the man-made United Nations or by means of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion that rests on the religion of ancient Babylon. It is a peace that is offered by the Most High God, concerning whom Psalm 83:18, according to the *King James Version*, says: "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth." We do not want Jehovah to look on us as his foes at Armageddon and therefore to be at war with us there. Our desire is for Jehovah to be at peace with us at that critical time. His being peaceable toward us then means our survival, our salvation. God's peace, on his terms, is extended to "men of good will."

³⁸ Our next question is, then, Who are these "men of good will," and how can I become one of them? These "men of good will" have not come into existence first in our day or generation. "Men of good will" have existed ever since the heavenly angels mentioned them to the God-fearing shepherds at the time of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. Throughout the nineteen centuries of our Common Era there have been some on earth. Now at this most critical time in human history there are still some on earth, although they are in the minority, as they always have been. Are they the prominent ones of earth who launch these much-advertised peace drives and offensives? Are they the people who belong to these political organizations for international peace, including the United Nations? No! Why not? Because all of these are seeking merely international peace by hu-

38. (a) How long have these "men of good will" spoken of by the angels been in existence? (b) Why do they not include these worldly advocates for peace?

man means, and not peace with God in God's way.

³⁹ From what viewpoint are these men who were mentioned by the heavenly angels said to be "of good will"? Is it the idea that they are of goodwill toward God, inclined to consider him in a friendly and indulgent way? Or is it the idea that God has goodwill toward them, thus making them persons who have the goodwill of God toward them? The idea evidently is that of God's goodwill toward worthy persons. In fact, God's attitude of goodwill is the deciding thing, the critical thing, not our goodwill toward him, for God has to decide who may become his friends and on what terms. One's having a religious attitude toward God and belonging to some church of Christendom or to some synagogue of Jewry does not meet the requirements.

⁴⁰ For instance, nineteen hundred years ago, out of all the nations, the Jews had a religious attitude toward Jehovah God and gloried in his gorgeous temple at Jerusalem. And yet the Christian apostle Paul, who had been a Jewish Pharisee, said concerning the natural-born Jews: "Brothers, the good will of my heart and my supplication to God for them are, indeed, for their salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God; but not according to accurate knowledge; for, because of not knowing the righteousness of God but seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the Law, so that everyone exercising faith may have righteousness." (Rom. 10:1-4) At last the apostle Paul found it necessary to turn to the non-Jews or Gentiles with his message of salvation. Because the natural Jews re-

39. In what way is it that these men are said to be "of good will"?

40. How, in the case of the natural Jews of his day, does the apostle Paul show that merely having a religious attitude toward Jehovah God is not enough?

jected God's righteousness through Christ, God cast off the Jewish nation.

⁴¹ God definitely showed this rejection of their nation thirty-seven years after the unjust death of Jesus Christ outside the walls of Jerusalem. Then, in the year 70, God permitted the Roman armies to destroy Jerusalem and its temple and to carry off 97,000 surviving captives into slavery in all parts of the Roman Empire. That was no act of goodwill on the part of the Most High God toward that religious nation, but was a very painful expression of his displeasure. However, at that particular time God was showing goodwill toward a Jewish remnant who had become followers of his Son Jesus Christ and also toward many Gentile followers of his Son. These were the "men of good will" of that time. They escaped the destruction of Jerusalem and the enslavement of its miserable survivors. Those goodwill persons proved worthy also of later being saved out of death by a resurrection under God's kingdom.

⁴² A number of modern Bible translations bring out this thought as contained in the words of the heavenly army of angels at Jesus' birth. The *Revised Standard Version* translates Luke 2:14 this way: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" *The New English Bible* reads: "Glory to God in highest heaven, and on earth his peace for men on whom his favour rests." Dr. James Moffatt's translation reads: "Glory to God in high heaven, and peace on earth for men whom he favours!" *An American Translation* reads: "Glory to God in heaven and on earth! Peace to the men he favors!" Other modern translations read similarly. They make it very plain that God's peace is among

41. (a) How did God definitely show this rejection of the Jewish nation? (b) Who, then, were the "men of good will" of that time?

42. How do a number of modern Bible translations bring out this same thought concerning "men of good will"?

the persons toward whom he has goodwill or with whom he is pleased.

⁴³ Jesus Christ when on earth called attention to that fact that God was then specially exercising goodwill and that it was the time for the Jews to avail themselves of God's goodwill for their everlasting benefit. In the synagogue in the city of Nazareth where he had been a carpenter till thirty years of age, Jesus was given the book of the prophet Isaiah. Out of it he read from chapter sixty-one, verses one and two, which read: "The spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me, for the reason that Jehovah has anointed me to tell good news to the meek ones. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to those taken captive and the wide opening of the eyes even to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of good will on the part of Jehovah and the day of vengeance on the part of our God." That prophecy sets the goodwill on the part of Jehovah God in contrast with his vengeance, a fact that makes it manifest that God's goodwill is not toward all people. (Luke 4:16-19) In the coming "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Armageddon, he will express his vengeance toward all those who are there lined up against him in war.

⁴⁴ God's goodwill was toward his Son Jesus Christ as a man on earth. In the prophecy of Isaiah 49:8, 9 He foretold this, saying: "This is what Jehovah has said: 'In a time of good will I have answered you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you; and I kept safeguarding you that I might give you as a covenant for the people, to rehabilitate the land, to bring about the repossessing of the desolated hereditary possessions, to say to the prisoners,

43. (a) At Nazareth how did Jesus call attention to the fact that God was then exercising goodwill? (b) What contrast in God's dealings did the prophecy there read set forth?

44. (a) According to Isaiah 49:8, 9, to whom was God's goodwill nineteen centuries ago? (b) How did God's goodwill operate that the rest of Isaiah's prophecy might be carried out?

"Come out!" to those who are in the darkness, "Reveal yourselves!" ** Because of God's goodwill toward his faithful Son Jesus Christ, who prayed to him for salvation, Almighty God saved him out of death by resurrecting him on the third day. Thus, alive from the dead forevermore in heaven, the resurrected Jesus Christ could carry out the rest of Isaiah's prophecy.—Heb. 5:7-9.

⁴⁵ That is a reason for us people today to be happy, if we desire to be "men of good will" and to enjoy peace both now and at the crucial time of Armageddon. In this short remaining time before that "war of the great day of God the Almighty," when he will execute his vengeance upon his enemies, it is still a "time of good will" on His part. It is still a "day of salvation" in which we can take advantage of God's provisions for salvation from destruction. The apostle Paul earnestly calls this to our attention, when he writes these words: "Sharing in God's work, we urge this appeal upon you: you have received the grace of God; do not let it go for nothing. God's own words are: 'In the hour of my favour I gave heed to you; on the day of deliverance I came to your aid.' The hour of favour has now come; now, I say, has the day of deliverance dawned." —2 Cor. 6:1, 2, *New English Bible*.

⁴⁶ It was nineteen centuries ago that the apostle Paul quoted those words of Isaiah's prophecy (49:8) and applied them to our benefit. How much more, then, at this late date, ought his words to appeal to us! Will

* NW, 1958 edition, margin. Also, Young's *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* (1898) reads: "Thus said Jehovah: 'In a time of good pleasure I answered thee, and in a day of salvation I helped thee.'" etc. Isaac Leeser's *The Twenty-four Books of the Holy Scriptures* reads: "Thus hath said the Lord, In the time of favour have I answered thee, and on the day of salvation have I helped thee;" etc.

45. (a) Hence over what fact can those who want to be "men of good will" be happy today? (b) How does the apostle Paul call attention to this, in 2 Corinthians 6:1, 2?

46. According to Paul's words, what should we do today, and what will doing so mean to us?

we now take full advantage of God's undeserved kindness through Jesus Christ while the time of his goodwill is still here? To do so means our salvation.

HOW TO GET HIS GOODWILL

⁴⁷ Today hundreds of thousands of people of all sorts of nations, of all kinds of languages, of all sorts of color, in at least 194 known lands, have become "men of good will." With might and main they are striving to keep in God's favor, under his approval. How have they become "men of good will"? By following the wisdom set out in the Holy Bible. In its Proverbs (8:35) it is written concerning the getting of heavenly wisdom: "The one finding me will certainly find life, and gets good will from Jehovah."

⁴⁸ We have to do something toward gaining God's goodwill, for Proverbs 11:27 says: "He that is looking for good, will keep seeking [God's] good will; but as for the one searching for bad, it will come upon him." We must become, not Baptists, nor Methodists, nor Presbyterians, nor members of Christendom's churches, but God's true people. Otherwise, we cannot have his goodwill, for Psalm 149:4 says: "Jehovah is taking pleasure in his people. He beautifies the meek ones with salvation." Psalm 147:11 adds: "Jehovah is finding pleasure in those fearing him, in those waiting for his loving-kindness." Jehovah's pleasure means his goodwill.

⁴⁹ True "men of good will," both those who entertain heavenly hopes and those who entertain earthly Paradise hopes, are very busy today in helping all seekers of God's goodwill to get it. To these interested seekers they are bringing copies of the Bible in the needed languages and also printed literature to help these seekers to under-

47, 48. Like hundreds of thousands of others today, how can people become "men of good will" today?

49. (a) What are true "men of good will" very busy in doing today? (b) How?

stand that sacred Book and to find out what God's requirements are for getting his goodwill. To avoid being influenced by the froggish expressions inspired by demons that issue from the mouths of the Dragon, the wild beast and the false prophet, we need the heavenly wisdom that is found in the Bible, which was inspired by God's holy spirit. To this end God's "men of good will" today are helping the honest seekers by carrying on personal Bible studies in the homes of these people free of charge. They also invite such searchers of the Bible to their congregational meetings for association with "men of good will."

⁵⁰ True "men of good will" are persons who have been reconciled to God by dedicating themselves through Christ to God and then testifying to their dedication by being baptized in water. They have made a deep impression on the public eye by being immersed in water, sometimes thousands at a time, as, for instance, those 7,136 who were baptized during the Divine Will International Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses held simultaneously in Yankee Stadium and the Polo Grounds, New York City, in the summer of 1958.

⁵¹ Why were they thus baptized? Of course, to imitate the example of God's greatest man of goodwill, Jesus Christ himself. He sent out his followers into all the earth with the command: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And, look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 28:19, 20) When Jesus himself was baptized, he symbolized the dedicating of himself to Jehovah God to do the divine will. Likewise those who are now "men of good

will" and Jehovah's ordained ministers, publicly symbolized their complete dedication of themselves to their God by baptism.

⁵² Thus, as dedicated, baptized Christians, they are fearlessly facing the oncoming outbreak of the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Armageddon. They know that the issue over which that war is fought out to a finish is God's kingdom over all the earth in the hands of his King of kings and Lord of lords. As long as nineteen hundred years ago Jesus Christ saw that at this time the issue must be clearly set forth before all mankind. Hence in his prophecy concerning the conclusion of the system of things in our day he said: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matt. 24:14) God's "men of good will" are the ones who have been fulfilling this mandatory prophecy since the end of the Gentile Times in 1914, and particularly since the end of World War I in the year 1918. In this way notice has been served on all the nations, and especially Christendom, which prefers the United Nations organization to God's Messianic kingdom.

⁵³ The "good news" that God's kingdom has been set up in heaven with His Messianic King on the throne must continue to be preached till the end of this doomed system of things is reached. As the preaching continues and spreads out, more and more persons are acting on the good news. They are choosing peace with God rather than to suffer destruction with the nations at Armageddon.

⁵⁴ So by dedicating themselves to God and his service and by symbolizing this

52. With what attitude are these "men of good will" facing Armageddon, and what notice are they serving on the nations, and why?

53, 54. (a) As the good news continues to be preached, what choice are a multitude of people making, and what are they becoming? (b) In harmony with the Proverbs, how are they gaining the pleasure of the reigning King?

50, 51. Who are the true "men of good will" today, and whose example have they copied?

dedication through a public water baptism they are putting themselves in line for God's favor. They are becoming "men of good will." Mindful of the newly enthroned King Jesus Christ, they take to heart the words of the inspired proverbs: "The pleasure of a king is in the servant who is acting with insight." "The lips of righteousness are a pleasure to a grand king; and the speaker of upright things he loves." (Prov. 14:35; 16:13) So with proper insight the dedicated ones see their obligation to use their lips in preaching the good news of God's newborn kingdom everywhere for a witness. Obediently they join in preaching.

⁵⁵ These sheeplike people not only love the King Jesus Christ but also love his spiritual brothers, a small remnant of whom yet remain on earth as leaders in the work of preaching the good news. The sheeplike people want to show their love for the King by doing good to his spiritual brothers. They know that they can do this particularly by helping Christ's spiritual brothers to get the Kingdom witness accomplished. So they take a share with them in preaching the Kingdom news and in suffering with them as Kingdom witnesses. They look forward to the time when the giving of the witness to all the nations will have been done, for then the King will say to them: "Come, you who have my Father's blessing, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world. . . . Truly I say to you, To the extent that you did [good] to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." Their having the blessing of the

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Jerusalem—"A Burdensome Stone to All the Peoples."
- Wolves in Sheep's Covering.
- Do You Have Sufficient Determination?

King's heavenly Father means that they are among God's "men of good will." To indicate this, the King has placed such sheeplike people at his right hand.—Matt. 25:31-40.

⁵⁶ At that time the goatlike enemies of God's kingdom will go off into everlasting punishment, the everlasting cutting off from all existence anywhere. The righteous

sheeplike people will enter "into everlasting life" under God's kingdom. (Matt. 25:46) They will continue to enjoy God's "peace among men of good will." God has

long had such men of goodwill in mind. So from the founding of the world about six thousand years ago God made preparation for them. He has in mind for them a Paradise realm on a cleansed earth under the kingdom of his dear Son Jesus Christ. In the heavenly kingdom itself the King will have his spiritual brothers reigning with him to bless all mankind. But the earth, cleansed of all who are not "men of good will" at Armageddon, will be the territory of the Kingdom, the terrestrial realm of the heavenly kingdom. It will be beautified with Paradise conditions that will result in praise and thanksgiving to God's kingdom, and Satan and his demon angels will not be permitted to interfere.

⁵⁷ What a glorious, peaceful home this Paradise earth will be for "men of good will" everlasting! Do you readers want it? It can become yours if you now take steps to escape from destruction with divinely disapproved men at Armageddon and you now choose wholeheartedly to become God's "men of good will" enjoying His peace.

55. (a) How do they show their love for the spiritual brothers of the reigning King? (b) How does their having the blessing of the King's Father identify who they are?

56. Where will the goatlike people go at Armageddon, but into what inheritance will the sheeplike people at the King's right hand enter?

57. By what course now may a peaceful Paradise home on earth be gained?

A HAUGHTY SPIRIT is before STUMBLING

"PRIDE is before a crash, and a haughty spirit before stumbling," are the words of the wisest king of ancient times. This wise man recognized that the principle applied to himself as a king. It goes even farther and applies with equal force to a nation.

—Prov. 16:18.

In previous issues we have discussed how the ten-tribe northern kingdom of Israel, with its capital at Samaria, broke away from the royal house of the kings of the line of David who sat on "Jehovah's throne" at Jerusalem. In addition it pulled its people away from the worship of Jehovah at the temple in Jerusalem, thus rejecting Jehovah's worship and his word and becoming haughty against him. Inevitably the nation began to deteriorate and decline. It began to stumble because God then permitted the enemy nations round about to come in and make inroads on its territory. This kingdom, after 257 years, stumbled to its complete crash, being taken captive by Assyria, its subjects being carried away and scattered in distant lands.

Samaria's sister kingdom of Judah did not learn a lesson from Samaria's fall, but similarly demonstrated haughtiness against

Jehovah. Finally God sent his prophet Jeremiah with his strongest warning yet. In this prophecy he likened his rage against Judah to wine, this rage to be poured out in execution of his judgment. The cup represented the instrument he would use to accomplish the execution. To execute his rage against Judah and Jerusalem and many of the other nations, Nebuchadnezzar would be the cup. But later, for Babylon's wickedness and haughtiness against Jehovah and his people, Babylon itself was to drink of his rage from another cup or instrument, another king. The effect of drinking this cup is described in God's words to Jeremiah:

PROPHETIC CUP OF RAGE SERVED TO JUDAH

"You must say to them, 'This is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, has said: "Drink and get drunk and puke and fall so that you cannot get up because of the sword that I am sending among you.'" And it must occur that in case they refuse to take the cup out of your hand to drink, you must also say to them, 'This is what Jehovah of armies has said: "You will drink without fail. For, look! it is upon the city upon which my name is called that I am starting off in bringing calamity, and should you [nations] yourselves in any way go free of punishment?'"' 'You will not go free of punishment, for there is a sword that I am calling against all the inhabitants of the earth.'"—Jer. 25:27-29.

In a symbolic way Jeremiah had to make Jerusalem and the land of Judah and their rulers first drink the cup, by serving this prophetic message of divine rage. It was distasteful to the nations to hear these words. It was like having a foretaste of the symbolic cupful of wine. This occurred specially in the reign of Jehoiakim, the

third last king on the throne of Judah. Jehovah said to Jeremiah: "Take for yourself a roll of a book, and you must write in it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel and against Judah and against all the nations, since the day [beginning in 647 B.C.E.] that I spoke to you, since the days of Josiah, clear down to this day. Perhaps those of the house of Judah will listen to all the calamity that I am thinking of doing to them, to the end that they may return, each one from his bad way, and that I may actually forgive their error and their sin."—Jer. 36:1-3.

Jeremiah dictated Jehovah's message to his secretary Baruch. Because of Jeremiah's inability at the time, he told Baruch to take the written message to the temple at Jerusalem and read it aloud to all those there on the fast day. This fast day was called nine or more months after Jeremiah began to dictate and produce the scroll. As Baruch courageously read the prophecy in the temple's upper courtyard, at the entrance of the new gate of the temple, Micaiah the son of Prince Gemariah was there listening.

BOOK-BURNING

Micaiah reported the matter, and Baruch was called before the princes to read the prophecy to them. Afterward they took the roll and told Baruch and his master Jeremiah to conceal themselves. On hearing about the prophetic roll, King Jehoiakim sent for it. Would the king now listen and honor the prophecy or would he show haughtiness by acting against what was now not only the spoken but also the inspired written word of God?

All the princes stood about as Jehudi read the

scroll. "And the king was sitting in the winter house, in the ninth month [November-December], with a brazier burning before him. Then it came about that as soon as Jehudi had read three or four page-columns, he proceeded to tear it apart with the secretary's knife, pitching it also into the fire that was in the brazier." Three of the princes pleaded with the king not to burn Jeremiah's roll, but he paid no attention; the whole roll was burned. Thus Jehoiakim reached a peak in his haughtiness against Jehovah, going so far as actually to burn God's written Word. Jehoiakim even tried to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch, but in vain. "Jehovah kept them concealed."—Jer. 36:4-26.

Here a lesson was given that should show the nations who try to destroy God's Word by burning it or by grinding it up or by banning it from their realm that their efforts are futile and completely ineffective; that Jehovah's Word stands forever and cannot be destroyed by wicked men. Jehovah said to Jeremiah: "Take again for yourself a roll, another one, and write on it all the first words that proved to be on the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah burned up. And against Jehoiakim the king of Judah you should say, 'This is what Jehovah has said: 'You yourself have burned up this roll, saying, 'Why is it that you have written on it, saying: 'The king of Babylon will come without fail and will certainly bring this land to ruin and cause man and beast to cease from it'?' Therefore this is what Jehovah has said against Jehoiakim the king of Judah, 'He will come to have no one sitting upon the throne of David, and his own dead body will become something thrown out to the



Jehoiakim burns God's written Word

heat by day and to the frost by night. And I will call to account against him and against his offspring and against his servants their error, and I will bring upon them and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and upon the men of Judah all the calamity that I have spoken against them, and they did not listen.””

Jeremiah obeyed. He dictated to his secretary “all the words of the book that Jehoiakim the king of Judah had burned in the fire; and there were added to them many more words like those.”—Jer. 36:27-32; 45:1-5.

JUDAH BECOMES TRIBUTARY TO BABYLON

This was toward the end of the fifth year of King Jehoiakim's rule and in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar, or in 624 B.C.E. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had not yet come against Jerusalem, as is evident from the fact that Jehoiakim objected to Jeremiah's prophecy foretelling Nebuchadnezzar's attack. (Jer. 36:9, 29) This helps us in understanding the time of the occurrence of the events recorded at 2 Kings 24:1-6: “In his days Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came up, and so Jehoiakim became his servant for three years. However, he turned back and rebelled against him. And Jehovah began to send against him marauder bands of Chaldeans and marauder bands of Syrians and marauder bands of Moabites and marauder bands of the sons of Ammon, and he kept sending them against Judah to destroy it, according to Jehovah's word that he had spoken by means of his servants the prophets. It was only by the order of Jehovah that it took place against Judah . . . Finally Jehoiakim lay down with his forefathers, and Jehoiachin his son began to reign in place of him.”

It was not in 628 B.C.E., the first year of Jehoiakim's reign, but in 620 B.C.E., that King Nebuchadnezzar made Jehoia-

kim his vassal or servant. In the third year of this vassalage (not the third year of his reign, but the eleventh year), Jehoiakim rebelled and stopped paying tribute to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar then came up a second time to punish Jehoiakim. That was in 618 B.C.E.—See *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, by M. S. and J. L. Miller, edition of 1952, page 306, under “Jehoiakim.”

God's prophecy had said of Jehoiakim: “With the burial of a he-ass he will be buried, with a dragging about and a throwing away, out beyond the gates of Jerusalem.” (Jer. 22:18, 19; 36:30) It was Nebuchadnezzar's intention to take King Jehoiakim alive and in fetters to Babylon as a captive, as 2 Chronicles 36:6 states: “Against him Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came up that he might bind him with two fetters of copper to carry him off to Babylon.” But Jehoiakim was never taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar nor did he make peace with him, but he died inside Jerusalem. How, the Bible does not disclose. Because of his “detestable” acts his body was thrown outside Jerusalem's walls.—2 Chron. 36:8.

CAPTIVITY OF PRINCIPAL PEOPLE OF JUDAH

In Jehoiachin his son reigned only three months and ten days, a period of time so short as hardly to be taken into account in Jehovah's words at Jeremiah 36:30. (2 Chron. 36:9, 10) “During that time . . . Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon proceeded to come against the city, while his servants were laying siege against it. At length Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, . . . and the king of Babylon got to take him in the eighth year of his being king.” The eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign ran from the first month of the Jews' calendar, Nisan, the first day, to their twelfth month Adar, the 29th day. This last day

would correspond, in the Gregorian calendar, to March 19, 617 B.C.E.

In this captivity "no one had been left behind except the lowly class of the people of the land. Thus he took Jehoiachin into exile to Babylon; and the king's mother and the king's wives and his court officials and the foremost men of the land he led away as exiled people from Jerusalem to Babylon. . . . Further, the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his uncle king in place of him. Then he changed his name to Zedekiah."—2 Ki. 24:8-17.

It was this event that Daniel the prophet writes about: "In the third year of the kingship of Jehoiakim the king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and proceeded to lay siege to it." (Dan. 1:1) This "third year" of vassalage to Babylon would be the eleventh year of Jehoiakim's entire reign and would be due to end on Adar 29, or March 19, 617 B.C.E. He died before he lived out the end of this eleventh year.*

So, then, the exile and captivity of even part of the Jews at Babylon did not begin in 625 B.C.E., at the end of the third year of independent rule of King Jehoiakim at

* In agreement with this, Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 10, chapter 6, says, in part: "In the fourth year of Jeholakim, one whose name was Nebuchadnezzar took the government over the Babylonians, who at the same time went up with a great army to the city Carchemish, which was at Euphrates; upon a resolution that he had taken to fight with Necho king of Egypt, under whom all Syria then was. . . . But when Nebuchadnezzar had already reigned four years, which was the eighth of Jehoiakim's government over the Hebrews, the king of Babylon made an expedition with mighty forces against the Jews, and required tribute of Jehoiakim; threatening upon his refusal to make war against him. He was affrighted at this threatening, and bought his peace with money; and brought the tribute he was ordered to bring for three years.

"But on the third year, upon hearing that the king of Babylon made an expedition against the Egyptians, he did not pay tribute; yet was he disappointed of his hope, for the Egyptians durst not fight at this time. . . .

"A little time afterward, the king of Babylon made an expedition against Jeholakim: . . . and made his son Jehoiachin king of the country, and of the city; he also took the principal persons in dignity for captives, three thousand in number, and led them away to Babylon. Among whom was the prophet Ezekiel, who was then but young. And this was the end of king Jeholakim, when he had lived thirty-six years and reigned eleven. But he was succeeded in the kingdom by Jehoiachin, . . ." [See also Ezek. 1:1-3]

Jerusalem. Likewise, the seventy-year period that was foretold by the prophet Jeremiah did not begin in that year of 625 B.C.E. The prophecy that the land of Judah was to be turned upside down like a vessel and emptied of all its inhabitants was certainly not fulfilled then. Even eight years later, in 617 B.C.E., the time of the captivity of Jehoiachin along with the principal men of Jerusalem, only a small portion of the people were taken along. The vast majority of the people continued to inhabit Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, and the land was by no means left an uninhabited desolation.*

It is because of making the mistake of dating the beginning of the seventy-year period for the desolation of Jerusalem and the land of Judah after King Jehoiakim reigned at Jerusalem but three years that the chronologers in Christendom throw their time schedule of history at least nineteen years out of order, shortening up the stream of time by that many years. They do this because of trying to harmonize the Bible records with the astronomical Canon of Claudius Ptolemy, an Alexandrian or Egyptian astronomer of the

* In Jeremiah 52:28 we read: "These are the people whom Nebuchadrezzar took into exile: in the seventh year, three thousand and twenty-three Jews." This "seventh year" may mean the seventh year *after* the year of his victory over Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish in 625 B.C.E., for *after* his victory at that place Nebuchadnezzar had all Palestine at his mercy. Telling what followed this, 2 Kings 24:7 says: "Never again did the king of Egypt come out from his land, for the king of Babylon had taken all that happened to belong to the king of Egypt from the torrent valley of Egypt up to the river Euphrates."

Hence, with a special threat to Jerusalem and Judah, the reign of Nebuchadnezzar as king of Babylon might be counted as starting in 624 B.C.E., or the year after his victory over Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish. From this standpoint the "seventh year" mentioned in Jeremiah 52:28 would be 618-617 B.C.E., which was also the eleventh year of Jerusalem's king Jehoiakim. But, from when Nebuchadnezzar actually began to reign in Babylon, 618-617 B.C.E. would be the "eighth year" of his reign. (2 Kings 24:12) So, then, it was actually in the eighth year of his reign in Babylon that he took into exile the above-mentioned 3,023 Jews, evidently not counting in their wives and families, numbering thousands.—2 Ki. 24:14-16.

Parallel with the above, the "eighteenth year" of Nebuchadnezzar spoken of in Jeremiah 52:29 would be the "eighteenth year" of his domination over Palestine, but the "nineteenth year" of his entire reign in Babylon, as mentioned in 2 Kings 25:8.

second century after Christ, but whose system of astronomy has long since been exploded. In this we do not go along with such chronologers.

So, at this captivity in 617 B.C.E., the beginning of Judah's desolation had to wait until the eleventh year of the last king of Judah, Zedekiah, who was put under an oath of submission by Nebuchadnezzar.—2 Chron. 36:13; Ezek. 17:12-14.

PROPHETIC CUP OF RAGE SERVED TO BABYLON

Haughty King Jehoiakim had died a disgraceful death. But the obedient priest Jeremiah remained alive to prophesy for Jehovah. In the fourth year of King Zedekiah, or in 614 B.C.E., Jeremiah wrote a prophecy setting out in detail the coming fall of Babylon. It was in contrast to the prophecy made by the false prophet Hananiah to nullify the effect of Jeremiah's prophecy against Jerusalem. (Jer. 28:1-4) In that same year King Zedekiah, with his quartermaster Seraiah, made a visit to Babylon for political reasons, doubtless to reassure the king of Babylon by personally bringing the tribute due to Nebuchadnezzar. At this time it appears that the governor of the city of Babylon was one Nabonidus, whom King Nebuchadnezzar was thinking of marrying to his favorite daughter Nitocris.* Jeremiah took advantage of Zedekiah's visit to have this Seraiah take along the roll containing the prophecy on Babylon's fall and to read it aloud at Babylon. He tells us:

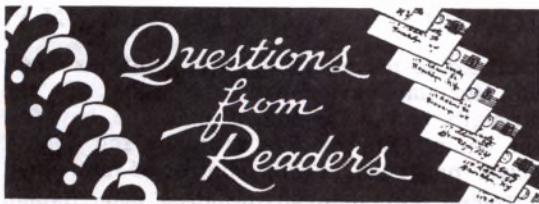
"And Jeremiah proceeded to write in one book all the calamity that would come upon Babylon . . . Furthermore, Jeremiah said to Seraiah: 'As soon as you come to Babylon and actually see her, you must also read aloud all these words. And you must say, "O Jehovah, you yourself have

spoken against this place, in order to cut it off so that there may come to be in it no inhabitant, either man or even domestic animal, but that she may become mere desolate wastes to time indefinite.' And it must occur that when you will have completed reading this book, you will tie to it a stone, and you must pitch it into the midst of the Euphrates. And you must say, 'This is how Babylon will sink down and never rise up because of the calamity that I am bringing in upon her; and they will certainly tire themselves out.'" —Jer. 51:59-64.

From these events in the latter days of the kingdom of Judah, with kings of the line of David sitting on Jehovah's throne at Jerusalem, we learn the lesson: "Let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall." (1 Cor. 10:12) Jerusalem, the city of the great King, that had been so richly blessed by Jehovah God, that had been protected by him, even many years beyond the fall of her sister kingdom of Samaria, had reached a climax in haughtiness and pride, even going so far as to burn the written Word of Jehovah God. After this the entire nation began to decline most rapidly and to stumble seriously to the point of losing her freedom and to come under servitude to a pagan king, with her fall and complete desolation imminent. How this occurred will be discussed in the next succeeding issues of this magazine.

Bible-burning governments, and those who seek to destroy God's Word, the Bible, or who try to keep it from the people by banning it and arresting those who possess the Bible, and persecuting those who believe and proclaim its message, will stumble seriously, and, because of pride and haughtiness against Jehovah, will soon be brought down with a crash to desolation from which they will never be able to recover.

* See the book by G. R. Tabouis entitled "Nebuchadnezzar," and chapter four entitled "The Embassy of Zedekiah," particularly pages 96-99.



- Why did the law given to Moses require that the hand of the witnesses should be first to come upon a person sentenced to death, and does this have any application or lesson for us today?

Concerning those sentenced to death by the court in Israel, Deuteronomy 17:5-7 reads: "... you must stone such one with stones, and such one must die. At the mouth of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one dying should be put to death. . . . The hand of the witnesses first of all should come upon him to put him to death, and the hand of all the people afterward; and you must clear out what is bad from your midst."

Not only were the judges and older men of the nation responsible to clear out what was bad, but all in Israel were to be zealous for true worship, anxious to see that no reproach was brought upon God's name, that the organization remained clean, avoiding community condemnation. The witnesses must show their zeal by taking the lead in carrying out the judgment. Such zeal was illustrated by the Levites when they acted against their Israelite brothers who practiced calf worship at Sinai; by Phinehas the Levite in executing the Simeonite Zimri at the time 24,000 Israelites died for immorality in connection with Baal of Peor. (Ex. 32:25-29; Num. 25:6-9) Parents were required to bring their stubborn, incorrigible son to the judges, not shielding him from the death sentence. If one became a false prophet or apostate, love of Jehovah God and loyalty to him and his organization came ahead of even the closest natural ties, such as that of a son or a daughter.—Deut. 21:18-21; 13:6-11.

Another principle was involved. It was one thing to bring testimony against a person before the court but quite another thing to be the executioner, actually shedding the person's blood. This would make a witness think very carefully in giving evidence. It would be a very hardened witness who would give false testimony knowing he also had to be first to act to put the man or woman to death.

So today, if wickedness is practiced by anyone in the Christian congregation, the congregation's judicial committee has the responsibility to investigate and disfellowship, to clear away what is bad. But each one in the congregation should be just as zealous for the congregation's cleanliness and good standing before Jehovah, even though the guilty one may be as close as a son or a daughter. Each one should be zealous to bear witness to what he knows in the case, not withholding information or evidence because of close ties of family or friendship. He should acquiesce to the judgment of the committee and support its action.—Zech. 13:3.

Also, there is another lesson for us. We should be very careful that we give true, not false or questionable testimony. We should not let prejudice or a preconceived opinion cause us to give false, hasty, careless or inaccurate testimony. We stand accountable to the great Judge, Jehovah God. For we must remember that in God's law to Israel the false witness received the punishment that he had intended for the one against whom he testified falsely.—Deut. 19:18-20.

Thus, from this law given to Israel we can apply to our modern day the principle of being zealous for right, for the pure, clean worship of Jehovah, and also the principle of being truthful, very careful, in giving testimony, knowing that we are before the great Judge Jehovah, who judges us on the words we speak at such a time.—Matt. 12:36, 37.

- Is it proper for a Christian to have a hobby of magical tricks simply for his amusement?

It may be that a person has a hobby of performing tricks that have nothing to do with real magic or demonism. It may be that one simply employs sleight-of-hand tricks or those involving illusions. So if one were merely showing how adroit a person may be with his hands, with no pretense of any magic, there may be no objection to such entertainment. However, whether a Christian will be involved in things of this nature or not is something that should be thoughtfully considered. One might start out performing simple tricks, but this could lead into practices that, knowingly or unwittingly, mimic the magical arts. One might duplicate by trickery real magical feats that are performed by demons, such as levitation, moving objects mysteriously, ectoplasmic materializations, and so forth. Such could lead into involvement with wicked spirit forces be-

cause it is playing at what the demons actually do.

Illustrating the danger of playing at anything that resembles demon activity is the experience of a woman in London. Her experience is described by Nandor Fodor in the book *The Haunted Mind*. This woman was fascinated by magic and hypnotism, and she had an extensive library on magical arts. The report says:

"I had a young boy staying with me who was a good hypnotic subject. I drew a magic circle, put him inside and sent him into hypnotic sleep. Then I commanded him to bring up the Devil! The boy writhed and cried. He was afraid. . . . Nothing happened in the first five hypnotic sessions. But the sixth time something did, and it frightened me out of my senses. In the magic circle a light appeared. Out of a luminous haze two eyes—as big as eggs—looked at me with an awful, penetrating look, a horrible expression. I asked hoarsely what it was. The boy answered—in a totally different voice—'the Evil that you conjured up speaks to you'. . . . I was so scared that I shrieked, 'Go back, never come again! I will not permit you, I don't want you!' The light disappeared with a rushing sound, and things

returned to normal. But I was white as chalk and for days afterward I felt that all the strength had gone out of me. The boy felt the same. Four or five times he felt that a power had tried to gain control of him."

Toying with magical practices, even though one may be faking them, is highly dangerous, and is inviting the demons to put in an actual appearance, as they did in the case of a man who put on fake seances, only to discover that sometimes he actually performed mediumistic phenomena.—*Clock Without Hands*.

Sometimes those who perform tricks try to cause others to believe that they are doing something supernatural, magical. Thus they may, in fact, lay themselves open to real difficulty with the demons. Certainly no Christian would want to make any claim to having supernatural powers or leave any impression that he is a practitioner of Babylonian magic, which is condemned by God. (Deut. 18:10, 14) A Christian should also keep in mind that persons who know him and that he is a minister of God might look unfavorably on magiclike tricks; some persons might be stumbled. So the Christian may well find the pursuit of a hobby in so-called "magical" tricks is not advantageous.—Phil. 1:10; 1 Cor. 6:12.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIELD MINISTRY

Jehovah God has provided everlasting good news that is today being proclaimed to all peoples, and it is the privilege of his servants on the earth to share in this proclamation. During October, Jehovah's witnesses will continue to do this by giving brief Bible sermons to the people in their homes, by conducting free home Bible studies with those who manifest interest, and by offering the *Awake!* magazine on a subscription basis; \$1 for a year.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

- November 8: "Peace Among Men of Good Will" or Armageddon—Which? ¶1-29. Page 621.
- November 15: "Peace Among Men of Good Will" or Armageddon—Which? ¶30-57. Page 627.