

The **WATCHTOWER**

NOVEMBER 15, 1966

Semimonthly

Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

"PREACH A RELEASE
TO THE CAPTIVES"

WHAT THE RELEASE MEANS
TO THE CAPTIVES IN OUR TIME

HOW COMPLETE IS
GOD'S FORGIVENESS?

ARE YOU READY TO GET BAPTIZED?

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"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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AS - American Standard Version Le - Isaac Leeser's version
AT - An American Translation Mo - James Moffatt's version
AV - Authorized Version (1611) Ro - J. B. Rotherham's version
Du - Catholic Douay version RS - Revised Standard Version
JP - Jewish Publication Soc. Yg - Robert Young's version

What you don't know **CAN** hurt you

"WHAT I don't know cannot hurt me." "I'm just going to mind my own business and let others mind their own." "At least, they cannot blame me for something I did not know." These are but a few of the expressions heard from persons who do not wish to become involved with others, who do not want to take on any responsibility for their neighbors or fellow creatures. Some actually believe that by isolating themselves and insulating themselves against undue contact with others they will be able to live a quiet, carefree life.

How wise are such attitudes? And can those who adopt them do so and at the same time claim God's favor as followers of his Son, Christ Jesus?

"Blissful ignorance" certainly sounds attractive. And it is according to the rules of human justice that crimes of ignorance are viewed with greater leniency than those committed willfully. So, on the surface of things, it might seem to be quite plausible to think that what you do not know cannot hurt you.

But why not go to God's Word, the Bible, for authoritative counsel on the subject? Suppose we consider Lot, the nephew of Abraham. This faithful worshiper of God could have closed his eyes and ears to all that was going on around him in

Sodom and the adjacent cities, deluding himself into thinking that everything was all right, that the less he knew about matters the less would be his responsibility. But is that how this God-approved man viewed matters? The Bible answers: "That righteous man by what he saw and heard while dwelling among them from day to day was tormenting his righteous soul by reason of their lawless deeds."—2 Pet. 2:8.

To disclaim any responsibility for the safety and welfare of our neighbors and fellow creatures might seem to relieve us of a heavy load. This is what some have in mind when they determine to "mind their own business." But surely it is wise to stop and ponder this question: Wherein does my attitude differ from that expressed by bloodguilty Cain when he said to God: "Am I my brother's guardian?" (Gen. 4:9) This lack of regard for others accounts for the heartless manner in which people in the large cities can stand by and see a fellow citizen done to death without bothering to summon aid.

It is absolutely true that what people do *not* know can prove to be very hurtful to them, yes, even fatal. If you lived in an upper apartment, and you were unaware

that a great fire raged in the lower apartments, you would, in fact, be in grave danger. In the same way, a blind man walking along in the general direction of a deep pit is also in great peril. In either case a warning word is what is needed. But who is going to give the word of warning if each one is determined strictly to "mind his own business"? Is not the endangered person going to get hurt by what he does not know?

That there are some who do not wish to pay attention to warning information was made clear by the apostle Peter when he wrote: "For, according to their wish, this fact escapes their notice, that there were heavens in ancient times and an earth standing compactly out of water and in the midst of water by the word of God; and by those means the world of that time suffered destruction when it was deluged with water." (2 Pet. 3:5, 6) None of those who turned down the advance warning, who took the attitude that what they did not know would not hurt them, survived that world's watery end.

The Scriptures show that one who insulates himself from the needs of his fellowmen is headed for trouble. Under inspiration the wise man declared: "One isolating himself will seek his own selfish longing; against all practical wisdom he will break forth." (Prov. 18:1) Practical wisdom would tell him that he himself urgently needed upbuilding association of others. Isolationist tactics do not excuse from responsibility, nor do they protect from calamity.

Really, then, there is nothing to be gained by hiding one's head in the sand like the proverbial ostrich. Responsibility will attach to us, even though we are ignorant, if we have turned down opportu-

nities to gain knowledge. Just think of the terrible situation of those Israelites who refused to hear the word of warning from God, and of whom he, in turn, declared: "'Just as he called and they did not listen, so they would call [in their day of calamity] and I would not listen,' Jehovah of armies has said"—Zech. 7:13.

Those who refuse to take in vital knowledge, who take the view that what they do not know will never hurt them, may well be jeopardizing their lives. Why? For the reason stated by Christ Jesus, when in prayer to his Father in heaven: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the One whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) How important, then, to lay up sound knowledge, for knowledge brings wisdom, and wisdom, in turn, provides defense against calamity.—Eccl. 7:12.

The proclamation of the Kingdom message by Christ Jesus and his followers nineteen hundred years ago brought great responsibility upon all within hearing, whether they listened or not. Now, in our day, that responsibility has been intensified both by the spread of knowledge and the critical time in which we live. Apropos, then, are the words of the apostle Paul: "God has overlooked the times of such ignorance, yet now he is telling mankind that they should all everywhere repent. Because he has set a day in which he purposes to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed."—Acts 17:30, 31.

Ignorance of God's purposes in this day when he is having the knowledge proclaimed to the ends of the earth will be no excuse in his great court of justice. Truly, what you don't know CAN hurt you.



How Complete Is GOD'S FORGIVENESS?

HONESTY with ourselves requires us to admit that we are sinners, that we commit sins, that we make mistakes, that we often miss the mark. As a Hebrew poet or psalmist of old once expressed it: "We have sinned just the same as our forefathers." To which the Christian apostle Paul adds his testimony: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."—Ps. 106:6; Rom. 3:23.

The fact that we are sinners should and does give us concern. Why? Because it plagues us with a guilty conscience, and what is more, sin makes men the enemies of God, even as it did our first parents, bringing forth God's displeasure, which resulted in death to them and to their offspring: "That is why, just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." Yes, "the wages sin pays is death."—Rom. 5:12; 6:23.

Lovingly Jehovah God has provided a means by which we can become his friends, by having our sins forgiven us. Thus we are told: "When we were enemies, we became reconciled to God through the death of his Son." (Rom. 5:10) However, this reconciliation does not come automatically to us. It comes only to those who exercise faith: "He that exercises faith in the Son has everlasting life."—John 3:36.

What does it mean to "exercise faith"? It means more than simply saying "I believe." It means doing something about it;

On what basis does God forgive?
Are indulgences required?

it means becoming active, for "faith without works is dead," it being alone. (Jas. 2:26) As the apostle Peter exhorted the conscience-stricken Jews who had been involved in the death of the Son of God: "Repent," feel truly sorry for your sins, "and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out." To turn around means to change the direction in which one is going—in this instance, from following a course of selfishness and sin to following a course of righteousness. While we cannot do so perfectly, yet we can and must oppose sinful tendencies in our flesh and keep striving to do better. "Do not let sin continue to rule as king in your mortal bodies that you should obey their desires."—Acts 3:19; Rom. 6:12.

By pleading for forgiveness on the basis of Christ's sacrifice we can have freedom from a consciousness of guilt, even as we read: "If anyone does commit a sin, we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ, a righteous one. And he is a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, yet not for ours only but also for the whole world's." But we must follow a consistent course of action: "If we are walking in the light as he himself is in the light, . . . the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us."—1 John 2:1, 2; 1:7.

INDULGENCES NEEDED?

But what does this forgiveness include? All punishment for sin, or is there punishment to be undergone? According to the

Roman Catholic Church, for the sins that a believer himself commits he must undergo temporal punishment, that is, punishment limited in time: "There still remains the temporal punishment required by Divine justice." She further claims that "that requirement must be fulfilled either in this present life or in the world to come, i.e., in Purgatory."* And here is where the teaching of indulgences comes in, for indulgences are granted to reduce the temporal punishment one is supposed to suffer in purgatory after death.

Regarding indulgences, the Council of Trent (December 3, 4, 1563), among other things, stated: "The holy synod teaches and ordains that the use of indulgences, as most salutary to Christians and as approved by the authority of the Councils, shall be retained in the Church; and it further pronounces anathema [curses] against those who either declare that indulgences are useless or who deny that the Church has power to grant them."

The Roman Catholic Church also teaches that there are two kinds of indulgences: plenary, that is, full and complete indulgences, and partial indulgences. By plenary indulgences she means that all future punishment for sins is wiped out so that, if one died right after having received plenary indulgence, he would go straight to heaven; which, however, modern theologians are wont to qualify with a few "ifs," giving one to understand that such a thing is rarely likely.

Partial indulgence is for a certain number of days. As for what will gain one such indulgences, there are almost an endless number of things. For example, wearing certain religious articles that have been blessed results in granting indulgences for so many days. Kissing the pope's ring gives one a 300-day indulgence; but

kissing an ordinary bishop's ring, only 50 days. Ascending the "holy stairs" in Rome on one's knees—which steps are supposed to be the ones Jesus walked at the time of his trial and judgment—"whilst meditating on the passion [suffering] of our Lord Jesus Christ," merits more than 3,000 days' indulgence for each step.

Indulgences are also granted for reading the Bible. Thus the preface of *The New Testament*, Catholic Confraternity edition, has the note: "Pope Leo XIII granted to the faithful who shall read for at least a quarter of an hour the books of the Sacred Scripture with the veneration due to the Divine Word and as spiritual reading, an indulgence of 300 days.—*Preces et Pia Opera*, 645."

A CONFUSED PICTURE

That the use of indulgences in the Middle Ages was made to serve selfish ends history clearly shows. This was, in fact, one of the chief causes of the Reformation; Pope Leo X was seeking to collect money by the sale of indulgences for the completion of St. Peter's cathedral in Rome, and the most notorious agent of this indulgence traffic was John Tetzel. All of this caused the priest and monk Martin Luther to break with Rome. Thus *The Catholic Encyclopedia* tells that "indulgences were employed by mercenary ecclesiastics as a means of pecuniary gain."

There was much learned discussion of the value of indulgences at the Vatican II Council, no small amount of it being adverse. However, in spite of all this, Pope Paul VI saw fit to put more emphasis on indulgences than ever before by announcing that 1966 would be a Jubilee Year, which usually comes only every twenty-five years. During the Jubilee Year in times past, any Catholic who traveled to Rome to visit one of its four major Roman Catholic basilicas, or elaborate ca-

* *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 7, p. 783.

thedrals, and worshiped there gained plenary indulgence. However, for this year the pope decreed that Roman Catholics can obtain plenary indulgence at home, simply by attending one of the certain cathedrals he specified in their dioceses where special instructions were to be given on the accomplishments of the Vatican II Council.

—*Time*, Dec. 31, 1965.

But, when one considers the nature of the discussion held at Vatican II Council meetings on the value of indulgences, one wonders whether Pope Paul VI is out of step with his prelates or not. For example: There was Maximos IV Saigh of Antioch, who pointed out that in the Roman Catholic Church during the first eleven centuries "there was no trace of indulgences, and even today the Eastern Church ignores them. In the Middle Ages, abuse of indulgences made grave scandals for Christianity. Even in our day it seems to us that the practice of indulgences too often favors in the faithful a sort of pious book-keeping in which one forgets what is essential, namely, the sacred and personal effort of penance." Another prelate at the Council pointed out that indulgences tended to widen the gulf between Roman Catholics and other churches in Christendom, that they were theologically unsound and not Biblical enough.

According to reports, these remarks were greatly applauded by the some 2,000 bishops assembled. The original idea of the group of the Council dealing with the subject had been merely to abolish the time feature, so many days, years, and so forth, for this, that and the other thing. But with such strong objections to the very idea of indulgences, nothing was done about them at the Vatican II sessions. In fact, to carry out the ideas of some would have made them liable to the curses inveighed by the Council of Trent upon all who questioned the value of indulgences!

GOD'S WORD ON THE SUBJECT

Can indulgences in fact release one from "temporal punishment"? What is the position of God's Word on the subject? When Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was on earth he at times freely forgave the sins of some. Did he on those occasions have anything to say about indulgences? No, he did not. (Luke 7:48, 49) Nor did any of his early followers. Thus the apostle Paul writes: "By means of him we have the release by ransom through the blood of that one [Jesus Christ], yes, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his undeserved kindness." Making it even stronger or more explicit are the words of the apostle John: "The blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from *all* sin." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous so as to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from *all* unrighteousness." If Jehovah God, on the basis of Christ's sacrifice, forgives *all* our sins, there can be no temporal punishment before or after death for them.—Eph. 1:7; 1 John 1:7, 9.

Besides, how could persons be punished after dying, when, according to the Scriptures: "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." Yes, "in that day" that a man dies, "his thoughts do perish." The Bible tells us of Lazarus, a friend of Jesus who was raised by Jesus after he had been in the grave for four days. Had he been alive somewhere we may be sure he would have told about his remarkable experience!—Eccl. 9:5; Ps. 146:4; John 11:38-44.

The erroneous teaching of suffering for sins after death and of which suffering indulgences are supposed to be able to relieve one is based on a false premise, namely, that man has a soul that is separate and distinct from his body, and that it is immortal, leaving the body at death. But neither scientists nor surgeons have

ever found such a soul in man, nor has anyone else found any evidence of such a thing. Man's consciousness depends upon his organism; seriously harm it, as in an accident, and his consciousness suffers. The Bible teaching is in support of this scientific fact, for it tells us that, upon creation, man "came to be a living soul." As for man as a soul being immortal, God's Word plainly negates such a teaching, stating: "The soul that is sinning—it itself will die." The hope for the dead lies, not in a supposedly immortal soul, but in a resurrection, which the Bible assures us will include "both the righteous and the unrighteous."—Gen. 2:7; Ezek. 18:4, 20; Acts 24:15.

More than that, not only does the Bible have nothing to say about indulgences and an immortal soul, but it likewise has nothing to say about such a place as purgatory. It tells of God's creating heaven and earth but never mentions a purgatory, the word not occurring in the Bible from Genesis through Revelation.

SUPPOSED OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

Those who teach such doctrines as indulgences, immortality of the human soul and purgatory claim that these teachings are supported by Jesus' words at Luke 12: 47, 48, about those knowing his Father's will and not doing it being beaten with many strokes. However, no illustration can properly be used or interpreted to contradict plain statements of the Bible, but

must be construed in harmony with them. Jesus was here stating a principle and a prophecy to be fulfilled at his second coming while his professed disciples were still alive in the flesh on earth.

Another text used to support the indulgence structure is 1 Corinthians 3:15, which reads: "If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved; yet, if so, it will be as through fire." Clearly, here literal fire is not meant, for Christians do not build with literal "gold, silver, precious stones," or with "wood materials, hay, stubble," as mentioned in verse 12. More than that, it speaks of the person being saved as through fire because his works are burned. He built carelessly or unwisely in this life; in this life his works are destroyed and it is in this life, therefore, that he will be saved, as through fire of testing.

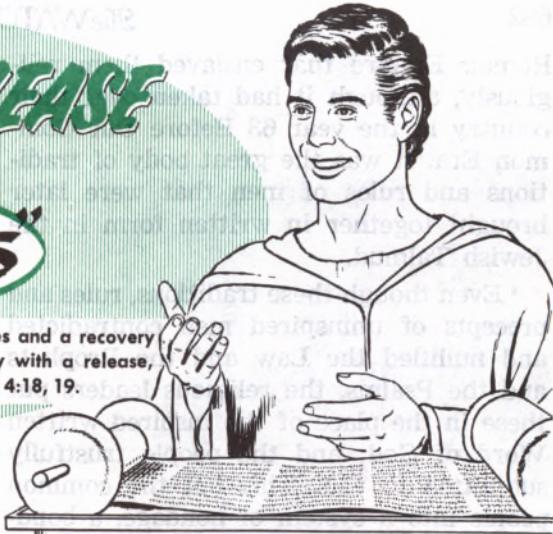
God's Word shows Him to be reasonable, just, loving and righteous. He has made provision for the forgiveness of sins that are not willful by the ransom sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ. Since that sacrifice cleanses us from all sin and consciousness of guilt, it leaves nothing to be paid for by temporal punishment, and which punishment might be or is supposed to be obviated by indulgences. Especially is there nothing left to be paid after death, since in death man is wholly unconscious, without any thoughts until the resurrection, if that be his lot. Yes, God's forgiveness is complete.

Evening and Morning Twilight

◆ Between sunset and the actual darkness there is a short period of evening twilight when the stars begin to be seen. This time was called *nesheph* by the ancient Hebrews and evidently is the time meant by the expression "between the two evenings" found at Exodus 12:6. (Prov. 7:9) Similarly, at the end of the night's darkness there is a morning twilight leading to the dawn and this was expressed by the same Hebrew word. Thus, the writer at Psalm 119:147 says: "I have been up early in the morning twilight."

"PREACH A RELEASE TO THE Captives"

"He sent me forth to preach a release to the captives and a recovery of sight to the blind, to send the crushed ones away with a release, to preach Jehovah's acceptable year."—Luke 4:18, 19.



TO DAY it is a question of early release or inescapable destruction! Either there is a release for the people or else they will be destroyed with what is holding them captive and crushing them! The matter is that pressing! The situation today facing us all is not without a warning example earlier in history. It faced a group of thirteen men nineteen centuries ago. They took the situation courageously in hand and put forth strong efforts to bring about a release of their people before the horrible destruction came. A number of thoughtful persons gave an obedient ear to the preaching of a release and accepted the help offered and gained a timely release from the organization holding them captive and crushing them. They were not among the more than a million of their own people who died in a few months of siege and the tens of thousands of others who were led off into exile and slavery to pagan masters. All this was prophetic and its lesson should come home to us today. By way of similarities of events, history is about to repeat itself today, only on a worldwide scale. For people now it is a case of either release or destruction!

1. For the people today it is a case of either release or what, and what warning example was furnished us nineteen centuries ago?

² Look at the national situation that faced Jesus Christ and his twelve apostles nineteen hundred years ago. He had to start out single-handedly, except, of course, that God was with him. He came to his own people. They were deeply religious. They were jealously attached to their religion, which was absolutely different from the Hinduism, the Buddhism, the Persian Zoroastrianism, the Greek and Roman religions, and the Gothic and Druid religions that flourished over large areas of the earth. Such Gentile religions were marked by idolatry. Because of this difference of religion Jesus' people should have been a free people, at least religiously. They had thirty-nine sacred books, and these were grouped under three headings, namely, the Law or Torah, the Prophets and the Psalms. These they had received from God the Creator. Why should they not have been a free people? But they were not!

³ It was not the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms that put these people in a slave state, religiously speaking. It was not the

2. As regards religion, what national situation faced Jesus and his apostles, and was his nation a free people?
3. What was it that put Jesus' people in a slave state?

Roman Empire that enslaved them religiously, although it had taken over their country in the year 63 Before Our Common Era. It was the great body of traditions and rules of men that were later brought together in written form in the Jewish Talmud.

⁴ Even though these traditions, rules and precepts of uninspired men contradicted and nullified the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms, the religious leaders put these in the place of the inspired written Word of God; and the people trustfully submitted to this. This put the common people into a system of bondage, a bondage to religious leaders who had more regard for what men of previous times had taught and practiced than for God's plainly written Law and arrangement. This bondage blinded them. It made them blindly follow their blind religious leaders and oppose inspired men whom God himself sent to them. As the naked facts of history show, it made them oppose, to the death, their greatest Prophet, who gave all evidences of being the very Son of God.

⁵ For instance, take the ancient walled city of Jerusalem back in the year 33 of our Common Era, which was the nineteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar of Rome. Three days before the Jewish Passover that year, Jesus Christ denounced the religious enslavement of the common people and then said to their holy city: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the killer of the prophets and stoner of those sent forth to her,—how often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks together under her wings! But you people did not want it. Look! Your house is abandoned to you. For I say to you, You will by no means

see me from henceforth until you say, 'Blessed is he that comes in Jehovah's name!' " (Matt. 23:1-4, 15, 37-39) But the people who followed their tradition-keeping religious leaders did not want the protection that Jesus Christ offered to them, as a hen protects her chicks under her wings. The Jerusalem of that day never did say to Jesus: "Blessed is he that comes in Jehovah's name!" So, in 70 C.E., that Jewish city was horribly destroyed.

⁶ The apostles of Jesus Christ also saw the religious captivity of the people. About twenty years before Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman armies, the apostle Paul wrote to some disciples in Galatia who were being misled into captivity to religious traditions: "Abraham acquired two sons, one by the servant girl and one by the free woman . . . Now this [servant girl] Hagar . . . corresponds with the Jerusalem today, for she is in slavery with her children. Wherefore, brothers, we are children, not of a servant girl [Hagar], but of the free woman. For such freedom Christ set us free. Therefore stand fast, and do not let yourselves be confined again in a yoke of slavery." (Gal. 4:21-25, 31; 5:1) Those words meant that for seventeen years after Jesus Christ died outside her gates, Jerusalem had continued in her religious slavery. She continued in it till she was destroyed in the year 70 C.E. and the tens of thousands of her religiously enslaved children were dragged away into slavery to the pagan Romans.

RELEASE PREACHED AND OFFERED

⁷ Well, then, when Jesus Christ presented himself to his people nineteen hundred years ago, did they need a release? Was it a case of either a release or destruc-

4. Who put them in this system of bondage, and how, and with what resultant action toward God's prophets?
 5. How did the people react to the protection offered to them by Jesus, and what, therefore, happened to their city?

6. With a reference to Abraham's household, how did the apostle Paul illustrate the slavery of his people, and how long did Jerusalem continue in this slavery?
 7. In Jesus' day was it a case of either a release of the people or their destruction, and what does subsequent Jewish history show on this?

tion? For refusing the religious release, did they suffer a bodily destruction? Yes, 1,100,000 of them, according to the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus. Their having a priesthood, their having a magnificent temple and altar and holy city, their having the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms in the original Hebrew and Aramaic did not save them. They had rejected the release that had been offered to them in God's way. No release came by their own rebellion against Rome in 66 C.E. and their heroic efforts to free themselves from Roman domination. God had indeed abandoned their "house," their holy temple in Jerusalem. He did not protect it from destruction in 70 C.E.

⁸ It takes time for a wrong course of action to produce its bad results. That is the way it was with Jerusalem and her temple. At least forty years were involved. At the Passover time in the spring of 30 C.E. Jesus Christ cleansed the temple of bankers and businessmen who were turning the temple into a "house of merchandise." (John 2:13-17) Some months later he visited his hometown of Nazareth. The year preceding he had left Nazareth as a carpenter. Now he returned as a preacher of God's kingdom. The Jewish sabbath came, and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue, not just to listen but to present his message of release. He stood up to read part of the Holy Bible to the Jewish worshipers there. "So the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed him, and he opened the scroll and found the place where it was written: 'Jehovah's spirit is upon me, because he anointed me to declare good news to the poor, he sent me forth to preach a release to the captives and a recovery of sight to the blind, to send the crushed ones away with a release,

to preach Jehovah's acceptable year.'" —Luke 4:16-19.

⁹ That was the prophecy of Isaiah 61: 1, 2, written at least 732 years Before Our Common Era. So it was written at least 125 years before the Babylonian armies destroyed Jerusalem and dragged most of the surviving Jews off into captivity in Babylon, the capital of false religion. There they were crushed under oppression and their God Jehovah was made fun of. Just as the prophet Isaiah had foretold: "'The very ones ruling over them keep howling,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and constantly, all day long, my name was being treated with disrespect.'" (Isa. 52:5) Babylon had no thought of releasing the captive Jews. It became necessary to overthrow religious Babylon in order to bring about the release of the captive Jews. That was why the prophet Isaiah, when foretelling the downfall of Babylon, said that people would ask this question about her overthrown royal dynasty: "Is this the man that was agitating the earth, that was making kingdoms rock, that made the productive land like the wilderness and that overthrew its very cities, that did not open the way homeward even for his prisoners?" (Isa. 14: 16, 17) However, Isaiah's prophecy about an anointed preacher indicated that a release would come for the Jewish prisoners. Without fail, release did come—in 537 B.C.E.

¹⁰ Who was the anointed preacher to whom Isaiah referred? The prophetic words as recorded in the Hebrew Bible 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 bro-

8. (a) In Jerusalem's case, how much time was involved for bad results of wrongdoing to appear?
 (b) In what capacity did Jesus return to Nazareth, and fittingly what did he do on the sabbath day there?

9. Where was the prophecy that Jesus read found, and, in its first application, whose release from captivity did it indicate?

10. How was the question about the anointed preacher foretold by Isaiah settled in the Nazareth synagogue?

kenhearted, 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; to comfort all the mourning ones." (Isa. 61:1, 2) The question about this anointed preacher was settled by Jesus Christ there in the synagogue of Nazareth. After he finished reading Isaiah's prophecy, he handed the scroll back to the attendant and sat down and said to all those in the synagogue: "Today this scripture that you just heard is fulfilled." (Luke 4:20, 21) That meant that Jesus was the anointed preacher.

¹¹ Jesus had spoken correctly. The year preceding he had been baptized by John the Baptist and, as he came up out of the Jordan River, God poured down the holy spirit upon the baptized Jesus. The Lord Jehovah anointed him with holy spirit. Thus he became the one anointed to preach the release to the captives and the recovery of sight to those blinded by the deep gloom of their religious prison. (Matt. 3:13-17) But Jesus said to those Nazarenes in the synagogue: "Truly I tell you that no prophet is accepted in his home territory." Jesus was right; for, when he finished his sermon, they tried to kill him, even though he was actually the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ. But their way was not the way for Jesus Christ to die. So with God's help he got out of their hands, and went preaching elsewhere. (Luke 4:22-30) He looked outside his home territory for Jews who wanted release from captivity.

¹² Was Isaiah's prophecy about the anointed preacher finished in Jesus Christ? No! The preaching of a release was not

over when Jesus Christ died on Passover day of 33 C.E. His death still left the capital city of Jerusalem "in slavery with her children." (Gal. 4:25) But Jesus had gathered twelve men about him, to be with him most of the time. After his resurrection and before his ascension back to heaven, he said to his faithful apostles: "You will receive power when the holy spirit arrives upon you, and you will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth." Ten days later the holy spirit did arrive upon them, on the day of the festival of Pentecost, there at Jerusalem. (Acts 1:1-9; 2:1-21) Thus the Lord Jehovah began anointing with spirit the baptized followers of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 1:21; 1 John 2:20, 27) In that way Isaiah's prophecy became applicable to them also, and the obligation came upon them to "preach a release to the captives." ^{IA}

¹³ Those Jews and proselytes who gathered by the thousands to hear Peter and the rest of the apostles preach under the impulse of holy spirit that day of Pentecost may not have fully appreciated how important and timely this release from religious captivity was. But Peter appreciated it, and he told the inquiring people: "Get saved from this crooked generation." Also, in his preceding talk to them he quoted Joel's prophecy about the pouring out of Jehovah's spirit in the last days and continued on quoting the rest of Joel's prophecy, saying: "And I [Jehovah] will give portents in heaven above and signs on earth below, blood and fire and smoke mist; the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and illustrious day of Jehovah arrives. And everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved." (Acts 2:16-21, 40; Joel 2:28-32) That meant that the outpouring

11. (a) In what way had Jesus there spoken correctly? (b) Why did he go looking outside Nazareth for Jews wanting release from captivity?

12. Was Isaiah's prophecy about the anointed preacher finished in Jesus, and what did happenings on the following Pentecost show?

13. On the day of Pentecost, how did the apostle Peter show the people's urgent need of a release?

of holy spirit and the preaching of release were forerunners of an unusual time of trouble with destruction for the "crooked generation" and all those who did not call on the name of Jehovah.

WHAT MUST FOLLOW THE ANOINTING WITH SPIRIT

¹⁴ Trouble was brewing for earthly Jerusalem, who was "in slavery with her children." Another prophetic statement with regard to the anointing indicated this. In that prophecy the angel Gabriel told the prophet Daniel the exact year of the anointing of Jesus with holy spirit to make him "Messiah the Leader," and also the anointing of his followers. After that there was trouble to follow, for the angel Gabriel said, in part:

¹⁵ "There are seventy weeks that have been determined upon your people and upon your holy city, in order to terminate the transgression, . . . and to anoint the Holy of Holies. . . . Messiah will be cut off, with nothing for himself. And the city and the holy place the people of a leader that is coming will bring to their ruin. And the end of it will be by the flood. And until the end there will be war; what is decided upon is desolations."

¹⁶ In these words from Daniel 9:24-26, the Holy of Holies that was to be anointed is God's spiritual temple or sanctuary. It is composed of Jesus Christ and his 144,000 faithful followers who become "living stones" of the spiritual temple. By his spirit God inhabits this temple of living stones. (1 Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Cor. 3:16, 17) So this anointed temple is different from the "holy place" that was to be brought to ruin by the people of the coming leader. The doomed "holy place"

14, 15. After the anointing with spirit, what was to follow upon the nation, and how did Gabriel foretell this to Daniel?

16. What was the "Holy of Holies" that was to be anointed, and when and how did this take place?

was the house of worship, the temple of literal, inanimate stones, that Jesus said had been abandoned by God to the unbelieving Jews. (Matt. 23:38) It was not anointed with God's holy spirit; but at the beginning of the seventieth week in the year 29 C.E., Jesus was baptized with holy spirit. Shortly after the middle of the seventieth week his faithful apostles and other disciples were anointed with spirit at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost; and at the end of the seventieth week the first Gentile or non-Jewish believers were anointed with holy spirit,* at Caesarea, about fifty miles northwest of Jerusalem.

¹⁷ This anointed "Holy of Holies" survived when the "holy city" and "the holy place" were brought to ruin thirty-four years after the end of the seventieth week. Just as the angel Gabriel had told Daniel, until the end of Jerusalem and her temple there was war, and the Roman leader that came with his legions, namely, Titus, brought upon the "city and the holy place" what was decided upon by Jehovah God, namely, "desolations." That was certainly a "day of Jehovah" with reference to Jerusalem and her children. And in connection with that day there was plenty of "blood and fire and smoke mist," the sun not brightening the gloom of the city by day, and the moon suggesting shed blood, not peaceful, silvery moonlight by night. These things came after Jehovah God had been pouring out his holy spirit upon all sorts of flesh in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, the prophecy that the apostle Peter quoted to the thousands of Jews and proselytes at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost of 33 C.E. Peter was particularly warning those circumcised Jews and proselytes of

* See *The Watchtower*, as of December 1, 1946, page 363, under the heading "Good Results of Seventy Weeks."

17. (a) What, as decided upon by God, came upon the "city and the holy place," but what about the "Holy of Holies"? (b) So regarding what day was Peter warning the Jews on the day of Pentecost?

the "great and illustrious day of Jehovah" that was due to arrive in the year 70 C.E.

¹⁸ Was there, then, any urgency about their accepting the release that was being preached by Jesus' disciples to the religious captives, and was there any urgency about their calling upon the name of Jehovah through Jesus Christ in order to be saved? Indeed there was! Only two months before Pentecost, when Jesus was on his kingly ride to Jerusalem, he stopped and wept over the city, saying: "If you, even you, had discerned in this day the things having to do with peace—but now they have been hid from your eyes. Because the days will come upon you when your enemies will build around you a fortification with pointed stakes and will encircle you and distress you from every side, and they will dash you and your children within you to the ground, and they will not leave a stone upon a stone in you, because you did not discern the time of your being inspected."—Luke 19: 41-44.

¹⁹ Two days later, after Jesus had told the Jews that their temple, their house of worship, had been abandoned to them, he did some sight-seeing in the temple and said to his apostles: "Do you not be-

18. How did Jesus' prophecy over Jerusalem on his ride to that city indicate there was an urgency about accepting a release?

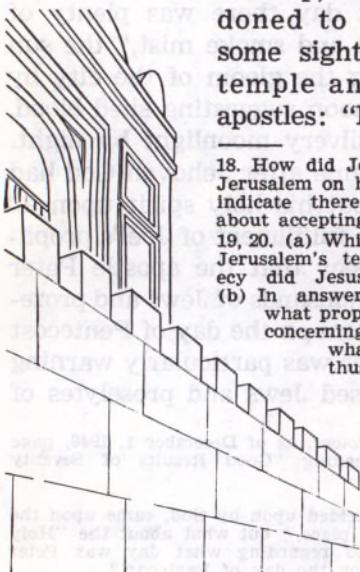
19, 20. (a) While sight-seeing in Jerusalem's temple, what prophecy did Jesus make about it? (b) In answer to his apostles, what prophecy did Jesus give concerning Jerusalem, and what day was Jesus thus preaching?

hold all these things? Truly I say to you, By no means will a stone be left here upon a stone and not be thrown down." (Matt. 23:38; 24:1, 2) When was this to be? His apostles asked him later on.

²⁰ Then he gave his prophecy on the end of the system of things, in which he said: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near. Then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains, and let those in the midst of her withdraw, and let those in the country places not enter into her; because these are days for meting out justice, that all the things written may be fulfilled. Woe to the pregnant women and the ones suckling a baby in those days! For there will be great necessity upon the land and wrath on this people; and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled." (Luke 21:20-24) Jesus was then preaching the day of vengeance of our God.

²¹ Three days later Jesus was marching to Calvary followed by Simon the Cyrenian carrying the torture stake for him. "But there was following him a great multitude of the people and of women who kept beating themselves in grief and bewailing him. Jesus turned to the women and said: 'Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for me. On the contrary, weep for yourselves and for your children; because, look! days are coming in which people will say, 'Hap-

21. On his way to Calvary, how did Jesus predict trouble for Jerusalem and her daughters?



"By no means will a stone be left here upon a stone and not be thrown down."



py are the barren women, and the wombs that did not give birth and the breasts that did not nurse!" Then they will start to say to the mountains, "Fall over us!" and to the hills, "Cover us over!" Because if they do these things when the tree is moist, what will occur when it is withered?" —Luke 23:26-31.

²² There was still some moisture of life in the tree of the Jewish nation because of the existence of a believing remnant in the midst of it. But the taking out of this Christianized remnant would leave a spiritually dead tree, a withered national organization. O how it would bring God's wrath upon the Jews then!

²³ About seventeen years after Jesus warned about the withered tree, the apostle Paul, a converted Jew, wrote to the Christian congregation that was under persecution in Thessalonica, Macedonia, and said: "You became imitators, brothers, of the congregations of God that are in Judea in union with Christ Jesus, because you also began suffering at the hands of your own countrymen the same things as they also are suffering at the hands of the Jews, who killed even the Lord Jesus and the prophets and persecuted us. Furthermore, they are not pleasing God, but are against the interests of all men, as they try to hinder us from speaking to people of the nations that these might be saved, with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But his wrath has at length come upon them." (1 Thess. 2:14-16) How true, for twenty years later the "great and il-

22. How was the symbolic tree still moist, and how would it become withered?

23. Some years later, what did Paul say about the conduct of the Jews and about what was to come upon them, and did this come?

lustrious day of Jehovah" arrived upon them, and his wrath was poured out upon them at the hands of the Roman armies!

²⁴ Following Jesus' counsel, the Jewish Christians fled from Jerusalem and the Province of Judea, leaving the unbelieving Jews to their foretold terrible end. Then the outpouring of Jehovah's holy spirit upon Jews in Jerusalem and Judea ceased. This withholding of his spirit was very ominous, betokening trouble ahead!

²⁵ The unbelieving Jews rejected the preaching of a release as delivered by Christ's followers anointed with holy

spirit. They chose to remain captives to the tradition-bound system of Judaism. Their very own religious table became a trap of destruction for them. (Ps. 69:22; Rom. 11:9) Rejecting Jesus Christ as the "Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world," they continued holding their annual Passover at Jerusalem. Instead of fleeing with the Christians from Jerusalem and Judea, they flocked into Jerusalem by the hundreds of thousands in the spring of 70 C.E. Then the Roman legions under General Titus returned and bottled them up at Jerusalem, building a five-mile fortified enclosure about the doomed city. After a cruel siege Jerusalem fell to General Titus on September 8, 70 C.E. According to the historian Flavius Josephus, there was a death toll of 1,100,000, and 97,000 miserable survivors were carried off into slavery. For at least 1,100,000 the refusal of release by Jesus Christ had meant terrible destruction.

24. When the Christianized Jews fled, what began to be withheld from those in Judea and Jerusalem, and did that betoken anything?

25. How did the rejection of the release as preached by Jesus' followers turn out to mean destruction for the Jews?

ARTICLES IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Liberty-giving Worship.
- Freedom of Worship.
- "Happy Are the Pure in Heart, Since They Will See God."
- Can This World's Armageddon Be Avoided?

WHAT THE RELEASE MEANS

to the Captives In Our Time

THE disaster that befell the Jewish nation in our first century was a historical illustration, on a small scale, of what it results in if the release as preached by Jehovah's anointed ones is not accepted. The release is not just a getting out of a system of captivity, the restoring of the light of freedom to the eyes blinded by the religious darkness of a prison system. Release also includes an escaping from destruction with the prisonlike system of religious captivity. Such a destruction is approaching men of this generation, on a worldwide scale.

¹ Nineteen centuries ago it was the Jews and circumcised proselytes whom Peter warned to get saved from that crooked Jewish generation. He was warning them of what befell their nation in 70 C.E. He was preaching to them more than just a release from the enslaving system of traditional Judaism.—Acts 2:40.

² Not quite three and a half years later Peter was sent to preach the message of release to the uncircumcised Gentiles, who were not in bondage to traditional Judaism. (Acts 10:1-48; 11:8) To the Gentiles who believed from then on it was a case of release from the pagan system of religion. It was a case of release from the worldwide empire of false Babylonish re-

ligion. The call to those Gentiles was to come out of Babylon the Great, which meant coming out of that world empire of false religion. That is why the resurrected Jesus Christ told his disciples: "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) So the fact that earthly Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 C.E. was no sign to indicate that the preaching of a release to the captives was to cease. Babylon the Great still remained after Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman armies.

³ Twenty-six years after Jerusalem was thus destroyed, the apostle John had a miraculous vision and saw Babylon the Great still sitting oppressively on many symbolic waters, namely, peoples, crowds, nations and tongues, all around the globe. (Rev. 17:15) Babylon the Great still continues to sit heavily upon the backs of the people. There is now a pressing need of release from her in all her religious ramifications. Ancient Babylon did not escape destruction after she herself had destroyed earthly Jerusalem in the year 607 B.C.E. Are we to expect that Babylon the Great will escape destruction after the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonish Romans

1. What does the Jewish experience in the first century illustrate, and so does a release mean merely getting out of a system of captivity?

2. So Peter's warning them to get saved from that crooked generation meant more than just a release from what?

3. (a) About three and a half years later Peter issued the call to Gentiles to come out of what, and how was his action in keeping with Jesus' parting command? (b) After Jerusalem's destruction, why did preaching of a release have to go on?

4. Years later, what vision of Babylon the Great did John see, and why is there a pressing need for release from her now?

in 70 C.E.? Not according to Bible prophecy.

⁵ Destruction of Jerusalem and her temple in that year marked a "great and illustrious day of Jehovah," which the first-century Christians could appreciate. But it was not the complete fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. (Joel 2:30-32) After Jerusalem and her temple had lain in ruins already for twenty-six years, the apostle John was told of a still future day of Jehovah, "the great day of God the Almighty." It was a day to be marked by war at a place called in the Hebrew tongue Har-Magedon, or Armageddon. Hence the call that John heard was not a call to get out of earthly Jerusalem, for that city was then out of existence and the Romans did not build a new city there until along in the second century. The call that John heard must now be heard by all the world of mankind, a call to get out of Babylon the Great. (Rev. 16:14-16; 18:1-4) Failure to heed this call will result disastrously!

⁶ In course of time there came the death of the apostle John and all the other apostles of Jesus Christ and their faithful close associates like Timothy and Titus. Then the Christians began to compromise with regard to the freedom for which Christ had set them free. For selfish, materialistic, social advantages they let themselves come into bondage to Babylon the Great. The setting up of Christendom during the reign of Roman Emperor Constantine the Great was merely a fusing of the popular kind of Christianity of that time with the paganism of Babylon the Great, of which Constantine was Pontifex Maximus till he died in 337 C.E. So the people of Christendom today should not think that they are

5. (a) Jerusalem's destruction marked what day? (b) How did the revelation to John show whether that was the final fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, and out of what must people now be called?

6. Why should the people of Christendom today not think they are enjoying Christian freedom, and do they need to heed the call?

enjoying Christian freedom, "the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Rom. 8:21) They are in bondage to their religious clergymen and to their ecclesiastical religious systems. They are in slavery to Babylon the Great with her confusion of sectarian religions, a thousand or more of these claiming to be Christian. So the call from heaven to get out of Babylon the Great includes getting out of Christendom.

THE MODERN FLIGHT FROM BABYLON THE GREAT

⁷ In the spring of 1919, just some months after the close of World War I, a comparatively small group of dedicated Christians made a courageous move to get out of Babylon the Great. In the year 1931 they became known internationally as Jehovah's witnesses. During World War I they had come into a captivity to Babylon the Great and her political lovers, especially so in Christendom.

⁸ The last book of the Bible, in Revelation 11:2-12, tells us of God's anointed witnesses, his two symbolic olive trees. It says that they would be killed by the beastly system of world politics; but after a short period of time, like three and a half days, God's spirit of life would enter into these anointed witnesses and they would come to life and would be elevated heaven-high in God's service on earth. This reviving of God's anointed witnesses occurred in the spring of 1919. It was then that these anointed witnesses themselves responded to the heavenly call to get out of Babylon the Great. With God's help, by means of his reigning King Jesus Christ, they got out of Babylon the Great. With God's assistance they are determined to stay out and stay free from her till she is no more.—Zech. 4:11-14; 2:7.

7. In 1919, who made a move to get out of Babylon the Great, and for what reason?

8. How did Revelation 11:2-12 foretell their moving out of Babylon the Great, and what are they now determined to do?

⁹ Those who got free in 1919 were a small anointed remnant of dedicated, baptized Christians, who are Jews inwardly, spiritual Israelites. But still more were needed to fill up the Biblical number of 144,000 spiritual Israelites who are to stand with the Lamb Jesus Christ on the heavenly Mount Zion and to rule with him from the "heavenly Jerusalem" for the blessing of all nations. (Rev. 7:1-8; 14:1-5; Heb. 12:22) Therefore, more captives in Babylon the Great needed to hear the message of release and make their escape from her and become part of the free spiritual "Israel of God," the Christian Israel. (Gal. 6:16) So the anointed remnant that had been liberated in 1919 realized that they had been anointed with God's holy spirit to "preach a release to the captives," and they went preaching from house to house as well as publicly.

¹⁰ Thousands responded to the good news of release, of liberty, from Babylon the Great, and these dedicated themselves to God and got baptized as Jesus Christ had commanded. Afterward their Christian lives showed that they had been begotten by God the Father to be his spiritual children, joint heirs of the heavenly Jesus Christ.—John 3:3, 5; 2 Cor. 1:12; 1 John 2:20, 27; Rom. 8:16, 17.

¹¹ Do you know fully what this meant? It meant more than that Jehovah God was begetting spiritual children for a heavenly inheritance! It meant also that he was anointing these newly released ones, he was pouring out his spirit upon these dedicated, baptized believers who were of all sorts of flesh. In this way there was a modern fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32, from which the apostle Peter

quoted on the day of Pentecost in 33 C.E., when the holy spirit was poured out upon the congregation of Christ's disciples for the first time.

¹² According to Joel's prophecy, not only was the spirit to be poured out, but there was to be a prophesying by the anointed ones, both male and female, young and old. Well, then, if the spirit had been poured out, did the foretold prophesying occur? Yes, not only publicly but, more than ever before, from house to house. The dedicated believers had been anointed with holy spirit to prophesy and preach. How, then, could they keep from preaching the message of the "conclusion of the system of things," namely, "this good news of the kingdom," in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations before this system of things ends?—Matt. 24:14.

¹³ Have we observed this modern-day fulfillment of the outpouring of God's spirit upon all sorts of flesh in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (2:28, 29)? Since we have, then something more is to be expected. As illustrated in the prophetic pattern of nineteen centuries ago, in the days of Christ's apostles, from Pentecost of 33 C.E. to the summer of 70 C.E., the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 meant more than the pouring out of God's spirit upon all sorts of flesh. It also meant that Jehovah would "give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun itself will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah. And it must occur that everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will get away safe; for in Mount Zion

9. Why was there a need for the anointed remnant to preach a release to the captives from and after 1919, and did they do so?

10. What response was there to this preaching of a release, and what did this produce?

11. What did this action by God regarding these released ones mean, and what prophecy was thus having a modern fulfillment?

12. What activity was predicted to follow the outpouring of spirit on all sorts of flesh, and did it follow?

13. (a) In fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32, what more is to be expected than outpouring of spirit and prophesying? (b) According to what we have already observed since 1919, for what are we now due?

and in Jerusalem there will prove to be the escaped ones, just as Jehovah has said, and in among the survivors, whom Jehovah is calling." Since in these modern times we have convincingly observed the outpouring of God's spirit upon dedicated, baptized Christians, we are due for the coming of the "great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah." Where will the place of survival be found?

¹⁴ As illustrated nineteen centuries ago, in apostolic times, the place of the survivors was not in the earthly Mount Zion and in earthly Jerusalem occupied by the unbelieving Jews. It was in the heavenly Mount Zion and in the "heavenly Jerusalem."

¹⁵ Let us, then, not miss the sobering significance of things that have happened within the past fifty years. We have had a gathering of the chosen, called, anointed ones since 1919 into a unified organization throughout the earth. This gathering work under angelic direction continued on into the transition years of 1931-1935. Those who were added to the released remnant after 1919 were also anointed with God's poured-out spirit to prophesy. According to the historic pattern of our first century, this outpouring of spirit is a close forerunner of the "great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah" with its portents in the heavens and blood, fire and columns of smoke on the earth. That is the day of Jehovah God for executing his vengeance upon all who have not called upon His name and who have not escaped from the worldly system of bondage to the side of God's kingdom, which reigns since 1914 in the "heavenly Jerusalem" on the heavenly Mount Zion.

¹⁶ According to Isaiah's prophecy (61:1,

14. Where will the place of survival be found?
15. In connection with what gathering has there been an outpouring of spirit since 1919, and of what event should this be the forerunner?
16. (a) In what "year" are we still living, and why does it now behoove us to continue preaching a release? (b) Who is taking the lead in this work today?

2) we are still living in the "year of good will on the part of Jehovah," but this symbolic "year" is bound to reach its end, giving way to the "day of vengeance on the part of our God." Before the "year" of divine goodwill runs out it behooves us to intensify our preaching of a release to people still captive, because "the day of vengeance on the part of our God" is now much nearer, yes, nearer than when there was an outpouring of God's spirit from 1919 forward. Some thousands of the anointed remnant are still with us; and they are carrying out the purpose of their anointing. How? By taking the lead in the work that God has assigned, "to proclaim liberty to those taken captive and the wide opening of the eyes even to the prisoners" in Babylon the Great.

¹⁷ For Babylon of ancient times there was also a "day of Jehovah," and it was "cruel both with fury and with burning anger." (Isa. 13:1, 9) Likewise, for modern Babylon the Great there is a "day of vengeance," yes, "the great day of God the Almighty." There is now every good reason for getting out of Babylon the Great, for listen to what the apostle John heard the voice from heaven say:

¹⁸ "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues. For her sins have massed together clear up to heaven, and God has called her acts of injustice to mind. . . . That is why in one day her plagues will come, death and mourning and famine, and she will be completely burned with fire, because Jehovah God, who judged her, is strong."—Rev. 18:4-8.

¹⁹ Take note! Destruction is coming up—

17, 18. (a) Why is there now every good reason for getting out of Babylon the Great? (b) What did John hear the voice from heaven say?

19. (a) Why does that make it urgent for the anointed remnant to keep preaching a release to captives, and especially to what kind of captives now? (b) On what occasion back in 1923 was attention turned to such captives?

on Babylon the Great as "in one day." This makes it very urgent that the anointed remnant preach without ceasing a "release to the captives." For some decades now the anointed remnant has had in mind religious "captives" who are not of this anointed remnant with its heavenly hope. This fact is shown by an event of the year 1923. On August 18-26 an assembly of many thousands of dedicated, baptized Bible students was held in Los Angeles, California, U.S.A. On Saturday afternoon, August 25, the then president of the Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society spoke to thousands of the anointed remnant on Jesus' parable of the "Sheep and Goats." He explained the "sheep" to be those who do kind favors to the anointed remnant of Christ's spiritual brothers. As a reward, members of this "sheep" class were to be preserved alive through the coming battle of Armageddon and ushered into God's new order of things afterward. At the close of this talk the speaker read and moved the adoption of a Resolution, and, except for some strangers, this was unanimously adopted by a standing vote. In the last three paragraphs of this it was said:

²⁰ "... the line of demarcation between the two classes of Christendom is closely drawn, and that the time has come for the separation of those who prefer evil from those who love righteousness and desire the Lord's kingdom. We, therefore, in the spirit of love sound the warning to all such peace and order loving and God-fearing ones who are associated with the denominational churches, and point them to the fact that they can have no part in nor fellowship with that class of pretending Christians who repudiate the Word of God and deny the Lord Jesus Christ and his kingdom; and we call upon them to heed

20, 21. (a) This Resolution was directed to such kind of captives where, and what call was applied to them? (b) An appeal was made to them to do what?

the Word of God and separate themselves from the unclean thing (2 Corinthians 6: 17), to withdraw themselves from the unrighteous ecclesiastical systems designated by the Lord as 'Babylon', and to 'come out of her, lest they be partakers of her sins and receive of her plagues' (Revelation 18:4); and

²¹ "We appeal to all such to recognize Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, and that his kingdom now at hand is the hope and salvation of the peoples; and that they individually and collectively declare themselves on the side of the Lord and in sympathy with his cause, and be ready to receive the blessings of God's kingdom which he has prepared for them from the foundation of the world."—*The Watch Tower*, as of November 1, 1923, page 327.

²² This call to come out of Babylon the Great, particularly that part of it called Christendom, was again powerfully sounded forth Sunday, July 24, 1927, before a public audience of 15,000 or more at Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and a countless invisible audience brought together by the then "world's greatest hookup," a network of 53 radio stations, in the speech entitled "Freedom for the Peoples." This stirring appeal as delivered by the then president of the Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society was later published in the October 15, 1927, issue of *The Watch Tower* (see page 313, paragraph 56) and also circulated in millions of copies of the booklet bearing the title "Freedom for the Peoples."

²³ Getting out of Babylon the Great and escaping to the place of safety is not done by merely withdrawing from the religious systems of Christendom or by stopping at-

22. How was this call to come out of Babylon the Great sounded forth from Toronto in 1927?

23. What shows whether merely getting out of Christendom's religious systems will save persons on the day of God's vengeance?

tendance at a denominational church. Millions of people of Christendom have done that much, especially in lands where there is a State Church, or a union of Church and State with one particular church denomination being established as the Church of the nation. Although they withdrew and stopped supporting the State Church financially, they still are kept in bondage to the political paramours of Babylon the Great. Although they may see Babylon the Great destroyed in the "day of vengeance on the part of our God," they will soon afterward be destroyed like symbolic "goats" with the political lovers of Babylon the Great. Those political paramours have been the tools of the religious Babylon the Great, and with her they have set themselves in opposition to God's Messianic kingdom.

²⁴ In view of that fact the official magazine of Jehovah's witnesses, *The Watchtower*, under date of August 15, 1934, pages 249, 250, said that for a person to become one of the "sheep" class he must make a full, unconditional dedication of himself to Jehovah God and be baptized in water, just the same as Jesus himself did. The following year it was further disclosed that these "sheep" would be from "all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" and that they would form "a great multitude," "a great crowd," by the time of destruction of Babylon the Great. (Rev. 7:9, 10, AV; NW) Consequently, the members of that "great crowd" must come not only out of Christendom but also out of heathendom. How appropriate it was, then, that a book was published in 1963 en-



titled "Babylon the Great Has Fallen! God's Kingdom Rules!" and that this book should identify Babylon the Great as being larger than the organized religion of Christendom, namely, the *world* empire of false Babylonish religion, including Christendom.

OUTPOURING OF SPIRIT OVER, NEXT THE GREAT DAY!

²⁵ For whom, then, is the preaching of a release? It is for the captives of *all* the religious systems that make up Babylon the Great. All these need to be released from Babylon the Great now, if they desire to escape destruction with her or destruction with her political paramours in the "war of the great day of God the Almighty," at Armageddon. (Rev. 16:14-16) We must warn them of the eternal destruction that is speeding toward them. This generation of mankind has witnessed the pouring out of God's spirit upon all sorts of flesh in order to accomplish the great preaching work concerning God's Messianic kingdom.

Now, shortly, must come the fulfillment of the rest of Joel's prophecy (2:28-32), and that is the "great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah" for the destruction of all those who do not call upon the name of Jehovah through Jesus Christ and who do not seek refuge with Jehovah's anointed remnant under protection of the "heavenly Jerusalem." So the preaching of a release to the captives dare not stop now. This work of liberation, of salvation, must go on to the finish!

²⁶ Babylon the Great and her political

24. (a) To become a "sheep" in contrast with the "goats," what must a person do, and how many of such "sheep" will there be by the time of destruction of Babylon the Great? (b) In view of what Babylon the Great is, from what religious areas must these "sheep" come?

25. (a) For what captives is the preaching of a release, and why must this work of liberation go on to the finish? (b) Since we have seen the outpouring of the spirit, what must come next in fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32?

26. How will slavery under Babylon the Great and her political paramours end, and why, according to God's will, must such slavery go?

consorts and patrons keep on committing religious filthiness together, and they hold the people in a slavery that will end up soon in destruction on the "day of vengeance on the part of our God." Such slavery must go! God is not interested in having a slave camp kept in operation here on earth by Babylon the Great and her political paramours. Yes, Satan the Devil is interested in such a slave camp, but not Jehovah God. He does not believe in an eternal slavery and indebtedness for all mankind. He is the God of freedom, of liberty! He believes in the freedom of those who are his children.

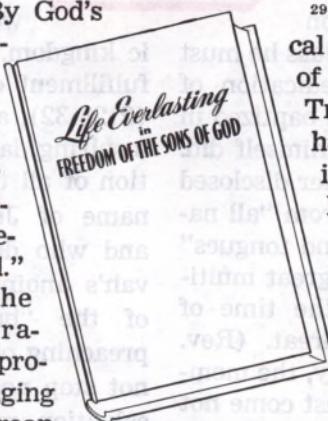
²⁷ At creation it was not God's will that mankind should become enslaved to Satan the Devil, to sin and to death. Such enslavement he permitted to occur while allowing his earthly children to use their free moral agency, of their own accord to love God obediently or to reject him. But immediately he announced his unchangeable purpose to bring a liberation for the unfortunate victims of the transgression that Adam and Eve, our first human parents, committed. By God's published and recorded statement of purpose he aroused in the hearts of human creatures the "hope that the creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Rom. 8:20, 21) Babylon the Great and her political paramours will not block this program of Jehovah God for bringing this precious freedom to the groaning human creation. The earth must

27. (a) How was it that God let this enslavement of mankind occur, but what statement of purpose did he at once make? (b) What hope did such statement arouse in human hearts, and so of whom must this earth now be purged?

be purged of these obstructors of God-given freedom. Liberty lovers must be helped now to escape from destruction with those obstructors.

²⁸ What, then, will the anointed remnant and those sheeplike persons who have already been released by Jehovah God and his Son Jesus Christ do? They will continue to go to people of all the nations and of all religions and "preach a release to the captives" while there is still opportunity to gain the release and enjoy the freedom for which Christ has made us free. This release will lead to God's protection and preservation when Babylon the Great and the political paramours who sin with her go down in ruin, after which slavery to them is no more. Such a taking of our stand for true Christian freedom will be a step toward our having a part in the realization of God's magnificent purpose to banish sin, death and Devil and have all the earth transformed into a paradise of freedom for perfected human sons of God forever.

²⁹ To give aid today in this critical time to such prospective sons of God the Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society of Pennsylvania has now published a new book in English, entitled "Life Everlasting—in Freedom of the Sons of God." We can heartily recommend that you read it, study it with the Holy Bible, and so safeguard your priceless freedom that is the gift of God through Christ.



28. (a) What will the remnant and the released sheeplike people now do? (b) To what will this release and this step for Christian freedom lead?

29. What has now been published as an aid to such prospective sons of God, and what is recommended regarding it?



The DOOM of False Religion

WOULD you be happy if you knew that in a very short while there would be no false religion practiced upon the earth? Think of the unity and peace this would bring about! Today the various religions of the world are trying to unite; they are trying to find some common basis on which there can be unity, but have found none. If you are a student of history you well know that a great part of the bloodshed on the earth has been because of religion. Take, for example, the Crusades and the Thirty Years' War. Consider also the suffering and torture of countless numbers of people, for instance, in the time of the Inquisition. These wars were not because of the true religion of God. Jesus stated the principle by which we can be sure of this: "By their fruits you will recognize them." The works and results were not the peaceful fruitage of the spirit. The mere claim does not make one a follower of Christ, as he declared: "Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will."—Matt. 7:16, 21; Gal. 5:22, 23.

When the flood survivors, Noah and his wife and his three sons and their wives, eight in all, stepped out of the ark, they were united in one religion, the true worship of Jehovah God. (Gen. 8:20, 21) They knew that Jehovah was the true God and the all-powerful One and also that he was the Preserver of their lives through the flood. False religion set in and got another hold more than a hundred years later with the building of the Tower of Babel, and the

result of it was confusion of the people. (Gen. 11:4-9) So false religion has ever since that time caused confusion and strife and has turned people away from the principles of the true God and has caused the moral breakdown and the decline the world has suffered since that time. Noah and his faithful son Shem continued to observe the true religion of the worship of Jehovah. They stayed aloof from Babylon's influence. But false religion spread over the earth and has assumed various forms and, at the present time, has brought about such confusion that unity among its various divisions is impossible.

But what about its doom? Well, in the sixteenth chapter of Revelation, God expresses what he will do in this time of the end when he manifests his anger at the various things that are causing the ills of this world. Among them is false religion. In the twelfth verse he gives the apostle John a vision of the sixth of the seven angels pouring out the bowls of God's anger, the plagues. John says: "And the sixth [angel] poured out his bowl upon the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, that the way might be prepared for the kings from the rising of the sun."

EUPHRATES DRIED UP

The mention of the river Euphrates is significant. It was a very important river in ancient times and figured prominently in history. Its drying up has reference to one great event that history records, namely, the fall of Babylon to the Persian Cyrus the Great. So, while the name Babylon is not here mentioned, Babylon is no

doubt meant. Babylon was the chief city located on the Euphrates River in ancient times. It was against God from its very beginning when built by Nimrod, a "mighty hunter in opposition to Jehovah." (Gen. 10:9, 10) It was by means of practically drying up the riverbed that Babylon's fall was accomplished.

The Bible mentions the Euphrates as where captives were located, for, as described in Revelation 9:13-15, the sixth trumpet was blown by an angel who was given the following command: "Untie the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates." Babylon had taken God's people into captivity in 607 B.C.E. and intended to keep them captives forever. It seemed that she would actually do so, for the city appeared impregnable, with her tremendous walls and great military force. It was in 539 B.C.E. when Cyrus the Persian, by practically drying up the riverbed, entered the city, conquered it, and released the Jewish exiles in the second year thereafter.

The pouring out of the sixth bowl of God's anger discloses prophetically the destruction of Babylon the Great. As pointed out in previous issues of this magazine, Babylon the Great represents the world empire of false religion, pictured in Revelation, chapter 17, as an unclean woman and as a great city that has a kingdom over the kings of the earth. (Rev. 17:3-6, 18) Babylon the Great has held many people in captivity by her false doctrines and practices. She has even used the kingdoms of this world to force converts to her false form of religion. The pouring out of the sixth plague does not refer to the release of these captives from Babylon, for the drying up of the Euphrates River, not any revolt of the Jewish captives, was the thing that caused the fall of ancient Babylon. Her captives had no share in her fall, neither were they released at that

time, but later, in 537 B.C.E., by Cyrus' decree.

GREAT BABYLON'S FINAL FALL

Babylon the Great suffered a fall in the year 1919 C.E., as proclaimed by an angel in Revelation 14:8. In this fall her hold on her captives was loosened, but she remained to fight against true worship. Babylon the Great's overthrow by the "kings from the rising of the sun," in Revelation 16:12, is something else, just as Babylon's destruction and desolation came years after her fall to Cyrus. Cyrus the Persian and his associate conqueror, kings from eastward of Babylon, pictured Jesus Christ and his Father, Jehovah God. While it was Cyrus of old who caused the diverting of the waters of the Euphrates in order to capture Babylon, it was really Jehovah who directed the matter according to the word that he had spoken by his prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah. Today it is Jehovah, together with his enthroned king Jesus Christ, who causes the fall and destruction of Babylon the Great. He is the "One saying to the watery deep, 'Be evaporated; and all your [Babylon's] rivers I shall dry up.'"—Isa. 44:27 to 45:5.

The tendency a person has is to be loyal to the religion in which he was brought up and to look to the elaborate and ornate buildings and to the colorful, glittering religious ceremonies as beautiful and therefore having merit in the eyes of God. But remember that Jehovah told the religious leaders of Jerusalem that they would fall like a *desirable vessel*, a valued vase. (Jer. 25:34; 19:11) And he decreed that Babylon, the *beauty of the Chaldeans*, would go into desolation. (Isa. 13:19) Neither should the antiquity of a religion nor its seeming security and firm position with the elements of this world be looked upon as something in which to put your trust and confidence. This fact also was pictured

by Babylon of old. God's decree brought her down in one night, finally to go into complete decay and desolation. So he has decreed regarding Babylon the Great.

SUPPORT AND DEFENSE GONE

The Euphrates River was depended upon by Babylon for defense. At Revelation 17:1, 15 we are told that Babylon the Great "sits on many waters," which, the angel explains, "mean peoples and crowds and nations and tongues." So, then, the drying up of the waters of the Euphrates would picture the removal of people from the support and defense of Babylon the Great, their turning away from her. It would not picture any turning from Babylon's false religion to the true worship of Jehovah God, for in the case of literal Babylon the drying up of the literal waters of the Euphrates merely resulted in the fall of Babylon. The people who served Jehovah God left her by a direct decree of Cyrus about two years later. So the turning of the waters away from Babylon the Great means that people who formerly supported her will forsake her and will revolt against her, but not in favor of Jehovah.

It is too late for any to turn to Jehovah after Babylon the Great's destruction begins, for although the people may revolt and do much damage to her, it is really Jehovah God and Jesus Christ, the kings from the east, who must destroy Babylon. Those deserting Babylon then would not do so of their own volition. This takes place when God's bowl of anger against all who are in defense of and support of Babylon will be fully felt and it will be his judgment against them. The people forsaking her only because they see her going down may possibly want to turn to Jehovah God just to save their necks. Doubtless many sought refuge in the ark when the floodwaters began to fall, but the

record says that, when Noah with his family entered, *Jehovah* shut the door behind him. (Gen. 7:16) Jehovah wants those who serve him to do so out of love for him and out of devotion to righteousness. They are given an opportunity to hear of the corruption of Babylon the Great and the righteousness of God's government under Christ and they must come out before God strips Babylon naked and exposes her to her crashing doom. Now is the time when the people can hear the warning proclaimed by Jehovah's witnesses: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues." (Rev. 18:4) They can do this by learning of Jehovah God's provision for safety and salvation, by putting themselves under the enthroned King Jesus Christ and by helping others to flee also with the hope of everlasting life in a paradise earth under God's new order of things.

SIXTH PLAGUE ANNOUNCED

The sixth plague is announced mercifully beforehand by Jehovah God so that the people may hear and take heed. Jehovah's witnesses are used as instruments in making this announcement. This announcement has been especially strong since Sunday, July 24, 1927, when an address was directed especially to people who were unwilling captives in bondage to Babylon the Great. The address was the leading feature of the general assembly of the International Bible Students at Toronto, Canada. It was spoken, not only to a visible audience of 15,000, but also to an invisible audience by means of 53 radio stations linked together from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean and including radio station WBBR. After reading a resolution addressed "To the Peoples of Christendom," President Rutherford spoke in favor of the resolution in his widely advertised speech,

"Freedom for the Peoples." When speaking of the hopeless state of Christendom, he said:

... With great pomp and glory that unholy system rides upon the backs of the peoples. Without the support of the common peoples that wicked system called 'Christendom' could not survive. When the peoples withdraw their support therefrom 'organized Christianity,' which is a part of Babylon or the Devil's organization, will fall like a great millstone into the sea.

... But instead of heeding the message from the Word of God the rulers of the world, to wit, those constituting the unholy alliance, walk on in darkness and continue to oppress the peoples. The doom of 'organized Christianity' or Babylon is sealed! . . .

—The Watch Tower, as of October 15, 1927, page 312.

This message was afterward put in booklet form in a number of languages and distributed world wide by the millions of copies. It served as further notice to the world that Babylon the Great was doomed and that this world empire of Babylonish religion was to be destroyed by the "kings from the rising of the sun." Such notification of impending destruction has continued to be served on Babylon the Great in even sharper and clearer terms. It has been like a great plague or blow to those who support and defend her.

THE NEED TO BE ACTIVELY ALERT

Those who have been released from captivity to Babylon the Great must endure to maintain this freedom and God's favor. Jesus Christ goes on, in Revelation, chapter 16, to describe events in connection with the sixth plague, which refers not only to the destruction of Babylon the Great but also to the battle of Armageddon that follows. He interjects a warning at verse 15: "Look! I am coming as a thief. Happy is the one that stays awake and keeps his outer garments, that he may not walk naked and people look upon his shamefulness."

To whom is he speaking? He is addressing the spirit-begotten Christians who are taking part in the proclaiming of the plagues, the same ones that he speaks to in the first three chapters of Revelation as the seven congregations in Asia. There he repeatedly warns these congregations that he is coming suddenly to them for an inspection work, followed by due rewards or recompense. (Rev. 2:5, 16; 3:11) They are commanded to watch carefully that they do not fall away to the condemned Babylonish religion. They are heirs with Jesus of the heavenly kingdom, serving Jehovah God in his spiritual temple as his spiritual priesthood, a royal priesthood, clothed in Christ's righteousness. As it was in the temple in Jerusalem during Jesus' days on earth, if they go to sleep at their posts of duty and the temple inspector comes and finds them not watching over the safety and interests of the temple, they will be beaten and stripped of their priestly garments and be discharged. They will be put out of the temple as unfit workmen. This will be shameful for them and persons who look to them for priestly services will see them, as it were, in their nakedness, without the covering of Christ's righteousness, as being no imitators of him.—1 Pet. 2:5-9; Ex. 20:25, 26.

Consequently, the temple priest who stays awake and keeps actively on the watch and who is found in this state when Jehovah's High Priest arrives like a thief for inspection work will be happy for his faithfulness and reliability. He will retain his priestly garments and functions and not be stripped of them. He will have glory rather than suffer shame here with Babylon the Great.

HOW TO FIND REFUGE FROM THE PLAGUE

How can those who have not yet fled from worldly religion to serve in proclaim-

ing God's kingdom do so before it is too late? They must associate closely with these spirit-begotten Christians, God's "royal priesthood," to learn from them. These remaining ones of Christ's spiritual brothers compose the "faithful and discreet slave" to whom Christ has committed all the Kingdom interests on earth. (Matt. 24:45-47) They are in charge of teaching the people and shepherding those who want to serve the Great Shepherd, Jehovah God, and his Fine Shepherd Jesus Christ.

Those being taught by the "faithful and discreet slave" are like the Nethinim, who were non-Israelites serving in the temple of Jehovah in the days of David and Solomon and who worked closely with the priests of Israel, keeping themselves religiously clean for temple service. Revelation 7:9 describes them as a "great crowd" out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues. God, on the throne, and the Lamb look favorably upon them. They have white robes, which they have washed in the blood of the Lamb, and they serve continually in God's temple. (Rev. 7:9-17) In order to enjoy this favor with God this "great crowd," now numbering nearly one million, share in announcing the warning message of false religion's doom.

The "great crowd" have learned how

Christ gave his human life as a sacrifice for mankind. They have found that the kingdom of God is a heavenly kingdom and will rule this earth forever, bringing peace and righteousness to a paradise earth, blessing people with everlasting life. They know that they will see many loved ones and friends come back to earth by a resurrection. Furthermore, through a study of the Bible they see that the Kingdom has already taken power in the heavens and moves swiftly toward the destruction of Babylon the Great. If you do not know these vital truths, you need to hear what Jehovah's witnesses have to say, study, and then take a position in harmony with God's pure Word of truth. When you do this you will be happy to learn of the fulfillment of the sixth plague, which points to the complete desolation of Babylon the Great and the resultant freedom and happiness that it means to all who serve Jehovah God.

But the mere destruction of Babylon the Great will not bring complete righteousness to the earth. The sixth plague covers also the battle of Armageddon, which will be considered in the next issue of this magazine.

For a discussion of all seven plagues of Revelation, chapter 16, see the book "*Babylon the Great Has Fallen!*" *God's Kingdom Rules!* by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, New York.

'I Have My Religion'

- One of Jehovah's witnesses in Jaboticabal, Brazil, had the pleasure of meeting a lady who showed a great deal of interest in his doorstep sermon. However, as the minister finished his Bible message, the woman said: "Fine! I enjoyed your explanation, but I am not interested because I already have my religion, although I do not know the name of it. But I do know it is the truth. I learned it by means of some books I have here in my home." The Witness asked her to show him the publications. To his surprise and pleasure, the books were "*Let God Be True*" and *What Has Religion Done for Mankind?* The minister showed the woman that the books were published by Jehovah's witnesses. He also arranged for a regular Bible study to be conducted in her home. Within a short time she asked for two studies a week instead of one. Progressing in knowledge, she is already taking part in telling the good news of the Kingdom to others, using the publications that helped her to learn of God's truth.

Are You Ready to Get **BAPTIZED** ?



EVERYONE who has read the Gospel accounts in the Bible knows that the Lord Jesus got baptized and that he commissioned his disciples to baptize others. Baptism in symbol of one's dedication to God is a basic teaching of Christianity. (Heb. 6:1, 2) Have you been baptized?

Among the readers of *The Watchtower*, there are upward of fifty thousand persons each year who get baptized in imitation of Jesus and in obedience to his instructions. If you are a person who is contemplating that step, you will be interested in what was said on this matter at the "God's Sons of Liberty" District Assemblies of Jehovah's Witnesses held this past summer. There the question was posed: "How much should a person have studied, yes, to what extent should he know God's Word before he gets baptized?"

The speaker had already pointed out that, for one to share publicly in the preaching work done by Jehovah's witnesses, he ought to believe that the Bi-

ble is God's inspired Word. He should know and believe at least the basic teachings of the Scriptures. His own life must harmonize with the Bible's high standard in connection with honesty, sexual morality, and moderation in any use of intoxicating drinks. He should not be a person who is attending and sharing in the activities of any false religious organization, and he should not be involved in the political affairs of the world. Rather, he should be attending meetings of the Christian congregation of Jehovah's witnesses. These requirements also apply to one who is contemplating water immersion.

In addition, the speaker said this in answer to the question on baptism: "Jesus' instructions, recorded at Matthew 28:19, 20, read: '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.' Now, what did he say that these people were to become before they were baptized? Disciples.

"That means that they should be persons who learn; and it includes even more than that. Notice in John 8:31 that Jesus says: 'If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples.' To remain in his word, they would have to know that word, wouldn't they? It is good to realize that when a person gets baptized he accepts certain responsibilities. Obviously, he is not ready to get baptized if he does not know what those responsibilities are, is he? Jesus shows that those who know and live in harmony with his word are his disciples, and it is those who are disciples who are to be baptized.

"Realizing this, the Watch Tower Society believes that it would be a fine thing for anyone who wants to get baptized to read or study both the book '*Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie*' and the book *Life Everlasting—in Freedom of the Sons of*

God (or, if this latter book is not yet available in your language, then carefully read the booklet *Living in Hope of a Righteous New World*) before presenting himself for water immersion. This is not an inflexible rule, but it is something that we strongly recommend so that those who get baptized will fully appreciate what they are doing."

GROWTH IN LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE

Some may feel that this will hold back new ones who want to be baptized, and the speaker at the assembly was asked if that might not be the effect. He replied:

"Not at all. Really, as you study with them week by week you are encouraging them to progress. You are equipping them to be better praisers of Jehovah.

"It is true that if a person were to cover everything in those publications in a regular home Bible study before getting baptized, it might take quite a few months. But as you study with him week by week you are endeavoring to stimulate in him a love for the truth and a desire to grow in knowledge of it. Your desire for him is like that expressed by the apostle Paul in Philippians 1:9, namely, that his 'love may abound yet more and more with accurate knowledge and full discernment.' Once the person's heart begins to respond, he is going to show some initiative in the matter. Why, if a person is really hungering and thirsting for the truth, in many cases he could read those two publications and look up the scriptures in not too many days. And, on the other hand, if an individual really does not have a strong love for the truth, one that moves him to do something about it, he is not ready for baptism anyway, is he?"

In the event that someone who has not read those publications should express the desire to be baptized, it was suggested that this be done:

"You might read together the scriptures that we have considered, emphasizing the need to know the teachings of the Bible. Then ask him some questions to highlight that need. Ask him what the Bible says about marriage, neutrality, blood, and so forth. Show him the importance of knowing these things. Explain to him that they are discussed in the book *Life Everlasting—in Freedom of the Sons of God* and encourage him to read it. Then take time from your regular study of the '*Impossible to Lie*' book to quiz him on what he has read to be sure that he understands it. Certainly one who has this knowledge before he is baptized will be in a better position to live up to his dedication to Jehovah. Remember that you should urge all persons to read the books through as soon as they can."

SCRIPTURAL VIEWPOINT

Encouraging individuals to have a clear appreciation of what is involved in being a Christian before they get baptized is consistent with what the Bible tells us about those persons who were immersed by the early Christians. This was emphasized when the convention speaker was asked: "What would you say if someone referred to the three thousand who were baptized at Pentecost, on the very day that Peter preached to them, or the Ethiopian eunuch, who was baptized by Philip after having just one Bible discussion with him?"

In answer he said: "It is important to keep in mind who these people were. They were not persons who had heard only a few verses from the Bible in their entire lives, as is true of so many today. Many were Jews and proselytes who knew the Scriptures. The inspired writings of Moses and the Prophets were read aloud every sabbath day in the synagogues. (Acts 15:21) They believed them. Now,

when they heard about Jesus Christ, they expressed faith in the fact that he was the one of whom the prophets had spoken and that only through him could they gain salvation. So at Pentecost, after giving these people a thorough witness about Jesus, Peter urged those who believed to be baptized. And Acts 2:41 says: 'Those who embraced his word heartily were baptized.' They showed that they were different from the other Jews who, though they knew the Scriptures, put human traditions first; God's Word found a response in their hearts.

"The same was true of the Ethiopian eunuch to whom Philip witnessed. He was acquainted with God's Word. He had just been to Jerusalem to worship, and when Philip approached him he was busy studying the Scriptures. He believed in Jehovah God; he recognized how the holy spirit had operated to accomplish God's will, and now, when Philip 'declared to him the good news about Jesus,' he accepted it and, in imitation of Jesus, he got baptized.
—Acts 8:35.

"But today people in general do not have that background of Bible knowledge. They are not in a position to take on the responsibilities of a dedicated servant of God until they learn what his requirements are. And it will greatly assist them to gain that knowledge if they read the books '*Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie*' and *Life Everlasting—in Freedom of the Sons of God*."

If you are studying the Bible with one of Jehovah's witnesses, we encourage you to hasten your progress to Christian maturity by taking the initiative to read these publications with your Bible. Get a solid foundation of Bible knowledge, a clear picture of what is required of a Christian, and then do not hesitate to act in harmony with what you learn. But do not delay! Time is running out for this wicked world, and only those who are dedicated and baptized Christians who are living up to their Christian responsibilities have their feet firmly planted on the way to life.—1 Pet. 3:21.



- At what age is it proper for a boy or a girl to start going out on "dates" with one of the opposite sex?—M. Q., U.S.A.

With all the emphasis that is placed on this in the modern world, it is only natural that young folks are concerned about it. But it is not wise to let it become the matter of chief concern. Turn in your Bible to Ecclesiastes 12:1, and notice where it says youths should focus their interest. It reads: "Remember, now, your grand Creator in the days of your young

manhood, before the calamitous days proceed to come, or the years have arrived when you will say: 'I have no delight in them.'" Then see what verse 13 says: "The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man." Yes, this is the whole purpose of living; everything else we do in life produces good results only if it is kept in its proper relation to our service to God.

When you are single you are free to move about and take up assignments in the service of God that married persons often cannot. There are marvelous blessings for those who take up the full-time ministry as Jehovah's witnesses. You might serve at one of the Watch Tower Society's Bethel homes or as a special pioneer or in the missionary work, possibly

as a circuit servant, visiting and serving congregations. The years remaining before the end of this system of things are very few; the privileges now open will never be repeated; this is the time to take advantage of them.

In time, most young folks do get married, but why get yourselves so emotionally involved that you feel impelled to marry almost as soon as you complete your schooling, or perhaps even before that? Why not get a taste of life first and lay hold of the service opportunities that are open to you? Once you have set your course in life, you can intelligently plan other things around it. You will be much happier if you do. Then, when the time comes that you want to take on the responsibilities that go with marriage, you will be better equipped to handle them in a right way.

As to seeking close association with a person of the opposite sex, it is well to realize that this is not simply a form of recreation. The end to which it naturally leads is marriage. In some lands a young man and his bride-to-be never even visit together before their wedding; it is all arranged by their parents. In other places parents always chaperone their daughter until she is married, and it is not wise to offend the public sense of decency by ignoring that custom. However, in certain places a large number of parents do let their minor children keep company with one of the opposite sex unattended under certain circumstances. It is not up to the young persons to decide at what age this is to be permitted or if a chaperone will be required. That is the God-given responsibility of the father; and, if there is no living father in the home, the responsibility rests with the mother. Children who are seeking to do what is pleasing to the Lord will not try to take these matters into their own hands or pressure their parents to get their own way, but will wisely apply the counsel recorded at Colossians 3:20, namely: "You children, be obedient to your parents in everything, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord."

As for the parents, they must shoulder the responsibility and then be willing to face up to the consequences of their decisions. It is not for the Watch Tower Society to make rules for them to follow. But it is a loving and considerate parent who firmly protects his child against emotional involvement until his offspring reaches an age when he is in position to follow through by getting married.

It is not a kindness for parents to close their

eyes to what is going on when their teen-age children begin to lavish affection on someone of the opposite sex, because this awakens desires in their bodies that cry out for satisfaction, and all too often they ruin their lives by getting involved in fornication. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10, 18) Nor does it show love on the part of Christian parents to allow their minor child to go out on "dates" and keep regular company alone with an unbeliever of the opposite sex, calling it recreation. It is heading their offspring into a life filled with heartache and grief and, in many cases, it will mean that they forsake the worship of Jehovah and lose out on life in the new system of things.—Deut. 7:3, 4; Neh. 13:26, 27.

There are no two ways about it: Keeping close company with a person of the opposite sex is not a game; it is not recreation; it is a definite step toward assuming lifelong responsibilities.

- In the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, Habakkuk 1:12 reads in part: "O my God, my Holy One, you do not die." However, other translations say "we shall not die." (AS, AV) What accounts for this difference? —S. C., U.S.A.

In copying Biblical manuscripts, early Jewish scribes, or *sopherim*, endeavored to be scrupulously accurate. But later these copyists took certain liberties. For instance, they made eighteen emendations in the Hebrew text of the Scriptures. Such changes were assumed corrections. However, the Masoretes, scribal successors of the *sopherim*, noted these alterations, making a record of them in the margin of the Hebrew text. These notes are known as the Masorah. One of the Eighteen Emendations of the Sopherim, or *tigqunei sopherim*, is to be found in Habakkuk 1:12.

Some translations, such as the *King James Version*, render Habakkuk 1:12 in accord with the Masoretic Hebrew text as changed by the *sopherim*. Thus, they read, "we shall not die." But the New World Bible Translation Committee conscientiously restored the original reading, which states in address to Jehovah, "you do not die." This rendition is also consistent with the rest of the verse.

According to the *King James Version*, Habakkuk 1:12 reads: "Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou

hast established them for correction." Repeated reference is made to God, but with this fact the words "we shall not die," a reference to the people, seem inconsistent. The rendering in the *New World Translation* poses no such problem, however. It presents a parallelism in phrases, reading: "Are you not from long ago, O Jehovah? O my God, my Holy One, *you do not die*. O Jehovah, for a judgment you have set it; and, O Rock, for a reprobating you have founded it."

Other translations of recent times agree with the *New World Translation* at Habakkuk 1:12. For instance, *An American Translation* says: "Art not thou from of old, O LORD, my holy God? Thou diest not!" *The Emphasised Bible*, by J. B. Rotherham, reads there: "Art not thou from of old, O Yahweh my God, my Holy One? Thou diest not!"

Scholar C. D. Ginsburg made the following significant comments regarding Habakkuk 1:12: "All the ancient records emphatically state that this exhibits the corrected text by the Sopherim and that the original reading was: 'Art thou not from everlasting? O Lord my God, mine Holy One, thou diest not.' The

parallelism plainly shows that this is the correct reading. The address in both clauses is to the Lord who is described in the first clause as being from everlasting and in the second clause as never dying or enduring for ever. The introduction, therefore, of a new subject in the plural with the predicate 'we shall not die' thus ascribing immortality to the people is contrary to the scope of the passage . . . The reason for the alteration is not far to seek. It was considered offensive to predicate of the Lord 'thou diest not.' Hence 'we shall not die' was substituted."—*Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible*, 1897, p. 358.

The Jewish *sopherim* evidently made their emendation in Habakkuk 1:12 because they thought it blasphemous to associate the idea of mortality with God in any way. However, it is by no means irreverent to say in addressing Jehovah God: "You do not die." In fact, these words strike a Scriptural blow at the modern-day attitude that God is dead and they harmonize with Moses' inspired psalm wherein it is said to Jehovah: "Even from time indefinite to time indefinite you are God."—Ps. 90: 1, 2.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



FIELD MINISTRY

True faith is something for which one must put up a hard fight, not with a sword of steel, but with "the sword of the spirit," which is God's Word. The true fighter for Christian faith must exert himself to keep his own life in harmony with Bible principles, and he is obligated to expose falsehood and uphold God's truth. During November, Jehovah's witnesses will continue to share in this organized fight for the faith, pointing out to others what the Bible teaches, and offering to all persons the new Bible-study aid *Life Everlasting*—in *Freedom of the Sons of God*, with a booklet, for 50c.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

December 18: "Preach a Release to the Captives," Page 681. Songs to Be Used: 3-2.

December 25: What the Release Means to the Captives in Our Time. Page 688. Songs to Be Used: 84, 93.