



**"Watchman, What of the Night?
The Morning Cometh, and a Night also!"—Isaiah**

VOL. LII

SEMI-MONTHLY

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*"I will stand upon my watch and will set my foot
upon the Tower, and will watch to see what He will
say unto me, and what answer I shall make to them
that oppose me."—Habakkuk 2: 1.*

Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. . . . When these things begin to come to pass, then know that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.—Luke 21: 25-31; Matthew 24: 33; Mark 13: 29.

THIS JOURNAL

ITS SACRED MISSION

THIS journal is published for the purpose of aiding the people to understand Jehovah's purposes. It provides systematic Bible study in which all its readers may regularly engage. It gives announcement of the visits made to Bible classes by traveling speakers, announces conventions, and gives reports thereof. It announces radio programs and publishes suitable Bible instruction for broadcasting.

It adheres strictly to the Bible as God's revealed word of Truth. It stands firmly upon the great ransom sacrifice as the fundamental doctrine by which all doctrines are measured. It is free from parties, sects and creeds of men. It does not assume a dogmatic attitude, but confidently invites a careful examination of its utterances in the light of the infallible Word of God. It does not indulge in controversies, and its columns are not open to personalities.

TO US THE SCRIPTURES CLEARLY TEACH

THAT JEHOVAH is the only true God, the Maker of heaven and earth, and is from everlasting to everlasting; that the Logos was the beginning of his creation; that the Logos became a man; that he is now the Lord Jesus Christ in glory, clothed with all power in heaven and in earth.

THAT GOD created the earth for man, and created perfect man for the earth and placed him upon it; that man wilfully disobeyed God's law and was sentenced to death; that by reason of Adam's wrongful act all men are born sinners and without the right to life.

THAT JESUS was made a human being in order that he might become the Redeemer of man; that he gave his life a sacrifice for man and thereby produced the ransom price; that Jesus the divine was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and presented the value of his human sacrifice as the redemptive price for man.

THAT FOR MANY CENTURIES God, through Christ, has been selecting from amongst men the members of his church, which constitutes the body of Christ; that the mission of the church is to follow in the footsteps of her Lord Christ Jesus, grow in his likeness, give testimony to the name and purpose of Jehovah God, and ultimately be glorified with Christ Jesus in his heavenly kingdom; that Christ, Head and body, constitutes the "seed of Abraham" through which all families of the earth shall be blessed.

THAT THE WORLD HAS ENDED; that the Lord Jesus has returned and is now present; that Jehovah has placed Christ Jesus upon his throne and now commands all nations and peoples to hear and obey him.

THAT THE GREAT ISSUE before all creation now is the vindication of Jehovah's word and name, and that it is the privilege and duty of every true Christian to give the testimony of Jesus Christ, and to make known that the kingdom of heaven is come. *This gospel of the kingdom must be preached.*

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

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TERMS TO THE LORD'S POOR: All Bible Students who, by reason of old age or other infirmity or adversity, are unable to pay for this journal, will be supplied free if they send a postal card each May stating their case and requesting such provision. We are not only willing, but anxious, that all such be on our list continually and in touch with the Berean studies.

Notice to Subscribers: Acknowledgment of a new or a renewal subscription will be sent only when requested. Change of address, when requested, may be expected to appear on address label within one month. A renewal blank (carrying notice of expiration) will be sent with the journal one month before the subscription expires.

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FROM PACIFIC COAST TO COLUMBUS CONVENTION

The Pacific Coast friends inform us that they are making arrangements to run either special cars or a special train from the Pacific Coast to Columbus. The proposed schedule is as follows:

Lv. Los Angeles	10:00 a.m., July 20, Union Pacific
Ar. Ogden, Utah	1:30 p.m., July 21
Lv. San Francisco	11:20 a.m., July 20, Southern Pacific
Ar. Ogden, Utah	12:30 p.m., July 21
Lv. Ogden, Utah	2:10 p.m., July 21, Union Pacific
Ar. Green River, Wyo.	7:26 p.m., July 21
Lv. Portland, Oreg.	9:40 a.m., July 20, Union Pacific
Ar. Ogden, Utah	3:30 p.m., July 21
Ar. Green River, Wyo.	7:15 p.m., July 21
Lv. Green River, Wyo.	7:45 p.m., July 21, Union Pacific
Ar. Omaha	5:40 p.m., July 22
Lv. Omaha	6:00 p.m., July 22, C. & N. W.
Ar. Chicago	7:20 a.m., July 23
Lv. Chicago	9:30 a.m., July 23, Pennsylvania
Ar. Columbus	5:30 p.m., July 23

Friends from southern California planning to travel on this train will communicate with Edward Stark, 332 El Camino Drive, Beverly Hills, Calif. Those planning to join the train at San Francisco will communicate with C. W. Gerdes, 61 Diamond St., San Francisco, Calif. Those in the vicinity of Portland will communicate with W. H. Bentley, 832 E. 29th St., Portland, Oreg.

FROM THE SOUTHEAST TO COLUMBUS

Notice has been received that the Virginia and North Carolina friends will travel to the Columbus convention over the Norfolk & Western, using train No. 3, called "The Pocahontas". This train will leave Norfolk July 23 at 12.15 p.m., Richmond 12.50 p.m., Petersburg 2.05 p.m., arriving at Columbus 7.25 a.m., July 24. Friends desiring to use this train will communicate with R. A. Gamble, 3701 Granby St., Norfolk, Va., or D. H. Selden, 3109 Floyd Av., Richmond, Va.

FOR THE BLIND

For the benefit of those who are blind the book *Reconciliation* has been published in Braille, at a cost of \$3.00 per volume. To those unable to purchase a copy, the book will be sent on loan. All orders and requests for copies on loan should be addressed to the Society's Branch for the Blind at 1210 Spear St., Logansport, Indiana.

VACATIONS

The vacation for the Bethel family at Brooklyn and for the office force at the Canadian headquarters at Toronto will begin July 24 and end on August 8. During that period of time the office and the Bethel home at these points will be closed, and the members of the office forces and family will be privileged to attend the convention, and afterwards have part in the service as they may see fit.

Classes will please have these dates in mind and send any orders two weeks in advance, so that they can be filled prior to July 24, as no orders to either office will be filled during the time above mentioned.

The WATCH TOWER

AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE

Vol., LII

JULY 1, 1931

No. 13

ESTHER AND MORDECAI

"Ye lovers of Jehovah! hate ye wrong. He preserveth the lives of his men of kindness, from the hand of lawless ones he rescueth them."—Ps. 97: 10, Roth.

PART 4

JEHOVAH is the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. Knowing that his children in the land of the enemy would need comfort he has made provision therefor. One of the provisions Jehovah has made is that those who love him may approach his throne of grace in prayer. He knows the heart motive of each one, and he who honestly is devoted to God and is faithfully serving him may be always sure that God will hear his prayer. 'The ears of the Lord are open to the prayers of the righteous.' (1 Pet. 3: 12; Ps. 65: 2) God caused his faithful prophet to write: "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer." (Isa. 56: 7) Being in the covenant with Jehovah, the people of Israel constituted his typical house, and those who did what they could to be faithful to that covenant prayed to God and their prayers were heard.

² Satan's representatives surrounded the city of Jerusalem with a powerful army and threatened to sack the city. 'When Hezekiah the king heard it he rent his clothes and went into the house of the Lord.' He then sent a messenger to Isaiah the prophet and asked him "to lift up [his] prayer for the remnant that is left". Without a doubt Isaiah did pray to God and received answer to his prayer, otherwise he could not have spoken with such assurance as he did speak. He told the messengers to return to Hezekiah and say to him: "Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid." (Isa. 37: 1-7) The incident there described and what quickly followed foreshadows events just preceding Armageddon and what shall come to pass at Armageddon. This is a comfort to God's remnant.

³ Mordecai learned of the wicked scheme to kill him and all of his people. He saw the situation was desperate and that only God could save them. While the record does not mention the name of Jehovah, Mordecai, being a Jew in the covenant with Jehovah, would take and did take exactly the course pursued by other faithful Jews in such time of distress: "When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; and came even before the king's

gate; for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth."—4: 1, 2.

⁴ Without a doubt the cry of Mordecai was to Jehovah for help. By putting on sackcloth and ashes and by crying out it did not mean that Mordecai regretted that he had been firm in his refusal to bow down to Haman and that he was sorry for having been loyal to God. He knew that in doing so toward Haman he was doing the will of God. Now he saw that his faithfulness to God had afforded an excuse or pretext for his mortal enemy to seek, not only his destruction, but the destruction of all the Jews. Mordecai then cried for help. Faithfulness to God often brings down upon one's head the wrath of the enemy, but no man can be faithful to God and thereafter regret his faithfulness. If he is a faithful servant of God he will continue to trust in God for deliverance. 'Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us, because he who is for us is more than all that can be against us.'

⁵ Every servant who has faith in God shows his faith by what he does. (Jas. 2: 18) Not only do the faithful pray, but they watch and they work. It was even so with Mordecai. The course he took shows his faith in God. He did not lie down and confine himself to weeping, but as he wept he worked and prayed. "There was great mourning among the Jews" in every province. The record, however, does not say that Esther indulged therein. Probably that was due to the fact that she was amongst the last to learn about the decree of murder, and by that time Mordecai had begun to work and Esther saw the necessity of also doing her part.

⁶ Esther saw the subtle hand of Haman in the dastardly conspiracy and she knew that the greatest danger had arisen. This she learned, however, only after she had received a message from Mordecai. "Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it was, and why it was." (4: 5) In response to Esther's inquiry Mordecai sent to her a copy of the decree calling for the destruction of the Jews, and told her of the money Haman had promised to pay

to have this wicked work done. (4:6-9) Mordecai saw the necessity for both himself and Esther to work, and to work harmoniously and quickly, and therefore he instructed the messenger to tell Esther to make ready to go in before the king. "Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people."—4:8.

⁷ Since the coming of the Lord to God's temple, and the enlightening of the remnant class, the joy of the Lord has been and is their strength. (Neh. 8:10) At the same time the remnant is plainly told in God's Word that Satan seeks the destruction of those who are faithful to God at this time. The faithful, therefore, know that they are surrounded by the enemy who conspires to destroy them. Therefore they do not treat with indifference and insolent scorn the threatened assault to murder by the enemy. On the contrary, they view the situation with seriousness and move with great caution, and their prayers are constantly to God for his protection and care, preservation and deliverance. The faithful go forward in the performance of duty, working out their own salvation in fear and with cautious trembling before the Lord. They wish to make no mistakes.—Phil. 2:12.

⁸ Seeing the great danger, Mordecai warned Esther and called upon her to act. Even so today. Some of the remnant see the danger in the pathway of God's people and they give warning to their brethren, all of whom must be instructed what to do in order to maintain their integrity toward God. Mordecai pictures, therefore, the "faithful servant" class obeying the commandments of God to "cry aloud" and "spare not" and give warning of danger, and to point out what must be done to thwart the wicked intent of the enemy, and at the same time how the remnant can maintain their favor with God. (Isa. 58) Through the channel or means he has provided Jehovah points out to the prospective bride class yet on earth the identity of the enemy and his organization and the conspiracy formed and in operation to destroy God's people. For this reason the Lord has used *The Watch Tower*, especially in the past few years, to warn those who are in the covenant with him as to their proper attitude, duty and privileges at this period of time.

⁹ Mark now again the hand of Jehovah, the Most High, in directing the drama. The fact that Esther was a Hebrew woman had been concealed up to this point. That was designedly done, and done under God's direction. The time had now arrived, however, when Esther must declare her relationship to her people throughout the provinces. It must be known that she was a Hebrew woman and therefore of the seed of Jehovah. She must take her stand on the side of her God and declare herself. Thus she foreshadowed what

God's people must do in this day when Armageddon is approaching.

¹⁰ In the past those in present truth have been considered as like other "Christians" so called, merely religionists in the land. The time must come, and has come, when God exhibits his own people before the nations of earth, identifies them as his, and sends them forth with the command: "Ye are my witnesses . . . that I am God." (Isa. 43:9-12) How could this fact be made known unless the faithful have boldness in this day of judgment in declaring the Word and name of Jehovah? In no other way could their love for God be proven.—1 John 4:17, 18.

¹¹ Let others who claim to be followers of Christ refrain from saying anything about the enemy organization if they so desire, and let them pursue the course of least resistance, but let the faithful who will maintain their integrity toward God make it clearly to be known that they are on the Lord's side and that by his grace they will tell the truth as God will now have it told. All the faithful remnant must now be identified as God's people. This, of course, puts each and every one of them in a perilous position, because they are marked by the enemy for slaughter.

¹² Mordecai sent a messenger to Esther and urged her to go before the king and to make supplication or prayerful request for help in behalf of the Jews throughout the land. It might be said by some that Mordecai showed a lack of faith in God by requesting Esther to appear before the king and to ask for help, since the king was a worldly ruler. Not so, however; but, on the contrary, this is proof that God helps his own after they have shown their faithfulness in doing for themselves what they can reasonably do. When Esther received the message of advice from Mordecai she again dispatched a message in reply thereto. "Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment [a message, R.V.] unto Mordecai: All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live; but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days."—4:10, 11.

¹³ Had Esther then attempted to longer keep secret the fact that she was a Hebrew woman, or to have relied upon her position as queen to receive some special favor from the king and be exempted from the decree of murder, such would have been to take a compromising course. She could not maintain her integrity before God and compromise. For her to follow the advice of Mordecai and go before the king was not an act of compromise or showing a lack of faith in God. On the contrary, it required a great deal of faith on her part, because, unless the king was pleased to receive her, it meant her certain death. What Esther was advised to do, and what she did, absolutely and cer-

tainly foreshadows the right and proper course to be taken by the remnant.

¹⁴ We know it would be wrong for the remnant to compromise with earthly rulers, because the faithful must not "go down to Egypt for help" and compromise with the world because of the powerful influence thereof. (Isa. 31:1) The going of Esther in before the king did not foreshadow the remnant appealing to worldly rulers.

¹⁵ At this particular stage of the drama Ahasuerus the king pictured Jehovah God and his Christ. Jehovah is the great King, and Christ Jesus, God's anointed King, who performs his will. Such are the "higher powers", as stated in the Scriptures. Until quite recently God's people understood that this scripture, at Romans 13:1, speaking of "the higher powers", has reference to worldly ruling powers. Those who have withdrawn from the Society still hold this wrongful view. Now, however, the faithful remnant see clearly that this scripture has no reference to any part of Satan's organization but does apply exclusively to God's arrangement in his organization for his own people. Those who refuse to see this truth and who oppose the statement of *The Watch Tower* concerning it have seized upon such as an excuse for offense and have dropped out and have gone into the dark.

¹⁶ The remnant see that their obligation is unto God and his constituted power and that they must give their entire allegiance and obedience to God and his organization. They see that it is necessary for every part of his organization to work in exact harmony and according to Christ, the active Head, and according to Jehovah's will that is being carried out. Therefore the appearing of Esther before the king to make supplication in behalf of her people foreshadowed the appearing of the remnant before God to make prayer and supplication to Jehovah in the name of Christ for guidance, help and deliverance.

¹⁷ For Esther to appear before the king unbidden might result in her death. It was a real test of her faith in God. For a period of thirty days she had not been called before the king, and naturally the question would arise in her mind, Was she still in the king's favor? If not, and she appeared in his presence, she was certain to die.

¹⁸ With the remnant there appear to be times when God and Christ do not seem to manifest any special interest in or favor toward them, and this when the enemy is pressing them hard. Some of the faithful remnant may wonder why God permits the clergy and other instruments of Satan to make such malicious attacks upon them. Even in such dark times the remnant must continue to exercise faith in God and in Christ and to pray for help. Such occasions bring a great test upon God's people, but they must continue to be obedient to "the higher powers", that is to say, to God and to Christ, and do so by continually and faithfully serving, and appearing and supplicating

before the throne for themselves and their brethren. —Eph. 6:12-18.

¹⁹ Probably it had not yet occurred to Esther that the decree of murder would include her, but Mordecai knew that it would include her and there was no possibility for her to escape by being made an exception. "Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews." (4:13) The Devil had laid his trap for all the Jews and he would not overlook Esther because she occupied a place of favor and power with the king. Mordecai and Esther were the ones whom the Devil and Haman especially desired to destroy.

²⁰ Likewise today the Devil and his earthly agents are against all who serve God in any manner; but they are especially making war against the remnant of God because these are in God's favor and with power they proclaim God's message and they have the privilege and duty of delivering this message that was committed to them by the Lord. No one, therefore, who is of the remnant may expect to be made an exception in the execution of Satan's wrath. His purpose is to get every one of them.

²¹ Mordecai saw the urgent necessity of Esther's taking a bold stand for her people, and this, of course, would disclose her own relationship to God and make it known to all that she was a Jewess. To remain inactive in such a crisis would mean Esther's failure to maintain her integrity toward God. Hence Mordecai urged Esther to act. "For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"—4:14.

²² Seeing that Mordecai pictures the remnant from the viewpoint of the "faithful and wise servant", it is also to be seen that God has used some of the "servant" class to point out to others the great necessity of now taking a bold stand on the side of the Lord. Those who would be faithful to God cannot now hold themselves in secret and not disclose themselves about God's organization and their part in it. The time has come when every one of the remnant must clearly be identified as on the Lord's side. There is no compromise. Their declarations must be for God and his Christ and his kingdom; otherwise such could not be of the bride class. The words of Jesus are now appropriate: "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad."—Matt. 12:30.

²³ Now is the time when the remnant must 'hold fast that which they have, that no man take their crown', and in doing so each one must maintain his integrity toward God. He must cast in his lot with God's anointed and be one of them, fully resolved to meet all the dangers that are in the way, give heed to and obey the

commandments of the Lord, do his work as he has commanded, and be faithful unto death. When one is favored with a knowledge of the truth and then becomes negligent of God's commandments, he is walking in the way of wickedness and is in great danger. It is the duty of all those who are faithful to God to then give the warning and cry out and spare not. (Isa. 58:1) God has constituted his "servant" class as his watchmen, and to them he says: "When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." (Ezek. 33:8) Failure to do one's duty is equivalent to being disobedient to God's commandment. If one is unfaithful to God he will raise up another to take the place of that unfaithful one, because God's work will now be done.

²⁴ Mordecai the Jew knew that the hope of his people was in God alone, and he trusted in the divine providence when he said to Esther the queen: "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom [as queen] for such a time as this." Mordecai's words meant this: 'May it not be certain that God has placed you in the very position where you now are that you may be used for his purposes of delivering his people?' It was even so; and Mordecai believed it. Today we know that God's remnant constitute a people taken out from the world for God's name, and that such are in the earth and a part of God's organization for the specific purpose of being witnesses of Jehovah and singing forth the praises of his name. No one of the remnant, therefore, can maintain his integrity to God unless he is faithful in giving the testimony that has been committed to the remnant. He must boldly and clearly identify himself as one of God's witnesses. Otherwise he will not be preserved. He must show that he is a 'lover of God', if he would be preserved.

²⁵ Taking part in the service is not for God's benefit, but it is for the benefit of the remnant, because such activity affords an opportunity to prove faithfulness unto God. The great World War was brought to a sudden end in 1918 'for the sake of God's elect'. Then the commandment was given to his people to carry the message of truth to the peoples of earth before the final and great destruction at Armageddon. (Matt. 24:14-22) The remnant class is therefore not in ignorance of God's purposes concerning them. These have been brought into the position of favor that they now occupy in order that they might be made witnesses to the name of Jehovah and show forth his praises and be used at this day for the very purpose for which God raised them.

²⁶ While Mordecai and Esther picture in general the same class, to wit, God's remnant now on the earth, they were so situated that they could not communicate at all times by word of mouth. Messengers were used to carry their messages to and from each other. Today God's remnant are scattered throughout the world and

cannot at all times communicate with each other by words of mouth. Occasionally they come together, many of them in convention, to comfort and encourage one another. But this is seldom. God has graciously provided, however, a means of communication among the remnant. For years he has used *The Watch Tower* as such means of communication, and its columns are constantly used in an effort to give forth the truth to the remnant. It is not man's truth, but it is God's truth; and therefore the channel or instrument is God's, and not man's. For some time *The Watch Tower* has urged upon the brethren the necessity of diligence in service, and this has brought forth many cruel words uttered by those once favored with the truth and who have turned away from it. *The Watch Tower* is bitterly opposed and criticized by such because it publishes the truth. Let none of these things disturb the faithful. Harsh criticism by those who oppose the truth is evidence that the enemy is back of the opposition and that the faithful are doing God's will. Those who believe that God is directing his work and his people through Christ Jesus will continue to stand firm and hold steadfastly on in their course of faithful and joyful service to the kingdom.

²⁷ Those whom Esther foreshadowed, now seeing the gravity of the situation, make known to their brethren that their purpose is to get in line and participate in the work of the kingdom. In harmony with this it is written: "Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer: Go, gather together all the Jews that are present [found, margin] in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish."—4:15, 16.

²⁸ Esther now fully disclosed her own identity and expressed her determination to perform her part even at the cost of her life. In the past the Lord has shown himself as long-suffering and doubtless has tolerated some negligence and indifference, but now the issue is sharply drawn and every one who is for the Lord must take his stand on the Lord's side or be forced into the enemy's camp.

²⁹ It is the expressed will of God that when his people would appeal to him for help in time of need they should come in meekness and humility, putting themselves in the background. Clothing oneself in sackcloth and ashes denotes complete submission to God, and this method of self-humiliation, fasting and prayer was often employed at one and the same time by those Jews who sought God's favor.

³⁰ The Jews took this course because they were God's chosen people, as it is written: "But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom." (Ps. 35:13) No other people aside from the Jews followed this course, and they did so because Jehovah was their God. When Daniel would

appeal to God for help he said: "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes." (Dan. 9:3) That such a course of self-humiliation is taken according to the will of God is shown by the words of the Lord to his prophet: "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning." (Joel 2:12) Jesus emphasizes the importance of fasting and prayer: "Howbeit, this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."—Matt. 17:21.

³¹ Esther followed the law and custom of her people. She declared her purpose to fast and she called upon all the Jews in Shushan to do likewise. This was in recognition of the supremacy of Jehovah, the God of Israel, and showed the entire dependence of the Israelites upon him. There could have been no reason whatsoever for such humiliation and prayer of Esther and the other Jews except that they might have the favor of Jehovah. Following the custom of the Jews with reference to fasting, it is also certain that they prayed to God. In so doing Esther was not trying to make herself perfect by developing 'strength of character' and greater firmness and determination to face the ordeal of appearing unbidden before the king. She needed divine grace and compassion to carry her through the dangerous situation. By appearing before the king unbidden she was putting herself in immediate danger of death, and that would mean also the death of Mordecai and all the other Jews. It would be impossible to imagine a condition where there was greater need for divine help. Esther, therefore, proceeded to humble herself before Jehovah and under his mighty hand. She called upon all the Jews of the place to follow the same course. There is strength in unity, and in this Esther was divinely guided. When there is a trying situation, or when there is prosperity, the brethren do well to stand in unity as one man. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"—Ps. 133:1.

³² Now we are in the last days. The time to give the final witness to the name and word of God before Armageddon breaks is now here. The Devil sees that his time is short and he busies himself to prepare to destroy God's remnant. The remnant is not in ignorance of the activity and the power of the enemy. It is a trying situation with them, and they know that their strength comes from the Lord and without him none could stand. For the benefit of the remnant it is written by the psalmist, who put these words into the mouth of the faithful: "Preserve me, O God; for in thee do I put my trust." (Ps. 16:1) "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity." (Ps. 118:25) "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth

Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore."—Psalm 121.

³³ It seems quite certain that the apostle was moved by the same spirit of God to write for the benefit of the remnant these words: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." (Eph. 6:10-18) As Esther called upon all those to fast with her, even so the apostle calls upon all the anointed to stand together, pray and supplicate for one another and for deliverance, and then asks their prayers for boldness in declaring the truth.

³⁴ The appearing of Esther before the king pictures the remnant appearing before the judgment seat of Christ, who is the great Judge and who will determine what is the right and proper course for the remnant to take. He is in his temple, and he is guiding the temple class.

³⁵ Esther announced her purpose to hazard her life in doing her duty regardless of whether she perished. The fact that her appearing unbidden before the king was fraught with such danger would picture more than the remnant's appearing before Christ the great Judge in prayer. The remnant now plainly see that by faithfully continuing to bear the message of the kingdom to the people, and by refusing to give heed to the orders of Satan's organization to cease their method of work, they are taking their lives in their own hands. These know that their responsibility is to the 'higher power', to wit, God and his organization, and are determined to go ahead with the work and to carry the message of the kingdom from door to door regardless of all opposition; and they therefore appeal their case for final decision to the great Judge, Christ Jesus. Thus they watch and pray as they go forward in the work. No one really devoted to God would rashly rush into a dangerous situation. He will first pre-

sent the matter in prayer and supplication before the Lord, asking for divine wisdom, and that his course may be directed in the right way.

³⁶ Esther says: 'I am going even though I perish,' and the class whom she foreshadowed now say: 'We will do the work of the kingdom even though we die in the attempt. We know that the God whom we serve is able to deliver us; whether that deliverance is on earth or by death and immediate change into the likeness of the Lord, he will determine; and whatsoever he does will be done well.'

³⁷ Esther acted with much caution and cool deliberation, but without hesitation when the time arrived to act. Even so the remnant with calmness view a threatened situation, act with caution and deliberation, yet without hesitation, because the time is here when the work of the kingdom must be done, and done boldly.

³⁸ It is morally certain that Mordecai, Esther and the other Jews followed the law and custom of their people, and that would mean that they fasted and prayed unto God for their own preservation and for the destruction of the enemy. Prayers recorded by the prophets of God are often prophecies which have more than one fulfilment. Since the days of Eden till now the great issue or question for decision has been and is the name of Jehovah God. The prophetic pictures which God caused to be made foreshadowed his purpose to vindicate his name, and to that end he caused his prophets to put in the mouth of his people prayers looking to such vindication by the destruction of the enemy.

³⁹ In the diplomatic move of Haman Mordecai saw a combined effort of the enemies of God to destroy all who serve Jehovah. No doubt he communicated this fact to Esther and to the others and they all appealed to God to destroy Haman and all of his kind. A prophetic prayer fitted to the occasion, and which doubtless had its miniature fulfilment in the time of Esther and Mordecai, is this: "Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult; and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people [Mordecai, Esther, and the other Jews], and consulted against thy hidden ones [like Esther hidden in the palace]. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent [by casting a lot over a period of a year]: they are confederate against thee [in a conspiracy to reproach God by destroying his people]: the tabernacles of Edom [of whom the Amalekites were great-grandchildren], and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes; Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek [Haman was an Agagite]; the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur also is joined with them; they have holpen the children of Lot. Do unto them as unto the Midianites [by the hand of Gideon]; as to Sisera, as

to Jabin, at the brook of Kison; which perished at Endor, they became as dung for the earth. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever: yea, let them be put to shame, and perish; that men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth."—Ps. 83: 1-10, 17, 18.

⁴⁰ In these last days Satan has organized his forces against the remnant of God and goes forth to make war upon them. The movements of the enemy are subtle and it is the attempt of the enemy to justify themselves under the law. Satan's forces include the apostate clergy and those who once had the truth and who later form themselves into the "evil servant" or "man of sin".

⁴¹ The name of Jehovah God is now at issue, and the remnant is the only class standing firmly and steadfastly for his name, and therefore in harmony with the will of God the remnant thus pray: "Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise; for the mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful, are opened against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. For my love they are my adversaries; but I give myself unto prayer. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love. Set thou a wicked man over him; and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin. Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the Lord, and of them that speak evil against my soul. But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name's sake; because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me. Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice. Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle."—Ps. 109: 1-7, 20, 21, 28, 29.

⁴² Jehovah has declared that when he sets the golden crown upon the head of his King this mighty ruler shall find out all of his enemies. (Ps. 21: 8) 'Jehovah arse' at the time he set his beloved Son upon the throne to rule amidst his enemies. He there took his great power to reign. (Ps. 110: 2; Rev. 11: 17) It is therefore in harmony with the will of God that the remnant should pray for the destruction of God's enemies that the name of the Most High may be honored and exalted in all the earth: "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let them also that hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God."—Ps. 68: 1, 2.

⁴³ Let no one of the remnant permit malice to come into his heart, even against the most wicked. Vengeance belongs to the Lord God and he will repay, and he executes his vengeance righteously and for the vindication of his name. The remnant is privileged to be on the side of Jehovah and to sing forth his praises just preceding and at the vindication of God's name.

Because the remnant is faithful in thus doing and in telling the testimony concerning the kingdom the enemy seeks the destruction of the remnant. For the sake of the name of Jehovah they properly pray for the destruction of the enemy.

"A climax in the life of Esther had been reached and she prepared to face it bravely. Now a climax in the existence of the remnant of God has been reached, and let every member thereof face the enemy courageously and boldly, treading with humility before God and being joyfully submissive to him, and looking forward with complete confidence that in his own good way and time God will provide complete deliverance for those that love him; and this shall be to his everlasting glory.

(To be continued)

QUESTIONS FOR BEREAN STUDY

- ¶ 1, 2. For what purpose has Jehovah provided the privilege of prayer? Does he always hear and answer prayer? Relate a particularly illustrative incident in which he answered prayer.
- ¶ 3-5. Point out the propriety of Mordecai's procedure upon his learning of Haman's wicked plot. How does it prove Mordecai's faith in God?
- ¶ 6, 7. How did Esther learn of Haman's scheme? How is this part of the prophetic picture fulfilled?
- ¶ 8-11. What did Mordecai then do? How did this determine the position Esther must take? Explain how this foreshadowed the position of God's people now?
- ¶ 12, 13. What was the message then sent to Esther? What was her reply? Explain whether each proceeded wisely in the matter.
- ¶ 14-16. Justify their appeal to an earthly king in behalf of God's covenant people. What was there foreshadowed?
- ¶ 17, 18. What circumstance seemingly increased the peril attending Esther's appearing before the king? How does this have a present application?
- ¶ 19, 20. What was Satan's objective in his plan to destroy all the Jews? What is the warning to be taken therefrom by the remnant?
- ¶ 21-23. Point out the wisdom in the words of Mordecai recorded in Esther 4: 13, 14. How do they serve as an admonition to the remnant today?
- ¶ 24, 25. Explain and apply Mordecai's words, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"
- ¶ 26. In what manner did Mordecai and Esther communicate with each other? How is communication now effected among those there foreshadowed?
- ¶ 27-33. To Esther came the necessity for immediate action in behalf of God's covenant people. What action did she take? With other scriptures, show whether this was the appropriate procedure. Point out the lesson contained therein for the remnant today.
- ¶ 34-38. In Esther's appearing before the king, and particularly in view of the peril therein, is seen what lesson for God's people at the present time? What can we learn from the manner in which she approached the king?
- ¶ 39, 40. Point out the diplomacy with which Satan proceeded to accomplish his wicked purpose at that time. Show that he is employing a similar method today.
- ¶ 41-43. Quote scriptures expressing the prayer of the remnant at the present time. What will be the attitude of the remnant while awaiting vindication of Jehovah's word and name?
- ¶ 44. At this point in our study of this prophetic drama, compare Esther's position with that of the remnant.

MAN AND HIS HOME

A MIGHTY prince, clothed with great power and authority and having received a dominion over which to rule, with light heart and buoyant step walked in the way of happiness. His countenance was pleasing to the eye, his face radiant with smiles, and his voice musical and as clear as the trumpet sound on the morning air. The beasts of the field and the fowls of the air obediently responded to his call. His food and raiment were supplied in abundance; and his castle, situated in the sweet-scented groves, was a place of joy and delight. His relationship with God was that of confidence and trust. He was monarch of all he surveyed. But his happy situation was one of short duration.

A man, apparently bent with years, journeyed through the valley of darkness. His garments would mark him as a tiller of the soil and a feeder of swine. His visage was greatly marred, telling of thoughts impure and a heart wherein resided malice and ill will. His voice was husky and cruel. At his approach the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air fled before him.

The mighty prince was the selfsame one who became the cruel and repulsive man. Shorn of his power and authority, and alienated from the mighty God, he no

longer walked in the way of happiness. Now his journey lies along a dreary and dismal way and leads to the bog of despair.

Why the change from prince to pauper? His power and authority, his dominion and his life, he received from the Most High God. Because of disloyalty and unfaithfulness to his God and to the trust reposed in him he lost all. A wide gulf now separates him from his Creator and Benefactor.

Is there hope of a reconciliation between the man and the Most High God? Is it possible for the man ever to be restored to his dominion and to his place of honor and trust?

These questions find answer in the Holy Word of Jehovah God. Therein are disclosed the cause of the alienation of the mighty prince from Jehovah and the statement of God's gracious provision leading to a way of reconciliation.

The Bible is God's sacred Word of truth. From it and it alone is obtained the true history of the prince and the pauper. The story is more thrilling and fascinating than any fiction ever told.

The earth was the place of the beginning of this drama and the home of the mighty prince. The earth is yet the place of the domicile of man and all the crea-

spring of the first man. Now, after a lapse of more than sixty centuries, comparatively few of his offspring understand who owns the earth, why it was created, and man's relationship to the Creator. No man can have a proper appreciation of the history of the race, of his obligation to the Creator, and of the prospect set before him, if he ignores or turns aside from the sacred truths contained in the Scriptures.

The Bible is the fountain of truth. The more one drinks at this fountain, the sweeter is its life-flowing stream.

The earth incites the wonder and admiration of man even though he is imperfect and his understanding greatly limited.

Whether the earth is viewed with respect to the formation of its various strata or its vegetable and animal life; whether by the use of the microscope its endless varieties are seen; or whether by employing the telescope the relationship of the earth to the other planets and the stars is considered, the reverential man stands in awe and wonderment at the wisdom displayed in its creation. When he learns that the earth was created by the Most High God and made to be the lasting habitation of man, his mind and his heart yearn to know more about it and more concerning its great Creator. The telescope was not discovered until A.D. 1600, and it is no matter for surprise that prior to that time man thought the earth to be the center of all things.

The knowledge of the great Creator, as he reveals himself in his creation of man and his provision for man, was preserved by a very few. This knowledge was merely a tiny stream of truth which trickled down through the centuries, and few were they that drank thereat.

Early in the history of man he put God out of his thoughts; consequently the vision of man was limited to things he saw with his natural eye. When the sun and the moon and the stars came into view some men gave consideration to the creation but not to the Creator. Because it was apparent to them that all life enjoyed by all creation of earth proceeded from the sun, that planet became the object of worship by men. Those who did retain a knowledge of the Creator and had faith in him knew that God was beyond the starry heavens, and they worshiped him as the Creator of both heaven and earth. Such were so few, however, compared with the greater number, that they are hardly observable.

The development of the telescope, together with increased knowledge of things, brought men to see that the earth is not what man had once thought it to be. He learned that instead of being fixed and the center of all things the earth is a sphere and one among the other planets associated with the sun, and that the sun is the center of this planetary system known as the solar system.

The ecclesiastical system of Rome, and particularly its leaders, for a thousand years and more thought that the earth is fixed and that everything else revolves about it. They also claimed to be the sole interpreters of the Bible, and they claim the Bible as authority for this erroneous conclusion. This had probably more to do than anything else to fix the thought in the minds of the people.

As knowledge increased men learned that the earth is a star or planet among the other planets which move about the sun. The facts learned by them disprove the theories held and taught by the clergy of Rome. This caused them to lose confidence in those teachers. It also produced suspicion and doubt about the Bible as an authority of truth. The result was that many were led entirely away from the Bible. Had they understood the truth, as taught in the Bible, and not been influenced by the misrepresentation of these incompetent teachers, they would not have turned away from the Bible and away from God.

Increased knowledge, commonly known as physical science, discloses that there are stars so enormous that the earth beside these is but a pigmy. Astronomers claim that the star Betelguese is so large that the sun and its satellites, including the earth, could be placed in the interior of Betelguese's shell and still keep their respective distances from each other. It is difficult for man to conceive the enormity of this tremendous star. The enlightened student of the Word of God knows, however, that the earth holds a place of importance in God's creation far greater than that of Betelguese or any other star or planet.

It is claimed by savants that the writers of the Old Testament or Hebrew Scriptures were ignorant of the relationship between the earth and the other planets and stars of creation. There is no evidence, however, to support such a claim. It is quite evident that it was not the purpose of God to state in his Word, which constitutes our Bible, all the facts relative to the earth and its relationship to other bodies of creation.

The spirit of God operated upon the minds of the faithful men of old who wrote the Bible and it is reasonable that they understood some things about the creation that are not recorded in the Scriptures. What they did write under divine direction was and is true, and of that we can be absolutely certain. These holy men of old wrote as they were moved upon by the holy spirit.—2 Sam. 23: 2.

The Bible is the only credible guide either as to the real relationship between man and the earth and the great Creator of both, or concerning the purpose of the creation of both. Taking the Bible as his guide, man sees that the earth occupies a place of great importance in God's purposes and that in his due time every creature in heaven and in earth will be brought into one grand harmonious whole or unity. To this effect the inspired witness of Jehovah wrote:

"[God hath] made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the

fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."—Eph. 1: 9, 10.

WHEN EARTH'S GREATEST WAS BORN

THIS is a day of great inventions; because it is the day the Lord God foretold by his prophet. (Dan. 12: 4) The radio and the airship are among the marvels of the age. Imagine the curtains of night having been drawn and silence brooding like a silent spirit over the earth. In the quietness of his bed-chamber a man rests, but sleep is gone from his eyes. Stretching out his arm he touches the dial of his radio receiving set and turns it. There comes to him from some unseen place the strains of sweet music, telling of the glory of God and the marvelous provision made by him for the blessing of mankind. His heart responds in gladness. Then suddenly through the thick darkness there also bursts a flood of light and he beholds in the canopy above him a great fleet of airships illuminated with myriads of lights and carrying a multitude of sweet singers. The music and the lights thrill his soul and he instinctively cries out: "How wonderful! How marvelous!" But this as an illustration is inadequate. It pales into insignificance when compared with what came to pass on the night of the birth of Jesus.

Four thousand years had sped by since the tragedy in Eden. Two thousand years had gone since God had called to the patriarch Abraham and said: "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 22: 17, 18) During all that period of time the peoples of earth had groaned in pain and travailed in suffering, waiting for the time of deliverance. Throughout that period the angels of heaven, in harmony with God, had been watching for the birth of him who would be the Savior of the world. The time drew on when this great event was to take place.

The earthly preparation was simple and is told in a few words. No amount of preparation that man could have made would have added any dignity or honor to that occasion. The Lord God saw to it that not one of the Devil's earthly representatives was permitted to witness the birth of his beloved One. The Pharisees and other Jewish ecclesiastics of that day posed before the people as the representatives of God, even as the clergy do now; but not one of these was called to witness the birth of the Redeemer of man. On the contrary, God selected a few plain and honest watchmen of sheep to be the witnesses to this unparalleled event.

In heaven the preparation was on a more elaborate scale. To the angel Gabriel had been assigned the hon-

orable duty of journeying from the courts of Jehovah God as the bearer of the message to the virgin Mary that she should bear a son who would deliver the peoples from their enemies and restore the obedient ones to full fellowship with God. Nine months had elapsed since the delivery of that very important message. In the meantime Gabriel had returned to heaven and doubtless communed with many others of the holy angels of heaven, advising them of his mission to earth. There are millions of such glorious creatures before the throne of God, as the Scriptures show. (Dan. 7: 10) The great Jehovah would issue the order for the organization of a multitude of the heavenly host to act as a guard of honor to accompany the special messenger to earth, there to testify to the birth of the beloved Son of God. There must have been tremendous rejoicing in heaven and songs of boundless praise to God when this mighty throng began its journey to earth. Probably some few days would be required to make the journey from heaven to earth; and while the heavenly messengers proceeded on their way the stage on earth was being set.

Joseph and Mary, responding to the decree of the Roman Emperor Cæsar Augustus to report for the purpose of being taxed, were on their way to their native town of Bethlehem. Joseph was a man of small means, but honest; and above all, he served Jehovah God. He would not have a great retinue of servants with him, nor would the populace hail him by the way and bow before him or kiss his toe. How unlike men of the present time who think they are charged with some exalted duty and privilege! With his virgin wife seated upon an ass, and with staff in hand, he trudged by her side over the hills and through the valleys, unaccompanied by visible attendants. Satan knew where this blessed man and woman were going, and the reason why; and without a doubt he would have slain them by the way had not God prevented him. It is equally certain that some of the holy angels of heaven were delegated to walk by the side of Joseph and his bride, and when they stopped to rest these messengers would encamp about them and guard them from the assaults of the enemy and save them from all harm. For it is written: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."—Ps. 34: 7.

After a few days of hard journeying they arrived at Bethlehem, late in the evening, and found all the available space in the lodging houses occupied. From place to place they went and applied, and each time

being turned away they finally found a place to rest where the cattle were usually housed. What a fit place for the Savior of the world to be born!

It was nighttime. The shepherds had gathered their flocks into the corral and were keeping watch lest the wild beasts should carry some away. These were plain, humble but kindly men; otherwise the Lord would not have used them. They were familiar with the promises God had made to their forefathers. It is not unreasonable to think that even at that very time they were recounting to each other these promises and discussing the future, that some day the Lord would send to them a King who would deliver them from the Roman yoke. They would be familiar with the prophecies concerning the coming of the King and Deliverer; and with no light by which they might read, and while they must be awake and watching, they would sit and talk about the things dear to their hearts.

The hour had now come. The heavenly throng was due. God does everything on time. In the van of this marching heavenly host was one mighty angel of God, to whom had been delegated the authority to announce the birth of the beloved Son. Probably this angel was Gabriel; because he had been sent on the previous mission to Mary. As they came near to Bethlehem, doubtless the multitude halted, while the leader of that heavenly company advanced and made announcement to the humble men who were to be the witnesses of the birth of Jesus. The shepherds were watching their flocks, waiting for the dawn of day, "and," as it is written in the beautiful account of Luke's gospel, chapter two (9-11), "lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

The glory of the Lord shone round about these shepherds; and that glory must have been a great light in the heavens, because usually the glory of the Lord appeared unto witnesses in this manner, as other instances recorded in the Scriptures show. (Acts 9:3) That was a far more wonderful and beautiful light than all the illuminated fleets of airplanes that could fly over cities in modern times. Then there fell upon the ears of that shepherd company sweet strains of music such as no mortal ear had ever heard. It was a song of the mighty host of angels that had accompanied this special one from heaven. This chief messenger who had made the announcement was now joined by a multitude of the heavenly host singing praises to God; and this is what the shepherds heard: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."—Luke 2:14.

Not only was that a sweet and melodious song, but

it was a prophecy that he who was born at that hour in the city of David would in God's due time vindicate the name of his Father, bring peace on earth and establish good will between and toward all men. This song of the multitude of angels must have been wafted back to heaven and there joined in by all the holy ones before the throne of the Almighty God. As the sweet anthem thundered on through space the very stars and planets would dance for joy and join in the song of praise. We are told that they did this very thing when God laid the foundation of the earth as a place for the habitation of perfect man. (Job 38:7) How much more must they have sung the songs of praise when he was born who would save mankind and make earth a fit place in which to live?

Who was this One now born in the manger at Bethlehem, and whence had he come? The record of God is that in the beginning he was the heavenly One who bore the title Logos, which means The Word of God. He was the first and only direct creation of God. Thereafter he was the active agent of Jehovah in creating all things that were created. In obedience to the will of Almighty God his life was now transferred from the spirit to the human plane. The Logos was 'made flesh and dwelt among men', that he might take away the sin of the world.—John 1:1-29.

Through his prophet Micah (5:2) God had foretold that the mighty ruler and deliverer should be born in the city of Bethlehem. In due time and at the proper place this prophecy had been fulfilled, and nothing Satan could do could in any wise interfere with the progression of the divine purpose. Of course Satan would know about the birth and about the announcement of the birth made by the holy angels of heaven. We may even be sure that another company of mighty angels of God would keep Satan and his wicked angels back from interfering with the birth of the Savior. This wonderful event and this marvelous manifestation of the power of God should have served to convince all those angels who had fallen away with Satan that Jehovah God is all-powerful, that nothing can prevent him from carrying out his purpose, and that their hope of eternal life and blessing would be for ever blasted by their continuing to follow Satan. It should have been sufficient to induce even Satan to cease his wrongful course. But Satan, totally depraved and fatally bent on continuing in wickedness, still pursued his nefarious course and drew along with him a host of wicked ones as his assistants.

However, up to this point the word of God had been vindicated, because his infinite power had accomplished the miraculous transfer of the life of his only-begotten Son from celestial realms to the sphere of man, and the human birth of this beloved Son had taken place in the fulness of God's time and at the royal town of Bethlehem, exactly as God's Word had foretold long centuries previously.

CONSPIRACY TO DESTROY MAN'S DELIVERER

AT THE time of Jesus' birth the Romans were in control of Palestine. The politician Herod acted as a petty ruler and king under the supervision and control of the Romans. Satan the enemy began to devise ways and means for the destruction of the newly born babe Jesus. Herod was a very wicked man and a willing instrument in the Devil's hands. He would not hesitate to destroy anyone who he thought might interfere with his occupancy of the office of king. He was one of those conscienceless and wicked politicians who would resort to any mean and wrongful act, and stop at nothing to accomplish his purposes. Yielding to the influence of Satan he had put himself in this position.

At the same time there dwelt in the land of Persia, which lies to the east of Palestine, savants or "wise men", so called. They were sorcerers and magicians who worshiped the stars and other objects, which fact is proof conclusive that they were idolaters and worshiped the Devil. (1 Cor. 10:20) Magicians or men of this kind were employed by the various rulers of the earthly part of the Devil's organization, as advisers. These "wise men" were mediums, through whom the great adversary operated. Satan used such as his visible instruments at various times. (Ex. 7:11) Many of them may have been sincere men, but they had been overreached by the Devil and had turned away from the true and living God to worship anything except the Lord Jehovah. Being tools in the hands of the enemy Satan, they could be used by him to carry out his wicked schemes, the details of which they would not even understand.

These so-called "wise men of the east" were astrologers who believed that a star is assigned for each creature when born into the world, according to his relative importance. There are many historical incidents showing that Satan and his wicked angels have power to produce lights and to cause them to move through space and to make them appear like stars. We know, however, that stars do not move in this way. Satan caused a light to appear to these astrologers which had the appearance of a star; and he induced them to believe that this was the star of the child born to be king of the Jews.

The enemy's scheme was to bring these wise men to Herod and thus have them inquire of the king over the country in which the town of Bethlehem was located: "Where is the one born to be king of the Jews?" That information would immediately start the thought of murder in the heart of Herod, and he would search out the babe and have it murdered lest it should interfere with his kingdom. The Lord God let the enemy Satan carry out his scheme until the danger point, then held him back. Subsequent facts show that it must have been between one and two years after the birth of Jesus that the Devil attempted to carry out this conspiracy.

Joseph and Mary the mother of Jesus were then living in a house at Bethlehem. These astrologers or "wise men" appeared before Herod and said: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." (Matt. 2:2) The information which they brought Herod upon this occasion troubled him and his official family. The first thing he thought of was his clergy allies, the priests and Pharisees. He sent messengers and gathered them in before him.

Without a doubt the Devil was invisibly present at that gathering, directing each move of Herod; in fact, moving all parties to the conspiracy like as a player moves his pawns upon a chess board. When the clergy appeared before the king he demanded of them to tell him where Christ should be born. (Matt. 2:4-6) Then Herod, directed by his super-lord the Devil, next arranged a private audience with the "wise men" and got all the information possible from them concerning the supposed "star" that they had seen. Without doubt Satan engineered this in such a way that Herod would think that he was carrying out the scheme.

Then Herod gave the order that these men be sent to Bethlehem. (Matt. 2:8) Here is another glaring case of hypocrisy. We recall how hypocrisy had its first appearance in the days when Enos, the grandson of Adam, was born, thousands of years before Christ. The Devil sees to it that it crops out always at the proper time for his purposes. (Gen. 4:26) Little would Herod worship the Lord God or his beloved Son when he was found, as he said he would do when the babe was found. He had no thought of so doing. His purpose was to locate the babe that he might murder it. The astrologers started on their way to Bethlehem; and the Devil saw to it that the light, supposed to be a star, went before them. Let it here be noted that real stars do not move as this imagined star did, first from east to west, and then from north to south, nor in any other direction at the suggestion or whims of men nor for the purpose of guiding men. This of itself is proof that the light was not a star, even though these men doubtless thought it was a star. It was a light produced by the Devil, as one of the means for carrying out his wicked conspiracy.

The several astrologers (the Bible does not say how many they were) arrived at Bethlehem. The record of the gospel of Matthew (2:11) says: "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." The young child Jesus was now located, and Satan thought he was about at the point where he would soon have the child destroyed. But God interfered.

The further record concerning these wise men says: "And being warned of God in a dream that they

should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child, to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men."—Matt. 2:12-16.

The fact that Herod caused all the children of two years and under to be slain is proof that it was more than a year after the birth of Jesus that this conspiracy was carried out. To thwart the wicked designs of the enemy and to preserve his beloved Son God moved him into Egypt and there kept him until Herod's death. (Matt. 2:19-21) Later Joseph and Mary returned to the city of Nazareth, and there the lad Jesus was subject to Joseph and his mother until he attained the age of his majority.

Jesus came into the world that he might bear witness to the truth of God's kingdom. So he himself said, according to the record in John's gospel, chapter eighteen, verse thirty-seven. When he reached his legal majority at thirty years of age he began his ministry, that the purposes of God might be accomplished. His first act was to report to John at the Jordan river, asking to be baptized. He was a perfect man. Why should he be baptized? Baptism or water immersion is a symbol of being buried or put to death. The baptism of Jesus was a symbolic representation of the fact that Jesus, at a great sacrifice to himself, had yielded unto his Father to do his Father's will, no matter what that will might be, even unto death. (Matt. 3:15-17) John, in putting Jesus under the water and raising him up out of the water, represented Jehovah; and symbolically this act declared: Jesus is in the hands of his Father to do his Father's will, to accomplish his Father's

purposes, and this will lead to his death; but the Father will raise him up out of death. Here at the Jordan he fulfilled what the prophet had before said for him: "Lo, I come . . . to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

At the time of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, it is written concerning him, "the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"; thus giving an outward demonstration to John the Baptist, as a witness that this was God's beloved Son, born to be the Deliverer of mankind.

Satan the enemy did not miss so important an occasion as this. No doubt he heard these words of approval spoken concerning Jesus. Immediately he began to devise ways and means for the destruction of Jesus. He knew that the life of Jesus depended upon his being loyal and faithful unto God his Father.

To be loyal means to be obedient to the letter and spirit of the divine law. The law of God is his expressed will, particularly that which is written in the Scriptures. To be faithful means to be uncompromisingly devoted to the Lord at all times, and never at any time to render allegiance to another or to even sympathize with a course contrary to that of Jehovah.

By maintaining his loyalty and faithfulness to Jehovah God his heavenly Father, Jesus would prove his integrity toward God and thereby prove also his worthiness of life and of his Father's continued favor and protection. The opportunity of Satan the Devil to test out the integrity of Jesus came very promptly. The record of the gospel of Mark (1:12, 13) tells us that after Jesus' baptism "immediately the spirit [of God] driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels [of God] ministered unto him". With superb devotion Jesus kept his integrity and faith toward God by firm resistance of every one of the Devil's insidious temptations and finally commanding the Devil to be gone. It was then that Jehovah God manifested his approval of Jesus by sending his holy angels to minister unto his devoted and faithful Son. And thus another devilish plot to destroy man's Deliverer was completely foiled.

PRAISE YE JEHOVAH

I will praise Jehovah with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. The works of Jehovah are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: Jehovah is gracious and full of compassion. He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.—Psalm 111.

LETTERS

THANKFULNESS TO JEHOVAH

BELOVED BROTHER RUTHERFORD:

We cannot find words to express our gratitude to our heavenly Father for the rich food which he feeds us through his appointed channel, and for the light of truth which enables us to more fully comprehend and appreciate his will concerning ourselves and the whole creation in these last days.

We especially rejoice in, and are thankful for, the light of Truth contained in recent issues of *The Watch Tower* on "fruits of the kingdom". These articles fully explain the position and course of the Christian at the present time. It overthrows every unreasonable idea of "character development". "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."—2 Cor. 9: 15.

We wish to express our thanks to you, for the Lord uses you to bestow these gifts upon us. We shall always remember you in our prayers, asking the Lord to keep you steadfast in the faith, that you may be able to impart his precious blessings for the encouragement and comfort of his people during the great battle in which his name shall be vindicated.

We are pleased to inform you that our "class", consisting of three members, limited its activities, until the end of December 1929, within a radius of ten miles, due to such a small number. Being in the center of a large tract of virgin territory, we have a large task before us, and we pray to the Lord to send more workers to proclaim the message of truth.

Our prayers have been answered, and the Lord has blessed in such a way as to enable us to visit 55 villages in about eight months' time, and we have placed in the hands of the people 140 bound books and 900 booklets, which is very satisfactory, considering the great economic crisis. The people are satisfied with the message; so we can say they are ready for the kingdom.

For all these blessings we thank the Lord from the bottom of our hearts, and we remain,

Your brethren in the service,
KYRGIA (Drammas) ECCLESIA, Greece.

JOY AND GRATITUDE

DEAR BROTHER RUTHERFORD:

Greetings in the blessed name of our God and King. I want to thank our heavenly Father, his dear Son, and you, dear brother, for this precious gift, the books *Light*, 1 and 2, and the booklet.

Words fail to express my joy and gratitude. My prayer is: The Lord enlarge my heart and mind, in order to sing forth his praises. Ever since 1917, when my eyes were opened, my desire has been and is to bring this blessed light to others. It thrills me to have a part, small though it may be, in Jehovah's purposes.

Tears come to my eyes when I consider how frail we are, and that the great Creator of the universe condescends to use us to his praise.

My earnest desire is to be found worthy until everything that has breath will be found praising Jehovah and his dear Son.

May our dear heavenly Father ever keep you faithful in my prayer.

MRS. H. B. JANSSEN, Missouri.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the convention of Bible Students in session at Wilson, N. C., that we recognize Brother J. F. Rutherford, president of the International Bible Students Association, as the one chosen of the Lord to bring to his people light now due and disclosing God's purposes for His people, and that we accept the *Light* books, One and Two, and the *Watch Tower* articles as coming from the Lord to us through this well beloved channel.

Knowing this we do pledge our efforts to uphold and support our beloved Society with our prayers and our substance, in all his efforts to glorify the name of Jehovah in the earth.

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HONOR TO SHARE REPROACH

DEAR BROTHER RUTHERFORD:

We want you to know of our love for you and our sincere appreciation of the marvelous light which the Lord is causing to shine from his temple and upon his people, causing us to discern our honored position and our responsibility.

Light has shown us the Devil and his crowd for what they are and that their destruction is sure and certain.

In the year 1922 this ecclesia unanimously endorsed the Challenge which emanated from the Cedar Point convention, and then delivered it to the people, and at that time we marveled at the wisdom which that Challenge disclosed. *Light* gives the honor to the Lord, and so do we; and how we rejoice as we look back and see how the great Jehovah and our King used you as the mouthpiece and ourselves also as servants!

We count it a great honor to give testimony for Christ the King, and to share the reproach which results.

The vile accusations which the Dragon in his great wrath makes against you have not altered our confidence in you, and, by the Lord's grace, they never will. Your courage and boldness in proclaiming the kingdom message, and in warning the rulers and people of the impending destruction upon Satan's organization rejoices our hearts, and we here and now pledge ourselves to ignore these crafty tactics of the enemy, and to stand faithfully with you for the King and his kingdom.

Please extend our greetings to all your faithful coworkers at the Bethel.

With very warm love, we are,
GLOUCESTER (England) ECCLESIA.

JOY IN ENLIGHTENING PEOPLE

DEAR BROTHER RUTHERFORD:

I have just read the book *Light*. I simply cannot restrain myself from writing you. How wonderfully everything fits in when we understand that prophecy cannot be understood until fulfilled or in course of fulfillment. How thrilling to see that the Lord's people have been fulfilling prophecy, not knowing it at the time. What joy, what strength, it gives us to have an understanding of Revelation after waiting so long!

The Lord has of course given it when we need it most; and that is, to finish the work he has given us to do.

The *Watch Tower* article "Stand Firm" is especially appreciated. The enemies continue to attack the faithful remnant; but we know that the Lord will give strength to his people.

The receiving of the book *Light* is a special occasion of rejoicing; and I take this opportunity of telling you, dear fellow workers, how I appreciate your courage and patience and zeal in the Lord's cause. I shall have real joy in delivering *Light* to the people.

Yours in joyful service,
H. LODGE, England.

"LOOKING UP EVERY SCRIPTURE"

DEAR BROTHER RUTHERFORD:

I wish briefly to tell you the joy and blessing I have received in the reading of *Light*, Book One and Book Two. I am thoroughly reading it by carefully looking up every scripture.

No words could adequately describe the enlightenment that comes from this rich unfolding of the divine Word. I am in the fight, dear Brother Rutherford, for the establishment of the kingdom, and it gives me great joy to perceive that we are near the time when all that pertains to the Devil's organization will perish from the earth.

I am specially anxious to see the destruction of the old "wench" (organized religion) at the hands of her erstwhile supporters. It seems clear that already they are beginning to wash their hands of her to save their own necks.

It is a source of great joy to see in this the near establishment of the kingdom of righteousness and peace.

In full cooperation with you always in the honor and praise of Jehovah,

Yours in his service,
HARRY E. BACHMANN, W. Va.

International Bible Students Association

SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

T. E. BANKS

Winder, Ga.	July 3	Summit, Miss.	July 13
Athens, Ga.	" 4	Columbus, Miss.	" 14
Greshamville, Ga.	" 5	Auburn, Ala.	" 15
Monticello, Ga.	" 6	Camp Hill, Ala.	" 17
Valdosta, Ga.	" 7	Stroud, Ala.	" 18
Thomasville, Ga.	" 8	Birmingham, Ala.	" 19, 20
New Orleans, La.	" 10	Decatur, Ala.	" 21
Hammond, La.	" 11	Louisville, Ky.	" 23
Osyka, Miss.	" 12	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30

T. E. BARKER

Mechanicville, N. Y.	July 3, 4	Newburgh, N. Y.	July 14, 15
Troy, N. Y.	" 5, 6	Tarrytown, N. Y.	" 17, 18
Stottville, N. Y.	" 7, 8	Yonkers, N. Y.	" 19, 20
Kingston, N. Y.	" 10, 11	New Brunswick, N. J.	" 21, 22
Poughkeepsie, N. Y.	" 12, 13	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30

C. W. CUTFORTH

Guelph, Ont.	July 2-5	Collingwood, Ont.	July 16-19
Camilla, Ont.	" 6-8	Barrie, Ont.	" 20-22
Singhampton, Ont.	" 9-12	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30
Meaford, Ont.	" 13-15	Midland, Ont.	Aug. 11-13

G. H. DRAPER

Canton, Ohio	July 3, 4	Kent, Ohio	July 14
Massillon, Ohio	" 5, 6	Ravenna, Ohio	" 15, 16
Barberton, Ohio	" 7	Pittsburgh, Pa.	" 18-23
Wadsworth, Ohio	" 8, 9	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30
Akron, Ohio	" 11-13	Pittsburgh, Pa.	July 31-Aug. 2

M. L. HERR

Catlettsburg, Ky. June 30, July 1		Bedford, Ind.	July 12, 13
Ashland, Ky.	July 3, 4	Linton, Ind.	" 14, 15
Craney, Ky.	" 5	Dugger, Ind.	" 17, 18
Lexington, Ky.	" 6, 7	Jasonville, Ind.	" 19, 20
Louisville, Ky.	" 9, 10	Brazil, Ind.	" 21, 22
Salem, Ind.	" 11	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30

W. M. HERSEE

Matheson, Ont.	June 29, 30	Toronto, Ont.	July 12
Kirkland Lake, Ont.	July 2, 3	London, Ont.	" 13, 14
New Liskeard, Ont.	" 4, 5	Chatham, Ont.	" 16, 17
North Bay, Ont.	" 7, 8	Windsor, Ont.	" 18, 19
Hamilton, Ont.	" 9, 10	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30

A. KOERBER

Augusta, Ga.	July 3, 4	Fitzgerald, Ga.	July 11
Clyo, Ga.	" 5	Eastman, Ga.	" 12
Savannah, Ga.	" 6, 7	Washington, D. C.	" 18-20
Taylor Creek, Ga.	" 8	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30
Waycross, Ga.	" 9, 10	Washington, D. C.	July 31-Aug. 2

LOUIS LARSON

Crewe, Va.	June 30	Huntington, W. Va.	July 12, 13
Richmond, Va.	July 2-4	Portsmouth, Ohio	" 15, 16
Lynchburg, Va.	" 5-7	Cincinnati, Ohio	" 17-22
Clifton Forge, Va.	" 9	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30
Charleston, W. Va.	" 10, 11	Cincinnati, Ohio	July 31-Aug. 2

G. Y. M'CORMICK

Cleveland, Ohio	July 1-8	Tippecanoe Citty, Ohio	July 14, 15
Sidney, Ohio	" 10	Springfield, Ohio	" 17, 18
Piqua, Ohio	" 11, 12	Dayton, Ohio	" 19, 20
West Milton, Ohio	" 13	Columbus, Ohio	" 21-30

E. D. ORRELL

Chicago, Ill.	July 1-12	Marion, Ind.	July 20, 21
Gary, Ind.	" 13-15	Muncie, Ind.	" 22, 23
Culver, Ind.	" 16	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30
Peru, Ind.	" 18, 19	Chicago, Ill.	July 31-Aug. 2

J. C. RAINBOW

Coffeyville, Kans.	July 3, 4	Ottawa, Kans.	July 12
Parsons, Kans.	" 5, 6	Topeka, Kans.	" 13-15
Iola, Kans.	" 7, 8	St. Louis, Mo.	" 17-20
Hilltop, Kans.	" 10	Terre Haute, Ind.	" 22
Garnett, Kans.	" 11	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30

C. ROBERTS

Guelph, Ont.	July 2-5	Collingwood, Ont.	July 16-19
Camilla, Ont.	" 6-8	Barrie, Ont.	" 20-22
Singhampton, Ont.	" 9-12	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30
Meaford, Ont.	" 13-15	Winnipeg, Man.	July 31-Aug. 2

H. L. STEWART

Kipling, Sask.	July 2-5	Dilke, Sask.	July 16-19
Fort Qu'Appelle, Sask.	" 6-8	Plunkett, Sask.	" 20-22
Earl Grey, Sask.	" 9-12	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30
Nokomis, Sask.	" 13-15	Midland, Ont.	Aug. 11-13

W. P. STRONG

Kokomo, Ind.	July 1, 2	London, Ind.	July 13
South Bend, Ind.	" 3-5	Indianapolis, Ind.	" 15-20
Elwood, Ind.	" 6, 7	Richmond, Ind.	" 21, 22
Anderson, Ind.	" 9, 10	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30
New Castle, Ind.	" 11, 12	Indianapolis, Ind.	July 31-Aug. 2

W. J. THORN

Hazleton, Pa.	July 1, 2	Allentown, Pa.	July 15-17
Pottsville, Pa.	" 4, 5	Bethlehem, Pa.	" 18
Reading, Pa.	" 7, 8	Easton, Pa.	" 19, 20
Pottstown, Pa.	" 10, 11	Kunkletown, Pa.	" 21
Linsfield, Pa.	" 12, 13	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30
Boyetown, Pa.	" 14	Buffalo, N. Y.	July 31-Aug. 2

S. R. TOUTJIAN

Kathryn, N. Dak.	July 2	Detroit Lakes, Minn.	July 13
Fargo, N. Dak.	" 3-5	Minneapolis, Minn.	" 15
Grand Forks, N. Dak.	" 7, 8	Oshkosh, Wis.	" 17
Minot, N. Dak.	" 10	Detroit, Mich.	" 19-22
Lawton, N. Dak.	" 11	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30
Argyle, Minn.	" 12	Detroit, Mich.	July 31-Aug. 2

J. C. WATT

Sweetwater, Tex.	July 3, 4	Muskogee, Okla.	July 14, 15
Fort Worth, Tex.	" 5, 6	Springfield, Ill.	" 16, 17
Wichita Falls, Tex.	" 7, 8	E. St. Louis, Ill.	" 19, 20
Denison, Tex.	" 10, 11	Danville, Ill.	" 21, 22
McAlester, Okla.	" 12, 13	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30

GEORGE YOUNG

Syracuse, N. Y.	July 1-3	Johnstown, N. Y.	July 14, 15
Watertown, N. Y.	" 4-6	Gloversville, N. Y.	" 17, 18
Rome, N. Y.	" 7, 8	Buffalo, N. Y.	" 19-23
New York Mills, N. Y.	" 10	Columbus, Ohio	" 24-30
Utica, N. Y.	" 11-13	Buffalo, N. Y.	July 31-Aug. 2

I.B.S.A. Berean Bible Studies

by means of

The WATCH TOWER

"Esther and Mordecai" (Part 2)

Issue of June 1, 1931

Week beginning August 2	¶ 1-17
Week beginning August 9	¶ 18-36
Week beginning August 16	¶ 37-55

"Esther and Mordecai" (Part 3)

Issue of June 15, 1931

Week beginning August 23	¶ 1-26
Week beginning August 30	¶ 27-50