

The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

JUNE 1, 1952

Semimonthly

"GET OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE"

FIXING DESTINIES IN THIS
JUDGMENT PERIOD

MINISTERS OF GOOD NEWS
AT YOUR DOOR

PREACHING EFFECTIVELY AT THE DOORS

CHRISTIAN EXPANSION IN
THE ARAB STATES

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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Literal towers in Bible times were elevated vantage points from which watchmen could observe happenings, warn of danger, or announce good news. Our magazine figuratively occupies such a vantage point, for it is founded on the very pinnacle of wisdom, God's Word. That elevates it above racial, national and political propagandas and prejudices, frees it from selfish bias. It is not bound by any traditional creed, but its message advances as the light on God's purposes and works increases.—Habakkuk 2:1-3.

It sees things Scripturally. When it observes this generation afflicted with greed, delinquency, hypocrisy, atheism, war, famine, pestilence, perplexity and fear, and persecution of unpopular minorities, it does not parrot the old fable about history repeating itself. Informed by Bible prophecy, it sees in these things the sign of the world's time of the end. But with bright hope it also sees opening up for us just beyond these woes the portals of a new world.

Thus viewed, "The Watchtower" stands as a watchman atop a tower, alert to what is going on, awake to note signs of danger, faithful to point out the way of escape. It announces Jehovah's kingdom established by Christ's enthronement in heaven, feeds his kingdom joint-heirs with spiritual food, cheers men of good will with glorious prospects of eternal life in a paradise earth, comforts us with the resurrection promise for the dead.

It is not dogmatic, but has a confident ring in its voice, because it is based on God's Word. It does not privately interpret prophecy, but calls attention to physical facts, sets them alongside prophecy, and you see for yourself how well the two match, how accurately Jehovah interprets his own prophecy. In the interests of our salvation, it keeps sharp and faithful focus on Bible truth, and views religious news generally.

'Be watchful in these perilous times,' God admonishes. So keep on the watch by regularly reading "The Watchtower".



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N. H. KNORR, President GRANT SUITER, Secretary

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

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Abbreviations used in "The Watchtower" for the following Bible versions:

- | INFORMATION FROM "The Watchtower" FOR THE FOLLOWING BIBLE VERSIONS | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| AS - American Standard Version | LXX - The Septuagint Version |
| AT - An American Translation | Mo - James Moffatt's version |
| Da - D. N. Parry's version | NW - New World Trans. (2nd Ed.) |
| Ca - Cambridge Donkin version | Ro - C. E. Rotherham's version |
| ED - The Empatic Diaglott | RS - Revised Standard Version |
| Le - Liner-Lange's version. | Ys - R. H. Young's version |

Unless otherwise indicated, the Bible used is the King James Version.

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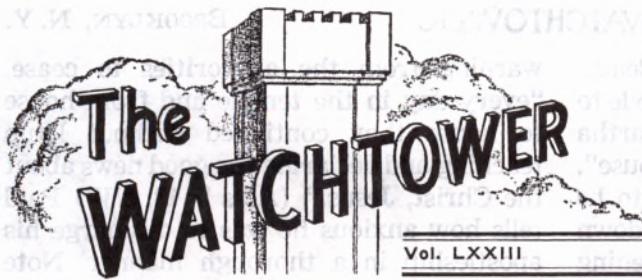
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Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

Vol. LXXIII

June 1, 1952

Number 11

MINISTERS OF GOOD NEWS AT YOUR DOOR

GOOD news at your front door! That is what Jesus Christ prophesied for these critical times. "Look! I am standing at the door and knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into his house and take the evening meal with him and he with me." True Christian ministers make a like approach to the people "because even Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely".—Rev. 3:20; 1 Pet. 2:21, NW.

Who are the ministers of good news? Jesus predicted today's unparalleled woes and bad news, but simultaneously said: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for the purpose of a witness to all the nations, and then the accomplished end will come." (Matt. 24:14, NW) Necessarily, the witnesses of the birth of Jehovah's kingdom by Christ would be Jehovah's witnesses. Some will want us to leave it to Christendom's more than 250 sects to declare the message. But how can they, when they ridicule its timeliness, persecute its preachers, and teach unscriptural doctrines in its stead? And how many would hear it if it were left confined to the four walls of an orthodox sectarian cathedral or "church" building? In the United States, 1950 statistics, which were considered high, revealed that only fifty-seven per cent of the population was enrolled in church membership. This leaves some 65,000,000 persons unaccounted for, and when those that attend church only

very irregularly are included, it is safe to say that from seventy to one hundred million in this country alone are not adequately reached. Yet all the spiritually needy over the earth have pulpits ready and waiting for a minister to arrive, step in and preach to them. Unbelievable? No, these pulpits are their own front doorways!

Surprised moderns need not voice amazement at the appearance of God's ministers at their doors. Jehovah commissioned his pre-Christian prophets for such style of preaching. Faithful Isaiah was told to keep at it until the locale of his activity was desolated, "until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man." A mighty message through Ezekiel resounded "by the walls and in the doors of the houses". With good authority, then, Jesus sent his early followers to the homes with a message that would divide the inhabitants, adding: "If the house is deserving, let the peace you wish it come upon it." And he personally took the lead, "from city to city and from village to village, preaching and declaring the good news of the kingdom of God."—Isa. 6:11; Ezek. 33:30, AS; Matt. 10:11-13; Luke 8:1, NW.

In his general witness work Jesus called at the homes of "all kinds of men", "to seek and to save what was lost." He invited himself to Zacchaeus' home and, after that chief tax collector had accepted his message, said: "This day salvation has come to this house." At a certain ruler's house he

restored that one's daughter from death. He sent orders to an army officer's abode to heal his slave. A "woman named Martha received him as guest into the house", where Jesus found her sister Mary to be very much interested, for she "sat down at the feet of the Master and kept listening to his word". Martha's anxiety over material things Jesus here said was in vain, proving that the spiritual provisions he served were always the motivating purpose of his calls.—Luke 19:5-10; Matt. 9:23-26; Luke 7:2-10; 10:38-42, NW.

So it would appear that house-to-house work was meant again when, following the outpouring of the holy spirit at the feast of Pentecost, A.D. 33, the disciples were described "continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house". (Acts 2:46) Certainly we know that Jesus' followers expanded the private home ministry to marvelous limits after his death and resurrection. Despite

warning from the authorities to cease, "every day in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus." (Acts 5:42, NW) Paul tells how anxious he was to discharge his apostleship in a thorough manner. Note the means he used to ensure this: "I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house." —Acts 20:20, NW.

How natural in view of all this that, with the immense task of preaching the good news of the Kingdom throughout the earth in this complex modern world, Jehovah's organization should lean so heavily on the age-old Scriptural door-to-door ministry! Difficult as the task is even with this help, it would be impossible without it. Still there are problems to be overcome in doing this work effectively. Just how we will now consider.

Preaching Effectively at the Doors

WHAT brings the minister of good news to the door? To find the Right Shepherd's "other sheep", a unique and blessed pursuit. If for his public lectures God's minister prepares earnestly, should he not prepare equally well for the task of confronting each door in a manner much more intimate than is possible with any one of the listeners in a public hall? As the Right Shepherd's representative he should be a pleasing example, able to relay the Shepherd's voice without distortion.

The exemplary apostle Paul, in his effort to reach all and not stumble any by his

message, said: "For, though I am free from all persons, I have made myself the slave to all, that I may gain the most persons. And so to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to those under law I became as under law, . . . I have become all things to people of all kinds, that I might by all means save some." (1 Cor. 9:19, 20, 22, NW) This does not mean to affect a false front of superficial worldly wisdom to impress the intellectual. The real sheep will be weary of such



vain speculations anyway and will welcome God's wisdom as a refreshing change. In it they will recognize the voice of, no, not you, but the "right shepherd". (John 10:14, NW) Furthermore, such persons are in need of far more than mere mental exercise. They need what false religion and worldly philosophy have not given them; they need love, sympathy, understanding. Given these, those disposed to be sheep-like will respond. They will see your sincerity and open their minds. The good news will have been successfully introduced.

Still, weightier matters of Bible truth and argument must follow. The Christian minister's appeal should consistently be to the mind rather than to the emotions of the householder. The most sincere of listeners will likely have some question or objection that must be removed before further progress can be made. If we can combine adequate and ready answers with sincerity and warmth of decorum, we will have fashioned a twofold weapon for effective use of "the sword of the spirit, that is, God's word". (Eph. 6:17, NW) True, many initial objections are stock phrases used to rid the doorway of pests and peddlers. Often these can be ignored, the weight of the Kingdom message speaking for itself and clearing up any question as to the minister's purpose in calling. But more often the seemingly minor plaints must be dealt with. In doing so be brief, escaping an argument over incidentals, not fumbling the opportunity to proceed into more constructive Scriptural teachings.

A few of the commoner objections presented to the house-to-house minister follow. The answers given may not always be appropriate and they should not be memorized. They only illustrate possibilities. Far more effective will be the minister's own words with sincere conviction, and especially a good knowledge of the Bible literature he is presenting, keeping in mind

points it covers that are helpful in meeting various arguments.

TURNING ASIDE OBJECTIONS TO THE MINISTRY

Householder: The Bible is all I need.

Publisher: Not quite. You also need God's spirit, for without that you could never understand the Bible. Many Bible writers could not understand what they had written because God's spirit that inspired the writing had not yet opened those prophecies for understanding. Today many prophecies are being fulfilled and the Bible is widely distributed, but God's spirit is still active; it will yet assist those who seek the mind of the Lord. You are wise in obtaining a Bible. Be equally wise in accepting a God-given help to understand it.

Householder: I have my own church.

Publisher: True, you have your own church, your neighbor on the right has his own church, and your neighbor on the left has her own church. It is also true that Christ Jesus has his own church. Is your church his church? Can you prove it by the Bible?

Or to this one might also say: Nor would I seek to force your conversion from yours to another sect. But surely your church can stand to have a better Bible student in its midst. Our literature is nonsectarian and will acquaint you with the Bible, not another sect.

Householder: You are against religion.

Publisher: Hardly that, since by occupation I am a minister of religion. Of course, I do not subscribe to every religious doctrine. Neither do you. In Jesus' day only one group claimed Christianity; today more than 250 sects make this claim. Obviously some must be wrong in some way. We are simply engaged in re-establishing the beliefs of the one true religion. From what you say, I believe this would interest you.

Householder: I am a Catholic.

Publisher: Then we have a very important point in common. I know from experience that Catholics do not believe in sectarianism, and neither do Jehovah's witnesses. We both know that Christ founded only one true church, not hundreds. Our work seeks to educate Christians to the Scriptural idea of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism". I wonder if you would like to consider the Bible proof we have found.

Householder: I am a Jew.

Publisher: Splendid. I find consulting with Jewish persons to be an invaluable aid in the work I am doing. You see, like you we are opposed to all intolerance. And we feel the real hope for defeating that menace is the acceptance of the true worship of Jehovah God. The ancient Jewish nation was in a special covenant with Jehovah. Its prophets sounded God's messages and recorded them under divine inspiration. Today those prophecies are being explained and we feel that united belief in their common hope for all mankind will remedy all disunity and intolerance.

Householder: You are against the government.

Publisher: No, I am against only corrupt government, and, of course, I suppose you are too. But in our study of the causes for corruption in government we find the Scriptural reason for a general lack of integrity in human rule and the reason for its many failures. Please look into this publication for the cause and the solution.

Householder: I am too busy.

Publisher: Then do not allow me to consume your time just now. I know what it means to handle my own secular work,

household duties and still do this preaching, and I do not like to be bothered when occupied either. However, please accept this sample copy of one of our magazines. You undoubtedly acquire timesavers for your other important tasks, things you feel you *must* get done. Bible study is really our greatest necessity, since we claim to be Christians; and you will find our literature an invaluable timesaver in this. May I inquire what time might be suitable for me to call again when you would not be so busy?

Householder: I am not interested.

Publisher: I hope you will not think me presumptuous if I say you might be interested in a question nearly all your neighbors have asked me: "Why are there so many religions and which one is right?" This publication traces religious history back to the time when there was but one religion and it helps you identify the religion that God started for man.

Many easier methods of preaching the "good news of the kingdom" than from door to door can be found; but there is none other more essential, none so varied, nor any more joyous. True, it means meeting the scoffer face to face, but this yields the privilege of sharing in the great marking work foretold by Ezekiel. (Ezek. 9) On the other hand, when the sheeplike persons invite you into their homes for Bible study and they come to learn the truth and side with those whose hope is everlasting life in the new world, how they will thank you for coming and how glad they will be that they did not claim to be too self-sufficient, too busy, too sick, too tired, too much opposed or too little interested to hear and accept the only truly good news today!



STRONG REFUGE

"**G**OD is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalm 46, from which those words are taken, was written and preserved for just such a crisis as exists today in the lives of those who watch, pray and hope for the kingdom of God.—1 Cor. 10:11, NW.*

Those who look to human agencies for help are doomed to bitter disappointment. Why? Because the entire system of things under which such human agencies operate is dominated by Satan the Devil and his demons. These invisible forces have no love for their human dupes and devotees; in fact, they are responsible for all the woe and turmoil we find in the world today. (2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:1-12) They will no more be able to furnish protection from God's wrath at Armageddon than they were able to do so at the Flood.

Religious leaders praying to God for peace and prosperity are likewise doomed to disappointment, for all such prayers are contrary to God's will. Why should God go contrary to his announced purposes and give selfish men peace and prosperity just so they can consume it on their selfish desires? So long as such men exist God will not bring peace to the earth.—Isa. 48:22; Jas. 4:2, 3.

If we would receive God's protection and find him a refuge and strength, we must exercise faith in him. We must accept the trouble that his Word foretold would come upon the earth, and while it rages look to God for refuge and strength. We must serve his purpose while making known his purposes to others. "I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no saviour. I have declared, and I have saved, and I have showed; and there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses,

saith Jehovah, and I am God."—Isa. 43:11, 12, AS.

God's Word is filled with examples of how he proved himself a refuge and strength to his people in times past. Jehoshaphat found him such when Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir came up against Judah. Asa found God to be a safe refuge when an Ethiopian army, consisting of a million men and hundreds of chariots, came up against him. Hezekiah likewise found Jehovah a present help when Sennacherib and his hosts threatened to come against Jerusalem.—2 Chron. 20:1-30; 14:9-15; Isa. 37:14-38.

In recent years, particularly since 1918, Jehovah's witnesses have repeatedly found Jehovah to be a refuge and strength. If that were not true they would not be here today, and that in ever-increasing numbers. The most determined and fiendish persecution against them has failed, their persecutors going down while Jehovah's witnesses lived on to renew their strength and to resume their preaching work.—Isa. 40:28-31; Rev. 11:7-12.

Quite likely at Armageddon we shall see cataclysmic forces of destruction operated by God to overwhelm this old world and blot it out. (Ps. 46:2, 3) We may naturally be frightened, as was Moses at Mount Sinai, but we shall not share the world's fear, because we will know that God is controlling the forces of destruction and that he is directing them, not at us, but against his enemies.

Our Christian obligation now is to be fearless in Jehovah's service under the shadow of his mighty hand. So we can keep calm and go peacefully about our work as his ministers of good news knowing that he will never forsake his faithful people, but will help them, "and that right early."

—Ps. 46:5, AS.

* For a detailed discussion of this subject please see *The Watchtower* of March 15, 1951.

Christian Expansion *in the* Arab States

While recently touring Near Eastern and Oriental areas with his secretary in the interests of expanding Christian missionary work, the Society's president, N. H. Knorr, sent this report from the Arab countries.

BEIRUT, Lebanon, on Christmas eve would remind most Americans of New Year's Eve. Brother Henschel and I found that out while trying to sleep there through the night of December 24, 1951. The effort was largely wasted. Not long after the noise had subsided we had to get up in order to catch an early plane to Jerusalem. We had been in Beirut only long enough for a stopover visit with the local Kingdom publishers and some that had come over from Tripoli and points in between. However, we planned an early return to Beirut following an assembly in Ramallah, near Jerusalem.

Because of our traveling in a Lebanese plane our flight to Jerusalem followed a circuitous route. Lebanese and Syrian aircraft do not fly over the modern state of Israel where they would run the risk of being shot at. But we did not mind the extra half-hour this added to our flying time, for the trip afforded a highly interesting study in Biblical geography.

We gained altitude, swept southward over the land once called Tob and on past the territory that God gave to the children of Manasseh on the east side of the Jordan. On the southern tip of the sea of Galilee

we saw the waters going out through the Jordan river toward the Dead sea. The valley is fertile all the way down to the Salt sea, but becoming less and less so as one goes southward. It is easy to see why the ten cities spoken of in the Bible as Decapolis had their location to the east and just south of the sea of Galilee.

I had the opportunity to sit next to the captain in the cockpit, thus gaining an extraordinary view of the territory. Along the northern portion of the Salt sea and to the east of it was the one-time land of Reuben, and below that the lands of Moab and Mount Seir. A few miles to the north of the point where the Jordan flows into the Dead sea the captain pointed out the city of Jericho and the hills that continue to rise until the city of Jerusalem takes its lofty place in the hills of Judah. I could see distinctly the cities of Ramallah, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and in the distant west Jaffa and Tel Aviv. Beyond that was the great Mediterranean.

ASSEMBLY IN RAMALLAH

We landed on a little strip in the hills between Jerusalem and Ramallah and soon made our way into Jerusalem, skirting along the Jordan side of an area near the city known as "No man's land" which separates the states of Israel and Jordan. Then we arranged for a car to take us to the home of the Society's local representative in Beit Jala near Bethlehem south of Jerusalem.

On the way we passed "The Field of the Shepherds", so called in memory of the shepherds who were watching their sheep on the night that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. It is a place not far from the city and they could easily have walked in to see the Lord on the night of his birth. But it could hardly have been on the night of

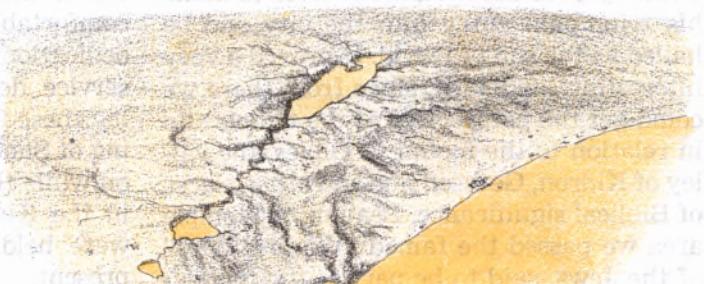
December 24, because on the 25th when we were driving through the region it was prohibitively cold. There were few sheepherds to be seen and little green grass or stubble on which sheep might feed. More harmonious with such known facts is the evidence that Christ was born around the first of October, a point more in keeping, too, with his baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan river, which took place when Jesus had just turned thirty years of age. In October, but certainly not in December, one might expect the temperature of the Jordan's waters to accommodate the baptismal program of John.

Learning in Beit Jala that Brother Kibrossi, whom we sought, had already proceeded to Ramallah for final assembly preparations, we followed at once. That afternoon we located him and discussed the problems affecting Jehovah's witnesses in Jordan. Strange to say, this land, so favored nineteen centuries ago with the birth of Christianity and the first announcement of the glad message, "The kingdom of the heavens is at hand!" is today in sore need of more preachers to advance the cause of pure worship. We told the brothers there of six missionaries on their way from America, two of whom will be assigned to Bethlehem and Beit Jala and four to Ramallah. It developed that five regular Bible studies conducted in the vicinity of Jerusalem have a total attendance of about ninety-five persons. Of this number only twenty-two were actually publishing the Kingdom message.

The next morning forty-nine of us gathered in the front room of one of the brothers' homes for the opening session of our assembly. Brother Chimiklis, a graduate of Gilead, opened with a talk on "The Way of Success".

Brother Henschel next gave good counsel on walking by the spirit and keeping oneself and the organization clean. I followed, basing my remarks on the apostle's strong admonition for all members of the congregation to be ministers, for which reason he had written Christians everywhere to heed the supreme importance of this office, a minister of the Most High. This concluded an enjoyable morning and we turned our attention to the public meeting scheduled at 2 p.m. in the Town Hall.

No printed advertisements or signs had been used to announce the subject, "Will Religion Meet the World Crisis?" Just two hours of activity in this regard now took place, and that only by the brothers' calling on persons of good will known to be interested in the Kingdom message. We were pleasantly surprised, therefore, on arriving at the Town Hall, to find it nearly filled. By the time the talk started listeners were standing in the hallway. Ninety-two in all were present, including the mayor of Ramallah, who afterward said he believed that more of this kind of information should be given to the people of his city. During the concluding session back at the private home, I urged the local publishers to aid the missionaries who would soon be with them to learn the Arabic language, and showed how in turn the missionaries would provide them all with much help in their witnessing work. Explanation of the Society's plans for local organization was eagerly absorbed by this group so inter-



ested in becoming more proficient ministers of the Kingdom.

THE "HOLY CITY", MOSLEM VERSION

With a portion of the next day to ourselves we were anxious to visit the old walled city of Jerusalem and see the location where the temple had been planned by David and built by Solomon. Now considered sacred ground to the Moslems who control it, Christians can enter only between 7:30 and 11:30 a.m., and then by special permission. Central point of interest now is the mosque called The Dome of the Rock, inside which is the highest peak of Mount Moriah, rising about five feet above the floor. The top of the rock bears an expanse approximately thirty feet by twenty feet, around which is a wooden barricade and which is supposed to mark the spot where the Jews' altar of sacrifice had been located. It was on this very Mount Moriah that Abraham brought his son Isaac to offer him in sacrifice to Jehovah as commanded. The spot's interest to Moslems rests in the claim that Mohammed is here supposed to have last touched earth when he ascended to heaven. The part of the rock which allegedly shows his footprint has been cut off and put in a special boxlike shrine with an opening to allow devotees to touch it.

Not far from here is the "Golden Gate" in the walls of Jerusalem through which Jesus and his disciples entered the city when the Lord came down from near Bethany over the mount of Olives to make his triumphal entry into the city and be hailed as the son of David. It proved a very interesting landmark, since from there we could get the perspective of the temple site in relation to the mount of Olives, the valley of Kidron, Gethsemane and other places of Biblical significance. Leaving the temple area we passed the famed "Wailing Wall" of the Jews, said to be part of the founda-

tion of Herod's temple. But there are no more Jews in the walled city to wail at this wall as we saw them doing in 1947. A guide told us that now the Orthodox Jews stand in their State of Israel facing this wall and continue their wailing. We were soon flying back to Lebanon, leaving in our wake this city of wailing, much more a symbol of sorrow than of hope to the diverse religions that have branded it "holy". In the near future the reign of Christ the King will bring the establishment of pure, undefiled worship everywhere on earth, making necessary no pilgrimages here or bloody crusades to wrest one piece of ground from the grasp of its possessors. It was good to know this troubled area was being served by devoted believers in Jehovah's service.

BAPTISM IN THE RAIN

We were on hand for the following day's opening of the convention scheduled for Beirut. Brothers were there from all parts of Lebanon and many from Syria. Conspicuous in the crowds were large numbers of young men and women. The attendance reached 260 by the time of Brother Henschel's talk on Friday evening, December 28. We had a taste of the unusual when the electric power failed in our section of the city about halfway through this address, but Brother Henschel continued without a break. A few candles were brought into action until the lights were restored. On Saturday morning a small outside pool was furnished with warm water to make immersion candidates more comfortable, and twenty symbolized the dedication of themselves to God and his service despite a heavy downpour. During these first two days extensive advertising of Sunday's public meeting was carried on while the attendance continued to grow in the Kingdom Hall, where the sessions were held. By Saturday night 400 were present.

On Sunday, December 30, all activity was transferred to the chapel of the American University, where the public meeting was set for three o'clock. "Will Religion Meet the World Crisis?" was the issue that our advertising had succeeded in making the question of the day in Beirut, and 793 persons came to hear the answer. Their applauses were loud and enthusiastic as one point of argument after another touched them off. At the close of the talk the listeners happily received a new booklet in Arabic, a matter of as much special joy as it was surprise to the brothers, for it meant having new information to use in the field service.

This convention was a gratifying experience in a land where interest in the Kingdom has soared rapidly. A little more than two years ago the Society sent two brothers to Beirut, where a small group of six persons was organized but badly in need of assistance. Now the company has over 100 publishers. Four more missionaries were sent there about a year ago and still another eight arrived three months ago. The latter group is assigned to Tripoli. In 1947, when I last visited Lebanon, there were 99 publishers on the average. In 1951 the average was 301, with a peak of 401, showing plainly the expansion in this land of one and one-half million people.

SYRIA AND ITS PROBLEM MOSLEMS

On Monday, December 31, we got an early start by car for a scheduled visit to Syria. A crisp ride through mountain snows was relieved by a descent into the long valley that boasts Lebanon's most fertile land. It is here that Baalbek is located, which, however, was not on our route. A city had been built there and in Nero's time temples were erected to Jupiter, Bacchus and Venus. Native stone was taken from a nearby quarry in huge slabs and a great center of devil religion was set

up. The ruins still stand to point silently back to the ancient worship of Baal with its base sexual orgies with which the practices there had been associated as well as the pagan worship of Rome. The valley produces fine wines which would lend themselves readily to the drunken ceremonies in honor of Bacchus.

The fertile plain was quickly traversed. Then through the Anti-Lebanon range, the border formalities of Lebanon and Syria, and down the winding road into the city of Damascus. We had a little time to see the city, the modern part of which is very progressive in appearance. Interest carried us to the street called "Straight", mentioned in the Bible, particularly to see the portion of the wall of the old city that contains the window where Paul was supposed to have been let down and made good his escape. (2 Cor. 11:32, 33) There is no doubt that parts of the old wall are still there, but we doubted seriously that the window we saw and which is above the main entrance of a church was the window it pretended to be. It looked much too new to be the same window or, in that portion, the same wall as in Paul's day, because the city had been attacked and wrecked and conquered many times by invaders. Anyway, the window over the front door of the church provides good advertising for that particular church. The account in the Bible is authentic, but one wonders about the authenticity of that particular window.

We waited for the funeral procession of a Moslem priest to pass. Immediately before the coffin walked a man with a husky voice who wailed and cried for the ones that followed after. We were told that he was paid to do this. We noted no women in the procession.

That afternoon from two to four o'clock Brother Henschel and I spoke to forty-five of our brothers, fifteen of whom had come

from Lebanon to encourage those in Syria. The Syrian publishers were overjoyed to hear that the Society would soon try to send missionaries to Damascus to assist them.

The work in Syria faces excellent prospects. It was organized about three years ago with one full-time pioneer minister and nineteen company publishers. Now there are fifty-seven publishers, and a peak of eighty-two was reached last year. Moslem influence, much stronger in Syria than in Lebanon, presents a major problem. It is very difficult to talk to a Moslem about Christ's ransom sacrifice or his being the Messiah. The Moslems hold to a doctrine that sometime someone will come to show them the way and establish a world government on earth. To them Christ is only another prophet and Mohammed a greater prophet. They implicitly follow their Koran and remain adamant toward the Bible. On the other hand, about fifteen per cent of the population is composed of nominal "Christians" who have the Bible in common with Jehovah's witnesses and among these interest is growing, some already having become Kingdom publishers. When we finally had to say good-by to these very friendly brothers we motored away from the skyline dotted by Moslem minarets and returned once again to Beirut.

REJOICING AMID PROGRESS

We were back to begin the new year in Beirut, further discussing matters concerning the work in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, all of which come under the jurisdiction of that office. At midmorning all of the missionaries stationed at Beirut joined us and we went by car to visit the new missionary home in Tripoli. We arrived in time for the midday meal, which was followed by discussing their problems with the Tripoli missionaries. Shortly some of them may be sent to Aleppo in Syria to

help in the expansion of the work there, and when they go they will be replaced in Lebanon by others recently graduated from the Watchtower Bible School of Gil-ead, if such proves to be the Lord's will. There are advantages in sending experienced missionaries to Syria, because these brothers will know more of the Arabic language and will be better able to get along in Syria, where much less English is spoken than in Lebanon.

That night a two-hour meeting was scheduled for the Tripoli company and persons of good will in the vicinity. Some came from other companies too, packing out the Kingdom Hall's main auditorium and adjoining overflow rooms with 302 persons. Between Brother Henschel and me, I had Brother Tuttle the branch servant and Brother Chimiklis talk. These brothers had been the first two missionaries in Lebanon and they spoke now in Arabic. Both did well and the audience was pleased with their efforts. It is hoped that in three months these brothers will be able to serve the companies as circuit servants without interpreters and also give their public talks in the Arabic language. They are going to try hard to do this, and I feel sure that with their efforts and the Lord's blessing they will succeed.

We drove back to Beirut that night because there was a lot to do the next day, finishing our work in the office and getting ready to leave for Karachi, our next stop. Our fellow workers in Lebanon are very enthusiastic and very happy over the progress that has been made in the preaching of the good news during the last few years. They appreciate that the Society has sent missionaries into their midst to help them. They in turn have helped the missionaries by furnishing teachers of the Arabic language from their midst, and all of the missionaries have been grateful for this. The work continues to be blessed by Jehovah.

"Get Out of Her, My People"

"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."—Rev. 18:4, 5, NW.

THERE is a basic rottenness in these last days that has polluted every field of this world's activity. Its politics is corrupt. Its commerce is oppressive. Its military is wasteful. Its religion is hypocritical. Its pleasures often lead to delinquency and immorality, and its sports to foul play and crookedness. The vast majority of the people go along with the world in its rottenness, seeing it, contributing to it, participating in it, indifferent to it, calloused to it, or cynically accepting it. For outward show many practitioners of it make incensed speeches against it, but how many really rise up in wrath to stamp it out? The majority cling to this wicked old world, support it, fight for it, die for it, vote into power its corrupt rulers, and otherwise completely make themselves a part of it. They cast their lot in with this world. With it they sow to the lusts of the flesh. With it they will reap their share of its plagues. Not only is this logical and just; it is Scriptural as well.

² In chapter 18 of Revelation the entire world organization or system of things controlled by Satan the Devil is spoken of as "Babylon the great". Babylon began her fall when her invisible part was hurled earthward by Christ after his enthronement A.D. 1914. (Rev. 12:1-12) At Arma-

geddon the fall of the invisible demon hordes will be completed and will land them in the abyss, and the visible realm of Satan will suffer complete destruction. (Rev. 19:11-21; 20:1-3) But some will escape the fiery judgments that consume her. How? By a later resurrection in the millennial reign of Christ? Not according to the record: "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, 5, 8, NW.

³ Her plagues are destruction, fiery and final. The Babylonish organization will never be resurrected or raised up from her destructive baptism of fire. If this is her plague, and if those who remain in her share it, how can we contend that those individuals undergoing fire baptism with her will rise in the resurrection of mankind? We cannot do so Scripturally. The plain statement is that the fate of individuals remaining within the organization is the same as that of the organization itself. If the individuals return, the organization

1. What conclusion is both logical and Scriptural?
2. How must we escape the plagues upon Babylon the great?

3. What are the plagues? So what logically follows?

will; but if the organization does not, neither will the individuals once within it. The way to salvation is flight now, before its fall: "Get out of her!" Israelite captives in ancient Babylon were instructed to flee that wicked system: "Away! away! go out thence; touch nothing unclean! Go out of the midst of her; keep yourselves pure, you who bear the vessels of the LORD!" "Go out of the midst of her, O my people! Save everyone his life from the fierce anger of the LORD." (Isa. 52:11; Jer. 51:45, AT) Revelation 18:4 shows the same instruction holds true at the time of greater Babylon's fall.

⁴ Most persons view things from the human standpoint, and for that reason attach too much importance to the salvation of creatures. That is only a secondary purpose for the release of Babylon's prisoners. Jehovah's view of matters is what counts, and it shows the primary reason for the release: "I do not this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for my holy name, which ye have profaned among the nations, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which hath been profaned among the nations, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations shall know that I am Jehovah, saith the Lord Jehovah, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land." (Ezek. 36:22-24, AS) On different occasions in the wilderness Jehovah was going to destroy Israel, but Moses pleaded with Jehovah and prevailed upon him to spare them. On what grounds? The salvation of creatures? No, but for the sake of Jehovah's great name. (Ex. 32:9-14; Num. 14:11-24; 16:44-50; Deut. 9:18, 26-29; Ezek. 20:9) How important to us is the salvation of grasshoppers? We are as

grasshoppers in God's sight. (Isa. 40:22) So we must make God's thoughts our thoughts, if we are to see in clear focus and true perspective Jehovah's destructive acts at the end of judgment periods. If we persist in tenaciously clinging to the self-centered human view that focuses on creature salvation and leaves Jehovah's vindication in the hazy, out-of-focus background, we may find the Scriptural teaching a hard saying unwelcome to our ears, and be offended and stumbled by it.—Isa. 55:8, 9; John 6:60, 66.

⁵ It is likely that for the majority of men who have lived on the earth the time of their judgment will be in the millennial reign of Christ, at the time of the resurrection of mankind and thereafter. However, long before this many persons will have had their time of judgment, as the Scriptures show that God has brought certain judgment periods upon human society at certain times, during which God held them accountable for their course of action. That they might be really accountable at such times, he caused testimony to be given that they might know the issue and make their decision, by which they would determine their destiny, independent of any inherited condemnation from Adam. One of such judgment periods was the flood of Noah's day, prior to which Noah preached righteousness. Another was the fiery end of Sodom and Gomorrah, which cities saw warning miracles by angels and heard testimony from Lot before the rain of fire fell. In Jesus' day it was a time of judgment and he warned certain Jewish cities of a fate like that upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and judged certain scribes and Pharisees fit for the eternal destruction of Gehenna. Our present day is also a time of judgment, and by the time Armageddon strikes all persons then living will have fixed their destiny.

4. In contrast with a human view, what is the correct view on release of Babylon's prisoners?

5. What judgment periods are here mentioned?

DOWNPOURS OF WATER AND FIRE

⁶ We can learn much about this present judgment period by considering past ones pictorial of our day. The first was the Noachian flood. Jesus declared it was a picture of the present judgment period: "Just as it occurred in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of man: they were eating, they were drinking, men were marrying, women were being given in marriage, until that day when Noah entered into the ark, and the flood arrived and destroyed them all." (Luke 17:26, 27, NW) Why were they destroyed? Because of their corruption: "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man on the earth was great, and that the whole bent of his thinking was never anything but evil." Hence Jehovah determined: "I will blot the men that I have created off the face of the ground, both men and animals, reptiles, and birds of the air; for I regret that I ever made them." Noah was to escape. Why? "Noah alone among his contemporaries was a pious and exceedingly good man; Noah walked with God." That the destruction of the others was a final judgment executed against them is shown by Jehovah's forceful words to Noah: "I have resolved on the extermination of all mortals; for the earth is full of wrong-doing through them; I am going to exterminate them from the earth. But with you I will make a covenant; you shall enter the ark, accompanied by your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives."—Gen. 6:5, 7, 9, 13, 18, AT.

⁷ Not only is this final destruction made sure by God's use of the expression "exterminate" and Jesus' use of "destroyed", but also 2 Peter 2:5-9 (NW) establishes it: "He did not hold back from punishing an

6. Why consider the Noachian flood? What were the facts?

7. How does Peter show the destructions of the flood and at Sodom were final?

ancient world, but kept Noah, a preacher of righteousness, safe with seven others when he brought a deluge upon a world of ungodly people; and by reducing the cities Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them, setting a pattern for ungodly persons of things to come, and he delivered righteous Lot, who was greatly distressed by the indulgence of the law-defying people in loose conduct—for 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—Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial, but to reserve unrighteous people for the day of judgment to be cut off." Peter cited these ancient examples of cutting-off to show the fate of false prophets and false teachers in the Christian congregation, who brought in destructive sects and disowned Christ, and who thereby were "bringing speedy destruction upon themselves". Who will contend that the destruction of such defilers of the Christian congregation is not final? The ancient destructions upon Noah's contemporaries and Sodom and Gomorrah must be just as final, else how could they illustrate the one Peter was discussing?—2 Pet. 2:1-4, NW.

⁸ After showing the flood typical of the present judgment period, Jesus proceeded to show Sodom and Gomorrah pictorial of it also: "Just as it occurred in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building. But on the day that Lot came out of Sodom it rained fire and sulphur from heaven and destroyed them all. The same way it will be on that day when the Son of man is to be revealed." (Luke 17:28-30, NW) Our previous consideration of 2 Peter 2:5-9 has shown that those destroyed by God at Sod-

8. Why is Sodom's case vital, and what else shows its destruction final?

om and Gomorrah are eternally "cut off". Corroborating this is Jude 7, which states that these cities are "placed before us as a warning example by undergoing the judicial punishment of everlasting fire". (NW) "Everlasting fire" symbolizes the same thing as Gehenna, namely, second death. The destruction upon Sodom and Gomorrah must be final, or Jude would not have used it to illustrate the fate of those defilers for whom "the blackness of darkness stands reserved forever". (Jude 13, NW)

Jude 7 shows that those ancient cities had their judgment day back there at the time of their destruction, since they are spoken of as having already undergone an execution of judgment, "the judicial punishment of everlasting fire." By no wresting of scripture can this be made to mean a future resurrection for slain of the Lord. No remnant was saved from those cities, Lot and his daughters being sojourners, not natives.—Rom. 9:29, NW.

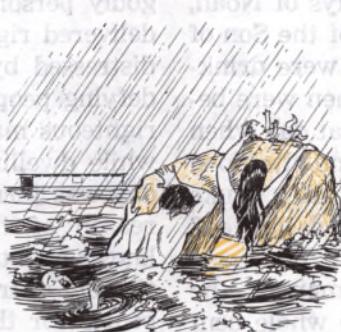
⁹ If those slain by the Lord at Sodom have no resurrection, then those slain by him at Armageddon will have none, for the former pictures the latter. So in their endeavor to prove their contention that not all slain at Armageddon will remain dead, some seek to show that the Sodomites destroyed by fire will return in a resurrection. They quote Ezekiel 16:53-55: "When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them: that thou mayest bear thine own shame, and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done, in

that thou art a comfort unto them. When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate."

¹⁰ The context shows that restoration after captivity, not resurrection in the millennium, is being discussed. In a miniature fulfillment came the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem after 70 years of desolation (607-537 B.C.), when Jews and Nethinim and other foreigners returned to inhabit

the land. The greater restoration started in Jesus' day and continues now. When Jesus came the Jews were in captivity to the Devil's organization, Babylon the great. Captives of Rome politically, captives of sin, captives of false religion. But when Jesus came, preached, died, was resurrected, appeared in heaven with his sacrificial merit, provided the basis for redemption, poured out the holy spirit upon a faithful Jewish remnant who sought redemption in his name, illuminated their minds to freedom-giving truths and released them from bondage to antitypical Babylon, then they were restored to the theocratic organization of Jehovah God. For three and a half years after Pentecost the freeing message was confined to the Jews, and a remnant was restored. All this was in fulfillment of Ezekiel 16:53-55, where it speaks of the restoration of Jerusalem and her daughters.

¹¹ When persecution grew intense and believing Jewish Christians were scattered, they went everywhere preaching. The evangelist Philip went to Samaria, where



9. Why and how do some try to show Sodom's destruction not final?

10. What fulfills Ezekiel's prophecy about the restoration of Jerusalem and her daughters?

11. When were "Samaria and her daughters" restored?

Jesus had preached some time previous. Many of the Samaritans believed, more preachers were sent to them, and the holy spirit descended upon them. They were brought into God's congregation. There, as represented in that Samaritan remnant, Ezekiel 16:53-55 was fulfilled.—John 4:39-42; Acts 8:1-25.

¹² Then the gospel went to the Gentiles. The Jews thought of them as dogs. (Matt. 15:26, 27; Mark 7:27, 28) Dogs were unclean animals, viewed as sexually depraved, and linked in with sodomy: "There shall be no prostitute of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a sodomite of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog, into the house of Jehovah thy God for any vow: for even both these are an abomination unto Jehovah thy God." (Deut. 23:17, 18, AS) The female prostitute's gain is likened to the hire of a harlot, and the male sodomist's gain is likened to the wages of a dog. Instead of "dog" *An American Translation* uses "male prostitute" and Moffatt's version uses "catamite", which means a boy kept for unnatural purposes. These sexual depravities were flagrant in Sodom, the base sin of sodomy taking its name from that city. So all this shows how the Jews associated Sodom and dogs and Gentiles.

¹³ To buttress this view of matters note the following quotation from the introductory material of volume 7 of *The Interpreter's Bible*, published last year. The first paragraph under "Morality", beginning on page 80, reads: "The moral life of the pagan world was often referred to by

early Christian writers whose view of the morality of the time was a stereotyped one inherited from their Jewish predecessors. Both Jewish and Christian authors agreed that the Gentiles were morally degenerate. The Old Testament story of Sodom and Gomorrah, on which the Lord had rained down fire and brimstone, represents the Hebrew attitude toward pagan wickedness, whether of Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, Assyrians, Babylonians, or Romans."

¹⁴ The apostle Peter had this view of Gentiles as being sodomic and doglike, and that is why it was so hard for him to grasp God's purpose for him to take the gospel to the Gentiles. Yet when he did understand he obeyed, and God poured out his spirit on Gentile believers, receiving them into the same restored congregation along with believing Jews and Samaritans. (Acts 10:9-48) When the faithful Jewish remnant saw uncircumcised Gentiles, whom they had previously viewed as dogs and Sodomites, restored with them they

felt some shame. They had thought the Jews specially holy and that God would use only Jews to make up Messiah's bride. Now they learn they are not so important or holy, but that God makes worthy for the Kingdom not only Samaritans but also uncircumcised Gentiles. Thus fulfillment of



Ezekiel 16:53-55 was started off in early Christian times. Ezekiel did not mean literal Sodom, no more than did Isaiah when he called Israel Sodom, or did John when he wrote that Jesus died in Sodom. (Isa. 1:10; Rev. 11:8) Ezekiel used it symbolically for uncircumcised Gentiles, and when

12. What shows how the Jews linked Sodom and dogs and Gentiles?
13. What quotation supports this view?

14. So how did the restoration take in "Sodom and her daughters"?

discussing restoration of the theocratic organization, not resurrection.

JUDGMENT UPON ISRAEL IN JESUS' DAY

¹⁵ Another judgment period is brought into view when those championing resurrection for exterminated Sodomites quote Jesus' words on a certain occasion. He had reproached the unrepentant Jewish cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida, which had witnessed many of his powerful works, then said: "And you, Capernaum, will you perhaps be exalted to heaven? Down to Hades you will come; because if the powerful works that took place in you had taken place in Sodom, it would have remained until this very day. Consequently I say to you people, It will be more durable for the land of Sodom on Judgment Day than for you." (Matt. 10:14, 15; 11:20-24; Luke 10:10-15, NW) From this some argue that there is a future judgment, in the millennial reign, for both Sodom and these Jewish cities.

¹⁶ If we take this expression to mean that, then it would contradict Jude's statement that Sodom had already undergone the "judicial punishment of everlasting fire". Actually, Jesus was using a form of speech construction common in Biblical times. He used a similar construction when he said: "It is easier, in fact, for a camel to get through the eye of a sewing needle than for a rich man to get into the kingdom of God." (Luke 18:25, NW) No sane person would believe a camel could squeeze through a needle's eye. Yet if this obviously impossible thing were said to be easier than something else, would that not powerfully emphasize the utter impossibility of the other thing? So Jesus forcefully made the point that rich ones loath to part with their wealth would not enter the kingdom.

15. Why do some argue for a future judgment for both Sodom and the Jews of Jesus' day?

16. What did Jesus mean when he said judgment would be more durable for Sodom than certain Jewish cities?

Similarly, Sodom did not endure its judgment day, had failed completely, and the Jews knew its fate was sealed. Their opinion of Sodom was the lowest possible. So when Jesus told them that it would be more durable for utterly depraved Sodom than for these Jewish cities they got the powerful point.

¹⁷ These Jewish cities had heard the warning and had seen powerful works; they had had their fair judgment trial and by their decision showed they were worthy of eternal destruction. (Matt. 10:5-15; Luke 10:8-12; John 12:37, NW) By witnessing miraculous cures performed by the power of the holy spirit and yet refusing to accept the message, the inhabitants of these cities were sinning against the holy spirit, which is the unforgivable sin meriting second death. They ranged themselves alongside the Pharisees who saw Jesus heal a demon-possessed man, but refused to accept this manifest operation of the holy spirit. Because of this Jesus told them they would never have forgiveness, neither in the present system of things nor in the next, the new world. Being judged adversely, unforgivable in both the old world and the new world, it would be useless to resurrect them in the millennium. Jesus pronounced judgment against them: "Serpents, offspring of vipers, how are you to flee from the judgment of Gehenna?" If the blind religious leaders were to land there, so were their blind Jewish followers. And when the false religious leaders converted some heathen they did not bring him into the true worship that would cleanse him of his past sins against God, but merely added to his past sins the religious sinfulness and hypocrisy which they taught him, doubling his burden of guilt. Thus the proselyte became twice as much a "subject for Gehenna" as the scribes and

17. Why would it be useless to resurrect the Jewish clergy, their Jewish followers, and their Gentile converts?

Pharisees.—Matt. 12:22-32; 15:14; 23:15, 33, NW.

^{br}¹⁸ Nor is the fact that the judgment day for natural Israel was nineteen centuries ago denied by Jesus' words: "Men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it; because they repented at what Jonah preached, but, look! something more than Jonah is here. The queen of the south will be raised up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it; because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, but, look! something more than Solomon is here." (Matt. 12:41, 42; Luke 11:31, 32, NW) This does not mean the Ninevites and the queen of the south will confront the Jews of Jesus' day in the millennium judgment period. Why that, just to condemn those Jews, and for something they did in their former existence? In the millennium persons will be judged on the basis of what they do then, not what they did in a previous existence. Yet these Jews are adversely judged and condemned because nineteen centuries ago, back in their lifetime, during their judgment period, they rejected one more than Jonah and more than Solomon, namely Messiah Christ. They have no second chance in a second judgment period, in the millennium.

¹⁹ What Jesus meant was that the Jews of his day were condemned by the example of the repentant Ninevites, which example was recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures and confronted those Jews during their then judgment period. In the same way the record of the queen of the south stood up to confront the unrepentant Jews. Such Gentiles heeded mere men such as Jonah and Solomon; the covenant nation of Jews would not heed even their Messiah. Before their judgment period was over, those

Jews were literally confronted by Gentiles like the Ninevites and the queen of the south, Gentiles of their day who repented and became a part of the bride of Christ. The Jews judged themselves unworthy of life. (Acts 13:44-50, NW) Abel did not have to be alive for his blood to cry out from the ground in condemnation of Cain, and his course of integrity and the record of it speaks, even though Abel is dead. (Gen. 4:10; Heb. 11:4) Similarly, the course of the Ninevites and the queen of the south, and the record of it, could rise and speak in condemnation of the Jews during their judgment period back there.

²⁰ To argue against that time's being a judgment period for the Jews some quote Jesus' words: "If anyone hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him, for I came, not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that disregards me and does not receive my sayings has one to judge him. The word which I have spoken is what will judge him in the last day; because I have not spoken out of my own impulse, but the Father himself that sent me has given me a commandment as to what to tell and what to speak." (John 12:47-49, NW) It was not a judgment period for the world, but it was for the Jews. Jesus did not have to judge even them. The words he spoke did, and they were not his, but God's. They brought enlightenment and responsibility, and the Jews' reaction to them indicated their position regarding the Messiah and their standing in judgment. (Deut. 18:18, 19; John 3:18-21; Heb. 4:12) The texts that we have considered sound as though the judgment of the Jews was future, and this one speaks of them as being judged "in the last day". When Jesus spoke of the judgment of the Jews in his day the bulk of that period was future, it

18. Why is it illogical to argue that Matthew 12:41, 42 means a resurrection for those Jews?

19. What do those words of Jesus mean?

20. Why does John 12:47-49 not deny it was a judgment period for the Jews then? and why could Jesus speak of the judgment as future?

was barely starting when he spoke. The last days of it did not come until A.D. 70, nearly forty years later. Then is when the judgment period of the nation of natural Israel reached its climactic end, when Jehovah used Titus to execute the judgments that had been accumulating for the past forty years.

^{b1} Now some will object that this calamity befell only those Jews in Jerusalem, where Titus laid siege. They will ask, Wherein did judgment come against the other Jewish cities, such as those Galilean cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum that Jesus pronounced woes against? Such inquirers are unacquainted with the historical record. The Roman legions swept through Galilee with such destructiveness that Josephus writes: "Galilee was all over filled with fire and blood; nor was it exempted from any kind of misery or calamity." More specifically, when judgment day struck Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum it was not at all endurable for those cities. They passed out of existence and no one definitely knows where they were even located, it being a debated matter. Also we must remember that the final siege of Titus against Jerusalem started at Passover time A.D. 70, and hence caught in the city with the regular inhabitants were Jews from all Palestine that still clung to the Mosaic Law in rejection of Messiah and the new covenant. Among them would be many residents of Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum.

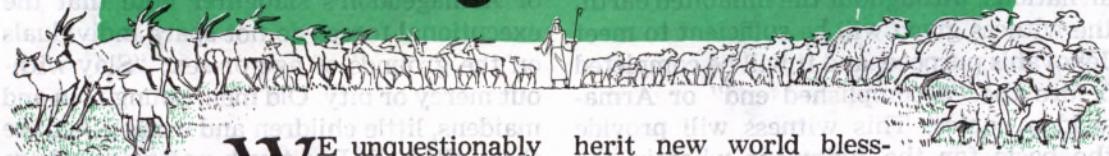
21. How did the Galilean cities Jesus condemned come under the execution of judgment A.D. 70?

^{a22} In Jesus' day the Jewish system of things entered its "time of the end", particularly after his death on the stake and Jehovah's nailing of the Law to the stake in cancellation of its power and operation. But the actual end of the temple service and its priesthood and sacrifices did not come until A.D. 70. Then was its accomplished end, though the temple service was no more effective with God immediately after Jesus' death and resurrection and ascension. That was the nation of natural Israel's "time of the end", and when Jerusalem's fall came those who had not heeded Jesus' warning to flee to the mountains had judgment executed against them, with finality. Then was accomplished a partial and miniature fulfillment of Jesus' famous prophecy of Matthew 24. Major and complete fulfillment comes in our day, is now in progress. Satan's world entered its "time of the end" A.D. 1914. There its license and authority to rule ended as far as Jehovah was concerned, though it remains for a time, until its accomplished end, just as did the Jewish system of things. This present satanic system is in its judgment period, and execution will come in this generation, at Armageddon. That execution of judgment against nations and individuals will be just as final as were the executions at the end of the typical judgment periods of times past, such as the Noachian flood, the rain of fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, and the destruction wrought on natural Israel A.D. 70.

22. How was the Jewish judgment period a miniature fulfillment of Matthew 24? How is our time the major fulfillment?

²³ Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah; who swear by the name of Jehovah, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness. . . . Go ye forth from Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans; with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth: say ye, Jehovah hath redeemed his servant Jacob. And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts; he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them; he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out. There is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked.—Isa. 48:1, 2, 20-22, AS.

Fixing Destinies in This Judgment Period



WE unquestionably enter a judgment period upon the second presence of Christ. Judgment began at the house of God, cleansed the anointed remnant of Babylonish filth, released them from Babylonish bondage, enabled them to flee greater Babylon to escape sharing in her plagues. They were freed to preach, to herald the establishment of the heavenly kingdom, to sound a warning of the impending "accomplished end": "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for the purpose of a witness to all the nations, and then the accomplished end will come." (Matt. 24:14, 21, 22; 1 Pet. 4:17, NW) This enlightenment brought responsibility and laid a foundation for judgment: "Now this is the basis for judgment, that the light has come into the world." (John 3:19-21, NW) Hence the judgment that started at the house of God spread to take in all peoples of all nations, as Jesus had said it would at his second presence: "When the Son of man arrives in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will put the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left." The sheep who showed kindness to Christ's brothers in-

herit new world blessings, but the goats who refused kindness to them go off "into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels". Christ's judgment is: "These will depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the righteous ones into everlasting life." The goats remain in greater Babylon and share her plagues; the sheep belong to God and live by heeding the command: "Get out of her, my people."—Matt. 25:31-46, NW.

² This judgment period will be completed during this generation, and when the execution of judgment starts at Armageddon the destinies of all persons then living will have been fixed. Some become perturbed over this, and speculate on the existence of a third class not separated into sheep and goat categories, and which will be resurrected in the millennium for its judgment period. Into this third class they would put all babes and children, and any adults not reached by the Kingdom message by the time Armageddon strikes. Such speculators can produce no solid Scriptural support for their theory. It seems to be spawned either by human sentiment over creature salvation or by a negative, defeatist attitude toward a successful completion of the preaching work. Or by both.

³ Jehovah's Word states that the Kingdom message "will be preached in all the inhabited earth for the purpose of a wit-

1. What has been the progress of the present judgment period?

2. What speculation is advanced, and on what grounds?

3, 4. Why is the theory of a third class unsound?

ness to all the nations". Will his word return void? his purpose unfulfilled? No; even the stones would cry out to prevent that! (Isa. 46:11; 55:11; Luke 19:40) To all nations, throughout the inhabited earth, the witness given will be sufficient to meet Jehovah's purpose, and it will be completed before the "accomplished end" or Armageddon comes. This witness will provide the basis for the judgment wherein the people of all nations are separated into sheep and goat classes, by Christ Jesus. Will Christ the Judge do a halfway job? Will he fail to complete the job outlined for him, and have an unforetold third class left over that he failed to separate? Or will he complete the dividing work Jehovah committed to him, and separate the people of all nations into just the two foretold classes, and thereby accomplish the divine purpose and fulfill the divine word?

⁴ This judgment period from 1914 to Armageddon is set aside for this separation work and is a part of the sign that we are in "the time of the end". Will Christ loiter at the separation work, so that he will have to finish it in a future judgment day, and fail to fully provide this part of the sign? Some argue that the parable of the sheep and goats applies on into the millennium. They ignore the fact that the separation is complete before the sheep inherit the new world blessings of the millennial reign, that this separation takes place when he arrives, not centuries thereafter. Nations exist; there will be no such divisions along national lines in the new world. The judgment work assigned to this period must be completed before execution starts at Armageddon. Judgment at the house of God was completed, not left half done; so will it be with the judgment of the nations during the same judgment period.

⁵ In harmony with the illustration of the

sheep and goats, Ezekiel 9:4-6 (AT) shows but two classes, those marked for preservation and the unmarked ones appointed to destruction. And in this prophetic picture of Armageddon's slaughter note that the executional forces do not spare individuals on the grounds of age or sex: "Slay without mercy or pity. Old men, young men and maidens, little children and women—strike them all dead! But touch no one on whom is the mark." Note that in this picture the ones preserved are those who did "sigh and cry for all the abominations" done in the land in reproach of Jehovah's true worship. In the parable of sheep and goats the ones preserved showed favor toward Christ's brothers. In both cases the ones destroyed were those who remained indifferent or neutral as well as opposers. Christ Jesus, during the judgment period when he was on earth, laid down the principle for such times: "He that is not on my side is against me, and he that does not gather with me scatters." (Matt. 12:30, NW) No room remains for a third class.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY

⁶ Since Ezekiel 9:4-6 shows that some "little children" are in the class eternally destroyed at Armageddon, on what basis are they put in that class in view of the fact that they are too young to be held accountable for themselves? The Scriptures indicate a family responsibility or a family merit under which the destiny of irresponsible children is determined. Scriptural examples of this principle will help meek and teachable ones mold their minds to fit in with God's view on this matter, will help them get God's thoughts on it rather than stubbornly clinging to their own. Theirs are not only fallible but also immaterial, since Jehovah's are the ones that fix the

5. How do Ezekiel's prophecy and Jesus' words leave no room for a third class?

6. What principle operates for the classifying of small children?

principles that determine the outcome of the matter.

⁷ When Dathan and Abiram rebelled against Jehovah's theocratic arrangement in the wilderness the earth swallowed them up. But not them alone, for the record shows that along with them perished "their wives, and their sons, and their little children". (Num. 16:23-33; Deut. 11:6) Did not Achan by his greed bring death not only to himself but to his sons and daughters as well, his entire household and possessions being destroyed with him? (Josh. 7:24-26) Did not David's sin result in his offspring's death? (2 Sam. 12:15-18) Ham's trespass brought a curse upon his son Canaan. (Gen. 9:22-27) King Saul's descendants suffered for his sins. (2 Sam. 21:1-9) Also, the Mosaic Law stated that the iniquities of the parents should be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

⁸ At a time of judgment Jesus said: "If, then, a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit." (Matt. 15:14, NW) That means not only clergy and laity but also parent and child. If a parent chooses to sin against the holy spirit despite the eternal interests of his offspring, that then becomes the responsibility of the parent. We have seen how the destructions at the time of the Flood and at the time of the fiery downpour on Sodom and Gomorrah were final. No small children were preserved in the ark; they must have been slain by Jehovah. Many babes and youngsters must have been in Sodom and Gomorrah, but their youthful innocence did not cause Jehovah to count them righteous. The presence of ten righteous ones would have saved the cities. There were certainly more than ten unresponsible children. Along with their unrighteous parents they were slain by Jehovah.—Gen. 18:20-33; 19:1-26.

^{7, 8. What Scriptural examples establish the principle?}

⁹ This principle of family responsibility also works in reverse, in what we might call family merit. Israelite firstborns were spared in the tenth plague because the family heads obeyed Jehovah's command to spatter the Passover lamb's blood on the doorposts. (Ex. 12:7, 13) Mephibosheth was spared because he was the son of Jonathan. (2 Sam. 21:7) Rahab's wise course resulted in the preservation of her family. (Josh. 2:12-14) It was partly out of regard for Abraham that his nephew Lot was favored, and the angels that visited Sodom were, for Lot's sake, going to allow him to take his relatives to safety with him. Their refusal and subsequent destruction shows that there must be co-operation with the family head if family merit is to be realized. (Gen. 19:12-14, 29) Of special interest to parents in these last days are Paul's words: "The unbelieving husband is sanctified in relation to his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in relation to the brother; otherwise, your children would really be unclean, but now they are holy." (1 Cor. 7:14, NW) "Jehovah knows those who belong to him," and that also means little children at Armageddon whose parents belong to Jehovah and who try to rear them according to God's Word.—Deut. 6:6, 7; Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:19, NW.

¹⁰ These facts should make those of Jehovah's witnesses who are parents soberly reflect on the theocratic training they now give their children. Parents are commanded to instruct their children in God's ways, and if in these last days parents fail to heed the divine instructions they may bring destruction not only upon themselves but upon their small children at Armageddon. And if these small children become grown and responsible on their own before Armageddon strikes, the parental training may determine whether they choose the course

9. How does this principle work for the salvation of children?

10. Why is proper parental training of children so vital?

of life or death. (Prov. 22:6) There comes a time when the maturing children shoulder the responsibility for themselves, having reached an age of accountability and responsibly choosing the course they will follow. They then come out from under family responsibility or merit and under the principle of personal responsibility: "The person who sins shall die. A son is not to suffer for his father's iniquity, nor a father for his son's iniquity; the good man shall be credited with his own goodness, and the wicked man with his own wickedness."—Ezek. 18:20, Mo.

¹¹ Some will argue that this text disproves the belief that small children will perish with their wicked parents at the end of judgment periods. But this text is not applicable to youngsters. The setting clearly shows that the son being discussed is grown, and not a small child. The preceding verses say that if a man is doing what is lawful and right he will live. If he begets a son that is violent, sexually depraved, oppressive of the poor and needy, a robber and an idolater, that wicked son will die for his iniquity. If the son shuns all these sins and does right, helps the poor, commits no crime, keeps God's law, that son will live, whether his father be good or wicked. Each is on his own, being of the age of personal responsibility. Then all this is summed up in verse 20, above quoted. The verses that follow show that if the wicked son or father forsakes his evil-doing and does right he will live, and that if the good son or father turns evil he dies

for it. Now, what infant or small child could commit the sexual depravities or crimes or religious idolatries mentioned, or do the good works cited, or be able to weigh his course of action and decide to change it? The setting rules out any application of Ezekiel 18:20 to small children. So when of necessity young children come in for classification during a judgment period it is done on the basis of parental responsibility, and not personal responsibility.



¹² Ezekiel 18:20 links father and son the way it does because in those olden days fully grown sons often remained in their father's household and under his headship; and this sometimes even after they were married. As long as they remained in their father's household they acknowledged his headship, but they did not stand or fall in God's sight on the basis of their father's conduct, in the way they once did when small. Though still in his household, they were accountable for themselves. They chose their own course relative to right and wrong. Recall that in the wilderness rebellion the offspring of Dathan and Abiram perished with their fathers, but that the sons of Korah did not die with him. (Num. 26:9-11) Apparently Korah's sons had reached the age of responsibility and did not follow their father in rebellion.

COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

¹³ In view of the eternalness of the destruction of those slain by Jehovah at Armageddon, some will ask about those who

12. Why does the text link father and son the way it does?

13. What examples establish the principle of community responsibility?

11. Why is Ezekiel 18:20 inapplicable to children? What does it show?

may not personally hear the message, especially in some lands that prohibit the witness work. In addition to family responsibility the Bible shows a communal or community responsibility, where a community upholds or goes along with rulers that persecute Jehovah's people or are otherwise wicked. Did not the Egyptians suffer plagues because of Pharaoh's hardness? (Ex. 5:1, 2; 9:13-16) Did not the Amalekites suffer for generations afterward because of Amalek's opposition to Israel in the wilderness? (Ex. 17:8, 14, 16) King Saul brought trouble on Israel years after his death. (2 Sam. 21:1) David's sins brought punishment upon the people. (2 Sam. 12:10-23; 24:10-17) Some relate some of this to ruler punishment rather than community responsibility, but it does show how the sins of one can affect many. It was unquestionably community responsibility when Achan trespassed and brought a military defeat on Israel. (Josh. 7:5, 13-21) Wicked men brought destruction upon the entire city of Gibeah, and those who supported Gibeah or merely refrained from helping punish her suffered with her. (Judg. 19:22-30; 20:40; 21:9, 10) Because King Jehoram of Judah deflected from God the nation went wrong and was punished. (2 Chron. 21:11-15) If idolatry started in a city in Israel and corrupted the inhabitants the city was destroyed. And other examples could be given. (Gen. 12:17; 20:9, 17; 26:10; Deut. 13:12-18) Matthew 10:14, 15, 23 shows households or cities that are unreceptive to the message will find judgment day unendurable. The principle applies on a national scale also.

¹⁴ The people must accept responsibility for the nation's acts. If the government becomes too oppressive against them they oust it, by either ballots or bullets. But wickedness against God they placidly toler-

ate. To them personal convenience and liberty are more precious than godliness. They revolt from harsh rulers, but support godless ones. They lack the burning love for righteousness and the devouring hate for wickedness that would consume the corruption and immorality now rampant in all human governments. Rulers and ruled wallow in the trough of an international moral breakdown. (2 Tim. 3:1-5) Nations operate according to the principle of community responsibility. Rulers may start wars, but the people fight them. It is upon the people generally, young and old, male and female, that the enemy nation rains destruction, and not upon the wicked rulers. The nations in their wars sow death on the basis of community responsibility. Will it not be just for them to reap it on the same basis at Armageddon? Can they rightly complain if they reap as they sow, are judged as they judged, are shown the same mercy they showed? If the people either actively or passively support what is corrupt and immoral and murderous, do they not bear some responsibility therefor?

—Matt. 5:7; 7:1, 2; Gal. 6:7; Jas. 2:13.

¹⁵ When the Israelites wanted a human king they were warned of the oppressions it would bring upon them. (1 Sam. 8:4-22) But they insisted on having human government, and rightly bore responsibility for the evil-doing of the human king, since they were responsible for his being put in a position where his flagrant sins were possible on a national scale. Today people vote into office politicians known to be corrupt, and thus empower them to capitalize on evil-doing. That the people must bear the responsibility before God is shown not only in Israel's case above mentioned but by Paul's counsel to Timothy about appointments in the Christian congregation: "Never lay your hands hastily upon any

14. Why can peoples of nations not complain if God operates on the principle of community responsibility?

15. Why must the people accept responsibility for their rulers' acts?

man; neither be a sharer in the sins of others; preserve yourself pure." In addition to being warned against hasty appointments, Timothy was told what qualities to require of appointees to service positions. (1 Tim. 3:1-13; 5:22; 2 John 10, 11, NW) Why all this precaution? So that he might avoid being "a sharer in the sins of others". If he made improper appointments he would become responsible for the sins of such appointees, since he put them in position to commit their sins that hurt the congregation in God's sight. So the people who either vote wicked rulers into office or allow them to remain in power must accept responsibility for such rulers' official acts and sins against God and man.

¹⁶ Actually, the majority of the people today lack a love for right and hate for wrong. They know the world is corrupt to the core. Yet they are apparently satisfied with it. At least they stick with it, and scoff when Jehovah's witnesses expose it. They seem to "love to have it so". (Jer. 5:31; 6:13) The corruption around them gives license to their own lusts, deadens any feeble protests of anemic consciences, scuttles any remaining scruples. They fear only punishment, not evil-doing: "Because the sentence upon an evil deed is not quickly executed, therefore the minds of the sons of men are fully determined to do evil." (Eccl. 8:11, AT) They do not zealously "seek righteousness", nor do they "sigh and cry" because of any offended sense of righteousness, but only when wrongs curb or halt their pursuit of selfish ends. (Ezek. 9:4; Zeph. 2:3) They are repelled by Jehovah's message because it demands a separation from this corrupt, immoral, pleasure-mad world.

¹⁷ They are not like Noah was, for he was repelled by his fellow man whose "whole bent of his thinking was never any-

thing but evil". They are not like Lot was, for "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". They are not like those who are marked for preservation at Armageddon, who "sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done". They are not like men of good will toward God today who gladly separate from the world because they have nothing in common with its corruption. (Gen. 6:5; Ezek. 9:4, AT; Jas. 1:27; 4:4; 2 Pet. 2:8, NW) They do not have to hear a specific message from God to be repelled by this world's wickedness; not if they love right and hate wrong. Even without God's Word men by nature and by conscience can note right and wrong. (Rom. 2:12-16) Those with honest hearts will sicken of this world, and more so as we advance toward Armageddon, for right up to that time "wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse, misleading and being misled". —2 Tim. 3:13, NW.

¹⁸ Some argue that ignorance is an excuse that will gain a resurrection for many of Armageddon's slain, such as those perishing because of community responsibility. They will cite Paul's case. That former persecutor said: "I was shown mercy, because I was ignorant and acted with a lack of faith." But he was shown this mercy during a judgment period, and did not spurn it. He used it to eliminate his ignorance and build up his faith. This show of mercy was also for another reason, to demonstrate divine long-suffering. (1 Tim. 1:12-16, NW) So to say Paul was saved because of his ignorance is wrong. Because he acted in ignorance repentance was possible for him, he had not unforgivably sinned against knowledge or the manifestation of the holy spirit. The world is full

16. What is lacking in the majority of people today?

17. Who are they unlike? What will honest ones do even without a specific message from God?

18. How do some argue concerning ignorance, and why wrongly so?

of Bibles, in more than 1,125 languages, and a glance at its pages is sufficient to convict the world's conduct. But the masses of people remain ignorant "according to their wish". (2 Pet. 3:5, NW) In some past times ignorance was overlooked by God, but it is not so during a judgment period, whether it be the one in Noah's day, or Lot's day, or Jesus' day, or our day, or during the millennium. That is the point Paul was making when he said: "True, God has overlooked the times of such ignorance, yet now he is telling mankind that they should all everywhere repent." Why? "Because he has set a day in which he purposed to judge the inhabited earth." (Acts 17:30, 31, NW) As previously stated, that day for most men will be the millennial reign; but others have had or are having their judgment period earlier. Such periods are no time for ignorance, but for repentance.

WHY WE WITNESS NOW

¹⁹ If ignorance during this present judgment period is an excuse and is going to mean a resurrection for ignorant ones in the millennial reign, would it not be advantageous to let all remain ignorant now? If all those not personally preached to now and who are slain by Jehovah at Armageddon are going to return in the resurrection of mankind, why preach now at all? Even those who oppose the view that all Armageddon's slain are forever dead will admit that those hearing but not accepting the witness now will perish eternally at Armageddon. Just for the sake of reasoning together, adopt their view for a moment. We preach to one thousand persons now, and perhaps one accepts the truth, while all the others reject it and die forever at Armageddon. But if we refrained from preaching to this one thousand, all would die at Ar-

mageddon but all would return in a resurrection, not having heard the message. Surely when they returned in that new world far advanced toward perfect paradise, with no corrupting humans around and demonic influence gone, so our opposers would incline to think and say, many more than one of that thousand would conform to new world requirements. Maybe only one would refuse. So why preach now and save one out of a thousand? Why not be silent now and save 999 out of a thousand?

²⁰ That, of course, would be folly. It would mean eternal destruction for the witness who remained silent. It means the stones would cry out the warning, if the watchman class failed to do so. (Ezek. 33:7-9; Luke 19:40) The gospel-preaching is going to be done earth-wide, for Jehovah says so. And whether it is done on the basis of personal or family or community responsibility, the peoples of all nations are going to be separated into "sheep" and "goat" classes, for Jehovah says so. Those whom he slays at Armageddon will remain forever dead, for his prophetic pictures made at the time of the Flood and at the time of Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction say so, along with the parable of the sheep and goats. This view is corroborated by John 5:28, 29 (NW): "The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out."

²¹ Note that John 5:28, 29 limits resurrections to those "in the memorial tombs". This means that only those whose existence Jehovah retains in his memory will be resurrected, which remembrance is indicated or symbolized by the expression "memorial tombs". That is why criminals considered unworthy of a resurrection were unceremoniously tossed into the Valley of Hinnom, or Gehenna, where their bodies

19. Why is the view that ignorance will excuse many of Armageddon's slain not conducive to zealous witnessing now?

20, 21. (a) Why would that course be folly? (b) How do John 5:28, 29 and Jeremiah 25:33 confirm the view that Armageddon's slain remain dead?

were consumed, unlamented, unburied, without any tomb to remind of or memorialize their former existence. So those not "in the memorial tombs", or not thus symbolized as being in God's memory, will not be remembered at resurrection time. What this means to us today is that those now living in this time of judgment and who fail for one reason or another to take a stand for Jehovah, and are therefore slain by him at the battle of Armageddon, will not be retained in his memory for a resurrection. That this group will include the majority of humans now living on earth is shown by Jeremiah 25:33: "The slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." These vast numbers slain by Jehovah and likened to dung strewn over the earth could hardly be considered as being "in the memorial tombs" for Christ to remember and call forth during the Millennium. He does not remember dung.

²² At Armageddon Jehovah will baptize this world with destructive fire: "The heavens and the earth that are now are stored up for fire and are being reserved to the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men. . . . Jehovah's day will come as a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a hissing noise, but the elements being intensely hot will be dissolved, and earth and the works in it will be discovered. . . . the heavens being on fire will be dissolved and the elements being intensely hot will melt." (2 Pet. 3:3-13, NW) Notice that this period of last days climaxed by Armageddon is called a "day of judgment and of destruction", after which comes the promised new world of righteousness, the millennial reign.

22. What baptism awaits this world?

²³ This baptism of fire was foreshadowed by an ancient one, when upon "Sodom it rained fire and sulphur from heaven and destroyed them all". Later Jehovah "burned up Jacob like a flaming fire" and "poured out his wrath like fire" and "kindled a fire in Zion", when in 607 B.C. he used Nebuchadnezzar to immerse Jerusalem and Judah in a fiery baptism because of their gross sins. (Lam. 2:3, 4; 4:11, AS) When Christ came to earth John the Baptist spoke of the nearness of a baptism of fire upon the nation of unbelieving natural Jews, when they would be as a tree "cut down and thrown into the fire" and as "chaff he [Christ] will burn [them] up with fire that cannot be put out [by man]". (Matt. 3:10-12, NW) This baptism of fire came A.D. 70, when Rome's imperial legions destroyed Jerusalem and killed 1,100,000 Jews and took 97,000 into captivity. A final baptism of fire will come upon those siding with Satan at the end of the thousand-year reign: "Fire came down out of heaven and devoured them." (Rev. 20:9, NW) Like other fiery baptisms, this one comes at the end of a judgment period, a thousand-year one. There is certainly no resurrection from that baptism of fire, for it is tied in with second death, the lake of fire and sulphur. So fire is unquestionably the symbol for destruction that is final, whether used in connection with Armageddon or with the end of the millennial reign.

²⁴ Those who are disturbed by this view of matters should remember several points. First, if Jehovah destroyed everyone there would be no injustice involved, since none has any inherent right to life. Second, the witness work will be done to the extent he deems necessary for separating all peoples and he will make no mistake. Did he not know before Noah ever preached or built

23. What other fire baptisms does the Bible mention?
24. What points should disturbed ones remember?

that no others would join Noah and his household in the ark? Did he not know before Lot preached or angels performed miracles in Sodom that there were not even ten righteous ones there? Long before we can determine the bent of man's mind toward sheeplikeness or goatlikeness Jehovah and Christ can judge and divide without making mistakes. And they are the Judges, not we. Third, the division is not completed yet, the judgment period not over. It is not the unfinished division now existing that counts, but the finished one that obtains at Armageddon's start. Though we are in a judgment period, we need not view as finally destroyed all who die from various causes prior to the execution of judgment at Armageddon. Some in the preflood world who died before the deluge may be resurrected; some Sodomites who died before fire and brimstone rained down may return; some Jews of Jesus and the apostles' day not destroyed by the Roman executional forces may live again. But not those slain by the Lord in the Flood, or in the fiery rain on Sodom, or in the judgments executed A.D. 70, or during Armageddon. Some may die during Armageddon who are not slain by Jehovah, such as some of his people whose physical organisms may not be able to endure the ordeal; but the vast majority will be "the slain of the LORD" who litter the earth like dung. They remain dead forever.

²⁵ Also remember that Bible prophecies indicate that men and nations will intensify their assaults against Jehovah's people and the work they are doing. Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 speak of demon-inspired forces coming against Jehovah's restored theocratic organization: "You shall advance like a storm, you shall come like a cloud covering the land, you and all your hordes, and many a people with you. . . .

25. What do Bible prophecies indicate lies ahead?

It shall come to pass in the end of the days that I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me." When this vicious assault occurs, Jehovah says: "My fury shall rise in my nostrils." His indignation and fiery wrath is so awesome and terrible that every living thing will tremble, mountains topple down and cliffs tumble to the ground. Peoples are thrown into confused self-slaughter and Jehovah adds his destructive forces to annihilate this wicked world. (AT) Intense persecutions and conspiracies will doubtless come against Jehovah's witnesses before Jehovah's fury rises to the point of launching his Armageddon destruction.

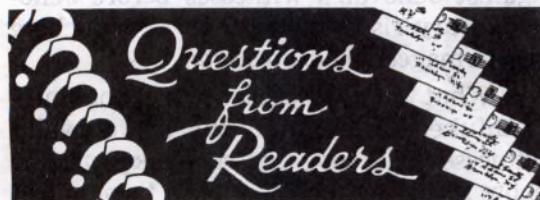
²⁶ What an unprecedented opportunity faithful endurance of all this by Jehovah's witnesses will give for sheeplike ones to show favor and goatlike ones to manifest their indifference! Just as now many see our huge assemblies and marvel at the wonderful unity made possible by God's spirit, so then they will see more than ever the unflinching integrity displayed by us with the help of Jehovah's spirit. The preaching work yet to be done, the increases yet to come, the persecutions yet to be endured—all of this will be a further manifestation of Jehovah's spirit working upon his people and will effect a further, sharper division of mankind before Armageddon strikes. It is not by our own power and might that we will work and increase and endure, but by God's spirit. Those who fight Jehovah's visible organization, upon which his spirit is manifest, sin against the holy spirit, unforgivably so. Those not participating in this opposition but condoning it or indifferent to it fit those the parable pictures as goats. Whether actively or passively or indifferently going along with the world in its assaults against Jehovah's witnesses, individuals come under

26. How will a further and sharper division yet be effected, with what added responsibility upon the people?

either personal or community responsibility therefor.—Zech. 4:6.

²⁷ So let all know that this time of judgment of the nations is not a mere dress rehearsal for a future and decisive second judgment to come, thereby making the destruction of individuals at Armageddon not count for eternity. Know that all living at Armageddon will be baptized, either with fire for destruction with the wicked or with salvation for life with the theo-

27. What should we now know?



● One child lives because it has consecrated parents. Another dies with its wicked parents. Some persons hear the Kingdom message and live. Others may never hear it and die at Armageddon. Their opportunities are not equal. Would not justice require equal opportunity? —L. S., Ohio.

Justice could demand the death of everyone, since none are righteous of themselves. All are sinners and have earned sin's wages, which is death. (Rom. 3:10; 6:23) Not justice but love inspired the provision of a ransom price, and its value or merit belongs to God and Christ for them to use as they see fit. Who are we to tell them how to use what is their own? In an illustration some vineyard laborers tried to do such dictating, when they thought they were not being fairly treated, and suffered severe rebuke. (Matt. 20:1-16) After God has shown in his Word that he sometimes operates on principles of family and communal responsibility, and after we see that some of such instances pictured Armageddon and involve a withholding of the ransom benefits from those destroyed, on what grounds can we thereafter argue that he should act contrary to these principles? Equal opportunity for every individual? What scriptures establish this as a divine principle, and eliminate those of family and community responsibility?

cratic organization. Know that off-focus sentimentality for creature salvation will not alter God's Word or sway him from his purpose. Know that those really concerned in a practical way for their fellow man will not waste time fretting over the eternalness of Armageddon's destruction, but will zealously preach to save both themselves and others. (1 Tim. 4:16) In short, know that God meant what he said when he warned: "Get out of her, my people."

Actually, to secure equal opportunity for everyone in the absolute sense would involve far more than merely letting everyone hear the message. There are many influences outside the individual's control that affect his stand toward the truth. Wicked parents that keep the message from their small children is only one case. Oppressive rulers that keep it from the peoples under their control is only another case. There are more. In one heathen country preaching has been done for many years, with practically no results so far as those steeped in the native religions are concerned. Is it their fault that they were born and raised in an environment that warped their minds beyond the reach of the truth? Some nationalities or races seem to have traits of stubbornness. Others are marked by qualities of humility and teachableness. More of the former reject the truth; more of the latter accept it. Not many wise or powerful or noble get the truth—it is not God's purpose. He deliberately chooses more of the foolish and weak and ignoble to put the worldly great ones to shame. (1 Cor. 1:26-31) So it is not just wicked parents or dictatorial rulers that influence a person's destiny. Other things beyond his control, such as the nation or race or station of life in which he was born, are weighty factors.

Aside from these big divisions there are many influencing elements. One person is raised by staunch Catholic parents and now is old. Another is raised by parents who did not indoctrinate him with any false religion and is young. Both hear the truth for the first time. Equal opportunity? Not in the absolute sense, for it is easier for the young, flexible mind free of false doctrine to embrace the truth than for the old, set mind cluttered with creedal

errors. A third person may have been raised in the truth. Is not his opportunity for accepting it when he reaches the age of responsibility far better than that of others? Certainly. We cannot ignore the vital role played by home training, as Proverbs 22:6 shows. The varying environments of home and school, factory and office affect the individual's mental outlook and capacities. "Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Cor. 15:33, NW) The spoilation can proceed till one becomes like a brute beast fit only to be destroyed. (2 Pet. 2:12) A delinquent world, a dictatorial nation, a degenerate community, wicked parents, bad playmates—all are environmental factors that can corrupt the growing child in its formative years until when old it is beyond recovery and reform. Even inherited personality traits may make it easier for one to grasp the truth than another. So absolutely equal opportunity is not as simply provided as hearing the message.

View another aspect of the matter. Some have their judgment period now and hear the message. Others have it in the millennial reign. Undoubtedly acceptance will be easier then, in a righteous new world. And if we are looking for grounds for complaint, did the faithful men before Christ have equal opportunity? They had no opportunity for heavenly existence as immortal, incorruptible spirit creatures who are privileged to reign with Christ and stand before Jehovah himself. Their earthly reward does not equal that of the higher calling. And the "other sheep" now, should they grumble against God because they do not have an equal opportunity with the anointed to go to heaven?

The "equal opportunity" argument is spawned by the human tendency to overrate human importance. We must not commit Adam and Eve's blunder of trying to decide what is good and what is evil, what is just and what is unjust. (Gen. 3:4-6, 22) We must be willing to dismiss our own thoughts to make room for God's thoughts, and bend our thinking to conform to the principles of God as shown in his Word, even on this point of family and community responsibility. (Isa. 55:8, 9) Ridding ourselves of prejudiced, biased human views, we can view matters as God does, appreciating the great Potter's power over creatures of clay, that he can make one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use, that through the one he can show forth his glory and mercy and through the other he can show after much long-suffering his righteous wrath against what

is evil. If Jehovah chooses to do something, "What of it? O man, who, then, really are you to be answering back to God?" (Rom. 9:24, 20, NW) Seeing that there may not be the equality of opportunity that we once thought in our fallible human way of viewing things, how should it affect those of us so favored as to be in the truth? It should greatly humble us and fill us with gratitude to God for his undeserved kindness toward us. And rather than want God to conform to our ideas of saving people, if we are *really* concerned about those who have not yet heard the message we will do all in our power to see to it that they do hear, as a result of our own zealous preaching activity. So let your zeal in witnessing be the real measure of your concern for people.

● When David displeased God by numbering Israel, 2 Samuel 24:1 says God moved him to do it, whereas 1 Chronicles 21:1 says Satan caused him to do it. Also, in 2 Samuel 24:9 the sum given is 800,000 Israelites and 500,000 Judeans, whereas 1 Chronicles 21:5 numbers Israel's fighting men at 1,100,000 and Judah's at 470,000. How can these differences be harmonized?—H. B., Massachusetts.

God is sometimes spoken of in Scripture as doing what he merely permits to be done by another. Thus in 2 Samuel 24:1 it states: "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." But Jehovah was not the one that moved David to sin. It was Satan, as 1 Chronicles 21:1 states: "Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." God was displeased with Israel and hence permitted Satan to bring this sin upon them, and for that reason 2 Samuel reads as though God did it himself. Rotherham's translation shows it was by God's sufferance rather than his doing: "The anger of Yahweh kindled against Israel, so that he suffered David to be moved against them saying, Go count Israel and Judah." The Septuagint in its English translation goes so far as to insert "Satan" in the place of the pronoun "he". The marginal reading in the King James Version gives "Satan" instead of "he".

Regularly enlisted in the royal service were 288,000 troops, divided into 12 groups of 24,000 each. They served under a rotation system whereby each group of 24,000 served one month during the year. There were an additional 12,000 attendant on the twelve princes of the tribes,

making a total of 300,000. Apparently the 1,100,000 of 1 Chronicles includes this 300,000 already enlisted, whereas 2 Samuel does not. (Num. 1:16; Deut. 1:15; 1 Chron. 27:1-22) As for Judah, 2 Samuel apparently counted in 30,000 who were in an army of observation stationed on the Philistine frontiers, and which were not included in the 1 Chronicles figure. (2 Sam. 6:1) We note that in 2 Samuel the record does not say "all they of Israel were", as it does in the more complete summation in 1 Chronicles, but just "there were in Israel", not using the all-inclusive expression, since it did not include in its numbering the regularly enlisted forces. Again, in 1 Chronicles the account does not say "all they of Judah were", as it did in the case of Israel, but only "and Judah was", since it left out 30,000 and hence was not all-inclusive.

So when the entire picture is brought under examination, when we remember that the accounts were written by different men, who had

GIVING GOD'S WORD FIRST PLACE IN OUR LIVES

"How can a young man keep his path pure? By heeding thy word. I find joy in thy statutes; I will not forget thy word." (Psalm 119:9, 16, AT) This is pre-eminent counsel for both young and old and shows the attitude one should take toward God's Word. Honest and sincere persons today seek to know and do God's will. The study of God's Word is essential for such. They learn precious truths from the perusal of its pages, and then also seek to share the knowledge gained with others, near and far. Accordingly, during the months of June, July and August, Jehovah's witnesses throughout the world, will make a special effort to get into the isolated and more-difficult-to-reach places with the message of God's kingdom. You, too, may share the knowledge you have with others, calling on your friends and neighbors. If you desire further particulars, contact Jehovah's witnesses in your vicinity or write the Society. Giving God's Word the first place in your life in this way will bring you great joy and blessing.

different views in mind, we can harmonize the two accounts without difficulty.

- Did other persons live before Adam? Where did Cain get his wife?—G. B., Alberta, Canada.

Adam and Eve were the first humans; all others have descended from them. Of Adam Genesis 5:4 says: "He begat sons and daughters." One of these daughters Cain married. Not one of them was mentioned in the record at the time of her birth, but all were merely acknowledged at the close of the account of Adam's life. The Bible seldom indicates the birth of girls individually. Prior to Genesis 5:4 other men are spoken of as having wives and begetting offspring, yet no record of the birth of these women appears. Cain's case is not exceptional. (Gen. 4:16-26) Incidentally, even evolutionary scientists generally hold that there was only one original pair, and that their offspring interbred, brother with sister.

BROOKLYN BETHEL VACATION

The Society's offices, factory and Bethel home in Brooklyn, New York, will be closed from August 9 to 24 inclusive for the annual vacation. Orders and correspondence sent in during that period will not be handled until some time after the reopening of the offices. To avoid delays it will be necessary to anticipate your needs well in advance and place your orders in ample time for attention before the vacation period.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES

Week of July 6: "Get Out of Her, My People," etc. ¶ 1-16.

Week of July 13: "Get Out of Her, My People," etc. ¶ 17-22; also, "Fixing Destinies in This Judgment Period," ¶ 1-12.

Week of July 20: "Fixing Destinies in This Judgment Period," ¶ 13-27, etc. etc.