

The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

MARCH 15, 1967

Semimonthly

LEARN BY CONTRAST
TO APPRECIATE
TRUE RICHES

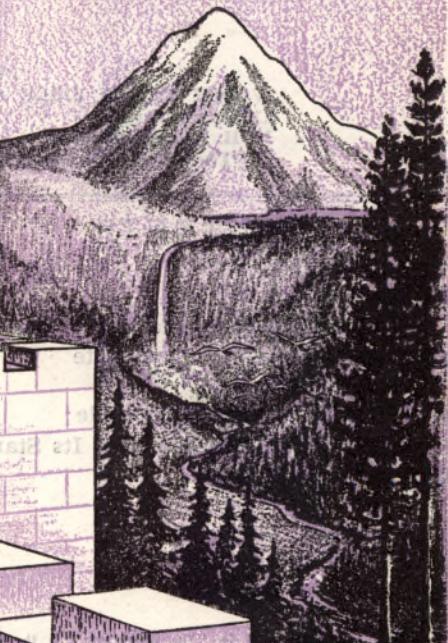
THE HAUGHTY VERSUS THE HUMBLE

THE "LAST DAYS"

—WHAT THEY MEAN TO YOU

A POLITICAL UNION DOOMED
FROM ITS START

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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

LEARN BY CONTRAST
TO APPRECIATE
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"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

CONTENTS

You Are Invited	163
The "Last Days" —What They Mean to You	165
Learn by Contrast to Appreciate True Riches	169
The Haughty versus The Humble	175
A Political Union Doomed from Its Start	181
"Happy Is the Nation Whose God Is Jehovah"	186
'Happy Those Having Part in the First Resurrection'	190
Questions from Readers	191

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AS—American Standard Version	Le—Isaac Leeser's version
AT—An American Translation	Mo—James Moffatt's version
AV—Authorized Version (1611)	Ro—J. B. Rotherham's version
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Number 6

YOU ARE INVITED

Dear Reader,

We warmly invite you to attend the "Lord's supper." You no doubt recall that, on the night before Jesus Christ died to open up the way to eternal life for believing mankind, he instituted a memorial meal and instructed his faithful followers: "Keep doing this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19) This very special occasion will be kept this year on March 25, after 6 p.m., and we urge you to make every effort to be present.

Last year nearly two million persons were in attendance in about 195 lands to observe this commemoration of the Lord's death. What makes this occasion important to you as an observer or as a partaker is the fact that it is the only celebration that Jesus commanded his disciples to keep each year. To miss it would be a serious oversight indeed!

The manner in which this celebration is to be kept is plainly seen in the words of the Christian apostle Paul, who wrote: "The Lord Jesus, on the night of his arrest, took bread and, after giving thanks to God, broke it and said: 'This is my body, which is for you; do this as a memorial of me.' In the same way, he took the cup after supper, and said: 'This cup is the new covenant sealed by my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me.'" —1 Cor. 11:23-25, "New English Bible."

Since the day that took place, according to the Bible, was Nisan 14 on the ancient Jewish calendar, faithful Christians have endeavored to keep it on that specific day of the year and in the very way Jesus instructed. This year Nisan 14 corresponds to our March 25, after sundown.

This night will be a memorable one for you. You will not be called on to say or do anything, if you are a visitor, and no collections of any kind will be taken. However, on your arrival at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses you will no doubt be greeted warmly and made to feel welcome. You will get to meet many happy people—people who have a deep appreciation for the provision made by Jehovah God for their salvation through Christ. You will be privileged to associate with these

people of faith and experience a rewarding hour of spiritual upbuilding and warm companionship. Songs will be sung to God's praise, and heartfelt prayers will be addressed to the Most High God. An informative and faith-strengthening talk from the Bible will be given. Unleavened bread and unsweetened wine, the same kind of emblems that were used by Jesus, will be on hand, and those who have the witness of God's spirit identifying them as heirs with Christ of the heavenly kingdom will partake of those emblems, just as the apostles Matthew, John, Peter and others did on the night that Jesus instituted this memorial meal.

There will also be many present who do not partake of those emblems. They are not of the "little flock" called by God to share the heavenly kingdom. (Luke 12:32) But many of them are devoted Christians. As related in Revelation chapter 7, they, too, earnestly declare: "Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb." This portion of the Bible goes on to describe them as serving God zealously "in his temple," that is, in close association with those heirs of the heavenly kingdom, whom the Bible describes as making up "a holy temple . . . for God to inhabit by spirit."—Rev. 7:9-17; Eph. 2:21, 22.

Although those who look forward to sharing in fulfillment of the Bible's promise of eternal life on a paradise earth do not partake of the Memorial emblems, by their close association with those who do, they show that they fit the description there in Revelation of those who enjoy heaven's blessing and who will receive salvation from God and the Lamb Jesus Christ. They appreciate that the Lord's evening meal calls attention to a marvelous liberation from sin and its penalty death, a liberation that will come to them through the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. Their respectful attendance at the annual Memorial celebration shows their deep regard for this divine provision. We encourage you to be present with them.

As you can see, it is not only to a very happy occasion that you are being invited, but also to a very meaningful one. This occasion affords you an opportunity to manifest the depth of your appreciation to God and Christ for the unspeakable prospect of life eternal made possible by the ransom provision. It offers you a fine opportunity to renew your appreciation of spiritual things. It presents a choice occasion to reflect on one's own life course in the light of God's requirements and a stimulus to do God's will. This occasion, therefore, is rewarding to each and every one who is present. A spiritual blessing awaits you.

So please accept our invitation to be present for this Memorial of the Lord's evening meal at any Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses on March 25, after 6 p.m. If you know of no Kingdom Hall near you, you might consult a telephone book or write an airmail letter to us immediately, and we will be happy to supply you with the address of the Kingdom Hall nearest to you.

Yours in the remembrance of the love of
Jehovah God and of Jesus Christ,

Jehovah's Witnesses

UNDoubtedly you have heard the expression "last days." Many persons are familiar with it because of its use in God's Word the Bible.

But since the expression has a foreboding tone and portends doom, it is often an unwelcomed subject. Some persons even scoff at that there could be such a thing and close their minds when the Bible subject of the "last days" arises. Yet, it is a fact that many things do come to their end, and, hence, experience their final days.

For example, people enter the last days of their life, or of some aspect of their life. If you were to visit a large library and look in its card catalog, you would find books on such subjects as "The Last Days of Charles II," "The Last Days of Marie Antoinette," "The Last Days of General Grant," "The Last Days of Abraham Lincoln," "The Last Days of Hitler," and so forth. Certainly no one doubts that people experience the "last days" of human life!

Other things, too, experience their last days. Thus at certain libraries you will also find books entitled "The Last Days of Sevastopol," "The Last Days of Pompeii" and "The Last Days of Herculaneum." Devastating warfare at times brings an end to the ordinary functions of a city, as happened to the city of Sevastopol on the Black Sea during the second world war. Or a volcanic disaster can bury a city and its population out of existence, as the eruption of Mount Vesuvius did to the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum in 79 C.E.

Yet, not only persons and cities, but entire nations and empires have experienced their final days of existence. Only a few generations ago mighty Indian nations

THE LAST DAYS" —What They Mean to YOU

roamed the plains of the western United States, living a simple nomadic life. But now they are gone, stamped out of existence by the westward-moving white men. Robert M. Utley, in his recent book *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, describes the final conflicts and events that brought this once-powerful Indian nation to its end.

It is not uncommon for old governments or systems of rule to experience their last days, and, in time, be replaced by new ones. This is noted in the book *The Last Days of the French Monarchy*. "In August 1788," the author writes, "the days of the old [French] regime ended, and a new order began." A more recent book, *The Last Days of the British Raj*, discusses the concluding days of British rule in the country of India. And a widely publicized volume published just last year, *The Last 100 Days*, describes the last days of Nazi Germany.

SUBJECT TO MISUNDERSTANDING

"Last days" is clearly a common topic. So to scoff because mention is made in the Bible of the "last days" is certainly unwarranted. However, since the expression can have various meanings, it is easy for uninformed or misinformed persons to draw wrong conclusions and have misunderstandings.

For example, a person might assume from the title of the book *The Last Days of Richard Nixon* that the man is dead. But this is not true, for in this instance the expression "last days" does not refer to the final days of the man's life, as is the general case, but to an episode or phase of his life. The cities of Sevastopol and Pompeii might be taken as other examples. While both of them experienced "last days," the results were quite different. Pompeii and every single person that remained within the city were obliterated, and Pompeii still lies in ruins after nearly 1,900 years. On the other hand, Sevastopol, while suffering great destruction, was rebuilt and is now a thriving city of well over 100,000 inhabitants.

So people unfamiliar with the facts of a matter can easily misunderstand the significance of the expression "last days." This is also true relative to the use of the term in the Bible. Many persons have an entirely wrong impression as to what the Bible means when it speaks of the "last days." However, it is very important that we know the truth on the subject. What are the "last days"? The "last days" of what? Can they be avoided? Are they to be viewed with horror? What do they mean to you?

WHAT ARE THE "LAST DAYS"?

At Second Timothy chapter three, verse one, the Bible explains: "Know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here." Also, at Second Peter chapter three, verses three and four, the Bible says: "For you know this first, that in the last days there will come ridiculers with their ridicule, proceeding according to their own desires and saying: 'Where is this promised presence of his? Why, from the day our forefathers fell asleep in death, all things are continuing exactly as from creation's beginning.'"

The "last days" here spoken of in the Bible are obviously an important period in history that would be marked by unusual distress, yes, "critical times hard to deal with." Yet, the Bible shows that, in spite of the evidence that the "last days" were at hand, people would not believe it. Instead, they would ridicule: 'Where is this promised presence of God? It will not come in our day. All things are continuing as they always have been.'

Jesus Christ also spoke unmistakably about the "last days." When he was on earth his disciples approached him privately and asked: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3, King James Version) Or, as a modern translation more accurately renders the latter question: "What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" (New World Translation) By his answer Jesus showed that his second "presence" and "the conclusion of the system of things," or "end of the world," would involve a period of time. This time period corresponds with what the Bible also calls the "last days."

LAST DAYS OF WHAT?

Since "last days" and "the end of the world" are thus linked in the Bible, many persons believe that the "last days" will mean the end of the literal heavens and earth. Somehow, they believe, a tremendous fire will ignite the earth and heavenly bodies, and these will all be burned into desolate cinders. It is claimed that the Bible supports this view when, in speaking of the "last days," it says: "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." (2 Pet. 3:3-7) It is no wonder that persons with such a belief con-

sider the "last days" a foreboding and unwelcome subject!

Well, then, do the "last days" mean the last days of the planet earth? Does the "end of the world" signify the end of the literal heavens and earth? Certainly it is unreasonable that this beautiful planet, which God pronounced "very good" after preparing it for human habitation, should be completely destroyed, burned to a cinder, because of the waywardness of some wicked men. (Gen. 1:31) Not only is this unreasonable, it is also unscriptural.

Note what God's Word says on the matter: "For this is what Jehovah has said, the Creator of the heavens, He the true God, the Former of the earth and the Maker of it, He the One who firmly established it, who did not create it simply for nothing, who formed it even to be inhabited." (Isa. 45:18) God created the earth, not simply for nothing, in vain, but to be lived upon and enjoyed by righteous inhabitants.

That this purpose of God will be carried out is clearly shown in the Bible, where it says: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." (Ps. 37:29) Yes, eternal habitation of the earth by righteous persons will be possible, for as the Bible further says: God "has founded the earth upon its established places; it will not be made to totter to time indefinite, or forever." Therefore, the "last days" do not mean the end of the planet earth. This earth, as well as the beautiful starry heavens, will last forever, even as the Bible promises.—Ps. 104:5; Eccl. 1:4.

So, then, "the heavens and the earth," spoken of at Second Peter chapter three, that "are stored up for fire" at the climax of the "last days" are obviously not the physical heavens and earth. (2 Pet. 3:7) This is shown in the previous verses of that chapter, which ex-

plain that the destruction of an ancient world occurred "when it was deluged with water." Certainly it was not the literal planet earth that perished in the flood-waters in Noah's day, and so neither will the conclusion of the present system of things include the destruction of the literal earth. Rather, God's day of judgment, at the conclusion of the "last days," will result in the wiping out of wicked people, the "destruction of the ungodly men."

This helps us to understand what the expression "last days" refers to—what it is the last days of. It is the last days, not of the physical world, but of the present wicked system of things, which is made up of all organizations of men that refuse to submit to God's direction. Yes, all earthly governments of mankind in opposition to God's kingdom will be destroyed, as the Bible explains: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. . . . It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Dan. 2:44.

HEED THE WARNING!

But when will this occur? Are we now living in the "last days" of this worldly system of things? Yes, we are! All the physical evidence in fulfillment of Bible prophecies points to that conclusion. Just as cities, nations and even empires have in the past experienced their last days, so we have now reached the time when *ALL* nations and kingdoms are, at the same time, in their last days! True, it may seem unbelievable, but it is a fact! The evidence is conclusive.

In recent years Christian witnesses of Jehovah God have been sounding the warning that time is running out, that these "last days" will soon conclude with a destruction comparable to the global flood of Noah's day. Although many persons scoff, remember: The Bible foretold

that "in the last days there will come ridiculers with their ridicule." It is characteristic of people to ignore lifesaving warnings.

For instance, when Mount Vesuvius was sending forth warnings in 79 C.E., the majority of people in the city of Pompeii did not heed. While a few left the city at the mountain's first outburst, one historian explained: "Many Pompeians—chiefly the wealthy—refused to abandon precious homes and possessions and took shelter, hoping the horror would pass. The decision cost them their lives." They realized that things were not right, yet they did not flee. How foolish! Rather than make a similar mistake, we today should heed the warning of the end's approach. But what action should be taken?

ACTION THAT IS URGENT NOW

Obviously the "last days" cannot be avoided; for they are now here, accompanied by all the calamities, distress and moral decadence that were foretold to mark them. God's "day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men" is fast approaching! (2 Pet. 3:7) But should it be viewed with horror and dread? Should we consider the "last days" an unwelcome subject, and refuse to consider what they mean to us? Not at all!

Please note that God's judgment will adversely affect only "ungodly men." It is only those who refuse to submit to God's laws that will suffer destruction. On the other hand, for those who love righteousness and long for God's kingdom to remove wickedness from the earth, the "last days" are indeed a time in which to rejoice. True Christians can rejoice because God's kingdom is near and deliverance

from this wicked system of things is at hand. (Luke 21:28-32) But to be among those blessed with survival when this entire system goes down in destruction, positive action is urgent.

First of all, you must prove that, like Noah and his family, you are walking with God and love his ways. In that pre-Flood era God separated persons either for survival or destruction, and he is doing the same today. Jesus Christ has been appointed as judge, and the Bible explains that he is separating people either as "sheep" to his right hand of favor or as "goats" to his left hand of disfavor. (Matt. 25:31-46) What will you prove to be, a "sheep" or a "goat"?

You determine this by how you treat God's message carried by his ministers. Sheeplike persons will listen to the instruction that God gives in his Word and heed it, patterning their lives in harmony with God's righteous principles. This action will benefit, not only themselves, but other members of their households as well. For just as the heeding of the warning by parents before the destruction of Pompeii meant preservation for their minor children, similarly at the end of this system of things your conduct will directly affect whether your children take up the service of God, and, hence, whether they receive his favor and blessing or not.

So with the "last days" speedily running out, positive action is indeed urgent. It is a time in which you can rejoice. For these need not be the last days of your life, but of only a particular phase of your life. Yes, you may have the grand prospect of living through the end of this system of things with your family, and on everlastingly in God's righteous new order.



LEARN BY CONTRAST

CONTRASTS make life interesting. Often they help to deepen our appreciation. How we welcome the warm sunshine after a cold and wet winter season! Good health, often taken for granted, becomes greatly prized after recovery from a severe spell of sickness. Yes, contrasts draw our attention to the value and importance of things that otherwise would be given but little consideration.

² God's Word, the Bible, abounds with contrasts, making it a most interesting and lively book. More than that, these contrasts draw our attention to things of vital importance and help us to appreciate them at their true worth. For example, the opening account of creation in the book of Genesis quickly builds up in our mind's eye an inviting picture of the great preparations made for a beautiful home for man, including the creation of man himself as a masterpiece made in God's own image. The picture is made complete, also man's happiness, by describing the creation of that perfectly lovely woman, given to the man as an ideal helper, "as a complement of him," making a pleasing

*to
Appreciate
True Riches*

"Why do you people keep paying out money for what is not bread, and why is your toil for what results in no satisfaction? Listen intently to me, and eat what is good, and let your soul find its exquisite delight in fatness itself."

—Isa. 55:2.

contrast, male and female.—Gen. 2:18.

³ Then follows a sharp contrast. A sinister shadow crosses the picture. Through the serpent, a discordant note is heard. God's word is brought into question: "Is it really so that God said . . . ?" God's word is then denied: "You positively will not die," if you eat the forbidden fruit. First the woman and then the man decide to eat of that fruit. Thus, instead of letting

God be their Instructor concerning the "knowledge of good and bad" in his own way and time, they take matters into their own hands. By painful experience they taste the bitter contrast between life and death. By forsaking the Source of true knowledge, leading to the true riches of endless life, they plunge themselves and their posterity into beggarly conditions, subject to bad leadership and false information.—Gen. 2:17; 3:1-6, 16-19.

⁴ In the closing part of God's Word we find more contrasts, but in the reverse order. We read of the defeat of "the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan," in a war in heaven, and then later

1. By making contrasts, what benefits can be gained?
2. (a) What part do contrasts play in God's Word?
(b) What inviting picture is portrayed in the account of creation?

3. How was this followed by a sharp contrast, leading to what result?
4. In the reverse order, what fine contrasts are found in Revelation, giving what prospect?

of the binding and putting completely out of action "the original serpent . . . for a thousand years." This is done "that he might not mislead the nations any more" with false knowledge and bad leadership. (Rev. 12:7-9; 20:1-3) After describing the downfall and destruction of "Babylon the Great" and then of all the other parts and supporters of Satan's organization in the war of Har-Magedon, we come to a vivid and wonderful contrast. We read, not of the creation of a literal earth, but of God's new system of things, "a new heaven and a new earth." Instead of death's coming into the picture, "death will be no more." Built up in our mind's eye is a picture, not of the first man and his wife and human headship, but a description of the heavenly government providing true headship, composed of Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, with his Christian congregation, the "holy city, New Jerusalem," the true church, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Then we read, not of a literal "river issuing out of Eden," but of a "river of water of life." On either bank are trees, not laden with forbidden fruit, but "trees of life . . . yielding their fruits each month," symbolizing God's provisions for giving eternal life with all its riches to believing, obedient mankind in a restored Paradise.—Gen. 2:10; Rev. 21:1-4; 22:1, 2.

⁵ Finally, we read, not of losing God's favor and of expulsion from the garden home, but of the invitation to "let anyone that wishes take life's water free." Life itself in perfection cannot yet be gained, but the way thereto has been clearly indicated. Particularly since 1934, this magazine, *The Watchtower*, has shown from the Scriptures that those who wish to enjoy God's favor, with the hope of surviving Har-Magedon, must dedicate themselves fully to him, symbolized by their baptism

in water. They must identify themselves with God's other dedicated servants, known as Jehovah's witnesses. This means sharing with them in extending the invitation to yet others, to "anyone thirsting," to come and start quenching their thirst. —Rev. 22:17; see *The Watchtower* as of August 15, 1934, pages 249, 250, paragraphs 31-34.

INVITATION TO TRUE RICHES

⁶ How is such invitation extended to others? Jesus said in his prayer: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." In anticipation of life in reality, we can and must start now to take in that life-giving knowledge by gaining an understanding of Bible truth. As Jesus later said in that same prayer: "Your [God's] word is truth." It is the "word of life," and by conforming to it closely we learn how to turn from the "road leading off into destruction," and, in happy contrast, to find the "road leading off into life." We can then invite and help others to be instructed by God "about his ways," and, with true Christians, to "walk in his paths," leading to true riches.—John 17:3, 17; Phil. 2:16; Matt. 7:13, 14; Isa. 2:3.

⁷ Early in his ministry Jesus commenced giving out this invitation, using the same illustration as found at Revelation 22:17. He did not limit this to the Jews, but to a Samaritan woman he spoke of "living water" as "the free gift of God." He then invitingly said: "The water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water bubbling up to impart everlasting life." Later in his ministry he cried out aloud: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me

6. How can we find the "road leading off into life" for ourselves, and how can we aid others in this respect?

7. On what occasions did Jesus speak of "living water," leading to what conclusions?

5. What invitation is given respecting "life's water," and what obligations are thereby involved?

and drink. He that puts faith in me, just as the Scripture has said, ‘Out from his inmost part streams of living water will flow.’” This surely implies that the one blessed with this life-giving provision does not keep it to himself, but invites others, “anyone thirsting,” “anyone that wishes,” to come and “take life’s water free.”—John 4:7-15; 7:37, 38; Rev. 22:17.

⁸ John adds the comment that Jesus “said this concerning the spirit which those who put faith in him were about to receive.” (John 7:39) This makes it clear that the taking in of this life-giving knowledge, also helping others to drink of it, is actually an operation of God’s spirit. It cannot be done without the aid of the holy spirit. This definitely rules out all human philosophy and religious tradition that make the “word of God invalid.”—Matt. 15:6.

⁹ However, Jesus was not the first one to voice such an invitation in such terms. Over seven hundred years previously, Jehovah, through his prophet, extended this arresting invitation: “Hey there, all you thirsty ones! Come to the water. And the ones that have no money! Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk even without money and without price. Why do you people keep paying out money for what is not bread, and why is your toil for what results in no satisfaction? Listen intently to me, and eat what is good, and let your soul find its exquisite delight in fatness itself.” (Isa. 55:1, 2) What an invitation, and what a contrast! In Isaiah’s day, under bad leadership by their kings and princes, Jehovah’s people were toiling and paying a high price for false riches that gave no sustenance or security. For one thing, they were looking to Gentile nations, such as Assyria and Egypt, for pro-

tection. (2 Ki. 16:7; 18:21) Besides that, under bad priestly influence, many turned to outright idolatry, while others were content with a formal and hypocritical way of worshiping Jehovah. As Jehovah told them: “This people have come near with their mouth, and they have glorified me merely with their lips, and they have removed their heart itself far away from me, and their fear toward me becomes men’s commandment that is being taught.”—Isa. 29:13.

¹⁰ So, in contrast, Jehovah invited and called on the people to “listen intently to me” and drink in, not just water, but “wine and milk,” and that “without money and without price.” He invited them to enter into his “covenant respecting the loving-kindesses to David,” that is, for the lasting kingdom and government under the Greater David, Christ Jesus, the right and true “leader and commander to the national groups.” He invited them to turn from their own thoughts and ways and, instead, to pay heed to “my word that goes forth from my mouth.” He guarantees that his word will have “certain success,” and that it “will certainly do that in which I have delighted.” To respond to this invitation meant taking in true knowledge, leading with certainty to true riches. This would result in a delightful contrast, for “instead of the thicket of thorns . . . [and] stinging nettle,” there would be the juniper tree and myrtle tree, and all creation would rejoice, “for with rejoicing you people will go forth, and with peace you will be brought in.”—Isa. 55:1-4, 8-13.

A MESSAGE FOR OUR DAY

¹¹ In Isaiah’s day Jehovah’s people were wayward and rebellious for the most part.

8. What part does God’s spirit play in gaining and dispensing life-giving knowledge?

9. Through Isaiah, what similar invitation was given, making what contrast, and why was this appropriate?

10. What further appeal did Jehovah make to his people, holding out what prospect?

11. Why was the message at Isaiah 55:6, 7 appropriate in Isaiah’s day, finding what parallel in our own day?

But that did not stop Jehovah from sending out through his prophet this very appealing invitation: "Search for Jehovah, you people, while he may be found. Call to him while he proves to be near. Let the wicked man leave his way, and the harmful man his thoughts; and let him return to Jehovah, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will forgive in a large way." (Isa. 55:6, 7) We can see how that message was appropriate then, but what about our day? Are the majority of people today wayward and rebellious from God's viewpoint, especially those who claim to be Christian? Is not the spirit of nationalism stronger today than ever before, and that with the support of religion? Under present political and religious leadership, are the people taught to listen intently to the message of God's established kingdom under Christ Jesus, or, instead, are they told that it is their Christian duty to serve and support the national kingdom and government under which they live? On these vital questions are the people given true knowledge leading to true riches, or has the arch deceiver, "the original serpent," "the god of this system of things," blinded their minds with false information?—Rev. 12:9; 2 Cor. 4:4.

¹² As many prophecies show, God clearly foresaw and foretold the conditions that would make the foregoing message appropriate for our day. As Paul was inspired to write: "In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves . . . self-assuming . . . headstrong . . . having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power." (2 Tim. 3:1-5) Even as far back as David, God spoke prophetically about the combined opposition of the nations and

rulers "against Jehovah and against his anointed one," Christ Jesus, after being installed as King in 1914 on the heavenly Mount Zion. (Ps. 2:1-6; Heb. 12:22) This combined opposition, under demonic leadership, gathers the nations and the "kings of the entire inhabited earth" to Har-Magedon, as foretold in the last book of the Bible. (Rev. 16:13-16) Jesus too was inspired to give a detailed prophecy telling of the 'sign of his presence' in our day, when there would be "many false prophets" and the "increasing of lawlessness," and people 'taking no note,' resulting in God's final judgment coming upon them "as a snare."—Matt. 24:3, 11, 12, 39; Luke 21:35.

¹³ Yes, the message found at Isaiah 55:6, 7, with its strong appeal, is certainly appropriate for our time, but the question is, How are we responding to it? Are we going along with the majority down that "broad and spacious . . . road leading off into destruction," ignoring and perhaps even resisting any appeal to "search for Jehovah . . . while he may be found"? Jesus plainly said that "narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it." Nevertheless, he made the invitation quite plain: "Go in through the narrow gate." It is not impossible. It is not God who has made it difficult. On the contrary, he invites us to forsake the wicked way and the harmful thoughts and to turn to him. He is ready to show mercy and to "forgive in a large way."—Isa. 55:6, 7; Matt. 7:13, 14.

¹⁴ To find that "narrow gate" and the incentive to pursue that 'cramped road' requires not only accurate knowledge but also a keen appreciation. As already mentioned, contrasts can be a big help to this

12. In what way do the prophecies show that Isaiah's message is fitting for our time?

13. In harmony with Isaiah 55:6, 7, what striking contrast did Jesus make at Matthew 7:13, 14?
14. Besides contrasts, what interesting parallels are found in Bible prophecy?

end. Jesus realized this to be a good teaching method and often used it, both with his disciples and when talking to the crowds. But before looking at some of these contrasts, there is something else worth noting; not a contrast, but a parallel. Jesus knew that the conditions in Israel in his day were, in many respects, a close parallel with those of Isaiah's day, and he often quoted from Isaiah's prophecy as having a fulfillment in his own time. For example, he once said to the Pharisees: "Isaiah aptly prophesied about you when he said, 'This people honors me with their lips, yet their heart is far removed from me.'" (Matt. 15:7-9; see Isaiah 29:13) Jesus also knew that the conditions in our time, especially in Christendom, would be a close parallel with those of his own time, also, of course, with those of Isaiah's day. Let us keep this in mind as we listen to Jesus making some pointed contrasts, helping us to appreciate true riches.

TWO CLASSES SET IN CONTRAST

¹⁵ After Passover of 31 C.E. Jesus gave the well-known Sermon on the Mount. It was given in the hearing of a large crowd, but was addressed primarily to his disciples gathered near to him. (Matt. 5:1, 2) Matthew gives a full account of this sermon in chapters 5 to 7, but Luke, in his shorter account, records the opening part as a series, or, rather, a double series, of surprising contrasts. First, Jesus speaks to his disciples as having suffered hard conditions up till that time. He says: "Happy are you poor, because yours is the kingdom of God. Happy are you who hunger now, because you will be filled. Happy are you who weep now, because you will laugh." (Luke 6:20, 21) Note that each

statement is a contrast, but, instead of offering sympathy, he says each time: "*Happy* are you." Why? Because the time had come for them to experience a great change. Hitherto poor and hungry and weeping, they were now to be enriched with the inheritance of the kingdom of God, and promised to be filled and made to laugh.

¹⁶ Next comes a most interesting contrast. Jesus says: "Happy are you whenever men hate you, and whenever they exclude you and reproach you and cast out your name as wicked for the sake of the Son of man. Rejoice in that day and leap, for, look! your reward is great in heaven, for those are the same things their forefathers used to do to the prophets." (Luke 6:22, 23) Jesus here not only tells his disciples of a further cause for happiness, but mentions another class of people, namely, those who were responsible for the shocking bad treatment meted out to his disciples. He points to the identification of this evil class of persecutors when he says that "the same things *their forefathers* used to do to the prophets" (the true prophets), including Isaiah. Who were these forefathers? Isaiah says they referred to Israel's rulers, "the elderly ones of his [God's] people and its princes," especially the religious leaders, "priest and prophet" (false prophet), who "have gone astray because of intoxicating liquor . . . they have gone astray in their seeing, they have reeled as to decision."—Isa. 3:14; 28:7.

¹⁷ Jesus now speaks directly to this evil class with a further series of contrasts, but in the reverse order to the previous one. We can imagine, too, that, instead of

16. What other class did Jesus then refer to, giving what identification?

17, 18. (a) Who are addressed in the series of contrasts at Luke 6:24-26? (b) What points did Jesus then emphasize?

15. At Luke 6:20, 21, what contrasts did Jesus make respecting his disciples, and on what basis?

looking directly at his disciples, he now lifts his gaze and takes in the whole crowd, seeing among them a number of those to whom this second series applied. This wider sweep is indicated by his subsequent expression: "But I say to you who are listening," that is, to any who might pay heed and profit from his teaching.—Luke 6:27; 7:1.

¹⁸ Notice now the terse contrasts in this second series, when Jesus says: "But woe to you rich persons, because you are having your consolation in full. Woe to you who are filled up now, because you will go hungry. Woe, you who are laughing now, because you will mourn and weep. Woe, whenever all men speak well of you, for things like these are what their forefathers did to the false prophets," that is, in flattery and for selfish advantage. —Luke 6:24-26.

¹⁹ Here we can observe another close link between the prophet Isaiah and the greater prophet, Christ Jesus. Similarity of expression is seen, not only in the invitation to come and drink (see paragraphs 7 to 9), but also in the contrasts just mentioned. Listen to what Isaiah was inspired to record: "This is what the Lord Jehovah has said: 'Look! My own servants will eat, but you yourselves will go hungry. Look! My own servants will drink, but you yourselves will go thirsty. Look! My own servants will rejoice, but you yourselves will suffer shame. Look! My own servants will cry out joyfully because of the good condition of the heart, but you yourselves will make outcries because of the pain of heart and you will howl because of sheer breakdown of spirit.'"

19. What similar contrasts are found at Isaiah 65:13, 14, leading to what questions?

(Isa. 65:13, 14) Do these contrasts expressed by both these prophets have a parallel fulfillment in our day? Do they help us to identify more sharply the two classes involved? Do they quicken our appreciation of true riches? And is it possible for an individual to flee from one class to the other, even though, as classes, they are separated by a great chasm?

²⁰ In order to give these questions proper consideration we will examine in a succeeding study something of special interest that Jesus had to say later on this same subject. He not only taught by plain speech and direct explanation, as he did in much of the Sermon on the Mount, but he also taught extensively by the use of illustrations, or parables, especially when addressing the crowds. "Indeed, without an illustration he would not speak to them," Matthew records. (Matt. 13:34; see also verses 10-15) One of these illustrations centers around the two classes mentioned at Luke 6:20-26 and is worthy of our close attention.

²¹ One thing is clear. These two classes referred to by Jesus early in his ministry were very much on his mind and on his lips, because (1) they were clearly delineated in the Hebrew Scriptures, (2) they had already shown up even before the start of his ministry, and he knew from the Scriptures that they would continue to do so, and (3) he knew that these same Scriptures, plus his own teaching, would be a source of enlightenment and a "warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived." May we prove to be among those "who are listening."—1 Cor. 10:11; Luke 6:27.

20. What different teaching methods did Jesus adopt?
21. Why would the two classes at Luke 6:20-26 be prominent in Jesus' thoughts and utterances?

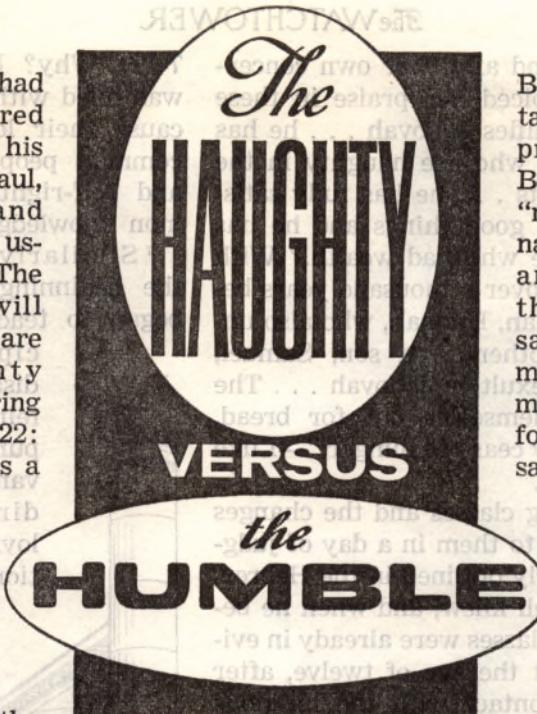
COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- The Pattern of Judgment.
- God's Judgment Makes Manifest the Truly Rich.
- Have You Forgotten Your Decision to Serve God?
- How We Know We Live in the "Last Days."

WHEN David had been delivered by Jehovah from all his enemies, including Saul, he composed a grand song of thanksgiving, using these words: "The humble people you will save; but your eyes are against the haughty ones, that you may bring them low." (2 Sam. 22: 28) This expresses a principle that is emphasized throughout God's Word. It concerns two classes or groups of people set in contrast. For a time, as with David, the humble ones are treated as outcasts by those who are haughty, and often go hungry. Then comes a visitation, or a time of inspection and judgment from Jehovah. This results in a complete reversal to these two classes, though not, mark you, by stepping into each other's shoes.

² Such a day of inspection and judgment was initiated when Jesus commenced his ministry at the age of thirty. He came as Jehovah's representative, the "messenger of the covenant," foretold in Malachi's prophecy. This prophecy foretold Jehovah's coming to his temple for judgment, as he said: "I will come near to you people for the judgment, and I will become a speedy witness" against the evildoers mentioned. Did the ministry of Jesus as Jehovah's "messenger of the covenant" result in a change of conditions for the two classes, the humble and the haughty? Yes.

1. What important principle is stated at 2 Samuel 22:28, and how does it apply?
2. How did Malachi 3:1, 5 find a fulfillment at the first advent?



But there was a fore-taste of that change even prior thereto. How so? Besides speaking of the "messenger of the covenant," Jehovah spoke of another messenger in the same connection, saying: "I am sending my messenger, and he must clear up a way before me." Jesus plainly said that this messenger who prepared the way and was a forerunner to him was John the Baptist.—Mal. 3:1, 5; Matt. 11:7, 10; Luke 1:76; 7:24, 27.

³ John the Baptist's ministry commenced about six months before that of Jesus, but during that time two classes began to show up. On the one hand there were John's disciples, whom John introduced to Jesus and who, with others, formed the nucleus of the one class. They were humble men and truly God-fearing men, such as Nathanael, "an Israelite for a certainty, in whom there is no deceit," as Jesus testified. On the other hand, when John "caught sight of many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to the baptism, he said to them: 'You offspring of vipers, who has shown you how to flee from the coming wrath?'"—John 1:47; Matt. 3:7.

⁴ However, thirty years before that there was a foregleam of the change coming to these two classes. The virgin Mary, after visiting Elizabeth, the mother-to-be

3. How did two classes become manifest through John the Baptist's ministry?
4. What previous foregleams were given respecting these two classes?

of John the Baptist, and after her own conception by holy spirit, voiced her praise in these words: "My soul magnifies Jehovah . . . he has scattered abroad those who are haughty in the intention of their hearts . . . he has fully satisfied hungry ones with good things and he has sent away empty those who had wealth." With remarkable similarity, over a thousand years before that, another woman, Hannah, who also unexpectedly became mother to a son, Samuel, said: "My heart does exult in Jehovah . . . The satisfied must hire themselves out for bread, but the hungry actually cease to hunger."—Luke 1:46-53; 1 Sam. 2:1, 5.

⁵ The two contrasting classes and the changes that were due to come to them in a day of judgment were indeed clearly outlined in the Hebrew Scriptures, as Jesus well knew, and when he began his ministry both classes were already in evidence. Perhaps even at the age of twelve, after three days of close contact with the religious teachers at the temple, he, with his perfect mind and quick understanding, perceived the characteristics of those men forming the one class. (Luke 2:42-47) His first brush with those haughty, wealthy and well-filled religious leaders was possibly at the first Passover after his ministry began, when he drove out the traders and money changers from the temple. We can imagine how tormenting that was to those who authorized and profited from that commercial trafficking in Jehovah's house of prayer.—John 2:13-17.

⁶ Not only were the two classes in evidence, but the due changes were not delayed, not for a moment. From the start, John had his disciples who openly helped in his ministry. Instead of being at the mercy of the religious rulers and ignored and despised, they now had an assignment of service that brought great joy and satisfaction, like food to a hungry soul. In sharp contrast, the moment that John caught sight of those Pharisees and Sadducees he gave them a withering blast, as already mentioned. (Matt. 3:

5. When and how did Jesus first come in contact with those who were haughty?

6. Through John's ministry, what due changes began to be apparent?

7-12) Why? Not only because he was filled with God's spirit, but because their lordly attitude to the common people, their great pride and self-righteousness, were common knowledge.

⁷ Similarly with Jesus. From the beginning of his ministry he began to teach and train his disciples. No longer at a disadvantage, they now felt that life had a real purpose. From their new vantage ground they had direct proof of God's loving favor and protection. What a happy contrast for them! But what a bit-



7. How were these changes intensified through Jesus' ministry?

ter contrast for those rulers whose position and prestige had hitherto been unchallenged! How often they must have writhed at the fearless and public exposures that they had to listen to from the lips of Jesus. As representing his Father, Jesus continued without letup throughout his ministry to show favor to the humble and disfavor to the haughty. Sometimes he referred to the two classes by plain speech, as in the Sermon on the Mount, but more often in his public teaching he made use of illustrations. Even so, though not grasping all the detail, the religious rulers knew well enough when he was speaking about them. As Matthew records: "When the chief priests and the Pharisees had heard his illustrations, they took note that he was speaking about them."—Matt. 21:45.

TIME FOR TABLES TO BE TURNED

⁸ Now note the circumstances leading up to an illustration that

8. What circumstances led up to Jesus' denunciation of the Pharisees at Luke 16:15?



we wish to examine in detail. Before Jesus went up to Jerusalem near the close of his earthly ministry, Luke records that the Pharisees and scribes kept muttering because the tax collectors and sinners kept drawing near to Jesus to hear him. Hence Jesus gave illustrations contrasting the two classes, the rejoicing over the repentant sinner and over the prodigal son welcomed back home, as compared with those who think they have no need to repent. Then came the illustration of the unrighteous steward, helping his disciples to appreciate true spiritual riches and friendships in contrast with the fleeting and unrighteous riches of Mammon. (Luke 15:1–16:13) Luke then makes this interesting comment: "Now the Pharisees, who were money lovers, were listening to all these things, and they began to sneer at him. Consequently he [Jesus] said to them: 'You are those who declare yourselves righteous before men, but God knows your hearts; because what is lofty among men is a disgusting thing in God's sight.'"—Luke 16:14, 15.

⁹ Those plainly spoken words showed how Jesus viewed those men. He next refers to the important time factor, saying: "The Law and the Prophets were *until John*. *From then on* the kingdom of God is being declared as good news, and every sort of person is pressing forward toward it." (Luke 16:16) Yes, the time had come for the tables to be turned on this haughty, self-righteous, money-loving class, and in favor of that other class who hitherto had had a raw deal at their hands. With this theme in mind Jesus went on to relate the illustration we are interested in, known as the rich man (Di'ves) and Lazarus. He used the familiar pattern of contrast, followed by a complete reversal of situations. So as to have the picture in mind, we will first summarize what Jesus said.

¹⁰ A certain rich man daily enjoyed every luxury. Lazarus, a beggar in a pitiable state, was put at the rich man's gate, craving anything dropped from his table. The beggar died, and the angels carried him to the bosom position of Abraham. The rich man died and was buried. Tormented in Hades by a blazing fire, he implored Abraham to send Lazarus to dip

9. What important time factor did Jesus then state, leading up to what illustration?

10. How can the illustration at Luke 16:19–31 be summarized?

his finger in water to cool his tongue. But Abraham explained that a complete reversal had occurred for both men, also a great chasm had been fixed between the two that could not be crossed. Then the rich man asked that Lazarus be sent to warn his five brothers about this place of torment. But Abraham replied: "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to these." The rich man said: "No, . . . but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent." Abraham's final word was: "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead."—Luke 16:19-31.

CHARACTERS IDENTIFIED

¹¹ Let us look first at the application of the illustration in Jesus' own day. In view of the scriptures already discussed it is not difficult to identify the two main characters, strengthened by the details given. As to the first, Jesus said "a certain man was rich, and he used to deck himself with purple and linen, enjoying himself from day to day with magnificence." (Luke 16:19) Who was this rich man who gloried in his riches? Whom did he represent? Why, Jesus had just been speaking to them, the money-loving Pharisees. Notice the similarity of expression. Jesus said: "You . . . declare yourselves righteous before men." Likewise the rich man "used to deck himself with purple and linen." (Luke 16:15, 19) The Pharisees did not wait or depend on someone else to declare them righteous. Likewise the rich man did not wait or depend on someone else to invest him with the robes and insignia of royalty and outstanding virtue and righteousness, symbolized by the purple and linen. Neither God nor his servant Christ Jesus, nor the prophets, such as

Isaiah, ever declared the religious rulers of Israel a righteous class. Far otherwise! But those of that class were never slow in parading their own righteousness. Just like that rich man, they showed it in their dress and general demeanor, as Jesus said: "They broaden the scripture-containing cases that they wear as safeguards, and enlarge the fringes of their garments. They like the most prominent place at evening meals and the front seats in the synagogues . . . [and] outwardly indeed appear beautiful . . . [and] righteous to men."—Matt. 23:5, 6, 27, 28; 6:1, 2.

¹² As for the purple, from ancient times it has been used as a symbol of imperial or regal power. When Jesus had been arrested and was questioned by Pilate: "Are you the king of the Jews?", we remember that, in mockery, the "soldiers braided a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him with a purple outer garment . . . saying: 'Good day, you king of the Jews!'" (John 18:33; 19:2, 3) The religious rulers did not actually aspire to kingship on a throne, but they did assert and exercise real rulership. Were they not the leaders of the nation to whom God promised: "You yourselves will become to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"? Did they not remind Jesus on one occasion: "We are Abraham's offspring and never have we been slaves to anybody"?—Ex. 19:6; John 8:33.

¹³ As for the linen, that is used as a symbol of righteousness. Note the description of the Christian congregation as the Bride of the Lamb Jesus Christ at the time of her marriage to him in heaven. She is "arrayed in bright, clean, fine linen, for the fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the holy ones." But note that it does not say that she decks herself with

12. Of what is purple a symbol, and how did this apply to the religious rulers in Jesus' time?

13. What does linen symbolize, making what contrast as between the Pharisees and the Lamb's wife?

11. Whom did the rich man represent in Jesus' day, marked by what similarities?

purple and linen, even though the marriage is with the "King of kings." Ah, no! She does not declare herself righteous, like the Pharisees, but, as appropriately expressed, "it has been granted to her *to be arrayed* in . . . fine linen." (Rev. 19:7, 8, 16) The apostle Paul, formerly a zealous Pharisee, came to appreciate the contrast between the true righteousness and the false, as he wrote: "That I may gain Christ and be found in union with him, having, not my own righteousness, which results from law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that issues from God on the basis of faith." —Phil. 3:8, 9; see also Romans 10:2-4.

¹⁴ In the eyes of men generally and in their own eyes those religious rulers had everything, like the rich man "enjoying himself from day to day with magnificence," including a lavish spread. (Luke 16:19) As we have seen, knowledge, especially spiritual knowledge, is likened to food and drink. (Isa. 55:1, 2; John 17:3) Well, the Jews and particularly their leaders were well stocked with such provisions on which they could feast continually. Paul once asked: "What, then, is the superiority of the Jew?" He replied: "A great deal in every way. First of all, because they were entrusted with the sacred pronouncements of God." He also wrote that to the Israelites belonged "the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the sacred service and the promises." As for the leaders, Jesus said they were "versed in the Law" and had the "key of knowledge." So as we examine the opening words of Jesus' illustration, it is evident that the rich man represented the religious leaders and rulers as a class. —Rom. 3:1, 2; 9:4; Luke 11:52.

¹⁵ Now what about the beggar? Jesus

left the rich man without a name, but he gave the beggar the Jewish name Lazarus, meaning "God is helper." He "used to be put at his [the rich man's] gate, full of ulcers and desiring to be filled with the things dropping from the table of the rich man. Yes, too, the dogs would come and lick his ulcers." (Luke 16:20, 21) As with the rich man, we do not have to look far to find the class represented by Lazarus. Jesus had just been speaking about them. In fact, it was the Pharisees who caused Jesus to talk about this other class when they complained about his welcoming the tax collectors and sinners. (Luke 15:1, 2) Also, note that, just prior to that, Jesus said to one of the rulers of the Pharisees: "When you spread a feast, invite poor people, crippled, lame, blind." Yes, the beggar represented primarily the poor and spiritually impoverished among the Jews. They were greatly despised by the ruling class, who "trusted in themselves that they were righteous and who considered the rest as nothing," as, like Lazarus, fit company only for dogs. Even worse, the chief priests and Pharisees, speaking angrily about the people who accepted Jesus, said: "This crowd that does not know the Law are accursed people." The rulers, like the rich man, made no provision for any spiritual sustenance for the poor people, who were "conscious of their spiritual need" and eagerly looked for any scraps dropped from the rich man's lavish table.—Luke 14:13; 18:9; John 7:49; Matt. 5:3.

¹⁶ Additionally, those rulers substituted the traditions built up over the years by their own class in place of God's "sacred pronouncements." Hence, as Jesus said, they "made the word of God invalid" and taught "commands of men as doctrines." So there would be precious little nutriment in those scraps. Moreover, those rulers

14. What further aspects help to identify the "rich man" class in Jesus' day?

15. How did Jesus describe the beggar, and whom did he represent?

16. How were the religious rulers responsible for the sick condition of the "Lazarus" class?

bound heavy loads on the shoulders of the people and were "not willing to budge them with their finger." (Matt. 15:6-9; 23:4) No wonder Jesus pictured Lazarus as "full of ulcers." In such emaciated condition he was surely carrying a heavy load, without the slightest prospect of any help or relief from the rich man.

¹⁷ This state of affairs was bad, wholly unjustified, and could not be tolerated indefinitely. As Jesus said to the complaining Pharisees: "Persons in health do not need a physician, but the ailing do. Go, then, and learn what this means, 'I want mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came to call, not righteous people, but sinners." And as he warned that same class: "Woe to you who are versed in the Law, because you took away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not go in, and those going in you hindered!" Yes, the time had come for a change, for a reversal. How did Jesus portray this in his illustration?—Matt. 9:12, 13; Luke 11:52.

THE CLIMACTIC CHANGE

¹⁸ Of all the experiences that contribute to change and reversal in human life, death is the most climactic. Jesus used just that in his illustration. After the initial description of the two characters, as just discussed, Jesus continued: "Now in course of time the beggar died . . . Also, the rich man died." Ah, yes! The important time factor made all the difference. How vividly Jesus now appealed to the imagination of his listeners, knowing that imagination, besides contrast, is a powerful aid to appreciation! Were those two men left to sleep peacefully in their graves? Not they! The beggar was immediately "carried off by the angels to the bosom position of Abraham." The rich

man "was buried. And in Hades he . . . [was] existing in torments" in a blazing fire.—Luke 16:22, 23.

¹⁹ As many of our readers are aware, many commentators and authorities in Christendom interpret this as a literal statement of fact in support of their traditional doctrine of eternal torment suffered by immortal souls in hellfire. But did any of Jesus' listeners, either the Pharisees or his disciples, take it that way? Did they think that Jesus was drawing aside the veil for a moment, as is often said, to give a glimpse of the fate awaiting the wicked, in fact, of all those who do not gain heavenly bliss? Hardly. All who listened to Jesus realized that this was a parable, or illustration, portraying certain things, and hence not to be taken literally. As pointed out in a previous issue of *The Watchtower*, to take it literally makes the situation absurd and impossible, besides doing violence to those plain Scriptural statements proving that Hades (*Hebrew*, Sheol) is the common grave wherein are the 'dead, who are conscious of nothing at all . . . for there is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol, the place to which you are going.' (Eccl. 9:5, 10) Is it reasonable to think that those in the fires of hell are within comfortable speaking distance of those in heaven? Are they so close as to be able to see those in heaven and what they are doing? Are they able to carry on a conversation, even to arguing the point, with those in authority in heaven?—See *The Watchtower* as of February 1, 1965, pages 75, 76, paragraphs 11 to 16.

²⁰ But you may ask, Was Jesus authorized, or did he have any precedent in picturing the dead as alive and talking, in order to illustrate something unusually

17. How did Jesus show that a change was due respecting these two classes?

18. In the illustration, what climactic event occurred, leading to what changes and reversal?

19. (a) In support of what doctrine is Luke 16:23 often quoted? (b) Why is such a conclusion both unreasonable and unscriptural?

20. How did Isaiah use a similar method in portraying a dramatic reversal?

dramatic? Yes! Here we find another interesting parallel between the expressions used by Jesus and the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah was inspired to foretell the dramatic fall and destruction of the Babylonian dynasty of kings. It was such a terrific reversal that, so to speak, the kings of the other nations, each lying in state in his niche in the great pit of Sheol, are pictured as waking up and craning their necks in astonishment at the arrival of the "king of Babylon," saying: "Have you yourself also been made weak like us? . . . Down to Sheol your pride has been brought . . . Beneath you, maggots are spread out as a couch; and worms are your covering." Furthermore, this one does not join the other kings in a niche of his own, but is "thrown away without a burial place . . . like a carcass trodden down." (Isa. 14:4, 10, 11, 19) In the *Authorized Version* and many other versions, the "king of Babylon" is named "Lucifer" at Isaiah 14:12 and is generally understood to refer to Satan the Devil. Taking such a view, this

means that Satan, instead of ruling over hell and keeping its fires burning, is rejected and debased even in his own domain. No wonder that Christendom's commentators do not heavily rely on this prophecy for support for their eternal torment doctrine.

²¹ No, there is no warrant, either from the viewpoint of Scripture or reason, for concluding that Jesus was now suddenly giving a literal account of what takes place. An illustration, or parable, is an allegorical narrative, a pictorial representation of certain truths or events. Consistent with his other illustrations, Jesus was here using a vivid word picture or story to portray something, in this case something already happening to two classes of people. To ascertain the true meaning of what was thus portrayed in this particular illustration, both in Jesus' time and in our own day, we must leave to a subsequent issue of *The Watchtower*.

21. Are Jesus' parables intended to be taken literally? If not, what is their purpose?

A Political Union

AN OLD saying is: "Politics makes strange bedfellows." It is true—there is much rivalry in politics and generally very little unity. But when something threatens their way of operation or exposes the general corruption existing in politics, or if it in some way seems to stand in the way of their plans, they join forces with erstwhile rivals or even enemies and distastefully work together to overcome what they consider a common threat. If their temporary co-

DOOMED from its start

operation succeeds, then they split up again and resume their bickering and fighting.

The Bible is not subjectively concerned with politics and Christians have never had anything to do with it, but the Bible

does describe some of the developments of politics as they affect the lives of God's people and as they cross paths with his purposes. One of these developments is the greatest and most far-reaching coalition of political powers ever undertaken, combining some of the bitterest enemies in a common cause. But it is doomed from its start, for it is a united rebellion against the Sovereign God of the universe. It is the very same kind of rebellion that expressed itself in the building of the Tower of Babel, with its resulting confusion.* —Gen. 11:1-9.

The preceding two issues of this magazine have discussed the scarlet-colored beast of the vision of Revelation and have pointed out that it is a prophetic picture of the international alliance first called the League of Nations, and now the United Nations. The scarlet-colored beast has seven heads and ten horns. These are, of course, symbolic. In Daniel's prophecy we can get the understanding of what horns on a symbolic beast represent. Here the two horns on the ram of Daniel's vision stood for the kings of Media and Persia and the horn on the he-goat stood for the first king of Greece. (Dan. 8:20-22) Correspondingly, the horns on the scarlet-colored beast represent kings, or national rulers. Horns on an animal can be used aggressively and violently, and this is how the scarlet-colored beast uses its horns. The vision to John continues:

"And the ten horns that you saw mean ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they do receive authority as kings one hour with the wild beast. These have one thought, and so they give their power and authority to the wild beast. These will battle with the Lamb, but, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings, the Lamb will conquer them. Also,

those called and chosen and faithful with him will do so."—Rev. 17:12-14.

Of the ten horns on the wild beast, one and possibly two belong to the Seventh World Power, Britain and America. The Medo-Persians were a dual power pictured by two horns on the head of the ram. In John's day Rome, the sixth head, was in power. He was told that the seventh symbolic head had not yet arrived. John was also told that the ten kings had not yet received a kingdom. Ten kings would symbolize all the national governments that are members of the international peace-and-security organization. Of course, in John's day the scarlet-colored beast itself was not present, for the League of Nations did not come into existence until after World War I. Even the seventh head of the wild beast out of the sea (Rev. 13:1, 2) had not yet appeared. The scarlet-colored beast, being an image of the original beast "out of the sea," could not precede that which it images. Besides, the scarlet-colored beast is shown to be an "eighth king" or world power. The eighth could not appear on the scene before the seventh, but the Bible reveals that it rules concurrently with the seventh for a brief time.

A "ONE HOUR" UNITY

In fact, the duration of its existence is given to us by John when he says that the ten kings will receive authority as kings one hour with the wild beast. If we count the time of the beginning of the Seventh World Power from the time that England itself began to have dominance, we would count from 1763. Of course, it was not until the nineteenth century that the dual feature of the world power arrived, with the United States coming into prominence. Even so, that is only a short while, as stated by the angel in Revelation. (Rev. 17:10) Therefore, the existence of

* See *The Watchtower* of May 15, 1964, pages 311-315.

the scarlet-colored beast with its ten horns, that is, the League of Nations and its successor the United Nations, from 1920 onward, must be still shorter and the Bible states that it is just "one hour." This would be a very short time, indeed, for it to exercise influence in world affairs. In fact, many governments did not get into this international wild beast organization until it appeared in its new guise, the United Nations, in 1945, and others even since then. So their time for membership in it is still shorter.

"ONE THOUGHT"

The vision tells us that these kings have "one thought." Wherein does such unity lie? Is it that they have one desire for all nations to cooperate in brotherly love and bring true peace and unity lastingly to the earth? Well, the way the veto power has been used in sessions of the Security Council of the U.N., and the refusal on the part of some members to pay the required taxes for certain military ventures of the U.N. and the disorders that have featured some of the meetings of the General Assembly and the continual lack of oneness of mind on the crucial proposals on general disarmament and stopping nuclear testings, and so forth—all this proves that these ten kings are not one in thought in this direction.

The complete oneness or the "one thought" on the part of the modern-day ten kings is in opposing God's Messianic kingdom. This is the one thing upon which they come to complete unity. The Bible and fulfilled prophecy show that the kingdom of God was born or set up in the heavens in the hands of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, in the year 1914. The nations were put on notice as to this, some of the clergymen of Christendom even acknowledging that the time was at hand for the

close of the times of the Gentiles and that the revelation of the Lord could be expected at any moment. They even declared "that all human schemes of reconstruction must be subsidiary to the second coming of the Lord, because all nations will be subject to his rule."⁵ Nonetheless, instead of willingly acknowledging the sovereignty of God's enthroned king, the nations wanted to continue with man's rule and they were not wanting to give up their own sovereignty, so they formed a conspiracy that expresses itself in the League of Nations and, today, the United Nations.

This is nothing unexpected, for Jehovah God foretold it, not only in the book of Revelation nineteen hundred years ago, but in the book of Psalms nearly three thousand years ago, for it is stated: "Why have the nations been in tumult and the national groups themselves kept muttering an empty thing? The kings of earth take their stand and high officials themselves have massed together as one against Jehovah and against his anointed one [Messiah or Christ], saying, 'Let us tear their bands apart and cast their cords away from us!'" (Ps. 2:1-3) So all the kings associated with the scarlet-colored wild beast give their power and authority to it, and even the other nations that are not members of the United Nations are also cooperating with the beast in this opposition to God's kingdom.

HOW THEY FIGHT THE LAMB

Now, these ten kings are included among the kings that are being gathered under demon influence to the war of the great day of God the Almighty at Har-Magedon. (Rev. 16:14, 16) But they cannot fight against the Lamb of God himself in a direct way, for he is in heaven and they are on earth. He is spiritual, in-

⁵ See *The Golden Age* as of July 28, 1926, page 693c, published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

visible, inaccessible to them. How can they show their viciousness and try to erase from the earth everything representing the Kingdom and any proclamation of it? It is by attacking the King's earthly representatives, his spirit-begotten followers, the members of the Christian congregation who have been chosen by him and are striving to be faithful, true and loyal to the Lamb. They become very clearly evident and identifiable to these kings by reason of their neutrality toward all the conflicts of the nations and by reason of the fact that they proclaim the good news of the kingdom of the Lamb, the Anointed One of God, and urge the people to look to that kingdom for world peace. (Matt. 24:14; Eph. 6:11-18; Acts 5:28, 29; Isa. 9:6, 7) The attack of the nations on these representatives, these spiritual brothers of Christ, is accounted as a direct attack against him, in harmony with the rule expressed by Jesus himself at Matthew 25:45 when he sends the "goats" into everlasting cutting-off.

In what way do these "ten kings" who compose the real power of the United Nations fight against the spiritual brothers of Christ? Well, they try to make it appear that the proclamation of the Kingdom message is against the best interests of the people and that it hinders the earthly kings from getting the full, unqualified support of the people for their so-called peace movement. Actually they are inducing the people to worship the scarlet-colored wild beast, the image of the beast. But, being in power, they frame laws and apply laws in a way that makes it seem that their fight is entirely legal. They stoop to "framing trouble by decree," as foretold by the psalmist, to make their attack seem to be in the national interests.—Ps. 94:20.

The nations not only fight against the spiritual brothers of Christ but they also

fight against those who take a position alongside and who cooperate with these spiritual brothers, namely, the "great crowd" whom John saw standing before the throne of God and shouting: "Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb." (Rev. 7:9, 10, 13-17) Even now we see the opposition of many of the national rulers against the preaching of the good news, although the scarlet-colored beast itself has not yet been steered directly against God's people. In many of the nations opposing God's kingdom, the harlot Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, eggs them on. Examples of this are Portugal, Spain and Greece. Also, the complete Communist bloc of nations bitterly fights against these representatives of the Lamb.

THE LAMB DISPLAYS LIONLIKE QUALITIES

The earthly followers of the Lamb of God are also lamblike in disposition and they have no share in the literal fight against the nations that come up against them. Their fight is a spiritual one described in Ephesians 6:11, 12, against the invisible demons, who are gathering the nations to Har-Magedon. Their work is an educational work, informing people of God's kingdom, showing them that man's rule will not succeed in bringing peace to the earth, teaching persons who want to learn the fine truths of God's Word. But even so, the symbolic ten horns should not expect to win the battle. They should not entertain any hope of destroying these lamblike ones, for they should remember that the Lamb is also "the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah" and in battle he will display his lionlike qualities against God's foes. (Rev. 5:5; Gen. 49:9, 10) They should look at the second Psalm again and see how the Sovereign God in the heavens views them: "The very One sitting in the heavens will laugh; Jehovah

himself will hold them in derision. At that time he will speak to them in his anger and in his hot displeasure he will disturb them, saying: 'I, even I, have installed my king upon Zion, my holy mountain.' Let me refer to the decree of Jehovah; He has said to me: 'You are my son; I, today, I have become your father. Ask of me, that I may give nations as your inheritance and the ends of the earth as your own possession. You will break them with an iron scepter, as though a potter's vessel you will dash them to pieces.' "—Ps. 2: 4-9.

So Jehovah has fulfilled the request of his Son at the end of the Gentile Times in 1914 by giving him the Kingdom. The nations are his inheritance; he is to break them into pieces as with a rod of iron. He is the "Lord of lords and King of kings," a new title given him in his superior position as a Lord and King above all lords and kings of this earth. He has all necessary authority in heaven and on the earth, which he received from his Father.—Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:32-36.

Consequently, the "ten kings" with their "one thought" have no chance whatsoever to win in the fight against the powerful Lion of the tribe of Judah, who will conquer them completely. Sharing with him in his conquest will be "those called and chosen and faithful with him." This would mean the 144,000 of them, who will all finally stand with him on the heavenly Mount Zion. (Rev. 14:1-3) The ones who died faithful prior to the battle and who were rewarded with a resurrection to life with him in the heavens will be with him in the battle. All of these are now gathered with him awaiting the signal for the battle to begin. (Rev. 14:13; 2:26-28) However, we know there are yet those on the earth who are standing faithfully also waiting for the battle to begin, but who will not have any part in the actual fight-

ing with material weapons. They will stand firm against the furious attack of Gog of Magog, Satan the Devil, and of his entire beastly organization. (Ezekiel 38, 39) They are known as the remnant of Christ's spiritual brothers, but, being faithful through the fight, they will be accredited with a share in the conquest. Here we have added proof, assurance, that a remnant of Christ's spiritual brothers will survive Armageddon in the flesh and will for a while be in the flesh on earth in the new order after the battle. Alongside them will be the "great crowd" of persons who serve with them.

"EXERCISE INSIGHT"

So the failure of the political union brought about by the "one thought" that these national rulers have will not be because of mismanagement or because it takes the wrong turn, but it will be because it is doomed from the start. It is a conspiracy against the Almighty God, the Sovereign of the universe, and his enthroned King. It is against the interests of the people, for it tends to turn their hopes and even their worship toward something that is set up in the place of God's kingdom and thereby leads them with the "ten kings" into a fight against God. What a futile thing to do against the Creator of the unfathomable universe! Jehovah himself warns: "Jehovah is taking vengeance against his adversaries, and he is resentful toward his enemies. In the face of his denunciation who can stand? And who can rise up against the heat of his anger?"—Nah. 1:2, 6.

But the prophet goes on to say: "Jehovah is good, a stronghold in the day of distress. And he is cognizant of those seeking refuge in him." Even to national rulers Jehovah warns: "And now, O kings, exercise insight; let yourselves be corrected,

O judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear and be joyful with trembling. Kiss the son, that He may not become incensed and you may not perish from the way, for his anger flares up easily. Happy are all those taking refuge in him." Happy are we if we listen to the warning given to kings, and ourselves take refuge in the name of

Jehovah, which is a strong tower for all those who love him. Only in this way can we escape the doom of those who are led by this conspiracy to fight against God. Only in this way may we be able to have a hope of everlasting life under His glorious Kingdom rule.—Nah. 1:7; Ps. 2:10-12; Prov. 18:10.

"Happy IS THE NATION WHOSE GOD IS JEHOVAH"

As told by Robert A. Winkler

WHEN the crucial year of 1914 came along and World War I broke out, I was in school in Germany and efforts were made there to urge the students to take on military service. For those who volunteered, a special examination was prepared, and all passed with honors. I was one of those students for whom classroom studies had suddenly ended.

I was just a child of sixteen when I stood at the front in France, across from Rheims as a "one-year volunteer." Here at the front, provision was made for religious instruction. I observed that the chaplain preached exactly the opposite to what I had learned. This instruction taught and encouraged us to kill as many of the enemy as possible and that a heroic death should be viewed as something of great honor. All this made me think. This plus my association with those in the army finally brought me to the point where I lost faith.

When I was seriously wounded and returned well decorated from the front, I was discharged from the army. I then got

acquainted with someone who studied philosophy, the result of this association being that I became an atheist, as he was.

BECOMING ONE OF JEHOVAH'S PEOPLE

I remained an atheist until 1924, when I came in contact with a *Bibelforscher*, that is, one of Jehovah's witnesses. What he told me about the Bible was entirely new to me. I was prodded to seek new arguments to be able to refute his views. I accepted all literature he presented to me and studied it till deep into the night. The book *The Divine Plan of the Ages* particularly interested me, as I wanted to know what that "plan" was.

Because I spent every evening studying this literature and spoke about it, all members of my family turned against me. Finally my father burned all my books. All new literature I could henceforth obtain had to be kept well hidden.

Very soon I realized that there were no arguments I could find to refute those of the *Bibelforscher* and was forced to realize it was indeed God's truth. Indescribable was my joy in learning what Jehovah's purposes were, in getting an un-

derstanding of God's kingdom and the blessings it would bring to mankind. These promises, these expectations of blessings simply overwhelmed me. I got to understand what the psalmist said at Psalm 33: 12 and could join with him in saying: "Happy is the nation whose God is Jehovah."

I could hardly wait for the next time this Christian minister would visit me. But I wanted to preach, not just within the family circle, but as he did, from house to house. My joy was great when he agreed to have me accompany him from house to house. After we had gone together for the first few houses he agreed to have me go alone. I often think back on the joys and blessings the first day of witnessing brought me.

I also like to think of the moment when I, together with the brother from the Watch Tower Society's branch office in Magdeburg, stood in front of a large map and he asked me if I wanted to go to Bonn. "Bonn," he explained, "is a difficult city, a university city with many intellectuals, a Catholic territory. If you are going to hold out in this territory," he continued, "you will have to be strong in faith and well versed in the Scriptures." Thus Bonn became my first ministerial assignment. Very soon my fiancée came and we were married. Soon more full-time preachers of God's kingdom came to our aid. Jehovah richly blessed our efforts, and soon, besides our small group of attenders at the study of *The Watchtower*, we had quite a number of interested people, which number grew from month to month until the hall was full, more than eighty persons attending our meetings.

GESTAPO HARASSMENT

Suddenly a great change came. Hitler's Gestapo began to pay us many a visit, which visits we had anticipated and so we

had our literature carefully hidden. These visits were made during the day, or at midnight or during the early hours of the morning. They came to get names and addresses of Witnesses and they would carefully search each shelf, the clothes closets, the beds and the linen.

When working from house to house, we used only the Bible. One day I called at the home of a woman who was a member of the Nazi party and she phoned the police and gave them my description.

This led quickly to my arrest, after which I was transported to the Esterwegen Concentration Camp. How heart-warming it was to make persons broken in spirit and without any hope happy with the Kingdom message! The great joy to be able to help sheeplike persons in the camp to understand God's truth and dedicate themselves to God made the cruel treatment meted out by the Gestapo mean nothing. Yes, here in camp we learned to appreciate the great privilege of being among the people whose God is Jehovah.

After my release I was to report daily to the Gestapo, and they demanded that I perform the "Heil Hitler" salute. Each day as I refused, their ire rose to greater heights and they would scream out: "You didn't learn a thing in camp, absolutely nothing, not even the German salute, and when you return tomorrow morning and do not give the German salute, you will never see your wife again. Do you understand that?"

This same day the Watch Tower Society's circuit supervisor came to visit us, and I told him the things the Gestapo had told me. He said he had heard of similar cases and, since each Gestapo post in the country had a copy of my photo, it would be wise for me to continue the witness work in the Netherlands. We accepted our new assignment and gladly left our home

and all we possessed to the thievish Gestapo.

When we got to Holland and began our new assignment we knew nothing of the Dutch language. Jehovah blessed our efforts to serve in that land. As we daily went from house to house we soon got to know the people. In 1938 I received the assignment to visit all the congregations in the Netherlands. In 1939 my privileges were expanded and I was called to the branch office of the Watch Tower Society. In 1940 German troops occupied the Netherlands, and now it was clear that the Gestapo would soon carry on its campaign of searching and robbery in this country as well.

On October 21, 1941, I was betrayed and arrested. The Gestapo rejoiced when they finally got me. They made this news known to many a Gestapo post in Germany and the Netherlands.

EFFORTS TO GET ME TO BETRAY JEHOVAH'S PEOPLE

It was the wish of the Gestapo to squash the organization of Jehovah's witnesses, and, according to them, I would be a smart man to cooperate in their schemes. "This Jehovah," they scoffed, "is bankrupt in Germany and the same is happening in other lands." The Führer, according to them, was God-sent, and I would have to change my mind. I would raise my position something wonderfully, they said, if I would support the cause of the Führer and break with something that really did not exist. I was to tell them who belonged to the office staff and where they were, where my wife was and who the leaders in the congregations were. They assured me that none of those betrayed would ever get to know that I gave the information nor would they arrest all those informed upon. They would merely inform them to

mend their ways and to serve the cause of the Führer.

When I told them squarely I would not go along with them in their plan, they pulled the curtains shut, turned on the radio full volume and beat me unmercifully. When one of them could not go on any further, another brute would take over until I fell unconscious to the floor, later to regain consciousness. "So," they sneered, "we did not expect you to be so unreasonable. One who has proved to be a good organizer and intelligent, one who was such a good fighter for a bankrupt cause, should have more sense. We need people like you. Just think how you could improve your lot in life. Tell us where your wife is, and we give you our word of honor she will not be beaten. If you are smart and go along with us, you can exchange your prison for a villa and your condition of shame and revilement for one of honor, money and prestige."

As I remained silent, the second round began. First it was the *Obersturmführer* Barbie, and when he was tired *Oberschaarführer* Engelsman took over. This went on till I lost consciousness again. This continued from one o'clock in the afternoon till midnight. At 1 a.m. I was handed over to the prison guard. With teeth knocked out and the lower jaw dislocated and my body beaten raw, I was taken to the dark cell. "Do you know why I am bringing you to the dark cell?" the guard asked me.

"No," I answered.
"Because they could not get anything out of you."

"How do you know that?" I asked.

The guard replied: "Because when they have mistreated anyone like you have been and he has given in and spilled everything then he gets a better cell, better food and better treatment. You go to the dark cell because they think this type of

treatment will break you. But I will let you have light and something warm to eat."

The thoughts of Jehovah's promises to help one in all kinds of trouble gave me the comfort and strength to endure all this, so that thoughts of any compromise with my demonized persecutors never once entered my mind.

When I looked at myself in the mirror the next day, I was shocked at the way I looked. The two Dutch plainclothes policemen who had transported me from the prison to be interrogated by the Gestapo could not recognize me now. They had given the Gestapo assistance with my arrest and when they saw me now they asked: "Are you Winkler?"

"Yes."

"Are you that R. A. Winkler?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Are you Winkler, the witness of Jehovah?"

"Yes, I am."

"Are you the Witness Winkler whom we arrested in the Wittenkade last week?"

I told them I was the man. They asked me what the Gestapo had done to me. When I told them, they said they never would have arrested me if they had known what the Gestapo would do to me.

Saturday I had been beaten by the Gestapo, and on the following Monday I was to be interrogated by them again. What would happen now and what was I to do? I turned to Jehovah in prayer, trusting in his promises. I knew this meant the use of theocratic war strategy for the sake of the Kingdom work and the protection of my Christian brothers. It was a great trial for me to endure and the seventeenth day I was completely worn out, but I thanked Jehovah that in his strength I was able to endure this trial and keep my integrity.

SPIRITUAL STRENGTH DESPITE PHYSICAL ILLS

At this point I felt a very great need for spiritual food. A couple of days later this same friendly prison guard came up and asked if he could do something for me. I told him he certainly could; he could procure a Bible for me from my wife. "Yes," he said, "write a note. I will bring you a pencil and some paper."

The day of February 10, 1941, I will never forget. The door of my cell flew open and someone threw a pocket Bible into the cell, and before I realized what was going on the door slammed shut again. What a joyful occasion! The Gestapo did not permit me to have any reading material at all, and now, by Jehovah's undeserved kindness, I had a Bible to read. What a joy it was daily to enjoy the pleasant words of truth from His Word! Although any reading had to be done secretly, I felt myself getting stronger spiritually.

I was able to retain this Bible until moved to another camp in the Netherlands, Camp Vught. While in Vught I was able to get another Bible.

From Vught I was moved to Germany, to a camp in Oraniëenburg-Sachsenhausen. There we were brought into barracks where we were forced to remove our clothing and get under a shower. All our clothes along with our shoes were taken away from us; only those who had wooden shoes could retain them. I let my Bible slip unnoticed into a wooden shoe and thus was able to keep it while in camp.

Here in this new camp I turned ill. I soon found myself in the camp hospital where there were already about 3,000 persons being treated by doctors who themselves were prisoners. As soon as I was free from one illness I fell prey to another. In time I was brought over to other barracks, where I was treated by a Swedish doctor.

This doctor asked me if I knew Witnesses Erich Frost, Konrad Franke and R. Braüning. When I said I knew them, he told me they had saved his life on the island Wight, and now, in gratitude, he was going to try to save my life. The doctors were required to report to the SS guards every prisoner who, due to illness, would not be able to report to work during the coming six months. Such patients were brought over to other barracks and were loaded into buses that proved to be nothing else than gas chambers on wheels. The exhaust gases killed the victims en route to the crematories. This would have been my lot, but the Swedish doctor did not do what the Nazis expected of him, because of the kindnesses of my Christian brothers.

I also often think back on the so-called "March of Death" from the Sachsenhausen Camp to Schwerin in April of 1945. I would never have endured this march were it not for the loving care of my Christian brothers who had risked much to remove me from the barracks for the ill who could not move on their own power. The SS wanted to burn the barracks with the seriously ill so as not to let such evidence fall into the hands of the Russians. The brothers got hold of a sort of wagon on which they placed me and other Witnesses who could not walk. They pulled this wagon with their Christian brothers on it who could not walk, till the end of

this nightmarish march of death. Anyone who collapsed during this march was dispatched by the SS with a bullet in the neck. The loving care of our Christian brothers helped us to avoid such a lot.

I finally returned to my place of theocratic assignment in the Netherlands clothed in camp uniform and with nothing but paper sheets as underwear and able to walk only with the aid of a cane. However, I quickly recovered and was soon able to take on work in God's Kingdom service. This I have done for over twenty years since my release. We still have the great privilege of working in the Society's branch office in the Netherlands.

From the German government we received a compensation and thus we were able to buy things we had lost. Now that I have passed my sixty-fifth year, I also get an old-age pension. I am thus able to maintain a car, which enables me to do as much as possible in the ministry.

Yes, Jehovah does not allow any test greater than that we can bear, and, in addition to this, provides the strength to endure. For no price on earth would I want to miss the trials I have endured in His power. These trials have added to my faith in Jehovah, to my appreciation of his love, wisdom, righteousness and might. By actual experience I learned the great truth we read in the Bible: "Happy is the nation whose God is Jehovah."

'Happy Those Having Part in the First Resurrection'

Many readers of *The Watchtower* were well acquainted with William R. Brown and Thomas E. Banks, both of whom died late in January. William R. Brown, long known in West Africa as "Bible Brown," was approaching the age of 90. Of his fifty-seven years as a full-time minister, twenty-seven were spent in West Africa, where he saw Jehovah's witnesses grow in numbers from one to more than ten thousand ministers. He finished his earthly course in Port of Spain, Trinidad, on January 25, 1967. Thomas E. Banks represented the Society for many years in the southern States and the Caribbean islands. Later he served as branch servant in Jamaica. There he completed his earthly ministry, which began with his dedication in 1901, on January 29, 1967. Doubtless these devoted servants, by their faithful course unto death, may now enjoy the happiness of the first resurrection, triumphing over death.—Rev. 20:6.

Questions from Readers

- At Jesus' impalement, which garment or garments did the soldiers distribute by casting lots?—D. T., New Zealand.

This question is based on an apparent discrepancy between Matthew's account and what John says occurred on this occasion. First, Matthew wrote: "When they had impaled him they distributed his *outer garments* by casting lots." (27:35) Mark presented essentially the same information. (15:24) However, John wrote: "Now when the soldiers had impaled Jesus, they took his *outer garments* and made four parts, for each soldier a part, and the inner garment. But the *inner garment* was without a seam . . . Therefore they said to one another: 'Let us not tear it, but let us determine by lots over it whose it will be.' This was that the scripture might be fulfilled: 'They apportioned my outer garments among themselves, and upon my *apparel* they cast lots.' And so the soldiers really did these things." —John 19:23, 24.

From John's eyewitness account we learn that Jesus had outer garments and an inner garment. John 19:23 informs us that the soldiers made four parts out of his outer garments, each taking a piece; however, John does not tell us how they decided who would get what piece. Finally, John 19:24 reveals that the soldiers cast lots over Jesus' one-piece inner garment.

The account in Matthew 27:35 does not disclaim the fact that Jesus had an inner garment; nor does it contradict the fact that lots were cast over it. Matthew simply does not mention this particular garment. Rather, he provides details about Jesus' outer garments, which John says were made into four parts, Matthew adding that they were also distributed by the casting of lots.

By taking into consideration the two Gospels, Matthew and John, we can see that the soldiers cast lots over both the outer garments and the inner one. Instead of contradiction, we have two accounts written by different persons, each providing details that the other does not include, and yet neither one contradicts the other. And, as the later account written by John points out, the casting of lots for the Messiah's apparel served to fulfill Psalm 22:18. We can draw this correct conclusion from reading either of the inspired books.

After the Flood, Noah planted a vineyard, began drinking of the wine and became intoxicated. (Gen. 9:20, 21) Since the Bible condemns drunkenness, even saying that drunkards will not inherit God's kingdom, how should we view Noah's intoxication?—B. M., U.S.A.

Concerning Noah's drinking wine to the point of intoxication, Genesis 9:20, 21 states: "Now Noah started off as a farmer and proceeded to plant a vineyard. And he began drinking of the wine and became intoxicated, and so he uncovered himself in the midst of his tent." Noah, who was over six hundred years old at the time, was evidently completely overtaken by the wine, for the account says: "Finally Noah awoke from his wine." (Gen. 9:24) Hence, there is no question about his being quite intoxicated.

However, when considering the account at Genesis 9:20-27, one does well to realize that nowhere in His Word did Jehovah God register condemnation of Noah because of this incident. Of course, this does not mean that God winks at drunkenness, for the Bible shows that this is not true. (Prov. 23:20, 21, 29-35; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10) Yet, in Noah's case Jehovah may have taken extenuating factors into consideration. The record of this matter in the book of Genesis is brief and the incident is not dealt with elsewhere in the Scriptures. Evidently, though, Noah was unwittingly overtaken as a result of drinking the wine, whether out of weariness or because of a heavy heart or for some other reason, the Bible does not say. For that matter, perhaps under the changed atmospheric conditions that followed the Flood, the wine Noah drank had fermented to greater strength than he realized. Certainly, however, Noah was not a confirmed drunkard. There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that he habitually drank wine to the point of intoxication. In fact, the Scriptures do not say that he ever became intoxicated again.

When Bible writers condemned drunkenness or urged persons to avoid it, they never used Noah as a bad example. Also, they made no unfavorable remarks about him because of

this unfortunate incident. In fact, the apostle Peter called Noah "a preacher of righteousness." (2 Pet. 2:5) In writing to Hebrew Christians, the apostle Paul said that by his faith Noah "condemned the world, and he became an heir of the righteousness that is according to faith." (Heb. 11:7) Paul viewed Noah as one of those making up the great cloud of faithful pre-Christian witnesses of Jehovah. (Heb. 12:1) Furthermore, when Jesus Christ compared Noah's day with "the days of the Son of man," or his second presence, he made no condemnatory statement regarding Noah.—Luke 17: 26, 27.

Therefore, Noah is not to be likened to those who engage in works of the fallen flesh and who may get involved in "drunken bouts, revelries, and things like these." (Gal. 5:19-21) Nor should faithful Noah be compared with persons who were once baptized as Christians but who may later make it a practice to become intoxicated. Such confirmed drunkards who are unrepentant have not just been unwittingly overtaken by drinking too much of an intoxicating beverage on one occasion. They are really drunkards and must be disfellowshiped from the clean and upright Christian congregation. The apostle Paul had such individuals in mind when he told the Christians in Corinth:

"But now I am writing you to quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that is a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a *drunkard* or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man." (1 Cor. 5:11) If they do not repent, such drunkards will never realize the blessings of God's kingdom.

Suppose that, like Noah, a dedicated Christian today is inadvertently overcome when drinking an alcoholic beverage in the privacy of his own home on one occasion. This never happened to him before and he is determined to exercise care so that it never occurs again. What should he do? Well, he is not a confirmed drunkard. And it is not reasonable to think that because of this one incident he is condemned by God for all time to come, so that he could not possibly gain everlasting life as a gift from Jehovah. (Rom. 6:23) However, such a Christian should express true sorrow concerning this in prayer to Almighty God. He should plead with Jehovah through Christ, seeking God's merciful forgiveness. (Deut. 4: 31; Psalm 51) Then he should be determined to avoid any repetition of this wrong. Yet, if he is still deeply troubled over the matter, such a Christian should avail himself of the spiritual assistance available to him by heeding the words of James 5:13-16.

ANSOUNCEMENTS

FIELD MINISTRY

In order for people to put faith in Jehovah God and his provision for salvation through Christ they need to hear the Bible's message and have opportunity to get their questions answered. During March, if one of Jehovah's witnesses calls at your home, it will be with the desire to help you personally to get satisfying Bible answers to your questions. He will gladly take time to show you the answers in your own Bible. As a further aid, he will encourage you to subscribe for this fine Bible journal, *The Watchtower*, for a year, for \$1.

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