

The WATCHTOWER

A Way of Life That Results in Happiness

Letting God Be the Sovereign of Our Lives

God's Judgments Reveal His Personality

NOVEMBER 1, 1975

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

November 1, 1975
Vol. 96, Number 21

A watchtower enables a person to see far into the distance and announce to others what is coming. Can a magazine serve similarly in our day? Yes, from its first issue (July 1879) onward, *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's witnesses, has done just that.

How can it benefit you? Consider: Do you long for a better world, one of true justice and free from sorrow, hatred and war? Do you want to live at a time when genuine peace and love prevail among people of all races? Then this magazine can aid you. Using God's Word, the Bible, as its authority, it points out the clear evidence that the present wicked system of things will soon end, destroyed by God. But it also announces the coming in of a righteous new order. There, under the rule of God's kingdom, his heavenly government, people will enjoy life forever in true peace, health and happiness on a paradise earth.

Faithfulness to the Word of God lifts *The Watchtower* above the contradicting religious teachings and philosophies of men. It stays strictly neutral as regards political affairs. It wholeheartedly upholds the highest moral standard—that of man's Maker, Jehovah God. From this source, it shows solutions to the problems of daily life.

We know that many sincere persons would appreciate a discussion of these things in their own home with a qualified person. A minister of Jehovah's witnesses will be glad to call on you free of charge. To arrange for this, simply write the publishers of this magazine or contact Jehovah's witnesses locally.

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A WAY OF LIFE



That Results in Happiness

HAPPINESS! When do you want it? Right now, you say. On what terms? On any terms, you quickly reply. Then you begin to think. You know perfectly well that happiness can be skin-deep, intensely enjoyable for the time being, but afterward leaving a sour taste in the mouth, a bad reaction or permanent scars. After a little more thought, you say to yourself that you want the kind of happiness that is well-founded and long-lasting. It may not be so exciting as the temporary kind, but it is deeply satisfying.

Having got so far, you may be tempted to give up, saying to yourself that, with things as they are in the world and in your own particular circumstances, it is useless to reach out for something that is impossible to grasp. You feel that you must learn to be content with what happiness you can find on a short-term basis.

But need you give up so quickly? Why not follow along with us in a line of rea-

soning that might open up to you a fresh and different way of life, one that results in true and lasting happiness? There are many thousands of people today who have found and are pursuing that new way of life, but whose previous way of life, in many cases, was about as bad as any that could be imagined—physically, mentally and morally.

STEPS IN ATTAINING HAPPINESS

As it is said, we must start off on the right foot. We must build on the right foundation. And what is that? Well, what are some of the things that give us immediate happiness? They are things that we enjoy seeing, the many delights of God's creation around us, not to mention what we enjoy eating, the fruits and produce of that creation. There is also the companionship of those we love, who are near and dear to us. Life and health, too, are precious possessions. All these things, and

many more, point to a personal Creator who designed and created us in such a way that we may be truly happy. He created all things with a definite purpose in mind. As he caused to be written in his own book, the Bible, he is "the One saying, 'My own counsel will stand, and everything that is my delight I shall do.'" (Isa. 46:10) Hence, he is worthy of receiving all the credit for what he has done, and that is exactly what the Bible says at Revelation 4:11: "You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created."

Granting all of this, what is the next step toward real happiness? Surely it is only logical to concede that, as we are included in the things created, we ought to be very interested in the Creator's will, or purpose, with regard to us humans. Can you not immediately see that herein lies the secret of true and lasting happiness?

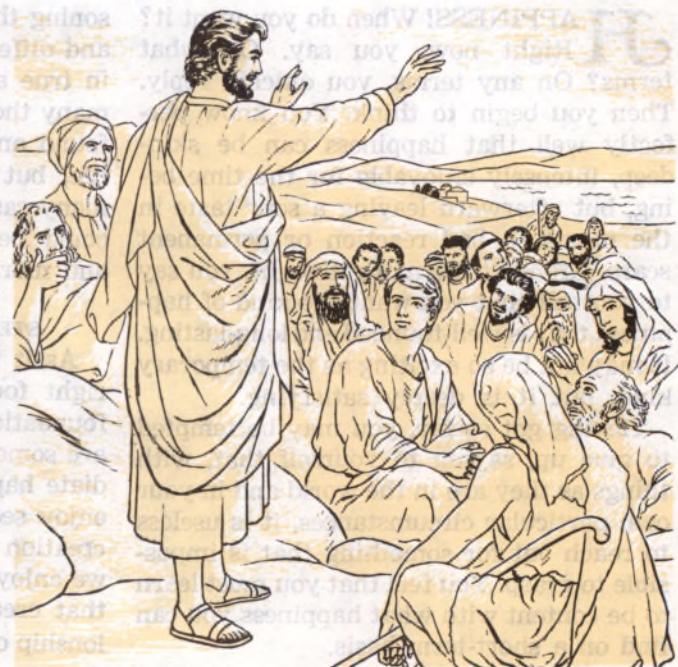
Let us illustrate it this way. If someone gave a plowman a race-horse to plow with, would he be happy about it? Neither he nor the horse would be comfortable or content. Each in his own way would feel very much out of place in attempting the job. The initial problem with mankind in Eden was similar. In striking out on a course of independence from their Creator, Adam and Eve found themselves in a position contrary to the purpose for which they had been created. So they felt uncomfortable and out of place. They lost their happiness.—Gen. 3:8-13.

Did the Creator lose *his* happiness when that occurred? No. Of course, he was not pleased with the willfully disobedient

pair, but at that very time he determined within himself how he would cope with the situation. Speaking prophetically and in symbolic phrase, he foretold that he would bring forth a "seed" for blessing mankind. (Gen. 3:15) Later, he indicated that this "seed" would come through the line of his "friend," Abraham, and that by means of this "seed" all nations of the earth would certainly "bless themselves." (Gen. 22:18) Stated in other words, mankind would have the opportunity of finding true happiness again—through this "seed." And who is this "seed"? Galatians 3:16 answers: "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. . . . 'And to your seed,' who is Christ."

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS

Truly, Christ Jesus knew the secret of happiness. Why, he mentioned the subject no less than nine times in succession at



In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus revealed a way of life that results in true happiness

the beginning of his well-known Sermon on the Mount, as follows:

"Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them."

"Happy are those who mourn, since they will be comforted."

"Happy are the mild-tempered ones, since they will inherit the earth."

"Happy are those hungering and thirsting for righteousness, since they will be filled."

"Happy are the merciful, since they will be shown mercy."

"Happy are the pure in heart, since they will see God."

"Happy are the peaceable, since they will be called 'sons of God.'

"Happy are those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them."

"Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and leap for joy, since your reward is great in the heavens; for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you."—Matt. 5:3-12.

On reading these words, you might be inclined to say, What a strange recipe for happiness! Yet it can truly be said that Jesus was telling of a way of life that results in happiness of the right kind, true and lasting. For example, look at the first of the nine 'happinesses.'

Are you 'conscious of your spiritual need'? There have been some persons who studied the Bible with one of Jehovah's witnesses, but who for some reason discontinued the study and drifted away. Did they find happiness by changing their course? Did they completely forget what they learned? Or did they now have it impressed on them that "the word of God is alive and exerts power"? (Heb. 4:12) Actually, many of these have found that the Bible truths they had learned made them feel really out of place when they had got back in the old world and resumed trying to be part of it. So, many of them have made the effort to retrace their steps

and again associate with, and be identified with, Jehovah's witnesses.

You would likely be surprised if you knew how many of Jehovah's witnesses, especially among the younger ones, have had just that experience. They made some progress in gaining a knowledge of the truth of God's Word the Bible, or were reared that way from infancy, and then, perhaps in their teen years, they struck out on a course of independence. Some of them got involved in drugs, loose living and hippie-style dress and appearance, only to get the bitter taste of frustration. They got some thrills and excitement, but no real happiness. Then they made fresh contact with their former friends, who were able to give them practical help and encouragement. They became "conscious of their spiritual need." This resulted in their turning around and cleaning themselves up. To look at them today—clean, eager, fresh-looking and ready to be friendly—you would never imagine that they had come from so bad a background. They no longer feel out of place, but are associating joyfully in the Christian congregation, with deep appreciation for the purpose for which they have been created. They have regained their happiness.

The first of the nine 'happinesses' of Jesus' sermon is thus fundamental in showing us the way to benefit from the Source of real happiness. Those who are aware of their need for spiritual guidance are led to seek a personal relationship with Jehovah. As the relationship grows stronger, they become God's friends and are very conscious of the inner peace and happiness that no one can take away. (John 14:27) The other eight 'happinesses' point, in the main, to qualities that will bring one ever closer to Jehovah, such as being mild-tempered, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, being merciful, pure in heart, peaceable, and showing endurance under persecution.

However, the nine 'happinesses' are only the introduction to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, commencing at Matthew 5:3 and going on to Matthew 7:27. All of this sermon has a direct bearing on the subject of happiness. Following this introduction, Jesus showed clearly what is our commission, the fulfilling of which contributes to our own happiness, and to that of others, when he said: "You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world." (Matt. 5:13-16) Just as salt has preserving power, so the good news that we carry can preserve lives. And what happiness we have in 'letting our light shine' to others by word and example!

Jesus then continued to make a series of comparisons, commencing: "You heard that it was said." (Matt. 5:21, 27, 33, 38) In these, he showed that the Christian way of life in being a true disciple of his went deeper and brought greater benefits, also responsibilities, in comparison with the requirements in the Law that God gave to Israel through Moses. Christians are required to love even their enemies and to cultivate the same kind of unselfish love that God shows to all mankind, thus proving themselves to be perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect. That surely assures happiness, helping them to become like "the happy God."—Matt. 5:43-48; 1 Tim. 1:11.

The remainder of the Sermon on the Mount can be summarized by saying that

IN COMING ISSUES

- Our Refuge Under the Incorrputible "Kingdom of the Heavens."
- A God Who Merits Our Trust.
- When Preaching Is a Real Challenge.

it shows us how to come close and how to stay close to Jehovah. We do this, in part, by avoiding an outward show of piety, and especially by avoiding anxiety over "treasures upon the earth," and such things even as food and clothing. Anxiety and happiness do not go hand in hand. "Never be anxious about the next day," Jesus said, but "keep on . . . seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you."—Matt. 6:1-34.

As was mentioned earlier, there are conditions to be met. This way of life is not the "broad and spacious" road of self-indulgence, which leads, not to happiness, but into destruction. Rather, as Jesus went on to say: "Narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it." (Matt. 7:13, 14) Many persons are not prepared to pay the price of being truly unselfish, subjecting their will in the spirit of whole-souled devotion to the will of the One who created them. Jehovah is indeed worthy "to receive the glory and the honor and the power."—Rev. 4:11.

Of course, we cannot buy Jehovah's favor and demand payment in terms of happiness. It is only by Jehovah's undeserved kindness that we sinful creatures can acceptably offer ourselves to him in dedication and enter into an approved relationship with him. He made this possible by the ransom sacrifice of his beloved Son. (1 Tim. 2:3-6) It is Jehovah who has provided in abundance all the spiritual food and enlightenment and other refreshing provisions, and then he makes the kindly invitation: "Come, buy wine and milk even without money and without price. . . . Listen intently to me, and eat what is good, and let your soul find its exquisite delight in fatness itself . . . and your soul will keep alive."—Isa. 55:1-3.

That is the way of life that results in happiness!

"Let Anger Alone"

IT IS not easy to keep anger in check when injustices are committed or lawless people prosper. Yet under these very circumstances the Bible urges: "Let anger alone and leave rage; do not show yourself heated up only to do evil."—Ps. 37:8.

There is wisdom in 'letting anger alone.' Anger can be a very damaging emotion. When a person gives vent to anger, his blood pressure rises and the pulse and respiratory rates increase. When anger passes, generally everything returns to normal. But repeated outbursts of anger are obviously hard on the body. On the other hand, a person may be given to anger but keep things 'bottled up' inside himself. Outwardly he may seem very calm, but inwardly he may be in a state of turmoil. When that is the case, he may begin to experience bodily ailments and still deny that emotional disturbances are the cause of his affliction. Anger can thus contribute toward or aggravate a host of ills, including cardiovascular disorders, respiratory ailments, skin diseases, dental and digestive troubles, and headaches.

Besides physical problems, anger can

lead to great spiritual harm by causing a person to violate God's law. Calling attention to this danger, the Bible says: "He that is quick to anger will commit foolishness." (Prov. 14:17) "As a city broken through, without a wall, is the man that has no restraint for his spirit." (Prov. 25:28) In ancient times a city with a breached wall was defenseless, open to the invasion of enemy forces. Similarly, the person given to anger makes himself vulnerable to the invasion of improper thoughts, leading to foolish acts.

Just how dangerous anger can be is illustrated in the case of Cain. When he saw God's favor manifested upon his brother Abel, but not upon himself, Cain became enraged. Though given divine warning, Cain yielded to wrong thinking and murdered his brother.—Gen. 4:4-8.

HOW ANGER CAN BE CONTROLLED

Certainly none of us would want to become like Cain, either in attitude or action. So we should strive to keep anger in check. This does not mean mere outward control of emotions. Control of anger starts with one's being able to respond reasonably—without undue external or internal disturbance—when confronted with unfavorable situations.

Take the case of a person who is corrected because of being guilty of some neglect or wrong. If he lets pride get in the way, he may become very angry about this. That is what happened to Judean King Asa. When corrected by the prophet Hanani for having shown a lack of faith, Asa became very angry. He put Hanani in "the house of the stocks" and also began oppressing others of his subjects. (2 Chron. 16:7-10) Instead of giving vent to anger, Asa should have taken the reasonable view of the situation. He should have kept in mind that Hanani was speaking, not of his

own originality, but as Jehovah's messenger. It was a time for Asa to acknowledge his wrong and to express sincere repentance. Humility could have helped Asa to keep anger in check. So if we are going to heed the Bible's counsel to "let anger alone," we, too, need to cultivate humility.

At times people do and say things to us that are entirely uncalled for. This may upset us very much. What can we do? We do well to consider the motivations of those disturbing us.

Are they deliberately trying to get us angry? If so, we would only be playing into their hands if we were to give way to a fit of anger. Far better it would be to ignore cutting remarks or actions intended to provoke us. The counsel of Jesus Christ would then apply: "Whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other also to him." (Matt. 5:39) A slap on the cheek would not be intended to injure physically but to insult or provoke a fight. Hence, by reacting in kind, a person would only worsen the situation.

But what if the things disturbing us were not said or done with any intent to incite us to anger? In that case, we might reason with ourselves. Are we perhaps making an issue over trifles? Might it not be more loving just to cover over the minor offense?

On the other hand, we may have real basis for being incensed. But should not love move us to want to help the individual involved to avoid giving offense in the future? Christians are counseled: "Be wrathful, and yet do not sin; let the sun not set with you in a provoked state, neither allow place for the Devil." (Eph. 4: 26, 27) If our main objective is to help the person who wronged us to overcome his weakness, we will not harbor anger against him and go beyond the bounds of proper indignation. We will not leave an opening

for the Devil to take advantage of our provoked state and incite us to retaliate.

Of course, there are things about which we can do very little. In this imperfect system, many injustices occur. To get all upset about these, perhaps to the point of ruining our health, would certainly benefit no one. Rather, we can take comfort in the Bible-based assurance that Jehovah God, by means of his kingdom, will end all injustices and oppression. (Dan. 2:44) Meanwhile we can depend upon him to sustain us so as to endure any trial we might face.—Jas. 1:2-5.

Besides having a balanced view of things that can give rise to anger, our avoiding the company of those given to anger will aid us to maintain self-control. The Bible admonishes: "Do not have companionship with anyone given to anger; and with a man having fits of rage you must not enter in, that you may not get familiar with his paths and certainly take a snare for your soul."—Prov. 22:24, 25.

On the other hand, associating with persons of calm and even temper will surely have a wholesome effect on us. Such persons do not incite others to anger by cutting remarks. Their mildness has tremendous power in putting an end to bitter disputing and overcoming stiff opposition. In their case the words of the Bible prove true: "An answer, when mild, turns away rage." (Prov. 15:1) "One that is slow to anger quiets down quarreling." (Prov. 15: 18) "A mild tongue itself can break a bone."—Prov. 25:15.

Truly there are sound reasons for 'letting anger alone.' We are benefited both physically and spiritually. May we, therefore, strive not to give occasion for others to get angry, and may we ourselves watch our associations, cultivate humility and continue to take a reasonable, balanced view toward what fellow humans may do or say.



MEXICO

GETS A RICH CULTURAL BOOST

MORE than 48,000 of Mexico's people have learned to read and write during the past twenty-eight years through the efforts of a unique association of volunteers. By means of the finest publications available, these unselfish workers are also assisting many thousands to learn uplifting principles that truly enrich the quality of their lives and culture.

In a mighty chain reaction, the humanitarian work of Jehovah's witnesses has spread across Mexico. From about 7,000 in 1950, the number of field workers has mushroomed elevenfold to about 80,000 in 1975! More than 185,000 persons were present at large assemblies held across the nation in late 1974, and then 304,284 attended the annual meeting commemorating Jesus' death, on March 27, 1975.

Local Study Halls all over are thronged with attentive people at the five instructive meetings held each week. In some areas attendances may be up to four times the number of local Witnesses. The 25 Witnesses in Vizcaino, Durango, were delighted to welcome 485 persons to a special color-slide program presented by a traveling overseer. And of the 480 people who came to see this program at Las Huertas, Durango, only eleven were Witnesses!

These groups grow quickly, often becoming so large that they must divide. During one recent six-month period, nearly 300 new groups, called *compañías*, were formed. Mexico now has over 2,800 *compañías* serving its people. More than 350 of these are in the Mexico City area.

CULTURAL BENEFITS

Last year alone, these groups taught over 2,000 persons to read and write, so that they can now more readily study worthwhile publications for themselves. One person who was eagerly telling her neighbors about these things had not yet mastered reading and writing herself. Nevertheless, when she met a housewife who could not read either, she at once made arrangements to return and teach her. "But how are you going to teach her, since you do not know yourself?" asked her companion afterward. Well, as this determined worker was taking literacy instructions herself, she passed along the same information to her own student!

Local authorities have also been favorably impressed by another benefit of this unselfish activity. Many who formerly lived together outside of legal marriage, after learning of the Creator's high moral standards, have changed their way of living. For example, away up in the mountain village of Yahuio, Oaxaca, thirty-three couples have legalized their marriages since 1969. Imagine the surprise of the authorities when even aged couples who have lived together for many years come to them to do this!

Cultural benefits have also found their way into Mexico's prisons. A number of prisoners serving their sentences at a penal island off the Pacific coast have been helped to reform their lives in accord with righteous standards. A group of them are now holding regular meetings on the is-

land, as well as assisting other prisoners to rehabilitate their lives. Such prisoners at the border city of Tijuana are allowed to use a prison auditorium for their meetings, and they have divided the entire prison into zones so that other prisoners can be systematically helped. They call their group *Compañía Libertad* (Freedom Company)!

Even criminals still on the loose have been helped. A group of Witnesses returning from an assembly were stopped by bandits intent on robbery. One of the group asked to speak privately to the bandit leader. He then asked the leader if he recognized him—a former associate in crime! This former wrongdoer gave the bandit leader one of the instructive publications that had helped to change his life, with the result that the surprised bandit released the travelers unharmed. Now this bandit leader has reformed his own life, and is busy helping—instead of harming—others.

The power of truth and of following right principles has helped to improve lives in other ways too. A married couple who had been studying for just two months expressed a desire to tell others about what they were learning. It was tactfully explained to them that some changes in personal appearance would be necessary to reflect the modesty befitting those who do this cultural work. To the surprise of those who knew this couple, both were on hand for activity the very next morning, modestly and neatly attired. That very night the man had awakened the barber to get his hair cut, while his wife had lengthened her dresses!

APPRECIATING ITS VALUE

Often those who appreciate this humanitarian work are surprised to learn that it is done without cost. When one person heard a marriage talk full of good practical counsel for the newlyweds, he asked

how much was charged for such fine counsel. After being told that no charge is ever made, and that the speaker paid his own expenses to the wedding location, this person exclaimed: "The other day when my son got married, the priest charged us 1,500 pesos (\$120) and he did not say anything!" Arrangements were made at once to help this person to study the righteous principles that motivate such unselfish service.

A Catholic priest who appreciated one of the instructive talks given by a traveling overseer at Colima, Colima, invited the speaker to his home. "I would like to have you talk to me about the condition of the dead," he said, "because I just lost my beloved nephew in death." Why should a priest desire such information? He admitted: "To be very honest—what I have been telling other people in this circumstance is not satisfactory to me now." Says the Witness: "Immediately we began to study together the comforting material on the condition of the dead from the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*."

Even the "Circo Alegria" ("Joy Circus"), a traveling circus company composed almost entirely of Witnesses, appreciates the value of regular meetings for study and association. When they entertain in areas where Study Halls are near, they join the local group for meetings and cultural work among the people. But when the troupe visits an isolated area, they still hold their own meetings—in one of the circus trucks! In fact, even though the show does not earn as much in these smaller towns, the troupe often chooses to visit them so as to reach even these isolated people with their unselfish cultural work.

Thus tens of thousands of conscientious workers are rendering a truly fine service to the people of Mexico, helping them to improve the quality of their lives and culture. Surely Mexico is getting a rich cultural boost!

Insight on the News

● The phrase "pray now, pay later" appeared in a headline of the Philadelphia "Inquirer" in reporting on a church experiment due to go

"Pray Now, Pay Later"

into effect shortly. A group of ten U.S. religions, including some major Lutheran, Episcopalian, Methodist and Baptist denominations, have decided to try church collections by credit card. The experiment, sponsored by the National Council of Churches, will encourage participating church members to authorize credit-card transfers of a specified contribution to their church each month. The idea, a Council spokesman says, is that "this will provide the local church with regular income whether or not the local congregation is in attendance," especially in "off-seasons," like summer vacation time. The report on the experiment says that those joining the program will be "giving unto business what belongs to business—a profit." How so? "Participating banks will charge 65 cents a transaction, and the credit card companies will rake off 3 percent of every donation." Obviously someone benefits, but how much spiritual benefit is the modern church-goer getting?

● Sir Isaac Newton, the English scientist who lived in the 17th and 18th centuries, developed the mathematical system of calculus, made major discoveries as to the nature

Scientist and Belief in God

of light and the laws of gravitation. The "Encyclopædia Britannica" calls his book on "Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy" "one of the most important single works in the history of modern science." Recently, a new publication entitled "The Religion of Isaac Newton" makes even clearer the profound respect this renowned scientist had for the Bible as God's Word. His intense interest in the Creator did not develop in his old age. Rather, it was the subject of thought and research from his youth upward.

A review of this new book, published in the "Scientific American" magazine (August 1975), says that "for Newton . . . there were two ways to examine the universe God had made, one through the book of nature, the other through Scripture." Newton gave

the following as his standard for studying each of these: "Truth is ever to be found in simplicity, and not in the multiplicity and confusion of things. . . . He is the God of order and not of confusion." (See 1 Corinthians 14:33.) Those who fancy themselves to be of scientific mind would do well to think of that when they incline to dismiss as unworthy of credence the Bible's simple, straightforward account of creation, including the creation of the first human pair, its history of the origin of sin and of the provision of a ransom for mankind.

The review points out that Newton "cared nothing for the subtle substances of the Trinity [the unscriptural belief in three co-equal Gods in one]. His all-powerful God was bound up with plain words, the words of Scripture, and not with philosophical abstractions." In the early 1690's Newton produced a manuscript endeavoring to prove that trinitarian passages in the Bible were latter-day corruptions of the original text. Research since his day demonstrates the rightness of his view, particularly as regards such texts as 1 John 5:7, acknowledged today even in Catholic translations as containing spurious words added to the original in an effort to support the Trinity doctrine.

● In France, where 85 percent of the people are Catholic, a new survey reveals that regular Mass attendance has dropped by more than one fourth since 1971. In that year 22 percent said they attended regularly; only 16 percent do now. The survey

Foundering Church in France

also reveals that only about a third of the French Catholics agreed that Jesus is "really living" today, while the other two thirds either disagreed or gave no opinion. Calling the survey's results "disturbing," Archbishop Robert Coffy, chairman of the French bishops' committee on the sacramental pastorate, pointed to a major source of the problem, saying: "It must be recognized that we are doubtlessly responsible—we the bishops, the priests and also the (religious) activists." Christ Jesus said that a tree is known by its fruits—if the fruits are not good, neither can the tree be. (Matt. 7:16-20) What does the Church's fruitage in France show?

LETTING GOD BE

THE SOVEREIGN OF OUR LIVES

DOES it really matter so much who it is that is the sovereign of our lives? Indeed it *does!* Certainly in any country where the ruler has absolute power, it does matter whether the people have a good sovereign or a bad sovereign.

² By the title "sovereign" is meant a monarch or political ruler who has the supreme power and who ranks above all others in the land with respect to position, authority and executive ability. Such a monarch or ruler has sovereign powers. His rulership affects the lives of all his subjects, whether for good or for evil. A wise monarch of ancient times stated the matter in this way: "When the righteous become many, the people rejoice; but when anyone wicked bears rule, the people sigh." —Prov. 29:2.

³ Today the times are very critical. We cannot escape the question about the sovereignty of our lives. On the surface of things, it appears that two great political forces are bitterly contending with each other for domination, for sovereignty, over the lives of all the people of the earth. Even those nations that claim to be politically neutral are obliged to put up strong defenses against being overrun by one or the other of these superpowerful political forces. Blocs of nations are lined up on each side in this unyielding contest for control of the souls of men. One side is for the regimentation, the complete regulation, of the people in their private and public affairs. Even religion, if at all permitted, is not free from domination and

1, 2. Does it really matter so much who is the sovereign in our lives, and how can we illustrate the point?

3. What two superpowerful political forces today seek to dominate the souls of all men on earth?

"The sovereignty of the world has passed into the possession of our Lord and his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever."—Rev. 11:15, An American Translation.

regulation by the politicians. The *other* side allows for a measure of liberty in the personal lives and pursuits of the citizens. Yet it claims full control over the lives of the people when the interests of the political state are in imminent danger and they need to be defended against violent aggression.

⁴ However, there is a contest of far greater magnitude than the foregoing political conflict, for rulership over the lives of all humans. The contest between international communism and capitalistic democracy is global. The greater contest involves the whole universe. It is between the two great moral forces, the one for good and the other for bad. This contest has been going on for now nearly six millenniums of human history. Shortly it will come to a head. The two contesting forces involve intelligent personages. So they are not two blind forces, like magnetism and gravity, that operate impersonally for good and for bad, without intelligent direction behind them. Accordingly, bad exists because *personages* do bad, and good exists because *personages* do good. There is a *personal* source for the operation of good. Likewise, there is a *personal* source for the operation of what is bad. Good laws

4. What contest is now coming to a head, greater than that between communism and democracy?

issue from a good Intelligence; bad laws from a bad Intelligence.

⁵ The two contesting forces are compared to light and darkness. The force for good is compared to light, since deeds of goodness are done in the light, the doer thereof not being ashamed or afraid. The force for bad is compared to darkness, as deeds of badness are done in the darkness, the doer thereof realizing that he is doing wrong and not wanting to be punished. When busy at bad deeds done in the dark so as to avoid detection, the doer thereof hates the light with its power of exposure. Just as a widely read and quoted writer said: "Men have loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were wicked. For he that practices vile things hates the light and does not come to the light, in order that his works may not be reproved. But he that does what is true comes to the light, in order that his works may be made manifest."

—John 3:19-21.

⁶ Further showing the contrast between the works associated with the darkness and those associated with the light, another noted writer of the first century C.E. said to persons who were committed to the doing of good: "The night is well along; the day has drawn near. Let us therefore put off the works belonging to darkness and let us put on the weapons of the light. As in the daytime let us walk decently, not in revelries and drunken bouts, not in illicit intercourse and loose conduct, not in strife and jealousy. . . . do not be planning ahead for the desires of the flesh."—Rom. 13:12-14.

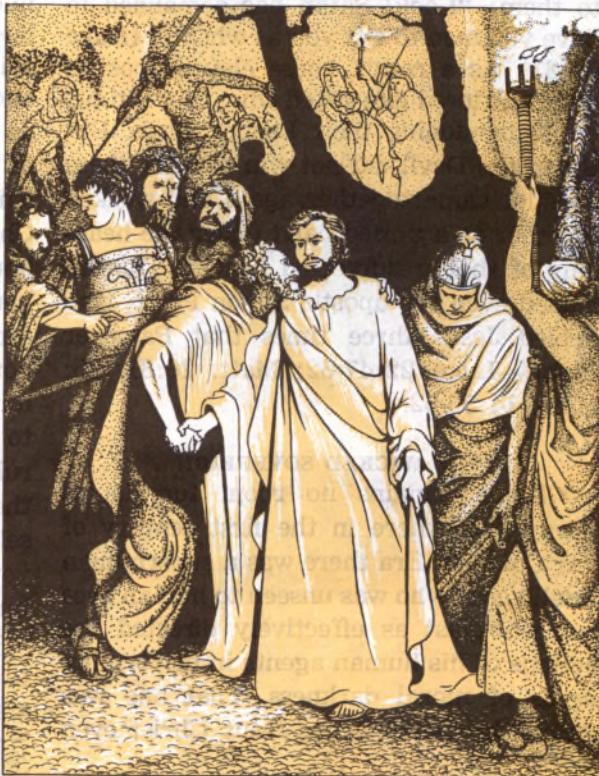
⁷ When the Founder of Christianity

5. To what are these two forces compared, and why so?

6. How are deeds associated with darkness and those associated with light set in contrast in Romans 13:12-14?

7. (a) The authority of what was it that prevailed on the night of Jesus' betrayal? (b) Who was most interested in bringing about the great crime of Passover day of 33 C.E.?

was betrayed by one of his own twelve apostles, the traitor Judas Iscariot, he said to the armed crowd that came under cover of night to seize him secretly: "This is your hour and the authority of darkness." (Luke 22:53) The authority of darkness prevailed that tragic night, but it took human agents to carry out the works of darkness that led to the greatest crime in human history on the following afternoon, the Passover day of the year 33 C.E. Furthermore, there was someone higher and mightier who was more interested in the committing of that crime than the human perpetrators of it were. There was an unseen higher intelligence that was using his influence upon them to commit this crime. That superhuman intelligence was the one who took advantage of the opening and injected into the heart of Judas Iscariot



Judas Iscariot allowed Satan the Devil to become his sovereign, resulting in his betrayal of Jesus Christ

the base idea of betraying his innocent Master. In no unmistakable terms the record says: "Satan entered into Judas, the one called Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve [apostles]; and he went off and talked with the chief priests and temple captains about the effective way to betray him to them." (Luke 22:3, 4) When, at the Passover supper, Jesus Christ identified his betrayer by giving him a morsel of food, then, as the record tells us, "after the morsel . . . Satan entered into the latter. . . . Therefore, after he received the morsel, he went out immediately. And it was night."—John 13:27-30.

⁸ After this, when Jesus was alone with the eleven faithful apostles, he pointed out the real instigator of all the criminal activity that was being carried on, by saying to them: "Look! Satan has demanded to have you men to sift you as wheat." (Luke 22:31) As a result, these eleven apostles were scattered like sifted wheat for a time, even abandoning their Leader Jesus. But Satan the Devil did not win out, for these apostles came together again and worked together as a united band under the headship of their resurrected Leader. This included even the apostle Simon Peter, who denied Jesus three times that Passover night.—Luke 22:47-62; Matt. 26:31, 35; Mark 14:50-52.

THE WICKED SOVEREIGN

⁹ There remains no room for doubt! Away back there in the first century of our Common Era there was a superhuman intelligence who was unseen to human eyes but who just as effectively directed the actions of his human agents in performing deeds of moral darkness. That one was Satan the Devil. Why, Jesus Christ even

8. How did Jesus identify the instigator of all the criminal activity, and did that one prove the winner? 9. How did Jesus indicate that there was a superhuman intelligence behind the intent of the Jews to kill him?

said to those of his fellow countrymen who were playing into the hands of that wicked one: "If you are Abraham's children, do the works of Abraham. But now you are seeking to kill me, . . . Abraham did not do this. You do the works of your father. . . . You are from your father the Devil, and you wish to do the desires of your father. That one was a manslayer when he began, and he did not stand fast in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaks the lie, he speaks according to his own disposition, because he is a liar and the father of the lie."—John 8:39-44.

¹⁰ To this day the natural, circumcised Jews are suffering the sad consequences from the works of darkness that were done within their nation nineteen hundred years ago. This illustrates what can happen to a whole nation that comes under the influence of that unseen superhuman intelligence, Satan the Devil. Jesus Christ called this Evil One "the ruler of this world," and Jesus' own nation yielded to that one as their "ruler," their sovereign, instead of to the God whom they professed to worship at the temple of Jerusalem. Jesus Christ said to his faithful apostles: "The hour is coming when everyone that kills you will imagine he has rendered a sacred service to God." (John 12:31; 16:2) But not so! The misguided religionist who commits such evil is actually rendering service to God's Adversary, Satan the Devil. The rule here applying is correctly stated in these words: "If you keep presenting yourselves to anyone as slaves to obey him, you are slaves of him because you obey him."—Rom. 6:16.

¹¹ It is time today for people to wake up to the fact that there are other world rulers besides the visible ones of blood and

10. What did Jesus say about imagined "sacred service" to God, but what rule here applies?

11. Alerting us to the existence of other wicked rulers besides flesh-and-blood ones, what did Paul write about Christian wrestling?

flesh on earth. Alerting us to that fact, the apostle Paul, who suffered at the hands of those who imagined that they were rendering a sacred service to God, said to his fellow believers in the pagan city of Ephesus, Asia Minor: "Put on the complete suit of armor from God that you may be able to stand firm against the machinations of the Devil; because we have a wrestling, not against blood and flesh, but against the governments [the Sovereignties, *Jerusalem Bible*], against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness [the Powers who originate the darkness in this world, *Je*], against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places [the spiritual army of evil in the heavens, *Je*]."—Eph. 6:11, 12.

¹² Who today, in the last half of this twentieth century, will dispute that moral darkness—that is, the works and deeds of an evil kind—predominates over the earth? Deny it as many materialistic, worldly-wise people may, the fact remains, and the evidence is there to show, that there are "world rulers of this darkness," or, as *An American Translation* renders the Greek Bible text, "the master-spirits of this dark world." All this "spiritual army of evil in the [invisible] heavens" is under the sovereignty of Satan the Devil, "the wicked one." (Eph. 6:16; Matt. 13:19) Let us all face this plain fact realistically. It means something very personal for us. What is that? Well, we are all of us, inescapably, "in the world." (John 17:11) So we are feeling the effects of all the hard times through which the world of mankind has been passing, especially since the year 1914, and this makes us realize the bad situation in which we find ourselves. Hence, the question that none of us can sidestep is this: Inasmuch as Satan the Devil is the "ruler of this world," where we find ourselves—is he for that reason the sovereign of *our* lives?

12. Under whom are the "master-spirits of this dark world," and what question does our being in this world make us ask ourselves?

¹³ This personal question deserves our serious and honest consideration. The state of affairs of the world today has not changed at all from what it was nineteen centuries ago when the last writer of the Bible said: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) So we can ask ourselves individually, Does that include me? Am I too lying under the power of the Devil, the wicked one, the sovereign of this world? It will not alter matters for us to take offense at such an inquiry and to say, 'The question is too repulsive for me to consider, in fact, too insulting for me to take notice of, with dignity to myself.' We certainly do not want to fool ourselves, do we? Yet we can do so. The Bible writer was foretelling the events of our own time when he described the abasing of the Wicked One and his spirit forces, saying:

¹⁴ "So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven say: ' . . . Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time.' "—Rev. 12:9-12.

¹⁵ That Arch-Deceiver does not have the good interest of anyone on earth at heart. He is still on the loose in the vicinity of our earth to which he has been hurled down. He will not be stopped from misleading the entire inhabited earth until after the steadily approaching "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon. Then, first, he along with his demon angels will be "hurled . . . into the abyss . . . that he might not mislead the nations anymore

13. In what position does the world still lie with respect to the wicked one, and so what questions are advisable for us to ask ourselves?

14, 15. Whom is the Devil misleading, and when first will he be stopped from this?

until the thousand years [of the reign of Jesus Christ] were ended." (Rev. 16:14, 16; 20:1-3) That time for removing Satan the Devil and his demons from the vicinity of our earth and isolating them in a distant abyss has not yet come, and the look of things on earth today demonstrates that it has not yet come. Hence, each one, without exception, is still exposed to being misled by the Devilish sovereign of the world. If we self-confidently claim that we are not being misled by the one in whose power the whole world is lying, then do we find ourselves wrestling with superhuman forces of wickedness in a successful way? Either we are being misled or we are wrestling; it is one or the other.

¹⁶ So, let all of those who stoutly insist that Satan the Devil is not the sovereign of their lives ask themselves in all honesty, Am I triumphantly wrestling against the "governments" in the Devil's invisible superhuman organization, against the authorities therein, against "the cosmocrats of this darkness," against "the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places"? (Eph. 6:12, *The Bible in Living English; New World Translation*) The misled world of mankind is not doing so, and, if we make ourselves a part of this world, then we are not doing so either, no matter how much we may be trying to reform this world politically, religiously, socially, materially. By trying to improve the Devil's visible organization on earth people are merely trying to keep it going that much longer and to make it more attractive and tolerable. Such reform efforts will never bring in a millennium of peace, prosperity and happiness for all mankind. This world or human society under its present arrangements is not slated for global reform. It is slated for doom, and the "ruler of this world" cannot prevent this!

16. By making ourselves a part of this world we shall not be wrestling against whom, and why will efforts to reform the world not succeed?

DETERMINING UPON THE ONE WHO IS OUR SOVEREIGN

¹⁷ Because we cannot get out of this world but are bound to be in it, are we going to let Satan the Devil, the source of wickedness, take over as sovereign of our lives? If we do not desire to let this happen, then who is there left for us to choose as the sovereign of our lives? It is the One against whom Satan the Devil is the great Adversary. This One is the only living and true God. (Jer. 10:10) He is the One who the Holy Bible says bears the name Jehovah. (Ps. 83:18) He is not a mere abstract principle, not an impersonal, formless, fluid spirit that pervades all the universe and all the tangible things in it. He is a person, just as fully as Satan the Devil is a person. He uses language concerning himself that indicates that he has a body, the form of which, however, we cannot imagine. Unlike Satan the Devil, who is a self-made god, Jehovah is the original God, the God formed by no creatures in existence, the God who was alone before all creations. Rightly he says concerning himself, in contrast with the man-made gods of the nations:

¹⁸ "Before me there was no God formed, and after me there continued to be none. I—I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no savior."—Isa. 43:10, 11.

¹⁹ He is the intelligent personal Being that is the source of everything good. It is because He himself is all good. He is the One who created our earth and the heavens and all the things in them. It is He who put man upon the earth, making him like the One who is all good. The first book of the Holy Bible tells us: "God proceeded to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him; male and female he created them. Further, God blessed them and God said to them: 'Be fruitful

17, 18. If the Devil is not our sovereign, then who is there left to be such, and what does this one say about his existence?

19, 20. Why is Jehovah God the Source of all good, and like whom did He create the first man?

and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth.' . . .

²⁰ "After that God saw everything he had made and, look! it was very good. And there came to be evening and there came to be morning, a sixth day."—Gen. 1:27-31.

²¹ When God saw that everything he had created was "very good," he let it remain good and desisted from his creative works regarding our earth and man upon it. He did not say: 'For everything there has to be its opposite. In contrast with what is "very good," there has to be its opposite, what is bad. And so I must create what is bad. I am a good God, and so I must create my opposite, a wicked god. I must set an evil principle in operation. I must give mankind the motivation to do what is bad.'

²² No! God did not formulate such a wrong philosophy. He could not be the source of what is good and of what is bad, no more so than a spring can be the source of fresh water and of salt water at the same time. (Jas. 3:12) He cannot be light and darkness at the same time. The apostle Paul raised the pertinent question: "What fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14) To illustrate how the true God is all that is clear, bright, clean and enlightening, the apostle John wrote: "God is light and there is no darkness at all in union with him. If we make the statement: 'We are having a sharing with him,' and yet we go on walking in the darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. However, if we are walking in the light as he himself is in the light, we do have a sharing with one another."—1 John 1:5-7.

21. God left creation in what condition, and did not reason himself into creating what?

22. What apostolic illustration is given to show that God cannot be the source of what is good and of what is morally bad?

²³ Jehovah is the God of enlightenment for the benefit of his creatures, whether in heaven or in earth. How significant it was that on the first day of God's creative week, his command was: "Let light come to be"! Because he created light-bearing bodies in the heavens to give light to creatures upon the earth, he has been called "the Father of the celestial lights." The natural light of day is one of the good things from him, as it is written: "Every good gift and every perfect present is from above, for it comes down from the Father of the celestial lights, and with him there is not a variation of the turning of the shadow."—Gen. 1:3, 14-18; Jas. 1:17.

²⁴ How eloquent regarding God's power for enlightenment is the statement of the apostle Paul: "God is he who said: 'Let the light shine out of darkness,' and he has shone on our hearts to illuminate them with the glorious knowledge of God by the face of Christ"! (2 Cor. 4:6) In the face of this testimony, nobody can truthfully say that Jehovah, the God of the Bible, believes in the darkness of ignorance and of false teaching. With the Christian apostle John we must say that "God is light" and, as such, He is the greatest Enlightener in all existence. Christianity, the true kind and not that professed by the churches of Christendom, is the greatest enlightenment ever sent to humanity. Like light, it is life-giving, it is liberty-giving!

²⁵ Is this God of enlightenment the spiritual Personage whom we desire to be the Sovereign of our lives? If we make him such, then our lives are bound to be brightened with the light of the truth, with the light that liberates us for free, intelligent movement and action in what is right, and with the light that shows us the path to everlasting life in harmony with the Sovereign of the universe.

23, 24. (a) How is God "the Father of the celestial lights"? (b) How, as on the first creative day, did God cause spiritual light to shine in apostolic times?

25. If we let this God of enlightenment be the Sovereign of our lives, how will our lives be brightened?

THE TIME FOR Choosing God As Sovereign

FOR more than sixteen hundred years now, or since the days of Emperor Constantine the Great, the world has observed the doings of Christendom. After all that time, what does the so-called "pagan" world observe as to the religious state of affairs? The greatest religious confusion and division of all human history! Global darkness religiously! The situation fits the Bible prophecy that said: "Look! darkness itself will cover the earth, and thick gloom the national groups."—Isa. 60:2.

² The earth-wide darkness has been a challenge to God, the Sovereign of the universe. This God, who, at the beginning of the creative week, commanded, "Let light come to be"—what was he going to do about it? He acted consistently; he acted in accord with his way of proceeding of nineteen centuries ago, concerning which the apostle Paul says: "The same God who said, 'Out of darkness let light shine', has caused his light to shine within us, to give the light of revelation—the revelation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 4:6, *The New English Bible; The Jerusalem Bible*) Accordingly, this same God has, since the close of the darksome days of World War I, caused the greatest campaign of enlightenment of all human history to be carried forward. He foretold it in these words of his Son Jesus Christ: "This good news of the kingdom

will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come."—Matt. 24:14.

³ We should not, however, think that this worldwide campaign has met up with any reception different from that of nineteen centuries ago. As regards the reception given to the effort at enlightenment back there, we read: "The true light that gives light to every sort of man was about to come into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into existence through him, but the world did not know [recognize, *NE*] him. He came to his own home, but his own people did not take him in." (John 1:9-11) Back there, those who accepted the light endeavored to enlighten others; they did not hide the light. The reason why more were not enlightened is that there was mounting opposition to the work of enlightenment. The main one who was responsible for that opposition to the light is identified for us by the apostle Paul when he writes:

⁴ "If, now, the good news we declare is in fact veiled, it is veiled among those who are perishing, among whom the god of this system of things has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through."—2 Cor. 4:3, 4.

⁵ Likewise, there is worldwide opposition

1. After sixteen centuries of Christendom, what does the "pagan" world see the religious state of affairs to be?
2. To whom was such darkness a challenge, and what did he do about it, as foretold in Matthew 24:14?

3, 4. What reception has been given to this light, and what has hindered more people from being enlightened?
5. Who is behind the opposition to the Kingdom proclamation, and of whom besides the "wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places" is he the sovereign?

to the campaign of enlightenment that is being carried forward through the proclamation of the good news about God's established Messianic kingdom in the heavens. The one who was behind the opposition to the good news about the Messiah (Christ) nineteen centuries ago is the same one who is masterminding the opposition to the proclamation of the Kingdom message since World War I. That one is the blinder of men's minds, the one whom the apostle Paul called "the god of this system of things." This "god" has associated with him in his bedarkening campaign the superhuman spiritual "world rulers of this darkness," "the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places." (Eph. 6:12) Just as he is the sovereign of these "spirit forces in the heavenly places," so he strives to continue being the sovereign of the lives of the peoples on earth. That is why he prevents, as far as possible, the light of the Kingdom truth from shining through to the minds of the blinded peoples.

⁶ These "wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places" under their sovereign, Satan the Devil, are the ones with whom the true Christians must wrestle as they carry on their campaign of enlightenment. How do such Christians do this? Not just by exposing the Devilish source of demonism, astrology, spiritism, occultism, fetishism, voodooism and witchcraft. Christian wrestling against such unseen, superhuman forces of wickedness is done also by steadfastly refusing to be pressured into becoming a part of this "system of things," of which Satan is the "god." They abide by the rule for true Christian living that Jesus Christ stated: "They [my followers] are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:16) To those professed Christians who were not living

6, 7. How do true Christians wrestle with such spirit forces, in accord with what rules stated by Jesus and James?

in harmony with that rule, the disciple James said:

⁷ "Do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God."—Jas. 4:4.

⁸ The reason for Christian separateness from the world is that the world is on the side of its invisible superhuman sovereign, the one who is a Satan and a Devil to the one living and true God, Jehovah. Hence, there is no other outcome to the matter than this, that the Christian wrestling with the "wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places" will continue as long as this world stands and until Satan the Devil and his demon angels are chained and plunged into the abyss for the thousand years of Christ's reign. (Rev. 13:1-8; 16:13-16; 19:19 through 20:3) For the purpose of resisting and standing firm in this wicked day, the friends of Jehovah God equip themselves with the various parts of the "complete suit of armor from God." (Eph. 6:11) This does not include any weapons of flesh, any 'carnal weapons.'—2 Cor. 10:4, *Authorized Version*.

⁹ The command from the heavenly Commander in Chief, through the apostle Paul, to his warriors is this: "Stand firm, therefore, with your loins girded about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and with your feet shod with the equipment of the good news of peace. Above all things, take up the large shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the wicked one's burning missiles. Also, accept the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, that is, God's word, while with every form of prayer and supplication you carry on

8, 9. (a) What is the reason for separateness from the world, with what outcome to the matter? (b) So what command is given to Christians, through the apostle Paul, by their Commander in Chief?

prayer on every occasion in spirit."—Eph. 6:14-18.

THE SOVEREIGN LORD JEHOVAH

¹⁰ In the case of all of those who obey this divine command, there is no question as to whom they are letting be the sovereign of their lives. It is Jehovah God, whose word is as a sword in their hand, "the sword of the spirit." In this choice of Him as their Sovereign, they stand, not with the world and its system of things, but with Jesus Christ and his apostles, also with King David of ancient Jerusalem, with the patriarch Abraham the earthly forefather of the Messiah, yes, with all the men and women of Godly faith the record of whom is contained in the Bible.

¹¹ Abraham acknowledged the Most High God as his Sovereign Lord. After he had returned victorious from battle with four marauder kings and had been blessed by Melchizedek the priest of the Most High God, the divine word came to Abraham, saying: "Do not fear, Abram. I am a shield for you. Your reward will be very great." In response to this, Abraham showed who was his Supreme Master by the way in which he addressed God, saying: "Sovereign Lord Jehovah, what will you give me?" When God promised to give him the land to which God had led him, Abraham showed the relationship in which he considered himself to be by saying: "Sovereign Lord Jehovah, by what shall I know that I shall take it in possession?" (Gen. 15:1, 2, 8) In his own language, Hebrew, the patriarch Abraham used, in addressing God here, the words: *A-do-nay' Y^eho-wih'*. Some Bible translators, in order to avoid using God's personal name, translate this expression as "Lord God." The Bible Concordance producer Young renders it "Lord Jehovah." But *The Jerusalem Bible* trans-

10. With whom do those who make Jehovah the Sovereign of their lives stand?

11. By what form of address to God did Abraham show the relationship that he had with Him, and how do some translators render the Hebrew expression used by Abraham?

lates it "My Lord Yahweh." So does *The Emphasised Bible* by Rotherham.

¹² However, the Hebrew word *A-do-nay'* does not mean "My Lord." It is understood to be the old form of *A-do-nim'*, literally meaning "lords." So when the word is applied to an individual it takes on the sense of excellence or grandeur; it means a lord in an excellent way, a lord of grandeur. This old Hebrew word is applied in the Bible to no one but Jehovah or Yahweh. For that reason the *New World Translation* renders the Hebrew title *A-do-nay'* as "Sovereign Lord."* In agreement with this, Hebrew translations of Acts 4:24 use the word *A-do-nay'* with the significance of "Sovereign Lord."—Acts 4:24, *New World Translation*.

* See footnotes on Genesis 15:2, 8 in the 1971 edition of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

12. What is the significance of the Hebrew word *A-do-nay'*, as shown in the *New World Translation*?



Those who choose Jehovah as their Sovereign identify themselves with such persons of Godly faith as Jesus, Abraham and David

¹³ Truly this God Jehovah is the Sovereign of the universe, for He is over all things and to none of his creatures has he imparted power equal to His. Thus he remains the Almighty One, the All-Powerful One. Rightly, as the Universal Sovereign, Jehovah said to Abraham: "I am God Almighty. Walk before me and prove yourself faultless." (Gen. 17:1) And to the prophet Moses, Jehovah said: "I am Jehovah. And I used to appear to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as God Almighty." (Ex. 6:2, 3) With utmost confidence he can issue the challenge: "To whom can you people liken me so that I should be made his equal?" (Isa. 40:25) Shall we today, like Abraham, make this God the Sovereign of our lives?

¹⁴ No real sovereign can afford to wait upon his subjects, for them individually to make up their minds. A sovereign has his rulership to carry on and all the obligations of his governorship, and he must take care of his duties at his appointed time. We tiny human creatures here on earth are assuming too much if we think that the Sovereign of the universe, Jehovah God, has to wait until we personally make up our minds to have him as our Sovereign before He may proceed with his precisely timed purpose. In harmony with his sovereign right, he acts when his appointed time for action comes! On this account now is the urgent time for each one of us to act wisely with regard to His sovereignty!

CHANGE OF WORLD SOVEREIGNTY

¹⁵ Already the announcement of highest importance with reference to our earth has been sounded in the heavens, and it is being relayed to the world of mankind all around the globe: "The sovereignty of the

world has passed to our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever!" (Rev. 11:15, *The New English Bible; An American Translation*) "The sovereignty of the world now belongs to our Lord and His Christ; and He will be King until the Ages of the Ages." (Weymouth, 3rd ed.) This fact of universal interest has been true since the year 1914 C.E. In that year "the times of the Gentiles," or, "the appointed times of the nations," ended about October 4/5, when counted from the desolation of Jerusalem and the land of Judah by the Babylonians in the year 607 B.C.E. For 2,520 years since then the Gentile (non-Jewish) nations have dominated human affairs without any interference on the part of God's Messianic kingdom. During all that time the Jews have had no kingdom at Jerusalem in the hands of the royal lineage of King David.—Luke 21: 24, AV, NW.

¹⁶ Back there, in 607 B.C.E., the last reigning king of David's line at Jerusalem was deposed, and the Gentile nations were allowed to have complete world domination and exercise their sovereignty over mankind, Jew and Gentile alike. But at the close of the Gentile Times in 1914 C.E. the time for Jesus Christ to keep waiting at his heavenly Father's right hand ended. At that time the Sovereign Lord Jehovah installed his Son Jesus Christ on the throne in the "heavenly Jerusalem," on the heavenly Mount Zion. In this way the royal line of David was again exalted to the throne, and the Messianic kingdom was born. At the same time the great Priest-King like ancient Melchizedek, namely, Jesus the Messiah, was installed in his heavenly kingdom. (Heb. 10:12, 13; Ps. 110: 1-4) From then on it could be proclaimed to the world of mankind: "The sovereignty of the world has passed into the possession of our Lord and his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever."—Rev. 11:15, AT. 16. So, why from 1914 C.E. onward could the announcement about divine sovereignty be made?

13. Why is Jehovah rightly the Sovereign of the universe, and what challenge can he therefore issue?

14. Why is now the time for us to act wisely with regard to Jehovah's sovereignty?

15. Since when has the heavenly announcement concerning divine sovereignty been relayed to mankind, and why not before then?

¹⁷ The world of mankind was not asked about this first. The earthly nations, with their national sovereignties, were also not asked first about this move on God's part. The Most High God went right ahead at his appointed time and established the heavenly Messianic kingdom, in accord with his own right of universal sovereignty. (Dan. 4:35) The right response for people to make to God's rightful expression of sovereignty was illustrated in the action of the twenty-four elders who bowed in worship before Him and said: "We thank you, Jehovah God, the Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and begun ruling as king."—Rev. 11:16, 17.

¹⁸ How, though, about the worldly nations? Ah, they were too interested in fighting out their first world war for world domination. Because of trying to regiment all the peoples to their support in total war, they persecuted wrathfully those true Christians who took their stand for the sovereignty of the Lord God and his Christ. This was just as it had been foretold by those twenty-four elders, who went on to say: "But the nations became wrathful, and your own wrath came, and the appointed time for the dead to be judged, and to give their reward to your slaves the prophets and to the holy ones and to those fearing your name, the small and the great, and to bring to ruin those ruining the earth."—Rev. 11:18.

¹⁹ To this very day the nations continue wrathful toward Jehovah's "holy ones and to those fearing [His] name, the small and the great." So it is the appropriate time for each one of us to ask himself, 'What about me? Am I going to let the course

17. Were men and nations first asked before God took action, and how was the right reaction illustrated by the twenty-four elders?

18. What, though, was the reaction of the nations, and how was this foretold by the twenty-four elders?

19. (a) This is the appropriate time for us to ask ourselves what questions regarding sovereignty? (b) Our following the example of the nations would mean what for us?

of the worldly nations guide me as an example? Or, am I going to be like those twenty-four elders of Revelation 11:16, 17 and thank God for expressing his sovereignty and taking his great power to reign? Do I acknowledge that the sovereignty of the world has passed into the possession of Jehovah God? Do I, in recognition of this vital fact, choose Him as my heavenly Sovereign? Am I letting Him be the sovereign of my life?" One way or the other, we cannot escape now having a new relationship with God the Sovereign Lord, either a favorable relationship or an unfavorable one. Anyone putting himself on the side of the wrathful nations puts himself in an unfavorable relationship with the Universal Sovereign. That spells ruin for anyone doing so, for the nations are the ones that are "ruining the earth" and they, in turn, will be ruined in the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon.—Rev. 16:14, 16.

²⁰ This provokes the question, 'If I let God be the Sovereign of my life, does that mean my becoming a witness of Jehovah?' In answer to that question, we can refer to the inspired psalmist, who let God be the Sovereign of his life. He wrote: "But as for me, the drawing near to God is good for me. In the Sovereign Lord Jehovah I have placed my refuge, to declare all your works." (Ps. 73:28) Also: "O my God, provide me with escape from the hand of the wicked one, from the palm of the one acting unjustly and oppressively. For you are my hope, O Sovereign Lord Jehovah, my confidence from my youth. I shall come in grand mightiness, O Sovereign Lord Jehovah; I shall mention your righteousness, yours alone."—Ps. 71:4, 5, 16.

²¹ So we ask, Will the person of today who places his refuge in the Sovereign

20, 21. (a) In answering the question of becoming a witness of the One whom we make our Sovereign, to what expressions of the psalmist do we refer? (b) As in the case of our greatest Exemplar, no honor on earth could be greater than what?

Lord Jehovah do any differently from what the ancient psalmist did, namely, "declare all [God's] works"? Will the person of today who has been provided with escape "from the hand of the wicked one" and who has made the Sovereign Lord Jehovah his hope do otherwise than did the psalmist, namely, "come in grand mightiness" and "mention [God's] righteousness"? Certainly he will not be ashamed of the Sovereign of his life. Jesus Christ, our greatest Exemplar, was not ashamed of his Sovereign, Jehovah God. Hence, he became a witness of Jehovah, and for this reason he is called "Jesus Christ, 'the Faithful Witness.'" He speaks of himself as "the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation by God." (Rev. 1:5; 3:14) Those who truly become his footstep followers must likewise become witnesses of his Father Jehovah. No honor could be greater for anyone on earth than being a witness of Jehovah.

²² Our making Jehovah God the Sovereign of our lives will bring upon us persecution from those who make Satan the Devil their sovereign by making themselves a "part of the world," of which that wicked one is the "god" and "ruler" and sovereign. (2 Cor. 4:4; John 14:30; 15:19) But, when under persecution, the afflicted one can take up the prayer of King David: "You are Jehovah the Sovereign Lord. Deal with me for the sake of your name. Because your loving-kindness is good, deliver me." (Ps. 109:21) "O Jehovah the Sovereign Lord, the strength of my salvation, you have screened over my head in the day of the armed force. Do not grant, O Jehovah, the cravings of the wicked one. Do not promote his plotting, that they may not be exalted." (Ps. 140:7, 8) "My eyes are to you, O Jehovah the Sovereign Lord. In you I have taken refuge.

22. Our making Jehovah the Sovereign of our lives will bring what experience upon us, but what prayer of the psalmist can we then take up?

Do not pour out my soul. Keep me from the clutches of the trap that they have laid for me and from the snares of those practicing what is hurtful."—Ps. 141:8, 9.

SOVEREIGN OF AN ORGANIZED PEOPLE

²³ If you now choose Jehovah God as your Sovereign, you will not be alone. You will be one of his *people*. He is not the Sovereign of just one lone individual upon the earth, but is the Sovereign of an organized people. Using the ancient nation of Israel as a typical illustration of the spiritual Israelites whom He gathers out of religious Babylon the Great in this "time of the end," he says: "This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said, 'This is what I shall yet let myself be searched for by the house of Israel to do for them: I shall multiply them like a flock with men. Like a flock of holy persons, like the flock of Jerusalem in her festal seasons, thus the cities that had been a waste will become full of a flock of men; and people will have to know that I am Jehovah.'" —Ezek. 36:37, 38; Rev. 18:1-4; Dan. 12:4.

²⁴ Blessed are those today choosing Jehovah as their God and letting Him be the Sovereign of their lives. Over them he reigns as heavenly King by his enthroned Son, Jesus the Messiah. When, in the impending "great tribulation," the divisive national sovereignties of today are wiped out and the present invisible sovereign of the nations, Satan the Devil, is bound and abyssed, God the Almighty will keep safe and secure those lovingly upholding his universal sovereignty. (Matt. 24:21, 22; Rev. 7:14, 15) Shall we be among those blessed survivors to hail the righteous new order under the sole "sovereignty . . . of our Lord and his Christ"? Let our choice of Jehovah as the Sovereign of our lives decide this in our favor.—Rev. 11:15, AT.

23. By making Jehovah the Sovereign of one's life, why will one not be alone, as indicated by Ezekiel 36:37, 38? 24. How are those making Jehovah the Sovereign of their lives blessed, and what choice will determine our surviving to hail the New Order?

GOD'S JUDGMENTS

Reveal

DOES the Bible refer only to one time of divine judgment? No, there have been a number of times during the course of human history in which Jehovah God rendered specific judgments. An examination of these judgments is very enlightening. It reveals a God of infinite wisdom and justice, one who cares deeply about the welfare of his intelligent creation.

We can better appreciate the reasons for Jehovah's judgments by viewing them in the light of his purpose regarding humankind. Before the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, he set the prospect of everlasting life on earth. In Eden, he provided a beautiful home for them—a lovely garden filled with a variety of fruit trees from which they could eat to satisfaction. Informing them of his purpose, Jehovah said: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth."—Gen. 1:28.

These words, addressed to the first humans, indicate that it was Jehovah's purpose for the whole earth to become like the garden of Eden, filled with humans doing his will and looking out for the welfare of the animal creation. Adam and Eve, however, disregarded God's law, thereby forfeiting their privilege to share in car-

HIS PERSONALITY

rying out their Maker's marvelous purpose. How did this come about?

Using a serpent as his instrument, the invisible spirit person who later came to be known as Satan the Devil deceived Eve into thinking that disobedience to God was a means of gain. Eve fell for the lie and afterward succeeded in persuading her husband to join her in the transgression.

The rebellion of Satan and of Adam and Eve made it appear that all intelligent creatures were in reality motivated by selfishness, even though they might appear to be willingly submitting to God's rule. This was, in fact, Satan's contention, as is evident from what he said centuries later respecting the faithful man Job: "Everything that a man has he will give in behalf of his soul. For a change, thrust out your hand, please, and touch as far as his bone and his flesh and see whether he will not curse you to your very face."—Job 2: 4, 5.

The issue that was raised by Satan was not one that could be settled by immediately destroying him and anyone else who might thereafter express like ideas and motives. Had that been done, the question would have remained, 'Might Satan, if given enough time, have succeeded in proving his claim?' As long as such a question persisted, it could undermine confidence in God's rulership toward his intelligent creation. Therefore, since the time the first humans rebelled, God's judgments have taken into consideration the issue that had been raised as well as his original purpose for the earth and man upon it.

THE CURSE ON THE GROUND

Consider the judgment pronounced on Adam. He was told: "Because you listened to your wife's voice and took to eating from the tree concerning which I gave you

this command, 'You must not eat from it,' cursed is the ground on your account. In pain you will eat its produce all the days of your life. And thorns and thistles it will grow for you, and you must eat the vegetation of the field. In the sweat of your face you will eat bread."—Gen. 3:17-19.

This curse on the ground was purposeful. By sinning, Adam had lost the right to share in transforming the uncultivated land outside the garden of Eden into a paradise. It was, therefore, a just pronouncement on God's part to make it impossible for Adam to produce even a semblance of such a delightful place.

Furthermore, Jehovah God fully understood the effect that sinning would have on his intelligent creatures. He knew that, unless there were impeding factors, imperfect humans would quickly plunge ever deeper into a course of degradation. In this connection, the curse on the ground may well have served to retard man's sinful inclinations from speedily coming to a head. How? Because he would have to wrest a living from the ground through painful and exhausting labor, Adam would certainly have less time and energy to use for harmful activities.

As long as the curse on the ground continued, its wearying effects were keenly felt by Adam's descendants. This is evident from the prophetic words spoken by Lamech at the birth of Noah: "This one will bring us comfort from our work and from the pain of our hands resulting from the ground which Jehovah has cursed."

—Gen. 5:29.

AN ADDED CURSE ON CAIN

Painful as the effects of that curse on the ground were, they were not enough to restrain the bad inclinations of Cain, a farmer. This firstborn son of Adam murdered his own brother Abel in the heat of great anger. (Gen. 4:5, 8) For this, God's judgment against Cain was: "Now you are

cursed in banishment from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood at your hand. When you cultivate the ground, it will not give you back its power. A wanderer and a fugitive you will become in the earth."—Gen. 4:11, 12.

Jehovah God was thus banishing Cain from land that he had caused to be defiled with the innocent blood of Abel. Subjected to the effects of blood defilement on the ground, Cain from then on had to devote even more time and energy than previously to provide for himself and his family. (Gen. 4:12-17) This no doubt served to impress upon Cain the badness of what he had done.

THE FLOOD

However, as the centuries passed, violence intensified. The Bible reports: "The earth came to be ruined in the sight of the true God and the earth became filled with violence." (Gen. 6:11) Bad as the situation was, it was not yet God's due time for the earth to be cleansed and to become a paradise, inhabited by people who wanted to serve Jehovah God. Many centuries had been set aside by the Creator for the complete settlement of the issue raised by the rebellion of Satan and of the first humans. Nevertheless, Jehovah God had the wisdom to handle the problem of a violent world's coming into existence so soon after Adam's creation. In harmony with justice, he took action against that ungodly world. By means of a global Flood, Jehovah God destroyed wicked men and women whose violent ways threatened to interfere with the due fulfillment of his purpose to have a paradise earth inhabited by humans who loved his sovereignty.—2 Pet. 3:5, 6.

Only righteous Noah and seven members of his family survived the flood. As these deluge survivors had shown a heartfelt desire to serve God, they did not need to be punished by means of a new special

curse on the ground. The pre-deluge curse was lifted in fulfillment of Lamech's prophetic words regarding Noah. Then, too, in view of the reduced human life-span after the flood, the hardship that would have been imposed by a curse on the ground would evidently have made life more difficult for the sinful descendants of Noah.

REBELLION AT BABEL

Sometime during the 350 years that Noah continued living after the flood, many of his descendants chose to rebel against God's will for them. There being a comparatively small human population on earth, there was certainly no need for people to band together in cities. Yet many of Noah's descendants felt otherwise. Contrary to God's will for them to spread abroad in the earth, they began building the city of Babel, along with a lofty tower. "Come on!" they said. "Let us build ourselves a city and also a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a celebrated name for ourselves, for fear we may be scattered over all the surface of the earth." (Gen. 11:4) Jehovah, the God of justice, however, put an end to that defiant scheme to band together instead of scattering.

Presenting the reasons for God's taking quick action against Babel's builders, the Bible says: "Look! They are one people and there is one language for them all, and this is what they start to do. Why, now there is nothing that they may have in mind to do that will be unattainable for them." (Gen. 11:6) These words show that the all-wise Creator foreknew that rebellious humans would stop at nothing to carry out their defiant schemes through organized and concerted efforts. As time would pass, one wrong thing after another would come to their mind. Then, by means of unified action, they would set themselves to accomplish their evil ends.

Wisely, Jehovah God did something to thwart such unified action for bad. He confused the language of Babel's builders. No longer being able to understand one another, they stopped their building operation. From then onward, the language barrier hindered any successful banding together for wrong purposes.—Gen. 11:7.

We today should be grateful to God for his taking action in confusing man's language. Think about what men have done in recent times, for example, in the development of weapons of mass destruction. Despite their being divided and working independently, they have built up an arsenal of weapons that could turn this earth into a desolate waste. It staggers the imagination to contemplate the greater extremes to which men might have gone had it not been for the divisions caused by the language barrier. Indeed, it was no exaggeration when, in connection with the building of Babel, God said of defiant humans: "There is nothing that they may have in mind to do that will be unattainable for them."

God's past judgments surely reveal his justice and wisdom. They also show that he has been handling matters with a view to fulfilling his purpose for the earth and man upon it. This will especially be true of God's coming judgment against the present wicked system of things. That judgment will spell the end for all unbridled wickedness and pave the way for making this earth a paradise.

If you want to be among those to share in the realization of God's glorious purpose for man and the earth, you need to live in harmony with it now. Unlike those who disregarded God's purpose and experienced adverse judgment in the past, you should want to be like righteous Noah in doing what is pleasing to the Creator. Only then can you hope to witness and share in the transformation of the earth into a beautiful paradise.

DO YOU APPRECIATE

ON THE night before Jesus' death, he told his disciples: "I shall not leave you bereaved." He then promised to send them a helper, God's holy spirit, which would act on their minds and hearts as a reminder and teacher and would also be a witness-bearer about Christ. (John 14:18, 26; 15:26) Christ, in heaven, would be their Head and would direct them. God gave no man or body of men this headship, but reserved it for his Son.—Col. 1:18.

Besides holy spirit, Christ also used angels to serve his congregation on earth. (Heb. 1:13, 14) But he did something else for which we can be thankful. One of his apostles wrote: "When he ascended on high he carried away captives; he gave gifts in men." (Eph. 4:8) The writer here paraphrased Psalm 68:18 and applied it to Jesus Christ as Jehovah's Chief Agent. Jesus ascended to heaven, having "conquered the world" by his integrity-keeping course. He also triumphed over death and over Satan the Devil by reason of God's resurrecting him from the dead. (John 16:33; Heb. 2:10, 14; Acts 2:24) Like a conqueror Jesus took "captives" from the enemy. These "captives" were men who had been in slavery to sin and death. They were now usable to God. Christ could now offer these "captives" of his (they are also called "slaves," as at Ephesians 6:6) to be devoted to the service of Jehovah God and his Christian congregation.

In what way are these "captives," given by Christ as Head, "gifts in men"? They are men with abilities needed for the well-being of the congregation. These men have become servants of God, whose spirit

The "Gifts In Men"?

moves them to devote themselves vigorously and wholeheartedly to Jehovah. All Christian men have this opportunity, but some exercise greater faith and zeal. Jesus Christ observes their course of "reaching out" for wider service. (1 Tim. 3:1) He wants men of such faith for use in the congregation. Through God's holy spirit he accentuates and enhances the abilities they have to teach, to shepherd the flock of God, to help, to encourage and to take the lead, with a view to the readjustment of those in the congregation toward greater harmony with God's will. Christ equips them to do special ministerial work, to take care of certain congregational duties. Their purpose is to help the Christian brothers and sisters to grow in spirituality, that the spirit of God may have freer operation in the congregation. These "gifts in men" work toward the unity of the congregation, until "all attain to the oneness in the faith . . . to the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ."—Eph. 4:11-13.

Today we find these "gifts in men" serving as elders and ministerial servants. These men realize that they are not 'rulers' or "masters" of the congregation, nor are they fathers, but are *brothers*, "*fellow workers*." (1 Cor. 4:8; 2 Cor. 1:24) They are to 'take the lead' in doing what is right, preaching the word of God, reproving, exhorting and teaching, but not ruling or im-

posing their consciences on others. (Heb. 13:7; 2 Tim. 4:2) Their work is to slave for their brothers, "in order that we [in the congregation] should no longer be babes, tossed about as by waves and carried hither and thither by every wind of teaching by means of the trickery of men, by means of cunning in contriving error."

—Eph. 4:14; Gal. 5:13.

HARMONY AS A BODY

So the elders in the congregations of Jehovah's witnesses recognize that they, along with every other member of the congregation, are like 'joints' or members of a body, as the apostle says: "Let us by love grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ. From him all the body, by being harmoniously joined together and being made to cooperate through every joint that gives what is needed, according to the functioning of each respective member in due measure, makes for the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."—Eph. 4:15, 16.

A joint or a member of the body relies also on the other joints and other members for sustenance and useful operation. Thus, all the members of the body, including elders and ministerial servants, are dependent on one another. They realize that God's spirit, not their own ability, accomplishes God's will, through the wholehearted spirit of the brothers. The elders' work is to encourage that wholehearted spirit. Also, they see that it is not primarily through organizational efficiency, but "by being harmoniously joined together" in the uniting bond of love by the operation of Jehovah's spirit, that spiritual growth, smooth functioning and increase come.—Col. 3:14.

All the brothers and sisters, as part of the congregational body, have a definite part in the body's harmonious working. They recognize these fine "gifts in men"

as those to whom obedience is due, for the good of the congregational body. (Heb. 13:17) Each shares in functioning "in due measure," according to his or her faith, circumstances and ability, cooperating with "every joint that gives what is needed." Thus all the congregation is happy, with no "sore" spots or places of friction.

Is it not wonderful wisdom on the part of Christ as Head of the congregation to provide these "gifts in men"? Is it not comforting to have men to help us, brothers of ours, who work alongside us and have the same problems and experiences that we have? Do we not feel warmth toward them and appreciate that they have given themselves to the influence of God's spirit so that their natural abilities have been increased and turned in the direction of service to God and to all of us?

A gift is given to supply a need, or to make someone happy. Certainly Christ had these things in mind in giving the "gifts in men." Elders and ministerial servants should therefore work for the joy and happiness of all the members of the congregation. They should avoid making themselves feared by the brothers. Neither should they consider themselves as "benefactors" to whom the brothers are somehow indebted, for they are not to be like the rulers of this world's system of things. (Luke 22:25, 26) Christ is the Benefactor to whom all are indebted. He administers the affairs of the congregation for our happiness. His 'yoke is kindly and his load is light.'—Matt. 11:30; 1 Tim. 6:15.

All in the congregation should therefore thank Jehovah God through Christ for this arrangement, so different from that of this world. Proper appreciation can help us to come to the "accurate knowledge of the Son of God," and to recognize him fully as the Head of the congregation. This will keep us in the right relationship to Jehovah God—surely the primary goal of all true Christians!—Eph. 4:13; Jer. 9:23, 24.

Miracles Jesus Performed

IN HIS OWN CITY

WOULD you be glad to see sick loved ones restored to health? Would it thrill you to observe the ears of the deaf unstopped, to hear the tongue of the dumb sing, to witness the eyes of the blind being opened and even to welcome back the dead? You would? But do you say that could never happen? Yet it has happened before!

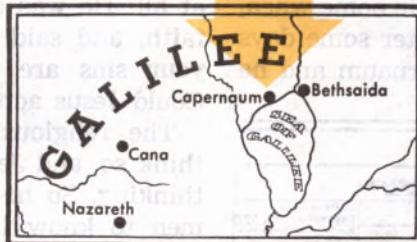
Just a little over 1,900 years ago there was a man who performed miracles such as these in the land that is now the Republic of Israel. That man's name was Jesus. The Bible reports regarding Jesus' public appearance in this region: "So, boarding the boat, he proceeded across [the Sea of Galilee] and went into his own city."—Matt. 9:1.

But which city was Jesus' "own city"?

HOW JESUS' CITY CAN BE IDENTIFIED

It was near the sea, for when Jesus got off the boat he went into this city. Well, then, was Jesus' city Bethlehem? That is where he was born. How could it be, since Bethlehem is nowhere near the Sea of Galilee? It is some sixty miles or so away.

Well, was Nazareth Jesus' "own city"? This is where Jesus grew up and became a carpenter. (Luke 4:16; John 1:45; Mark 6:3) But Nazareth is not near the sea either. Evidently the modern town of En Nasira is the site of ancient Nazareth, and it is about a five-hour walk from the Sea of Galilee.



Near the beginning of his preaching, Jesus returned to Nazareth and spoke in its synagogue. However, the men became angry, rushed Jesus out of the city and tried to kill him. But Jesus got away. (Luke 4:16-30) The Bible explains that after Jesus was forced to leave Nazareth, "he came and took up residence in Capernaum beside the sea."

—Matt. 4:13.

Yes, *Capernaum*, where Jesus took up residence beside the sea, was Jesus' "own city."

SETTING OF MANY MIRACLES

While he was walking alongside the sea near Capernaum, Jesus called to his first four disciples to follow him. They were Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, and James and his brother John. Jesus said to them: "Come after me, and I shall cause you to become fishers of men." The five of them then entered Capernaum.

—Mark 1:16-21.

Here Jesus went into the synagogue and cured a demon-possessed man. The Bible says: "Immediately they went out of the synagogue and went into the home of Simon and Andrew with James and John." (Mark 1:22-29) From this we learn that Peter and Andrew were now living in Capernaum, having moved there from their former residence in Bethsaida.—John 1:44.

Peter's mother-in-law, who was evidently living with Peter and Andrew, was sick

with fever. So Jesus cured her. The Bible account continues: "After evening had fallen, when the sun had set, the people began bringing him all those who were ill and those demon-possessed; and the whole city was gathered right at the door. So he cured many that were ill with various sicknesses, and he expelled many demons."

—Mark 1:30-34.

What a marvelous witness this was to all those people of Capernaum! They saw firsthand many miracles of Jesus.

Perhaps while living in Capernaum Jesus stayed at the home of Peter and Andrew. If so, Jesus was at their home when, as the Bible later says: "After some days he again entered into Capernaum and he

was reported to be at home."—Mark 2:1.

When people heard that Jesus had returned, they flocked to the house. The crowd was so great that they jammed the doorway and spilled over into the area outside. The stage was set for a truly remarkable event. The Bible says: "Men came bringing him a paralytic carried by four. But not being able to bring him right to Jesus on account of the crowd, they removed the roof over where he was, and having dug an opening they lowered the cot on which the paralytic was lying."

What did Jesus do? Was he angry? Not at all! He was deeply impressed by their faith, and said to the paralytic: "Child, your sins are forgiven." Imagine that! Could Jesus actually forgive sins?

The religious leaders present did not think so, and Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said: "'In order for you men to know that the Son of man has authority to forgive sins upon the earth,' —he said to the paralytic: 'I say to you, Get up, pick up your cot, and go to your home.' At that he did get up, and immediately picked up his cot and walked out in front of them all."—Mark 2:12.

The cure was clearly by divine power. But later Jesus performed an even more remarkable miracle. The daughter of Jairus, the presiding officer of the synagogue there in Capernaum, became sick and died. Yet Jesus responded to the requests for help and went to the man's house. The Bible says: "Taking the hand of the young child, [Jesus] said to her . . . 'Maiden, I say to you, Get up!' And immediately the maiden rose and began walking, for she was twelve years old. And at once they were beside themselves with great ecstasy."—Mark 5:41, 42.

Certainly those people of Capernaum had every reason to accept Jesus as the Son of God! But only a few did. The vast majority were concerned simply with the personal benefit they could receive.

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(See instructions on reverse.)

WHAT SIGNIFICANCE FOR US TODAY?

Capernaum no longer exists as a city. Its ruins stretch out for about a mile along the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee. Interestingly, one of the finest synagogue ruins yet discovered has been excavated there. Although it dates from the second or third century, it is suggested that it may have been built on the site of an earlier synagogue in which Jesus himself preached. So, then, these ruins are a reminder of Jesus' many miracles in "his own city."

It is true that the healings and resurrection that Jesus performed in Capernaum were only of temporary benefit, since eventually those people again got sick and died. Yet Jesus proved something—he

proved that health and even life itself can be restored. Thus we have certain basis for believing that what Jesus did on a small scale he can do on a global scale now that he has been resurrected and is installed as God's heavenly king. But will he really use his power in this way?

We have Jesus' own promise. He said: "The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out." (John 5:28, 29) Do you believe this? If so, do not be like those residents of Capernaum who saw but refused to become Jesus' followers. May you, rather, on the basis of your belief, be motivated from an appreciative heart to love and serve Jesus and his heavenly Father.

—Matt. 11:23, 24.

Graduates of Gilead's 59th Class Urged to Stick to the Work

SEPTEMBER 7, 1975, was graduation day for the students of Gilead's 59th class. They had successfully completed an intensive five-month course, designed to equip them for missionary work. During the morning program held at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in Queens, New York, speakers emphasized the importance of a fine relationship with God and the need for the graduates to stick to their missionary assignments.

U. V. Glass reminded the graduates that they are "sheep" of Jehovah God under the loving care of Jesus Christ. Using Psalm 23, he explained that its beautiful description of God's shepherding finds a basis in the actual experience of sheep and shepherds.

E. A. Dunlap stressed that success will not lie in the missionaries' own strength or ability but in 'accepting the undeserved kindness of God and not missing its purpose.' (2 Cor. 6:1) He encouraged them to remember that their purpose is to carry God's name to the people in their assignment. By sticking to that purpose, as did Joshua of old, even when faced with opposition, the graduates could be certain of success.—Josh. 1:2, 3; 21:45.

Illustrating the value of continuing in one's assignment, M. G. Henschel related the follow-

ing experience: A musician began to think seriously about the purpose of his being alive and prayed to God. He remembered a missionary who had called on him fifteen years earlier. He began looking for her and, since she was still in her assignment, was able to locate her, identifying her on the street. As a result, one of the man's sons has already become a dedicated servant of Jehovah and other members of the family are making progress toward this end. What a fine blessing this missionary experienced because of having remained in her assignment!

In his comments, M. H. Larson showed that the graduates possessed lifesaving spiritual food and should, therefore, be willing to weather stormlike problems to help people. He counseled them to be like the Hebrew prophet Habakkuk, who said: "At my guard post I will keep standing, and I will keep myself stationed upon the bulwark; and I shall keep watch."—Hab. 2:1.

Among other things, G. M. Couch directed attention to the example of Jesus Christ, who left behind his heavenly home to minister to sinful humans. Yet Jesus Christ was happy. Why? Because he understood the importance of his assignment and saw good in people. By

imitating Jesus Christ, the graduates could likewise find happiness in their assignments.

Addressing the graduates, F. W. Franz showed why they were not being sent by any ecclesiastical body such as exists in the churches of Christendom. According to the Scriptures, neither Philip nor the apostle Paul, two outstanding evangelizers or missionaries in the first century C.E., received missionary assignments from the apostolic body at Jerusalem. Both men did their work under the direction of the real head of the Christian congregation, Jesus Christ. Paul had, in fact, been directly chosen by Jesus as an apostle to the nations. Later, at the direction of God's spirit, Paul and his companion Barnabas were sent out from the Antioch congregation. Both men recognized their assignment as having come, not from men, but from Jesus Christ. The missionaries trained at Gilead School can also be confident of Christ's backing and direction.

Concluding the morning program, N. H. Knorr highlighted the importance of maintaining a good relationship with God through wholesome speech. He urged the graduates to "add lustre to the doctrine of God our Saviour."

(Titus 2:10, *New English Bible*) How could they do so? They could make this doctrine beautiful and brilliant in the eyes of others by their wholesome speech, fine manners, honesty, trustworthiness and, yes, by their being Christians whole-souled. Thus they would be backing up God's Word by what they said and did.

In the afternoon the graduates put on a delightful program that included two informative dramas drawn from the Bible and present-day experiences.

Truly the admonition to remain faithful to Christian assignments and to safeguard one's relationship with God by 'adding lustre to his doctrine' was most timely for the graduates and all others in attendance. Only by doing this can any of us hope to continue experiencing God's favor and blessing.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

December 7: Letting God Be the Sovereign of Our Lives. Page 652. Songs to Be Used: 30, 104.

December 14: The Time for Choosing God as Sovereign. Page 658. Songs to Be Used: 48, 102.

1000 of staged scenes. A re-enactment of events related to the baptism of Jesus Christ was a highlight of the Day of Feasting. This event, which has no parallel but one, was witnessed by the entire congregation. The scene was set in a simple room with a table and chairs and a small oil lamp. The people present to observe the baptism were gathered around the table and listened intently to the words of Jesus.

Unaware of the baptismal rite, the people gathered outside. At the conclusion of the baptismal service, the people gathered outside, including Jesus' mother, Mary, who had been present throughout the entire ceremony. After the baptism, Jesus turned to his mother and said, "Behold thy son!"

"Behold thy son!"—Jesus' words were repeated by the people gathered outside. A woman, older than Jesus' mother, Mary, approached Jesus and said, "Behold thy son!"

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