

# The WATCHTOWER

## THE GAMBLING BOOM

-HOW DO YOU VIEW IT?



Also In This Issue:

To Whom Do You Belong?

OCTOBER 1, 1974

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

# The **WATCHTOWER**

October 1, 1974  
Vol. 95, Number 19

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.

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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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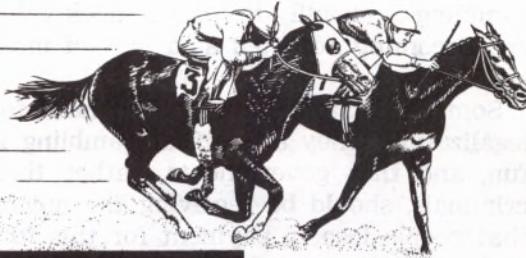
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**T**HE upsurge in legalized gambling has been phenomenal world wide. More than seventy-five countries operate lotteries, and other forms of gambling also flourish.

A number of Asian countries



## The GAMBLING BOOM

### -How do you view it?

have recently legalized casino gambling. Modern casinos are also big attractions in Africa's Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana.

Britain's parliament in 1960 voted to legalize popular forms of gambling, including off-track betting and casinos. Australia has some 2,500 state-licensed bookmakers. The people bet more than \$5.5 billion annually, which is more than the government spends on education, defense, housing, social services and welfare combined!

Some fifty million Americans gamble each year, betting anywhere from \$30 billion to \$100 billion, depending upon the estimate one chooses. The vast majority of this money is wagered illegally. Many states, however, are now stampeding to legalize lotteries, approve new race-tracks and set up off-track betting.

By early 1974,

eight states were operating lotteries, with at least four others about to open for business. New York city began legalized Off-Track Betting (OTB) in 1971, and many other places, too, may soon do so. Also, New Jersey, Maryland and Hawaii are said to be considering joining Nevada in legalizing casino gambling.

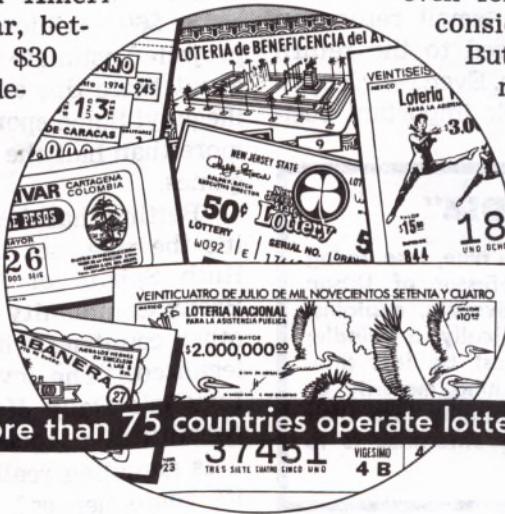
How is it that an activity, previously run almost exclusively illegally, is now being legalized?

#### WHY LEGALIZATION POSSIBLE

The change in public attitudes is largely responsible. A generation ago gambling even for "good" purposes was considered morally wrong.

But that is not the way most people view it now. What about you?

Commenting on gambling's growing acceptability, *Newsweek* observed: "The trend can be attributed partly to the general permissiveness of society; like alcohol, marijuana and sexual freedom, the institution of



More than 75 countries operate lotteries

gambling is steadily losing its shock value and becoming accepted as a part of modern life."

Some legislators have pushed hard for legalization. They argue that gambling is fun, and that governments, rather than criminals, should be receiving the money that people lose in payment for this fun. Major religions would apparently agree, as Episcopal priest William S. Van Meter notes: "Officially, the Episcopalians, Jews and Roman Catholics do not believe gambling is immoral."

But what do you think? Is it really Christian, is it consistent with the Bible, to encourage an activity that has caused problems for so many persons? Some apparently feel that legalization is justified. They hope that, by legalizing gambling, illegal operations will be driven out of business.

Has this been occurring?

#### HURTING ILLEGAL GAMBLING?

Not long ago a National Science Foundation report noted: "State lotteries have had very limited impact on illegal gambling . . . The legal game is not sufficiently appealing to players of the illegal game to attract them away from it."

Informed gamblers know that state lotteries pay back only a small return on every dollar bet compared to the return on the dollar bet illegally. Even New York's OTB has taken very little important busi-

ness from illegal bookies. Major bettors have stayed with them because of the advantages they offer. For example, winnings are tax free, bookies provide credit, and there are types of betting, such as parlays, numbers, and so forth, that legal operations do not offer.

Also, surprising perhaps to many, by far most illegal gambling is on football, basketball and other sports. And, there is no legal betting on these events. As a result, the legalizing of lotteries and OTB has had the effect of encouraging people to seek out such illegal gambling attractions. This was the finding of a recent New York Police Department study.

This study estimated that illegal gambling shot up by 62 percent in 1972. Chief Paul F. Delise explained: "A climate has been created to gamble. Because it now is possible to bet legally on horses, thousands of people who never in the world would have thought of betting on football or basketball or baseball are now betting with the bookies."

#### A REAL BOOM

Some 200,000 persons now bet daily at New York city's more than 120 new OTB parlors. About 23 percent of the city's adults bet there. In 1973 they wagered some \$691 million, with \$800 million a projected estimate for this year. However, about twice this amount is bet in the city illegally! Some sportswriters estimate that more than half the football fans bet on the games.

"Betting has become so commonplace it's the rule, not the exception," laments Ruth Spirito of New York's Northeast Bronx Community Council. It is similar in other countries where gambling has been legalized. "The level of gambling," notes London's *Daily Mail*, "is now so high it constitutes a social menace."

Is gambling really a menace? What are its consequences?

#### "A SWINDLE"

Inevitably gamblers, in time, lose. Irving Kristol, Henry Luce Professor of Urban Values at New York University, explains: "Gambling . . . is, technically, a swindle; the payoffs on bets must be less than fair, and the overwhelming majority of the 'investors' must eventually lose their money, if the gambling enterprise is to survive and prosper."

# WHAT GAMBLING DOES TO PEOPLE

A CERTAIN New York postal worker had never made a bet before. Then an Off-Track Betting parlor opened in his neighborhood. One bet led to another. Recently when his wife phoned Gamblers Anonymous the man owed \$5,000, and had just run out to bet his last \$16, leaving behind an empty refrigerator and two hungry children.

Experiences are often bizarre. An owner of a thriving apparel company consulted a psychiatrist because of his compulsion to gamble. To get an insight into the case, the psychiatrist accompanied the man to the track. In fascination he watched the man win money on seven of nine races. Intrigued, the psychiatrist decided to give it a try. Soon he, too, became a compulsive gambler and, in time, lost his practice.

"Unbelievable," you say? "Typical," replied a former gambler upon hearing this experience. "I've seen many cases like that."

## AN INSIDIOUS COMPELSION

This compulsion to gamble starts in a seemingly innocent way. "I see the women coming in," explained a ticket seller at an OTB parlor. "At first they bet \$2 or \$4. Then it's twenties and thirties. After a few months they're betting \$50 and \$60 a race.

How many have I seen like that? At my shop alone—at least 20."

The number of people who become deeply involved in betting is astounding. "Half the [OTB] customers are betting six days a week," a member of Gamblers Anonymous claims. Many have lost control of themselves, and are sorry they ever started. A Brooklyn housewife cried: "I wish I weren't a regular bettor." And a youngster lamented: "I've been losing so much lately . . . But I can't stop, man, it's in my blood."

Many prominent businessmen, too, have become compulsive gamblers. In its article "The Hidden Executive Vice," *Dun's Review* concluded that gambling is "one of the U.S.' most serious menaces—even above alcoholism and drug addiction."

True, not everyone who starts becomes a compulsive gambler. In fact, many consider gambling 'harmless fun.' But is it really? To what does this "fun" so often lead? You may be surprised to know how many homes are affected by the sad consequences.

According to estimates by the National Institute of Mental Health, there are in the United States alone *10 million compulsive gamblers!* These persons gamble to the point of serious financial and personal troubles, causing untold suffering to their

families. Like drug addicts and alcoholics, these gamblers cannot seem to quit, no matter how many times they vow to do so. "There's no question it's addictive," says an assistant district attorney familiar with gambling.

Nongamblers may find this addiction, or compulsion, hard to understand. Yet it is real. Dr. Robert Custer, chief of staff, Brecksville Division, Cleveland V.A. Hospital, has treated many such gamblers. "They

are very desperate men when they come in," he notes. "When the CG [compulsive gambler] asks for help, he is so frightened and confused that he's near a state of panic. When he initially stops gambling, he's so desperate that you would think his life was in danger."

What causes persons to develop such a compulsion to gamble?

#### A DEMORALIZING DESIRE

A desire for easy money is apparently a major factor. Of course, no one wants to be poor; we all desire a sufficiency. But in gambling the prospect is held out of huge rewards without working—simply by chance or 'good luck' the possibility exists of becoming rich quickly. The prospect is alluring. And so often what ensnares a gambler is so-called "beginner's luck."

Thus in a typical experience a man in Ontario, Canada, had a remarkable winning streak at his first visit to a racetrack, turning about \$4 into \$1,000. "He should have stopped there," said his wife. "But he couldn't." Why not?

Because gambling seemed such an easy way of making money. The win lured him on, inciting in him desire for more. The result? "He started to change," his wife

said. "It was like he was two different people." In time he lost \$60,000 gambling, and ruined his family life.

Once the desire takes root, a big winning rarely satisfies it. Like moths lured by a light bulb, gamblers are tantalized by the prospect of making an even bigger

"killing." Thus a teacher in his late thirties accumulated gambling debts to the amount of \$20,000. But in an unusual four-day streak he won \$25,000. Did he pay his

debts? He admits: "I began thinking how easily I could double the \$25,000. I began betting horses on Monday, and by the end of the week it was all gone."

In an insidious way gambling can have this effect, eating away at the individual's moral fiber. Almost invariably, compulsive gamblers, in time, become devious and unscrupulous. Recently a man picked four horses in what is known as a "superfecta" bet, and won \$111,000 on a \$3 bet. However, he refused to come to the office of Jerome T. Paul, an OTB official, to have his picture taken. Why? "He owed more than the \$111,000," Paul explained, "and he didn't intend to pay."

People of all walks of life are affected. An Orthodox rabbi, who had run up gambling debts totaling \$100,000, explained: "I had no sense of responsibility to my family or my congregation. I'd schedule a funeral early, so I could get to the track. I made notes for my sermon between races."

Yes, gambling does these things to people—it so often makes them greedy, dishonest and almost unbelievably inconsiderate of others. It also destroys self-control. So gambling clearly clashes with basic Bible precepts, which condemn "greedy per-

## NEXT ISSUE—SPECIAL!

### ***Human Plans Failing as God's Purpose Succeeds.***

BY RONALD L. HARRIS

Illustration by J. D. Johnson

Photo by J. D. Johnson

sons," and urge self-control and love of neighbor.—1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:22, 23; Matt. 22:39.

#### ANOTHER ADDICTIVE FACTOR

But more is apparently involved in causing compulsive gambling. Doctors who have investigated the problem find it complex, and admit that they do not really understand it. However, some believe that the gripping action and excitement involved in gambling contribute to the addiction.

Thus Dr. William H. Boyd, who has spent nine years studying the problem, concluded: "The ingredient in alcoholism is alcohol and the ingredient in drug addiction is drugs. But the ingredient in gambling is the excitement." Dr. Robert Custer apparently agrees. "The 'drug' they seek," he says, "is being in action."

The action begins with the bet and continues until its outcome. There is joy over winning and anxiety over losing, and excitement during the whole procedure. Then, as Dr. Boyd notes, "The gambler has to go back and start over again for the thrill." And it is a fact that the craving for the action is so great that one will hear gamblers say: "It's not the money you owe that makes you desperate, but the idea of waking up and not having money to bet."

True, it may be difficult to see how something without any tangible ingredient—such as the drug addict's heroin—can cause addiction. But even in drug addiction there is more involved than just a physical addiction to some chemical. The mind is also affected somehow, bringing mental addiction. This is evident, since drug addiction continues even after the drug itself leaves the addict's body. So, in discussing gambling, Dr. Custer draws this parallel: "Psychological demand is the es-

sence of alcoholism and drug addiction, just as it is with compulsive gambling."

But in whatever way it is that gambling works to demoralize people, whether by love of money or the excitement that accompanies gambling, the fact to remember is that it does insidiously get a hold on people. How wise, therefore, to avoid gambling! Do not be tempted to try it just because today's permissive society has legalized it. Many persons started out gambling just a little—just for 'the fun of it'—but soon became "hooked," often with tragic results.

#### EFFORTS TO COPE WITH IT

Real efforts are now being made to help compulsive gamblers to quit. Gamblers Anonymous is a worldwide organization set up for that purpose, with some 200 chapters and 3,000 members in the United States alone. It endeavors to provide persons sufficient motivation to "kick" the habit. But it often fails. This is evidenced by the confessions of a cabdriver named Victor at a Gamblers Anonymous meeting in New York.

"I stood up and confessed that I couldn't stop betting," he said, "and I drove two shifts a day to support my habit. I told them I was so degenerate that as soon as I walked out of the meeting, I would probably drive four hours to Bowie in Maryland to play the horses. When I finished, three members were waiting for me. 'Hey, Vic,' they said, 'you got room for us in the car?'"

Simply realizing one's degeneracy, and even desiring to avoid the pain and consequences it brings, are often insufficient motivation to overcome compulsive gambling. But there is a way to "kick" the habit. Let one who had declined into the depths of compulsive gambling, but then recovered, tell about it.

# I WAS A COMPULSIVE GAMBLER

I STILL feel the gambling urge sometimes, such as when walking past an Off-Track Betting parlor. Crowds may be spilling out onto the street, racing forms in hand. Before realizing it, I think to myself, "I wonder if I can still pick winners?" The thought seems just to pop into mind. I fight it off—looking the other way and quickening my pace.

For over seventeen years I was a compulsive gambler. Betting controlled my life. *I just had to bet.* It was more important to me than eating, drinking, sleeping, sex—everything!

#### WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE

During those years I stayed up nights "handicapping" horses—selecting ones on which to bet the next day. Or I worked nights in order to be free to spend days at the track. I begged, borrowed and stole money to gamble. Everything we had of value was in some hock shop.

After getting paid, I would go to the track. "I'll bet \$10 and see if I can increase it," I would tell myself. The horse would lose, and I would say: "I've got to get my money back; I've got to get even." Time and time again I lost my paycheck this way.

The story of  
one man's successful struggle  
to break free, after seventeen years  
as a compulsive gambler



That meant there was no money for food, clothing or rent. Many times I went hungry, but so did my wife and two daughters. We had little to wear, and often we were evicted by landlords for not paying the rent. Or we moved to avoid shylocks.

Practically every gambler I knew was paying off a shylock—often several of them. Legitimate creditors will not lend to persons deeply in debt. But these underworld moneylenders will.

I used to go to a shylock and get maybe \$25. For a \$25 loan a person had to pay \$30 back. The payments might be \$6 a week for five weeks. If a person could not pay during a certain week, he would give what was called vigorish, about \$2 on a \$25 loan. But this \$2 was not applicable to the principal. A person could pay \$2 vigorish a week indefinitely, and still owe the remaining principal. Of course, \$2 may not sound like anything now, but it was then in the 1920's and 1930's.

Those shylocks could be rough. They had their strong-arm men. I remember a friend of mine getting beaten up terribly because he was unable to pay. So I often

lived in fear. When things got really desperate, I packed up and left. Fortunately, none of my family or I was ever hurt physically.

#### GAMBLING EVERYWHERE

It may be hard for you to believe how much gambling goes on. Wherever I worked, which usually was in restaurants and bars, all a person heard was "the horses." But other gambling was done too.

There were elaborate underworld places all around New York. But one needed connections and "approval" to get in. They had roulette, poker playing, dice games—all kinds of gambling. I would visit these. But most of my betting was on horses.

I often went to the track, but did even more betting with local bookies. This was more exciting, for a person can get greater action. What I mean is that bookies offer all kinds of complicated horse-betting possibilities; playing horses at various tracks in parlays, back to back, round robin, numbers, and so forth. Legal operations do not offer these. This is one reason why they are not so attractive to sophisticated gamblers.

Numbers betting is an especially big attraction. I would bet them six days a week. The numbers for each day were composed of three digits, for example, 8-3-9. The first digit was obtained by taking the last dollar-digit from the total pari-mutuel payments after the day's first three races. If the payment was \$359.73 after those races, the first digit was 9. Then after the fifth and seventh races the total pari-mutuel payments were used in the same way to get the last two digits.

I would often place my bets with a middleman who worked for a bookie. For a long time my steady middleman for numbers was our milkman. Usually I bet fifty cents, each morning giving him the money and the numbers slip. I remember once hitting the entire number straight 8-3-9,

for a payoff of \$300—a lot of money for fifty cents!

#### THE KIND OF ASSOCIATES

We gamblers spoke the same language, having the same predominant interest, with its accompanying excitement and troubles. But genuine concern for one another was sadly lacking. Take that milkman for example.

I trusted him, since I had known him a long time and he always paid off on my winners. So after I won that \$300 I was not suspicious when he invited me over to his house for a big dice game. It was not until I had lost most of my money that I realized the game was crooked. I had been "taken." But there is not much a person can do—it is difficult to prove.

However, that was far from the only time that "friends" cheated me. Once I gave money and a list of horses on which to place bets to a fellow worker. He worked a split shift, and was going to see the bookie that afternoon. Later I heard the racing results and was astonished that I had picked four winners! Of course, when my "friend" came in that evening I was excited and wanted my winnings. But he made some excuse as to why he had not made the bets. I could not prove it, but I am sure he had pocketed the winnings.

Gamblers are really a crooked crowd! Many a small-time bookie ran off with money I had won. But the truth is, I was no better. I often borrowed and never paid back, and even stole money outright. When I think back on some of those experiences, it saddens me.

#### ALLURE AND EXCITEMENT

I realized that the things I was doing were wrong. But I was enslaved by the habit, especially being captivated by the allure of easy money. That is actually what got me started in the first place playing horses.

I had gambled before, playing dice as a youngster on the streets of Philadelphia, and, later, poker aboard ship when I ran away to sea at age seventeen. But it was not until 1928, the year I got married, that I became interested in horses.

At the time I was working at a drug-store lunch counter at 49th Street and Lexington Avenue in New York. I was fascinated by the elation of horseplayers over their winnings. I learned later that they never mention their losses. "I'd better get in on some of this easy money," I figured.

I noted that gamblers got their horse information in the *Daily Mirror*. So one day I selected two horses from there and bet on them. I still remember their names, Buck Hero and Sunflower. With "beginner's luck," I won on both of them!

Now I had winners, and so could talk knowledgeably with the other horseplayers. "Too bad you didn't have a parlay," one said, "you really would have made a killing." Soon I was trying all betting possibilities. I really studied the horses, and began my own handicapping.

On occasion I went to the track and won big. I would really feel excited and proud. I might pay off a few debts, but the next day I would be back at the track 'to make a really big killing'—and usually lost everything.

And yet we would keep gambling, always figuring to hit that big payoff. I was reared in a Catholic orphanage where I learned about praying. So I would often pray for winners—in desperation on occasion even praying to the Devil.

Part of gambling's fascinating allure, I believe, is in the tremendous anticipation of the outcome. To prolong the exciting suspense I would often have someone check the racing results in the paper, and then ask the person such questions as: "Did the winner in the second race have ten letters in his name? How much weight

did he carry? How much did he pay? Who was the jockey?"

After the first or second question I would know by the answers when I was building up to a winner. Then finally I would ask if so-and-so—the horse I had bet on—had won. My elation was tremendous on hearing that he had.

#### EFFORTS TO PICK WINNERS

Handicapping horses was an involved procedure. Sometimes it would take hours to choose one good horse to bet on. Often I would decide that a race had no good betting possibility. But then what happened?

That night I would dream about a particular horse winning, and would bet on him the next day. Or I would go to the track, and notice that Straw Hat was running and that, unconsciously, I had put on a straw hat. So, of course, I bet on Straw Hat. I remember that once a can of pineapple fell off a shelf and hit my brother on the head. Checking the entries that day, he noticed a horse named Pineapple running; he bet on him and won! Gamblers are that way. They are very superstitious. And so rather than stick to their studied-out selections, they play hunches.

I am sure the Catholic Church realizes this characteristic of gamblers. For the nuns were always near the racetrack with their collection boxes. How could a Catholic, as many of us were, pass up a "sister" and expect to have any success playing the horses? So we would contribute. And if we won that day we would then be especially generous, hoping it would bring continued success.

You know why I played the number 839 so much—the one that came in and paid me \$300? Because I was born in the 8th month, my oldest daughter in the 3rd month and my wife in the 9th month. It was just superstition. I considered that

my lucky number—and it did pay off a few times.

But the fact is, I lost more than I won, and life was miserable, especially for my family. I wanted to quit. I would resolve: "I'm not going to do it. I'm just not going to play the horses anymore. I'm not even going to look at a horse sheet." Then what happened?

I would go to work, and the fellow next to me would say, "Hey, you know that I had so-and-so yesterday, and he paid so much." I would think to myself, "I used to play that horse." And, the first thing, I was back playing again.

#### A TURNING POINT

It was in 1944 that something occurred, however, that was eventually to change my life. I had temporarily moved with my family from New York to work at Patterson Field, some miles outside of Dayton, Ohio. My daughter subscribed to the magazine *Seventeen*, and a bonus offered a current best seller or the Bible. I chose the Bible since I had always wanted one. Then, just a few days later, a man called at my door and placed with me the book "*The Truth Shall Make You Free*".

Some weeks later, while alone one night, I picked up the book and began reading. It made more sense to me than anything I had ever heard concerning religion and the Bible. I was convinced that it was pointing me toward something more wonderful than I had ever heard about in all my thirty-eight years.

I was elated when the man returned, and so accepted his invitation to attend a meeting of Jehovah's witnesses. But then I got sick. After a long stay in the hospital I returned to New York. However, the man in Ohio arranged for a Witness to call on me there.

Accepting an invitation to a meeting, I noted that the Witness who accompanied me did not smoke, so I asked him: "Do

Jehovah's witnesses smoke?" Upon getting a negative response, I remember thinking to myself: "Well, that leaves me out. Smoking and gambling are two habits that I'll never be able to give up." But I was wrong.

#### WHAT MADE THE CHANGE POSSIBLE

For the first time I began to appreciate what a grand Creator we have. Oh, I believed in God before. I knew he existed. How else could intelligent life, with all its complexities, have come about? But now God began to be *real* to me. I could see that he had purposes for the blessing of mankind.

Many times before I had prayed the prayer taught us in the orphanage: "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*" (Matt. 6:9, 10, *Douay Version*) But now I began to appreciate that God's kingdom is a real government, and that we had finally reached the time in history when God had set that government in operation, with world-shaking consequences.

I was convinced that this system surely needs to be replaced. And it thrilled me to learn that Almighty God was really going to bring it about. The prophecy in the Bible book of Daniel especially became meaningful to me: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will . . . crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." (Dan. 2:44) The Bible promises of an earthly paradise, with freedom from even sickness and death, also had a powerful influence on my life.—Ps. 37:9-11; Rev. 21:3, 4.

I decided that if that is what God purposed for the blessing of mankind, I could show my appreciation by doing my best to obey His requirements. One requirement I learned was that a man "provide

for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household." (1 Tim. 5:8) So I began doing this, which, of course, necessitated greatly curtailing my gambling. My family and others who knew me could not help but be impressed by the change.

A growing desire to please Almighty God is what made this change possible. But vital, too, was reading the wholesome literature of Jehovah's witnesses and regularly associating with them. Whenever I went to their meetings, they were always friendly. Even people I never knew came up and said Hello. And I could see that their friendship was real; it was not hypocritical. When you are regularly with people like that you are influenced in a really beneficial way. I even stopped smoking.

#### BREAKING COMPLETELY FREE

But gambling had a much stronger hold on me. I was surprised, for I thought it would be easier to quit than smoking. However, the gambling urge was overwhelming, causing me to rationalize, "There's no scripture in the Bible against gambling. And I'm taking care of my family." So I would bet occasionally. In fact, at my first assembly of Jehovah's witnesses in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1946, I attended most of the sessions, but one afternoon I skipped to go to the racetrack.

I did this type of thing for years. I just could not resist the urge. "I have a few extra dollars," I would reason excusingly. "I can afford to have a little fun." However, in time I began to gamble more than I ever intended. Also about this time I got into financial trouble to the point that my position in the Christian congregation was in jeopardy. It was a crisis in my life.

However, Christian brothers lovingly came to my assistance. They patiently gave me counsel and direction. And from reading articles in *The Watchtower* and

*Awake!* I began more fully to appreciate gambling as the evil it really is. Especially did the 1964 *Awake!* article "Is Gambling Right for Christians?" have an effect on me. It helped me to appreciate that there really is a scripture against gambling.

I knew how superstitious gamblers are, always trying to win by wooing "Lady Luck." They will cheat and do almost anything to win—winning becomes an idol and Lady Luck a goddess. So the scripture discussed in that article, at Isaiah 65:11, really hit me. It speaks of those leaving the true God and "setting in order a table for the god of Good Luck and those filling up mixed wine for the god of Destiny."

When reading this I began to appreciate how closely gambling is connected with false worship. In fact, it made me think back to how we would often note that persons won their first bets—"beginner's luck," we would say. But now I am convinced that this is the Devil's scheme to lure people to gamble, in some way manipulating matters so they win at first, thus ensnaring them into a degrading form of false worship in which they come to idolize money and Good Luck.

With this appreciation of matters, I began fighting the gambling urge as never before. I just would not give in to it! It has been years now since my last bet, and I still get the urge. But because I know that Almighty God does not approve of gambling I am determined never to place a bet again.

If you ever are tempted to gamble, remember its terrible fruitage—what it does to people, how it degrades them and even entraps them in false worship. And do not place that first bet! If you already are ensnared by the compulsion to gamble, be assured that you can overcome it. There is a way, and Jehovah's witnesses will be glad to help you, even as they helped me.  
—Contributed.

# The Sad Result

IT IS a dangerous thing, generally, to have a negative viewpoint, and it is particularly dangerous when a person is negative toward the things of God. One who is negative can turn to bitter thinking and can actually become wicked.

Such a person is also usually sluggish, getting very little done. To avoid doing a thing the negative thinker, the sluggish individual, will make excuses to justify his course. "The lazy one has said: 'There is a lion outside! In the midst of the public squares I shall be murdered!'"—Prov. 22:13.

Of such a person's outcome, the Bible says: "I passed along by the field of the lazy individual and by the vineyard of the man in need of heart [or, good motive]. And, look! all of it produced weeds. Nettles covered its very surface, and its stone wall itself had been torn down. So I proceeded to behold, I myself; I began taking it to heart; I saw, I took the discipline: A little sleeping, a little slumbering, a little folding of the hands to lie down, and as a highwayman your poverty will certainly come and your neediness as an armed man."—Prov. 24:30-34.

The Proverbs have a spiritual as well as a literal application. Persons such as the Proverbs describe may have started off with a right spirit and attitude, but then they develop a negative outlook toward righteous acts and works. So it calls for careful watchfulness on our part to avoid developing that deplorable spirit.—Prov. 4:23.

## NEGATIVE THINKING

### THE UNAPPRECIATIVE SLAVE

Such a spiritually negative person, or, rather, such a class of persons, is described in Jesus' parable of the "talents." In previous issues we have discussed the two faithful slaves mentioned in the parable, who received five talents and two talents, respectively. The third slave received one talent (a talent being a unit of silver money). But, since his master gave each "according to his own ability," this third slave was under no handicap. The other slaves each made a 100-percent gain on the monies entrusted to them while their master was gone. The one-talent slave could have done likewise and thus have been pleasing to his lord; he did not have to gain five, or even as much as two talents.

But what did he do? The parable reads: "But the one that received just one went off, and dug in the ground and hid the silver money of his master." (Matt. 25:18) His failure to make increase was his own fault; he did not exert himself as did his fellow slaves. When his master returned to settle accounts, what excuse did he give? He complained: "Master, I knew you to be an exacting man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not winnow. So I grew afraid and went off and hid your talent in the ground.

Here you have what is yours."—Matt. 25: 24, 25.

In his negative thinking this slave tried to justify himself when the accounting was made. He tried to place wrongdoing on his lord. He charged his lord with getting crops, not only from his own land, but also from land he had not cultivated, and gathering grain that he had not winnowed of its chaff. His false reasoning was that the master had suffered no loss by his action—after all, he gave back the one talent. But this slave was unfaithful, because he accepted the money as a slave with the understanding that it should bring in profits. He no doubt accepted all the benefits that went with being a slave of his master, but he had no love for his master or consideration for his master's belongings. Actually he caused his master a loss.

The slave's master turned the tables on him, taking the slave's own trumped-up excuse and using it to expose him: "In reply his master said to him, 'Wicked and sluggish slave, you knew, did you, that I reaped where I did not sow and gathered where I did not winnow? Well, then, you ought to have deposited my silver monies with the bankers, and on my arrival I would be receiving what is mine with interest.'"—Matt. 25:26, 27.

#### MODERN-DAY SLUGGISH SLAVE

We have found in previous articles that the two faithful slaves represent, in the fulfillment, the faithful spirit-begotten brothers of the Lord Jesus Christ. The wicked slave, then, would represent those who likewise are spirit-begotten, anointed Christians, but who fail actually to care for the "belongings" entrusted to the "slaves" by their Master.

The sectarian church members of Christendom have falsely professed to be in the Lord's service. But they showed no interest at all in the Lord's "belongings" when World War I, in which they had

participated, ended, and there was opportunity to preach the good news of the Kingdom world wide. What, instead, did they do? They supported the League of Nations, a man-made agency that the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America called "the political expression of the Kingdom of God on earth." Now they direct people's attention and support to the United Nations as the world's hope for peace. They showed the Lord's "belongings" had not been committed to them, for they have not cultivated the world field and brought forth real supporters of the established Messianic kingdom.—Isa. 9: 6, 7.

However, among spirit-begotten ones associated with the "faithful slave" class, there was a class who sluggishly drew back. By 1931, when the name "Jehovah's witnesses" was adopted by the remnant actually doing the work of proclaiming the established kingdom of God, these negative ones had formed themselves into various groups called by diverse names. They did not boldly proclaim the Kingdom and stand for the name of the Almighty God, Jehovah. Moreover, they actually opposed those doing this work. They did not share in the terrible sufferings that Jehovah's witnesses experienced in the concentration camps, as well as the persecution in other parts of the earth. They fit the picture!

This unfaithful class does not have any proof that they have increased the Lord's "belongings" by spreading the Kingdom message. They have not experienced the blessings of tremendous expansion. But in the years 1968-1972, there were 680,871 persons baptized, to join with Jehovah's witnesses in proclaiming the Kingdom to others. The evidence is there as to whom Jehovah God is blessing. The faithful ones do not believe, as the wicked "slave" charged, that Jesus Christ is improperly reaping where he himself, when personally on earth, had not sown.

#### SETTLING ACCOUNTS

Note the punishment that the wicked and sluggish "slave" received at the hand of his master because of his negative thinking, his fearfulness and laziness, and his effort to justify a wrong course. His master said: "Therefore take away the talent from him and give it to him that has the ten talents. For to everyone that has, more will be given and he will have abundance; but as for him that does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. And throw the good-for-nothing slave out into the darkness outside. There is where his weeping and the gnashing of his teeth will be."—Matt. 25:28-30.

Evidently the master settled accounts with his slaves in the nighttime. Instead of entering into his master's joy, the wicked slave was thrown outside. The master's belongings entrusted to him, which he did not value and appreciate, were taken from him and given to the slave who had gained five talents, where these money values would be increased.

In the fulfillment, we can see that all Christ's anointed "slaves" are provided a warning. Those of the wicked "slave" class do not enter into the joy of their enthroned Master, being retained in his further royal service here on earth as representatives of an already established Kingdom. This sluggish slave does not enjoy any further assignment to increase adherents to the Kingdom. When the death-dealing darkness of the "great tribulation" comes upon mankind those belonging to this class will weep and gnash their teeth with the religious hypocrites until they perish.—Matt. 24:21.

The faithful "slaves" have in themselves that which the wicked and sluggish "slave" does not. The committing of the valuable "belongings" of the reigning King and their opportunity to increase these "belongings" rouse in them a zeal and devo-

tion to his kingdom. They believe in the heavenly Master's worthiness to receive an increase in disciple-making. They demonstrate a loving, courageous motive in making disciples of people of *all* the nations, not merely the Jewish nation in which Christ worked when on earth.

#### DANGER TO ALL

##### DEVELOPING NEGATIVE ATTITUDE

Even those of the "great crowd," who have hope of living on earth with health and life under that Kingdom government, have the same attitude as the faithful anointed "slaves" of the Lord Jesus Christ, with whom they associate. They express loving-kindness, appreciation, courage and zeal by word and action as they become assistants to the faithful anointed class. They know that negative thinking, drawing back, becoming bitter and making excuses to justify themselves will put them in a position similar to that of the wicked and sluggish "slave." This attitude would prevent them from surviving on earth through the "great tribulation." Furthermore, any of them dying as unfaithful now would not be resurrected to live in the paradise that the Kingdom rule will bring to earth.—Rev. 7:9-17; Zeph. 2:3.

Thus we can see the danger of a negative approach to the Lord's matters. In this time of judgment he will not let continue to associate with his faithful people any who are lazy or faultfinding. Their situation will prove to be like the one observed by the writer of Proverbs—broken down, weed-producing, so that their opportunity of work in the Lord's congregations will be lost to them, their 'poverty coming as a highwayman and their neediness as an armed man,' suddenly. Happy are all who think positively, in faith and devotion to the commands of Jehovah through Christ today!

# Insight on the News

- If you can read this you are doing something that nearly one out of every four persons on earth cannot—even if this material were in their native language. In some lands a startling 99 percent of the population is illiterate.

Can You Read This?

A United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report shows that—although educators seem to be winning the battle against illiteracy percentagewise—the total number of illiterates keeps getting bigger, due to the population explosion. From 1960 to 1970, illiterates increased from 735 million to 783 million, and now the figure nears 800 million.

Not only this, but in many nations enjoying a high literacy rate large numbers read very poorly, ineffectively. A Perth, Australia, newspaper reports an inquiry as showing that "312,000 Sydney adults are functionally illiterate." A 1970 poll revealed this was also true of 18.5 million Americans 16 years of age or older.

Some blame television for part of the problem. But this cannot be a big factor in poorer lands. One factor often overlooked is religion. It is a historical fact that religions have often been guilty of suppressing education among the "common people" in order to keep them submissive and in awe of their priesthood. In complete contrast, the Bible clearly calls for all true worshipers to become literate, for in many Scriptural exhortations all those addressed are called on both to read and to write. (Deut. 6:6, 9; Hab. 2:2; Matt. 24:15) Historically, where respect for the Bible has been high, literacy has also been high.

- Chagas' disease is a South American illness produced by a protozoan related to that which causes African sleeping sickness. The South American variety can produce convulsive seizures, at times ending in death or permanent mental or physical defects.

At the Third Congress of the Panamerican Federation for Voluntary Blood Donations, held recently in Montevideo, Uruguay, Chagas' disease came up for serious discussion. Why?

Because, like hepatitis, syphilis, malaria and other ailments, Chagas' disease may be

transmitted by blood transfusions. Studies carried out in Uruguay showed that in some sections of the country as many as 15 percent of the blood donors had positive reactions when tested for this disease. Estimates are that, in the Americas, some seven million persons are affected by it. The worst problem is that a person infected with the disease by a blood transfusion may not discover it until it is too late. Symptoms may appear several years later and may be followed by sudden death.

Clearly, those holding to God's standards regarding the use of blood and who abstain from blood transfusions are protected from many dangers.—See Acts 15:28, 29.

- Should Christian moral standards shift with the times, be molded by prevailing political attitudes or material prosperity? In the "National Catholic Reporter" (August 16, 1974), Catholic monsignor Paul Furley sharply contrasts first-century Christians with those of later centuries.

Early Christians endured the world's enmity and persecution. But, "all this changed with the Peace of Constantine [Roman emperor of the fourth century]," says the monsignor. "Christianity suddenly became respectable. The bishops crawled out of the underground and built themselves palaces. Christians began to become public officials, important military officers, wealthy merchants."

Moving down to modern times, the author first refers to Jesus' words about the rich man's difficulty in entering God's kingdom, and then says: "Yet . . . Catholic millionaires are not very worried. They know their bishops live in residences not inappropriately called palaces."—Matt. 19:23, 24.

Why this dramatic change from the standards of early Christianity? The writer points to the cause in saying: "If it is really the case that moral theologians tend to follow the mores of the middle class instead of the unworldly doctrines of the New Testament, then that fact is unspeakably tragic."

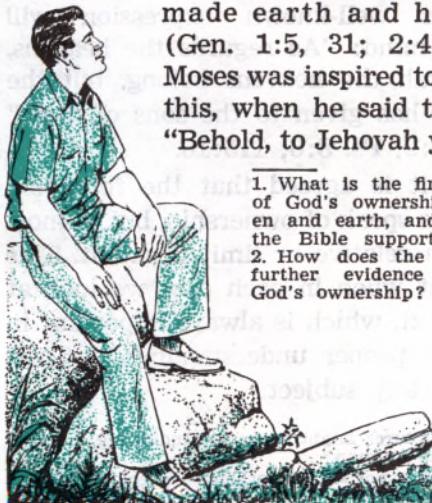
The shift is simply a repetition of the past. Jesus told money-loving, power-loving religious leaders of his day that they had 'substituted men's teachings and traditions for God's Word.'—Matt. 15:1-9.

"**I**N THE beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen. 1:1) These opening words of the Holy Bible give direct evidence as to God's ownership of the heavens and the earth. He created them, that is, he produced them and caused them to exist. He is their Maker. They were and are his possession, his property, and he has the exclusive and absolute right to their ownership. God holds the title to all this property, and the Holy Bible constitutes the legal evidence of this. It is his title deed. This is reiterated throughout God's Word right down to its last book, Revelation.—Rev. 4:11; 10:6; 14:7.

<sup>2</sup> The first chapter of Genesis continues to support the foregoing in unmistakable terms. In each and every step of creation it was God who gave the word as to what should be done. Time and again we read that God "proceeded to make" this and that, in heaven and on earth, animate and inanimate. He also named them. "God began calling the light Day, but the darkness he called Night." Finally, "God saw everything he had made and, look! it was very good." It had his stamp of approval. All things belonged to him, the only true God, "in the time of their being created, in the day that Jehovah God made earth and heaven."

(Gen. 1:5, 31; 2:4) Later, Moses was inspired to confirm this, when he said to Israel: "Behold, to Jehovah your God

1. What is the first evidence of God's ownership of heaven and earth, and how does the Bible support this?
2. How does the Bible give further evidence respecting God's ownership?

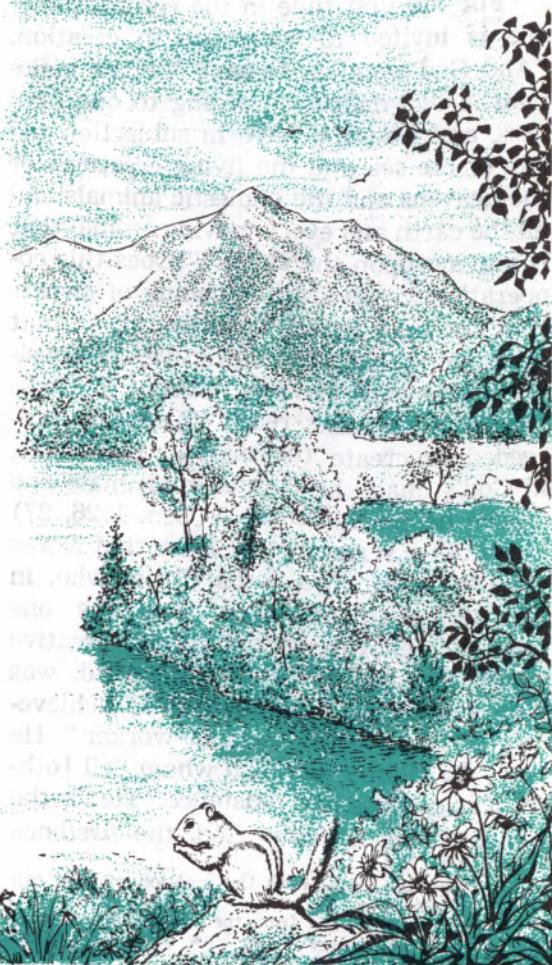


THE WATCHTOWER — OCTOBER 1, 1974

# Settling THE

# ISSUE OF OWNERSHIP

"Behold, to Jehovah your God belong the heavens, even the heavens of the heavens, the earth and all that is in it."  
—Deut. 10:14.



belong the heavens, even the heavens of the heavens, the earth and all that is in it. For Jehovah your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the God great, mighty and fear-inspiring."—Deut. 10: 14, 17.

<sup>3</sup> The creation of man was the crowning act of earthly creation, and this deserves our special attention. The telling of this at once indicates a development, a widening out of the subject of ownership. Different aspects are mentioned, such as subjection, indicating relative or limited ownership in varying degrees and responsibility thereto. Notice what is said in this connection.

<sup>4</sup> For the first time in the record, someone is invited to cooperate in creation. "And God went on to say: 'Let us make man in *our image*, according to our likeness, and let them have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and the domestic animals and all the earth and every moving animal that is moving upon the earth.'" Does this co-operation imply a relinquishing of ownership by God to any degree, or a joint ownership? No. The initiative, responsibility and control were entirely in God's hands, as we next read: "And God proceeded to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him; male and female he created them." (Gen. 1:26, 27) From other scriptures we learn that it was the one now called Jesus Christ who, in his prehuman existence, was the one used by Jehovah as his special creative agent. He, like Wisdom personified, was "the earliest of his [Jehovah's] achievements," Jehovah's "master worker." He was "the Word," through whom "all [other] things came into existence." He "is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn

3. Regarding this, why does the creation of man call for special attention?

4. (a) What do we learn from the expression: "Let us make man in *our image*"? (b) How does God's Word identify the creative agent used?

of all creation," hence appropriately involved at man's creation, since man too was created in God's image. True, Jesus Christ is spoken of as "our only Owner [or, Master] and Lord," but, as we shall discuss later, this title was given to him by reason of a purchase that he made, not because of his role as God's creative agent.—Prov. 8:22, 30; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15, 16; Jude 4.

<sup>5</sup> The question arises, however, as to whether man received a considerable degree of ownership when he was created and given the commission: "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) From this it might be argued that this was so. Did not man's being created in God's image include the ability to exercise ownership? Other scriptures might come to mind giving support to this. After the flood, regarding "every living creature," God said to Noah: "Into your hand they are now given." Then, too, we recall David's words when he said to Jehovah: "You make him [mortal man] dominate over the works of your hands; everything you have put under his feet." Again, the psalmist's well-known expression will come to mind: "As regards the heavens, to Jehovah the heavens belong, but the earth he has given to the sons of men." —Gen. 9:2; Ps. 8:6; 115:16.

<sup>6</sup> Yes, it is agreed that the foregoing scriptures speak of ownership, but at most it is to a relative or limited extent. This is evident when in each case we look at the context, which is always important in seeking a proper understanding of God's Word on any subject.

5. What scriptures might be quoted indicating a degree of ownership by man?

6. Why is it important to consider the context of any particular scripture?

<sup>7</sup> Regarding man's original status, there is no doubt who was the real Owner when we read that "Jehovah God proceeded to take the man and settle him in the garden of Eden to cultivate it and to take care of it." Next we read: "And Jehovah God also laid this command upon the man: 'From every tree of the garden you may eat to satisfaction. But as for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will positively die.'" (Gen. 2:15-17) Surely that man had no reason or excuse to forget to whom he belonged, when his very life depended on his obedience to his Creator and Owner. In a similar vein, when God gave all living creatures into Noah's hand, we immediately read of the strict prohibition regarding the eating of blood and the shedding of man's blood. Again this emphasizes who was the ultimate Owner of life as represented in the blood of all living creatures. (Gen. 9:3-6) Turning to Psalm 8, we observe that, rather than any suggestion of the ownership of the earth being handed over to man, the entire theme reflects to the credit and praise of the One who possesses and controls all things: "O Jehovah our Lord [Master, Owner], how majestic your name is in all the earth!" (Vss. 1, 9) We observe a similar theme when we look at Psalm 115. Notice especially the opening words: "To us belongs nothing, O Jehovah, to us belongs nothing, but to your name give glory according to your loving-kindness, according to your trueness." This stresses that Jehovah is not only the Owner in fact, but a good and worthy Owner. There could be none better.

<sup>8</sup> From the scriptures already considered, we can appreciate that man was originally given a position of great trust

and responsibility. Created in God's image as a free moral agent, he had all the necessary ability to meet every requirement. Jehovah was the Landowner. Man was the tenant farmer, commissioned to become the global caretaker. He was given a sacred trust and stewardship. That is clear. But it is equally clear that man today, generally speaking, does not acknowledge any obligation in that regard. Quite the opposite in fact. How did this come about? How did the question of ownership become an issue, and how will it be settled? Further, as individuals, how are we involved, and with what consequences to ourselves? We are really interested in getting the right answers to these questions.

#### ISSUE RAISED OVER OWNERSHIP

<sup>9</sup> When Satan the Devil tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, no direct mention was made as to its ownership. But consider for a moment what happens when you eat something. When once in your hand or on your plate, you have taken possession of it, whether entitled to it or not. After having eaten it, however, you have actually made it a part of yourself. You have made it your own, no matter what you may say by way of excuse or confession. That is how it was with Eve. Though she had just repeated God's command: "You must not eat from it, no, you must not touch it that you do not die," we next read that "she began taking of its fruit and eating it. Afterward she gave some also to her husband when with her and he began eating it." (Gen. 3:1-6) Satan's argument that prompted their action was to the effect that the right to eat of that fruit belonged to them. Thus by deliberate and defiant action, that speaks louder than words, both Adam and Eve classified that forbidden tree as one and the same as all the other trees to which they had been given the right to

7. Regarding man's position as owner, what do we learn from (a) Genesis 2:15-17, (b) Genesis 9:3-6, (c) Psalm 8, and (d) Psalm 115?

8. (a) In what position was man placed by his Creator? (b) Is this generally recognized, and what questions are raised?

9. What did the eating of the forbidden fruit imply?

eat. But immediately after both of them had eaten the forbidden fruit, did they feel justified in their judicial classification of trees? Their becoming conscience-stricken says No! True, they could not restore to the tree the pieces of fruit that they had eaten from it, but their having assimilated the eaten fruit into their bodies brought them no feeling of ownership of a just right to eat the forbidden fruit. The leaves with which they made loin coverings to hide their now realized nakedness were not taken from the forbidden tree, but were taken from the fig tree. The outcome of the whole matter was as if they had eaten sour grapes.—Ezek. 18:2.

<sup>10</sup> Still, the issue was raised over God's rightful ownership. Please note that the issue was by no means limited to something material, the fruit of a certain tree. What about man himself, not only his life, but also those fine moral qualities of loyalty and devotion and appreciation? Should not all these qualities be exercised at all times to the credit and praise of Jehovah, proved by a course of willing obedience and submission to him? Is not man completely dependent upon God for life and all its possibilities and blessings? Is not the constant acknowledgment of such dependence something that properly belongs to God as a rightful possession of his?

<sup>11</sup> Paul used reasoning similar to this when he wrote to the Christians at Corinth: "I am afraid that somehow, as the serpent seduced Eve by its cunning, your minds might be corrupted away from the sincerity and the chastity that are due the Christ." Such a course of sincerity and chastity on the part of these Christians rightfully belonged to the Christ, because, as Paul explained, "I personally promised you in marriage to one husband

that I might present you as a chaste virgin to the Christ." A correct Scriptural understanding of the matter of relationship will help us to get a correct view of ownership, so that we avoid being seduced by cunning sophistry.—2 Cor. 11:2, 3.

<sup>12</sup> Our first parents willfully chose a course of disobedience and independence, a course of corruption. In effect, they repudiated God's ownership of them. They took the view that they belonged to themselves and to each other, but not to God. They severed their good relationship with him. What was God's reaction to this challenge? Did he relinquish his ownership of them and their Edenic home? Not at all. He was their Lawgiver and Judge, and he now acted in this capacity. After pronouncing sentence, he protected his property by driving the man out of the garden of Eden and making any return thereto impossible, especially guarding "the way to the tree of life."—Gen. 3:24.

<sup>13</sup> Though we might say that God thereafter abandoned Adam and Eve entirely to their own resources, he did not deal that way with their offspring. When pronouncing sentence on the serpent, God prophetically told of a coming "seed" of the woman who would bruise the serpent in the head. (Gen. 3:15) No details were disclosed as to when and how this would be done, but it gave a definite promise that God would furnish a satisfactory answer to the challenge raised by man's rebellion. Hence, it also pointed to God's continued ownership of earth as well as heaven, including all their inhabitants, despite the temporary permission of evil and evildoers.

<sup>14</sup> In support of this, note what is said of three men of faith that Paul mentioned, Abel, Enoch and Noah. They "walked

10. How was the issue raised not limited to something material, and what further questions are raised?

11. (a) How did Paul use similar reasoning when writing to the Corinthians? (b) What connection is thus shown between relationship and ownership?

12. What was God's reaction to the rebellion in Eden?

13. For whose benefit was the prophecy given at Genesis 3:15, and what assurance did it provide?

14. How did Abel, Enoch and Noah acknowledge God's ownership of them?

with the true God," and Paul confirmed this at Hebrews 11:1-7. (Gen. 5:24; 6:9) They acknowledged God's ownership of them, proving it by maintaining a course of faithful obedience in the spirit of loyal devotion and submission. In the face of strong adverse pressure they gave to God what was due to him in all sincerity and chastity.

<sup>15</sup> Apart from the few already noted, most of the human family went their own way. The issue of ownership was far from being settled. The few, from Abel onward, exemplified by their life course the right principles involved, but, as the record shows, the great majority ignored, or resented and bitterly opposed, that good example. (Heb. 11:36-38) Even the flood of Noah's day, a forceful reminder of who actually owned the earth and its inhabitants, brought only a temporary halt to man's willful, selfish and rebellious course. This grieved the great Owner, Jehovah, but did not take him by surprise. Other closely related issues were involved: sovereignty or rulership, and worship. Challenging questions had been raised by Satan in connection with these issues, and Jehovah was working out his purpose, foreknown to him from the time the rebellion started. The full outworking of this purpose will demonstrate for all time, not only the fact of God's supreme ownership, but also his absolute worthiness to hold that position and man's obligation to recognize that. This recognition is and will be expressed right up to the final test by those maintaining the right relationship in the same way that Jesus replied to the final temptation in the wilderness: "It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service."—Matt. 4:10; Job 1:7-12; 2:2-5; Isa. 46:9-11; Rev. 20:7-9.

15. (a) What course has been pursued by mankind in general, involving what issues? (b) What are Jehovah's attitude and purpose regarding these issues? (c) How did Jesus set the example as to the right attitude?

<sup>16</sup> Soon after the Flood, the issue of ownership flared up again. Nimrod, a great-grandson of Noah, sought to grasp control of all mankind. He built and kept control of cities in his own land, "the beginning of his kingdom." Then "out of that land he went forth into Assyria" in conquest and built other cities. Infected with that spirit, a daring scheme was launched. The sons of men took concerted action and said: "Come on! 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." Jehovah met the challenge by confusing their language, and he "scattered them from there [Babel] over all the surface of the earth." However, they took with them that same mind and spirit. National groups developed, and the issue of ownership and rulership now existed on a national level, resulting in the narrow patriotism, rivalries and wars that have caused untold sorrow and bitterness right down to our own day.—Gen. 10:8-12; 11:1-9.

<sup>17</sup> In due time Jehovah also took action on a national level. From the twelve sons of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, Jehovah formed the nation of Israel. At Mount Sinai, he said to them: "If you will strictly obey my voice and will indeed keep my covenant, then you will certainly become my special property out of all other peoples, because the whole earth belongs to me." (Ex. 19:5) In the book of Deuteronomy the expression "a special property" occurs three times, and the context in each instance strongly emphasizes the right viewpoint and course

16. When and how was the issue of ownership raised to a national level, resulting in what?

17. (a) How did Jehovah take action on a national level? (b) In what ways did Israel prove unfaithful and unworthy, reaching what climax?

of action as to worship and ownership. (Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18) As a nation, however, Israel repeatedly failed to respond or submit to God's dealings with them or to heed his prophets. They rejected his ownership of them either as King or as Statute-Giver. (1 Sam. 8:7; Isa. 33:22; Ezek. 20:13, 30-32) The climax came when God sent his own beloved Son to them. They had every reason to accept him as their Messiah. Instead, under the influence of their leaders, they rejected him and killed him. Jesus himself accurately portrayed this in his illustration of Jehovah as the "owner of the vineyard" who "let it out to cultivators." —Luke 20:9-16.

#### SETTLEMENT OF THE ISSUE SECURED

<sup>18</sup> Those religious leaders thought they could now continue as undisputed masters of the situation and of the common people. Not so, however. At the festival of Pentecost, the fifty-second day from Jesus' im-palement, the holy spirit, accompanied by the miraculous gift of tongues, was out-poured on his disciples at Jerusalem. A crowd quickly gathered. Addressing them, the apostle Peter told them plainly of their responsibility in doing away with Jesus, adding, however, that this had occurred "by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God." It was a vital part of the outworking of Jehovah's purpose. Peter went on to say that God had resurrected Jesus and exalted him to his own right hand and had "made him both Lord and Christ." —Acts 2:22-24, 32-36.

<sup>19</sup> On three other occasions, publicly and before the Sanhedrin, Peter stressed these same truths, adding that Jesus was the "Chief Agent of life," and had become the "head [stone] of the corner," and that

18. (a) What fresh development occurred at Pentecost of 33 C.E.? (b) What important truths did Peter bring home to his hearers on that occasion?

19. What references did Peter and Jude make as to Jesus' rightful position, and how did Paul confirm this?

"there is no salvation in anyone else." (Acts 3:15-18; 4:10-12; 5:30-32) Years later, both Peter and Jude in their letters warned of false teachers who "will disown even the owner that bought them," "our only Owner and Lord, Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 4) Hence, it becomes evident that it was God's foreknown purpose that the settlement of the issue of ownership would be centered in Jesus, and that by his death and resurrection the first important step, the foundation, was made secure and guaranteed. As Paul said to the men of Athens: "He [God] has set a day in which he purposed to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and he has furnished a guarantee to all men in that he has resurrected him from the dead."

—Acts 17:31.

<sup>20</sup> Other scriptures enlarge on how Jesus became the owner of all mankind. Looking briefly at these, we observe that Paul explains, at Romans 5:12-21, how Adam, by his rebellion, sold himself and his descendants (as yet unborn in Adam's loins) into slavery, becoming subjects to Kings Sin and Death. However, God, in his great love and mercy, yet in harmony with strict justice, effected a means of reconciliation. This required the provision and payment of a satisfactory price whereby man could be redeemed and released from condemnation. The price must correspond exactly to the perfect man Adam. By a miracle, God arranged for his heavenly Son to come to earth, to be born and grow up to perfect manhood. Jesus willingly undertook this course and, as he said, he did "give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." As Paul wrote: "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all." God was

20. How did Jesus become the owner of mankind, in harmony with God's love and justice?

the Creator-Owner as well as Author of the arrangement; hence, we can say it is now a matter of joint ownership.—Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6; Acts 20:28.

<sup>21</sup> The righteousness that God imputes to one through one's faith in and acceptance of Christ's ransom sacrifice is spoken of as a "free gift." (Rom. 5:15-17; 6:23) The benefits of the ransom will become available for mankind in general during God's kingdom of a thousand years. So far, the majority have lived and died in complete ignorance of this provision. But under the rulership of God's kingdom there will be a resurrection of "all those in the memorial tombs," and a righteous judgment for all as administered by

21. How and when will the benefits of the ransom become available to mankind in general?

the King, namely, Christ Jesus.—John 5:28; Rev. 20:11-21:4.

<sup>22</sup> However, before that day for judging mankind commences, a further part of God's purpose is worked out. It also concerns the recognition of God's ownership. On one occasion Jesus said: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him *disown* himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me." (Matt. 16:24) What did he mean? Did he in any way set an example for us to follow in this regard during this system of things? What does this mean for us today as individuals? These questions naturally arise and we look forward to discussing them in the following article.

22. How did Jesus indicate a course opposite to that of ownership, giving rise to what questions?

## TO WHOM DO YOU BELONG?

THOUGH the settlement of the issue of ownership is centered in Jesus, God's Word shows that others will be closely associated in sharing with that central figure. In the prophetic vision of a "new heaven and a new earth," John says: "I saw also the holy city, New Jerusalem, . . . prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." This heavenly city is made up of the members of the Christian congregation. Collectively, they form "the bride, the Lamb's wife," that is, the bride of Christ Jesus. (Rev. 21:1, 2, 9) They

belong to him. Paul spoke of this, likening a husband's headship over his wife to the headship of Christ as "head of the congregation." He also wrote: "Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it." These scriptures clearly identify the New Jerusalem, and speak of ownership exercised in a loving way.—Eph. 5:22-25; see also 2 Corinthians 11:2.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus, when on earth, knowing his heavenly Father's purpose, spoke of this

1. (a) How is "New Jerusalem" used as a symbol in the Bible? (b) How do other scriptures confirm this?

2. (a) In response to Peter's declaration as to Jesus' identity, what comment did Jesus make? (b) How did Peter identify the "rock-mass"?

congregation and of himself as the builder of it. On one occasion, after asking his disciples how others identified him, he then asked: "You, though, who do you say I am?" In response, Peter replied: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." After saying that this had been specially revealed to Peter by God, Jesus added that "on this rock-mass I will build my congregation." (Matt. 16:13-18) This same Peter, in his first letter, confirmed that it was Christ Jesus who was the rock-mass foundation on which Christians are built as "living stones," when, quoting from Isaiah, he said that Jesus Christ was "a stone, chosen, a foundation cornerstone, precious."—1 Pet. 2:5, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Continuing, Peter went on to explain that the fleshly house of Israel, God's special property, under the influence of their leaders, or builders, disowned Jesus Christ as their Messiah. As foretold: "The identical stone that the builders rejected has become the head of the corner." Because of this, God rejected that fleshly house. Instead, he appointed the Christian congregation as the *spiritual* house of Israel to be his chosen property, "a people for special possession." Hence, we are interested in how the members of this spiritual house or congregation are chosen. What are the terms of discipleship, and do these same terms apply to all today who are seeking to be sincere followers of Jesus?—1 Pet. 2:7-10; Gal. 6:16.

#### TERMS OF DISCIPLESHIP

<sup>4</sup> It was with the prospective members of this congregation in mind that Jesus mentioned the terms or conditions attached to discipleship. Three things must be observed, as Jesus said: "Let him [1] disown himself and [2] pick up his torture stake and [3] continually follow me." For our guidance, he then added

3. Who did Peter show ultimately became God's "special possession"?

4. What did Jesus include in the terms of discipleship?

these comments: "For whoever wants to save his soul will lose it; but whoever loses his soul for my sake will find it."—Matt. 16:24, 25.

<sup>5</sup> To disown oneself has a strong meaning. It means more than just a failure to claim ownership of oneself and one's rights, just taking life as one finds it. It means more than just denying oneself certain things, as when religious bodies advocate a self-denial week, for example. To disown means to *reject* ownership. In this case it means rejecting ownership of oneself in favor of ownership by Jehovah God.

<sup>6</sup> To pick up your torture stake also has a strong meaning. Though not taken literally when the disciples were following Jesus, nevertheless it plainly told of a course undertaken voluntarily that would entail painful suffering, ignominy, shame and death. We will appreciate this more fully when considering it in relation to the other terms of discipleship.

<sup>7</sup> The last condition Jesus mentioned was that of continually following him. A disciple is a taught one, a learner. However, it is evident from Jesus' words that he required, not only acceptance and belief in what he taught, but that one's entire life, continually and without letup, should follow the same pattern set by Jesus. As he said in his final commission to his followers: "Go therefore and make disciples . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19, 20) The main emphasis in the pattern set by Jesus was on the preaching and teaching of the good news of the Kingdom. The record shows that his immediate disciples, and indeed the entire early Christian congregation, closely followed that same pattern. It was this, in addition to their being no part of the world, that

5. To disown yourself has what strong meaning?

6. What is implied by picking up one's torture stake?

7. 8. What does it mean to follow Jesus continually, and what pattern did he set for us, prompting what questions?

brought upon them the hatred and opposition of the world, resulting in the carrying of the torture stake.—John 15:19, 20; 17:14-18; Acts 8:4.

<sup>8</sup> We will gain a deeper insight of the significance of the foregoing terms of discipleship when we consider how and why Jesus himself set the example in observing the same terms. Did he disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually carry it? Did he in some way lose his soul?

<sup>9</sup> It was as if the apostle Paul had these very questions in mind when he wrote the following to the Christians in Philippi: "Keep this mental attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he was existing in God's form, gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God. No, but he emptied himself and took a slave's form and came to be in the likeness of men. More than that, when he found himself in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake." (Phil. 2:5-8) No one could have disowned himself more completely and to the limit. If you belong to Christ Jesus as one of his followers, you must keep and exhibit this same mental attitude.

<sup>10</sup> Other scriptures confirm this and give the reason for the Messiah's suffering and death in order to become man's redeemer. For example, the prophet Isaiah wrote concerning him: "He was despised, and we held him as of no account. Truly our sicknesses were what he himself carried; and as for our pains, he bore them. . . . Jehovah himself has caused the error of us all to meet up with that one. He was hard pressed, and he was letting himself be afflicted . . . For he was severed from the land of the living ones. . . . If you

9. As described at Philippians 2:5-8, how did Jesus completely disown himself?

10. What further information concerning this is given at Isaiah chapter 53?

[the individual] will set his soul as a guilt offering, he [the Messiah] will see his offspring [or will in this way come to have offspring], he will prolong his days, and in his hand what is the delight of Jehovah will succeed."—Isa. 53:3-12.

<sup>11</sup> Our review of the course that Jesus pursued at such great cost to himself would not be complete without taking note of the final outcome. Even before writing the above, Isaiah was inspired to record what God had said concerning the coming Messiah: "Look! My servant will act with insight. He will be in high station and will certainly be elevated and exalted very much." (Isa. 52:13) Later, to the Christian Philippians, Paul went on to write about that same Messiah: "For this very reason also God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name, so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend . . . and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:9-11) After stating the terms of discipleship, Jesus confirmed this future glorification, saying that "the Son of man is destined to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will recompense each one according to his behavior." (Matt. 16:27) Paul spoke of Jehovah's "good pleasure which he purposed in himself for an administration at the full limit of the appointed times, namely, to gather all things together again in the Christ." In the body of Jehovah's Christian witnesses we see that administration, that way of doing things, still in operation after nineteen centuries.—Eph. 1:9, 10.

#### STEPS TO BE TAKEN

<sup>12</sup> Do you belong to Jesus and his Father, Jehovah? As a member of the hu-

11. As a final outcome, what grand reward was given to Christ Jesus by Jehovah?

12. (a) On what basis do many accept Jesus as their Savior? (b) What is our only safe guide in this respect?

man family, purchased by Christ's ransom sacrifice, you are their property. (1 Tim. 2:5, 6) You may not acknowledge this, however. Comparatively few do so. Many in Christendom who claim membership in one of her churches say that they accept the Lord Jesus as their redeemer. But, apart from some church attendance and giving of financial support to the church, that is about as far as it goes. They may subject themselves to standards of good conduct, and submit themselves to human authorities and human relationships, but they have not committed themselves to Jehovah and Christ Jesus by entering into a definite relationship with them. Have you done this? God's Word shows how this can and should be done, step by step.

<sup>13</sup> First, you should recognize that as a member of the human family you are by nature imperfect and sinful. You have inherited sin and death. You cannot save yourself from that condition, and no other human can do so. As already discussed, however, God's Word shows that He, the only Source of life, has kindly made provision through his Son whereby you can become reconciled to him. By responding to his invitation you can be saved and enter into everlasting life. Appreciating this, prompted by conscience, you should feel moved to take the first two steps. You should feel sincere and genuine regret and sorrow over your previous course in going the way of the world. Though perhaps not guilty of anything that might be called criminal, yet you were satisfied in living your own life, paying little or no regard to God's requirements and standards. If influenced by religion, maybe you now realize that you were actually misled by false religion. Thus, besides the step of repentance, you also see and acknowledge the need to take the step of conver-

sion. That is, you completely change your course and turn your back on the way of the world. As Peter said to the Jews of his day: "Get saved from this crooked generation." "Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out." —Acts 2:40; 3:19.

<sup>14</sup> Surely these two steps are necessary and logical ones to take, especially when you come to see how God views this present system of things, 'stored up for fire and reserved to the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men.' (2 Pet. 3:7) There is yet a third step, however, that is also logical and is the natural outcome of the other two. Conscience also plays a vital part in this. When you were in the way of death, a slave to sin with death in view, you did not have a good conscience toward God. But, now, having come to learn and appreciate at what great cost God and his beloved Son have made it possible to become reconciled to them, you now view yourself in a very different light.—Rom. 6:16; 5:6-8; 1 John 4:9.

<sup>15</sup> Above all things, you now desire, not only God's blessing, but to enter into and enjoy a close relationship with him with a clean conscience. You decide to give yourself to him in sincere and whole-souled devotion. It is a mental and heartfelt decision. This is the step of dedication. In earnest prayer to God, through Jesus Christ, you tell him of your decision, asking him to accept you on his terms. Because you come to him trusting in the merit of Christ's sacrifice, you have the assurance that he will accept you. This also means becoming a disciple, a footstep follower of Jesus Christ. He being like his Father, you are assured that he too will accept you gladly. Thinking about this, you realize that something further is in-

13. (a) What must you first recognize, and how should this be expressed? (b) What further step must be taken, and how is this made manifest?

14. On learning God's view of the world situation, how should you be affected?

15. (a) What vital decision should you then reach, prompting what action? (b) What discipleship does this involve, with what assurance of acceptance?

volved besides the inward mental decision that you have already reached.—Isa. 55:7; Matt. 11:28-30.

<sup>16</sup> Peter wrote: ‘Christ left you a model to follow his steps closely.’ (1 Pet. 2:21) The first and visible step that Jesus took, when he knew it was God’s due time, was that of water baptism at the hands of John the Baptist. This was in symbol of his own presentation of himself to do God’s will as foretold concerning him at Psalm 40:6-8. (See also Hebrews 10:5-10.) Jesus had no sins of which to repent. He had a good conscience toward God. But in your case, the step of baptism is an outward and public symbol of your dedication to do God’s will, and because of your having been a slave of sin, it is also “the request made to God for a good conscience.” Though still imperfect, you “now present your members as slaves to righteousness with holiness in view.”—1 Pet. 3:21-4:3; Rom. 6:19.

<sup>17</sup> Viewed in the proper light, you should feel constrained to take these steps in a loving and eager response to God’s loving provision and kindly invitation. You are not put under pressure or forced to do so. Rather, you should view it as a grand privilege.—2 Cor. 5:14, 15.

#### A GREAT PRIVILEGE

<sup>18</sup> The second of the two great commandments given to Israel, as summarized by Jesus, was this: “You must love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matt. 22:39) But Jesus said to his disciples: “I am giving you a *new* commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” Later that same evening he added: “No one has love

16. (a) How did Jesus symbolize the presentation of himself to do God’s will for him as a human? (b) How is this a model for you, keeping what distinction in mind?

17. In view of 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15, how should you regard the foregoing steps?

18. (a) How did Jesus show that his commandment at John 13:34 was a *new* one? (b) Why is it a grand privilege to pursue the same course that Jesus took?

greater than this, that someone should surrender his soul in behalf of his friends.” (John 13:34; 15:13) Jesus did that very thing. He disowned himself. He did not seek to preserve or save his own soul for himself. He invited his followers to do likewise. Why? Because it was God’s fore-known purpose that, while the permission of evil was in full swing, the opportunity would be given to respond to his invitation: “Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me.” (Prov. 27:11) As illustrated in the case of Job, Satan was taunting Jehovah that no one would maintain his integrity toward God unless for a selfish reason, unless it paid him to do so. (Job 1:9-11; 2:3-5) In other words, no one would willingly disown himself out of love for God. Jesus, fully appreciating the situation, willingly and gladly seized the opportunity to take this course. Down to this day, those who willingly become Jesus’ disciples undertake a similar course. What a glorious privilege is ours to have a small but real part in the vindication of Jehovah’s name! Ours is the privilege of contributing to that grand and complete reply that Jehovah can hand back to his adversary and taunter.

<sup>19</sup> The privilege of carrying a “torture stake” belongs to all Christian disciples while the permission of evil is having its last fling, whether their hope of life in connection with the Kingdom is heavenly or earthly. After the “great tribulation,” dedication will still be in order, motivated by the same love as now, but under different conditions. There will be the requirement to give whole-souled devotion to Jehovah, but not to carry a “torture stake.”—Isa. 25:8.

<sup>20</sup> Thus we can appreciate how the set-

19. What privilege and requirement are set before all of us at this time?

20. (a) How will the issue of ownership be settled in fact? (b) As to the worthiness of God’s ownership, what position do all true Christians take?

tlement of the issue of ownership, already secured, will be worked out. The settlement of the issue *in fact* will be demonstrated following the "great tribulation" when Satan and his demons are abysmed and it will be eternally settled when they and those who side with them are destroyed forever. But in point of Jehovah's worthiness of ownership, abundant evidence has been provided by the true Christian disciples, and by Christ Jesus himself, that they gladly acknowledge the supreme authority of Jehovah, and that even if given the opportunity to choose a course of independence from God, they would firmly reject it.

21 During the thousand-year Kingdom rule, there will be no organized or sustained challenge to Jehovah's continued worthiness. But the tremendous work to be accomplished during that period, the work of undoing all the mischief and ruin caused on this earth by six thousand years under sin's rule—that will be an exciting challenge. When completed, what then? As Paul wrote: "Next, the end, when he [Christ] hands over the kingdom to his God and Father, when he has brought to nothing all government and all authority and power. . . . then the Son himself will

21. What exciting work and glorious prospect are ahead of us?

also subject himself to the One who subjected all things to him, that God may be all things to everyone." (1 Cor. 15:24-28) The unifying of all mankind having been accomplished, Christ will turn the Kingdom over to his Father, in recognition of the fact that all creation truly belongs to Jehovah. At such a prospect, we are urged to join now in that heavenly song: "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."—Rev. 4:11.

22 To whom do you belong? Have you responded to that loving invitation to give yourself in dedication to do God's will as outlined in his Word? If not, might it be that there is some selfish reasoning or longing that is holding you back? Speaking "as substitutes for Christ we beg: 'Become reconciled to God.'" Belong to him. Enter into close relationship with him and enjoy the intimacy of friendship with him. Enjoy the sense of mutual ownership, by making him *your* God, and making yourself one of his devoted people.—2 Cor. 5:20; Mic. 4:5; John 15:15; Rev. 21:3.

22. How can and should the question be answered: To whom do you belong?

## FIRM FOR GOD'S RULERSHIP

"JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES GO HOME"—this is one of a number of similar headlines that hit the front pages of the main daily newspapers in the Netherlands on July 31, 1974. What took place to prompt these news reports?

The newspapers that day reported the climax of a series of actions that the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Justice in the Netherlands took with regard to Jehovah's Christian witnesses who are of military age. The problem was that clean-cut, well-behaved young men, whose only "crime" was refusal to be trained to kill others, were put into

prison alongside hardened criminals, sometimes for terms longer than those criminals received. Those young witnesses of Jehovah took this stand because they acknowledged God's rulership as having prior claim on their lives.

Some years ago the first step in this series of actions was taken by the Ministry of Justice. This resulted in permission being granted for Christian witnesses of Jehovah to have Bible literature in prison. Later the Witnesses were moved to another part of the prison grounds, where they lived under less rigid circumstances.

They were even permitted to have their own assemblies, and representatives of the Watch Tower Society's branch office in Amsterdam were allowed to visit them and give talks. Still later, these young Witnesses were permitted to leave prison to attend national and international conventions of Jehovah's witnesses. They were even allowed to go home certain weeks.

Pursuing the matter further, officials of the Ministry of Defense had several discussions with representatives of the Watch Tower Society. On July 11, 1974, the Ministry of Defense announced to these representatives of the Society that no baptized Witnesses would have to report for military service anymore.

The Ministry of Justice then came into the picture again. It was decided that since the Ministry of Defense is working on definite legislation in this matter, it was no longer

necessary for the Witnesses already in prison to stay there any longer. So all these Witnesses were released.

Said the newspaper *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden* of July 31, 1974: "There is a law in the making to grant every baptized Witness of Jehovah exemption from military service. Pending the discussion of this proposed law by the representation of the people all action against Jehovah's [witnesses] has been stopped."

Thus for the time being young baptized Witnesses in the Netherlands are not subject to the military draft. They appreciate the action that Dutch officials have taken on their behalf. No doubt the government officials recognized the sincerity of these young men who determined to be firm for God's rulership because of their dedication to Jehovah, the One they recognize as having prior claim on their lives.

## True Worship Calls for Firm Decisions

WHEN Jesus Christ was here on earth he made it clear that being one of his disciples required firm decisions involving real changes in one's life. He said: "You may be sure, none of you that does not say good-bye to all his belongings can be my disciple." (Luke 14:33) This means—not that every person seeking to become Jesus' disciple should get rid of his possessions—but that each one must look at all his material things as secondary, letting nothing stand in the way of his service to God as a faithful disciple of his Son. —Compare 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Hebrews 13:5.

Every year thousands upon thousands of people demonstrate that this is true in their case. They are willing to make tremendous changes in their way of life, changes that others consider to be disadvantageous, foolish.

A young woman from Brazil tells of the changes she was willing to make in order to live according to the guidelines contained in the Bible. Telling why she readily agreed to study the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses, she says:

"I had always thought of the Bible as a question mark—a mystery. At the time, however, I was very busy working for a career in the performing arts at the university. As I progressed in my Bible study, the theater doors

were also opened more and more. At the VII National Amateur Theater Festival I received the prize for second-best actress.

"Because of my busy schedule I stopped studying the Bible for a while. But the Witness who had studied with me continued to call. She would encourage me to continue the Bible study, attend meetings and to read the Bible and Bible study aids.

"Little by little, my conscience began to prick me. I began to ask myself: 'Could I ask for God's blessing as I went on stage to perform a role that was contrary to Bible principles? Isn't unclean conduct condemned by God?'

"I had a real mental battle, for I really loved the theater. I had many offers to work both inside and outside the university. Though it wasn't an easy decision, I finally decided to leave the theater for Jehovah's service.

"Now I am very happy; my conscience is at rest. I feel secure among my spiritual brothers and sisters, all of whom are using their talents to further the interests of God's kingdom."

In the case of this young woman true worship involved saying good-bye to a career in the theater, but she is far happier in pursuing her goal to be a loyal disciple of Jesus Christ.

Another young woman in Brazil found that to become a disciple of God's Son, she had to

change her conduct, choosing between financial benefits and obedience to God.

During the course of her Bible study with one of Jehovah's witnesses, the wrongness of sexual intercourse between nonmarried people came under discussion. She said that she simply could not see anything wrong with it. Even when shown additional scriptures about God's view on morals, she did not accept the Bible's teaching.

The Witness studying with her realized that it would be pointless to push the matter any further. So she simply remarked that, in time, she would doubtless come to appreciate the Scriptural view and encouraged her to read various other Bible texts on the subject.

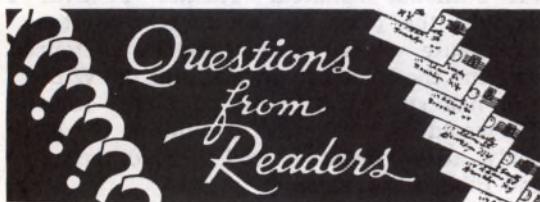
The young woman did read the scriptures and, the following week, admitted that God does not approve of fornication or adultery. She then confessed to living with a married man and being pregnant by him. This man was caring for all her financial needs, even providing a fine apartment by the sea for her. She wanted to know what she should do in this case. The Witness explained what the Bible

has to say and made it clear that the decision was one that she would have to make.

The Bible's counsel reached the woman's heart. That very week she discontinued her relationship with the man. Soon her friends started to criticize her, saying that she was crazy to forsake the man who had provided well for her materially. Her relatives also encouraged her to continue her association with him, as he had also helped them out financially.

But she stuck to her decision. Some months later she gave birth to a baby boy and thereafter got baptized, determined to serve God as a disciple of his Son. Though she now has to support herself and the child, she rejoices in having a clean conscience before Jehovah.

Truly, while drastic changes may have to be made and one may seem to be a loser in the eyes of the world, the person who makes his decision to be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ gains what is far more valuable. He gains a clean conscience before God and men and finds real contentment and satisfaction in doing God's will.



- Why do the Watch Tower publications refer to only seven world powers, when there were obviously other powerful empires down through the centuries?—U.S.A.

The Watch Tower publications are not arbitrary in referring to only seven world powers. They do so strictly in a Biblical context and not in a general or secular way. The Bible book of Revelation specifically mentions "seven kings." At Revelation 17:10 we read: "There are seven kings: five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet arrived."

Manifestly, throughout the centuries far more than seven literal "kings" have exercised rulership. So the seven "kings" here spoken of must stand for particular kingdoms or empires, the sixth one exercising rulership at the time the apostle John recorded those words. The book of Daniel reveals the name of three of

these empires—Babylon, the dual power of Media and Persia, and Greece. (Compare Daniel 2:37-43; 7:1-7; 8:20, 21.) All three of these great powers had direct dealings with God's ancient covenant people, the Israelites.

With this clue from the book of Daniel, we can identify the other "kings" of the seven mentioned at Revelation 17:10. They must be great empires that had direct dealings either with God's ancient covenant people or his new nation of spiritual Israel, composed of loyal disciples of Jesus Christ. (Rom. 2:28, 29; Gal. 6:16) Before Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and desolated the land of Judah, two other great empires exercised considerable influence over the Israelites. The first, Egypt, enslaved them for many years, and the second, Assyria, destroyed the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel and also devastated numerous Judean cities. After Babylon, Persia ruled Judea until Greek rule supplanted that of Persia; and later Rome dominated the Jews.

Accordingly, the five kings that had "fallen" by the time the apostle John wrote Revelation (about 96 C.E.) were: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece. The world power then ruling was that of Rome. As for the one to

In ampliatory parentheses left to the original text of the New American Bible, it is written: "The name of the author of this section is unknown." In the original text, the sentence reads: "In ancient times, the Anglo-American World Power stands out most prominently among those that have exercised great authority since the days of ancient Rome. And history bears out that, during World Wars I and II, the Anglo-American World Power took strong measures against those who are spiritual Israelites."

Thus while there have been other great powers, only seven of these fit the Biblical designation of "seven kings."

● Is there any real objection to one of Jehovah's witnesses "dating" a non-Witness who respects the Christian's beliefs?—U.S.A.

The Bible does not comment about "dating," as this is a modern practice, but it does contain guiding principles.

Devoted Christians do not consider "dating" simply as recreation. Instead, they look upon it as an aspect of courtship, a serious step toward marriage. As to marriage, the Scriptures encourage selecting a mate who is "in the Lord," a believer, and not just a person who respects one's beliefs. (1 Cor. 7:39) Hence, one who dated an unbeliever with a view to finding a marriage partner would be acting contrary to the Bible's admonition.

Then, too, while some unbelievers may respect one's beliefs, they themselves are not following the counsel of God's Word. This being the case, they may be inclined to take certain liberties with one of the opposite sex. Not being immune to the desires of the flesh, a Christian might yield to temptation when with an unbeliever. "Do not be misled," cautions the Bible. "Bad associations spoil useful habits."—1 Cor. 15:33.

Even if immoral conduct is avoided, an unbeliever is not a good associate. A person who is not a devoted worshiper of Jehovah God could not be a source of real encouragement to one who is. An unbeliever, while appearing to be a 'good person' and respecting the believer's faith, still does not appreciate spiritual things. Lacking a spiritual outlook, he or she would not strengthen the believer in a determination to be faithful to God. On the contrary, since the unbeliever may be thinking of marriage, he would be encouraging the Christian to disregard God's counsel about 'marrying only in the Lord.'

\* For details, see the book "Your Will Be Done on Earth," pages 179 to 182, and *Awake!* of December 8, 1970, pages 20-23.

for any of these and additional sections of the New American Bible, see the notes at the end of each chapter.

It is therefore wise for a dedicated Christian to look for possible marriage mates *only* among those who are believers and who possess spirituality.—Compare Deuteronomy 7:3, 4; Nehemiah 13:26, 27; Malachi 2:10-12.

● Will those who are raised to life on earth still be imperfect and afflicted with Adamic sin, since Romans 6:7 says that a person "who has died has been acquitted from his sin"?—U.S.A.

Romans 6:7 reads: "For he who has died has been acquitted from his sin." A consideration of the context shows that the apostle Paul was discussing spirit-anointed Christians alive at that time. While still alive, they had been baptized into Christ Jesus and received the valid prospect of heavenly life. In order to be anointed with holy spirit and accepted as spiritual sons of God, they had to die to their former course in life as imperfect humans, have their sins forgiven by God and have human perfection imputed to them.

But in making this comment with regard to anointed Christians, Paul was drawing on a natural and actual illustration. In its broad application, it could correctly be said that one who has died has been acquitted from sin.

Death, not the dying process in itself, is the full payment for sin. The Bible says: "The wages sin pays is death." (Rom. 6:23) This means that when a person has died his sinful record no longer stands against him. And were it not for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and God's purpose to resurrect the person, he would never live again. Still, he would remain acquitted from sin, as God would not repeatedly re-examine his case and then sentence him to other kinds of punishment for his sin.

This might be compared to the situation of a man serving a prison term for some criminal act. Once he has served his time of imprisonment, he is not repeatedly retried and punished for the same crime.

Now in the case of one raised from the dead to earthly life, the sinful record for which he was condemned to death no longer stands against him. Like one released from imprisonment, he has the opportunity to conform to law. Nevertheless, the resurrected one is still the same human. His death produced no change in him as to personality and sinful inclinations. By resurrection he did not become a perfect human, free from all effects of sin and imper-

fection inherited from Adam. He was not declared righteous because of dying. As in the case of an ex-convict, he must put forth diligent effort not to succumb to his fleshly weaknesses. He must start in, as it were, where he left off in life and take full advantage of God's provisions for everlasting life on earth.

Because of the life they lived before their death, some people will have a stronger leaning toward wrongdoing than others. The Bible does, in fact, say: "There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." (Acts 24:15) So those who were unrighteous at their death will be unrighteous at their resurrection to earthly life.

So while acquitting one from a record of sin, death produces no change in what one is as a person. Those raised to life on earth are the same individuals that died, descendants of sinner Adam. They are imperfect humans, just as were those raised by Elijah, Elisha, Jesus Christ, Peter and Paul centuries ago. The death and resurrection of individuals in the past did not transform them into perfect persons able to live forever. So with those raised on earth in the New Order, it is only their availing

themselves of the sin-atonung provisions of Jesus' sacrifice that shields them from death.

In the Bible book of Revelation, God's provision for life, including the sin-atoning arrangement, is portrayed symbolically as a river of water of life. (Rev. 22:1, 2) So it is by 'drinking' from this 'river' that the resurrected ones are gradually liberated from all sinful tendencies and become perfect humans.

Not until they are perfect humans does Jehovah God view them as having come to life in the fullest sense. It is evidently for this reason that the Bible says of those raised to life on earth that they 'do not come to life until the end of the thousand years' of Christ's Kingdom rule, during which rule the benefits of his atoning sacrifice will be applied to humankind.—Rev. 20:5.

## **"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS**

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