

The **WATCHTOWER**

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

DECEMBER 15, 1972

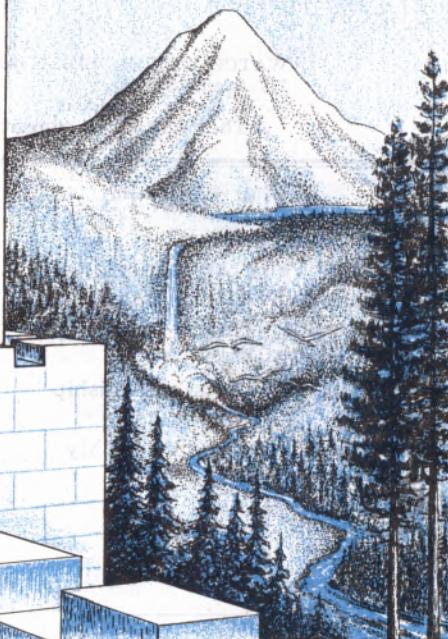
Semimonthly

**THE NAME IN WHICH
ALL NATIONS ARE
CHOOSING TO WALK**

**DO YOU SUBMIT TO CHRIST'S
HEADSHIP TODAY?**

THE GOD OF JUSTICE WILL ACT

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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONTENTS

How Deep Is Your Love?	739
The Name in Which All Nations Are Choosing to Walk	741
The Time to Decide in the Name of Which God to Walk	747
Do You Submit to Christ's Headship Today?	755
'You Are My Hope, O Jehovah, My Confidence from My Youth'	758
The God of Justice Will Act	763
A Fig-Shower	766
Questions from Readers	766

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HOW DEEP IS YOUR LOVE?

"ONCE upon a time," it is said, there was a young man who told the young lady he was courting: "I love you so much I'd be willing to die for you." She smiled and then asked: "Honey, where were you last Wednesday evening? I missed you." He replied, rather sheepishly: "Oh, well, you know; it was raining kind of hard." He was willing to die for his lady love, but he was not willing to brave the rain to spend an evening with her.

Obviously his love was not very deep. It consisted of words, but his actions did not back up his words. Fittingly the Bible counsels against this kind of love: "Little children, let us love, neither in word nor with the tongue, but in deed and truth."—1 John 3:18.

Another way that deep love manifests itself is by being loyal. When a friend is slandered, will we court unpopularity by speaking up in defense of our friend? This very matter applies to a Christian's love for his God. Thus a number of Arkansas natives once were gathered around a campfire and in the course of the conversation one of them made a disparaging

remark about God. Another in the group at once spoke up, saying: "Sorry, fellow, but I don't like to hear you saying something like

that. It's not true. You see, God is my Father and I love him." His loyalty gave him courage to speak up, giving proof that his love was deep.

How deep our love is can also be seen by how we react when a close friend or relative makes an embarrassing mistake in the company of others. Will we be mortified? Will we be critical? If our love is deep we will minimize or cover over the mistake. Not only that, but we will even cover over sins and shortcomings. How many? The apostle Peter answers: "Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a *multitude* of sins." A multitude is quite a few, is it not? And ancient wise King Solomon went even farther, for he said: "Love covers over even *all* transgressions." No doubt about it, if your love is deep you will be forgiving, charitable, merciful, even if you are the victim. As another scripture expresses it: "Love . . . does not keep account of the injury."—1 Pet. 4:8; Prov. 10:12; 1 Cor. 13:4, 5.

Still another proof of one's love being deep is that of being willing to counsel someone you know well when he needs to

be admonished or corrected. Many parents fail along this line, betraying that their love for their children is shallow. Thus a highly popular and successful American television entertainer and philanthropist admitted that his sons' turning to drugs was because "we see what is happening but we don't want to see it, we don't want to believe it. . . . I excused it." (*New York Times*, August 1, 1972) Ancient King David made the same mistake regarding one of his sons, for we read that he "did not hurt his feelings at any time by saying: 'Why is this the way you have done?'" And David also reaped waywardness from this son for his negligence in correcting him.—1 Ki. 1:6.

That parental discipline and reproof are evidence of love is clear from the way the heavenly Father deals with his children: "Whom Jehovah loves he disciplines." That this principle applies to friendships the Bible also shows, for it says: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Superficial friends will shrink from saying anything, but genuine friends with spiritual qualifications will seek to help you get readjusted.—Heb. 12:6; Prov. 27:6, *Authorized Version*; Gal. 6:1.

The converse is also true. If we have deep love for a friend we will not resent his endeavoring to help us to get readjusted. Rather, we will be like King David when he wrote: "Should the righteous one strike me, it would be a loving-kindness; and should he reprove me, it would be oil upon the head, which my head would not want to refuse." (Ps. 141:5) All of this, it might be said, has particular force for Christians in their relationship with their God, Jehovah. If our love for him is deep we will not grow bitter because he permits us to suffer hardships and wrongs. Instead, we will react like the patriarch Job, who, in spite of all his losses and sufferings, did not "ascribe anything im-

proper to God." No, he "did not sin with his lips." If we manifest such deep love we will be rewarded in due time, even as Job was.—Job 1:22; 2:10; Jas. 5:11.

What is the greatest or deepest love that one could have for another? Jesus said: "No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his soul in behalf of his friends." (John 15:13) That, in fact, is the very kind of love he himself displayed and also the kind of love that Christian husbands are commanded to have for their wives. If you are a husband, do you have such love for your wife?

The Bible also gives a shining ancient example of one who had such a deep love for another, namely, Jonathan, the son of King Saul. After the shepherd lad David had slain the giant Goliath, Jonathan's "very soul became bound up with the soul of David, and Jonathan began to love him as his own soul." Jonathan's love for David did not lessen even when it became apparent that David and not Jonathan would be the next king of Israel. Jonathan repeatedly aided David and even risked his life for David, his father Saul once throwing his spear to kill him because he kept taking David's side.—1 Sam. 18:1; 20:24-34; 23:17.

The proverb is true: "A friend is a loving companion at all times," even as was Jonathan. (Prov. 17:17, *New English Bible*) A friend may need protection from danger or may need material aid, but as often as not he may need encouragement and companionship. If our love is deep we will make sacrifices to supply that need.

How deep is your love—for your marriage mate, for your children, for your parents, for your close friend, for your fellow Christian? To the extent that your love is deep, you will be loyal, covering over mistakes and sins, giving or accepting correction and making sacrifices to express that love.

The Name

IN WHICH

ALL NATIONS ARE CHOOSING TO WALK

"All the peoples, for their part, will walk each one in the name of its god; but we, for our part, shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God to time indefinite, even forever."—Mic. 4:5.

THE United Nations, as an organization for world peace and security, has as of now 132 member nations. There are other nations outside. Each one of the political nations has an ideal that holds its people together under one government. So it walks or goes in the name of that ideal; that is to say, it goes as an adherent or follower of that common ideal. Before long the people start idolizing that ideal. To them it becomes a god that they adore and consider to be above all private, personal interests. Thus the people may be divided religiously, and yet they will worship that national ideal as a unifying god.

2 Millions of people claim to be godless, atheistic, not committed to any god. But they contradict themselves by worshiping a national god. Since the American Revo-

1. Though divided religiously, the people of a nation will idolize and worship what unifying god?
2. How do millions of people who claim to be godless contradict themselves in reality?

lution (1775-1783) we have heard much of "the goddess of Liberty." Or, the god or goddess may be this thing called democracy, people rule. Or, it may be the bitter foe of democracy, namely, international Communism. People will adhere to these political principles with a tenacity that amounts to fanatical religious devotion. Besides, each of the nations guards jealously what it views as its "national sovereignty," just as though it were a god that must not be violated or lost. In some nations many people idolize a strong military establishment that will give the nation a position of strength from which to deal with other nations. Concerning the modern-day "king of the north," it was long ago foretold: "To the god of fortresses, in his position he will give glory." —Dan. 11:38.

3 The inspired writer of ancient times correctly sized up the course of modern nations in saying: "All the peoples, for their part, will walk each one in the name of its god." (Mic. 4:5) Each of these gods is very popular in its own locality. That is why, if an individual who really knows what it is all about refuses to go along with the crowd, there is great offense taken toward that individual. Indignation is felt almost to the point of taking violent action toward the offender. But the question is, Of what value are those idolatrous "gods"? To what are they leading the peoples of the nations? To these questions the present world situation ought to give the most convincing answer, especially in view of the unchanging current of world affairs and conditions. We are obliged to agree that the ancient writer made a proper estimate of popular deities when he said:

3. How does Micah 4:5 correctly size up the situation as to their walking, and how is Psalm 96:5 a proper estimate of the value of such popular gods?

"All the gods of the peoples are valueless gods."—Ps. 96:5.

⁴ It is high time that the peoples woke up as regards the value of their popular gods. The "gods" that have got them into the present muddle are unable to get them out of it and cannot be depended on to get them out of it. If "the peoples" do not wake up, then, at least, *individuals* should do so, before the whirlpool of rapidly happening world events drags, sucks them down into destruction. Our being pulled out of this disastrous vortex to safety can result only from choosing the right God and walking in the name of that God. Either we continue to go in the name of some popular god, or we choose to go in another direction, walking in the name of a God better than all the popular gods of the peoples of the nations. The choice of this latter course, the right course, is yet possible for lovers of life and happiness. In recent years hundreds of thousands all around the globe have been awakened to the meaning of world events and have made the happy choice. It is not yet too late for others to do likewise.

⁵ Courageous such a course? Yes, indeed! Taking such a courageous course must certainly call for sincerity. Their sincerity in taking this course is not questioned for a moment, but does the mere sincerity as evidenced in their taking of this course make it the right course? No! Hence, the courageous course is being adopted not in sincerity alone, but on the basis of reliable information, correct knowledge. And this under trustworthy guidance, better than the guidance of "valueless gods." The correctness of the course is proved by the fact that it was foretold in a prophecy that has turned out to be no lie but the truth. All the features of this prophecy are

true, because it comes from a God whom no one can accuse of having told a lie, for he does not lie. After more than four thousand years of his dealing with mankind it could still be written of Him: "It is impossible for God to lie." (Heb. 6:18; Titus 1:2) This is the God in whose name more and more persons are choosing to walk today.

⁶ So the prophecy that correctly foretold this striking event of our day came from no mythical place of origin. This place is historical—a land that is known world wide today, it being much in the news—Israel. The God-inspired speaker of the prophecy was a man named Micah, who identified himself with the town of Moresheth in the territory of the tribe of Judah and about twenty-two miles southwest of Jerusalem. He lived during the reign of three historical kings, namely, "Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah." (Mic. 1:1) That locates Micah in the eighth century before our Common Era, and so his prophesying must have ended before 716 B.C.E.

⁷ However, what should strengthen our confidence that Micah was a true prophet of a true, living God, is not just his historicalness, but also his courage to tell his message even though he risked his life by doing so. In his day kings had practically absolute power, power over the life or death of their subjects. (Prov. 16:14) This caliber of the prophet Micah is called to our attention on the later occasion of where the prophet Jeremiah in Jerusalem was threatened with death by Jewish leaders who took exception to speech that seemed unpatriotic and subversive to them. Let us read Jeremiah's own account of this:

4. The choice of individuals today is between what courses, and who today are making the choice that brings safety?

5. Did sincerity alone have a part in their taking this courageous course, and why is it the correct course?

6. This prophecy comes from what kind of locality, and when was it delivered by the prophet?

7. What about Micah strengthens our confidence in his prophecy, and what later prophet refers to this?

⁸ "Then the princes and all the people said to the priests and to the prophets: 'There is no judgment of death belonging to this man, for it was in the name of Jehovah our God that he spoke to us.' Furthermore, certain ones of the older men of the land rose up and began saying to all the congregation of the people: 'Micah of Moresheth himself happened to be prophesying in the days of Hezekiah the king of Judah and went on to say to all the people of Judah, "This is what Jehovah of armies has said: 'Zion herself will be plowed up as a mere field, and Jerusalem herself will become mere heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the House will be for high places of a forest.'" Did Hezekiah the king of Judah and all those of Judah by any means put him to death? Did he not fear Jehovah and proceed to soften the face of Jehovah, so that Jehovah got to feeling regret for the calamity that he had spoken against them? So we are working up a great calamity against our souls.'"—Jer. 26:16-19.

⁹ Without question, Micah proved to be a true prophet of the one true God, meeting the three basic requirements. That is to say: (1) He spoke in the name of the true God. (2) His prophecies came true. (3) His prophecies tended and worked to turn honest persons to the one true God. (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20-22) Beyond all question of doubt, Micah walked in the name of his God. His very name is a challenge to all of us to compare his God with all the "valueless gods" that the peoples of the nations are worshiping, for his Hebrew name, Micah, means "Who Is Like Jah?" The proper way for us to react to that challenging question was advised by a prophet who was a contemporary of Mi-

8. How does Jeremiah 26:16-19 bring in this reference to Micah's courageous prophecy?

9. (a) How did Micah meet the three basic requirements of a true prophet? (b) What does the name Micah mean, and what does Isaiah 26:4 say is the proper way to react to that challenging question?

cah, namely, Isaiah, when he wrote: "Trust in Jehovah, you people, for all times, for in Jah Jehovah is the Rock of times indefinite."—Isa. 26:4; 12:2.

A TURNING POINT IN HISTORY

¹⁰ If we want to answer the challenging question set forth in Micah's name, the facts would oblige us to answer: "There is no one like Jah Jehovah!" This being the case, the question that now confronts us is, What are we going to do about this? Our doing the right thing about it would mark a turning point in our life, even in the lives of many persons who claim to be Christians. This change would be in line with what the prophet Micah foretold. In his prophecies he pointed forward to the turning point in human history. No, we do not here mean Micah's prophecy that the promised Messiah or Christ would be born as a man in the little town of Bethlehem in the land of Judah. (Mic. 5:2) The time of the fulfillment of that prophecy is used as the beginning of what Christendom calls "the Christian era," even though she is not exactly sure of the precise date of Christ's birth. (Matt. 2:1-6; Luke 2:4-17) That was not quite two thousand years ago. But the turning point in all human history to which we refer is the one that was reached within our own generation. The prophet Micah pointed forward to this!

¹¹ Micah foretold what would take place at this turn of events. Are we today seeing this take place? We should be seeing it, since we are in the right period of history. When Micah prophetically described what we can see taking place today, he introduced it by foretelling what proved to be

10. (a) Factually, what must be our answer to the question raised in Micah's name? (b) What question comes up about our answering this way, and to what turning point in history did Micah refer for our guidance in this matter?

11. By referring to what did Micah introduce this glorious prophecy, and why should we look to see its fulfillment in our own generation?

a turning point in the history of his own nation. This prophecy had its fulfillment in the century after Micah, and so he did not live to see what he foretold come true. In that way he escaped a national calamity. But this calamity upon his own nation has had a parallel within our modern generation, for which reason it deserves our consideration. So let us read what Micah wrote and see how well it introduces a glorious prophecy that finds fulfillment in this very twentieth century:

¹² "Hear, please, this, you head ones of the house of Jacob and you commanders of the house of Israel, the ones detesting justice and the ones who make even everything that is straight crooked; building Zion with acts of bloodshed and Jerusalem with unrighteousness. Her own head ones judge merely for a bribe, and her own priests instruct just for a price, and her own prophets practice divination simply for money; yet upon Jehovah they keep supporting themselves, saying: 'Is not Jehovah in the midst of us? There will come upon us no calamity.' Therefore on account of you men Zion will be plowed up as a mere field, and Jerusalem herself will become mere heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the house will be as the high places of a forest. And it must occur in the final part of the days that the mountain of the house of Jehovah will become firmly established above the top of the mountains, and it will certainly be lifted up above the hills; and to it peoples must stream."—Mic. 3:9 through 4:1.

¹³ Does that quotation from Micah sound like a sharp turn in the events of a nation? There can be no question of doubt that the grand final part of this prophecy must come true, for the words of prophecy introducing it most certainly came true.

12. In Micah 3:9-4:1, what bad religious condition did the prophet describe, and what changes did he foretell about "the mountain of the house of Jehovah"?

13. When did that turn of events take place in ancient times?

Recorded history is there to show it. In the year 607 B.C.E., near the beginning of what would be our month of October, the city over there in the Middle East that is poetically called "Zion" did lie like a mere field that had been plowed up. Yes, the national capital Jerusalem was left lying as mere heaps of ruins.

¹⁴ And what about the 2,500-foot-high mountain upon which Jehovah's house of worship that had been built by King Solomon used to stand in awe-striking beauty? That sacred mountain began to look like "the high places of a forest." It was deserted like a forested hilltop. Was that a disgrace for Jehovah God? Seemingly so. And yet he had willed it to be so, for he inspired his prophet Micah to be the first one to foretell such a religious calamity. He had all the reason in the world for doing so, especially since Jerusalem was being filled with unrighteousness and defiled by unjustified acts of bloodshed. What else could be expected for a city when her headmen let their eyes be blinded to justice by accepting bribes, when the temple priests carried on religious instruction for a fixed price and when imitation prophets carried on demonistic divination to make money off the gullible people? And yet those religious hypocrites felt that they were walking in the name of Jehovah, or that Jehovah would continue to be in their midst at his temple, to protect them against calamity! No wonder that Micah's prophecy, although so shocking, came true.

¹⁵ Religion is no defense for hypocrites. The religious hypocrites were disappointed in what they wrongly expected of Jehovah, in spite of what Micah was used to

14. (a) What did "the mountain of the house of Jehovah" then begin to look like? (b) Because of what judicial and religious practices had Jehovah willed that this take place?

15. (a) What means did Jehovah use to bring the foretold national calamity, and when? (b) What happened to governmental and religious things at Jerusalem, and what happened to Jehovah's rating as a god?

foretell. By what means, then, did Jehovah bring a national calamity upon them in 607 B.C.E.? It was by means of the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar. After about eighteen months of besieging Jerusalem, the Babylonian army broke into the city, plundered it and its temple, led off the miserable survivors captive, and burned down the holy city. The royal throne, "Jehovah's throne," as it was called, upon which the line of kings of the royal family of David sat, vanished, as

well as Jehovah's "ark of the covenant" that had been located in the innermost compartment, "the Most Holy," of the temple. Thus the kingdom of David, then 463 years old at Jerusalem, was broken down. Also, the full-scale worship of Jehovah at his temple was interrupted. Jehovah's rating as a god dropped sharply among the pagan nations. The worship of Him nosedived to a deep low in the estimation of the world nations. His holy name seemed profaned.

¹⁶ Would Jehovah's worship ever rise again? That was doubtless the question in the minds of many interested pagans. If they had known and believed the prophecies of Micah and Isaiah and Jeremiah and other prophets of Jehovah they would have known the answer to be Yes! But the unbelieving pagans and those who despised the worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob thought not. Year after year wore on, up to the seventieth year, and there was no restoration of Jehovah's worship at the holy city. Jerusalem continued to be a heap of ruins; Zion continued to be like a mere field all roughed up as if by plowing. The temple

16. What were observing pagan nations led to believe about the rising of Jehovah's worship again at Jerusalem, and why?

mountain was like a deserted mound in a jungle. Instead of temple instrumental music and songs, the harsh, untuneful calls of birds and wild animals rose up therefrom. The observing pagans round about seemed to have reason to believe that, with Jehovah's people in exile largely in Babylon, His worship would die out.

¹⁷ Yet, never let anyone think that worship of the true God can be wiped out! Little did those who drew satisfaction from the calamitous decline in the wor-

ship of Jehovah realize that a turn of events was at hand. In a startling way it came. At the end of sixty-eight years of Jerusalem's lying desolate without man or domestic beast, the mighty Third World Power of Bible history fell. As foretold by the prophets of the God who never lies, Jehovah, the empire of Babylon fell. Babylon by her terrifying armies had destroyed Jehovah's temple at Jerusalem by his permission, but she did not get away unpunished with that presumptuous act of insult to the one living and true God. World power by Semitic rulers ceased. By a turn of events, world power by Aryan or Japhetic rulers began, to continue on down till our own day. The Persian conqueror, Cyrus the Great, became king of Babylon and of the Fourth World Power of Bible history. Babylonian religion now took a tumble. Her chief god, Merodach or Marduk, crashed in disgrace.

¹⁸ It became the time for the prophet Jeremiah's words to be carried out: "Tell it among the nations and publish it. And

17. What turn of events happened regarding Babylon, and how did another branch of the human family assume world power?

18. (a) What prophecy of Jeremiah regarding Babylon's god and her land was then due to begin fulfillment? (b) How has Babylon's desolation compared with that which she caused to Jerusalem?

NEXT ISSUE

**Get a Firm Hold on
the Real Life**

lift up a signal; publish it. Hide nothing, O men. Say, 'Babylon has been captured. Bel [The Lord] has been put to shame. Merodach has become terrified. . . . For against her a nation has come up from the north. It is the one that makes her land an object of astonishment, so that there proves to be no one dwelling in her. Both man and domestic animal have taken flight. They have gone away.' " (Jer. 50: 2, 3) This prophecy has meaning for us today. Where, we can ask, is Babylon on the Euphrates River in what is today the land of Iraq? It is nothing but a desolate ruin, suffering a fate like that which she had inflicted upon ancient Jerusalem, only her desolation has continued for centuries more than a thousand years, whereas Jerusalem's desolation lasted just seventy years.

JEHOVAH TAKES ASCENDANCY AS GOD

¹⁹ At Babylon's surprising comedown in 539 B.C.E., which god ascended to international importance? The national god of the victorious Persians or the god of the exiles in Babylon, Jehovah? The prophecy of Micah, together with prophecies of other men inspired of God, indicated that Jehovah would take the ascendancy. He did, in proof that his prophecies are infallible. Said Micah under inspiration: "And in the future days the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be set at the head of the mountains, lifted above hills, and peoples shall stream to it." (Mic. 4:1, Byington's translation) In order to bring about a primary or typical fulfillment of that challenging prophecy, Jehovah God used as an instrument King Cyrus the Great, a worshiper of the chief god of victorious Persia. Jehovah, in His superiority,

made the worshiper of a false god work for Him toward restoring Jerusalem's temple.

²⁰ How so? Well, Jehovah spoke of himself as "the One saying of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and all that I delight in he will completely carry out'; even in my saying of Jerusalem, 'She will be rebuilt,' and of the temple, 'You will have your foundation laid.'" (Isa. 44:27, 28) King Cyrus did completely carry out the thing in which Jehovah delighted, though this was contrary to what the national god of Persia delighted to have done. In the year 537 B.C.E., the seventieth year of the desolation of Jerusalem and its temple, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to decree that the temple should be rebuilt at Jerusalem. To that end Cyrus decreed that the exiles in Babylon who would volunteer for this temple work should be released from Babylon and go back to "the mountain of the house of Jehovah." (2 Chron. 36:20-23; Ezra 1:1-4) By the end of that seventieth year of Jerusalem's desolation a faithful remnant of temple-work volunteers were back in the land of Judah, bringing to an end its desolation. In the spring of the next year (536 B.C.E.) the foundation of the second temple of Jerusalem was laid.—Ezra 3:8-12.

²¹ This was not to the liking of the pagan opposers of the worship of Jehovah. But their opposition could not win out over the Almighty God. So, after years of active opposition by these defiant pagans, Jehovah's second temple at Jerusalem was completed by his faithful remnant in wintertime, on the third day of the lunar month of Adar in the year 515 B.C.E.—Ezra 6:15.

20. In fulfillment of what prophecy concerning the Persian conqueror did this take place, and when and how?

21. Despite what was Jehovah's second temple completed, and when?

19. After Persia's conquest of Babylon, which god took the ascendancy, and whom did this god use for the restoring of his temple?

²² In order to be used in doing this, the restored remnant had to elevate Jehovah's worship above all other things in their lives, and put down the worship of the false gods that their forefathers had unfaithfully adopted. Jehovah's worship, as represented by "the mountain of the house of Jehovah," rose above the lofty elevation that pagan nations gave to their demon gods, these being worshiped in many cases on natural high places such as hilltops and mountaintops. In a figurative sense, the mountain of Jehovah's house of worship was "firmly established above the top of the mountains" and was "lifted up above the hills." Respect for Jehovah's worship assumed the supreme position, not only among his chosen people but also among many individuals of pagan nations and peoples. Doubtless many of suchlike individuals came up to Jerusalem to worship the true God, just as those religious proselytes did in the days of the Christian apostles and just as that royal eunuch of Ethiopia did, whom the evangelizer Philip was delegated to convert to Christianity.

—Acts 2:5-10; 8:26-39; John 12:20, 21.

22. How was "the mountain of the house of Jehovah" "firmly established above the top of the mountains," both as to the restored remnant and as to pagan nations and peoples?

²³ Instead of walking in the name of their former gods, those individuals from all the various nations and peoples walked in the name of the God whose worship was most highly exalted, Jehovah. Truly that was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Micah. But only a partial fulfillment, a miniature or typical one. The full, complete fulfillment did not take place back there before Jehovah God sent his Messiah into the earth. The final, culminating fulfillment of Micah's glorious prophecy was timed to come in our twentieth century. How is it occurring? Is it because we are living in the century when Christendom has grown to its greatest extent, or to an estimated nine hundred million members and more among nations all around the globe? And has this not caused a change to come about? Since the coming of the Messiah or Christ, is it not the right thing for us to walk in the name of the Messiah, Jesus, instead of in the name of Jehovah? Are the churches of Christendom the fulfillment of Micah's prophecy? This deserves examination—here!

23. (a) In whose name did those individuals from the nations and peoples begin walking? (b) What kind of fulfillment of the prophecy was that, and, since the Messiah's coming, what question arises as to walking in the name?

THE TIME TO DECIDE

in the Name of Which God to Walk

THE second temple that was built in Jerusalem, during the days of the prophet Zechariah, proved to be only typi-

1. Did that second temple at Jerusalem prove to be the one to which nations and peoples would come to worship Jehovah forever, and why?

cal and, as such, had a prophetic significance. It did not prove to be the permanent temple to which all the nations and peoples should come up to worship Jehovah God forever. In view of that fact, Je-

rusalem's earthly temple was destroyed in the year 70 C.E., when Jerusalem was destroyed for the second time, this time by the armies of the Sixth World Power, the Roman Empire.

² This had been foretold by Jesus Christ thirty-seven years previously, in 33 C.E., and he said that thereafter Jerusalem would continue to be trampled on until the "times of the Gentiles" ("the appointed times of the nations") were fulfilled. (Luke 21:20-24) Those Gentile Times, seven in number, began at the first desolation of Jerusalem and the land of Judah by the Babylonians in the year 607 B.C.E. Jerusalem never again got a king of David's royal family upon its throne, and correspondingly those Gentile Times continued on for 1,844 years after earthly Jerusalem's second destruction. That means that those Gentile Times ended in the year 1914 C.E.

³ This did not mean that the end of the Gentile Times in 1914 marked the time for a third temple to Jehovah's worship to be built in Jerusalem. No, even though the beginning of the Gentile Times, in early autumn of the year 607 B.C.E., saw Jehovah's temple lying in ruins and desolate of worshipers amid a land desolate of man and domestic animal. An earthly material temple to Jehovah's worship did not need to be built in Jerusalem, to take the place of the Mohammedan mosque, the Dome of the Rock, still standing there. Neither the start nor the spread of Jehovah's worship in modern times depended on the erecting of such a temple there, for nations to stream to it there. The reason why not we shall soon see.

2. Who foretold that, and when did the times that he mentioned come to their end?

3. What question arises as to the building of a third temple to Jehovah at Jerusalem since the Gentile Times ended in 1914, and is the spread of Jehovah's worship dependent on such a temple?

⁴ On earth the worship of Jehovah as God was at a low ebb in the year 1914 C.E. Yes, even among those who professed to be Christians, not to speak of natural, circumcised Jews. World War I, which broke out in that year, brought Jehovah's worship on earth to an even deeper low. The International Bible Students Association, which rejected the Trinity doctrine because of its being unscriptural, was still somewhat hampered in appreciation because of the use of generally authorized versions of the Bible (like the *Authorized* or *King James Version*) that rarely contained the name of Jehovah or that did not even contain it at all. Yet, through the columns of the magazine *The Watchtower* they brought forth fittingly entitled articles such as "Jehovah's Abiding Presence with His People" (10/1/14), "Jehovah Our God Is One" (8/15/15), "Jehovah Chastening the World" and "Jehovah's Act—His Strange Act" (1/1/16), and "Jehovah an Accurate Time-Keeper" (3/15/19). However, those Bible Students did not then appreciate that the time was near for Jehovah God to make a name for himself.—Isa. 63:14.

⁵ However, what was there to be said about the far larger body of those who professed to be Christians, namely, that worldwide religious organization called Christendom? It was an assassination within *her* borders that touched off World War I, which began on July 28, 1914. By the end of the Gentile Times about October 4, 1914, eight nations and empires of Christendom, along with Japan, were fighting one another. And by the end of that war on November 11, 1918, there were twenty-four nations of Christendom, together with four non-Christian coun-

4. To what extent was Jehovah's worship at a low ebb by 1914 C.E., and what did even Bible Students not then appreciate about his name?

5. What was the record of the larger body of those who professed to be Christian during World War I, and why does this remind one of what Micah 3:9, 10 says?

tries, that were fighting one another. In contrast with the International Bible Students Association, the churches and religious organizations of Christendom, also Jewry and Mohammedanism, involved themselves with that war. The members of the churches who were taking the lead in this worldwide bloodspilling reminded one of the prophet Micah's description of the head ones and commanders of Judah and Jerusalem in his day in "building Zion with acts of bloodshed and Jerusalem with unrighteousness."—Mic. 3:9, 10.

⁶ During those four years three and a half months of intercontinental warfare, were judges in Christendom handing down judgments for bribes, were the religious priests commercializing religion by rendering their services for a price, were the religious prophets making their unscriptural predictions to please people for money? Yes, just as suchlike men were doing in Micah's day among Jehovah's chosen people. There was a detesting of true justice and a 'making everything that is straight crooked.' This became outstanding in Christendom's dealings toward the International Bible Students, who refused to mix in with politics and who wanted no part in the warfare over political and commercial issues, warfare that was not theocratic. Persecutions, restrictive bans, imprisonments she heaped upon these conscientious Bible Students, and by early summer of 1918 she had the president of the International Bible Students Association and seven other associates in the Watch Tower Society behind bars in the Federal Penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A., denied bail and appeal.

⁷ Certainly that was a tearing down of the

6. How did the head ones and religious leaders of Christendom match the description given by Micah, and what outstanding example was there of Christendom's 'making everything that is straight crooked'?

7, 8. (a) Thus Jehovah's worship was being torn down by what religious organization? (b) How was the spiritual estate of Jehovah's worshipers desolated, to compare with Micah 3:12?

worship of Jehovah! By whom? By modern Babylon the Great, this world empire of false religion while being dominated over by its most populous and powerful part, namely, Christendom. Yes, Christendom, which has the complete Bible in which the name Jehovah occurs, was serving foremostly as the agent of Babylon the Great in desolating the worship of the Most High God Jehovah. Christendom was laying His worship waste within her own self. She was devastating it among the International Bible Students, who had been reviving the worship of Jehovah as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. As a result, by the close of World War I at mid-autumn of 1918, not only were many parts of the literal earth desolated by the ravages of war, but also the earthly spiritual estate of the worshipers of Jehovah was desolated, that is, as far as hopes of spiritual restoration and reoccupation were concerned. It compared with what Micah had foretold of his own land because of Babylon's atrocities:

⁸ "Zion will be plowed up as a mere field, and Jerusalem herself will become mere heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the house will be as the high places of a forest."—Mic. 3:12.

MIRACULOUS RESTORATION

⁹ There was no need, however, for the spiritual estate of Jehovah's worshipers to lie in such a dilapidated state for seventy years, as in the case of the land of Judah, which lay desolate without man or domestic animal for the first seventy years of the "times of the Gentiles." (Luke 21:20-24; 2 Chron. 36:20, 21) The publicly exposed deathlike state of Jehovah's witnesses had been foretold to be for only a short period, like three and a half days.

9. (a) Why was it not necessary for the spiritual estate of Jehovah's worshipers to lie desolate for seventy years? (b) After the end of the Gentile Times in 1914, what must become the center of Jehovah's worship?

(Rev. 11:3-12) The Gentile Times had already ended, back in 1914, when nation lifted up sword against nation and they began to learn war on a worldwide scale with total mobilization and mass human slaughter. At the end of those Gentile Times the time had closed for Jerusalem's right to the Messianic kingdom to be trampled upon by the Gentile nations, and Jehovah's Messianic kingdom in the hands of King David's rightful successor, Jesus Christ, was born in the heavens, in the "heavenly Jerusalem." For more than eleven centuries *earthly* Jerusalem had been the center of Jehovah's worship. The "heavenly Jerusalem," with its Messianic kingdom in power, must now promote that same worship.

¹⁰ In harmony with this, the "heavenly Jerusalem," the heavenly center of Jehovah's worship, properly acted to bring about an early restoration of the worship of her God in the earth, and that to a scale never before experienced. The prophecy of Jehovah's mouthpiece, Micah, had foretold this, and miraculous has been the fulfillment of this glorious prophecy. Proceeding to foretell the restoration, Micah was inspired to say: "And it must occur in the final part of the days." That is to say, after the terrible desolation to Zion and Jerusalem and the "mountain of the house" that Micah had just foretold in the preceding verse. (Mic. 3:12; 4:1) What was to occur? An astounding reversal! Listen:

¹¹ "And it must occur in the final part of the days that the mountain of the house of Jehovah will become firmly established above the top of the mountains, and it will certainly be lifted up above the

hills; and to it peoples must stream."—Mic. 4:1.

¹² A miniature realization of that prophecy began in 537 B.C.E. with the releasing of the faithful Jewish remnant from Babylon, under imperial orders to return to Jerusalem and rebuild Jehovah's house of worship on the city's mountaintop. Now that the Gentile Times ended in 1914 C.E., we are living in the "time of the end" of the Gentile nations, whose further domination of the earth has been challenged by the newborn Messianic kingdom of Jehovah God in the heavens. (Dan. 12:4; Matt. 24:3-14) Well timed, in the first postwar year, namely, in 1919, came the divine release of the worshipers of Jehovah who had faithfully survived the crushing experiences of World War I, this release being notably marked by the release from Federal Penitentiary of the governing body of the International Bible Students, who clearly recognized that the Gentile Times had ended and that Jehovah's established Messianic kingdom must be proclaimed in all the inhabited earth to all the nations, for a witness.

¹³ Like that restored Jewish remnant who engaged in rebuilding Jehovah's house on the mountaintop of Jerusalem, so this modern-day remnant of Jehovah's worshipers engaged in promoting His pure worship, elevating it above all other interests of earthly life. This worthy worship of the only true God must be the most highly exalted thing in their lives. No other worship, regardless of how highly exalted by men, must be allowed to be higher than the worship of the Most High God, Jehovah. Its elevation must be established firmly above all other forms of human worship, no matter how highly extolled and boosted up by men and demons.

10, 11. (a) So what did the "heavenly Jerusalem" properly act to bring about in the earth? (b) According to Micah 4:1, when was this to occur, and with what effect on peoples?

12. What was the miniature realization of that prophecy, and what compares with that in modern times?

13. To what extent has the modern-day remnant elevated the level of Jehovah's worship?

¹⁴ So this faithful remnant of spiritual Israelites did not engage in building a literal temple at earthly Jerusalem. The temple that Jehovah had decreed to be destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E. he did not authorize the remnant of spiritual Israelites to rebuild there. He does not need such a man-made temple at that onetime holy place, for he has plainly told us that he does not dwell in temples made with human hands. He has his true, spiritual temple in which he personally dwells. It is the temple into the Most Holy compartment of which his High Priest Jesus Christ entered in the spring of 33 C.E., with the precious merit of his perfect human sacrifice in behalf of all sinful, dying mankind. (Heb. 9:24-26; Acts 17:24) It is this spiritual temple that we must recognize, and thereby give the Most High God his true dignity and holiness and grandeur. It is to this temple that we must draw near in the sincere spirit of worship, and this we can do anywhere on earth, for that is what Jesus Christ, Jehovah's High Priest, himself said. (John 4:21-24) Earthly Jerusalem counts no more!

¹⁵ As the postwar years flowed on, the number of spiritual Israelites who were engaged in this figurative temple-building work increased. They were Christians, footprint followers of Jesus Christ, but the rank and file of church members of Christendom also claimed to be such. So in whose name did this temple-building remnant of spiritual Israelites choose to walk? It was an important decision for them to make. From the year 1925 onward they began to discern that the time had come for the Most High God to make a name for himself. They were determined not to

denigrate that name along with the professed Christians of Christendom. So, after six years of intensively endeavoring to make the divine name known world wide, they embraced, in the summer of 1931, the Scripturally based name for themselves, Jehovah's witnesses. This has come about in fulfillment of the prophecy uttered by Zechariah during the days of the temple rebuilding at Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C.E.: *and called it the Name of Jehovah*

¹⁶ "In the distant places they will remember me; and they must revive with their sons and return. . . . And I will make them superior in Jehovah, and in his name they will walk about," is the utterance of Jehovah."—Zech. 10:9-12.

¹⁷ Consequently, since that historic decision in the year 1931 C.E., this temple-building remnant of spiritual Israelites have gone throughout the Gentile nations preaching the good news of God's Messianic kingdom in the name of Jehovah, as his Christian witnesses. (Isa. 43:10-12; 44:8) As an inevitable result of this, have the peoples of the nations come to learn about Jehovah as God and about his spiritual temple at which to render pure worship? The information that pours in from all parts of the earth answers with a positive Yes! Take note of what the prophet Micah says about these peoples who are streaming to Jehovah's temple:

¹⁸ "And many nations will certainly go and say: 'Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths.' For out of Zion law will go forth, and the word of Jehovah out of Jerusalem."—Mic. 4:2.

14. (a) Why did Jehovah not authorize the remnant of spiritual Israel to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem? (b) What temple is it that they must recognize, and why?

15, 16. (a) In 1925, what did the remnant begin to appreciate about God's name, and why did they embrace a new designation for themselves in 1931? (b) How was this in fulfillment of Zechariah 10:9-12?

17, 18. (a) Since then, how have the peoples of the nations come to know about Jehovah God and his true temple for worship? (b) What did Micah 4:2 say about the peoples that would stream to the temple?

¹⁹ Through the preaching and teaching activities of the temple-building remnant of spiritual Israelites in all the earth the knowledge of the "law" and the "word of Jehovah" has gone forth from the heavenly Zion and heavenly Jerusalem, the seat of the newborn heavenly kingdom of the Messiah. Reports pile up from year to year to show that individuals of all the nations are streaming up to the exalted "house of Jehovah" to worship Him at his spiritual temple. What does it mean for these seekers of Jehovah to say: "And he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths"? This means that these instructed persons of all nationalities make a dedication of themselves to Jehovah God, to do his will. They make a choice of their God.

²⁰ This very thing was foretold also by the prophet Zechariah, when prophesying in the days of the rebuilding of the temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem. Addressing himself to the temple builders, he said: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah. And many nations shall join themselves to Jehovah in that day, and shall be my people."—Zech. 2:10, 11, AS.

²¹ These peoples of "many nations" do the very opposite of what twenty-four thousand Israelites did on the plains of Moab shortly before the nation of Israel crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land. These twenty-four thousand forsook Jehovah; as it is written in Numbers 25:3-5: "So Israel attached itself to the Baal of Peor; and the anger of Jehovah

began to blaze against Israel. . . . Then Moses said to the judges of Israel: 'Each one of you kill his men who have an attachment with the Baal of Peor.'"

²² Concerning those renegade Israelites the prophecy of Hosea 9:10 says: "They themselves went in to Baal of Peor, and they proceeded to dedicate themselves to the shameful thing, and they came to be disgusting like the thing of their love." In utter contrast with that, today, while the "daughter of Zion" is crying out joyfully and singing because Jehovah has taken up residence in her as the "city of the living God," hundreds of thousands of persons out of "many nations" come and "join themselves," dedicate themselves, to Jehovah and become his people.—Heb. 12:22.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE AMONG WORSHIPERS OF JEHOVAH

²³ Because these dedicated people of all nationalities accept the law that goes forth out of the heavenly Zion and the word of Jehovah that proceeds out of the heavenly Jerusalem, what attention do they get from Him and how do they act toward one another? Micah's prophecy goes on to inform us, saying: "And he will certainly render judgment among many peoples, and set matters straight respecting mighty nations far away. And they will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. They will not lift up sword, nation against nation, neither will they learn war anymore. And they will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble; for the very mouth of Jehovah of armies has spoken it."—Mic. 4:3, 4.

19. (a) How have the "law" and "word of Jehovah" gone forth from the heavenly Jerusalem to the peoples and nations? (b) Their saying, "We will walk in his paths," signifies what on their part?
20. What did Zechariah 2:10, 11 say to foretell this same thing?

21, 22. How do these peoples of "many nations" do the very opposite of what the 24,000 Israelites did on the plains of Moab, according to Numbers 25:3-5 and Hosea 9:10?

23. What attention does Micah 4:3, 4 say that they get from Jehovah, and how do they act toward one another?

²⁴ The man-made world organization for international peace and security, namely, the United Nations, has not brought about the fulfillment of this prophecy. That political organization still has its Disarmament Conference functioning regularly amidst a world that is more mightily armed than ever before in history. But not so with the "great crowd" from the "many nations" that stream into the earthly courtyards of Jehovah's spiritual temple to worship Him unitedly. These know from the Bible prophecies that the United Nations will fail and that it is wrong to make a god out of it. (Rev. 13:14, 15; 7:9-17) They know that it will fail just as the previous League of Nations failed. Particularly from the spring of the year 1935 C.E., or four years before World War II broke out, these seekers of the one living and true God began to stream into his temple courtyards. Did they carry out Micah's prophecy?

²⁵ Did this international "great crowd" of worshipers at Jehovah's temple, figuratively speaking, beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears? The facts of recorded history are at hand to prove that they did and are doing so down to this day. In November of 1939, amid World War II that had then been raging for two months, they backed up their nonparticipation in national politics by boldly declaring their stand for Christian neutrality toward all worldly armed conflicts. To this day, in spite of fanatical persecution over this issue, they have held fast to their declared neutrality. (See the article "Neutrality" in the November 1, 1939, issue

of *The Watchtower*.) Even when the Har-Magedon situation is reached by the militarized nations and Jehovah God launches his theocratic "war of the great day of God the Almighty" against the hostile nations, these unarmed worshipers of Jehovah God will not lift up even a weaponless hand against those nations. They will stick to the divine rule: "The battle is not yours, but God's."—2 Chron. 20:15; Rev. 16:14, 16.

²⁶ What, then, do we today find with regard to the spiritual estate of Jehovah's worshipers on earth? This: Despite their international and interracial extraction, there is godly peace among them. They do not resort to violent war to settle their differences. They keep first their peace with Jehovah God and then their peace with man. Borrowing the prophetic language of the picture of peace and security, they sit unafraid in their garden, each one under his grapevine and his fig tree, enjoying the spiritual, life-giving prosperity that the God whom they unitedly worship showers down upon them. In brotherly neighborliness, as foretold in Zechariah's prophecy (3:10), they "call, each one to the other, while under the vine and while under the fig tree." This is really a precious foretaste of the peace, security and prosperity after God the Almighty has destroyed all his remaining enemies at Har-Magedon and he then restores paradise to earth. Jehovah's worshipers will sit literally under grapevines and fig trees alongside their happy homes.

PRE-HAR-MAGEDON TIME FOR DECISION!

²⁷ A most inviting prospect *that!* But a person's future enjoyment of that Para-

24. (a) Did the United Nations fulfill that prophecy of Micah 4:3, 4? (b) Why does the "great crowd" that has streamed to the temple courtyards since 1935 not worship the United Nations as a god?

25. (a) Figuratively speaking, how have Jehovah's worshipers beaten their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears? (b) Accordingly, at Har-Magedon, to what divine rule will they stick in their conduct toward the nations?

26. (a) What state of affairs do we find therefore in the spiritual estate of Jehovah's worshipers on earth? (b) What will be their domestic state on earth after Har-Magedon?

27, 28. (a) Our enjoyment of such a future experience depends upon what choice now, and what variety exists toward which to make a choice today? (b) What evaluation does the Bible make of such worldly gods?

dise experience all depends upon the choosing of the right God *now*. All around the earth the people are idolizing various things as gods. One of the most popular gods in each country is patriotic nationalism. To many persons a certain political ideology is a god. The political institution called The State also ranks as a god with many. Militarism has its worshipers in this nuclear space age. Materialistic science has its own devotees. And what about sports idols, theatrical and motion picture idols, musical idols? These have their idolizers among those who are "lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God." (2 Tim. 3:4) Unwittingly, many people worship demons, for the apostle Paul said: "The things which the nations sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not to God." (1 Cor. 10:20) And all these gods have over them the one whom Paul called "the god of this system of things," namely, Satan the Devil.—2 Cor. 4:4.

²⁸ Truly the inspired psalmist correctly evaluated the gods of the nations by saying: "All the gods of the peoples are valueless gods." (Ps. 96:5) Of what value will these gods be to mankind when Jehovah God removes them at Har-Magedon and at his binding and abyssing of Satan the Devil and his demons?—Rev. 16:16; 20:1-3.

²⁹ We are fast approaching that time, God's time. No longer is a neutral position toward the gods possible. The world situation that is now shaping up is forcing upon us the making of a final decision. Whom shall we choose—the true God or the valueless gods to which the people of

29. (a) Why is there now no room for neutrality with respect to gods? (b) In harmony with Micah 4:5, what definite decision have those made who engage in building up true worship?

(c) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the nations? (d) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God?

(e) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (f) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (g) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (h) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (i) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (j) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (k) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (l) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (m) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (n) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (o) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (p) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (q) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (r) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (s) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (t) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (u) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (v) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (w) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (x) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (y) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God? (z) What does Micah 4:5 teach us concerning the true God?

the nations are dedicated? Remember, the prophecy of Micah 4:1-4 is today undergoing fulfillment. It behooves us, therefore, to consider Micah's words that immediately follow that prophecy. Micah's words call for our defiance of all the false gods of this doomed world. Says Micah: "All the peoples, for their part, will walk each one in the name of its god; but we, for our part, shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God to time indefinite, even forever." (Mic. 4:5) This is the unchangeable decision that all the remnant of spiritual Israelites who engage in building up the pure worship at the spiritual temple of Jehovah God have made. That is the decision that those of the international "great crowd" who are streaming up to the earthly courtyards of Jehovah's spiritual temple are making. Is it the personal decision of each of us?

³⁰ It is the only right decision. It is in favor of the one God whom Jesus Christ himself takes the front rank in worshiping with exclusive devotion. No one can be a true Christian unless he imitates Christ's perfect example. (Ps. 69:9; John 2:13-17; 20:17; Rev. 3:12) All false gods will perish, and their worshipers along with them. Jehovah alone is the true God, who is imperishable, immortal, who lives "to time indefinite, even forever." He is the one God whom we can worship "to time indefinite, even forever." This choice of worship signifies eternal vindication to Him and endless blessings and joys to us in his peaceful new order.—1 Tim. 1:17; Ps. 90:2.

30. (a) How did Jesus himself show that this is the right decision to make? (b) Which one is the god whom we can worship "to time indefinite, even forever," and what will this signify for us?



DO YOU SUBMIT

to

CHRIST'S HEADSHIP

TODAY?

IN THE first century of our Common Era Jesus Christ gave the apostle John a divine revelation. In it he revealed his active headship over Christian congregations at that time. The revelation showed that Christ was personally carrying on inspection of conditions within the congregations. He was concerned as to their spiritual health, their Christian works and activity. But he was not only inspecting. He was prepared to take appropriate *action* according to what his inspection revealed concerning the response to his counsel.—Revelation chapters 1 to 3; see also *The Watchtower* of December 15, 1971, page 751.

Christ Jesus continues to exercise full headship of the true Christian congregation earth wide today. And, just as he did back then, he uses earthly agencies to express that headship. The first-century Christian congregation had a governing body composed of apostles and elders at Jerusalem. A similar body of anointed Christians functions now. This governing body is the administrative part of a “faithful and discreet slave” or “steward” class concerning which Jesus promised: “His master . . . will appoint him over all his belongings.” (Matt. 24:45-47; Luke 12:42-44) So, recognition of that governing body and its place in God’s theocratic arrangement of things is necessary for submission to the headship of God’s Son.

LOCAL BODIES OF ELDERS IN HARMONY

As was true in the first century, however, each congregation has its local body of elders. Of such men, the apostle Paul wrote Christians in his day: “Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account.” (Heb. 13:17) Or, rendering the Greek word used by the apostle more literally, they should be obeying the ones “governing” them. (See *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*.) Does this mean that each local body of elders formed a separate governing body operating independently of the governing body of the ‘faithful and discreet steward’ class?

No, that could not be. Why not? Because that would mean disconnecting themselves from the headship of Christ Jesus. The connection of all those composing the Christian congregation with their Head, Christ Jesus, is likened to the ways the members of a human body are joined to the head. Of Jesus, the apostle writes: “From him all the body, by being harmoniously joined together and being made to cooperate through every joint that gives what is needed, according to the functioning of each respective member in due measure, makes for the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” (Eph. 4:16) So, the Head, Christ Jesus, has various arrangements for ‘joining’ the individual members of the congregation to

him, and these cannot be disregarded.

What if someone should become "puffed up" due to a fleshly, rather than spiritual, frame of mind and want to ignore these provisions? He would fit the description the apostle gives of one who "is not holding fast to the head, to the one from whom all the body, being supplied and harmoniously joined together by means of its joints and ligaments, goes on growing with the growth that God gives." (Col. 2:18, 19) So, for any of us, whether Christian elders or not, to be linked with Christ Jesus as our Head requires our harmony with his congregation as a whole. It requires our cooperating with all its parts, through the "joints and ligaments" that connect and bind the congregation into a united whole, the means and arrangements for supplying spiritual nourishment and communication and coordination. This is what brings spiritual "growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." Yes, love produces humility and a spirit of unity, not independence or self-importance. Do you show your recognition of Christ Jesus as your Head by thus being harmoniously joined together and cooperating in love?

LETTING SCRIPTURE, SPIRIT AND CHRIST'S EXAMPLE PREVAIL

Bodies of elders show that they are 'holding to Christ as Head' by deep respect for God's Word, which Jesus taught, letting it control and direct their thinking. When they do this they are not misled by what may superficially appear to be "practical" or by methods that seem to work best in the world as it is presently organized. Additionally, they seek God's spirit and its guidance in applying Scriptural principles. They must be in harmony with that spirit, producing its fruitage, not "grieving" it by obstinacy.—Eph. 4:30.

And in yet another way they must manifest their attachment to Christ as Head.

They must imitate his example, reflecting his personality and ways. The example of Christ's apostles aids them to see how to do this. (Compare Philippians 4:9.) By these means they can achieve the greatest possible harmony with their fellow elders and with all their brothers and sisters.

Where elders thus look to Christ Jesus as Head they can be confident of his direction. Their sincere devotion and submission show that these elders truly do 'bend the knee' in the exalted "name" that Jehovah God has given to his Son. Though only two or three of them are met together in Jesus' name, they have his promise: "There I am in their midst." (Phil. 2:9-11; Matt. 18:20) So gathered, they will be very conscious of his headship in their discussions and deliberations.

Working together as a body requires humility and a deep concern for the prospering of the Master's interests. No single elder, then, will feel that his way, his viewpoint or preference must prevail and that 'otherwise nothing will get done or turn out right.' He may have greater 'seniority' than others in years as a Christian or he may have had more experience in shepherding than others. This is to his credit. It should add weight to his word in the judgment of his fellow elders. But he does not thereby become infallible. His knowledge, judgment and experience can never equal that of the Head, Christ Jesus, nor surpass the wisdom found in God's Word. His submission to the Head will be seen in his willingness to work with other elders as a body and to recognize that the congregation's Head can use them as well as him.—1 Cor. 3:5-9, 21-23; compare Romans 12:3-8.

Modesty and holding of others in due esteem, granting to each the measure of human dignity he deserves—these qualities lead to fruitful, productive discussions within any body of elders. The "wisdom

from above" is peaceable, mild and reasonable and allows no place for empty wrangling or bragging of one's accomplishments or abilities, things that show a lack of God's spirit and a fleshly outlook.—Jas. 3:13-18; 1 Cor. 3:3.

When a discussion among elders seems to falter or one feels that the trend of its course is deviating from that of true wisdom, what can he do? He can always offer silent prayer that God's spirit through his Son be manifest and prevail. Then his personal contributions to the discussion should reflect his confidence in Christ's headship. A lack of faith in that headship would be implied if he felt he must 'force' a matter through or in any way attempt to coerce others to accept his view. He wisely follows the spirit-filled apostle's counsel: "In showing honor to one another take the lead."—Rom. 12:10.

OBEDIENCE TO THE "LAW OF THE CHRIST"

Christians are urged to be "obedient to those who are taking the lead" among them or governing them. (Heb. 13:17) But this, of course, does not mean that bodies of elders will be enacting their own laws or formulating rules according to their own personal viewpoints and then requiring all in the local congregation to conform to these. Rather, these elders take the lead by setting an example of faithful adherence to what the apostle called "the law of the Christ," the "law of faith," found in God's Word. It is to obedience to this law that they exhort their brothers. (Gal. 6:2; Rom. 3:27) They also receive guidance in applying that law of faith through the governing body and the agencies it employs.

Elders, for example, are to exercise good judgment when inviting congregation members to share in presenting information from the platform in Christian meetings, and this could include exercising

care that the individual's appearance not be such as would have an adverse effect on the congregation generally. But they should certainly not attempt to control what congregation members wear in their own homes or in their daily activity, unless, of course, their manner of dress is so extreme as to cause public reproach in the community.

Yes, they will realize that in matters where personal conscience dictates what one does, they should wisely follow Christ's example, as did the apostle Paul. When Paul said, "Become imitators of me, even as I am of Christ," he had just been discussing matters of conscience. In some cases Paul knew that others had a wrong viewpoint due to a weak conscience, yet he did not try to superimpose his conscience on them and he counseled others against doing so, saying that they should rather "bear the weaknesses of those not strong."—1 Cor. 10:25-33; 11:1; Rom. 14:1-23; 15:1.

With all of us, there is a need to assure ourselves, not only that we are right in our stand on a matter, but also that we are proceeding in a *right way*, following Christ Jesus' example. The *spirit* with which we deal with one another does so much for attaining the loving harmony that brings spiritual growth and increase.

Christ Jesus now leads all his disciples earth wide in a mighty work of Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making. Not only human lives are at stake but also the honor of God's name and that of his Son. Now is the time of all times for us to be "of the same mind and have the same love, being joined together in soul, holding the one thought in mind, doing nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind." Let us thereby show that we have 'the mental attitude that was in Christ Jesus' and that we do indeed submit to his headship today.—Phil. 2:1-8.

'YOU ARE MY HOPE, O JEHOVAH, MY CONFIDENCE FROM MY YOUTH'

As told by Herman Mikkelsen

IN 1897, when I was twelve years old, we lived on the little Danish island of Bornholm. A friend of the family by the name of Swen Swenson, having read a book published by the Watch Tower Society and entitled "The Millennial Dawn," dashed right to our home. With one hand he held up the book; with the other, he pounded his knee, and in a voice filled with emotion cried out: "Here I have a book that surely is the truth, and I want to tell grandmother Pedersen [mother's mother] that grandfather is not in any hellfire as the preacher said at the funeral."

Grandmother was so happy that she cried out: "My prayers are answered!"

With that, about twenty-four hours of uninterrupted Bible study began at our house. During the night, if my father's eyes drooped, Swenson would ask: "Are you asleep? Did you hear what I said?" And they would continue.

In the morning my paternal grandfather, a teacher in the Lutheran church, dropped in. Soon scriptures came up that showed the church to be teaching things in opposition to the Bible. Grandfather tried to support the church but could not prevail because Swen had the Bible and a book that explained it. We began to place our hope and confidence in Jehovah.

Our family took a deep interest in God's Word of truth, but grandfather Mikkelsen

did not want to leave his church. Swen kept calling on him anyway. One evening grandfather asked grandmother: "I wonder why Swenson isn't here tonight?" She replied: "You should be glad; you always argue." But he answered: "No! He is right; I just can't agree with his condemning the church." So grandfather kept on going to church, but he told the church members about the things he had learned from the Bible, such as "hell" being the grave rather than a place of fiery torment.

Then one day he arrived at church to find two big young men blocking the entranceway. He was no longer welcome! When Swenson heard that my grandfather was debarred from church, he said to him: "That is the first time the church ever did you any good!"

From then on we were all united in serving Jehovah, and we would have regular meetings in grandfather's home. Thus I learned to make Jehovah "my confidence from my youth."—Ps. 71:5.

EVENTS LEADING TO BAPTISM

In 1910 I moved to the United States, and in 1912 married the Danish girl to whom I had been engaged. I had the Watch Tower Society's series of books entitled "Studies in the Scriptures" in Danish, but my wife decided to study them with the Bible to prove them false. Well,

the more she read them, the better she liked what she read, and soon she recognized it as being the truth. We both studied these books regularly and also worked hard at learning the English language.

By 1917 both my sisters arrived in the United States, and they and their husbands were interested in God's truth. One day they told me there was going to be a convention of the International Bible Students, as Jehovah's witnesses were then called. It was in Fresno, California, about twenty miles from where we lived. At this assembly, I met one of the Society's representatives, A. H. Macmillan. He said that God's Word of truth as explained in *The Watch Tower* is like the light of dawn that gets brighter and brighter until daylight appears. My wife nudged me as if to say, 'Did you hear that?' I had, and it has now lighted my steps for seventy-five years. From that little assembly until this day, we have never been away from Jehovah's loving organization.

During the war years our home Bible studies moved us to make our dedication to Jehovah, but the opportunity to symbolize that dedication by baptism did not present itself until the visit of one of the Watch Tower Society's traveling representatives. So on the day that the Memorial of Jesus' death was to be celebrated in 1920, my wife and I were baptized. And that very evening we partook of the emblems at our first Memorial, placing our hope and confidence in Jehovah, and embracing "the upward call of God by means of Christ Jesus."—Phil. 3:14.

PRIVILEGES AS SERVICE DIRECTOR

In 1922 I was appointed service director of the congregation in Reedley, the little farming town near which we lived. However, the following year someone else was appointed to replace me, and I resented it. I expressed my feeling to my wife, but

she did not sympathize with me at all. She said: "Are we serving men, or are we serving Jehovah? Let's be thankful that we are privileged to serve Jehovah, and let us assist the rest of the brothers to do the same, with all our strength." Right then and there I saw how right she was, and I got rid of my resentment. Jehovah greatly increased our joy and happiness; I was thankful to God for having had the opportunity to be tested as to humility and being able to survive it.

In 1924 we moved to a farm near Fresno, and shortly thereafter I was appointed service director there. This came as a complete surprise to many and to myself. I was new in the congregation, still spoke with a heavy accent, and I was not the fine speaker that some of the others were. Nonetheless, I was appointed and now my question was, What to do to improve the "Testimony Meeting" (now called Service Meeting).

At this meeting we used to give testimony relating to developing Christian "character," and not much was said about the public ministry. Previously we had read the *Bulletin* (now *Kingdom Ministry*) individually; it offered suggestions on how to share God's truths with outsiders. When I got up after opening the "Testimony Meeting," I was very nervous, and I asked everyone to get their *Bulletin* out. Though only two had theirs with them, we went ahead and used it and had a good meeting. We used the *Bulletin* from then on.

However, not everyone was pleased with the use of the *Bulletin*, since it placed emphasis on the field ministry. So steps were taken to have me removed. But at the next visit of the Society's traveling representative the matter was reviewed. He then gave us all a very forceful talk on our responsibility to preach the good news to others. This helped us to get better balance, thinking not only of the need for

a Christlike personality but also of telling others the good news.

WE ENTER THE

FULL-TIME PREACHING WORK

In 1929 my wife and I applied for the full-time preaching work under the direction of the Watch Tower Society. We were assigned to Roseburg, Oregon. We had a Model 'T' Ford sedan but could not sleep in that, because we now had three boys. So we bought an old "Star" truck and built a house on it, and set out for our assignment. We arrived having little money, so we traded Bible literature for much of what we ate. One woman asked if I had a Bible that she could have. I said, "Yes," and offered to trade her a Bible and a book for something. She said: "For that, you can have all my chickens." We took only one.

We had one road in our territory that went sixty miles back into the mountains. It was very steep and crooked. In places the cliffs were sheer and the drop was far. It was a long way down if a wheel slipped over the edge of the narrow road. We also hoped that we would not meet anyone coming from the other direction.

We had many other interesting experiences. For example, as I approached a cabin, a voice yelled: "Get out of here before I kill you!" In a friendly way I still kept coming. Then he pointed a rifle at me and shouted: "Do you hear me? I mean it!"

I answered quietly: "I'm your friend; give me a chance to tell you something."

He said: "Yes, I know, you are just the kind of friend I have been wanting to get a bead on. I was in three major battles in the war [World War I] and before each battle you dirty [using a word for chaplains] came out and blessed us. Once only four of us were left alive, and, according to you guys, God took all the rest to heav-

en. I was always looking for some of them [chaplains] during a battle, but I never could find one, or I would have sent some of them to heaven too."

By now he had lowered his gun, and he continued: "During one battle, it was hot and we had no water left and I saw a canteen on a dead buddy, just as one of the other men saw it. He looked at me and I looked at him, and I shot him; I killed him for some water, my own buddy. I know that I am going to burn in hell for that." It was a privilege to tell him the truth about "hell" and to share with him the good news as preached by the true ministers of God.

RETURN TO CALIFORNIA AND TESTS OF FAITH

In 1929 a financial crisis struck the country, and we found it necessary to discontinue our full-time preaching and to return to California. Here, in October 1935, my nine-year-old son, because of his Bible-trained conscience, refused to participate in the flag-salute ceremony at the little country school. What a bombshell this was to the community! Suddenly, we were ostracized by the townspeople. Neighbors who had been friendly were now afraid to look in our direction when meeting us on the street. Stores refused to sell us merchandise, and we had to go to Fresno to buy supplies.

Then in February 1936, the school expelled him. By 1938, many more Witness children were being expelled, so we started a private school, called "Kingdom School," at our home. This covered grades one to eight, and we had fourteen children living at our home from Monday through Friday. Then their parents would take them to their various homes for the weekends. This school continued until 1943, when the Supreme Court reversed itself on the matter of compulsory flag salute and the Wit-

ness children were able to go back to public schools.

The territory that my wife and I covered stretched from the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the east up into the Coast Range Mountains one hundred miles to the west. South of our territory was the town of Lindsay. The small group of Witnesses there had been very badly treated by the town officials, so the entire Fresno congregation decided to go down and witness to the whole town in one day. We finished our preaching work shortly after noon. There were two blocks that had not been done, however, because the police had threatened to arrest us if we called. My son and I, with another Witness and his son, volunteered to go. When I went to a home, a police officer came to the door and shouted: "You bet I'm interested in that. I just ran two of you fellows out of town, and if you don't get out right now, I'm going to throw you in jail."

Just then he saw the other Witnesses and yelled: "Come over here!" and placed us all under arrest. He took us to a little courtroom. The judge spoke nicely and asked us to sit down. But a few minutes later we heard footsteps and here was the officer with six men. He stepped up to me and said gruffly: "We represent the American Legion, and we are here to see to it that you get out of town right now or else."

Then the judge said: "This is the American Legion, the boys that crossed the ocean to fight and die for you." I answered: "Your Honor, I refuse to accept that anyone died for me, except Christ Jesus." I then tried to explain that our first allegiance is to Jehovah God. But the judge now shouted: "Get out of here!" As we left, two men kicked the book bags from the hands of the boys, and their Bible literature went flying. We picked them up and left.

On Saturday afternoon my wife and another Witness woman were arrested in Reedley for exposing false religion by carrying a sign proclaiming "Religion Is a Snare and a Racket" and "Serve God and Christ the King." When they were brought before the judge, who was a man we had known for many years, he said: "But, Mrs. Mikkelsen, a respectable woman like you, carrying a sign like that!" She replied: "Well, in your position, you know even better than I do that what the sign says is the truth." He burst out laughing. He then called the officer and said: "Take Mrs. Mikkelsen back to where you found her and let her go."

In 1939, when our home became too small for congregation meetings, we rented a small store about three doors from the Reedley police station. Despite this location, mobsters swung into action. They bombarded us with fruit and rotten eggs. They raced cars and motorcycles, yelling and trying to disturb our meetings, but the police never did anything about it. One Witness, Oscar Roth, a frail man of seventy years, was set upon by a mobster and badly beaten one evening on his way home. His ribs were broken and his eyes blackened. A few weeks later the same man tried to run over this Witness with his truck, but Brother Roth heard him coming in time to leap behind a tree, into which the truck was promptly rammed. Of all things, Brother Roth was then haled into court and charged with wrecking the man's truck! At least they did not succeed in making such a charge stick.

Not getting any help from our neighbors, the police, we appealed directly to the governor of California. The governor replied: "I feel sure that this situation will not arise again; however, should it do so, please let me know and I will take care of it." From that time on the police cooperated.

By the spring of 1941 we had grown to over a hundred Witnesses, and a new congregation was recommended for Selma, near where I lived. I was appointed as service director in Selma. During the mid-forties the congregation grew by leaps and bounds. We had many young people, and it made for a very lively and happy congregation. One of my cherished memories is a picture of sixteen young boys, teenagers, on their bicycles, book bags in hand, ready to go out one Sunday morning to preach the good news of God's kingdom. Most of our territory was rural and gasoline was rationed, so we used bikes. I also had a bike and went right along with them.

RETURN TO THE FULL-TIME PREACHING WORK

It had always been my hope to get back into the full-time ministry, but my wife became ill and had to be confined to a wheelchair. It did not seem possible that I would ever be able again to be a full-time proclaimer of the good news. Then, after five years in the wheelchair and though past sixty years of age, my wife recovered and began walking. I was able to apply for the full-time preaching work. Once again we were able to go together in the house-to-house ministry. That was over twenty years ago.

Two years ago my wife's health began to deteriorate, and when we came home from celebrating the Lord's Evening Meal, my wife said: "Well, that was our 50th Memorial celebration, and I think it was probably my last." Ten months later, after a little more than fifty-nine years of marriage and service to Jehovah together, my wife finished her earthly course, confident in Jehovah.

Now, in my eighty-seventh year, I count it a privilege that I am a third-generation witness of Jehovah. I have one son who helped to open up the Marshall Islands to the good news, and another son who is an overseer, near enough for me to visit. I have many Christian brothers whom I have watched grow up from the days on their bicycles, and who are now overseers in various congregations. I still have the strength of mind and of body to care for myself, drive my own car and take others in the witness work. But, above all things for which I am thankful, I am still able to serve Jehovah in the full-time ministry.

Now, as I reflect on seventy-five years in Jehovah's loving organization, I take pleasure in the knowledge that I have had a share in its growth. I remember that huge territory, from the mountains east to the mountains west, halfway across the state of California, and how we sometimes felt we could never get it all done. But we always placed confidence in Jehovah, and he provided all the help to accomplish the work. For now there are at least a dozen congregations and hundreds of energetic witnesses of Jehovah, a large number of whom we were privileged to help to an accurate knowledge of God's truth. I have the satisfaction of knowing that our whole territory is being covered with the good news of God's kingdom.

I know too that on the little island of Bornholm, Denmark, there are now several congregations, which I like to think grew, to some extent, from those meetings we held at my grandfather's house, where I first heard the name of Jehovah so very long ago. "You are my hope, O Sovereign Lord Jehovah, my confidence from my youth."—Ps. 71:5.



THE GOD OF JUSTICE

DOES it trouble you when you see or hear about injustices and oppression? Are you grieved that lawless persons, by means of bribery, are able to escape being brought to justice? Do you feel sick at heart that millions of persons are starving, largely because of the world's present economic system? In view of the spread of loathsome venereal disease and the increase in sexual assaults, abortions and illegitimate births, are you incensed at clergymen who, instead of upholding the Bible's standards, condone sexual immorality?

Manifestly honest-hearted persons throughout the earth have reason to be grieved about what is happening today. If they had the wisdom and power to bring about a beneficial change, they would doubtless do so. Is it not reasonable, therefore, that a loving God who has both the wisdom and power will act in behalf of those who want to do what is right? Indeed, we can have confidence that he will do so, for he has promised to make "all things new," to remove all causes for mourning, pain and outcry. (Rev. 21:4, 5) His word of promise is dependable. It is backed by a long record of faithful performance in the past.

Consider the situation that came to prevail in ancient Jerusalem and the land of Judah and how Jehovah God dealt with it:

The corruption that came to exist among the Israelites was much like that existing today in the political, commercial

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and religious systems of the world, especially those of Christendom. Rulers were oppressive. Violence and bloodshed increased. The poor and afflicted simply could not get justice. Religious leaders ceased to be a force for righteousness, and idolatrous practices abounded. —2 Ki. 21:11-16; Jer. 18:18; 22:13-16; Hab. 1:4.

While Jehovah God for a time put up with the unfaithfulness of his covenant people, he sent prophets to warn them that in due course his exercise of forbearance would end. One of these prophets was raised up from among the Israelites who had been taken into Babylonian exile in 617 B.C.E. Less than two and a half years before the start of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem in expression of divine judgment, Ezekiel was given this command:

"Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem and drip words toward the holy places, and prophesy against the soil of Israel. And you must say to the soil of Israel, 'This is what Jehovah has said: "Here I am against you, and I will bring forth my sword out of its sheath and cut off from you righteous one and wicked one. In order that I may actually cut off from you righteous one and wicked one, therefore my sword will go forth from its sheath against all flesh from south to north."'"—Ezek. 21:2-4.

Thus Jehovah depicted himself as a warrior who would act against the "wicked" and the "righteous," evidently meaning those who imagined themselves to be righteous. The "sword" that Jehovah would use was apparently the earthly agency for

executing judgment, though it may also have included his unseen heavenly organization of mighty spirit creatures. The earthly agency proved to be Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar and his armies. As a symbolic "sword," the Babylonians moved against the Kingdom of Judah, which lay southwest of Babylon and south of the territory once occupied by the ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel. But the executional work of the symbolic "sword" did not confine itself to the "south." The "sword" moved "from south to north" against "all flesh," against surrounding non-Israelite nations. Why?

Through his prophet Ezekiel, Jehovah provided the answer: "All those of flesh will have to know that I myself, Jehovah, have brought forth my sword from its sheath. No more will it go back." (Ezek. 21:5) Those on the "soil of Israel" and in Jerusalem were not the only sinners against him. Surrounding peoples, "all flesh," were also sinners against him and deserved to be punished. They were not to get the idea that, because of not being Israelite flesh, they had escaped Jehovah's attention. They were not to imagine that they were more righteous than Israel. All those nations who had ill will against Jehovah's people were to be struck by the symbolic "sword." Since Jehovah had announced this beforehand, "all those of flesh" would be made to know that He was battling against them.

A LESSON FOR TODAY

Jehovah God has not changed his view of people who persist in wrongdoing. Bible prophecy establishes that within this generation God's "sword" will strike the nations and people who oppose him. (Matt. 24:34) Just as the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the land of Judah experienced calamity before the surrounding nations did, so Christendom will be the first to feel the painful effects of that "sword."

Why so? This is because Christendom is the antitype of unfaithful Jerusalem of ancient times. Christendom claims to be the "house of God," enjoying a special standing and relationship with God by means of his "new covenant." Hence judgment must begin with her, as evident from the principle set forth at 1 Peter 4:17, 18: "It is the appointed time for the judgment to start with the house of God. Now if it starts first with us, what will the end be of those who are not obedient to the good news of God? 'And if the righteous man is being saved with difficulty, where will the ungodly man and the sinner make a showing?'"

The "sword" of Jehovah, however, will not stop its activity with the destruction of Christendom, the antitype of ancient Jerusalem that lay southward from Babylon as a "southern quarter." That "sword" in modern times will likewise be brandished against "all flesh from south to north." All the other false, hypocritical religious systems must also be devoted to destruction.

No one should think that Christendom will somehow be able to escape Jehovah's executional "sword." Evidently many inhabitants of Jerusalem thought they would be left unpunished because of their assumed favored position with God. This may be inferred from the fact that, when allowing for the activity of the symbolic "sword," Ezekiel introduced the question, "Shall we exult?" (Ezek. 21:10) The unfaithful inhabitants of Jerusalem were apparently exulting because of thinking themselves to be God's people and having the temple or house of God in their midst. Then, too, their king was a descendant of David, with whom God had made a covenant for an everlasting kingdom. Being anointed with oil into his office, that king was the "anointed one of Jehovah." And, as a descendant of David, he was said to

sit upon "Jehovah's throne." (2 Sam. 7: 4-16; 1 Chron. 29:23; Lam. 4:20) All exulting over such favored circumstances, though, was in vain. Through Ezekiel Jehovah plainly stated:

"Say, 'A sword, a sword! It has been sharpened, and it is also polished. For the purpose of organizing a slaughter it has been sharpened; for the purpose of its getting a glitter it has been polished.' . . . 'Is it rejecting the scepter of my own son, as it does every tree? And one gives it to be polished, in order to wield it with the hand. It—a sword has been sharpened, and it—it has been polished, in order to give it into the hand of a killer. . . . it itself has come to be against my people; it is against all the chieftains of Israel. The very ones hurled to the sword have come to be with my people. . . . an extermination has been made, and what of it if it is rejecting also the scepter? This will not continue existing,' is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah."—Ezek. 21:9-13.

Jehovah's "sword" would reject even the royal scepter of the Kingdom of Judah just like any other national scepter or "tree." One persisting in stubborn rebellion would not be spared because of being like a "son" to Jehovah on the royal throne at Jerusalem. Jehovah was against all unfaithful ones and would therefore give the "sword" into the hand of the "killer," his agency for executing judgment. In fulfillment of Jehovah's word, the highest earthly chieftain of Israel, King Zedekiah, was not spared. Royal rule in the house of David ceased. Thus the scepter or the emblem of royal power in an active sense did not "continue existing."

The frightful movements of the symbolic "sword" were enough to make an Israelite cry out and howl and, instead of beating his bosom like a woman, to slap his right thigh. It was enough to make him slap his hands together in astonishment, if not in fear. As Jehovah instructed Ezekiel:

"Cry out and howl, O son of man, . . . make a slap on the thigh. . . . And you, O

son of man—prophesy, and strike palm against palm, and 'A sword!' should be repeated for three times. The sword of the slain ones it is. It is the sword of someone slain who is great, which is making an encirclement of them. In order for the heart to melt and in order to multiply those who are overthrown at all their gates, I will make a slaughter by the sword. Alas, it is made for a glittering, polished for a slaughter! Show yourself [Sword personified] sharp; go to the right! Set your position; go to the left! To wherever your face is directed! And I myself also shall strike my one palm against my other palm, and I will bring my rage to its rest. I myself, Jehovah, have spoken."—Ezek. 21:12-17.

In agreement with this ancient pattern of action, the unchangeable God Jehovah will not permit any who are not his approved servants in our day to escape his encircling executional "sword." Once it goes into operation that symbolic "sword" will not come to rest until it has annihilated all practitioners of wickedness, including those who boast in their self-righteousness. Even Christendom's kings will not be spared. The fact that the religious clergy have anointed kings to reign "By the Grace of God" means nothing to the Supreme Sovereign. The claims of such rulers to exemption from execution will be rejected by the agency that Jehovah will use as his executional "sword." That executional agency will consist primarily of God's Son Jesus Christ and hosts of mighty spirit creatures, angels. (Rev. 19: 11-21) So protection can be had only by knowing God's will and living in harmony with it. This is in keeping with the inspired advice: "Seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth, who have practiced His own judicial decision. Seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger."—Zeph. 2:3.

SOUNDING A WARNING

The fact that the destruction of Christendom and all the rest of this system of

things is certain makes it imperative that a warning be issued. That is why Jehovah's Christian witnesses, the anointed remnant and their goodwill companions, spare no effort to sound this warning. In view of the destructive fury to be unleashed by the symbolic "sword," their feelings are the same as those the prophet Ezekiel was told to express visibly:

"O son of man, sigh with shaking hips. Even with bitterness you should sigh before their eyes. And it must occur that, in case they say to you, 'On account of what are you sighing?' you must say, 'At a report.' For it will certainly come, and every heart must melt and all hands must drop down and every spirit must become dejected and all knees themselves will drip with water. 'Look! It will certainly come and be brought to occur,' is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah."—Ezek. 21:6, 7.

The prophetic report of the frightful destruction to come upon Jerusalem was reason enough for Ezekiel to sigh and shake. When that report was fulfilled and news

of Jerusalem's destruction reached Babylon, the hitherto unbelieving Jewish exiles there must have given way to horrified excitement. Their knees likely dripped with more than mere sweat. Doubtless they were so weakened in spirit that the sphincter muscles of their bladders released, causing their knees to drip with urine.

The destruction to come upon Christendom soon will be even more frightening. The prophetic "report" of that calamity contained in God's Word deeply stirs the inward feelings of Jehovah's Christian witnesses. Their concern about the safety of fellow humans then is now motivating Jehovah's witnesses to be diligent in proclaiming this "report" so that others might take steps to escape destruction. How are you responding to that "report"? Is it causing you to take positive action to seek God's righteousness before he acts?

A FIG-SHOWER

- Once John the Baptist advised certain men in military service: "Do not harass anybody or accuse anybody falsely." (Luke 3:14) In relating this account, Luke used a Greek expression that literally means "should you take by fig-showing." What is a "fig-shower"?

Various authorities offer the explanation that in ancient Athens exporting figs out of the province was prohibited. One who denounced others, accusing them of attempting to export figs, was termed a "fig-shower." The word came to designate a malignant informer, a person who accused others out of a love of gain, a false accuser, a blackmailer.



- Why, according to Matthew's accounts, did Jesus use two different words—"fornication" and "adultery"—in discussing the proper grounds for divorce? Is not the only ground

for Scriptural divorce "adultery," as the term is generally understood?—U.S.A.

At Matthew 5:32 Jesus' words are: "However, I say to you that everyone divorcing his wife, except on account of fornication [Greek, *por-nei'a*], makes her a subject for adultery [Greek, *moi-khei'a*], and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery." Similarly, at Matthew 19:9 we read: "I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except on the ground of fornication [*por-nei'a*], and marries another commits adultery [*moi-khei'a*]."

The account, therefore, does use two distinct words. Let us first see what they mean and then consider the significance of their use.

Moi-khei'a, one of the terms used in Matthew's account, is properly translated "adultery." The English word "adultery" comes from the Latin *adulterare*, which means, basically, "to alter" and, by extension, "to corrupt or make impure, as by the addition of a foreign or a baser substance." Thus we speak of "adulterating" food, making it impure by adding foreign substances. A marriage is "adulterated" when one of the parties defiles the marital relationship by having relations with someone outside that relationship. This idea of adulterating or corrupting, and of unfaithfulness to a sacred relationship, is also inherent in the Greek term *moi-khei'a*. Therefore, both in Greek and in English, the focus is on the effect illicit sexual relations have on the *marriage relationship*, the adulterous mate being guilty of introducing someone else into that relationship, corrupting the union that should include just the husband and wife.

What of the other term used? "Fornication" focuses attention, not on the effect sexual immorality may have on a marital relationship, but on the *nature or quality of the sexual activity itself*. This is true, not only of the English word "fornication," but also of the Greek word, *por-nei'a*, used in Matthew's account. Our interest, of course, is primarily in the Greek term used by the Gospel writer. For, no matter what the word "fornication" may commonly be understood to mean by English-speaking people, it is what the word used in the Bible meant to the writer and the people at that time that really counts and is decisive.

When "fornication" is mentioned today, people commonly think of sexual relations between members of the opposite sex, relations carried on outside marriage yet consisting of intercourse in the 'ordinary' or natural way. So, many have understood that, when Jesus said that "fornication [*por-nei'a*]" was the only ground for divorce, he referred only to intercourse in the ordinary or natural way between a wife and a man not her husband, or, by extension, between a husband and a woman not his wife. But is that the case? Does *por-nei'a*, the word used in Matthew's account, refer only to such *natural* sexual relations? Or did it include *all* forms of immoral sexual

relations, including those between individuals of the same sex and also *perverted* forms of sexual relations between members of the opposite sex? Just what did *por-nei'a* mean to people in the first century when Jesus was on earth? And does a sincere and careful investigation of this meaning call for a reappraisal of our understanding as to what the Scriptural ground for divorce is?

A thorough study of the matter shows that *por-nei'a* refers to *all forms of immoral sexual relations*. It is a broad term, somewhat like the word "pornography," which is drawn from *por-nei'a* or the related verb *por-neu'o*. Lexicons of the Greek language clearly show this to be so.

They show that *por-nei'a* comes from a root word meaning "to sell," and it describes sex relations that are licentious and not restrained (as by the restraint of adherence to marriage bonds). Thus, of the use of the word in Bible times, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* states that *por-nei'a* described "illicit sexual intercourse in general." Moulton and Milligan's *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament* says it is "unlawful sexual intercourse generally." The sixth volume of the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* says that *por-nei'a* can come to mean "'sexual intercourse' in gen[eral] without more precise definition."

It is because of its being a broad term (broader in its scope than the word "fornication" is in the minds of many English-speaking people) that many Bible translators use expressions such as "gross immorality," "sexual immorality," "sexual sins," or similar, when translating *por-nei'a*.

Does this mean that unnatural and perverted sexual relations such as those engaged in by homosexuals are included in the meaning of this term used by the apostle in recording Jesus' words? Yes, that is the case. This can be seen by the way Jesus' half brother Jude used *por-nei'a* when referring to the unnatural sex acts of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Jude 7) Concerning the use of *por-nei'a* by Greek-speaking Jews around the start of the Common Era, the sixth volume of the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* says: "*πορνεία* [*por-nei'a*] can also be 'unnatural vice,' . . . sodomy."

What, then, is the significance of the Bible's use of these terms and what does it reveal as

to the valid Biblical grounds for divorce? It shows that any married person who goes outside the marriage bond and engages in immoral sexual relations, whether with someone of the opposite sex or someone of the same sex, whether natural or unnatural and perverted, is guilty of committing *por-nei'a* or "fornication" in the Bible sense. Such sexual relations do not refer to minor indiscretions a person might commit, as by a kiss or caress or embrace, but refer to immoral use of the genital organs in some form of intercourse, natural or unnatural.

We find principles in the Law covenant in support of this broadened viewpoint. It is clear that under that Law marriages were dissolved when a mate committed serious sexual sins, *including unnatural ones*, inasmuch as such mate was put to death according to God's own instructions.—Compare Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 18:22, 23, 29; 20:10-16; Deuteronomy 22:22; as well as the words of the Christian apostle at Romans 1:24-27, 32.

Taking Jesus' words for what they mean,

we see that the commandment of God concerning divorce is not to be applied in cases where a mate has committed "unnatural" sins, such as unnatural sexual relations with members of the same sex, or unnatural sexual relations with animals, or unnatural sexual relations with persons of the opposite sex.

Taking Jesus' words for what they mean, we see that a mate is to be separated from his mate if he commits "unnatural" sins, such as unnatural sexual relations with members of the same sex, or unnatural sexual relations with animals, or unnatural sexual relations with persons of the opposite sex.

Does this mean that anyone who commits unnatural sexual relations with members of the same sex, or unnatural sexual relations with animals, or unnatural sexual relations with persons of the opposite sex, is to be separated from his mate? No. That is not what Jesus said. He said that if a man left his wife, she was to be given a certificate of divorce so that she could marry another man. That is what Jesus said. He did not say that anyone who commits unnatural sexual relations with members of the same sex, or unnatural sexual relations with animals, or unnatural sexual relations with persons of the opposite sex, is to be separated from his mate.

Therefore it is not true that anyone who commits unnatural sexual relations with members of the same sex, or unnatural sexual relations with animals, or unnatural sexual relations with persons of the opposite sex, is to be separated from his mate.

Therefore, when a mate is guilty of such serious sexual immorality the innocent mate may Scripturally divorce such a one, if he or she so desires. One who obtains a divorce on such Scriptural grounds is also Scripturally free to remarry, not thereby being subject to a charge of adultery.

This clearly marks a correction in the view expressed on previous occasions in the columns of this magazine, but faithful adherence to what the Scriptures actually say requires it. There is much more that can be considered on the matter and for that reason it will be discussed more completely in a coming issue of this magazine.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

January 14: The Name in Which All Nations Are Choosing to Walk. Page 741. Songs to Be Used: 11, 22.

January 21: The Time to Decide in the Name of Which God to Walk. Page 747. Songs to Be Used: 59, 67.