

*Special
Issue*

The **WATCHTOWER**

APRIL 15, 1965

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

THE COMING
Banquet
FOR ALL THE PEOPLES

"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

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- AS - American Standard Version Le - Isaac Leeser's version
 AT - An American Translation Mo - James Moffatt's version
 AV - Authorized Version (1611) Ro - J. B. Rotherham's version
 Dy - Catholic Douay version RS - Revised Standard Version
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The WATCHTOWER

*Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM*

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Number 8

OUR God is invisible, and, therefore, has never been seen by human eyes. "No man has seen God at any time," the inspired Bible writer explained. 'If that is so,' one may ask, 'then how can you be sure that an unseen God actually exists?' Because of conclusive evidence to this effect.

—John 1:18.

Just as a physically blind person has sufficient reason to believe that there is a sun, so there is substantial reason for believing that an invisible God exists. We do not have to see him to know that he is, anymore than we need to see the wind to know when it blows. Many years ago a well-educated Oriental reasoned soundly on this matter, and wrote: "For [God's] invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship."—Rom. 1:20.

The things that we see—such as our own marvelous human body, its miraculous powers of reproduction, the fantastic size and orderliness of the universe, and so forth—supply irrefutable evidence that there are power and intelligence superior

to man's. One of the most gifted humans intellectually, the late scientist Albert Einstein, once said that it was enough for him "to try humbly to comprehend even an infinitesimal part of the intelligence manifest in nature." The intelligence, orderliness and design manifest in the things made testify that a Mighty Creator exists.

We are glad to acknowledge this Great One as our God.

RESPONSIBLE FATHER

Our God is a responsible Father. He is not, as some people seem to believe, an unidentifiable principle that initiated laws by which lower organisms would evolve into humans. Rather, as his chief Son Jesus Christ explained: God "who created them from the beginning made them male and female." Yes, the first man and woman were God's children, his specific creations, and he showed interest in them by providing this beautiful, perfectly designed earth for their home. How unlike some earthly men who father illegitimate children and then desert them!—Matt. 19:4; Gen. 1:27; 2:7.

Almighty God is still interested in mankind, and recognizes those who worship



him as his children. Therefore, it is only proper that a person should respond to this interest and seek to learn about God. Only if one does can he pray with meaning and understanding the way Jesus instructed in the famous model prayer: "Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come." It is because we are grateful to know our Father's identity that we humbly address him as did his prophet long ago: "*O Jehovah, you are our Father.* We are the clay, and you are our Potter; and all of us are the work of your hand."—Matt. 6:9, 10; Isa. 64:8.

Yes, God's name is Jehovah, and we are glad to use his name, for we are proud of our Father. We desire, as did the Bible psalmist, "that people may know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth." This great God of ours is not a mystery whom it is impossible for us to understand. He is the same God to whom Jesus raised his eyes, looking heavenward, and made his petition: "Father, . . . glorify your son."—Ps. 83:18; John 17:1, 6.

On another occasion Jesus described his Father in these clear, simple terms: "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah." So God is not an unexplainable trinity, consisting of several persons in one divine essence. He is Jesus' God, the one whom Jesus worships. He is also our God and Father. We, too, can love and worship him, and, if we do, he will show mercy toward us. So in heartfelt appreciation we say: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation."—Mark 12:29; 2 Cor. 1:3, 4.

NOT A MAN OR AN IDOL

This Father of ours is not a man, nor was he ever a man on earth who was later deified. "I am God and not man," he says.

Jesus explained that "God is a Spirit." Unlike men, God does not have a body of flesh and blood, but he is an invisible Personage.—Hos. 11:9; John 4:24.

Since he is a Spirit, Jehovah is not, at the same time, a lifeless image of wood or stone. "Our God is in the heavens," the Bible psalmist explains. On the other hand, the gods of the nations "are silver and gold, the work of the hands of earthling man." The psalmist then argues convincingly that these idols are utterly worthless, saying: "A mouth they have, but they cannot speak; eyes they have, but they cannot see; ears they have, but they cannot hear. A nose they have, but they cannot smell. Hands are theirs, but they cannot feel. Feet are theirs, but they cannot walk; they utter no sound with their throat. Those making them will become just like them." How foolish to put one's trust in such lifeless images!—Ps. 115:3-8; Isa. 44:14-20.

A prophet of God once showed the worthlessness of idols by comparing their powers with those of Jehovah. He asked: "Do there exist among the vain idols of the nations any that can pour down rain, or can even the heavens themselves give copious showers? Are you not the One, O Jehovah our God? And we hope in you, for you yourself have done all these things." Yes, it is our God Jehovah who is able to act and accomplish things. He is the one who deserves your praise.—Jer. 14:22.

So why not respond? "Shout in triumph to God, all you people of the earth. Make melody to the glory of his name. Render his praise glorious. Say to God: 'How fear-inspiring your works are! . . . ' Bless our God, O you peoples, and cause the voice of praise to him to be heard." We welcome you to join in praising our God Jehovah.—Ps. 66:1-3, 8.

UNSURPASSED IN WISDOM

"Raise your eyes high up and see," God invites. "Who has created these things?" (Isa. 40:26) Yes, look into the heavens and see the stars scattered above like sparkling diamonds. Not only are they indescribably beautiful, but they travel in their courses with such regularity that man sets his most accurate timepieces by their movements. This is what impressed astronaut John Glenn. "It is the *orderliness* of the whole universe about us," he said, "galaxies millions of light-years across, all traveling in prescribed orbits in relation to one another." What wisdom the Designer of this marvelous universe possesses!

Do not his creations cause you to want to praise him? "O Jehovah our Lord, how majestic your name is in all the earth," the shepherd David of Bethlehem long ago was moved to sing. "When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have prepared, what is mortal man that you keep him in mind?" These are also our sentiments. How insignificant humans are when compared with the all-wise Creator of heaven and earth!—Ps. 8:1, 3, 4; 19:1, 2.

Just look around and observe the wisdom with which God designed our earthly home. What matchless beauty there is! Can anything compare with the glorious sunsets, snowcapped mountains, sandy beaches, green valleys, rushing rivers and colorful flowers? Take a deep breath of air. It is of just the right composition of gases to sustain life. How appropriate that man absorbs oxygen from the air but returns carbon dioxide, while plants take in the carbon dioxide, utilize it in producing life-sustaining products and return oxygen to the atmosphere!

Everywhere around us such wisdom is manifest. Observe the miracle of growth. How wonderful is the way tiny seeds bloom into glorious arrays of fragrant blos-

soms! Taste the marvelous variety of delicious foods. Feel the warmth of the sun. Listen to the delightful songs of birds. No wonder the appreciative psalmist sang: "How many your works are, O Jehovah! All of them in wisdom you have made. The earth is full of your productions."—Ps. 104:24; Prov. 3:19.

And what of the greatest masterpiece of God's earthly productions—man himself? With what wisdom our minds and bodies are constructed! How beyond comprehension is the reproductive process, whereby one infinitesimally small male sperm unites with a female egg to develop, according to God's masterful design, into a living, breathing human creature! (Ps. 139:14-18) Does not the wisdom of our God recommend him as the One whom we should worship? Therefore, accept the invitation: "O come in, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasturage and the sheep of his hand." —Ps. 95:6, 7.

Although Jehovah's infinite wisdom recommends him as a God worthy of our worship, his boundless love makes him even more desirable to us.

ABUNDANT IN LOVE

Jehovah God showed love by taking on the responsibility of fathering earthly children. The exceptional quality of his love was demonstrated by providing this beautiful earth as their home and settling the first human pair in a gorgeously prepared section of it. Even when Adam and Eve rebelled against him, Jehovah continued to manifest his love by permitting them to live for a time so that we and the rest of mankind could come into existence and learn of his grand provisions. It is true that allowing sinful creatures to live has resulted in much trouble on earth, and even though wicked angels and evilly in-

clined men are the ones responsible, our loving Creator has often been the one unjustly blamed. Nevertheless, he has borne the reproach, and has continued to shower blessings on mankind.—Gen. 2:8, 9, 15; 3:16-19; Deut. 32:4, 5; Rev. 12:9.

Jesus Christ drew attention to these blessings from our Father when he said: “He makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous.” An apostle of Jesus also pointed to this loving care for mankind, crediting God with giving “rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer.”—Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:17.

But in addition to these loving provisions for man’s present needs, our God has mercifully provided for obedient humans to enjoy everlasting life. Think of it! God’s original purpose to have his earthly children enjoy a paradise home forever will be realized. Already he has made arrangements to relieve man of sin by sending his beloved heavenly Son to earth as a ransom. Concerning this provision the Bible explains: “By means of him we have the release by ransom through the blood of that one, yes, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his undeserved kindness.”—Eph. 1:7; Acts 13:38.

What a wonderful demonstration of love for mankind! “God loved the world [of mankind] so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.” How grateful we are! Because of the intervention of God’s mercy the hope of everlasting life in happiness is opened to all mankind.—John 3:16.

Do not these loving provisions of our God endear him to you? Indeed, “Jehovah is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness.” You can go to him in prayer, and “throw all your anx-

iety upon him, because he cares for you.” O how his love recommends him to us! Yet, at the same time, God’s love and mercy are perfectly balanced by his justice. —Ps. 103:8-14; 1 Pet. 5:7; Ps. 55:22.

A LOVER OF JUSTICE

His dealings are in complete harmony with this inspired description of him: “Perfect is his activity, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice; righteous and upright is he.” As we would expect of such a just ruler, his laws and commandments are not harsh or burdensome, nor does he exploit mankind. However, God does require obedience, and when persons become hardened in a course of evildoing, his justice requires due punishment. He himself tells us: “I, Jehovah, am loving justice, hating robbery along with unrighteousness. And I will give their wages in trueness.”—Deut. 32:4; Isa. 61:8.

We can be confident that when God metes out wages his justice will be tempered with mercy. Jehovah takes no delight in killing anyone, but, in fact, pleads with evildoers: “Turn back, turn back from your bad ways, for why is it that you should die?” It is because of this patience and kindness of our God that many persons have wrongly concluded that he does not notice unrighteousness, and will never execute justice against evildoers. But his inspired Word shows how wrong they are.—Ezek. 33:11; Zeph. 1:12; Ps. 10:13.

The Scriptures prove conclusively that God does observe. “The One planting the ear, can he not hear? Or the One forming the eye, can he not look?” Of course he can, and, in time, he will execute justice, as the Bible psalmist goes on to show: “Jehovah is knowing the thoughts of men . . . And he will turn back upon them their hurtfulness and will silence them with their own calamity. Jehovah our God will

silence them." Happily, we are fast approaching the day when Jehovah God will clean this earth of all unrighteousness. How grateful we can be that our God is a lover of justice!—Ps. 94:6-23; 37:9-11.

MATCHLESS IN POWER

Jehovah also has unlimited power. Not only does Jehovah possess the power to destroy evildoers; he also has the ability to preserve his servants alive into a righteous new order. He demonstrated this long ago by wiping out a wicked system of things by a global flood and delivering righteously disposed Noah and his family into a cleansed earth. Showing the significance of that deliverance, Jesus Christ said: "Just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be." This, therefore, is an assurance that God will protect his people when he soon brings destruction upon this wicked system of things.—Matt. 24:37; 2 Pet. 2:9.

Our God will then demonstrate his power in behalf of the survivors by initiating a miraculous program of physical healing. The eyes of the blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf will be unstopped, the lame will climb up just like a stag, the sick will be healed and the aged will grow progressively younger until once again they enjoy the vigor of youth. O what a happy time that will be! But what about those who have died during the past centuries of human history? Will they be de-

nied these blessings? Jesus Christ supplied the answer when he said: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out." Think of that! Resurrection from the dead!—John 5:28, 29.

Do you wonder whether God has the power to perform these miracles? Well, stop and reason. Do not miracles occur every day? What happens when a seemingly lifeless seed, perhaps of corn, is placed in the ground? Why, in a few days it pushes upward and, in time, golden ears of corn appear on the stalk. Can man make a seed grow? Does he even understand the secret of growth? Of course not! It is a miracle! Yet God is responsible for similar miracles occurring all the time. One cuts his finger, and the wound miraculously heals. A person eats some food and before long it is transformed into flesh, bones, hair, nails and other body materials. God's works are truly wonderful!

Therefore, is there not every reason to believe that God can also resurrect the dead and restore ailing mankind to perfect life? Yes, most certainly! Not only is He unsurpassed in wisdom, abundant in love and a lover of justice, but our God Jehovah is also matchless in power, truly a miracle-working God. For these reasons, we invite you to join with us as we "walk in the name of Jehovah our God to time indefinite, even forever."—Mic. 4:5.

Praise Jah, you people, for it is good to make melody to our God; for it is pleasant—praise is fitting. He is healing the brokenhearted ones, and is binding up their painful spots. He is counting the number of the stars; all of them he calls by their names. Our Lord is great and is abundant in power; his understanding is beyond recounting. Jehovah is relieving the meek ones; he is abasing the wicked ones to the earth. Respond to Jehovah with thanksgiving, you people; make melody to our God on the harp, the One who is covering the heavens with clouds, the One preparing rain for the earth, the One making the mountains to sprout green grass. To the beasts he is giving their food, to the young ravens that keep calling. Jehovah is finding pleasure in those fearing him, in those waiting for his loving-kindness.—Ps. 147:1, 3-9, 11.

THIS IS

The Word of God

SINCE our God is a loving Father, it is only to be expected that he would give spiritual instruction and guidance to his children. But how can we be sure that the Bible is his Word? Do we have any assurance that it is trustworthy and reliable?

Yes, we do, for the Son of God, Jesus Christ, in prayer to his Father affirmed: "Your word is truth." Truth indeed marks all the Word of God, because it was written, not out of human invention or origin, but under the direction of the holy spirit of our God. That is why "all Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial."—John 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21.

Many worldly authorities have commented about the Bible's sure marks of authenticity. One of these was the famous scientist Sir Isaac Newton, who, as a critic of ancient writings, examined the Holy Scriptures and concluded: "I find more sure marks of authenticity in the New Testament than in any profane history whatever."* And a noted archaeologist, W. F. Albright, wrote in his book *Archaeology and Israel*: "No major contention of Scripture has been proved unhistorical." As to small details such as chronological and geographical statements in the Bible, Professor R. D. Wilson writes in *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament*:

"Whenever there is sufficient documentary evidence to make an investigation, the statements of the Bible in the original text have stood the test."

... The chronological and geographical statements are more accurate and reliable than those afforded by any other ancient documents."

Though other books may be historically accurate, none can equal the Word of God. Although written by nearly forty different persons over a long period of

about 1,600 years, its various parts fit together like the parts of a fine watch. Truly evidence that it has one Divine Author! Unlike other books that form the basis of the great religions, it alone traces man's history from his creation in perfection to his fall into sin, down to the present and on into the glorious future.

Moreover, on whatever subject the Bible speaks, even on scientific matters, it never goes out of date. It endorses no scientific errors that were common at the time of its being written; it does not state that the earth is flat or that it is the center of the universe. Rather, it speaks of the earth as being round and hung upon nothing. (Isa. 40:22; Job 26:7) An astronomer, P. W. Stoner, had this to say about the Bible: "Although Genesis was written thousands of years ago, every reference to astronomy in this first chapter is corroborated by the best of our present scientific information. And yet we note that books of astronomy, written 25 years ago or more, are full of serious errors and anything written more than a few hundred years ago would be

* *The Union Bible Companion* (Philadelphia, Pa.; 1871) S. A. Allibone, pp. 29, 30.

suitable only for the entertainment of the reader."*

With good reason, then, an apostle of Jesus Christ wrote to the Thessalonian Christians: "When you received God's word, . . . you accepted it, not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God."—1 Thess. 2:13.

A BOOK OF NEVER-FAILING PROPHECIES

One of the many assurances that the Bible is worthy of our absolute confidence is prophecy. For the Bible is not just a Book of accurate history but also a Book of history written in advance! It is a Book of never-failing prophecies. Bible prophecy is not vague but so specific that it even named individuals before they were born.

The prophet Isaiah, for instance, foretold that Babylon would fall to one named Cyrus. And long before this Cyrus had been born, prophecy also foretold that the river gates of Babylon would be left open to him and that he would capture the city. (Isa. 45:1, 2) The writing of Isaiah's prophecy was finished about 732 B.C.E. Its fulfillment came in 539 B.C.E., when Cyrus the Persian took Babylon, the river gates of the city being left open as foretold by Isaiah about two hundred years earlier.

There are many more prophecies whose fulfillment is recorded by Bible writers. As an example, Joshua foretold that the man who would rebuild the city of Jericho would lay the foundation at the forfeit of his firstborn and put up its doors at the forfeit of his youngest. (Josh. 6:26) That was spoken in 1473 B.C.E. More than 500 years later, in the days of King Ahab of Israel, the Bible reports that Hiel built Jericho at the forfeit of Abiram his firstborn and put up its doors at the forfeit of Segub his youngest, "according to Jehovah's word that he spoke by means of Joshua."—1 Ki. 16:34.

* *Modern Science and Christian Faith* (Wheaton, Ill.; 1950), by members of The American Scientific Affiliation, p. 22.

The fulfillment of a number of prophecies, if not recorded in the Word of God, are obvious facts of history or are recorded by secular historians. In the eighth century B.C.E. Isaiah foretold that wicked "Babylon, the decoration of kingdoms, . . . must become as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. She will never be inhabited." (Isa. 13:19, 20) One authority says: "More thorough destruction than that which has overtaken Babylon cannot well be conceived."*

A similar prophecy is that of Zephaniah's against bloodguilty Nineveh: "He will make Nineveh a desolate waste." (Zeph. 2:13) Has that prophecy, written before 648 B.C.E., been fulfilled? The facts of history show that Nineveh fell to the Chaldeans and Medes about 633 B.C.E. and later became a mound of ruins. Historians have noted that "when Xenophon and his retreating Greek army passed [Nineveh] in 401 BC it was already an unrecognizable mass of debris."†

Before 607 B.C.E. God's prophet Jeremiah foretold that Jerusalem, yes, "all this land must become a devastated place" for seventy years. (Jer. 25:11; 29:10) That prophecy was fulfilled when Jerusalem lay desolate for seventy years following its destruction in 607 B.C.E., after which, as also foretold, a remnant of Jews returned to their homeland in 537 B.C.E. This was, says the Jewish historian Josephus, "in the first year of the reign of Cyrus, which was the seventieth from the day that our people were removed out of their own land into Babylon."‡

Most remarkable of all, however, are the many prophecies relative to the coming of the Messiah, who was to provide a ransom for man's sins. For example, the

* *Cyclopædia* (New York; 1882), M'Clintock and Strong, Vol. I, p. 596.

† *The New Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; 1963), J. D. Douglas, editor, p. 889.

‡ *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chap. 1, §1; see also *The Bible As History* (New York; 1956), Werner Keller, p. 313.

prophecy of Micah states: "You, O Bethlehem . . . from you there will come out to me the one who is to become ruler in Israel." (Mic. 5:2) That prophecy was written before 716 B.C.E. More than 700 years later, or in 2 B.C.E., Jesus Christ was "born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king," in fulfillment of Micah's prophecy. (Matt. 2:1-6) According to one authority this is just one of more than three hundred distinct prophecies, all of which received remarkable fulfillment in Jesus Christ.*

Jesus Christ himself uttered many Bible prophecies that received striking fulfillment. For instance, he told Jerusalem that enemies would build around Jerusalem "a fortification with pointed stakes and will encircle you" and "will not leave a stone upon a stone in you." (Luke 19:43, 44) Spoken in 33 C.E., that prophecy was fulfilled in 70 C.E. when Rome's armies under Titus surrounded Jerusalem and encircled it with a wall or "fortification with pointed stakes," exactly as Jesus had prophesied thirty-seven years earlier. Because of this encircling wall, Josephus reported, "All hope of escaping was now cut off from the Jews."† Demolition of the city by Rome's armies accords with the 'archaeological evidences of thorough destruction of Jewish buildings all over the land.'‡

Then there are those many Bible prophecies that are undergoing fulfillment today, such as those pointing forward to the "last days," or Christ's second presence, at which time there would be "on the earth anguish of nations" and "critical times hard to deal with," because of a moral breakdown in public and private life. Our own eyes can behold the fulfilling of these prophecies.—Luke 21:25, 26; 2 Tim. 3:1-5, 12, 13; Matt. 24:3, 7, 11, 12, 14.

* *Archaeology and Bible History* (Wheaton, Ill.; 1950), Joseph P. Free, p. 284.

† *Wars of the Jews*, Book V, chapter 12, ¶2, 3.

‡ *The Bible and Archaeology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; 1962), J. A. Thompson, p. 299.

DIVINE WINDOW TO THE FUTURE

So there is much prophecy in the Bible dealing with our day and even beyond! Many thrilling prophecies relate to what God is going to do on behalf of obedient mankind by means of his heavenly kingdom. Thus the Bible is a divine window to the future. As you read its prophecies, you will realize what a grand future awaits those who look to the kingdom of God. Would you like to live on a Paradise earth under that kingdom where there will be real security, with no threats to your home, your life and the life of your children? Well, then, here is what Bible prophecy shows that the future holds:

"Here I am creating new heavens and a new earth. . . . And they will certainly build houses and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating. For like the days of a tree will the days of my people be; and the work of their own hands my chosen ones will use to the full. They will not toil for nothing, nor will they bring to birth for disturbance. . . . The wolf and the lamb themselves will feed as one, and the lion will eat straw just like the bull."

—Isa. 65:17, 21-25.

That hope-inspiring prophecy cannot fail. Imagine a new system of things in which all threats to your security are removed! All will have their own homes with no threat of losing them. Today many own homes but because of threats to employment, high taxes or other reasons, they never really feel secure. Many have lost homes because they are not able to keep up payments. But in God's New Order one will not need to fear losing his home and the land, with its fruit trees and vineyards, flowers and gardens, that he has made beautiful. Nor will parents fear that their children will grow up to be sent off to fight

and die in wars or meet a tragic end because of crime and violence in the world. Violence and disturbance will be things of the past!

Moreover, never again will mankind need to fear the wild animal creation, for God's sure word of prophecy assures us that even the wolf and the lamb will get along peacefully, that the lion will be no threat to domestic animals. Looking into the future by means of the divine window, God's Word, we read this promise: "I shall certainly conclude a covenant in that day in connection with the wild beast of the field and with the flying creature of the heavens and the creeping thing of the ground, and the bow and the sword and war I shall break out of the land, and I will make them lie down in security." (Hos. 2:18) Unlike the promises of politicians, that divine promise will never disappoint you.

To learn more about the soul-stirring blessings that God's kingdom will bring to mankind, do not miss the feature article in this issue, "The Coming Banquet for All the Peoples." As you read that article and the grand hope it presents, keep in mind that no prophecy in the Word of God ever fails. The God of heaven and earth assures us: "So my word that goes forth from my mouth will prove to be. It will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it."—Isa. 55:11.

WALK IN GOD'S WAYS NOW

Seeing what wonderful prospects our heavenly Father holds out to those who walk in his ways, how should we respond to all this? Should we not want to become

more acquainted with our God and his Word? Yes, we will want to study it, not just listen to others speak about it. We will want to prove to ourselves all these things, making our hope certain. We do well to imitate those persons commended in the Bible because they 'carefully examined the Scriptures daily.' (Acts 17:11) By such regular, daily Bible study, you will learn God's will and his ways.

We will want to respond to God's love further, not only by study of his Word, but by applying all this divine instruction in our lives. His own Word tells us: "The conclusion of the matter . . . is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man." (Eccl. 12:13) So we need to familiarize ourselves with those commandments, obeying them so that the Word of God is at work in us.

Putting the Word of God to work in our lives means also to obey those commandments about God's kingdom. Jesus Christ, God's foremost Prophet, foretold a great publicity work for our day when he said: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations." (Matt. 24:14) So God's will is that the greatest publicity possible be given to his kingdom. This is being done, not just by printed word, but by the spoken word, by word of mouth. If you really put the written Word of God to work in your life, you will want to respond to the invitation of the Lord Jesus Christ and loyally support his kingdom by being an outspoken advocate of it to others.

The Holy Bible—this alone is the Word of God! Only by studying it and applying it in your life can you do the will of God so as to walk in his ways forever.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- The Christian Ministry.
- Mature Ministers Can Aid Others.
- Cheer amid World Fear.
- Why No Collections?

THE COMING

Banquet

FOR ALL THE PEOPLES

THE world as a whole is not enjoying any banquet of rich foods and drink now. Rather, the world is getting hungrier year by year. This dangerous fact is continually being pointed up by the reports published of famines, food shortages and undernourishment in large areas of the inhabited earth.

² For example, disquieting reports have been coming from that great subcontinent of India. Newspaper headlines of October 10, 1964, read "INDIA'S GRIM CAPITAL—Food Shortages and Water Pollution Aggravate Tempers and Peril Health." (New York Times) Earlier, or on August 2, 1964, the headlines read: "Hunger Grows in India—Major Crisis in the Nation Is Feared as Population Growth Outpaces That of Food Production." This is not due to a shortage of farmers. Of India's 450,000,000 people more than four-fifths live in the rural sections. Owing to improved methods and equipment, the Indian farmers produce more, but the yearly crop of Indian babies is too much for them. It is of little comfort now to millions that India's Food Minister predicted in Parliament that India would be able to feed herself by the end of the fourth five-year plan in 1971. For many persons that remains to be seen.—New York Times, September 11 and August 16, 1964.

1. Rather than enjoying a banquet, what is the world as a whole experiencing?

2. For what reasons is India a pointed example of this?

"And Jehovah of armies will certainly make for all the peoples, in this mountain, a banquet of well-oiled dishes, a banquet of wine kept on the dregs, of well-oiled dishes filled with marrow, of wine kept on the dregs, filtered."—Isa. 25:6.

³ "This Rich World of Ours Faces Famine" is the way an American Socialist newspaper headlined an article, under date of September 19, 1964. Even in the United States of America it is reported that widespread poverty exists in certain regions. Back in 1960 the late President John F. Kennedy was reported to have said: "The facts are that seventeen million Americans go to bed hungry every night." This meant about one-tenth of the country's total population back there. Four years later a \$950-million antipoverty bill was approved by the American Congress, and, at the time, President Lyndon B. Johnson said: "This Administration, here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty in America."

⁴ Back in 1959 the British historian Dr. Arnold J. Toynbee, when speaking before the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in Rome, said that the peoples of the world will have to keep the growth of the population under control.

3. What are indications on the matter of poverty in the United States of North America?

4. What warnings have been sounded by British historian Toynbee and Pope Paul VI?

Mankind must do this, he said, if it "is now going to save itself from the casualties formerly inflicted upon it by pestilence and war." He warned: "Sooner or later, food production will reach its limit." (New York Times, November 3, 1959) In the first Christmas message that the ruler of Vatican State, Pope Paul VI, delivered on December 23, 1963, he agreed that the world's leading problem is that of putting an end to physical hunger, but he was not willing to have Roman Catho-



lics help solve the problem by birth control, which control he termed "illicit."

⁵ The increase in the world's population each year has come to be so great that it has been called a "world population explosion." Back in 1961 the world population went up by 50 million. But now the year's increase is 63,000,000, according to a report to the United Nations in 1964. It reported that the world population is gaining at a record rate; the annual rate of increase is rising. Not only in Asia, where almost half of mankind live, is the growth very great, but in Latin America the population, which was at 200,000,000 last year, is growing so rapidly that it is expected to double in twenty years; and the study made by the United Nations estimates that by the end of this century it will rise to from 625,000,000 to 750,000,000. In fact, that United Nations study sees the people of the entire world doubling by the year 2000 C.E., getting near to six billion or even past that.

⁶ The trouble about this situation is that the increase in the number of people is exceeding that of food production. In 1963-1964 there was a record production of several commodities and increase in many harvests, but this increase in food production was too small to counterbalance the growth of the world's population. So the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization reported from Rome, Italy, last September 11. Some time earlier the Director General of the F.A.O. said that, because of this imbalance between world population growth and food production increase since the second world war, "up to half of the world's population, 1,500 millions, suffer from hunger or malnutrition

5. During the past several years what has happened to the world population, and what is foreseen for it by 2000 C.E.?

6. What causes the trouble about this situation, and since World War II what has the world situation come to be as regards hunger?

or both."—New York *Times*, as of September 12, 1964, and November 20, 1963.

⁷ What, then, is the greatest danger that threatens mankind at its own hands? Not warfare with nuclear bombs and bacteriological and radiological weapons, but this food problem due to the world's rapid population growth. Even though a third world war never came, this food problem would remain and grow worse till the breaking point was reached. This danger was warned against by the well-known columnist Arthur Krock, in an article entitled "The Most Dangerous Bomb of All." He said:

⁸ "In the rush of the great nations to produce nuclear weapons capable of agonizing mass destruction . . . , their Governments have paid small attention to the limitation of a more dangerous instrument for the destruction of civilization that is swiftly being assembled. The social scientists have named this weapon 'the population bomb,' . . . The Population Reference Bureau . . . has been laboring ever since to awaken the people of the world to their self-produced menace which in maturity can infest the planet with . . . 'billions of half-alive starving peasants, condemned to short, miserable lives of hatred and hunger.' . . . The 'more than half of the world's population' that live in crowded areas, 'disease-ridden, poverty-stricken, illiterate,' are on the verge of a population explosion, wrote Professor Notestein."

⁹ Later, columnist Krock, under the heading "Chief Problem on Earth Gets Some Attention," wrote: "The formulae for a glowing future . . . omit even mention of a trend which, if unregulated, will crowd the planet by 2000 A.D. with millions more people than its resources can provide for. This problem has been aptly termed 'the population bomb', because it

7-9. (a) What, then, is the greatest danger threatening mankind, of its own making? (b) According to columnist Arthur Krock, what is the "most dangerous bomb of all," and in what respects?

has the explosive potential of doubling the number of inhabitants of countries which cannot decently house, feed, employ, etc., those they have. . . . 'Not talking about it because it is controversial and uncomfortable is a luxury . . . we cannot afford.'" —New York Times, as of October 2 and November 13, 1959.

¹⁰ Certainly in the face of such world trends our talking here about a "coming banquet for all the peoples" seems unreasonable. But is it? Of course, if treating all the peoples of earth with a banquet depended upon the combined food producers, the politicians, the religious leaders, the sociologists and the scientists, the prediction of such a banquet would seem far-fetched. However, it does not depend upon men who, since the year 1914, have been caught in an "anguish of nations, not knowing the way out," as Jesus Christ predicted nineteen centuries ago. (Luke 21: 25) It depends upon the Almighty God, the Creator of us and of the planet on which we live. In his loving-kindness toward his human creation Almighty God has promised this banquet of good things to eat and drink. He has had this promise put down in writing, so that we can read it with our own eyes. He put his name to this promise and for the honor of his name he must make it good.

¹¹ God never failed in even one of his promises that was due to be fulfilled before now. Because of his reliability, he will not fail in his promise to provide a banquet for all the peoples. So the question for each one of us to ask ourselves in all seriousness is, Will I accept God's invitation to that banquet? One way by which to show whether you will accept his invitation is your being willing, your being interested

10. Is our talking about a "coming banquet for all the peoples" therefore unreasonable, and what fact affects our answering aright?

11. What question is it therefore fitting for us to ask ourselves, and why?

enough, to listen now to the good news about it. Are you?

TIME OF ITS FULFILLMENT

¹² Then let us take the Holy Bible and turn to the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter twenty-five, verse six, and read this inspired promise in God's own name: "And Jehovah of armies will certainly make for all the peoples, in this mountain, a banquet of well-oiled dishes, a banquet of wine kept on the dregs, of well-oiled dishes filled with marrow, of wine kept on the dregs, filtered."

¹³ Let us note, please, that Jehovah of armies has promised to prepare this rich banquet at a place that he calls "this mountain." There are many mountains on the earth, but which one is this? It is the one in which Jehovah of armies is most interested.

¹⁴ Hebrew was the language in which Jehovah God first gave his announcement of a banquet for all the peoples, and in less than ten lines above this verse (Isa. 25: 6) in the Hebrew text he names the very mountain where the banquet will be made. There we read these words about God's kingdom: "And the full moon has become abashed, and the glowing sun has become ashamed, for Jehovah of armies has become king in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and in front of his elderly men with glory." (Isa. 24:23) So glorious will be God's kingdom that the gleaming full moon will not be able to compare with it in glory, nor even the glowing sun at high noon. They will, so to speak, become ashamed of themselves.

¹⁵ At the mere mention of Mount Zion, many persons might think that this has

12, 13. What promise does Jehovah make in Isaiah 25:6, and what question arises as to the location?

14. Which mountain does Isaiah 24:23 identify as the one, and why will moon and sun become ashamed of themselves, as it were?

15, 16. Are people right in not looking to Zionism or the present-day earthly Jerusalem for the promised banquet, and why is the correct answer so?

something to do with "Zionism," but they are wrong. This has nothing to do with the modern movement called Zionism, which was begun as a political movement by Jews throughout the earth in 1897 but which not even all Jews believe in or support.

¹⁶ Neither does this have anything to do with the Jerusalem of today, as the ancient walled city is now a Moslem possession and the modern city to the west, outside the walled city, is a Jewish city, the capital of the Republic of Israel. Also, as regards the original Mount Zion, on which stood the city of David, this is not inside the walls of the present-day Moslem city of Jerusalem although it still belongs to the Moslem kingdom of Jordan. So the people in general are right in not looking to the political movement of the Zionists or the present-day Jerusalem for the enjoyment of God's promised banquet for all the peoples.

¹⁷ Could there, then, be another Mount Zion and another Jerusalem to which to look for the realization of God's promise of making a banquet for all the peoples? It is a long time since God made the promise. God made the promise through his prophet Isaiah about the year 732 before our Common Era began; which means about 2,696 years ago, Isaiah's book of prophecy being finished about then. How do we know whether this hoary prophecy has any value today? How can we be sure that this prophecy of a banquet applies to our time or to the near future? Happily the voice of inspiration or the pen of inspiration helps us to get the satisfactory answer to the question. How so? Well, one of the inspired Bible writers was the Christian apostle named Paul. He, in particular, gives us the inspired key to the right answer.

17. Why is there doubt about the value of this promise of a banquet today, and who helps us to locate the time of its application?

¹⁸ This man Paul, who became a Christian after Jesus died and was resurrected in the year 33 of our Common Era, wrote an inspired letter to the Christian congregation in Corinth, Greece, about the year 55 C.E. In this letter he quoted from Isaiah, chapter twenty-five, from right after the prophecy about the banquet. Now, what does Jehovah God go on to say right after he announces the coming banquet for all the peoples? He makes another reference to "this mountain" and says these remarkable words: "And in this mountain he will certainly swallow up the face of the envelopment that is enveloping over all the peoples, and the woven work that is interwoven upon all the nations. He will actually swallow up death forever, and the Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces. And the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for Jehovah himself has spoken it." (Isa. 25: 7, 8) For a certainty, all the nations stand to benefit by the realization of this prophecy.

¹⁹ Well, now, in his letter to the Corinthian congregation the apostle Paul speaks at length about the resurrection from the dead, and, when bringing his chapter of the resurrection of the spiritual Christians to a thrilling climax, Paul quotes from Isaiah 25:8 and applies it. He says: "For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised up incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this which is corruptible must put on incorruption, and this which is mortal must put on immortality. But when this which is corruptible puts on incorruption and this which is mortal puts on immortality, then the saying will take place that is written: 'Death is swallowed up forever.' 'Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?' The sting

18. How does that man get tied up with enabling us to locate the prophecy's time of fulfillment?

19. What pertinent quotation does Paul make, and in what context?

producing death is sin, but the power for sin is the Law. But thanks to God, for he gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

²⁰ Those words, written in 1 Corinthians 15:52-57, were penned in the first century of our Common Era, but the words that the writer Paul quotes, "Death is swallowed up forever," were written in the eighth century before our Common Era. However, does the apostle Paul apply those quoted words to his own time, in the first century? No! He applies the words to the time of the "last trumpet," which sounds after God's kingdom, mentioned in verse fifty, is established. Paul applies the words as beginning to be fulfilled at the resurrection of those who will be joint heirs with Jesus Christ in the heavenly kingdom, which resurrection takes place after Jesus Christ has come into his kingdom and turns his attention downward to this earth, where a remnant of his faithful followers and joint heirs still remain alive. (1 Thess. 4:14-17; Rev. 12:1-17) In this way the apostle Paul locates the fulfillment of those words far into the future from his own day back there in the first century C.E.

²¹ In fact, the apostle Paul applies the time for the fulfillment of God's promise to "swallow up death forever" to our own time. How so? Because in our time since the year 1914 C.E. we have the world conditions and events proving that God's Messianic kingdom was born in the heavens and Jesus Christ his Son came into the kingdom in 1914, when World War I broke out and when an era of violence began that has only grown worse since that year.

20. To what time does Paul apply the fulfillment of the words quoted by him from Isaiah 25:8, and how do we figure that out?

21. To whose time does Paul apply the fulfillment of the quotation, and how do we know this?

²² In fact, the Bible's own time schedule connects up with the dates of world history and marks the year 1914 as the date for the birth of God's promised kingdom in the heavens. By Bible time-schedule measurements the "times of the Gentiles," or "the appointed times of the nations," ended in autumn of that year, and the things that Jesus Christ predicted nineteen centuries ago began being fulfilled in their foretold order. (Luke 21:5-24, AV, NW; Dan. 4:1-32; 12:1-4) So we are the ones who are living in the favored time when death must begin to be swallowed up, this miracle beginning first with the faithful dead followers of Jesus Christ who were promised a share with him in his heavenly kingdom. Revelation 20:4-6 calls theirs the "first resurrection." As it is a resurrection to life with Jesus Christ in the heavenly kingdom, it is a resurrection invisible to our eyes.—1 Cor. 15:50.

PLACE FOR THE BANQUET

²³ Something else follows as a result of the apostle Paul's application of Isaiah's prophecy concerning death. What? This heart-cheering fact: If the time for fulfilling this prophecy concerning the swallowing up of death has its beginning in our time, then God's promise of a banquet for all the peoples also has its beginning in our days. This banquet promise is part of the same prophecy concerning what Jehovah God will do in "this mountain." Hence we can begin thinking about accepting the invitation to it.

²⁴ God's kingdom by means of his Son Jesus Christ is in the heavens. How is it, then, that the prophecy of Isaiah 24:23

22. The year 1914 marks the end of what Biblically foretold period of time, and in what way is it a favored time in which we are living?

23. Since Paul locates the time of the fulfillment of God's promise concerning death, what else is true in consequence?

24. Since God's kingdom is in the heavens, why is it that Isaiah 24:23 speaks of His reigning in Mount Zion and Jerusalem?

foretells that "Jehovah of armies has become king in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and in front of his elderly men with glory"? It is because the Mount Zion and the Jerusalem in which this prophecy and the next succeeding prophecy are fulfilled are not the present-day Jerusalem and Mount Zion in the Middle East, but are the heavenly Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem.

²⁵ Ancient Jerusalem on Mount Zion, when it was a city faithful to Jehovah God and his worship, was a prophetic picture of the spiritual Jerusalem on the heavenly Mount Zion. In the Jerusalem of nineteen hundred years ago Jesus Christ was condemned to death and handed over to the Roman soldiers to be put to death on a stake, to which he was nailed. The apostle Paul shows the difference, therefore, between the earthly Jerusalem and the heavenly Jerusalem when he writes to his fellow Christians: "The Jerusalem today . . . is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother." (Gal. 4:25, 26) The Jerusalem that slavishly followed its religious leaders and witnessed the murder of Jesus Christ was later destroyed in the year 70 C.E.

²⁶ In this year of 1965 the city of the one living and true God is not any earthly Jerusalem, whose walls today do not even encircle earthly Mount Zion, but is the one named in Hebrews 12:22-24, where the Hebrew Christians are told: "You have approached a Mount Zion and a city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem, and myriads of angels, . . . and the congregation of the first-born who have been enrolled in the heavens, and God the Judge of all, . . . and Jesus the mediator of a new covenant."

25. Of what was ancient Jerusalem, when faithful, a prophetic picture, and how does Paul show a difference between that back there and the Jerusalem of his time?

26. According to Hebrews 12:22-24, what is today the city of the one living and true God?

²⁷ In the last book of the Bible, which records the vision seen by the apostle John, he saw this heavenly Mount Zion and saw standing upon it the once-sacrificed Son of God, Jesus Christ, together with the faithful followers who become joint heirs with him in the kingdom: "I saw, and, look! the Lamb standing upon the Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. . . . the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been bought from the earth." (Rev. 14:1-3) Thus on heavenly Mount Zion and in the heavenly Jerusalem Jehovah God reigns gloriously by his Son.

²⁸ So, then, "this mountain" in which Jehovah of armies makes for all the peoples the banquet of well-oiled dishes and of refined aged wine is a heavenly mountain, symbolically speaking. Does this mean that the peoples will have to go to the invisible, spiritual heavens in order to enjoy this banquet? Will they have to leave this earth? No! Where, then, will they be able to enjoy the banquet to which they are invited? It will be right here on earth, where today so much famine, poor distribution of food supplies, hunger, under-nourishment and slow starvation obtain among a rapidly growing world population. How will that be possible?

²⁹ It will be possible because this earth, God's creation, is the realm over which his heavenly kingdom rules. This earthly territory of God's kingdom will never be destroyed, and the race of mankind will never have to leave it. Prophetic Psalm ninety-seven, verse one, says to earth's inhabitants: "Jehovah himself has become king! Let the earth be joyful. Let the many islands rejoice." Even despite world conditions today we can rejoice.

27. On what mountain is God's kingdom located in Revelation 14:1-3?

28, 29. (a) In what mountain, therefore, does God make the promised banquet, and where will people enjoy it?

(b) How will it be possible for mankind to enjoy it there?

Accepting The Invitation to The Banquet

IN FULFILLMENT of the prophecy of Isaiah 25:6 Jehovah of armies prepares the banquet for all the peoples on earth in "this mountain," the lofty place of his heavenly kingdom. On the earthly Mount Zion of three thousand years ago, and in the city of Jerusalem of that time, King David ruled in the name of Jehovah. He represented Jehovah of armies as the real King over the nation and hence King David on Mount Zion was said to sit on "Jehovah's throne." David's wise son Solomon succeeded to that throne. (1 Chron. 11: 4-9; 29:23) On the heavenly Mount Zion the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was foreshadowed by King David, sits enthroned since the year 1914 C.E., sitting indeed on Jehovah's throne, that is, at the right hand of God. (Ps. 110:1, 2; Acts 2: 29-36; Rev. 3:21) By means of him God prepares the banquet.

² For this reason, if the peoples on this earthly territory of God's kingdom want to enjoy the banquet, they have to give

1, 2. (a) In what city did David rule as king over all Israel, and on whose throne did he sit? (b) Where does the one foreshadowed by King David sit ruling, and so what will be required of people on earth to enjoy the banquet?

their loyalty and devotion and obedience to this heavenly kingdom of God's dear Son. In order to do this they do not have to leave the earth and go to heaven.

³ Jehovah of armies has made possible this banquet for all the peoples by means of his Son Jesus Christ. How so? In this way: For almost six thousand years now all mankind have been dying, and at death they have quit eating and drinking. To eat and drink we have to live and stay in good health. In turn, to keep on living we have to eat and drink. All mankind have inherited sinfulness and death from the

first man on earth, who sinned against God the Creator and brought God's sentence of death upon himself before ever he became a father of children. (Rom. 5:12-14) Because of his rebellious sin against his Creator, the first man and his wife were driven from their perfect Paradise home in the garden of Eden, to die outside. Thus the ruining of the earth, and the famine, drought, hunger and starvation have come about as an outgrowth of man's sinfulness. Says the Christian apostle Paul: "The wages sin pays is death, but the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. 6:23.

⁴ In order to lift the condemnation of sin from mankind and remove its penalty death Jehovah God had his Son die sacrificially on earth as the perfect man Jesus Christ. He died childless, thus sacrificing even his right to become father to a perfect human race on earth. Long ago miraculous food sustained the life of his earthly nation for forty years when they traveled through a wilderness. Hence Jesus compared his

3. For whom has God made possible this banquet, and why do they need it?

4. How did God make the banquet possible by his Son, and how did the Son compare himself with food?

perfect sacrifice to such food. He said: "I am the bread of life. . . . I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread he will live forever; and, for a fact, the bread that I shall give is my flesh in behalf of the life of the world."—John 6:48-51.

⁵ Now this Son of God Jesus Christ is back in heaven and is reigning in his heavenly Father's kingdom, in full possession of the value of his human sacrifice, the "bread of life." Is it any wonder, then, that for the peoples of this earth to eat and live forever on earth, they have to recognize God's kingdom on the heavenly Mount Zion? They have to accept God's reigning Son, Jesus Christ, as their King, and they have to give him unwavering loyalty and obedience. They must do this by faith.

⁶ Their feeding on the heavenly "bread of life" by means of faith would, in itself, be a feast, a banquet, if it results in everlasting life. What banquet on earth today, no matter how rich in many dishes, gives the banqueters everlasting life? But those who bow to God's kingdom in the hands of his Son will do more than eat by means of faith. They will literally eat enjoyable earthly food to sustain that life forevermore in peace, health and happiness. Isaiah's prophecy of a banquet has a literal aspect to it and not wholly a spiritual aspect. The loyal and obedient peoples will literally eat dishes well-oiled, "filled with marrow," as it were, to sustain the heart and make the face shine. They will drink wine, well aged on the dregs and filtered, to make their hearts glad. (Ps. 104:14, 15) There will be no ill effects.

⁷ The prophecies tell of the prosperous conditions that will prevail on earth under

the royal government of God's dear Son. In the prophetic psalm regarding King Solomon it is written: "He will descend like the rain upon the mown grass, like copious showers that wet the earth. In his days the righteous one will sprout, and the abundance of peace until the moon is no more. And he will have subjects from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow. His fruit will be as in Lebanon, and those who are from the city will blossom like the vegetation of the earth." (Ps. 72:6-8, 16) Such a period of plenty marked the reign of King Solomon, but Jesus Christ, who was foreshadowed by Solomon, is greater than Solomon. (Matt. 12:42) Hence abundance far surpassing that of the days of King Solomon will be produced on earth under Christ's kingdom.

PARADISE RESTORED, MADE EARTH-WIDE

⁸ This abundance, which will be ample enough to satisfy the hunger and bodily needs of all mankind, will call for radical changes in the earth from what it is today. There was no want of food in the earthly Paradise in which God placed the first man and woman in their perfect, sinless condition. Under Christ's kingdom, which reigns on the heavenly Mount Zion, that Paradise will be restored and extended to the limits of the earth. Thus it will not be too small for *all* mankind to live in. So there was a wonderful meaning to the words of the dying Jesus Christ, when he said to the sympathetic man who was impaled on a stake beside him on that darksome day of Nisan 14, 33 C.E.: "Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in Paradise."—Luke 23:43, NW; Ro.

5. Where is the "bread of life" now, and so in order to eat and live forever what must the peoples of earth do?
6. (a) Why would feeding on the "bread of life" be, in itself, a banquet? (b) What aspects are there to the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy of a banquet?

7. How does Psalm 72 regarding Solomon foretell the prosperous conditions on earth under the kingdom of God's dear Son?

8. Under the Kingdom how will the earth be changed, in accord with Jesus' words to the sympathetic evildoer dying on the stake?

⁹ The beauty and abundance of that earth-wide paradise under God's kingdom is beyond our imagination. A prophetic description of it is given in the sixty-fifth psalm, addressed to God in Zion. In part, it says: "You have turned your attention to the earth, that you may give it abundance; you enrich it very much. The stream from God is full of water. You prepare their grain, for that is the way you prepare the earth. There is a drenching of its furrows, a leveling off of its clods; with copious showers you soften it; you bless its very sprouts. You have crowned the year with your goodness, and your very tracks drip with fatness. The pasture grounds of the wilderness keep dripping, and with joyfulness the very hills gird themselves. The pastures have become clothed with flocks, and the low plains themselves are enveloped with grain. They shout in triumph, yes, they sing."—Ps. 65: 1, 9-13.

¹⁰ To this description Psalm 67:6, 7 adds: "The earth itself will certainly give its produce; God, our God, will bless us. God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him."

¹¹ In that peaceful, warless world the prophecy of Micah 4:3, 4 will also work out in a literal way: "They will not lift up sword, nation against nation, neither will they learn war any more. 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."

MORE THAN MATERIAL FOOD

¹² More than just material food and drink will be provided for all the peoples who are

favored with living under God's kingdom by his Son Jesus Christ. Today the man that has everything that his heart could wish in the way of food and drink, including what the doctors of his health may prescribe, cannot keep himself alive forever. More than material food is needed now; more than natural food will be needed then under God's kingdom. Jesus Christ, even at the end of a forty-day fast, quoted God's own words and said: "It is written, 'Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth.'" (Matt. 4:4; Deut. 8:3) Even more than material food, spiritual food is needed, and this spiritual food is the Word of God. His Word is his instructions and his commandments telling us what to do. Living in harmony with his Word and the doing of his will serve as real life-sustaining food and drink for mankind.

¹³ The greatest man ever on earth, namely, Jesus Christ, pointed out that fact. On another occasion when he was hungry, and before eating the natural food offered to him, he said: "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." (John 4:34) In a warning against becoming victims of materialism Jesus said: "Guard against every sort of covetousness, because even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses." "For the soul is worth more than food and the body than clothing." (Luke 12:15, 23) There is the danger, especially for the hungry, to make material earthly food a god and to worship their belly as their god.

¹⁴ Years ago the Indian saint, Mahatma Gandhi, pointed to the frantic urge of India's underfed masses, living on one meal

9. What prophetic description is given of that earth-wide Paradise in Psalm 65?
 10. According to Psalm 67, what will the earth then give, and due to what?
 11. In what way will Micah 4:3, 4 work out as a prophecy?
 12. Will the providing of material food be enough for mankind under God's kingdom, and what did Jesus say about the means of living?

13. What did Jesus say about his own food and about the inadequacy of material abundance as regards life?
 14. In what form do hungry Indians want God to appear to them, but who else also can make their belly their god?

or less a day, to do this very thing. For publication he said: "To the millions who have to go without two meals a day the only acceptable form in which God dare appear is food." Yet not only the starving masses but also the ones abundantly provided for can make bodily food one of their false gods and treat their belly as a god and ignore the true God and his provisions for everlasting life.—Phil. 3:19; New York *Times Magazine*, December 20, 1959, page 28.

¹⁵ The prophet Moses warned the Israelites against the likelihood of their forgetting Jehovah God when they came into possession of the "land flowing with milk and honey" and enjoyed its abundance of good things. The result of this would be to turn to the worship of other gods and to earn destruction for themselves. (Deut. 8:10-20) Correspondingly, when Jesus Christ was on earth and was about to ascend back to heaven, he commanded his faithful followers to go to the very extremities of the inhabited earth and make disciples of people of all the nations by bringing to them spiritual food, namely, the things that he had commanded them. (Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:6-11) Consequently, if Jesus felt that way about it when he was down here on earth as a man, how much more would he feel the same way about it when he reigns as King on the heavenly Mount Zion?

¹⁶ In harmony with that fact the prophet Isaiah said concerning the reign of Jesus as a descendant of Jesse the father of King David: "Righteousness must prove to be the belt of his hips, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. . . . They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy

15. (a) Against what did Moses warn the Israelites after they got into the land of milk and honey? (b) How would Jesus, now reigning in heaven, feel about the food vital for mankind?

16. How does Isaiah 11:1-9 refer to spiritual food under Christ's kingdom, and what did Jesus say will mean life to mankind?

mountain; because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea." (Isa. 11:1-9) By growing in the knowledge of God and living in harmony with this spiritual food earth's inhabitants will gain everlasting life; for Jesus himself said in prayer to God: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ."—John 17:3.

THE DEAD TO ATTEND THE BANQUET

¹⁷ Today farsighted men of affairs are afraid that by the end of this century or shortly thereafter the earth will become filled with more people than it can provide for. Therefore, they believe that the population growth will have to be controlled and held down to a certain maximum for each generation. However, Jehovah God, who has prophesied a banquet for all the peoples, has no such fears. When he created the first man and woman and put them in the Paradise garden of Eden he told them to have many children and fill the earth, at the same time subduing it (not ruining it) and having domination over all the lower forms of animal life. (Gen. 1:20-28) The earth has never yet been filled with creatures to the extent that Jehovah God had in mind when talking to Adam and Eve. But the kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ will see to it that the earth is filled with human creatures in God's image and likeness and that the earth is everywhere subdued for the good of man and beast. To this end Almighty God has purposed for even the dead people in the graves to attend the earth-wide banquet.

¹⁸ Immediately after announcing the banquet God inspired his prophet Isaiah to

17. (a) What fears of farsighted men of today did God not have when blessing Adam and Eve in Eden? (b) So God has purposed that who also should attend the earth-wide banquet?

18, 19. How is there, as it were, an envelopment over all the peoples, and a woven work upon all the nations?

add: "And in this mountain he will certainly swallow up the face of the envelopment that is enveloping over all the peoples, and the woven work that is interwoven upon all the nations. He will actually swallow up death forever, and the Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces."—Isa. 25:7, 8.

¹⁹ In order that there may be unbounded, unmixed joy at God's banquet for all peoples, is there not a need for God to do this? Is there not something that envelops all the peoples like a gloom out of which they can find no way of escape to brighter conditions and freer, enlightened movement? Is there not something woven, some web, that has been interwoven upon all the nations that keeps them from seeing clearly, that blocks their clear, unhindered vision of God, that prevents their having his full favor, that spreads itself like a condemnation over them, like a death shroud? The confused, perplexed, alarmed, unhappy, hopeless state of all peoples and nations today answers Yes.

²⁰ The Most High God looks down from above upon the face of this envelopment over all the peoples. He has purposed to remove it according to his promise to bless all the families of the earth. "In this mountain," that is to say, by means of his kingdom on the heavenly Mount Zion, he will swallow up this bedarkening thing, this interference which prevents the light of his glorious truth from shining through and making men free. (John 8:32; 2 Cor. 6:14-16; 4:4-6) He will swallow up this web work of condemnation that has spread itself over all the nations because of inborn sin, inherited from our disobedient first parents. He has made ample provision for lifting this condemnation by the sin-removing sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ now the King. (John 1:29, 36)

20. How will God swallow up these things "in this mountain"?

What a relief that will be to all who live to see it come in!

²¹ However, the benefit of this will not be for only the living. It will be also for the billions of dead mankind. How would God "swallow up death forever" if he left death that we inherited from sinner Adam reigning over all its victims? How would God "wipe the tears from all faces" if he left people bereaved of their relatives and other loved ones by that great enemy Death? For God to make good his prophetic promise he must raise the dead, without fear of overcrowding the earth. In view of his wisdom and power the earth will not become too crowded by resurrecting the dead.

²² The swallowing up of death forever will not be confined to the 144,000 joint heirs who inherit the heavenly kingdom with Jesus Christ and to whom first the apostle Paul applied the glorious prophecy, in 1 Corinthians 15:54. More than these 144,000 who are redeemed from the earth have died or yet die. If death is to be swallowed up forever it must be wiped out with regard to all the rest of mankind, and it will be. In the very last book of the Bible, Revelation, in its second-last chapter, part of Isaiah's prophecy is quoted. Why? To give us a final guarantee of the resurrection of the dead. In the Revelation the apostle John sees the heavenly kingdom of God coming into full power over the earth and transforming earthly conditions, producing a "new earth."

²³ Then John hears a voice from God's throne quote Isaiah's prophecy and say: "Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be

21. For whose benefit will all this be, and what is God obliged to do to make good his prophetic promise of Isaiah 25:8?

22, 23. (a) Because of Paul's quotation from Isaiah 25:8, does this promise apply only to the 144,000? (b) Where else also is part of that prophecy quoted, in what context, and to give what guarantee?

with them. And *he will wipe out every tear from their eyes*, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be any more. The former things have passed away." (Rev. 21:1-4; Isa. 25:8) On the basis of this the dead will be able to receive and accept God's invitation to the rich banquet.

²⁴ What will then be the attitude of the peoples toward God? What will their attitude then be toward God's people? Today those believers who have dedicated their lives to Jehovah God through his Son Jesus Christ have many enemies throughout the earth and are reproached by these. The public records and court records are full of cases of the persecution against Jehovah's witnesses. Jesus Christ himself foretold that it would be so; he himself as Jehovah's chief witness was reproached and cruelly put to death by the religious leaders of his day. (Matt. 24:9; 10:22, 23, 34-36) But at the time of the banquet for all the peoples, the living and the dead, there will be a change. Isaiah 25:8 shows the result of Jehovah's doing all these loving things for mankind, by adding: "And the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for Jehovah himself has spoken it." Jehovah will indeed vindicate his witnesses and prove himself to be the true God.

²⁵ Happy and fully satisfied will be all those who have dedicated themselves to him to be his people, his witnesses. The next verse of the prophecy assures us of this, saying: "And in that day one will certainly say: 'Look! This is our God. We have hoped in him, and he will save us. This is Jehovah. We have hoped in him. Let us be joyful and rejoice in the salvation by him.'"—Isa. 25:9.

²⁶ Is this not the kind of God that all

right-minded, appreciative people will want? Is this not the kind of God in whom to hope? He will never disappoint or shatter our hopes, if we wait for him to make good his Word. We can already rejoice in his provisions for our everlasting salvation. Unable to keep the present benefits thereof to ourselves, we are eager to share our joy with others. We shall yet rejoice in our everlasting complete salvation by him through his reigning King, Jesus Christ.

ALL INTERFERERS REMOVED FOREVER

²⁷ At present there is a great interference to the full realization of this banquet for all the peoples. This interference must be taken away; we must yet be saved from it. Do we see what that interference is? It is the oppressive, ungodly organization of man's greatest living enemy, Satan the Devil. This organization must yet be destroyed. The visible part of it must be violently removed from the earth, for the earth belongs to God the Creator and is the realm of his kingdom. The full removal of that visible organization is prophesied under symbols in Isaiah, chapter twenty-five. In the prophet's day the nation of Moab was part of the Devil's visible organization and acted devilishly. At times the prophet's own people had suffered at Moab's hands, and it came to be one of the conspirators against Jehovah's people. (Ps. 83:2-8) Using Moab as a symbol of the Devil's earthly political organization, Isaiah 25:10-12 goes on to say:

²⁸ "For the hand of Jehovah will settle down on this mountain, and Moab must be trodden down in its place as when a straw heap is trodden down in a manure place. And he must slap out his hands in the midst of it as when a swimmer slaps them out to swim, and he must abase its

24. What thing, now being suffered from their enemies, will then be taken away from Jehovah's people? And why?

25, 26. According to Isaiah 25:9, with whom will the people then be satisfied, and in what shall we yet rejoice?

27, 28. (a) What is the great interference from which we must yet be saved? (b) Of what is the nation of Moab used as a symbol here, and what does Isaiah 25:10-12 say about it?

haughtiness with the tricky movements of his hands. And the fortified city, with your high walls of security, he must lay low; he must abase it, bring it into contact with the earth, to the dust."

²⁹ In fulfillment of that prophecy, in "this mountain," that is to say, in the heavenly Mount Zion, the hand of Jehovah of armies will settle down and exert its power, to do away with those on earth who would interfere with his announced banquet. In his capacity as the "Lord of sabbath," or "Jehovah of armies," he has at hand powerful executional forces under the command of his Son Jesus Christ the King. Under these the visible political organization of Satan the Devil, symbolized by the nation of Moab, will be trodden down, crushed, just as a "straw heap is trodden down in a manure place." By such executional armies Jehovah of armies will deal destructive blows at the Devil's visible political organization, just as when a swimmer in ancient times slapped the water with succeeding strokes. Its fortified protective places with (as it were) "high walls of security" will be beaten down and laid low in the dust, never to be rebuilt again.

³⁰ Thus the Devil's visible political organization will be knocked off its haughty perch. But first Babylon the Great, which is the world empire of false Babylonish religion, will be brought down to everlasting ruin. (Rev. 17:1-18) The religious empire of Babylon the Great was foreshadowed by the ancient city on the banks of the Euphrates River, Babylon, which was outstandingly *the enemy city* in the history of ancient Israel. She was the great oppressor of Jehovah's people. In the year 607 B.C.E. she destroyed the city of Jeru-

salem and its temple to Jehovah and deported the surviving Israelites to the distant territory of Babylon. There she held them in slavery until the Persian conqueror, Cyrus the Great, released them in 537 B.C.E., after he had overthrown Babylon as a world power. So no city matches better the unnamed city spoken of in the opening verses of Isaiah, chapter twenty-five, than does Babylon the Great, the oppressive, tyrannical world empire of false religion. Jehovah destroys her. Hence Isaiah says:

³¹ "O Jehovah, you are my God. I exalt you, I laud your name, for you have done wonderful things, counsels [of Jehovah] from early times, in faithfulness, in trustworthiness. For you have made a city a pile of stones, a fortified town a crumbling ruin, a dwelling tower of strangers to be no city, which will not be rebuilt even to time indefinite. That is why those who are a strong people will glorify you; the town of the tyrannical nations, they will fear you. [Why?] For you have become a stronghold to the lowly one, a stronghold to the poor one in the distress that he has, a refuge from the rainstorm, a shade from the heat, when the blast of the tyrannical ones is like a rainstorm against a wall. Like the heat in a waterless country, the noise of strangers [the invading conquerors] you subdue, the heat with the shadow of a cloud. The melody itself of the tyrannical ones becomes suppressed."—Isa. 25:1-5.

³² When these religious and political oppressors of Jehovah's people are destroyed, the eyewitnesses on earth will exalt Jehovah still more enthusiastically as their God. They will laud his name because of his having fulfilled their hopes and having saved them. (Isa. 25:1, 9) There will thus be on earth no more people who interfere with his purpose to spread a banquet

29. (a) Where will Jehovah's hand settle down, and for what purpose? (b) Like whom will Jehovah slap out his hands, by what means, and with what effect?

30, 31. (a) But what first must be destroyed on earth, and how was it anciently symbolized? (b) What, therefore, is the "city" prophetically spoken of in Isaiah 25:1-5?

32. What will the surviving eyewitnesses of the fulfillment of that prophecy do, and how will Jehovah God then rule?

of rich things to eat and drink for all the peoples. Jehovah of armies will rule as triumphant King in the heavenly Jerusalem on the heavenly Mount Zion, without a rival on earth. He will have put all the enemies of his anointed Jesus Christ as a stool for his feet, by the utter destruction of them.—Ps. 110:1-6; Isa. 24:23.

³³ Then by means of his reigning Son, Jesus Christ, who is the "Bread of Life,"

33. (a) What will Jehovah then make in "this mountain," and who will enjoy it? (b) Hence how can we be happy today?

Jehovah will make in the mountain of His kingdom this long-promised banquet for all the peoples. The living survivors of the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Armageddon will enjoy it, and also the billions of the human dead who will be resurrected. Surely the appreciative ones will then accept God's gracious invitation to the banquet and will eat and drink to life eternal. Happy are we today if we spread this good news everywhere!

BABYLON'S FALL TURN THE TIDE OF HISTORY

YOU may wonder why the Bible has so much to say about the fall of Babylon, especially its fall in 539 B.C.E. to Cyrus, though the city was not destroyed at that time but continued for some centuries afterward. Readers of history have similarly asked why historians have said so much about this particular overthrow of the city. An excerpt from history gives us the answer:

Military conquest affected the fortunes of Babylon at many critical stages in its history. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that the capitulation to Cyrus in 539 B.C., should be designated 'The Fall of Babylon,' as if no other like event had occurred in the city's history. Even the submission of Babylon to Alexander [the Great] in 331 B.C. pales in importance when compared with the disaster which brought the Neo-Babylonian empire to a close.

A reasonable explanation of this phenom-

enon commends itself to the inquirer. Cyrus' capture of Babylon brought about far-reaching consequences. Its subjugation by Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal had not removed the balance of power from Semitic control, but the triumph of Persia in 539 B.C. introduced a new predominating influence in ancient Oriental developments. That date marks the turning-point in favor of Aryan leadership, a directing force which has maintained itself at the forefront of civilization down to the present day.—*Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, by R. P. Dougherty, page 167.

Says *The Encyclopedia Americana*, Volume 2, page 441b: "The fall of Babylon before the advance of Cyrus meant the fall of Semitic sway in Babylonia and the rise of Aryan power."—Edition of 1929.*

* Says page 65 of the book *On the Road to Civilization* (1937), by Heckel and Sigman: "With the opening of the gate of Ishtar to Cyrus, twenty-two centuries of Semitic supremacy ended and the Persian Empire became a power in the East." (Continued on the next page.)

Since it was such an important event, and since Babylon's fall is an outstanding Bible theme, it is good for us to have some of the details of what happened on Babylon's fatal night. It will help us to see greater significance in the Bible's account and to understand how it paints a prophetic picture of something greater to take place in connection with Babylon the Great in our day, as will be discussed in later issues of *The Watchtower*.

It is of interest to observe how easily this great city fell to Cyrus the Persian on the history-making night of Tishri 16 in 539 B.C.E. Mainly, it occurred in this way because it had been foretold by Jehovah's prophets, and he saw to it that his prophecies were carried out. Why were the inhabitants of Babylon so careless and unwatchful when they knew the armies of Cyrus were camped outside the city? 'Ah,' they thought, 'the defenses of Babylon are strong and the city is amply supplied with provisions, so let Cyrus try to take Babylon.' Even though the Babylonians under King Nabonidus had been beaten in the open field of battle and Nabonidus had taken refuge in Borsippa, a short distance southwest of Babylon, the Babylonians felt that, behind the walls of Babylon, they could laugh to scorn any besieger. They thought that any army besieging Babylon would wear out (and it might have been so with Cyrus had he not gained the easy access to the city that he did). Additionally, this was the night of a certain festival, and Belshazzar probably selected this as an opportunity to display his contempt of the besieger Cyrus before his thousand grandees.

Following the example of their king, the Babylonians gave themselves up for the night to orgies, filling the city with noises

Says page 236 of *The Dawn of Civilization* (1940), by Engberg: 'Moreover, Cyrus was the first great Aryan conqueror of whom we know, and through his efforts the Semites, long the lords of western Asia, lost control until the coming of the Arabs a thousand years later.'

of religious frenzy and drunken excess. But what was going on outside the walls? A most unexpected thing. Cyrus had taken a large section of his army up the Euphrates River, above Babylon. Here he had set them to work digging a canal or canals to drain off the water of the Euphrates before it reached the city. In the still darkness of the night outside Babylon's walls, the force of Medes and Persians left by Cyrus gathered at one end of the city where the Euphrates entered, near the Ishtar Gate, and at the other extremity of the city where the Euphrates flowed out. Eagerly they watched the receding waters. They would naturally be apprehensive that someone might notice the dropping water level and sound the alarm. So far, no cry was raised. The Babylonian watchmen seemed fully absorbed in the revelry. But the night was wearing on, and the invaders could not afford to wait until the river was completely drained. As soon and as silently as possible, they poured into the riverbed, sloshing almost up to their thighs, as they made for the nearest gates. Had the Babylonians been at all on the alert they could easily have trapped the Medo-Persian invaders and annihilated them with missiles from the top of the walls before they could even get out with their own lives by the way they had come. But the hapless Babylonians within the city were entirely oblivious to what went on outside. The only sounds coming to the invaders' ears were sounds of festivity.

One who peered into the darkness between the canyon-like Babylonian walls would have seen shadowy groups approach the gates, growing in size as hundreds of the attackers came up the river banks to reinforce their numbers. As they had hoped, the gates were carelessly left open. The Babylonians had depended on the river for defense rather than the gates. The guards at the gates were overpowered, but

Babylonian runners started for the king's palace from both extremities of the city with the alarming news. Cyrus gave orders that the soldiers should kill anyone blocking their way to the palace. 'If anyone shouts at you, shout back as though you are fellow Babylonian revelers. Do not waste time hunting out those who run into the houses. On with all haste to Belshazzar's palace!' As the Medes and Persians rushed through the streets, no Babylonian missiles rained down on them from the housetops. Every factor seemed to be on the side of the attackers.

Now the runners began to reach Belshazzar, one with the breathless report that the invaders had entered the end of the city from which he had come; on his heels another, saying the city had been taken at the other extremity. Paralyzed with fear, what would Belshazzar do? Would he commit suicide? About this time a noise is heard at the palace gates. We leave it for a historian to describe the cause of the disturbance and what ensued:

And Gobryas [Ugbaru the governor of Gutium] and Gadatas and their troops found the gates leading to the palace locked, and those who had been appointed to attack the guard fell upon them as they were drinking by a blazing fire, and without waiting they dealt with them as with foes.

But, as a noise and tumult ensued, those within heard the uproar, and at the king's command to see what the matter was, some of them opened the gates and ran out.

And when Gadatas and his men saw the gates open they dashed in in pursuit of the others as they fled back into the palace, and dealing blows right and left they came into the presence of the king, and they found him already risen with his dagger in his hand.

And Gadatas and Gobryas [Ugbaru] and their followers overpowered him; and those about the king perished also, one where he had sought some shelter, another while running away, another while actually trying

to defend himself with whatever he could.*

Succinctly the Bible notes the fate of Belshazzar: "In that very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed, and Darius the Mede himself received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old." —Dan. 5:30, 31.

Events that followed during that historical night are described in Xenophon's historical work entitled "The Education of Cyrus" (written about 370 B.C.E.).

Cyrus then sent the companies of cavalry around through the streets and gave them orders to cut down all whom they found out of doors, while he directed those who understood Assyrian to proclaim to those in their houses that they should stay there, for if anyone should be caught outside, he would be put to death.

While they were thus occupied, Gadatas and Gobryas came up, and first of all they did homage to the gods, seeing that they had avenged themselves upon the wicked king, and then they kissed Cyrus's hands and his feet with many tears of joy.

And when day dawned and those in possession of the citadels discovered that the city was taken and the king slain, they surrendered the citadel, too.

And Cyrus at once took possession of the citadels and sent up to them guards and officers of the guards. As for the dead, he gave their relatives permission to bury them. He furthermore ordered the heralds to make proclamation that all Babylonians deliver up their arms; and he ordered that wherever arms should be found in any house, all the occupants should be put to the sword. So they delivered up their arms and Cyrus stored them in the citadels, so that they might be ready if he ever needed them for use.—¶31-34, Section VII, chapter 5.

After the capture of Babylon, Cyrus marched against Borsippa, where Naboni-

* Quoted from the translation of the *Cyropaedia* (or, *The Education of Cyrus*), by the ancient Greek historian and general, Xenophon (VII, 5:27-30). It is believed that the Gobryas mentioned by Xenophon may refer to Ugbaru the governor of Gutium, whom the Nabonidus Chronicle mentions as having conquered Babylon for Cyrus the Persian and who is not the same as Gubaru who appointed governors in Babylon for Cyrus.—See *Darius the Mede* (page 75, footnote), by J. C. Whitcomb, Jr.

Concerning Gobryas as Ugbaru, see also *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, by R. P. Dougherty, pages 170-173, 175, 180, 184, 185, 187, 188, 192, 195, 196, 198, 199.

dus, the first ruler of Babylon, had taken refuge, for Nabonidus might be able to gather forces enough to become a formidable foe. But Nabonidus did not put up a fight; instead he came out in surrender to Cyrus. Cyrus extended mercy to Nabonidus as a reward for his submission. He spared his life, but is said to have deported him to Carmania, making him governor of that important province. Nabonidus, being a man who was interested in matters of history and archaeology, left behind inscriptions, one of which is known as the Nabonidus Chronicle. (*The Encyclopedia Americana*, edition of 1929, Volume 19, page 677)* Thus perished the Babylonian Empire.

Although Babylon fell on Tishri 16 (October 5-6), 539 B.C.E., Cyrus did not enter into the city himself until seventeen days after Babylon had been occupied by his troops. This was on the third day of Marchesvan (October 22-23). Receiving a good welcome from the Babylonians, he proclaimed peace to the city and treated its inhabitants with leniency. Eight days later his main general, Ugbaru (Gobryas), died, and a period of mourning followed. King Cyrus had a governor with him, namely, Gubaru; and when Cyrus made his entry, this Gubaru appointed governors in Babylon.†

Who was Darius the Mede, mentioned at Daniel 5:31? At the present time there is some difficulty in proving this matter from the uninspired pagan documents. It may be that in the future more documents will be discovered that will clarify the question. But the argument is strong that

he was the same as Cyrus' governor named Gubaru.*

Jehovah, as the handwriting on King Belshazzar's palace walls had indicated, did divide Babylon's kingdom between the Medes and Persians, for Darius the Mede ruled first. God's infallible Word speaks of him as a king and recounts that he "set up over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, who were to be over the whole kingdom." (Dan. 6:1, 2) At Daniel 9:1 he speaks of the "first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes, who had been made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans." His was a short reign, Cyrus the Persian soon taking the title of King of Babylon, King of Countries. So the throne of Babylon was divided and given first to the Medes, then to the Persians. For a time Cyrus continued to reign from Babylon, which he had overthrown but not destroyed.

The fall of Babylon, then, meant the downfall of the Third World Power of sacred history and the installation of the Fourth World Power, Medo-Persia. Medo-Persia was the world power seen as successor to Babylon in two visions by Daniel the prophet during the reign of Belshazzar, at Daniel 7:5 and 8:3, 4, 20.

The fall of Babylon meant much to true worship and to God's chosen people, for the Jews were released by Cyrus to go back to Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple. But a second and greater significance attaches to the fall of Babylon, for it foreshadows the fall of Babylon the Great, which has held many people in captivity to false religion and has made them suffer oppression and misery. Knowing the details of ancient Babylon's fall and the prophecies in connection with it will enable us to save our lives by getting out and staying out of Babylon the Great.

* See also Berossus, a Babylonian priest of Bel, about 250 B.C.E. He wrote about his people with the aid of cuneiform sources, but wrote in Greek. His works have disappeared, but the Jewish historian Josephus and also historian Eusebius Pamphilus have preserved fragments of Berossus' writings. See *Contra Apionem*, Book I, section 20, by Josephus. The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, edition of 1955, Volume 1, page 368a, says Nabonidus was imprisoned.

† See *Babylonian Problems* (page 201), by W. H. Lane, 1923 Edition.

* See chapter 7 of *Darius the Mede*, published in 1959 in the United States of America, by John C. Whitecomb, Jr.

The Joy of Sharing God's Truths

LAWYER USES THE BIBLE

In Rio de Janeiro, Guanabara, Brazil, a lawyer had an experience that brought him a great deal of joy. He related it to one of Jehovah's witnesses: "I was visited by a couple who intended to get a separation on religious grounds. The husband was Lutheran, the wife, Baptist. At the direction of his minister, the husband wanted their children to follow his religion; the wife, also at the direction of her minister, insisted that the children be educated in the Baptist Church. It was really a big problem."

The lawyer advised the couple to invite their respective pastors to visit his office the next day. The ministers stood firm for their requirements. They alleged: "There is only one way out: separation, otherwise the children will have to suffer for their parents' mistakes."

Opening the Bible, the lawyer showed the four of them that, according to God's law, religious problems are not a valid ground for a legal separation; only adultery is. The couple agreed and thanked the lawyer for his Biblical advice. At this the Lutheran pastor exclaimed: "Doctor, I feel so insignificant that, being a minister, I appealed to man's justice, whereas you, a lawyer, appealed to God's justice. Where did you learn so much about the Bible?" The lawyer stated that he had learned it from Jehovah's witnesses.

At this, the Baptist minister exclaimed: "Not with Jehovah's witnesses?" The lawyer then assured him that in his search for truth he had inquired of many of the so-called wise ones in Bible knowledge of various religious denominations, but he had never had his questions answered until he met Jehovah's witnesses. "Yes, they are the true disciples of Jesus Christ," said the lawyer, "and my doors are always open to them."

WALLS WITH EARS

A witness of Jehovah in New Jersey reports what happened when she was conducting a home Bible study with a lady in an apartment house. "One day after our study was over and I had left, the next-door neighbor visited the person I had just studied with. The neighbor explained that she had been

listening to the Bible study through the walls! She had found it so interesting that she wanted to learn more about the Bible. She wondered if I would study with her also. I was told of this conversation when I returned the following week. After the study was over, I called on the next-door neighbor and arranged for a Bible study with her. I am overjoyed to report that she is progressing very well in Bible knowledge, and her sister is also showing interest, sitting in on the study."

LIVING NOW WITH A HOPE

A witness of Jehovah who lives in Kentucky had this experience: "New neighbors moved in next door—a man and his 17-year-old son. Shortly after we had got acquainted, the boy was killed in an auto accident. Since the funeral was out of state, I offered to pick up the mail each day. I was elated to find that he subscribed for both *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* I joyfully awaited the opportunity to discuss Bible truths with him. Opportunity soon presented itself when he came to visit my husband and me. The subject of death came up and we pointed out what a wonderful resurrection hope the Bible offers. This was a new idea to him. We looked up scriptures in the Bible showing that man is a soul, that the soul dies and that man's only hope is in a resurrection. He listened intently and it was in the early hours of the morning before he went home."

"The next morning and each evening that week he was back again with questions. I suggested he have a home Bible study, which he was eager to have. He has taken deep interest in the study and has been attending the Kingdom Hall regularly on Sunday. This man's mother recently brought us great joy when she said: 'I'll be eternally grateful to you people for what you've done for my son. It used to be he'd get up in the morning and couldn't eat. He'd say, What's the use—I have no purpose for living now. But since he's been studying the Bible with you, he can eat and, best of all, he has a hope for the future.' Certainly Jesus Christ's words at Acts 20:35, 'There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving,' could never be truer."

Questions from Readers

- When one goes to Jehovah in prayer, what is one to imagine Jehovah to be like, or what should one think of?

In the visions given to Daniel, Ezekiel and to the apostle John, we have in symbols some idea of the magnificent glory of Jehovah. (Dan. 7:9, 10; Ezek. 1:26-28; Rev. 4:1-3) Yet it is to be remembered that the Israelites did not see any form on the day when Jehovah spoke to them at Mount Horeb. The reason was that it did not please Jehovah to allow them to make any representation of him, "a carved image, the form of any symbol, the representation of male or female, the representation of any beast that is in the earth."—Deut. 4:15-19.

In the case of Christians, there is nothing for us to imagine in the way of Jehovah's form, though Biblical visions might pass through our minds when we pray. Remember that "God is a Spirit." (John 4:24) When praying we should think in terms of Jehovah's magnificence and of his marvelous qualities, rather than trying to imagine his form. By study of the Bible, we have seen how Jehovah has mightily dealt with his people in times past and we know of his just and loving arrangements for the future. So in faith we do not need pictures or representations when we go to Jehovah in prayer. "We are walking by faith, not by sight." (2 Cor. 5:7) Think of Jehovah as our heavenly Father who is loving and merciful, who understands our limitations and who hears us when we pray in accord with his will in the right manner and for the right things in the name of Jesus Christ.—John 14:6, 14; 1 John 5:15.

- What is the meaning of Ecclesiastes 10:11? It reads: "If the serpent bites when no charming results, then there is no advantage to the one indulging in the tongue."

If a snake bites a snake charmer before he can charm it, then there is no advantage to his being a snake charmer. If he knows how to charm a snake and does not do so, he is bound to get bitten and there is no advantage in his being a master of the tongue for charming snakes. Likewise, if we have the power of pro-

tecting ourselves by the use of the tongue in the right way, but we do not use the tongue thusly and we get bitten or hurt, then there is no advantage or profit to us in having the ability to use the tongue for self-protection. If we have knowledge and an ability, then for this to be of advantage to us to safeguard us from hurt or loss, we should make use of it and without delay. It is too late to make use of it after the damage has been done. Compare Ecclesiastes 10:8.

- After Jehovah struck the firstborn of Egypt, Pharaoh finally told the Israelites they could leave Egypt, saying: "Go. Also, you must bless me besides." (Ex. 12:32) What did Pharaoh mean by this?

Pharaoh meant just that—he wanted a blessing. After he had granted permission to the Israelites with all their flocks and herds to go, he did not want them and their leader Moses to go away still cursing him and wishing him ill. He had been plagued enough. Now at last he granted what the God of Israel demanded of him. Since the Israelites wanted their herds and flocks in order to sacrifice to God, Pharaoh, in releasing these animals, wanted the Israelites to have in mind in offering sacrifice to Jehovah their God that they should make entreaty to God for Pharaoh and his people, that they might all be healed of the effects of the terrible plagues visited upon them.

Whether Moses and Aaron and the Israelites heeded his request and prayed to Jehovah in his behalf is another thing. It was one thing for Pharaoh to ask a thing and another for him to be granted that favor. Actually, he proved unworthy of having a blessing pronounced upon him by Moses and the Israelites, for he had a change of heart for the bad. This is shown in that, after he got the report that the Israelites were apparently trapped at the Red Sea, he mustered all his army and went in pursuit of them to destroy them or drive them back to slavery. Pharaoh merited no blessing.—Ex. 14:5-9.

- Did not the making of twelve copper bulls as a base for the molten sea in the courtyard of the temple at Jerusalem, as recorded at 2 Chronicles 4:4, violate the Second Commandment, which forbade the making of images?

Many persons apparently misread the Second Commandment, for that command did not forbid all making of images or representations, but only the making of them as objects

of worship, even as the full statement of the commandment shows: "You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or that is on the earth underneath or that is in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them nor be induced to serve them, because I Jehovah your God am a God exacting exclusive devotion." Among those misreading this commandment are the Moslems, who, as a result, use only geometrical designs in their art lest they violate this commandment.—Ex. 20:4, 5.

That Jehovah did not forbid all making of statues or images is apparent from his later commands to make them. Thus Moses was commanded to make two cherubs for the ark of the testimony as well as to have cherubs embroidered on the curtains used in the tabernacle. Later on, Moses was commanded to make a copper serpent to which all Israelites who had been bitten by serpents had to look in order to get healed. In connection with the temple, in addition to the large bulls mentioned, Jehovah also directed the making of two very large cherubs to be placed in the Most Holy. None of these, however, were to be worshiped, and when the copper serpent became an object of worship, faithful King Hezekiah had it crushed to pieces.—Ex. 25:18-22; 26:1; Num. 21:8, 9; 2 Ki. 18:4.

The bulls used to support the molten sea served a very practical purpose and were a most fitting choice in view of the immense size

of the "sea."* The brim had a diameter of thirty feet and the sea must have bulged out considerably in the middle, as it was said to be capable of holding 29,400 gallons of water, or some 117 tons! In fact, the bull in the Scriptures is used as a symbol of strength, for we read of "the power of the bull," and certainly it was the most powerful of domestic animals that the Israelites had. Fittingly, we find that in Ezekiel's vision of Jehovah's throne and its surroundings, and in John's vision of the same, there appear living creatures having the appearance of bulls. (Ezek. 1:6, 7, 10; Rev. 4:7) The bull in such symbolism is understood to denote Jehovah's attribute of power. Since, in Bible symbol, water usually stands for the word of truth (Eph. 5:26), we may see in this large copper "molten sea" and its strong base the unlimited power of Jehovah to carry out all his good word. No question about it: "So my word that goes forth from my mouth will prove to be. It will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it."—Isa. 55:11.

Thus, in the use of the bulls in connection with the molten sea of Solomon's temple, we see no violation of Jehovah's law against making images for worship but, rather, a most fitting and practical architectural design.

* In Herod's temple the sea was supported by twelve lions, for which, however, there was no Scriptural justification.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Jehovah God has lovingly provided a "house of prayer" for all the peoples. It is no expression of interfaith, but is a provision that Jehovah has made for the benefit of persons out of all nations who want to worship him in spirit and in truth. The *Watchtower* magazine has aided tens of thousands to come to God's house of prayer. Throughout April, Jehovah's witnesses will offer a year's subscription for *The Watchtower*, with three Bible study booklets, on a contribution of \$1.

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- May 30: Accepting the Invitation to the Banquet. Page 243.