

The WATCHTOWER

** GLOBAL NEWS **

Vol. 66 No. 666

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1977

35 cents

IS THERE TRULY GOOD NEWS TODAY?

Pompeio esse in anno relipub
quam cuius auxilium, si postea v
periusque adorat, ex ipsius or
ingressus in eam orationem, ne
conscripti essent, quo praeside*re*
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ne ad ejus particularum reservaret
fermoris verbo seque*re* amne
pro iuramentum se omnino neg*li*
adulti prae*se*ntis exercitus, minus am*ne*
stia certam dicit. Caesar extor*tu*s d
i*l*o*g* Gossius, tribunus plebis.

Catonem veteris intemperie
dissime crudelissimeque dicit, it
sunt eius ordinis et rebus.

provincie acum et regum appella*re*
namus imperii redit. Scripte*re*
cum Pompeio arbitrat*ur*.

I eni*m* consuli, corrupti ex*ar*
tua referunt: tot
Pompeio det*in*
Festu mag
ter, duce*re*
prae*se*ntis
rati*bus* ac
ante id ten*et*
voluntatis, e
omnia divers
intenduntur.

bat, totum se ab ejus amicitia a
summa definita tempore injun*ct*iva*re*
sum potissimum dominatum*re*
turba*re*. N



OCTOBER 1, 1977

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

October 1, 1977
Vol. 98, Number 19

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

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

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

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

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IS THERE TRULY GOOD NEWS TODAY?

HOW refreshing it is to hear good news! But people are generally cautious about what presents itself as good news. They have found that what is hailed first as good news often proves to be disappointing. This has been true of political promises, because frequently the promiser either has no real interest in or intention of fulfilling his promises, or, if sincere, he lacks the power to fulfill them.

But truly good news does really exist. It is news of good that will last, and it is from a person who has our highest welfare at heart. Race, color or nationality make no difference with him. Furthermore, this person also has the power to fulfill his promises. The good news can bring relief now, and full happiness in the near future. The person sending the good news is Almighty God, the Creator, whose name is Jehovah. (Ps. 83:18) The Bible, written over his "signature," contains the good news, and needs only to be considered with an open, sincere mind in order for it to reveal the full understanding of its message to men. Jesus said: "Accordingly I say to you, Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you."—Luke 11:9.

Mankind certainly need help, not only

in governing themselves, but also because, regardless of environment, good or bad, they get sick and die, losing everything. This is due to man's being imperfect, falling short of perfection, short of the "glory of God." (Rom. 3:23) Man's sinfulness is really the basic reason and source of the bad news that we hear all around us today. Men are sinners, most of them not of their own will, but "just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." (Rom. 5:12) This is why all humans die. The apostle Paul describes the situation of the man who seriously tries to do right when he says: "The good that I wish I do not do, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice. If, now, what I do not wish is what I do, the one working it out is no longer I, but the sin dwelling in me."—Rom. 7:19, 20.

The same Bible writer goes on to show that humankind is in this condition, but not without hope from the Creator. He speaks of the earthly creation's being "subjected to futility, not by its own will," and states that it was thus subjected "on the basis of hope that the creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom

of the children of God." (Rom. 8:20, 21) This is good news of perfection and everlasting life for humankind.

"Children of God"! This would mean a relationship with God as a family living on earth in unity, directly under his care, happy, well provided for, with plenty of things to keep people occupied in pleasurable work. For the earth was made as the home for humankind, and it is indeed a

beautiful home, made to stand forever. "The meek will inherit the earth," said Jesus Christ, quoting from the Hebrew psalms, which also declare that the earth "will not be made to totter to time indefinite, or forever." (Matt. 5:5; Ps. 37:11; 104:5) This is good news; it is wonderful to know it! How will God bring about his stated purpose toward the earth?

The Central Feature of the Good News —THE KINGDOM OF GOD

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."—Matt. 6:33, "Authorized Version."

THE good news from the Bible centers around the kingdom of God. Why? Because all of God's purposes toward humankind find their focus in the Kingdom. What man needs today is good government—a government that provides proper guidance but does not take away freedom, liberty and incentive, initiative or individuality.

1. Around what does the good news center, and why?

² Government by God is essential to the life and happiness of the human race. Man has amply demonstrated that he cannot govern himself successfully by any form of rule that he can devise. The inspired prophet wrote: "I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is

2. Why is government by the Creator better than that of men?

walking even to direct his step." (Jer. 10:23) But the Creator knows exactly what men, his creation, need. He knows their feelings, their wants, their loves, their desires. (Matt. 6:7, 8, 32) Only He can bring real satisfaction into their lives. "You [God] are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing," the Bible says. He will do this by the instrumentality of his kingdom.—Ps. 145:16.

³ The Messianic kingdom of God is a government arranged and established by Jehovah God, who alone is the Universal Sovereign. The Kingdom is subsidiary to his sovereignty and acts in subjection to it. (1 Cor. 15:27, 28) It is the instrument for expressing God's sovereign authority and rulership over the earth. At the head of this kingdom is God's Son, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, now an immortal heavenly spirit person. He is "the reflection of [God's] glory and the exact representation of his very being." (Heb. 1:3) Under him as Head there are to be 144,000 associate kings "bought" from among mankind, carefully selected over a period of 1,900 years. (Rev. 14:1-5) Of Christ, it is said: "With your blood you bought persons for God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and you made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they are to rule as kings over the earth." (Rev. 5:9, 10) This kingdom is to rule the earth for a thousand years to bring the inhabitants of earth into proper relationship with God.—Rev. 20:4-6.

WHAT GOD'S KINGDOM WILL DO FOR PEOPLE

⁴ God's prophet declares: "When there are judgments from you [Jehovah] for the earth, righteousness is what the in-

3. (a) What relationship does the Kingdom have to God's sovereignty? (b) Describe the selection and composition of the Kingdom.

4. How will the Kingdom help the people under it?

habitants of the productive land will certainly learn." (Isa. 26:9) Through the Kingdom's arrangement, provision will be made for every individual on earth to have personal, special attention and help to learn the proper way of living. All obedient ones the King 'will guide to fountains of waters of life.'—Rev. 7:17.

⁵ Do the people in general have this care and guidance now? No, people receive very little personal help from their governments. There are laws for protection and guidance, made by men and enforced by men. But obedience from the heart, because a law is right, is not cultivated. Failure to dispense justice, along with inequity and corruption practiced by men in high places, breeds disrespect for government and results in moral breakdown on the part of the people.

⁶ Also, a vital need today is *hope*, hope that has a foundation. The apostle Paul spoke of his "hope toward God," which hope the Jews also entertained, that "there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." (Acts 24:15) Hope is a joyful anticipation with the prospect of realizing what is hoped for. The world offers little hope to the living, and none at all for those who have died. The resurrection is the only real hope for the dead. It is the provision of an opportunity for even those who have misused their lives to make changes and to gain everlasting life. Millions will be resurrected under the rule of the kingdom of God, to learn righteousness and live. Jesus said: "The hour is coming . . . when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."—John 5:25, Authorized Version; Rev. 20:11-13.

5. In what ways do governments fail to give the people this needed help now?

6. What other vital need does the Kingdom supply?

⁷ As one of such persons, the evildoer who died alongside Jesus was promised: "You will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43) "Paradise" means "garden" or "park," as was the beautiful area that God made as a fitting home for Adam, the perfect man. (Gen. 2:8, 9) Under Kingdom rule the entire earth will be a 'glorious footstool' for God and a delight for man. (Isa. 66:1; 60:13) Furthermore, in ruling his own earth by means of the Kingdom, God will see that it again becomes ecologically balanced, erasing the effects of about 6,000 years of man's misguided efforts and misuse. Earth and its weather, its vegetation, its animal life, and man, will be coordinated for enjoyable living—all reflecting credit and praise to the Creator.—Ps. 148.

PHYSICAL, MORAL AND EMOTIONAL HELP

⁸ By this we can see that there is much more to God's kingdom than we usually expect from a government. The kingdom of God will accomplish these marvelous results because its kings will also constitute a heavenly priesthood—not a hierarchy of priests on earth to whom confessions are made and who rule with rigor and through superstition, at a great burden of expense to the people. These kings, numbering 144,000, are therefore called a "royal priesthood," under their High Priest, Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 2:9) This priesthood will not be looking out for their own interests or for material riches, for they will be *heavenly* priests and imitators of their great, merciful High Priest. They will be responsible to administer the spiritual education of the people. There will then be no deceptive false religions on

7. How will Jesus' words about Paradise be fulfilled?
8. (a) Besides kingly administration, what other service will the 144,000 associates of Christ perform? (b) What kind of priests will they be? (Heb. 4:15)

earth, no political organizations to bring pressure on people, no commercial exploitation. Such ruinous organizations will themselves have been brought to ruin.—Rev. 11:18.

⁹ As people progress in a spiritual way, applying right principles in their everyday lives, they will be lifted up by the power of the heavenly body of kings priests to perfection. Thereafter, no more will a man have to say, "the good that I wish I do not do, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice." (Rom. 7:19) Each man, in perfection, will have full control of all his powers and faculties and will be truly in the 'image and likeness of God,' reflecting his glory.—Gen. 1:26, 27; Rom. 3:23.

¹⁰ How can we be sure that we can put trust in this kingdom of priests? Will it be subject to eventual deterioration, just as have past governments and priesthoods? No. God does not do anything without first having proper basis in justice. "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne," wrote the psalmist. (Ps. 89:14, *American Standard Version*; Ex. 34:6, 7) Accordingly, in arranging for his "royal priesthood," he took centuries to select, train, prove and perfect its individual members.

GOD'S HEAVENLY SON BECOMES FLESH

¹¹ First and foremost is the King, the Head of the "royal priesthood." He is God's first creation, the "only-begotten Son" of God. (1 John 4:9; Rev. 3:14) Nowhere does the Bible say that he is part of a so-called "Trinity," or that he is on an equal level with Jehovah God. He called Jeho-

9. What will be the result of the activities of the "royal priesthood"?

10. Will this "royal priesthood" be subject to deterioration, as have past priesthoods? Why?

11. Describe the life of the King of the Kingdom down to the time of his becoming a perfect, full-grown man.

vah 'my Father and my God.' (John 20:17) This Son, Jesus Christ, when on earth, acknowledged that he had enjoyed a prehuman existence in heaven with his Father.

(John 8:56-58) It had been no problem for the Creator Jehovah God to transfer the life of his Son to the womb of a virgin girl named Mary. Consequently, though Jesus had a heavenly Father, he was born of a woman as a perfect human child, no longer a heavenly spirit person as he had been. (Gal. 4:4; Luke 1:35) He grew to full, perfect manhood—an equivalent of the perfect Adam, who later sinned and became the father of all mankind.—John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45.

¹² Of the stepping down of God's Son from the higher, spirit life to human nature out of humble obedience to his Father and out of love for humankind, the Bible says: "He emptied himself and took a slave's form and came to be in the likeness of men. More than that, when he found himself in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake." (Phil. 2:7, 8) The Father's love was great in thus sacrificing his Son. Wrote the apostle John: "God loved the world 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."—John 3:16.

HOW JESUS' SUFFERING HELPED MANKIND

¹³ Why was there a need for God's Son to undergo all these trials, including death? First, God's purpose to have a righteous Kingdom government to express his sovereignty required it. At the same time, Jesus' death was essential for the salvation and life of all humankind. How?

¹⁴ For one thing, the course that Jesus Christ took, according to God's will, magnifies God's justice and thoroughness and guarantees an unshakable, incorruptible government for the earth. It provides a firm basis for our faith. For in order to qualify as heavenly King and High Priest, Jesus had to undergo the severest, most searching test. About this, the apostle Paul said:

"In the days of his flesh Christ offered up supplications and also petitions to the One who was able to save him out of death, with strong outcries and tears, and he was favorably heard for his godly fear. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered; and after he had been made perfect he be-

13. Why was there a need for Christ to undergo suffering and death?

14. (a) What did Jesus' earthly course guarantee for us? (b) How does the apostle Paul describe Jesus' life course and its outcome?

12. How were the humility of Christ and the love of Jehovah demonstrated in Jesus' course?

came responsible for everlasting salvation to all those obeying him, because he has been specifically called by God a high priest according to the manner of Melchizedek [a priest in Abraham's time, before the Law covenant was made, and who received his appointment directly from God].”—Heb. 5: 7-10.

¹⁵ Jesus maintained his integrity in a perfect way. His ‘crying out to God’ was to avoid, not his death as a sacrifice for humankind, but death due to God’s displeasure for any unfaithfulness or failure on his own part. He wanted his course to be crowned with success. He “learned obedience.” He had been obedient in heaven under entirely favorable conditions. But on earth obedience to God brought persecution and suffering, even crushing circumstances. Jesus was perfect and righteous, without flaw from birth, but at the end of his course he was perfected in a greatly magnified way as the fully qualified, tried and true King-Priest.

¹⁶ How did Jesus’ earthly testing, suffering and death work toward the saving of humankind? Again, the apostle answers:

“He was obliged to become like his ‘brothers’ in all respects, that he might be-

15. (a) For what was Christ supplicating God with strong outcries and tears? (b) How did he learn obedience, and with what outcome?

16. How did Jesus’ earthly test and suffering work toward the saving of mankind?

IN COMING ISSUES

■ How Can You Have a Bright Outlook?

■ Reading the Bible with Your Family.

■ Do You Yearn for “the Good Old Days”?

come a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, in order to offer propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered when being put to the test, he is able to come to the aid of those who are being put to the test.”—Heb. 2:17, 18.

HUMAN RACE BOUGHT BY CHRIST

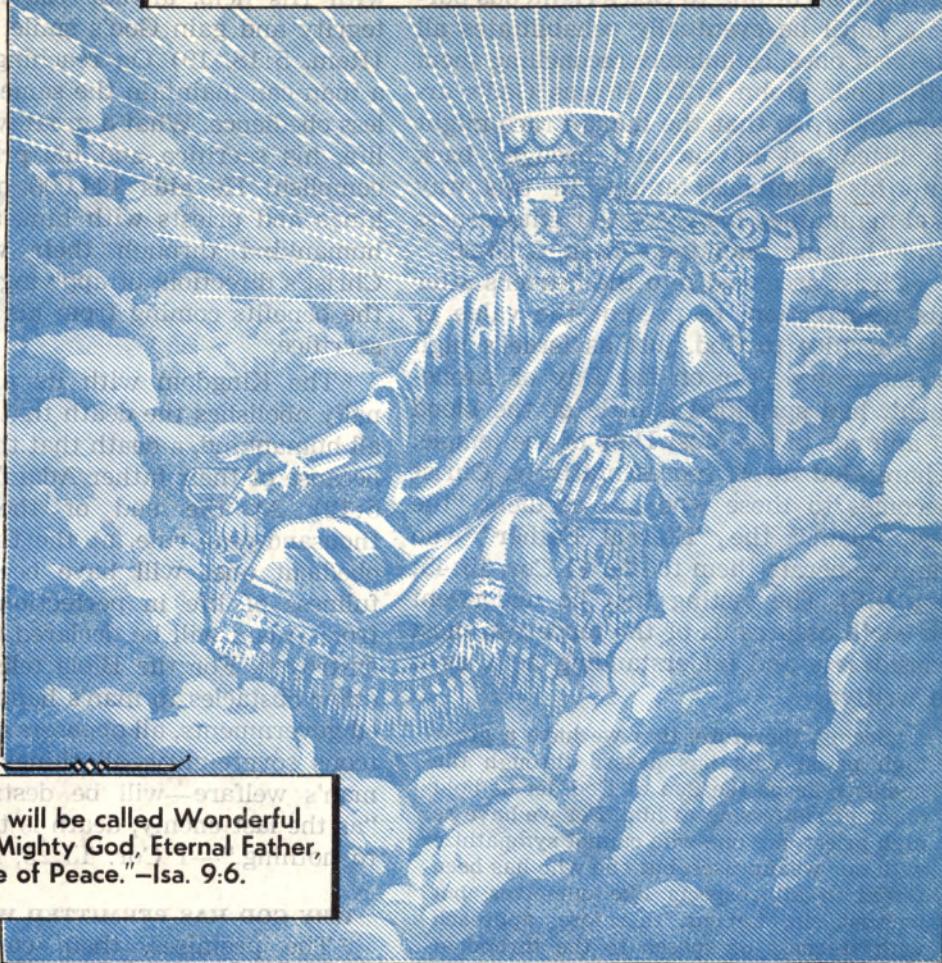
¹⁷ When Adam rebelled against God he became God’s enemy, thereby forfeiting his life and causing his offspring to be born sinful—sold into slavery to sin and death. (Gen. 3:17-19; Ps. 51:5) Therefore, the children were not deliberate sinners. They could be redeemed. (Rom. 8:20) Jesus Christ, as Priest, had to offer a sacrifice of the value and quality required to atone for sin. No man of Adam’s descent could do this with money, or even with the sacrifice of his life—the price was too high, for what was demanded was the equivalent of Adam, a perfect human life. Christ provided the necessary “corresponding ransom for all.” (1 Tim. 2:5, 6) He came to supply what the Law had foreshadowed with its inferior sacrifices of animals.

¹⁸ Of Jesus’ approach to God at the time of his baptism, the record portrays Jesus as saying: “‘Sacrifice and offering you did not want, but you prepared a body [a perfect human body] for me. You did not approve of whole burnt offerings and sin offering.’ Then I said, ‘Look! I am come (in the roll of the book [the scroll of the Law, especially toward kings, as in Deuteronomy 17:19, 20] it is written about me) to do your will, O God.’”—Heb. 10: 5-7; Ps. 40:7, 8.

¹⁹ So, God has made everything that we will receive—all our hopes—dependent on Jesus Christ. What this great King has done and will do for our good is further discussed in the following article.

17-19. (a) In what bad situation was the human race? (Rom. 7:14; Ps. 49:6-9) (b) How did Jesus become the answer to the calamitous situation of mankind?

WHAT THE KING DOES FOR US



"His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."—Isa. 9:6.

IT IS difficult for imperfect humans to see why God has allowed the same imperfect conditions to go on for more than 1,900 years since Jesus Christ was on earth. They say, 'Why haven't things moved faster?' Then, when they view the tangle that the world is in, they often say, 'I don't see how it can ever be straightened out.' As we examine the program for the King of God's government we can under-

1, 2. What conflicting feelings do people have when they see the bad situation in the world?

stand the seeming delay, and may even marvel at what it will accomplish in a relatively short time.

In the previous article we have seen that Jesus was transferred from heavenly spirit life to human life, to give that human life as a sacrifice, thus qualifying as mankind's High Priest. His obedient course on earth also qualified him to be King. How will he fulfill those offices for the benefit of the human race?

³ By his ransom sacrifice paid to Jehovah God, the Owner of all things, Jesus Christ owns the human race, to deal with each one according to God's righteous purpose, until he eventually rehabilitates all obedient ones, completely reconciling them with God. (John 5:22) It was God's arrangement, so that the human race might be lifted out of sin and brought back into his righteous family. In this way God maintained his absolute righteousness while helping mankind.—Rom. 3:23-26.

⁴ Christ ascended into the heavens after his resurrection, to present the value of his sacrifice to God, just as Israel's high priest, every year on the Day of Atonement, had sprinkled a little of the blood of animals in the Most Holy of the temple, where God dwelt representatively. Christ becomes to those who are obedient "the last Adam," the "Eternal Father" who can regenerate them to life. (1 Cor. 15:45; Isa. 9:6) The testing that he underwent on earth assures us of the tenderest, most considerate and understanding help, as it is written:

"Seeing, therefore, that we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold onto our confessing of him. For we have as high priest, not one who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in all respects like ourselves, but without sin. Let us, therefore, approach with freeness of speech to the throne of undeserved kindness, that we may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time!"—Heb. 4:14-16.

CAN HUMAN PERFECTION BE ATTAINED?

⁵ Christ's righteous life gained for him God's favorable decree that he had main-

3. By his sacrifice, into what relationship to the human race did Jesus Christ come? (1 Tim. 2:5, 6; 1 John 2:1, 2)

4. (a) What did Christ do after his resurrection, and what does he become to obedient persons? (b) How does the writer of the book of Hebrews show that Jesus' testing assures us of the tenderest, most considerate help?

5. (a) Christ's completely perfect, sin-free life proved what to us? (b) What does his sacrifice and priesthood accomplish for his 144,000 associates?

tained perfect obedience, completely free from sin, free from entertaining even a wrong thought. This provides proof that, with His help, anyone can maintain integrity and gain God's smile of approval. (Rom. 5:18, 19) On reaching perfection, a man can maintain the same perfect sinless obedience. What a great work Christ's life, his sacrifice and his priesthood accomplish! He aids 144,000 others to be kings and priests with him, and to bless humankind through their work, under Christ's direction, of applying to mankind the benefits coming from his propitiatory sacrifice.

⁶ The Kingdom with its priesthood finally abolishes the death that has plagued all humankind, a death that they inherited because of their father Adam's sin. (Rom. 5:12) At the end of the Kingdom's thousand-year rule, at the time when all obedient ones will have been given the fullness of life in perfection, this death from Adam will be declared to have been destroyed. For the Bible tells us that all other obstacles to man's happiness—wicked governments, all opposers of God's righteous sovereignty, all things contrary to man's welfare—will be destroyed. Then, "as the last enemy, death is to be brought to nothing."—1 Cor. 15:25, 26.

WHY GOD HAS PERMITTED WICKEDNESS

⁷ The promises, then, concerning the Kingdom's accomplishments in man's behalf, are a guarantee that God does not condone sin, wickedness, imperfection and their deadly results, and that he will completely do away with them forever. This question about God's permission of wickedness for a long period of time has perplexed many honest, inquiring persons. And, indeed, this is a major issue before

6. (a) What is the death that, as the last enemy, is to be brought to nothing? (b) How and when will death be destroyed?

7. What do the Kingdom promises guarantee, and what question in connection with this needs answering?

all creation. To understand God's purposes and the work of the Kingdom, it is essential to understand this issue.

¹⁸The issue is one of sovereignty—*God's sovereignty* or rulership—not as to whether God is sovereign. This is a fact. (Ps. 90:2; Acts 4:24) But a challenge has been made with regard to the *rightness, deservedness* and *righteousness* of Jehovah's sovereignty. It is because of this issue that God has allowed wickedness to exist for a limited time.

⁹ God's permission of wickedness all revolves around the fact that God made the first human creatures *in his image and likeness*. (Gen. 1:26, 27) Men are free moral agents. They can make a choice to do good or bad. They are not robots "programmed" to do only good. Adam and Eve, as such intelligent persons, were perfect in this regard. To create them unable to make moral choices and decisions would leave them incomplete, with something lacking. God would not withhold the freedom of decision as to choice of right and wrong from a rational creature made in his image. For this very reason he gave them a conscience.—Rom. 2:15.

¹⁰ Adam and Eve's decision to disobey God's command was a challenge to his sovereignty. Eve wanted to 'know,' that is, to judge or determine all matters for herself, "to be like God." Adam joined her in this act of proudly asserting complete self-sufficiency and independence. (Gen. 3:5, 6, 22) Both, in effect, refused to recognize their status as created persons. They showed no love or appreciation for what God had done for them and assumed prerogatives that belonged only to God as Creator and Owner of the earth, Sustainer of life and Universal Sovereign.

8. What is the great issue that is before the universe?
9. With what quality did God create the first human creatures, and does this quality make them imperfect?
10. How did the course of Adam and Eve challenge God's sovereignty?

¹¹In this haughty move Adam and Eve were prompted and abetted by a spirit son of God, an angel who rebelled. (Gen. 3:1-5; John 8:44) He challenged Jehovah's rule, claiming that the basis for His rulership and the obedience of His creatures was selfishness or fear, not love. Later, in the case of a faithful servant of God named Job, the challenge was plainly stated. The inspired writer (Moses) draws back the curtain of invisibility to reveal a heavenly scene for our enlightenment:

"Afterward it came to be the day when the sons of the true God entered to take their station before Jehovah, and Satan also proceeded to enter right among them to take his station before Jehovah. . . . And Jehovah went on to say to Satan: 'Have you set your heart upon my servant Job . . . ? . . .' But Satan answered Jehovah and said: 'Skin in behalf of skin, and everything that a man has he will give in behalf of his soul. For a change, thrust out your hand, please, and touch as far as his bone and his flesh and see whether he will not curse you to your very face.'"—Job 2:1-5.

¹² So Satan (meaning "adversary," "rressister") challenged the deservedness of God's sovereignty and also raised as a subsidiary issue man's integrity to God. God's rule is not an arbitrary dictatorship. For man's sake, by allowing men to show their faithfulness, and also for the sake of his hosts of angels, so that such an issue might be forever settled in their minds, God permitted Satan to continue for a limited time as an "outlaw." Adam's offspring, being sinful, could be influenced by this wicked one, so that Satan became "the god of this system of things." (2 Cor. 4:4) But God has sentenced him to death and he is soon to be destroyed, all his works being brought to nothing. (Gen. 3:

11. Who really was behind Adam and Eve in challenging God's sovereignty, and how is this shown to us in the book of Job?

12. (a) How did man's integrity become a subsidiary issue, and why did God permit Satan to continue to operate for a time? (b) What does the writer of Hebrews show that Christ accomplishes toward Satan and his works?

15) Of his Destroyer, Jesus Christ, we read:

"Therefore, since the 'young children'¹⁰ [Christ's disciples] are sharers of blood and flesh, he also similarly partook of the same things, that through his death he might bring to nothing the one having the means to cause death, that is, the Devil [meaning "slanderer"] ; and that he might emancipate all those who for fear of death were subject to slavery all through their lives."—Heb. 2:14, 15.

Again, it is stated: "For this purpose the Son of God was made manifest, namely, to break up the works of the Devil."—1 John 3:8.

¹¹ Jesus' perfect obedience to God proved and settled the issue of integrity forever, with no help needed from other humans. Jesus, before his death, said: "The ruler of the world is coming. And he has no hold on me." (John 14:30) Jesus "conquered the world" under its god Satan. Other faithful persons before and since have shared in serving for this issue, with help from God and his Son. These will be used by Christ to help others during his 1,000-year rule over earth.—John 16:33.

¹² Some may count God "permissive" or slow and uncaring. But the apostle Peter refutes this thought, saying: "Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise, as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance."—2 Pet. 3:9.

¹³ From Peter's words we see that God cares. His allowing time gives all of us opportunity to hear the truth. But, of course, millions are being born each month, and many have died. So Peter's words point out that God knows what is best, not just for the generation now alive, but for all, the living and those to be resur-

rected. And he knows the exact time to intervene as to human affairs and to bring the present system of things to a conclusion to make way for the thousand-year reign of Christ, during which the entire world will be judged "in righteousness." (Acts 17:31; Rev. 20:11-15) Thus the greatest number of people—actually *all* who want to do right—can be saved to everlasting life.—Rev. 20:7-10, 15.

WHAT COMES AT THE END OF THE 1,000-YEAR KINGDOM RULE?

¹⁴ The thousand-year rule of the Kingdom over all earth's affairs will be a most happy time for the human race. Then, at the end of the thousand years, the Kingdom will come to its conclusion, having accomplished God's will "as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matt. 6:10) With Adamic sin and its consequent death erased, all humans will then stand in perfection, no longer needing the priestly services of the Kingdom. God then can fully accept them into his clean, perfect family as "children of God."—Rom. 8:21.

¹⁵ At the end of the thousand years Christ, who in love and loyalty toward his Father Jehovah is "the same yesterday and today, and forever," acknowledges before all creation the everlasting sovereignty of Jehovah God, as the Bible reveals: "Next, the end, when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father, when he has brought to nothing all government and all authority and power. . . . When all things will have been subjected to him, then the Son himself will also subject himself to the One who subjected all things to him, that God may be all things to everyone." God's sovereignty stands alone, supreme, vindicated, now being directly

13. How did Jesus show that he had settled the issue of integrity by his life course? (John 12:31)

14, 15. How do the apostle Peter's words at 2 Peter 3:9 show that God is not slow or uncaring?

16. To what status does the Kingdom bring mankind? (Rev. 21:3)

17. What does Jesus Christ do at the end of the thousand years, and for what reason?

exercised over all his creation.—Heb. 13:8; 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

¹⁸ Of course, Christ will always be acknowledged and honored for his great work and will be Honorary High Priest and King. As the great Rewarder, Jehovah's further relationships to Christ and his 144,000 heavenly associates and his assignments to them will be expressions of his great love for them. (Heb. 6:10) The Bible does not reveal the things that he has in store for them, but what he has already done has been grand.

18. Does Jehovah have further marvelous things in store for Christ and his 144,000 associates after the thousand-year reign is finished?

"God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us, made us alive together with the Christ . . . and he raised us up together and seated us together in the heavenly places in union with Christ Jesus, that in the coming systems of things there might be demonstrated the surpassing riches of his undeserved kindness in his graciousness toward us in union with Christ Jesus."—Eph. 2:4-7.

¹⁹ All these things are involved in the good news, and an understanding and appreciation of them is essential to one who wants to serve God acceptably, and to proclaim the good news to others.

19. Why does a person need to understand the things that we have just studied?

their reward. Jehovah God "knows those who belong to him" and will make all his works turn out 'for the good of those who love him.' (Rom. 8:28; 2 Tim. 2:19) This can be a source of comfort and encouragement when we see righteous persons suffering while the wicked are prospering.
—Eccl. 8:14.

Bible scholars of recent centuries have been puzzled as to just what Solomon meant by his next statement at Ecclesiastes 9:1: "Mankind are not aware of either the love or the hate that were all prior to them." It may well be that these words were purposely written in such a way that a number of practical concepts can be drawn from them. For example, this may be understood as meaning that, because death brings an end to people's love and hate, the living have no idea of how much love and hate existed before they were born, that is, in the lives of people who lived before their own time.

Or, it may be that Solomon's words should be viewed in the previously expressed context of God's having power over the righteous and the wise as well as their works. The love and the hate that

What did the WISE MAN Mean?

They Are in God's Hands

Wise as he was, King Solomon could not fathom the full scope of God's work—the things that the Most High not only does but also tolerates in the outworking of his grand purpose. Still there was a vital truth that Solomon 'took to heart' after making a careful investigation of human affairs. What was it? "The righteous ones and the wise ones and their works are in the hand of the true God." —Eccl. 9:1.

Yes, both as to their persons and their actions, the righteous and the wise are in the hands or in the power of the Most High. While he may permit calamity to befall them, they positively will not lose

they as well as all the rest of mankind experience are a result of God's permission or toleration. Also, the Most High foreknew long before their birth that humans would experience both love and hate. He permitted a sinful human race, with its love and hate, to come into existence. After the rebellion of Adam and Eve, Jehovah God declared: "I shall put enmity between you [the original serpent, Satan the Devil] and the woman [not Eve, but God's "woman"] (Gal. 4:26-31)] and between your seed and her seed." (Gen. 3:15) So, though God was not 'unaware of either the love or the hate' that would result among mankind, this was something that man himself would come to know only through hard experience.

Then, again, the wise man's statement at Ecclesiastes 9:1 might be explained as follows: Among imperfect humans the emotions of love and hate are often expressed without rhyme or reason. So humans lack an awareness, an understanding or comprehension of the motivation of all the love and the hate expressed prior to them. Thus understood, Solomon's words would tie in with his following discussion of life's uncertainties and the unpredictability with which death can bring an end to everything. Love and hate can be just as blind and incomprehensible.

By reason of being in an imperfect, sinful world, humans, whether righteous or wicked, may experience both good and bad, love and hate. Jehovah God allows both the righteous and the wicked to enjoy food and drink as well as his other generous provisions for sustaining life. (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:16, 17) Furthermore, when it comes to dying, there is no distinction. Solomon continued: "All are the same in what all have. One eventuality there is to the righteous one and the wicked one, the good one and the clean one and the unclean one, and the one sacrificing and the one that is not sacrificing. The good

one is the same as the sinner; the one swearing [lightly or thoughtlessly] is the same as whoever has been afraid of a sworn oath."—Eccl. 9:2.

Since there may seem to be no outward difference between what befalls the righteous and the wicked during their lifetime, and especially since all end up in death, it might appear that there is no real advantage in leading an upright, God-fearing life. Solomon pointed to this as a reason for persistent wrongdoing among mankind, saying: "This is what is calamitous in all that has been done under the sun, that, because there is one eventuality to all, the heart of the sons of men is also full of bad."—Eccl. 9:3.

But does their giving in to lawlessness benefit them? No, for the wise man states: "There is madness in their heart during their lifetime, and after it—to the dead ones!" (Eccl. 9:3) While alive, they act as if beside themselves, following their wrong desires and inclinations without any restraint. Finally, their life of revelry and lust ends abruptly in death. What, then, is the truly wise course?

Enjoy Your Life in a Wholesome Way

A person should appreciate life and use it well. Solomon wrote: "As respects whoever is joined to all the living there exists confidence, because a live dog is better off than a dead lion. For the living are conscious that they will die [a sobering thought that should move them to use their life in a wholesome way]; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all, neither do they anymore have wages, because the remembrance of them has been forgotten. Also, their love and their hate and their jealousy have already perished, and they have no portion anymore to time indefinite in anything that has to be done under the sun."—Eccl. 9:4-6.

Only when a person is alive can there be any confidence, any hope. Then is the

time to build up a good name with the Creator. While there is life, hope remains that there might be a change for the better, even in the case of the one carrying on in a lawless way. When death comes it is too late. Hence, the living dog, though despised, is better off than a dead lion, the regal beast. The living can still do things, but the dead have no share in any activity or in the emotions of love, hate and jealousy that are so much a part of man's earthly existence.

We should, therefore, enjoy the works of our hands as God-fearing persons. Solomon admonishes: "Go, eat your food with rejoicing and drink your wine with a good heart, because already the true God has found pleasure in your works. On every occasion let your garments prove to be white [bright and clean, reflecting, not mourning or gloom, but joy], and let oil [likewise representative of joy, oil being cooling and refreshing] not be lacking upon your head. See life with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life that He has given you under the sun, all the days of your vanity, for that is your portion in life and in your hard work with which you are working hard under the sun. All that your hand finds to do, do with your very power, for there is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol, the place to which you are going."—Eccl. 9:7-10.

Wholesome enjoyment of life, including food and drink, is right, proper. It is God's gift and, therefore, has his approval. Evidently this is what Solomon meant when he followed up the encouragement to find delight in food and drink with the words, "because already the true God has found pleasure in your works." Yes, the Most High does not want us to lead an austere life, depriving ourselves of all joy. Being a happy God, he wants people to be happy in daily living, including their married life. (Acts 14:17) This, of course, is not

advocating a life of self-indulgence and mere pleasure seeking. Solomon encouraged work, taking advantage of opportunities to exert the hands in doing good before a person is totally incapacitated by death and ends up in Sheol, gravedom.

In this world, then, the wisest course is to enjoy life while one can, doing so within the bounds of God's moral laws. Very quickly death can bring everything to nothingness, because all too often the unexpected happens. The fastest runner may stumble and lose the race. A mighty army may go down in defeat before inferior forces. A wise man may be unable to get a good job and so may suffer hunger. People with excellent understanding of business management may, because of circumstances, be unable to put their understanding to work and thus find themselves in poverty. Knowledgeable persons may incur the wrath of those in authority and come to be in disfavor. This is something King Solomon noted in passing, but, after reconsidering it more carefully, he wrote: "I returned to see under the sun that the swift do not have the race, nor the mighty ones the battle, nor do the wise also have the food, nor do the understanding ones also have the riches, nor do even those having knowledge have the favor; because time and unforeseen occurrence befall them all. For man also does not know his time [for death can come unexpectedly]. Just like fishes that are being taken in an evil net, and like birds that are being taken in a trap, so the sons of men themselves are being ensnared at a calamitous time, when it falls upon them suddenly."—Eccl. 9:11, 12.

So, just as fish may be caught unexpectedly in a net and birds in a trap, death can overtake humans suddenly, without warning. What a powerful lesson Solomon gave about getting wholesome, rewarding enjoyment from life and its true benefits and opportunities while one can!

CHANGING PERSONALITIES IN KENYA'S PARADISE

MILLIONS of tourists have used Nairobi, capital of Kenya, as the starting point for their wildlife safaris. Into the national parks and preserves they go in search of lions, elephants, rhinos, leopards and other fascinating creatures in their natural environment.

The lion, largest of the carnivores, is a main attraction for these safari-goers. For many, the thrill of a safari is the sight of this majestic beast stalking, catching and devouring a "kill" of the peaceful plains game. In view of this spectacle, the Bible prophesies in Isaiah chapter 11, where the lion is portrayed as eating straw as the bull and lying down in peace with other animals, may seem strange indeed.

However, a spiritual change in human personalities that is even more remarkable is taking place today in connection with sincere people who, on learning Bible truth, are entering a spiritual paradise, where they discard former aggressive traits in favor of putting on personalities marked by peacefulness and kindness. This transformation has been repeated many times over in some ninety congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Kenya. And, in God's new order, it can be expected that even the most vicious of the wild animals will be tamed, to live at peace alongside man-

kind and all others of God's creation on earth.

Here is an example of "taming" the personality:

A young man from a coffee-farming area near Nairobi who had led the adventurous life of a wanderer had various jobs, including work as a shopkeeper, snake catcher, and barman. He fought with policemen, promoted illegal abortions, beat up many people, and had a long record of arrests. One day he felt abused by his employer and decided "to take out his eyes," even boldly announcing this to his neighbors. One neighbor, a dedicated witness of Jehovah, brought him to his senses with her reply: "If you would be studying the Bible, you would be a happy man and would not want to do such a bad thing to your employer."

A happy man—that is what he wanted to be! His question "How?" led to a Bible study. On the occasion of his baptism at the "Sacred Service" District Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses, he said: "Since then I have never tried to do anything bad to my employer or to anyone else. I tell you I am very happy now."

Truly a remarkable personality change!

EARLY CHALLENGES

Back in 1956 when the first missionaries of Jehovah's Witnesses entered this beautiful country, they faced many challenges in helping the people to gain accurate Bi-

ble knowledge in order to 'clothe themselves with the new Christian personality.' (Col. 3:10) Unlike many other African countries, Kenya is a melting pot of peoples, whose features, customs and languages may be completely unrelated. Migrations from the Nile Valley, the central African forest region and the Arabian peninsula brought people together that are possibly as different as Ukrainians and Eskimos, or Finns and Spaniards. Kenya is the home of over forty tribes, drawn from four basic groupings—Bantu, Nilo-Hamitic, Nilotic, and Hamitic. In addition to the large population, now around fourteen million, speaking a few dozen different languages, there were problems of tribal customs, illiteracy, immorality, and the scattered form of settlements where most people live separately in small homesteads surrounded by their fields.

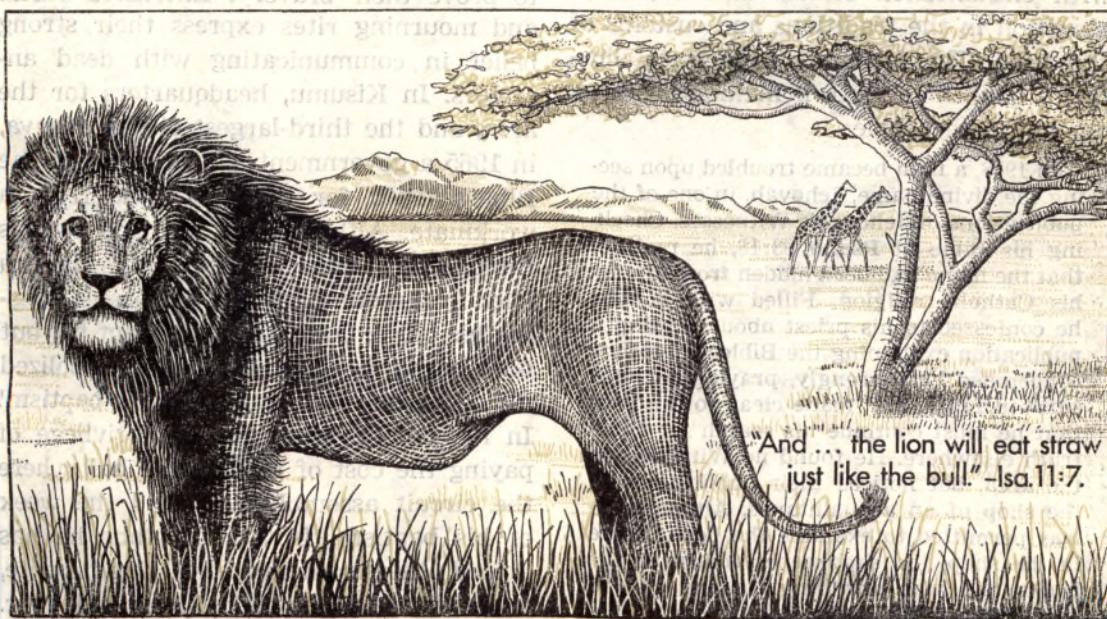
The religions of Christendom, with a great variety of churches, had established missions in much of central and western Kenya. Along the coastal strip the Arab influence had spread the Islamic religion.

Other peoples, resisting all outside influence, retained their traditional forms of worship.

To help people to gain Bible knowledge, Jehovah's Witnesses have used their well-known house-to-house witnessing method as well as the printed page. Bible study information has been made available in the "lingua franca" of eastern Africa, Swahili, and four major Kenyan languages.

PERSONALITY CHANGES AMONG VARIOUS PEOPLES

The Wakamba, Bantu people who inhabit the cultivated hills and plains east of Nairobi, are known for their fine wood carvings, their traditional attachment to land and cattle, and their past polygamous way of life. Yet, early missionary activity of Jehovah's Witnesses here proved rewarding, as today there are nineteen active congregations in this area. Many "special pioneer" proclaimers of the "good news" have come from among these cheerful people, who ably express themselves in song and dance. Consider this experience:



"And... the lion will eat straw
just like the bull." — Isa. 11:7.

One Witness, who has now served several years as a traveling minister and in "pioneering" new territories, had to make many changes in his personality. Observing the poor example of older people professing to be Christians, and lacking proper Biblical guidance, he found himself, at the age of thirteen, already steeped in the vices of immorality, stealing, smoking and drug addiction. Two former schoolmates contacted him with the truth, and their changed lives gave living support for their words. To the amazement of people in the area, he made his mind over, changed his personality, and became a clean, respectable and peaceful person, contributing to the moral development of the community.

In the fertile highlands west of the Great Rift Valley, green carpets of tea plantations decorate the countryside. The rugged people of this area, belonging to the Nilo-Hamitic group known as Kalenjin, were fierce warriors in bygone days. Today they are just as proud of the fact that some of the world's most famous and successful long-distance runners come from their number. Many of their old customs remain intact, including long initiation ceremonies with circumcision rituals and much instruction in the traditions and customs of the tribe. The following experience illustrates how Bible truth is making headway among these people:

In 1968, a man became troubled upon seeing the divine name, Jehovah, in one of the publications of Jehovah's Witnesses. Checking his Bible at Psalm 83:18, he realized that the name had been hidden from him by his Catholic religion. Filled with doubts, he confessed to his priest about reading a publication explaining the Bible. The priest condemned him strongly, praying for "his sins" in Latin, and made clear to the man that he must continue his search for Bible truth elsewhere. He found no Witnesses in the area, but noticed their publications in the shop of an acquaintance. Although he was permitted to examine the books there in the shop, the shopkeeper treasured the books and was unwilling to lend any to him. Some time later our young friend

came into possession of the book *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*, which clearly helped him to see the truth about God's name, as well as the wrongness of confession as practiced by his religion. (Ex. 6:2, 3; Isa. 42:8; 1 Tim. 2:5) Before ever having met a Witness, he decided to cut all ties with his church. Shortly thereafter, he heard of a woman who had moved into the area "preaching a queer religion." He went in search of her, found her to be a Witness, obtained the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* and completed reading it in three days. During his Bible study he faced much opposition from his parents, former friends and neighbors, but in time he was able to help even some of these opposers to start studying the Bible. Today he is a "pioneer" proclaimer of the "good news," pointing others to the truth, which, in the meantime, his shopkeeper friend has accepted also.

Moving farther westward, we reach the very shores of beautiful Lake Victoria and the home area of the only Nilotic people in Kenya, the Luo. The Luo, who migrated from the Upper Nile Valley, have a series of initiation ceremonies in which some young men submit to the removal of two or more teeth from the lower jaw in order to prove their bravery. Extensive burial and mourning rites express their strong belief in communicating with dead ancestors. In Kisumu, headquarters for the area, and the third-largest city in Kenya, in 1965 a government official heard of the Bible's truth for the first time from a workmate. Although not starting serious Bible study himself, he always had a friendly greeting for the Witnesses passing his office. Over ten years went by, but how happy he was when he symbolized his dedication last year by water baptism! In his joy he asked for the privilege of paying the cost of renting the hall where the circuit assembly was held the week of his baptism. In a short time he has helped others near him, including his wife, to see the truth and make their minds over.

Inhabiting the high ground northeast of Lake Victoria up to the foot of Mt. Elgon, 4,322 meters (14,178 feet), are the Abaluhya, a collective name given a large group of Bantu peoples. These people are accepting the good news with appreciative hearts. Last year, in a village almost on the equator in this western area, a fifteen-year-old youth overcame much opposition and dedicated his life to Jehovah. He then heard of the "Sacred Service" assembly to be held three months later in Nairobi, 340 kilometers (210 miles) away, and looked for a job to earn money for the journey. The presiding overseer of the congregation became his 'savings bank.' Surprisingly, when he had sufficient funds for his journey, he started saving a second lot. For whom? For an interested friend of his own age whom he wanted to have the same opportunity to enjoy the district assembly program!

THE MORAL CHALLENGE

Among all the tribes and peoples of Kenya, the Masai are probably the most internationally known. They have a reputation for fierce courage and aristocratic independence. Many of their age-old customs remain unaffected by the influences of Western civilization. You see them in their striking red-ocher dress and bead-work decoration, living on a diet consisting mainly of milk enriched with cow's blood. The "moran" system, where young men are segregated and subjected to a rigid code of self-denial, sex excepted, until they graduate as an elder, is still intact. An unusual feature of the Elgeyo/Marakwet people is that they solemnize the marriage only after pregnancy. The life-style of these two tribes points out some of the moral problems confronting them and others who wish to change personalities to conform to the Bible's moral standards.

There is the widespread custom of men and women living together, raising fami-

lies without the benefit of a binding, legally registered marriage. Many content themselves with somewhat tentative, tribal arrangements. High demands for bride prices often delay or obstruct efforts for a legally recognized marriage. Many, however, upon learning of God's high moral standards, have made sincere efforts to register their marriages. Elders of Jehovah's Witnesses, officially appointed and licensed by the government, have been a great help to these people because—unlike Christendom's ministers who often ask high expense payments—they are happy to give their services free. Thus, nearly 600 couples have been helped to comply with God's moral standards. Here is the experience of a typical couple:

The man tried to prevent the mother of his children from studying the Bible with the Witnesses. The woman, however, persevered and continued to make progress, wanting to please God. When the man refused to legalize their union, she left him and put up with a much lower standard of living. She experienced the truthfulness of the words of Psalm 37:25, which indicate that God would sustain lovers of righteousness, and she was able to provide for the children left with her. This amazed the man, yet his opposition continued even to the point of asking politicians to ban the work of Jehovah's Witnesses in the country. But in an unusual way, he began to 'make his mind over.' When taking his children on an excursion, remarks from his three-year-old son troubled him. The child would say things like: "Daddy, when you stop smoking and drinking and buy a songbook and a Bible, we will go to the Kingdom Hall and you will not be destroyed." Eventually, he accepted a Bible study, progressed, legalized his marriage, and began serving God with his now united family.

PROGRESS OF RECENT YEARS

Since the year 1973 the rate of expansion has been accelerated. Circumstances made it very clear in that year that local Witnesses would have to shoulder the primary responsibility for spreading

the "good news" to others. With Jehovah's help they have been equal to the task and have succeeded in carrying the message to even more remote areas of the country. At the same time, the ever-deteriorating situation in the world around was brought closer to home through a series of events. Periods of serious drought made some think about their dependence on our heavenly Provider. The spiraling cost of living and various crises involving neighboring countries helped others to realize the truthfulness of Bible prophecies. The worldwide problems of alcoholism, crime, drug abuse and family break-ups have become more prevalent, causing others, especially the young, to realize that their religious leaders have failed them and that they must look elsewhere for sound guidance. In all areas of the country, and among all groups, Jehovah's Witnesses contact and help people who sincerely want to put on the new personality and make changes in their lives.

In recent years "pioneer" proclaimers and teachers of the "good news" have moved into many new territories, some of which have shown very encouraging progress. Limuru, an industrial town near the eastern edge of the Great Rift Valley, has grown from no Kingdom proclaimers to sixteen active proclaimers of Bible truth in less than three years. In the same period the fertile farmland of the industrious Kikuyu, Meru and Embu peoples on the slopes of snowcapped Mt. Kenya has seen an increase from 30 to over 140 active Witnesses. Among them is a Kikuyu *mzee*, as older men are often respectfully called, born about eighty years ago, when earlobes usually were pierced, elongated and even wrapped over the top of the ear. He often walks about twenty kilometers (12 miles), climbing and descending hills, to attend Christian meetings. Whether it be around Mt. Kenya, on the scenic forested slopes of the Mau Escarpment west of

Nakuru or in the intensely cultivated area around Kisii in southwestern Kenya, the growth has been remarkable.

On the Indian Ocean coast, near Mombasa, one couple conducts a total of nineteen Bible studies in the homes of interested persons. They enjoy so much their service as pioneers that they named their firstborn child "Pioneer." In the whole of Kenya, 1,045 were baptized in symbol of their dedication during the past three years. And more are interested in putting on new personalities, as evidenced by meeting attendances frequently doubling the number of Witnesses present. The number of those present for the celebration of the Lord's Evening Meal on April 3 exceeded 5,000 for the first time, with 5,582 being present.

Yes, among all the peoples of Kenya, of whom we have mentioned only a few here, personality changes are being made. From the glaciers of Mt. Kenya, higher than any in the American Rockies or the European Alps, to the lovely, tropical, sandy beaches of the coast, and from the dry, desert areas of the north, through mountainous forests and rich highland farm areas to the grassy plains of the Masai Mara, on the edge of the Serengeti plains, people are hearing the Bible's message and making their minds over. So, when you think of Kenya with its fascinating wildlife in natural environment, of the majestic lion stalking a gazelle for the "kill," think, too, of the personalities and characteristics that are being transformed and made over in the power of God's Word. When you think of the various customs, practices, and languages, think, too, how these people, because of their personality changes, are being united into one happy family of Christian men and women serving the Creator. Truly, personalities are undergoing great changes in Kenya's spiritual paradise.

erit nebulosus noctis erubet in vobis et
nebulosus noctis conseruans te in
tempore tempestatis.

MANKIND is greatly divided at the present time. Religious, racial, national, social and linguistic barriers have proved insurmountable. But this division was not purposed by God. At the first, Adam and Eve, the parents of the human race, were in full unity and harmony with each other and, more importantly, with God and his heavenly family of angelic sons. (Gen. 1:27-31; Job 38:7) God purposes to restore this unity and harmony in the universe. The Bible, speaking of "the sacred secret of [God's] will," says: "It is according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself for an administration at the full limit of the appointed times, namely, to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth. Yes, in him."—Eph. 1:9, 10.

There can be no peace and happiness on earth without unity. But it cannot be a unity through fear, as the nations today hope to achieve to protect themselves against nuclear warfare. True peace must be based on heartfelt unity—love for one another and for God. This gathering together in Christ is a gathering together under Jehovah God's authority, an acknowledging of him as Sovereign. For the past 1,900 years he has been gathering persons from all races, nations and languages to form the Christian congregation, with Christ as Head. In this time of the conclusion of the present world system of things, God is also gathering persons hoping to survive this system's end, to live on earth forever under Jehovah's sover-

The Christian Congregation and Its Operation

enty. Moreover, during the thousand-year rule of his kingdom Christ will bring back the dead by a resurrection, to gather together all who prove to be obedient into one harmonious body.—1 Cor. 15:22, 23.

THE CONGREGATION AND ITS UNITY

What is the congregation? The word "congregation" is a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means, literally, "a calling out," from *ek*, "out of," and *klesis*, "a calling." The term was used by early Greeks of a body of citizens gathered to discuss the affairs of State. English equivalents of the word are "assembly" and "congregation." Some Bible versions render *ekklesia* as "church." The equivalent Hebrew word is *qahal*, used in referring to the congregation of Israel.—Compare Psalm 22:22, 25 and Hebrews 2:12.

The expression "congregation" applies, in its largest sense, to the entire body of Christian disciples under Christ as Head. (Col. 1:18; Rom. 12:5) It is also used in the Bible with reference to local bodies of Christians. (Acts 15:41; Rev. 1:4) Each congregation must have unity within itself and with the entire earth-wide congregation—they are all as one. The kind of unity that the congregation must have is described at 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I exhort you, brothers, through the name

of our Lord Jesus Christ that you should all speak in agreement, and that there should not be divisions among you, but that you may be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought."

Love, the basis for unity, is the primary identifying mark of the true Christian congregation. Jesus said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) The Bible commands Christians: "Clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union." (Col. 3:14) To achieve this loving unity all members of the congregation must study God's spirit-inspired Word and follow it. In this way they develop the mind and the spirit or motivating force of Christ and gain his mind on matters. (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 2:16) They come to know God—his personality, his fine qualities and ways, and can become imitators of him. (Eph. 5:1) This brings unity but not uniformity. Each member of the congregation, in 'putting on the new personality,' does not lose his identity. (Eph. 4:22-24) He still has his own tastes, talents and abilities. This works for enjoyable variety and for happiness in the congregation.

THE CENTRAL BODY OF ELDERS

Unified, concerted effort is necessary to get the proclamation of the "good news" accomplished earth wide. First-century Christians enjoyed this unity, as the apostle Paul wrote to the Christian congregation in the city of Philippi in Macedonia: "Only behave in a manner worthy of the good news about the Christ, in order that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear about the things which concern you, that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one soul striving side by side for the faith of the good news." (Phil. 1:27) The first-century congregations cooperated with the Jerusalem congregation. Since it was the oldest congregation, and

the body of elders thereof included the apostles, the other congregations looked to this body for counsel and direction.

Jehovah's Witnesses today have made efforts to learn the mode of operation of the early Christian congregation and to follow that Scriptural pattern. The more than 40,000 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the earth cooperate with a central body of elders at Brooklyn, New York. This body is made up of Christian men who are mature, experienced members of Christ's congregation, and are from various nationalities and from various lands. They qualify also, as outlined at 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, to be shepherds and overseers of the flock of God.

The operation of the first-century body of elders in Jerusalem is illustrated in Acts chapter 15. As shown there, God was dealing with his people wherever they were on earth—his entire congregation. Through the Head of the congregation, Jesus Christ, God led his servants Paul and Barnabas, preaching in non-Jewish lands, into a situation that posed a problem: Should Gentiles accepting Christianity be required to be circumcised before being accepted into the congregation? Some Jewish Christians said Yes.

Consequently the apostle Paul and others took the problem to Jerusalem, where the rest of the apostles and the elders of that congregation resided. (Acts 15:1, 2) With all this body gathered together, Paul and Barnabas set the question before them. A discussion ensued in which Peter described the leadings of the spirit in connection with the first Gentile convert, Cornelius. (Acts chap. 10) Next, Paul and Barnabas testified similarly. The holy spirit thereby 'bore witness' to God's will on the matter. (John 15:26) Then, to settle the question Scripturally, God's spirit acted as a reminder to direct the attention

of James the half brother of Jesus Christ to Amos 9:11, 12, and as a *teacher* to get James to see the significance of that prophecy. (John 14:26) Thus the matter was settled, actually by holy spirit. Consequently, a letter was written to all the congregations to guide them in harmony with God's will.—Acts 15:22-29.

By observing how that Christian body in Jerusalem operated, we can see how the modern-day central body of elders functions. When the need arises for additional help, the men composing the central body of elders select other experienced men who are qualified to serve on this body with them. This body also directs the review of recommendations of elders made by the congregations and the appointing of men to these positions. Another of its functions is the supervision of the writing and/or publication of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines, Bibles and other Bible publications, using the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania and the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., as legal agencies.

In addition to the administration of these matters, the central body keeps closely in touch with the congregations throughout the world by means of branch offices. It maintains the missionary school of Gilead at Brooklyn, New York, directs the assignment of missionaries throughout the earth and sees that proclaimers of the "good news" of the Kingdom reach isolated places. Members of this body visit these other lands from time to time. This helps worldwide unity of thought and action to be maintained. (1 Cor. 1:10) These men associate with and serve as elders in local New York congregations. They are not governors or "masters" of the lives or faith of Jehovah's Witnesses, but are viewed as brothers and equals having a duty of stewardship.—1 Cor. 4:1, 2; 2 Cor. 1:24; 1 Pet. 4:10.

ELDERS IN THE CONGREGATIONS

Each local congregation, in turn, has its body of "elders," or "overseers" (Greek, *episkopoi*). The elders are in no way superior persons, but are actually *servants* to the "flock" of God. Their attitude and work are described by the apostle Peter at 1 Peter 5:1-4, where they are called "shepherds." They are to help the "flock" in their charge. The terms applied to these men are not titles but, rather, actually designate that they are in fact "elders" as mature Christian men appointed to do a work of shepherding and overseeing spiritual matters. Special titles that set apart a "clergy" class from a "laity" are not used among Jehovah's Witnesses.—Job 32:21, 22.

Men recommended by each congregation to be recognized as elders or overseers are selected according to the Scriptural qualifications set forth at 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and other texts describing the qualities and work of true overseers. Thus it is that "holy spirit" indicates to the central body of elders whom they should appoint "to shepherd the congregation of God."—Acts 20:28.

The supervision of the flock of God is a "pastoral" work. In speaking of their duty to "take care of God's congregation," the apostle Paul uses the Greek word *epimeleomai*, which signifies "to take care of," involving forethought and provision, *epi* indicating 'the direction of the mind toward the object cared for.' (1 Tim. 3:5) At Luke 10:34, 35 the word is used with regard to the good Samaritan's care for the wounded man.

Accordingly, the primary function of the elders is to look well to the spirituality of the congregation, teaching, helping, reproofing, correcting, exhorting. The elders are concerned with the congregation, not as a mass of people, but with the spiritual welfare of every member individually. The elders' being "qualified to teach" includes



Body of elders in U.S.A.

ability to give helpful counsel to individuals, married couples and families as to the application of the Scriptures to their lives and problems.—1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 4:2; 2:24, 25.

The elders of a congregation sit as required to hear cases in which there are disputes between members of the congregation, or in which charges of wrongdoing are involved. However, in this they are not to be viewed as harsh judges, but, rather, as loving brothers interested in the recovery of the wrongdoer. Their objective is to help those involved to work out their problem as God's Word directs and to maintain the moral cleanliness of the congregation, in harmony with the Scriptures. This assures God's continued favor and also guards against reproach upon God's congregation. (1 Pet. 2:15, 16) Mercy and the good spiritual standing of the congregation are therefore the primary factors. Every effort is made to 'gain' the erring one, helping him to readjust, to correct his way and get back into sound spiritual condition. (Matt. 18:15) However, if individuals seriously violate Scriptural principles and show no true repentance or inclination to turn away from a

bad practice, the body of elders may act to "disfellowship" the offender. This action is a disassociation or breaking off of spiritual fellowship and social intimacy.—1 Cor. 5:9-13.

Besides keeping the congregation free from the accusation of condoning wrongdoing, disfellowshipping may help the offender to come to his senses.

(1 Tim. 1:20) Such a person, if he later repents and turns away from his wrong course and requests reinstatement, may be received back after the body of elders gives consideration to his changed course and attitude. (2 Cor. 2:5-8) While in the disfellowshiped state, the individual is not mistreated or abused, but is regarded in the way that Jesus counseled, "as a man of the nations," that is, as one who is among the outside world, not a member of the Christian congregation.—Matt. 18:17.

MINISTERIAL SERVANTS

"Ministerial servants" (Greek, *diakonoi*, servants or ministers) are selected on the basis of qualifications laid down in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. These men work under the supervision of the elders to assist in caring for the congregation's many needs. This they do by taking care of the records of the congregation, keeping meeting places clean, equipped, supplied, seeing that the people in the community are systematically reached with the "good news," which involves territory maps, assignments of territory to individuals and groups, making sure that all members of

the congregation are supplied with Bible literature for witnessing and teaching, assisting new ones to proclaim the "good news," visiting interested persons, helping needy or sick ones, and so forth. They, as well as the elders, serve in harmony with the "gifts" that God has seen fit to give them. (Rom. 12:6-8) None of the elders or ministerial servants receive a salary as such. Their services are given free.

While women engage in the work of proclaiming and teaching the "good news" to the people, as did women of the early Christian congregation, none are appointed as elders. This is in harmony with the apostle Paul's words at 1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34.

To provide special training for the elders, a school course is provided periodically, in convenient locations. All congregational elders are invited to these schools, called "Kingdom Ministry Schools," where they are provided with a textbook tailored to their needs. Qualified instructors conduct the schools. Local congregations may provide food and lodging for those who come to the school from outside the school's vicinity. A similar school is provided for training "pioneer" Witnesses—those who regularly devote ninety hours or more each month to the direct work of proclaiming the good news.

TRAVELING CIRCUIT AND DISTRICT OVERSEERS

Elders who are in a position to devote all or a large portion of their time to work as circuit overseers are appointed to make regular visits on some twenty congregations within a given area. The circuit overseer's work is to cooperate with the elders in the congregations that he visits, discussing problems that arise and encouraging the congregation by association and by sharing with as many members of the congregation as possible in the fine ser-

vice of proclaiming the "good news." He also gives talks encouraging all to progress in the faith.—Rom. 1:11, 12.

The work of the district overseer is similar to that of the circuit overseer. A district is usually composed of about twenty circuits or sections thereof. The district overseer visits these circuits, at which times "circuit assemblies" are held in convenient cities or at a centrally located Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. He serves as chairman at such gatherings. These assemblies are usually of two days' duration. Upbuilding talks and discussions by the circuit and district overseers and other local elders deal Scripturally with the life of a Christian, his work and problems. The central body of elders supervises the outlining of programs for two such assemblies a year. A baptismal service is conducted at these assemblies.

MEETINGS

Jehovah's Witnesses, as a congregation, have the following meetings each week, scheduled at the times most convenient locally.

Congregation book study. Once a week Jehovah's Witnesses and persons who are studying the Bible with them meet at homes in their various neighborhoods for a one-hour study, using the Bible and a Bible textbook produced under the direction of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. Here a person can become closely acquainted with others in his locality who are serving God. The small size of the group encourages a person to speak up freely and to get accustomed to declaring his faith before others. (Heb. 13:15) He also has opportunity to ask questions and receive answers, along with a discussion of scriptures in support. This sharpens one's knowledge of the Bible.—Prov. 27:17.

The home where the congregation book study is held usually serves as a meeting



place for the group at other times, to go from there to visit the homes of the people of the neighborhood with the "good news." This group arrangement gives opportunity for persons progressing well in their Bible study to receive help in sharing in the proclamation of the "good news."

Public meeting. Each week, usually on Sunday, the congregation meets to hear a public Bible talk. Outlines on a wide

variety of Bible topics are provided, and qualified speakers, usually elders, present the talks. By bringing a Bible along a person has opportunity to follow the speaker as he quotes or cites Scripture references, thus enabling him to get an understanding of what the Bible teaches on the subject. **"Watchtower" study.** This meeting usually follows the public meeting. It consists of a study of the Bible with the help of

the *Watchtower* magazine. The procedure followed here, with the entire congregation present, is similar to that of the small group at the congregation book study. Questions are asked by the chairman and voluntary comments are offered by the audience.

Theocratic School. Each congregation conducts this school to help all enrolled members to equip themselves more fully to speak the truth effectively to others. It equips many to "become an example to the faithful ones in speaking," as they give public talks, and exhort and teach the congregation from the platform. All in the school are assigned talks on Bible topics, and are helped to progress through kindly private counsel by the elder conducting the school. (1 Tim. 4:12, 13, 15; 2 Tim. 2:15) Anyone associated with the congregation may enroll. In this way they become more effective in speaking and teaching in the homes of interested persons.

Service meeting. This meeting, which usually follows the Theocratic School on the same evening, is so named because it focuses specifically on the service of the Christian toward Jehovah God. This includes matters of everyday living as well as proclaiming and teaching the "good news" to the people. Ways of presenting the Bible truth to others, the training and disciplining of children, deportment, experiences of the Witnesses in proclaiming the "good news," in meeting problems of life, and so forth, are discussed. The program includes talks and group discussions. Also, Bible discussions with others who have a

hearing ear, and the conducting of Bible studies in the homes of interested persons, are demonstrated at this meeting.

KINGDOM HALLS AND FINANCING

Jehovah's Witnesses call their congregational meeting places "Kingdom Halls." Sometimes rented buildings are used, but often the Witnesses build beautiful, yet simple, functional halls. Generally most of the building work is done by the Witnesses themselves. The building and maintaining of Kingdom Halls and all other expenses of the congregation are met by voluntary contributions from members of the congregation. At the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses no collection plates are passed, and no solicitation of money is ever made. A contribution box is placed in the hall, and anyone desiring to help in defraying expenses may contribute as he sees fit.

—Matt. 6:3, 4.

Similarly, the worldwide work of Jehovah's Witnesses is supported by contributions from those desiring to see "this good news of the kingdom" preached. (Matt. 24:14) Contributions received from interested persons for Bible literature defray part of the cost of printing and distribution.

Realizing that the "congregation of the living God" is a "pillar and support of the truth" in the earth, Jehovah's Witnesses hold closely to the Bible for its structure and function. Their purpose is that the congregation may truly help many persons to learn of God's arrangements and live according to the truth, and to glorify the God of truth.—1 Tim. 3:15.

How Good Was John the Baptizer's Diet?

John the Baptizer ate "insect locusts and wild honey." (Matt. 3:4) According to an analysis made at Jerusalem, desert locusts are 75 percent protein. Regarding honey as a food, *The Encyclopedia Americana* says: "Honey is highly nutritive, especially as a fuel for the energies of the body, as four fifths of its components are carbohydrates."

Insight on the News

● In recent years, the "swinging" life-style has been publicized as a desirable and happy life. It promises adventure, excitement and freedom from responsibility. A main feature of this way of life

"Swinging" Life-Style

is searching out a partner for sexual relations, usually for only one night.

However, psychiatrists report that many who live this way are now coming to them as patients, having serious mental and emotional problems. The "Times Herald" of Newport News, Virginia, observes: "Many in this group . . . are unhappy. Their romantic or sexual fantasies are not being fulfilled. Without any plans for getting better acquainted or seeing the partner again, they begin looking on themselves as promiscuous. . . . The result is regret, disgust and frustration over the non-satisfying and unfulfilling nature of their lifestyle."

Many go from physician to physician because of the fear of venereal disease. Also, many syphilophobes are being found among the "swingers." These are people who have a psychopathic dread of venereal disease. Especially is this the case among many married ones who have this morbid fear of passing on venereal disease to their wives or offspring.

This life-style was aptly described in the Bible, where one immoral person says to another: "Do come, let us drink our fill of love until the morning." But those who engaged in immoral relations, the account further says, are "like a bull that comes even to the slaughter, . . . until an arrow cleaves open his liver, just as a bird hastens into the trap, and he has not known that it involves his very soul." (Prov. 7:18-23) The very soul, or life, is involved because "God will judge fornicators and adulterers."—Heb. 13:4.

● Archaeologists have probed down to the bedrock foundations of the "wailing wall" in old Jerusalem. They have

'No Stone Left'
confirmed that the large stones of the wall are not part of any temple that was standing there before Jerusalem's destruction in 70 C.E.

Some people have had the impression that the remnants of the wall are from Solomon's

temple, or from Herod's temple. But as an Israeli archaeologist stated recently: "The wall you see is not the wall of Solomon's Temple, . . . Nor is it even the wall of the temple built by Herod the Great," which was the temple destroyed in 70 C.E.

What was this wall that is now called the "wailing wall"? The archaeologist stated: "When Herod decided to build the temple, he leveled off a site twice as large as the Acropolis—500 by 260 yards [457 by 237 meters]—bolstered by huge retaining walls. And the Western Wall [the "wailing wall"] is that retaining wall."

In his prophecy about Herod's temple, Jesus said to his followers: "Truly I say to you, By no means will a stone be left here upon a stone and not be thrown down." (Matt. 24:2) Archaeology confirms the truth of his prophetic words.

● In Brazil, eight children were murdered in a ritual drowning. They belonged to members of a sect called the Universal Assembly of the Saints. On the fatal night the group marched to the seashore carrying their sleeping children. One by one the children were thrown into the sea by the sect's leader.

Those involved were arrested. But they attributed the drownings to God. At a meeting where they spoke in tongues, the sect's leader said that he had been given a "divine command" by God to kill the children.

Was this the will of God? Of a similar practice in ancient times, God says: "They built the high places of the Baal in order to burn their sons in the fire as whole burnt offerings to the Baal, something that I had not commanded or spoken of, and that had not come up into my heart." God speaks of this practice as a "detestable thing."—Jer. 19:5; 32:35.

The Brazilian child sacrifice could not have been from God since it is completely contrary to his love and his command against murder. From where could such an anti-God "command" come? It is obviously of demonic origin, for "Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light."—2 Cor. 11:14.

When things go wrong due to a person's own lack of wisdom, or because of someone else's mistake, he may tend to blame God.

DO NOT BECOME “ENRAGED AGAINST JEHOVAH”

IT IS a human tendency, when things do not go just right, to blame someone or something for it. And often, the trouble is charged to God. If there is a food shortage in a certain area, people may make the accusation that God is letting them go hungry. Or, when unemployment causes hardships, some ask, "Why does God bring suffering on us?" But is God really to blame?

Actually, God does not bring such hardships on people and he is not partial, "since he makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good." (Matt. 5:45) The adversities people suffer today come because we are

all imperfect people, living in an imperfect, man-made setup, which is operated, for the most part, on selfish principles. Moreover, a person may encounter difficulty merely because of unwise action on his own part.

In most cases, men are reluctant to find themselves at fault, or even to acknowledge that the man-made system of things as a whole is distorted and is to blame for the world's calamities. (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2, 3) It has taken place as the Scriptures say: "It is the foolishness of an earthling man that distorts his way, and so his heart becomes enraged against Jehovah himself." (Prov. 19:3) Or, as rendered by another translator: "A man's ignorance muddles his affairs and he flies out against Jehovah."—*Byington*.

This is a dangerous course to take. Our first forefather Adam furnished us a warning example. He originally enjoyed great prosperity and peace, perfection of body and a gardenlike home in a beautiful location. (Gen. 2:7-9) He loved what God gave him but failed to appreciate and to credit his Giver for the things so abundantly provided. When things did not go right he was ready to blame God. In self-justification for his disobedience, he said to God: "The woman whom *you* gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree and so I ate." In effect, he was excusing himself for his failure to exercise loyalty to God and headship over his household, charging God with giving him a bad wife.—Gen. 3:12.

So Adam's selfish thinking and action distorted his way. His heart's affections turned away from Jehovah. He set out on his own independent course, becoming an enemy of God, and brought his own way and that of his family "to ruin." (Prov. 19:3, *Revised Standard Version*) Yes, with sin and imperfection ruling, and with each going his independent way, no one knows

what may befall him, for "time and unforeseen occurrence befall them all."
—Eccl. 9:11.

Those who feel that God is to blame for undesirable conditions might therefore ask themselves, Have I given God credit for the good things I have? In prosperous times have I attributed my prosperity to him, or have I credited myself? Do I thank him that I have life as one of his creations? Also, have I merited his favor or help by giving attention to his principles as found in the Bible?

AMONG THOSE CLAIMING TO SERVE GOD

The Jewish religious leaders in the first century are an illustration of what happens when persons professing to serve God neglect his word of truth and lean on their own understanding. (Matt. 15:8, 9) Their way became distorted and they actually became "enraged against Jehovah himself." (Compare Acts 5:34, 38, 39.) Because what Jesus Christ said revealed their wrong thinking, they put him to death. Later they showed extreme rage against Jesus' disciples because the disciples spoke the truth from God's Word to them.
—Acts 7:54-60.

Sad to say, some individuals in the Christian congregation may also develop a wrong attitude, laying responsibility on God for difficulties encountered. Things that go wrong due to a person's own lack of wisdom, or because of imperfection or mistake on the part of another, may be blamed upon God. For example, a person may be offended by what a brother in the congregation says or does. The offended one may then say, 'Well, as long as he is in the congregation I won't attend the meetings anymore.' Or he may say, 'If God lets things like this go on, I don't want to be in the congregation.' Again, he may complain, 'If this is an example of what the truth does for a person, I don't want anything to do with it.'

Is this sound, sober thinking? What a contradictory thing to say, that the *truth* would cause a person to be bad! And if personally offended, why "take it out" on the congregation and thereby on God himself? Why should one professing to be a Christian let another person, or a set of circumstances, destroy good relations with God?

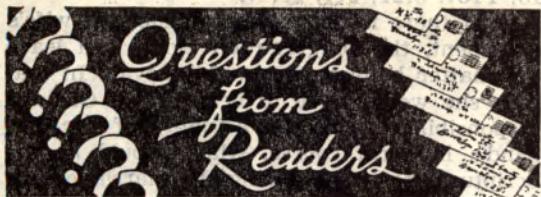
So, the individual making such rash statements actually is expressing rage "against Jehovah." What reasonableness is there in this? Even if someone else or something occurring in the congregation displeased or seriously offended him, the individual really is distorting his way, because he is not using his perceptive powers properly. (Heb. 5:14) Otherwise he would not adopt an unreasonable, disloyal attitude toward Jehovah, the Owner of the true Christian congregation.—Ps. 119:165.

The danger to a Christian is that such an attitude may become ingrained. It becomes deep-seated, affecting the HEART. The Christian will rarely accuse Jehovah directly. But in his heart he may be impatient with God and may feel justified in being angry, his own heart misleading him into rage against Jehovah.

Everyone at times experiences some irritating circumstance. And a person may feel very downhearted and frustrated, perhaps angry. But he should be alert to the warning signs and deal with the problem on a Scriptural basis. (Eph. 4:26) He should make efforts to work out the problem immediately, with the assistance of the elders in the congregation if necessary. Even if it is not worked out to his satisfaction, he should not let his emotions drive him to act foolishly. He should watch that his way of walking in the truth does not become distorted. Otherwise, his relationship to God will be damaged, his vision become unclear and his heart "enraged against Jehovah himself."

In view of this danger, the Bible gives counsel: "More than all else that is to be guarded, safeguard your heart, for out of it are the sources of life." (Prov. 4:23) Keeping our senses and not distorting our way by unwise action or foolish thinking

will enable us to keep our balance. (1 Pet. 1:13) Then, rather than blame Jehovah, we will call upon him as a loving God who cares. He will give us understanding and guide our course in a straight, sure path.—Prov. 3:5, 6.



● My unbelieving husband admitted to me that he has another woman. Is his admission sufficient ground for a Scriptural divorce?

In some cases if a Christian's unbelieving mate admits to committing immorality, that would provide a Scriptural basis for a divorce, which, in turn, would free the innocent Christian for remarriage if desired.

Jehovah God's law to the ancient nation of Israel made provision for divorce on various grounds. (Deut. 24:1, 2) Adultery, homosexuality and bestiality were bases for ending a marriage; the guilty person was to be executed. (Deut. 22:22-24; Lev. 18:22, 23) However, the Law set forth this important requirement: "At the mouth of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one dying should be put to death. He will not be put to death at the mouth of one witness." (Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Num. 35:30) Being a "lover of righteousness and justice," Jehovah required that such matters be determined on the basis of proof, of witnesses, not merely suspicion. (Ps. 33:5) This, of course, was stated as regards applying the death penalty, not as regards a divorce action.

Another situation dealt with in the Law also illustrates the importance of proof. What was a man to do if he suspected that his wife had committed adultery but she denied it and there were no witnesses? God's law outlined a step that could be taken, but it was a drastic one that could have lasting effects for the wife if she was guilty or for the husband if she was innocent. She could be brought before the priest and made to share in a prescribed procedure involving drinking some special water. If she was

guilty, she would experience the divine punishment of her 'thigh falling away,' apparently meaning that her sexual parts would atrophy and she would lose her ability to conceive. (Num. 5:12-31) Evidently in such cases the adulterous wife, though receiving this extraordinary punishment from God, because she denied guilt and there were not the required two witnesses, was not executed.

What is the situation today in the Christian congregation? Is it possible to obtain substantial testimony as to the grounds for a Scriptural divorce?

Jesus himself stated that for his followers the only ground for divorce, such as would free a person for remarriage, is if one's mate commits *porneia*, gross sexual immorality. (Matt. 19:9) Would there be sufficient ground for divorce if a Christian wife merely suspected that her husband was guilty of adultery? No, for the Christian Greek Scriptures carry forward the principle of a matter's being established by two or three witnesses, as a balanced sense of justice requires. (John 8:17, 18; 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28) So, if a wife merely suspected her husband of adultery, *but he denied it and there were no witnesses* to confirm it, she would not have sufficient basis for establishing with the Christian congregation that she had a right to divorce him and thus be free to remarry.

In some cases, though, an unbelieving mate admits to being immoral. A husband, for instance, might even boast of it to his wife as a taunt to hurt her. She might choose to overlook his waywardness. But what if she feels she cannot or should not? Is his confession enough proof?

In this situation it is not as if he professes innocence or adamantly denies being guilty of adultery. Rather, he admits it to her, though for the sake of his reputation he might not be willing to own up to it in a court of law or before other persons. What can the wife do?

Since she is part of the clean Christian con-

gregation, she should realize the importance of handling the matter properly so that, after divorcing him, if she later remarried there would be no question about her keeping 'the marriage bed without defilement.' (Heb. 13:4) To that end she could give the elders representing the congregation a letter outlining her situation, stating that her unbelieving husband confessed to her that he had committed immorality. And she could state that in accord with Matthew 19:9 she wishes to put him away, obtaining a legal divorce and thus ending the marriage Scripturally and legally.

The elders would consider whether there is any known reason to conclude other than that the unbelieving mate had been immoral. If not, they could accept her signed statement.

'But,' someone might say, 'is it not possible to submit a deceptive, untruthful statement, saying that her husband confessed immorality when he actually never said that?' Actually, it would be gross deception for anyone to try that. David once prayed: "You have examined my heart, you have made inspection by night, you have refined me; you will discover that I have not schemed." (Ps. 17:3) Conversely, Jehovah

is well aware when someone does scheme and He will make sure that the person does not lastingly succeed. Hence, if a Christian woman goes on record as stating that her husband has admitted immorality, Jehovah knows the facts. As the Bible says: "There is not a creation that is not manifest to his sight, but all things are naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have an accounting."—Heb. 4:13; Prov. 5:21; Jer. 16:17.

So if there is no reason to doubt the wife's statement, the congregation elders can leave the matter between her and Jehovah. In that case she would have to bear before God the responsibility as to the actuality of her husband's immoral course, which would be the Scriptural basis for ending the marriage even if the legal divorce were obtained on some other ground.

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