

# GOD LEADS A PRETTY SHELTERED LIFE



Billions of people were scattered on a great plain before God's throne. Some of the groups near the front talked heatedly ... not with cringing shame, but with belligerence.

"How can God judge us?" said one.

"What does He know about suffering?" snapped a brunette. She jerked back a sleeve to reveal a tattooed number from a Nazi concentration camp. "We endured terror, beatings, torture, death!"

In another group a black man lowered his collar, "What about this?" he demanded, showing an ugly rope burn. "Lynched for no crime but being black! We have suffocated in slave ships, been wrenched from loved ones, toiled 'till death gave release."

Far out across the plain were hundreds of such groups. Each had a complaint against God for the evil and suffering He permitted in His world. How lucky God was to live in Heaven where there was no weeping, no fear, no hunger, no hatred!

Indeed, what did God know about what man had been forced to endure in this world? "After all, God leads a pretty sheltered life," they said. So each group sent out a leader, chosen because he had suffered the most. There was a Jew, a black, an untouchable from India, an illegitimate, a person from Hiroshima, one from a Siberian *gulag*, and on it went.

In the center of the plain they consulted with each other. At last they were ready to present their case. It was rather simple: Before God would be qualified to be their judge, He must endure what they had endured. Their decision was that God "should be sentenced to live on Earth as a man!" But because He was God, they set certain safeguards to be sure He could not use His divine powers to help Himself:

Let Him be born a Jew.

Let the legitimacy of His birth be doubted, so that none would know Who His Father was.

Let Him champion a cause so just, but so radical, that it brings down upon Him the hate, condemnation, and efforts of every major traditional and established religious authority to eliminate Him.

Let Him try to describe what no man has ever seen, felt, tasted, heard, or smelled ... let Him try to communicate God to men.

Let Him be betrayed by His dearest friends.

Let Him be indicted on false charges, tried before a prejudiced jury, and convicted by a cowardly judge.

Let Him see what it is to be terribly alone and completely abandoned by every living thing.

Let Him be tortured and let Him die! Let Him die the most humiliating death, with common criminals.

As each leader announced his portion of the sentence, loud murmurs of approval went up from the great throngs of people.

But when the last had finished pronouncing sentence there was a long silence. No one uttered another word. No one moved. For suddenly all knew ... God had already served His sentence.

—Author unknown

