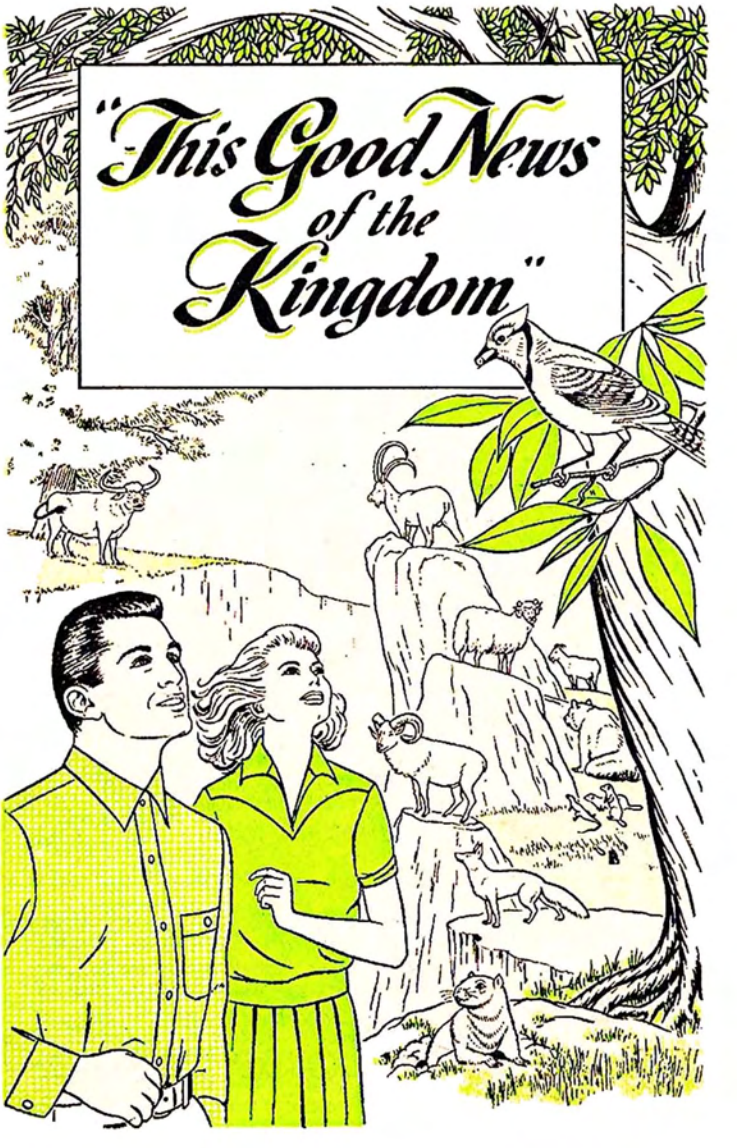
"This Good News of the Kingdom"

IS THERE ANY GOOD NEWS on earth today? Yes, there is, in spite of all the saddening, disturbing and frightening conditions that we all see on earth today. And this good news, too, comes from a most reliable and authoritative source, and is backed up by the very things that we see happening and existing. Why, then, should you be sorrowful and hopeless, when you can be joyful and hopeful and can make others happy with this good news? Read this little booklet, and then, we feel, you will want to pass its refreshing information on to others.

—THE PUBLISHERS

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# "THIS GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM"

WHAT is your hope for the future? Is it just to live out some few years on earth with the hope of gaining some pleasure and happiness in the short time before death brings an end to it? Or do you have hope of life beyond death? What does the future hold for mankind in general upon earth? Will some disaster finally destroy the earth and all life on it?

[2] People in different parts of the world will answer these questions somewhat differently. There are many different religions and many different ideas about what the future holds for mankind. Some have come to their own conclusions as to what their future will be. Surely the sensible thing to do, if we want to have a sure hope for the future, is to find out what the supreme and almighty God has purposed for man and for this earth, which is man's home. Since He created man, then He is the one to decide our future, and this He has done. For those who please the Creator there is a happy future, and this happy future was announced to man on earth through a special representative of the Creator, Jesus Christ. His message Jesus Christ himself called "this good news of the

1. What questions concerning man's hope for the future present themselves?
2. (a) How do people in different places answer these questions? (b) In order to have a sure hope for the future, what is the sensible thing to do, and why so?

kingdom."—Matthew 24:14, in The Holy Bible, *NW*.*

[3] What is "this good news"? To understand what it is, and what "the kingdom" is that is here spoken of, and how it will bring blessings to mankind, we need to know something of the purposes of the Most High God and of his dealings with mankind. This information we find in a book, the Holy Bible. One who can create the sun, moon and stars, this earth and all the wonderful things on it, the fish, birds, animals, trees and flowers, and man, that One could also create a book. Since it is the Creator's purpose to make this information available world wide in such a way that each one would be able to check the information for himself, there would have to be a written record that one could turn to for proof. The only written record of the Creator's purpose for man and the earth is the Bible, that sacred Book which God has preserved down through the ages and which has been translated into hundreds of languages. In this Book we shall find the answers to all the important questions about our life here on earth and our hopes for the future.

[4] Who is God? How and why did he make man? Why are there wickedness and suffering on the earth? When will they end? What is the

* *NW* stands for the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, edition of 1961, quoted throughout this booklet.

3. To understand all about "this good news," where do we find the needed information, and why do we find it only there?
4. What are some of the important questions that the Bible answers for us, and so what shall we now do?

future of the earth and man, and what does one have to do to gain eternal life from God? All these and many other questions are answered for us in the Bible. The Bible is God's Word in which he reveals himself and his purposes to us. (John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:15-17) Let us then look into this Book and learn some of its contents.

### THE TRUE GOD

5 There is only one true God who is almighty and supreme and who is the Creator that has "made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all the things in them." (Acts 4:24) Everyone who wants life, including God's chief Son, Jesus Christ, must recognize His supremacy and be subject to Him. (1 Corinthians 15:28) God is invisible to human eyes, and 'no man has seen God at any time.' (1 John 4:12) So, then, it is wrong for man to try to make an image of God to worship. He is beyond compare. He has no equal. Of him the prophet Isaiah wrote, chapter 40, verses 18 and 25: "And to whom can you people liken God, and what likeness can you put alongside him?" He is the source of all life and therefore it is to him we must look in hope for everlasting life in the future.

6 To differentiate him from the many false gods that are worshiped, the Almighty God has a personal name. That name is Jehovah. Psalm

5. If we want life, what must we recognize concerning God, and why is it wrong to try to make an image of God to worship?

6. Why does God have a name, what is it, and why must we know him by his name?

83:18 says about him: "That people may know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth." Therefore, to become a true worshiper of him one must come to know him by his name Jehovah.

### JESUS CHRIST

7 The chief one of God's creatures under Him is his son who came to earth and took the name Jesus. The Bible shows that this One had lived as a spirit creature in heaven before coming to the earth. At that time he was called the Word; that is, he was Jehovah's spokesman to all other creatures that were brought into existence. (John 1:1; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 19:13) After he was baptized and God's spirit descended upon him, he was called Christ or Anointed One.—Matthew 3:13-17.

8 Jesus and Jehovah God are not the same person, nor is Jesus equal to God. Jehovah alone is supreme. Therefore, Jesus said about Jehovah: "The Father is greater than I am." (John 14:28) He always has been and is obedient to his Father in heaven and has always been united or at one with him in God's works of righteousness. Because they were in harmony together Jesus could say: "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30) But he did not mean that they were one person. It would be foolish to say that, since later we find Jesus praying to his Father

7. Who is the chief of God's creatures, and why was he called the Word?
8. Are Jesus and Jehovah God the same person, and are they equal? What did Jesus say about this?

in these words: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me. Yet, not as I will, but as you will."—Matthew 26:39; compare John 17:20-22.

[9] Jesus is God's chief Son and most beloved One and he has become the King of God's kingdom, through which righteousness and peace will be brought about in a new order. While he was on the earth he taught his followers to pray for that kingdom and to direct that prayer to Jehovah, their heavenly Father. "You must pray, then, this way: 'Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth.'" (Matthew 6:9, 10) But before we go on to discuss why Jesus came to earth as a man and died, and why his preaching about the Kingdom was such good news, let us go back to the time when God created the first man in the garden of Eden.

### SIN, DEATH, AND THE DEVIL

[10] Originally God created a first man and woman, named Adam and Eve. They were perfect, and God placed them in a paradise garden in the part of the earth called Eden. He commanded them: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it"; and they were to have in subjection all other creatures on the earth.—Genesis 1:27-31.

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9. Of what has Jesus now become the ruler, and for what did he teach his followers to pray?
10. How did the first man and woman come to be, and what were they commanded to do?

[11] If they were faithful and obedient to the Creator they would live forever on the earth in peace with all the things that their hearts would desire. But, although they were perfect in body and mind, they were as yet untried, and God gave them the opportunity of proving their obedience to him under test. He gave Adam the command, saying: "From every tree of the garden you may eat to satisfaction. But as for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will positively die." (Genesis 2:16, 17) Did they prove faithful under this test? The Bible record shows they did not. In Genesis chapter 3 there is described the failure of first the woman and then the man to keep God's commandment, and they ate of the forbidden fruit of the tree. Who was it that deceived Eve into sinning? The record speaks of a serpent, but there must have been some invisible superhuman power behind the serpent's actions. We shall see in a moment who that invisible power was.

[12] In God's command about the fruit of this tree he had said to Adam: "In the day you eat from it you will positively die." (Genesis 2:17) And so now God put this sentence into effect. First, he drove out Adam and Eve from the paradise garden, and from that day on they began to die, and in due time they did die and returned to the dust from where they were taken.

11. How was their obedience tested out, and by what creature were they led to act as they did?
12. What happened to Adam and Eve after they had sinned, and who was the invisible power behind the serpent in the garden of Eden?

Their act of disobedience to God, their rebellion against God's commandment, brought death to them; and, since all their children were born after they sinned, then they passed on sin and death to their offspring and so down to us. "That is why, 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." (Romans 5:12) The invisible power behind the serpent who led them into rebellion against God was therefore responsible for their death, and he was a murderer. Jesus identified that murderer for us when he said to other followers of the evil one: "You are from your father the Devil, and you wish to do the desires of your father. That one was a manslayer when he began, and he did not stand fast in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaks the lie, he speaks according to his own disposition, because he is a liar and the father of the lie." (John 8:44) So, then, it is Satan the Devil who was the invisible power behind the serpent in Eden and who is the great rebel against God and his purposes.

[13] The Devil was originally a spirit son of God and, as such, he was perfect; but he allowed pride and greed for power to be like God to develop in his heart, and this led him to rebel and to get Adam and Eve to join him in his rebellion. He wanted to be a god and have creatures worship and serve him. (2 Corinthians 4:4) The way he got Adam and Eve to follow him was to tell Eve a lie. God, you will remember, had said

13. (a) How did the Devil come to be? (b) Who told the truth about the result of eating the forbidden fruit, and how has the Devil tried to counteract such result?

that if Adam ate of the forbidden fruit he would die, but the Devil through the serpent said to Eve: "You positively will not die. For God knows that in the very day of your eating from it your eyes are bound to be opened and you are bound to be like God, knowing good and bad." (Genesis 3:4, 5) Who told the truth, God or the Devil? Did Adam really die? The Record says he did: "So all the days of Adam that he lived amounted to nine hundred and thirty years and he died." (Genesis 5:5) So Satan was proved a liar. But to counteract this, he later on brought forth the religious idea that when man dies he just appears to die, that it is just the body that dies, but something inside him, a soul or spirit, lives on, either being born again to some other human or into an animal, or going off into some spirit realm. Is that true? What does happen to man at death?

[14] When God said that Adam would die for disobedience he said nothing about just the body's dying and his soul's going on living somewhere else. He just said: "You will POSITIVELY die." Note these Bible texts that show clearly that when a person dies he is completely dead and not alive somewhere else. "Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs. His spirit goes out, he goes back to his ground; in that day his thoughts do perish." (Psalm 146:3, 4) "For the living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all, neither do they any more have wages, because the remem-

14. Did God warn Adam that only the body would die, and what Bible verses show whether a dead person's soul is alive somewhere else?

brance of them has been forgotten. 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." (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10) "Look! All the souls—to me they belong. As the soul of the father so likewise the soul of the son—to me they belong. The soul that is sinning—it itself will die."—Ezekiel 18:4.

15 So, then, when a person dies his soul does not go straight to heaven, nor does his soul go to a place of torment called "hell," nor would that soul be able to come back as a "spirit" or "ghost" to haunt the dead person's relatives. All such teachings are based on Satan's religious lie that the soul of man does not die, and he has caused many to believe such teachings in order to hold them in fear and turn them away from the true understanding of God's purposes.

16 Many persons have been led to believe that sickness and disease are caused by the influence of the "spirits" of the dead, and these persons have gone to witch doctors, persons who claim that they can appease the "spirits." There are witches who claim that they can get in touch with the dead and communicate messages from these to the living, or that they have supernatural powers by the help of the "spirits" of the dead. These beliefs are based on Satan the Devil's lie, and he has caused these beliefs to spread in order to make man believe that he does

15. So, then, at death does a person's soul go direct to some invisible realm, and on what are teachings of that kind based?
16. What have people been led to believe about so-called "spirits" of the dead and about witches, and what does the Bible have to say about the practice of witchcraft?

not die at death. The Bible specifically warns against anyone's practicing such things as witchcraft. "There should not be found in you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, anyone who employs divination, a practicer of magic or anyone who looks for omens or a sorcerer, or one who binds others with a spell or anyone who consults a spirit medium or a professional foreteller of events or anyone who inquires of the dead. For everybody doing these things is something detestable to Jehovah, and on account of these detestable things Jehovah your God is driving them away from before you."—Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

17 The simple truth about the matter is that, when a person dies, he is dead, unconscious, and knows nothing. Well, you might ask, There is no future in that, is there? If, when man dies, he goes to the grave and that is the end of him, what hope is there for us? It is here in answer to these questions that the Bible brings to our notice Jehovah's most wonderful and merciful provision for the human race, and that is

### THE RANSOM

18 A ransom is something that loosens, something that brings deliverance, something valuable that is paid to bring release from bondage. In the Bible it means God's provision to deliver humans from sin and from death due to sin; and so at Matthew 20:28 we read: "The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister

17. So, when man dies, what about him? And hence what provision has God made for the dying human race?
18. What is a ransom? How did God provide one for mankind, and with what benefit to man exercising faith in it?

and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." Thus Jehovah God by sending his Son Jesus Christ to earth provided through him and his death a ransom price. Persons who exercise faith in this provision and who serve God faithfully may receive the gift of life, being set free from inherited sin and from eternal death as a result of sin. Thus we read at Romans 6:23: "The wages sin pays is death, but the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord."

[19] As we have already seen, sin and death entered into the world when Adam rebelled against God. Adam lost for himself and for his offspring perfect human life in a paradise on earth. By means of the ransom Jesus Christ bought back for mankind this that was lost, namely, perfect human life with its rights and earthly prospects. God's law at Deuteronomy 19:21 was that like should go for like; hence, a perfect human life had to be sacrificed for the perfect human life that was lost. No man on earth who was a descendant of sinner Adam could provide this ransom, because each one was himself under condemnation of sin and death by inheritance from Adam. No one from Adam had perfect human life to offer. So only God could provide the ransom, and he did this by transferring the life of his only-begotten Son, who was with him in heaven, to the womb of Mary, a Jewish virgin. (Matthew 1:23) So without the help of an earthly father Jesus was miraculously born as a perfect human. In this way he did not inherit condemnation from Adam.

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**19. What did the paying of the ransom require, and how was this valuable thing provided in Jesus?**

This child, Jesus, grew up to become a perfect man, and, as such, he possessed the valuable thing, a perfect human life, which could be used as a ransom.

[20] On seeing Jesus approaching him, John the Baptist likened him to a lamb for sacrifice and said: "See, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) The perfect human life that Jesus laid down in death is that valuable thing that serves as a ransom. Three days after his death Jesus was resurrected, and forty days later he ascended into heaven. He did not take back human life at his resurrection, but he was raised a spirit creature. (1 Peter 3:18) When he ascended into heaven he presented to God the value of his perfect human life as the offering, or sacrifice, that could take away sins.—Hebrews 9:24, 26.

[21] Who are the ones that benefit from the ransom? Jesus answers in John 3:16, saying: "For 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."

[22] The provision of the ransom therefore opened up a hope of everlasting life. The Bible shows that by means of the ransom some believers would be granted life in the heavens, others on the earth. Let us now look into what the Bible has to say about this future hope of life.

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20. Why was Jesus sacrificed in death, and how was he enabled to present the value of the ransom? Where and to whom?
21. Who are the ones that benefit from the ransom?
22. The providing of the ransom opened up what hope, to be realized where?

### "KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS"

[23] The word "heavens," when referring to the home of intelligent creatures, refers to the spirit realm. It is here that God dwells with his holy angels. The word "heavens" also refers to spirit rulers higher and more powerful than man or to the invisible rule of the earth by spirit powers. Originally there was a righteous heavenly rule over Adam and Eve, and God talked with them as his children. (Genesis 1:26-30; 2:7-24) With the rebellion of Satan the Devil wicked heavenly rule gained control of mankind, and God purposed to set up later a *new* heavenly rulership over the earth. It would be called the "kingdom of the heavens." (Matthew 3:2) This heavenly kingdom was pictured by Zion, the mountain on which King David of Jerusalem ruled. The heavenly kingdom would be made up of tried and tested creatures who would maintain their integrity on earth down till death in following faithfully the footsteps of Jesus Christ. At Revelation chapters 7 and 14, the number of these is limited to 144,000, quite a small number when compared with earth's population. When Jesus was on earth he began the selection of those who would be associated with him in this heavenly kingdom. He compared them to sheep and said: "Have no fear, little flock, because your Father has approved of giving you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32) From the time of Jesus until now the selecting of the members of the heavenly kingdom has gone on, and

**23. (a) How does the Bible use the word "heavens"? (b) Why did God purpose to set up a new rulership over the earth, and who or how many will exercise that rulership?**

today, after nineteen centuries of selecting, there is yet on earth a small remnant of the 144,000.

[24] Those Christians that make up this kingdom of heaven class are "called" by means of Jehovah's Word (the Bible) and his spirit; that is, through Jehovah's Word they come to know of this hope of service in the heavenly kingdom, and by means of his spirit operating toward them God makes them his spiritual sons and convinces them that this hope is for them. At Romans 8:16, 17 such Christians read: "The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children. If, then, we are children, we are also heirs: heirs indeed of God, but joint heirs with Christ, provided we suffer together that we may also be glorified together." (See also John 3:3-5.) When the last members of the Kingdom class finish their earthly course faithful to death, then the heavenly kingdom of the 144,000 under Jesus Christ the King will be completed by their resurrection from the dead to life in heaven. It will rule over all other creatures in the heavens and all those who gain life on earth.

[25] Those of this Kingdom class who still remain on earth today in the flesh (the remnant) have the commission from God to preach "this good news of the kingdom." (Matthew 24:14) And how good this news about the Kingdom is! This heavenly kingdom will crush out all rebellion and restore peace and righteousness in the universe. It will destroy Satan and all his agents. Under the righteous rule of the King-

24. How are these called to that heavenly kingdom, and when will that kingdom class be completed?

25. Who are commissioned to preach "this good news of the kingdom," and why is this news "good"?

dom the original purpose of the Creator will be carried out: namely, the populating of the earth with humans who will serve, praise and honor their loving God. All this will vindicate or clear the name, word and purpose of Jehovah God. It will show that he is the Supreme Sovereign. Since it is the kingdom of the heavens that will accomplish this, it means that the Kingdom is of greater importance than anything else and that the teaching about it is the most important doctrine in the Bible.

### LIFE ON EARTH

[26] Long ago the psalmist David prophetically wrote: "The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace. The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." (Psalm 37:11, 29) Jesus later quoted from this psalm, in Matthew 5:5, and thus confirmed this hope of everlasting life on earth as true. Some religious organizations hold out the prospect of either life in heaven or eternal torment in a hellfire. As we have seen, the Bible does not support the idea of eternal torment of human souls and it does not limit the hope of future life in peace and happiness only to heaven. Under the heavenly kingdom (for which only a *limited* number are called) an *unlimited* number will receive the blessing of perfect human life on the earth. That is why Jesus taught his followers to pray to

26. Psalm 37:11, 29 holds out the hope of enjoying everlasting life where? How does the prayer Jesus taught his followers agree with this?

God: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." —Matthew 6:9, 10.

[27] The call for the heavenly inheritance is now closing, but the Bible makes plain that Jehovah is now separating to his side of favor a great crowd of sheeplike ones who wish to serve him and whose hope is that of life in a paradise earth under the heavenly kingdom. Jesus, like a shepherd, spoke of these other sheep at John 10:16: "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those also I must bring, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd."

[28] But before such blessings can come to humankind there will have to be great changes, will there not? For peace and righteousness to flourish here, wickedness, destruction, sickness and death must pass from the earth. When and how will that come about? The Bible shows that all this must come to pass following the second coming of Jesus Christ and the setting up of his kingdom in heaven. The good news today is that Jesus Christ has come again, that God's kingdom by him has been set up and is now ruling in heaven, and that shortly Satan, his wicked angels and his visible servants on earth will be destroyed. How do we know this?

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27. What kind of people are being separated to this hope of earthly life, and how did Jesus, like a shepherd, speak of these?

28. (a) For such blessing to come to mankind, what changes will there have to be? (b) So what is the "good news" for this day?

### JESUS' PRESENCE IN KINGDOM POWER

[29] When Jesus said he would come again he did not mean he would return in the flesh visible to men on earth. He has given up that earthly life as a ransom and therefore cannot take such life back again. When he came to earth the first time in human form, that was a humiliation for him. (Hebrews 2:9) However, in his second presence he does not come as a human "lower than angels," but he comes as a spirit creature in all his glory. (Matthew 25:31) As such, his return in Kingdom power is invisible to man on the earth. Before he left the earth he had said to his disciples: "A little longer and the world will behold me no more." (John 14:19) Jesus has now been made the "exact representation" of his Father and therefore dwells with his Father in unapproachable light, and in his glory "not one of men has seen or can see" him. (Hebrews 1:3; 1 Timothy 6:16) So Jesus' second coming and presence are not seen with the literal eyes, but with the eyes of understanding.

[30] As proof of his presence in Kingdom power Jesus foretold certain outstanding evidences that would make up a great "sign." By seeing these visible evidences making up the "sign" and by understanding what they mean, people living on earth would know that Jesus had taken up his Kingdom power in heaven and was therefore *present* as King of the long-promised Kingdom. What would make up this "sign"?

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29. Is Jesus' second coming visible to human eyes? What facts and scriptures determine the answer?

30. By what means would those on earth understand that Jesus was present again and King?

[31] That question arose in the minds of Jesus' apostles, for they asked: "Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" (Matthew 24:3) In answer Jesus said: "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another. All these things are a beginning of pangs of distress."—Matthew 24:7, 8; Luke 21:10, 11.

[32] According to this, then, the great sign would commence with a world war. In the years 1914 to 1918 thirty nations were engaged in war with one another, and it was therefore called the First World War. It was accompanied by food shortages and pestilences in many places, and these things continued to bring woe and misery on earth after World War I ended. Indeed, more died from pestilence than were killed in the four years of the war. Also, since 1914 there have been reported more earthquakes than ever before in history, causing great destruction to both property and life. Yet Jesus said: "All these things are a *beginning* of pangs of distress." And so, since World War I, the time of distress has continued and has included another world war even more terrible than the first. Today there is fear of yet another war using more terrible weapons of destruction. Food shortages still afflict mankind, and earthquakes too. There is a feeling of insecurity on the part of all man-

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31. How did Jesus' apostles frame their question on this, and what did Jesus say would be the beginning of distress?
32. How was this prediction of the "beginning of pangs of distress" fulfilled, and how did Jesus foretell the time of sorrows since then?

kind as they wonder just what the future has in store for them. Jesus well described these conditions which are a part of the sign he prophesied. He said that there would be "on the earth anguish of nations, not knowing the way out because of the roaring of the sea and its agitation, while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth."—Luke 21:25, 26.

33 So, then, all the evidence shows that Jesus took up his Kingdom power and began his reign from heaven in the year 1914. But why should this wonderful event be accompanied by woes and sorrows on the earth? The book of Revelation, chapter 12, gives us the answer.

34 Satan, who is Jehovah God's chief adversary, had, up until this time, been permitted to come among God's angels in heaven. Satan would not want the Kingdom to begin to rule, or 'be born,' as the symbolic language of Revelation chapter 12 describes it. Satan wanted the rulership of the earth for himself; so, when the time came for Jehovah to command his Son, Jesus Christ, to reign, there was certain to be a fight between the newborn Kingdom and Satan. We read at Revelation 12:7-10: "And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels battled with the dragon, and the dragon and its angels battled but it did not prevail, neither was a place found for them any longer in heaven. So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was

33, 34. So, then, in what year did Jesus begin reigning, and by what events in heaven was this birth of the Kingdom followed?

hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven say: 'Now have come to pass the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brothers has been hurled down, who accuses them day and night before our God!'"

35 Although this victory over Satan caused rejoicing in the heavens, it did not remove Satan's influence over the earth. He was now confined to the earth, and therefore, knowing his end was drawing near, he would do all that he could to turn the inhabitants of the earth away from Jehovah. Revelation 12:12 reads: "On this account be glad, you heavens and you who reside in them! Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time." But our seeing these woeful conditions should not make us lose hope, for they are the sign that the long-promised Kingdom has been established in the heavens. It means that Satan's time is short, and soon he and all his agents will be destroyed. So Jesus said: "But as these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near."—Luke 21:28.

36 There is another part of the sign we have not yet mentioned, and that is referred to at Matthew 24:14: "And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited

35. Hence, why do woes and distress continue on earth, but why did Jesus say we should not lose hope at seeing these conditions?

36. What part of the "sign" is foretold at Matthew 24:14, and how have you yourself seen it undergoing fulfillment?

earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." So while the world suffers woe and sorrow and is in fear for the future, there should, according to prophecy, be people going about in all the nations preaching, and they should be preaching "this good news of the kingdom." They should be telling the people of the Kingdom established. This part of the sign is also being fulfilled and you yourself have seen this. Has not someone come to you telling you about the Kingdom? And throughout the world in more than 190 lands and islands of the sea and in more than 160 languages this good news about the established Kingdom is being preached by Jehovah's Christian witnesses.

[37] Because of their faithfulness in this Kingdom-preaching work Jehovah's witnesses have been bitterly persecuted in all lands. This too was foretold by Jesus to them: "And you will be objects of hatred by all the nations on account of my name."—Matthew 24:9.

[38] The purpose of this preaching work is that those who love righteousness and want to worship Jehovah so as to escape the destruction that will come upon Satan's order and then live forever in a new order of righteousness may be warned and take the right course. Those who would listen to the message and have faith in it Jesus likened to sheep. Those who reject the message and fight against it he likened to goats. The preaching about the Kingdom, then, is causing a division in the world: on the one hand,

37. What other part of the "sign" has followed as a result of this preaching?

38. What is the purpose of this preaching, and to what are those who listen favorably likened and to what those who do not listen?

the sheep; and on the other, the goats. "When the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will put the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left."—Matthew 25:31-33.

### END OF THIS SYSTEM OF THINGS

39 Thus we see all the different parts of the sign that Christ Jesus spoke of being fulfilled: World war, food shortages, pestilence, worldwide perplexity, woes on the earth, "this good news of the kingdom" being preached, the preachers of that good news being persecuted, and the people being divided into two classes. The fulfillment of this sign proves not only that Christ Jesus is reigning from heaven, but also that the end of this "system of things" is at hand. (Matthew 24:3) This does not mean an end to our literal earth, for the Bible says: "The earth is standing even to time indefinite." (Ecclesiastes 1:4) What comes to an end is the wicked system of things over which Satan is the god, bringing restraint to him and his wicked demons and destruction to all those who follow him upon the earth. (2 Corinthians 4:4) Thus the earth will be cleansed from all wickedness.

40 Because Satan is still determined to hold on to his position as "god of this system of things,"

39. (a) What does fulfillment of this "sign" in its different parts prove? (b) What does the end of the "system of things" mean?

40. What decisive war is yet necessary, and why will God's servants take no part in it?

there must yet be war between his visible organization and Jehovah, and that war is the war of Armageddon. There will be no need for God's servants on earth to take part in the fight. Christ Jesus will lead the heavenly hosts of Jehovah's angels in the final attack against Satan's visible organization, destroying it utterly and delivering obedient mankind into a new order of righteousness. (Revelation 16:14-16; 19:11-21) Bringing an end to this system of things in this manner is the only way to rid the earth of evil and make room for peace and righteousness to flourish. This could be done only by the Almighty God, Jehovah.

[41] Have men been at all successful in removing wickedness and unrighteousness from the earth? Have they been able to bring unity and harmony between the nations so divided by language, race and religion? No, they have not. So, then, "this good news of the kingdom" speaks of the only lasting remedy. "This good news" deals also with the end of this system of things and, for this reason, Jehovah's witnesses faithfully speak, not only of the blessings Jehovah has in store for those who love him and serve him, but also of his destructive judgments against those who oppose him and are wicked. The commission from Jehovah God commands them to "tell good news to the meek ones. . . . to proclaim the year of good will on the part of Jehovah and the day of vengeance on the part of our God; to comfort all the mourning ones."—Isaiah 61:1, 2.

41. Besides blessings for lovers of God, what else do Jehovah's witnesses preach, and why this?

[42] Yes, it is good news to know that shortly now wickedness, immorality, fighting, war, yes, disease and sickness with the accompanying sorrow will all pass away forever. Speaking of the conditions that will prevail among those who turn to Jehovah God during this time of the end of this system of things, the Bible record reads: "And they will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. They will not lift up sword, nation against nation, neither will they learn war any more. And they will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble; for the very mouth of Jehovah of armies has spoken it." (Micah 4:3, 4) There will be peace, not only between man and man, but also between man and the animals. "And the wolf will actually reside for a while with the male lamb, and with the kid the leopard itself will lie down, and the calf and the maned young lion and the well-fed animal all together; and a mere little boy will be leader over them. And the cow and the bear themselves will feed; together their young ones will lie down. And even the lion will eat straw just like the bull. And the sucking child will certainly play upon the hole of the cobra; and upon the light aperture of a poisonous snake will a weaned child actually put his own hand. They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain; because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea."—Isaiah 11:6-9.

42. What things will shortly pass away forever, and what conditions are prophesied to prevail among those now turning to God?

43 The righteous King Jesus Christ, the Son of the everlasting King Jehovah God, will have full sway and those then living on the earth will feel the benefit of his just and righteous rule. Hence the inspired psalmist prayed: "O God, give your own judicial decisions to the king, and your righteousness to the son of the king. May he plead the cause of your people with righteousness and of your afflicted ones with judicial decision. Let the mountains carry peace to the people, also the hills, through righteousness. Let him judge the afflicted ones of the people, let him save the sons of the poor one, and let him crush the defrauder. They will fear you as long as there is a sun, and before the moon for generation after generation."—Psalm 72:1-5.

44 What a wonderful prospect to look forward to! Would you like to live in such a perfect new system of things? You can do so if you show the sheeplike qualities of meekness and willingness to follow, and now do follow, the Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and get on Jehovah's side by putting faith in "this good news of the kingdom." With the prospect of these new conditions in view the sheeplike ones can heed the words of Jesus Christ when he said, after discussing the sign of his presence: "But as these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near. Truly I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away until all things occur." (Luke 21:28, 32) Yes, you can be one of the

43. How does the prayer of the psalmist for the King's Son agree with the foregoing?

44. How can you live in such a perfect new system of things, and with such a prospect what did Jesus say you should do on seeing the "sign"?

"sheep" living in this generation who will be delivered through the war of Armageddon into the cleansed earth beyond. What must one do to become one of the Lord Jesus' "other sheep" and gain his blessing? (John 10:16) Let us look at the steps that the Bible shows one must take.

### DEDICATION

[45] Before we can do what God requires of us, we must come to know Him, we must have knowledge of his purposes and we must exercise faith in him and his Son, Jesus Christ. Faith is based upon knowledge, and the right knowledge is found in the Bible. Jehovah has seen to it in these days that the meek ones of the earth are being made to hear his Word, for he is having his witnesses go among the people preaching "this good news of the kingdom" and helping those who hear and exercise faith to study God's Word and thus gain the knowledge that will lead them to life. "So faith follows the thing heard. In turn the thing heard is through the word about Christ."—Romans 10:17.

[46] Faith means that, because of the Bible knowledge one has gained, one has a firm assurance that God exists and that He will reward those who earnestly seek him, and that the Bible is true and is man's sure guide. Having faith also means acknowledging Jesus as one's Savior and Ransomer. Such faith causes one to make a change in his way of living. He turns away from following the wickedness of this world and serving his own selfish desires to

45. What is first necessary before we can do what God requires of us?

46. What does having faith mean? And what does dedicating oneself mean?

doing God's will. Realizing that everything he has he owes to God and that the only way to please God is to serve Him, then he dedicates himself to do God's will. That means he makes up his mind to do whatever God's Word tells him to do. Jesus said: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me." —Matthew 16:24.

47 Jesus presented himself to do his heavenly Father's will, and he made a public acknowledgment of that fact. How? By being baptized in water. He instructed his followers to "make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit." (Matthew 28:19) Therefore, each one who makes up his mind to do God's will must be baptized.—Psalm 40:8; Mark 1:9-11; Hebrews 10:7.

48 How should baptism be performed, and what does it accomplish? Jesus was baptized by being completely immersed in the water of the Jordan River. So baptism today must be in like manner, by being immersed in water. This immersion does not cleanse the one being baptized from sin. That is not the purpose of the baptism of Christians. The going under the water symbolizes that the one being baptized has become dead to his old course of life. He has voluntarily decided to devote his life to the doing of God's will. His being raised out of the water pictures his coming forth to the doing of God's will.

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47. Why should each one who has made up his mind to do God's will be baptized?
48. How should baptism be performed, and what does it accomplish?

[49] The one dedicated and baptized must then go forward faithfully serving Jehovah God. He must continue to study God's Word to know what God's will is, and he must rely upon Jehovah's spirit to strengthen him to perform that will faithfully. His hopes are now centered on the new order of Jehovah. He will want to associate with others with that same faith and to associate regularly with a congregation of God's people. However, in order to retain Jehovah's approval he must remain faithful to Jehovah right on down until Armageddon and on into his new order. If you want to be one of these persons, then you must prove yourself to be the kind of person that Jehovah would want in his new order.

[50] The apostle Paul, at Romans 12:2, counsels us: "Quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." No longer, then, may we be like the people of this present system of things who are filled with strife and jealousy and hatred, with its dishonesty and thieving, with its lying and murder, its uncleanness and immorality. Because of such things "the wrath of God is coming. In those very things you, too, once walked when you used to live in them. But now really put them all away from you, wrath, anger, injuriousness, abusive speech, and obscene talk out of your mouth. Do not be lying to one another. Strip off the old

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49. What must the dedicated and baptized person then do to be one whom Jehovah will want in his new order?
50. After what should we quit fashioning ourselves, and with what personality should we clothe ourselves? How?

personality with its practices, and clothe yourselves with the new personality, which through accurate knowledge is being made new according to the image of the One who created it.' —Colossians 3:6-10.

[51] A Christian acts differently from the world of unbelievers in everything he does. We see employed people in the world trying to cheat their employers and not working faithfully for them. But the Scriptures counsel: "You slaves, be obedient in everything to those who are your masters in a fleshly sense, not with acts of eye-service, as men pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, with fear of Jehovah. Whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah, and not to men." (Colossians 3:22, 23) By applying Bible principles in your home you will find that there will be a change there also. How many homes there are that lack peace and harmony, where husbands harshly oppress their wives or where wives are unruly and show no respect for their husbands! "You wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as it is becoming in the Lord. You husbands, keep on loving your wives and do not be bitterly angry with them. You children, be obedient to your parents in everything, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord." (Colossians 3:18-20) Yes, children also must learn to live in harmony with God's new order now, and the way they do so is by being obedient to their parents who have become dedicated Christians and are training them how to serve God.

51. (a) What instructions are Christian servants given? (b) What change will the applying of Bible principles make in the home for husbands, wives and children?

## CONCLUSION

[52] In our brief study together we have learned from God's Word the answer to the questions raised at the beginning of this booklet. We have found out who God is, that he is the Creator, that his name is Jehovah, that he made man to live on the earth in peace forever; but, due to Satan's rebellion and because the first man and woman joined him in unfaithfulness, sin and death entered into the world, resulting in much sorrow and wickedness. You have seen too that deliverance from sin and death comes through the ransom sacrifice of Christ Jesus and God's kingdom by him, and that soon God through Jesus Christ will destroy Satan and all wickedness. Then God's kingdom in the heavens will bring lasting blessings to mankind on earth. So, then, this information we have studied is good news, is it not? It is the only good news because it has to do with the kingdom of the Most High God, Jehovah, which kingdom of blessings will never end. (Psalm 145:13) You owe it to God and to your fellowman now to share "this good news of the kingdom" with others.

52. (a) In conclusion, what have we learned as to God, the reason for sin and death in the world, and the means and method for delivering mankind? (b) Why is this news good, and what must you now do with this news?