

True *Peace* and
Security

How Can You Find It?

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People everywhere want true peace and security. They long for relief from the many problems that press in on them. Is there a lasting solution to these problems? This book is published with the conviction that there is, and that soon true peace and security will be a reality earth wide. It is our sincere desire that by reading it you will gain a solid hope and heartwarming assurance about what the future holds for all who love righteousness.

—The Publishers

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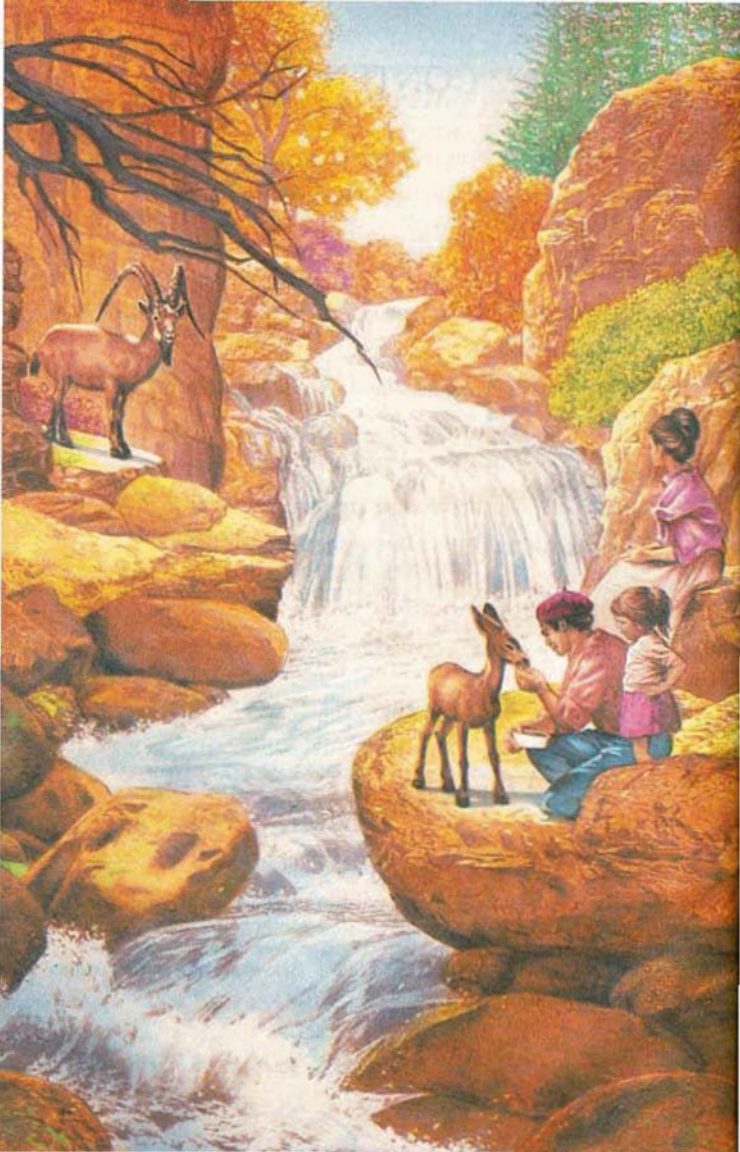
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The scriptures referred to in this book may be found in any translation of the Bible. However, unless otherwise indicated, direct quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, 1984 edition (NW). Below are the abbreviations of names of other Bible versions quoted:

NE - *The New English Bible* (1970).

Ro - *The Emphasised Bible* (1897), Joseph B. Rotherham.



Chapter 1

True Peace and Security Near!

SURELY you, like most persons, long for peace and security. People everywhere are tired of crime, violence, war, and the threatening nuclear nightmare. Too, many do not have decent jobs, adequate housing, or enough food. What a joy it would be if such problems could be solved and this earth would become a pleasant, secure home for its inhabitants!

² Surprisingly, there is sound reason to believe that the longed-for relief is at hand, that peace and security earth wide is nearing reality! But who will bring this about? Will the nations of this world set aside their differences in order to accomplish it?

³ An interesting Bible prophecy stated that the time would come when world leaders would actually proclaim "peace and security!"* In fact, when the United Nations declared 1986 an "International Year of Peace" it asked that organizations everywhere make a special effort from that year on to promote the goal of "peace, international security and cooperation."¹

* 1 Thessalonians 5:3.

1. What conditions make true peace and security so desirable?
- 2, 3. (a) If true peace and security is indeed near, what questions need to be asked? (b) How does the action taken by the United Nations seem to harmonize with the desire for peace and security?

⁴ But would this be a true “peace and security”? Would it reach into your neighborhood and into your home and deal with the problems that affect you personally? Would it solve the problems of increasing crime and drug addiction, rising food costs, heavy taxation, spreading pollution, and the steady decay of family ties? As long as any of those situations continue, they threaten your personal peace and security.

⁵ True, men hope that they can overcome these difficulties. They say that, freed from the crushing financial burdens of war, they could redirect all that wealth, research, and manpower into solving such problems.

⁶ Do you really believe that? Is there any solid evidence to show that humans can ever bring lasting solutions? What does history show? Indeed, what does your own experience in life tell you?

⁷ ‘But if men do not have the solutions, what remains?’ you may ask. Well, there is undeniable evidence that the earth and living things on it reflect intelligent design. (Hebrews 3:4) Is it possible that the One behind this design enters the picture? Will he take a hand in human affairs? Only the Bible offers answers to these questions.

⁸ In view of what is at stake, then, would it not be worth your while to consider what the Bible says on

4. If any arrangement for peace and security is to benefit you, what problems must it solve?

5, 6. On the basis of your own experience in life, do you believe that men are going to solve those problems?

7, 8. (a) Where else might we look for a solution? (b) How prominent a book is the Bible?

this matter? You may be aware that it is the most widely translated and circulated book on earth. In its entirety or in part, billions of copies have been distributed in over 1,800 languages.² But did you know that this ancient book comes to grips with the matters of greatest concern to us in this 20th century?

⁹ Many know that the Bible foretells an 'end of the world.' But few know what it says as to when that will come, or what life on earth will be like afterward. (Matthew 24:21, 22; 2 Peter 3:11-13) They may even pray the Lord's Prayer, where they ask for 'God's kingdom to come.' (Matthew 6:9, 10) But few realize that God's Kingdom is a real government that will replace all present political systems. As the prophet Daniel stated: "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. . . . It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." —Daniel 2:44.

¹⁰ Interestingly, the Bible's prophecy about "peace and security" noted earlier includes these features: "Whenever it is that they are saying: 'Peace and security!' *then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them.*" (1 Thessalonians 5:3) So whatever peace and security human leaders proclaim will evidently be of very short duration. For the prophecies indicate that immediately thereafter all human rulerships will be crushed out of existence, to be replaced by one government for all the earth—God's Kingdom.

9, 10. (a) What does the Bible say about the future, and of human governments? (b) What is God's Kingdom, and when will it take control from all present-day governments?

¹¹ Moreover, the Bible reveals many differences between the peace and security that God's Kingdom will bring and what human leaders promise. Today men speak in terms of reducing arms by treaties. The Bible, by contrast, declares that soon God will bring a complete end to all armaments and will remove the basic causes of war. (Psalm 46:9; Isaiah 2:2-4) And the security that God promises is not just from war between nations. It is from enemies of every kind, so that no one will ever again be in fear—day or night. (Micah 4:3, 4) Too, men are now concerned with bringing crime under control, but God's declared purpose is to root out even the attitudes and conditions that lead to crime.—Psalm 37:8-11; Galatians 5:19-21.

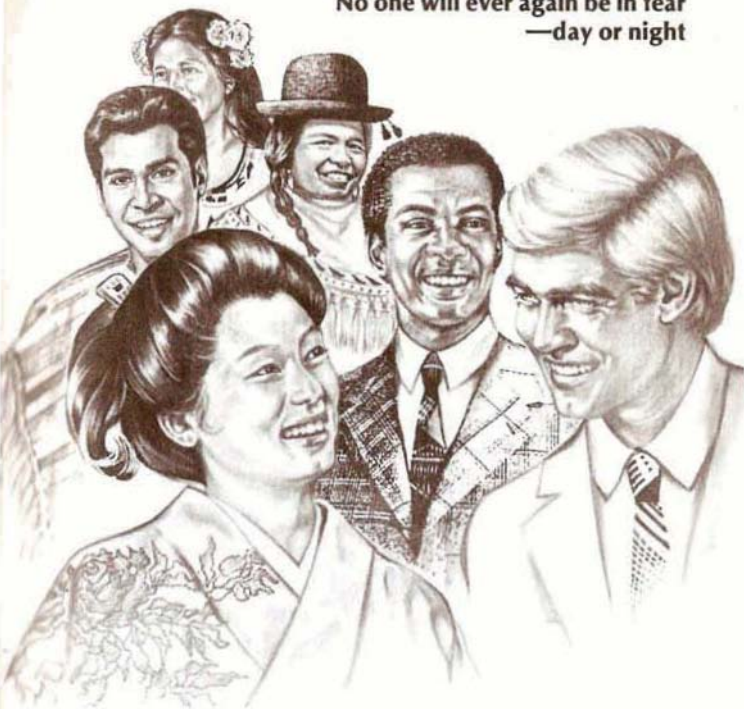
¹² The nations also pride themselves in progress in medical research and improved care of the sick and aged. But the Bible explains how God's government will bring about full and lasting health, even overcoming aging and death! (Revelation 21:3, 4) In addition, under God's Kingdom a person's work will be truly meaningful, bringing real satisfaction. For how happy can you be if your work is frustrating or does not bring a true sense of accomplishment?—Isaiah 65:21-23; Romans 8:19-21.

¹³ Which do you believe offers the kind of peace and security that will improve every part of your life—the promises of humans, or God's promises as implemented by his Kingdom government? By going along with

11, 12. What are some of the differences between what the Bible says that God's Kingdom will do and what human leaders are trying to do?

13. What questions would it be beneficial for us to examine?

No one will ever again be in fear
—day or night



what the world in general has to offer, have you found what you really want in life? What if you let yourself be carried along with what may currently be popular, but then realize that you have been taken in by misleading promises, leaving you without genuine peace and security? On the other hand, can you be confident that what the Bible promises is believable, practical, and realistic? Surely, the answers to such questions deserve thoughtful examination.

Chapter 2

Can Men Bring Lasting Peace and Security?

FOR HOPE to have any meaning, it must be founded on reality, on truth. False hopes only blind people to reality. Therefore, we need to ask: Do we appreciate just how big the problems are that must be solved to bring genuine peace and security? Do we realize how urgent the situation has become? Is there any evidence that human solutions would be equal to the immensity of the task?

² For thousands of years men have sought lasting peace and security, without success. But now the situation is most urgent because of the threat of nuclear war. A Canadian report warned: "There's no such thing as a winnable nuclear war because its aftermath would be so appalling that the survivors would envy the dead."³ Showing why, astronomer Carl Sagan stated: "There are now more than 50,000 nuclear weapons, . . . enough to obliterate a million Hiroshimas." He added: "There is little question that our global civilization would be destroyed."⁴

³ In addition, other threats imperil life on earth. One is the worldwide pollution of land, air, and water.

1. What questions do we need to ask, and why?

2, 3. (a) Why is the search for peace and security even more urgent today? (b) What other threats are there to life on earth?

Another is the population explosion with its associated hunger, disease, and unrest.

⁴ Regarding the various threats mankind now faces, a peace institute in Norway said: "Today's international situation is characterized by a profound crisis pervading almost all spheres of human activity: economic and social, political and military, spiritual and moral." It added: "Violence is on the increase and the use of force as an instrument of policy and diplomacy has become widespread. . . . The balance between peace and war is becoming ever more precarious."⁵ Where is this leading? The secretary-general of the UN warned: "We are perilously near to a new international anarchy."⁶

A Warless World by Men's Efforts?

⁵ Is there any reason to believe that men can bring an end to war? Historically, there have been only a few scattered years when this earth was totally free from war. In this 20th century alone, about 100 million people have been killed in war! Neither yesterday's League of Nations nor today's United Nations has been able to stop this slaughter.

⁶ But will not the fear of destruction from nuclear weapons change this? Was not sufficient fear of nuclear weapons aroused back in 1945 when atom bombs annihilated two Japanese cities? Well, since then stock-piles of vastly more powerful nuclear weapons have grown a thousandfold. And just since 1945 an estimat-

4. How has mankind's situation today been described?

5. What does history show as to man's ability to put an end to war?

6. Is the fear of nuclear war a sound foundation for peace?

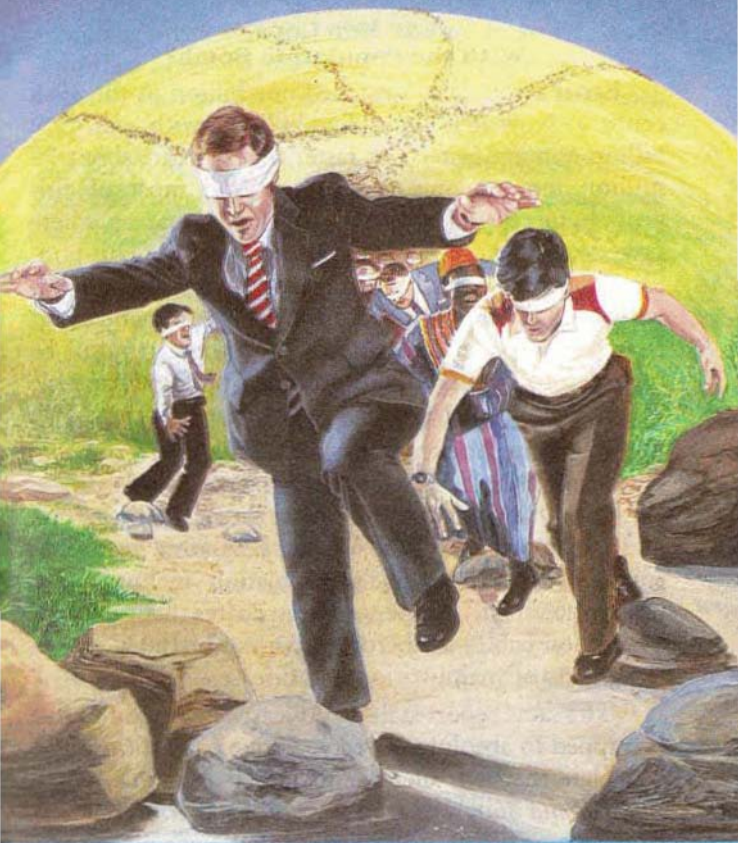
ed 35,000,000 people have been killed in wars and rebellions involving more than 100 countries. In one recent year 45 nations were involved in conflicts!⁷ No, fear of nuclear weapons has not stopped war.

⁷ Granted, nations do and probably will continue to sign disarmament pacts or peace treaties. Over the centuries literally thousands of these have been signed. Yet, whenever war sentiment became strong enough, those treaties became worthless scraps of paper. The United Nations also has failed to stop war, because although nearly all countries today are part of the UN, they ignore it at will. So is it realistic to hope that future world leaders will keep their word any more than those of the past?

⁸ On the other hand, the Bible's position is in harmony with the lessons of history. It does not recommend putting our hope in human efforts to bring peace. On the contrary, it foretold long ago that human efforts would never bring lasting peace. It forewarned that just before the end of this system of things, wars and disorders would escalate worldwide, with 'nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom.' (Luke 21:9, 10, 31; Revelation 6:1-4) World events since 1914 have fulfilled those prophecies. So rather than arousing false hopes, the Bible truthfully declares: "To earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." —Jeremiah 10:23.

7. Does the signing of disarmament pacts or peace treaties guarantee lasting peace?

8. How has the Bible told the truth about man's failure to achieve lasting peace?



Throughout history humans have been staggering blindly from one calamity to another—war, rising crime, pollution, poverty, and many others. As the Bible truthfully states: “It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step”

Can Men Cope With the Population Bomb?

⁹ Earth's population reached one billion in the 19th century. Now it is about five billion,⁸ with each new billion coming faster and faster. Every year, about 90 million more people are added! And most of this growth merely adds to the suffering in areas where poverty, hunger, and disease already prevail. This population increase has been called the population bomb with good reason. *The New York Times* commented: "It is as possible that large portions of the earth will be turned into desert by the pressures of unmanageable population and poverty as by a nuclear holocaust."⁹

¹⁰ Regarding the scope of world hunger, *Time* magazine said: "The hunger problem today is vastly different from that of the past . . . Now there is so little food in so many parts of the world, year after year, that fully 25% of the globe's population is hungry or undernourished."¹⁰ One source estimates that each year 11 million babies die before their first birthday due to the effects of malnutrition and disease.

¹¹ The same report states: "At least one person in five is trapped in absolute poverty, a state of destitution so complete that it is silent genocide."¹¹ And this, noted *The Toronto Star*, was after a world food conference in Rome over a decade ago "pledged that, within a decade, no child would go to bed hungry, no family would fear for its next day's bread and no human being's future would be stunted by malnutrition."¹² How hollow such

9-11. (a) How rapidly is the earth's population increasing?
(b) What condition afflicts large numbers of people?

promises proved to be! The reality is as England's *Guardian* observed: "The world is on the verge of a human catastrophe. . . . Whole continents have seen their hopes for the future disappear."¹²

¹² Much of the problem lies, not with the earth, but with the rulers and the people and their attitudes. For example, the nations now spend about a trillion (thousand billion) dollars on armaments each year while millions starve. But even if this enormous military buildup was abandoned, the world's divided economic systems would work against any true solution to the problem. Often, when food is available, the desire for huge profits prevents its distribution to those in need. In some places, governments have paid farmers not to plant certain crops because overproduction would decrease prices too much. Vast amounts of food have even been destroyed because of surpluses.

¹³ Thus, despite all of its scientific advancements, modern society has not been able to avoid the very conditions the Bible foretold. It accurately foretold the arrival of severe "food shortages" during this "conclusion of the system of things."—Matthew 24:3, 7; Revelation 6:5-8.

Can Men Make Peace With the Earth?

¹⁴ For decades men have been making war with the very earth on which they live. They have caused

12. Would cutting back the amount of military spending really solve the problem?

13. Was the Bible accurate when it foretold the conditions existing at the world's end?

14-16. How serious is the problem of pollution?

poisonous wastes to back up into the water, air, and soil. A *Toronto Star* headline declared: "Pollution Puts Earth in Danger." The article said: "Planet Earth is under a deadly assault. And the aggressor is man." It noted that "the poisons of his progress" now threaten his very existence, and it also observed: "Scientists consider the degradation of the environment every bit as serious as the threat of nuclear war."¹⁴

¹⁵ For example, of the United States, *Discover* magazine says: "Hazardous chemicals and metals seeping into the earth threaten the nation's buried reserves of water. Some hydrologists fear that it may already be too late to save a quarter of them."¹⁵ In England *The Observer* said that chemical pollution had contaminated "most of England's drinking water."¹⁶ And *New Scientist* reported: "The World Health Organisation says that diseases associated with dirty water kill 50,000 people every day."¹⁷

¹⁶ In the United States a congressional investigation revealed high levels of poisonous materials in the air. *The New York Times* reported: "Thousands of tons of cancer-causing agents and other very hazardous materials are being released into the atmosphere from hundreds of factories."¹⁸ Added to this are the hazardous chemicals put in the soil, for example, as pesticides, and into the food chain as animal feed.

¹⁷ Can technology come to the rescue? Is that likely, since it created many of the problems? The book *Environmental Ethics* notes: "Technology is a servant of only limited usefulness, and highly unreliable. When it

17. Is it likely that technology can solve this problem?

does solve a problem, it often creates two new ones—and their side effects are usually hard to foresee.”¹⁹

¹⁸ Again, the Bible foretold man’s lack of wisdom in using earth’s bounties. A prophecy at Revelation 11:18 spoke of the time when God would have to take action “to bring to ruin those ruining the earth.” Men admittedly do not fully understand the complex ecology of the earth. But God does, having created it. Is it not wise to look to this Source for a solution to the problems?

Security by the Removal of Crime

¹⁹ Pollution endangers the very essentials for human existence. But it is the increase of crime that causes the greater number of people to be in fear. Crime is robbing more and more persons of their personal security not only in big cities but also in small towns and rural areas. Not just possessions but often a person’s body and life are in jeopardy.

²⁰ Can men bring true security from these dangers, perhaps by new legislation? There are already thousands of laws on the lawbooks of the world. Yet, these have not stopped crime. Also, deep-rooted corruption often develops within law-enforcement agencies themselves. Dishonesty in high places may nullify the efforts of honest law-enforcement.

²¹ Does the answer lie in new methods of detecting

18. In coping with pollution, what vital knowledge do humans lack, but who has it?

19. What fear do many people have today, and why?

20, 21. (a) Why would the passing of new laws not eliminate crime? (b) Would increased prosperity or new methods of fighting crime solve the problem?

and thwarting crime? For every new method produced, criminals devise new ways to overcome it. Then will increased prosperity solve the problem? It would be a mistake to conclude that crime is characteristic only of lower-income groups. White-collar crime also is soaring. For instance, in the United States each year at least \$80 billion is lost because of such crime. About 30 percent of all businesses that fail do so because of it. South Africa reports that employee theft bankrupted about 1,500 businesses in one year.²⁰

²² Rising crime is not limited to just a few nations. It is everywhere. Note some headlines from around the world. Brazil: "Soaring Crime Rate." Canada: "Female Crime Rate Soaring." England: "Ever-Rising Child Crime." India: "Organized Crime a Growth Industry." Soviet Union: "Soviet Alarm at Increasing Crime."²¹ *Maclean's* magazine stated: "Violent crime in Detroit is so common that even murders sometimes rate only a brief mention in the back pages of newspapers."²² Thus, rising crime is an international problem, and human efforts alone cannot solve it. If a human solution had been possible, after all this time and effort crime should no longer be a problem.

²³ What is happening is just as the Bible long ago foretold: "In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, . . . without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, . . . lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God."

22. What evidence shows that human effort alone cannot solve crime?

23. Has what the Bible foretold about conditions in our day been fulfilled?

(2 Timothy 3:1-4) Jesus also foretold that an “increasing of lawlessness” would characterize the period just before God’s Kingdom would make the earth a place to be inhabited only by ‘mild-tempered persons.’ That “increasing of lawlessness” is a fact of life in our day. —Matthew 24:12; 5:5; Psalm 37:29.

The Greatest Problems of All

²⁴ Suppose men could solve the problems of war, poverty, hunger, pollution, and crime. Would this bring you full peace and security? No, something would still be lacking. Sickness and death would still remain as unconquered enemies. Indeed, what does relief from other problems matter when you watch a loved one sicken and die, or you find your own body attacked by a fatal illness?

²⁵ While medical advances have been made, has this brought us freedom from sickness and death? A medical authority answers: “Infectious diseases have not been licked. They are still the world’s leading cause of death and, here [in the United States], the leading cause of illness.”²³ In Africa a report says that disease is so rampant “that of 1,000 children born about 500 will die before the age of 5.”²⁴ Throughout the world hundreds of millions are affected by malaria, sleeping sickness, cholera, leprosy, and other diseases. In some advanced countries, heart ailments cause about half of all deaths, and cancer one death out of five. And *The*

24. Even if men could solve all problems discussed thus far, what greater enemies would remain?

25, 26. What prospects do medical researchers see for the conquering of disease?

Lancet, a British medical journal, states: "Throughout the world there are something of the order of 250 million new cases of gonorrhoea and 50 million new cases of syphilis annually. Other sexually communicable conditions may be even more common."²⁵

²⁶ A scientist stated that if cures are found for cancer, heart disease, and kidney disease, other illnesses would become bigger killers. He noted: "There is little chance that we will greatly increase life expectance or postpone aging in the near future."²⁶ And doctors in the Soviet Union say: "Despite all successes of medicine, within recorded history the biological span of human life has remained unchanged."²⁷

²⁷ How true the words of the Bible at Job 14:1, 2 continue to be today: "Man, born of woman, is short-lived and glutted with agitation. Like a blossom he has come forth and is cut off, and he runs away like the shadow and does not keep existing." The Bible also shows the reason for this, and it identifies the cause of all man's problems, as we shall see later.

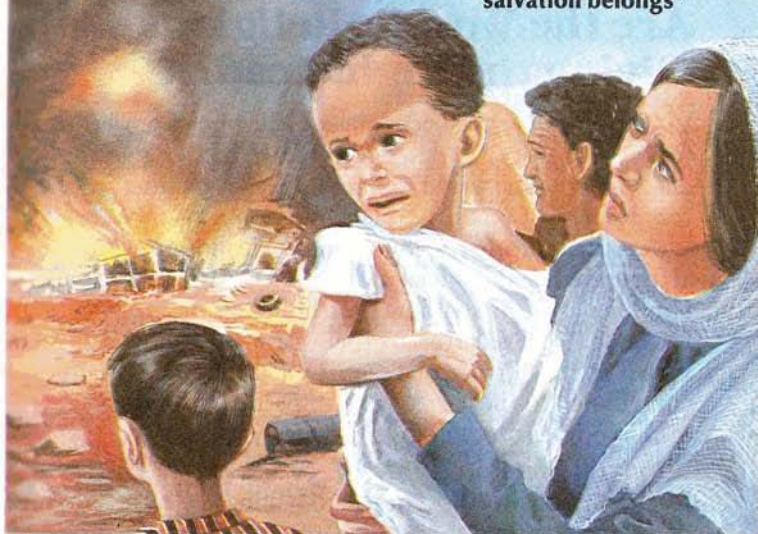
In What Will You Hope?

²⁸ In all honesty, is it realistic to trust in humans to solve the problems facing mankind? Or is it more realistic to put trust in the solution to which the Bible points, namely, action by God himself by means of a righteous heavenly government?

27. (a) What comment in the Bible on the human life span is just as true today? (b) Where can we learn why human life is so short and filled with problems?

28-30. To solve the problems facing mankind, why is it more realistic to trust God's solution than man's?

**"Do not put your trust . . . in the son of
earthling man, to whom no
salvation belongs"**



²⁹ Long ago the inspired psalmist wrote these words: "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. Happy is the one who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in Jehovah his God, the Maker of heaven and earth."—Psalm 146:3-6.

³⁰ Never forget that no matter how sincere men may be or how influential or powerful world leaders are, they are all dying creatures. Since they are unable to save themselves, how can they save others? They cannot. Only God can, through his Kingdom government.

Chapter 3

Are the World's Religions Giving the Right Lead?

"RELIGION has been one of the most powerful forces in history,"²⁸ stated *The World Book Encyclopedia*. But have the world's religions been a genuine force for peace and security? Have they taught their followers that brotherly love should surmount national boundaries and racial differences? Also, have the churches of Christendom, Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox, proved true to their claim to follow Jesus Christ as the "Prince of Peace"? Or have they actually contributed to the hatreds that imperil man's future? A look at the record will give the surprising answer.

² In this regard, *Parade Magazine* said: "History teaches lessons to those who are willing to learn. One of the most primary lessons is that conflicts based on religious and sectarian differences are almost always the most vicious, most enduring and most difficult to solve."²⁹ And as the *Chicago Tribune* stated: "Every major religion preaches peace and brotherhood and mercy, yet some of the cruellest and most intolerant repressions in history have been committed in the name of God."³⁰ With such historical facts in mind, newspaper editor C. L. Sulzberger appropriately asks: "Disagreeable as the subject may be, should it not be realized that in addition to other causes—imperialism, racism,

1. What important questions regarding the world's religions are here raised?

2. What do various sources tell us about the historical record?

ARE THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS GIVING THE RIGHT LEAD? militarism—religion has developed into a persistently greater threat to human life?”³¹

³ Yes, history is stained with the blood of religiously backed strife. Just in our century, during the two world wars and after, we have witnessed the shameful practice of fellow religionists slaughtering each other—Catholic killing Catholic, Protestant killing Protestant, Muslim killing Muslim, and others. And the clergy on opposing sides, though of the same religion, blessed the troops that would soon be killing their religious brothers.

⁴ Among the most reprehensible in this matter are the churches of Christendom. Why? Because they claim to represent the God of the Bible and his Son Jesus Christ, who said: “By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves.” (John 13:35) Yet the worst slaughters of all have occurred right in the heart of Christendom. As an editorial in the *Waterloo Courier* of Iowa declared: “Nor have Christians ever been squeamish about waging wars on other Christians. If they had been, most of the liveliest wars in Europe would never have occurred. . . . World Wars I and II, which set the all-time records for Christians killing Christians, could never have occurred.”³²

⁵ On this matter, the Bible is clear: Those who truly

3. What shameful practice of religion does the history of our 20th century reveal?

4. (a) Why are the churches of Christendom the most reprehensible? (b) What does one editorial comment about war?

5. (a) What does the Bible clearly tell those who truly serve God? (b) What question must church members face as to their own church?

serve God are told to “seek peace and pursue it,” to “beat their swords into plowshares,” and not to “learn war anymore.” (1 Peter 3:11; Isaiah 2:2-4) “We should have love for one another; not like Cain, who originated with the wicked one [Satan the Devil] and slaughtered his brother.” (1 John 3:10-12) But followers of this world’s religions continue to slaughter their brothers, as did Cain, and their clergy have supported those pursuing that course. Thus, if you belong to a religion, ask yourself: ‘If everybody on earth belonged to my religion, would wars have stopped and would this earth now be a place of genuine peace?’

⁶ The divided and warring state of the world’s religions prove that God is not their backer. This may come as a surprise to those who think that all religion must be good since it claims to represent God. Yet the Bible clearly shows that “God is a God, not of disorder, but of peace.” (1 Corinthians 14:33) It also shows that there is both true religion and false religion. And it states that only worship founded on truth, free from hypocrisy, has God’s backing.—Matthew 15:7-9; John 4:23, 24; Titus 1:16.

⁷ Because the world’s religions have, in effect, prostituted themselves for political, commercial, and social gain, the Bible pictures them as being like a harlot. Describing this “harlot,” it says: “In her was found the blood of . . . all those who have been slaughtered on the earth.” (Revelation 17:1-6; 18:24) Yes, this world’s

6. What does the divided and warring state of the world’s religions prove?

7. (a) What expression does the Bible use to describe the world’s religions? (b) What guilt is charged against them?



**The clergy
have bloodied
their hands in
support of
dictators**



religions bear a heavy bloodguilt in relation to all the slaughter of world history! For this they will be called to account.

⁸ Clearly, any religion whose practices are contrary

8. How do the words of Jesus regarding “blind guides” apply today?

to the Bible could never succeed in leading mankind to true peace and security. That is why Jesus said of the false religious leaders in his day: “Blind guides is what they are. If, then, a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.” (Matthew 15:14) Similarly, the world’s religions today are “blind guides” in the matter of war and in other vital aspects of life as well.

Do the World’s Religions Promote Morality?

⁹ Can anyone enjoy true peace with his neighbors or real security if true standards of morality are not maintained? Where there are no such standards, lying, stealing, adultery, and similar practices are commonplace. On the other hand, genuine love of neighbor should promote morality.

¹⁰ The Bible expresses God’s view on morality in this way: “He that loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. For the law code, ‘You must not commit adultery, You must not murder, You must not steal, You must not covet,’ and whatever other commandment there is, is summed up in this word, namely, ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does not work evil to one’s neighbor.”—Romans 13:8-10.

¹¹ More important than this, however, do you believe that a person can be at peace with God, having the assurance of His favor and protection, if he does

9, 10. (a) Why is holding to true standards of morality important to peace and security? (b) As taught in the Bible, what promotes such morality?

11, 12. (a) Can a person who does not hold to moral standards expect to enjoy peace with God? (b) Who rightly sets those standards?

ARE THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS GIVING THE RIGHT LEAD? not practice God's standards of morality? Could you even respect a God who did not require such morality from those who profess to serve him?

¹² For God to require adherence to his standards, he would have to make clear what those standards are. That he has done in his Word, the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) To say that each person should make up his own moral standards and go by them is no more reasonable than to say that each person should make up his own traffic laws and go by them. You know what the result would be. The Bible logically shows that there is only one way that brings God's approval. As Jesus said, all other roads lead only to destruction.—Matthew 7:13, 14; Luke 13:24.

¹³ Do Christendom's churches, especially, uphold God's standards of morality and so set a lead for the rest of the world? What do the lives of many who belong to those churches reveal? Do you belong to a church? Then ask yourself: 'If everyone on earth lived like the members of my religion do, would that put an end to crime, dishonest business practices, strife, and sexual immorality?'

¹⁴ The Bible warns that "a little leaven ferments the whole lump" and that "bad associations spoil useful habits." (Galatians 5:9; 1 Corinthians 15:33) For this reason it also commands Christians to "quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that is a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a

13-15. (a) What questions about morality need to be asked concerning the members of one's own church? (b) What does the Bible say should be done about a congregation member who persists in breaking God's laws? (c) Is this done in the churches?

drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man. . . . ‘Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.’”—1 Corinthians 5:11-13.

¹⁵ True, a person may make a misstep and then recover. But what of those who make a *practice* of such things? If these persons claim to be serving God, they are hypocrites. Surely you detest hypocrisy, and the Bible shows that God also hates it and those who practice it. (Matthew 23:27, 28; Romans 12:9) What, then, of your religion? Does it follow the Bible’s command to “remove” those who persist in breaking God’s laws and who show no genuine repentance? Or does it allow such ones to remain in good standing, thus endangering others? Does it render mere lip service to morality while actually winking at wrongdoing, or even condoning it?—Matthew 15:7, 8.

¹⁶ More and more clergymen say that fornication, adultery, and homosexuality are not necessarily wrong. But they are not in harmony with God’s thinking. His Word clearly states: “Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God’s kingdom.”—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

The Results of Rejecting God’s Word

¹⁷ The basic reason why this world’s religions are in

16. (a) What are many clergymen now saying about sexual conduct? (b) What does the Bible say about such conduct?

17-19. (a) How did the apostle Paul view the Bible? (b) How do many clergymen today view the Bible?

More and more clergymen accept what the Bible condemns as sexual immorality, as these sample headlines and news items show:

"When What's Bad Becomes Good the Clergy Will Tell Us." "[The Church of England] is now shedding its old-fashioned authoritarian image. Sex before marriage, with one or more partners, . . . will henceforth be considered morally acceptable."—*Alberta Report*.³³

"Pastors Silent on Premarital Sex." "The pastors of America have been sinfully silent in preaching on premarital sex . . . They are afraid they will lose some of their parishioners. Isaiah knew of such priests. In Chapter 1 of his book, he quotes the Lord as saying about them, 'I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.'"—*Telegraph*, North Platte, Nebraska.³⁴

"Adultery in Softer Light." "The English cleric . . . raised eyebrows when he aired the Church's tempered view towards the Seventh Commandment. . . . 'Our attitude is to be caring rather than judgmental,' he said."—*The Sunday Times*, Perth, Australia.³⁵

"Unitarians Endorse Homosexual Marriages."—*The New York Times*.³⁶

"A task force of the United Church of Canada has supported the ordination of active homosexuals as ministers."—*The Toronto Star*.³⁷

"Legalize Prostitution—It's the Saintly Solution."—Editorial by a Catholic monsignor in the *Philadelphia Daily News*.³⁸

such a divided, chaotic state is that they ignore God's laws as found in his Word, the Bible. Indeed, many clergymen reject the Bible as being the inspired Word of God. Yet, the inspired apostle Paul declared: "All Scripture is inspired of God." (2 Timothy 3:16) Paul also urged us to accept the Bible "not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God." (1 Thessalonians 2:13) Surely Jehovah God, the Almighty Creator of the awesome universe, could author a book and see to it that it maintained its integrity over the centuries!

¹⁸ Yet, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* says: "Many Biblical statements are simply not true when judged according to modern knowledge of science and history."³⁹ Writing in *U.S. Catholic*, a priest stated that earth's creation could not have happened the way it is described in Genesis. And of its account of the human creation, he stated: "The human race did not start that way."⁴⁰ An Episcopal bishop said: "The Bible contains mistakes, inaccuracies and contradictions. It is therefore understandable why the major Christian churches do not view the Bible as infallible."⁴¹ In England, an Anglican bishop referred to Christ's resurrection as a "conjuring trick with bones."⁴²

¹⁹ Thus, many of the clergy either belittle the Bible or do not teach their followers to respect it and follow God's laws contained in it. That is a principal reason for the appalling ignorance of God's Word throughout Christendom. Religious commentator M. J. McManus wrote this about church attenders: "Few trends in religion so threaten to undermine organized religion in the 1980s as does the sorry state of Biblical knowledge."

ARE THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS GIVING THE RIGHT LEAD?

He noted that "the Bible remains an unread, foreign document" for most churchgoers.⁴³

²⁰ What have been the results of all of this? Have the world's religions demonstrated that they can downgrade Bible teachings and still produce peace or good morals among their adherents? On the contrary, conditions worsen earth wide. The nations with non-Christian religions have become increasingly the scene of unrest, division, political corruption, and deteriorating morals. But Christendom especially has long been the hardest hit as to crime, immorality, drug addiction, racial strife, and war. It has come to pass just as God's reliable Word foretold: "They have rejected the very word of Jehovah, and what wisdom do they have?" —Jeremiah 8:9.

²¹ The evidence is undeniable. It shows that this world's religions are not a true force for peace and security. And they have left their followers ignorant of the true hope—God's Kingdom. What, then, does all of this signify?

End of World's Religions Nears

²² Jesus Christ stated: "Every plant that my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted." (Matthew 15:13) The bad fruitage produced by this world's religions proves that they are not of God's planting. Thus, the Bible foretells the coming destruction of all false systems of worship.

20, 21. What have been the results of rejecting the teachings of the Bible?

22, 23. What does the Bible say will come upon this world's false religions?

²³ Speaking of these religious systems under the symbol of the harlotlike “Babylon the Great,” God says the following regarding the worldwide empire of false religion: “Her sins have massed together clear up to heaven, and God has called her acts of injustice to mind . . . in one day her plagues will come, death and mourning and famine, and she will be completely burned with fire, because Jehovah God, who judged her, is strong.”—Revelation 18:2, 5-8.

²⁴ Note that this destruction is to come with surprising suddenness, as “in one day.” To the surprise and dismay of many persons, false religion will be brought to ruin, destroyed, by the very political nations with whom she has long played the harlot.—Revelation 18:10-17, 21; 17:12, 16.

²⁵ Therefore the divine call is: “Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues.” (Revelation 18:4) Taking such action means that one sees false religion as God sees it. It means that one detests it for its rotten fruits, its hypocrisy, and its superstition. Disgust should be felt for the way false religion has misrepresented God before mankind and for the way it has contributed toward the suffering and oppression of the people. (Romans 2:24; Jeremiah 23:21, 22) If you recognize this, you will withdraw all support from such religions, thus demonstrating your full support of God’s judgment on them.

24. How will such destruction come, and from what source?

25. (a) At Revelation 18:4, what are persons who desire God’s approval urged to do? (b) What should move one to take such action?

²⁶ However, it is not enough simply to withdraw. You must search out and find the true, unhypocritical worship that will bring you God's peace and protection when the foretold destruction comes. Those engaging in such true worship must be persons who have already 'beaten their swords into plowshares, not learning war anymore.' (Isaiah 2:4) They must be persons who believe God's Word and live it, letting it be the guiding force in their lives. (Psalm 119:105) They must show genuine, unhypocritical love for their fellowman. (John 13:35; Romans 13:8) Does any such worship exist today? Millions have found it among Jehovah's Witnesses. They are known the world over for their adherence to God's laws as found in the Bible. And the peace and security they enjoy even now vindicate the truthfulness and power of God's Word.

²⁷ Jehovah's Witnesses are deeply concerned about the dangerous situation into which false religion has brought people. They are sincerely endeavoring to give God's Word first place in their lives. You are invited to observe their meetings in their local Kingdom Hall and investigate for yourself the extent to which they reflect God's spirit and enjoy the peace and security it brings. You will also see how they are learning and applying what God requires of those who are to survive the coming destruction and live in his righteous New Order under the rule of his heavenly Kingdom.

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26. (a) Additionally, what must a person find if he is to enjoy God's peace and protection? (b) What kind of persons should one look for when seeking to find those who practice true worship?
27. What will you be able to observe firsthand by attending the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses at their Kingdom Hall?

Chapter 4

World Destruction First —Then World Peace

ACCORDING to Bible prophecy, before mankind can ever enjoy enduring peace, a world destruction must first take place. (2 Peter 3:5-7) But why is that necessary? From where does the destruction come? And what does it mean for humans on this planet?

² First we need to understand that the world destruction the Bible foretells is not the same as the global catastrophe that many world leaders, scientists, and others are warning about. The calamity they talk about would come in the form of some man-made disaster brought on by such things as pollution or the nuclear arms race, or both. But, of course, such a catastrophe would leave no hope for lasting peace and security on this planet.

³ Earth would be ruined for living creatures. For example, nuclear radiation or the speculated “nuclear winter” would leave survivors no better off—if not worse off—than those who had died. Survival would be largely a matter of chance, though the poor would likely be among the first to suffer. What hope would *you* have of being among the survivors of such a catastrophe? And even if you did survive, what hope

1-3. (a) What is the world destruction that human leaders are warning about? (b) Why is that not what the Bible refers to as the world destruction that will pave the way for lasting peace and security?

would there be that life would not drift back into the same strife-ridden uncertainty that now prevails?

What the Bible Foretells Gives Hope

⁴ What makes the world destruction that the Bible foretells different is that it will be selective, purposeful. It will not be some calamity that comes just as the culmination of man-made blunders. Rather than bring death indiscriminately, it will efface from the earth only those who really deserve to be destroyed. This kind of world destruction is in agreement with the divine principle at Proverbs 2:21, 22: "For the upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it."

⁵ What, then, will be destroyed? Many think the Bible predicts the total burning up of the planet Earth and everything on it. But this is not the case. Jesus Christ himself said: "Happy are the mild-tempered ones, since they will inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:5) Surely that 'inheritance' is not to be a burned-up, lifeless cinder! The Bible also gives God's definite assurance that the earth will remain forever as a place for people to live.—Psalm 104:5; Isaiah 45:18; Matthew 6:9, 10.

4. Who are to be destroyed in the world destruction of which the Bible speaks?

5, 6. (a) What will happen to the earth itself during that world destruction? (b) In this respect, how will it be "just as the days of Noah were"?

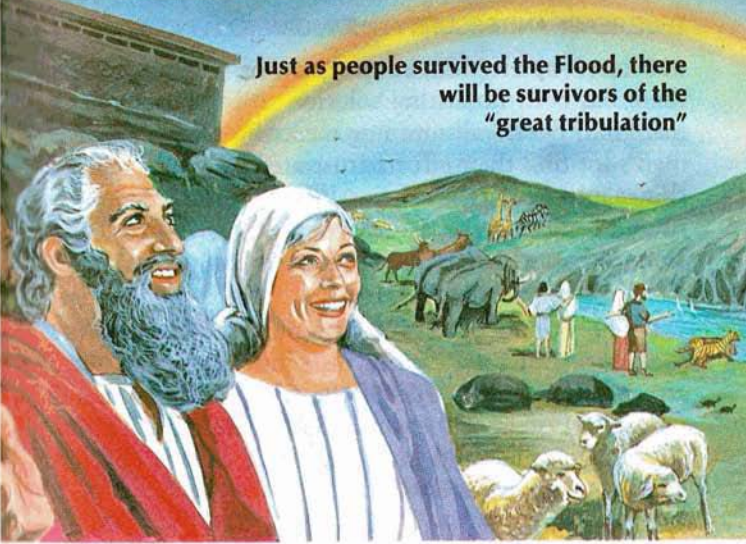
⁶ In harmony with this, the Bible speaks of survivors who will remain on earth after that “great tribulation” has passed. Jesus Christ said that “just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be.” When global destruction took place in Noah’s time there were also survivors.—Matthew 24:21, 37; 2 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 7:9, 10, 13, 14.

⁷ What is to be destroyed? It is the *worldwide system of things* that men have built up on earth—along with all those who uphold it rather than look to God and his promised rule for the earth. (Psalm 73:27, 28) That is why the phrase “the end of the world,” found in some Bible translations, is more accurately rendered in other Bibles as “the end of the age” (*NE*), “the conclusion of the age” (*Ro*), “the conclusion of the system of things” (*NW*).—Matthew 24:3.

⁸ The *source* of the coming world destruction will be—not men—but Jehovah God. The modern blights of pollution, famine, nuclear terror, and similar things that have resulted from human ignorance, error, and corruption are not what will cause the destruction. Instead, these are proof of the selfishness and utter failure of the present world system. They provide just cause for Jehovah God to do away with that system completely. He promises to take such action before ever the present world reaches a state of collapse or carries out its own self-destruction. (Revelation 11:17, 18) But is such drastic action really the only way?

7. What is it that will come to its end at that time?

8. (a) From what source will the destruction come? (b) This must occur before the present world system reaches what state?

A vibrant illustration depicting Noah and his wife in the foreground, looking towards a landscape. Noah, on the left, has a long white beard and wears a red robe. His wife, on the right, wears a white headscarf and a purple shawl. They are both smiling. In the background, a rainbow arches over a green valley. Various animals, including giraffes, zebras, and sheep, are visible. Several people are also present in the distance, some standing near a body of water. A large stone building is partially visible on the left side of the image.

**Just as people survived the Flood, there
will be survivors of the
“great tribulation”**

Why This System Must End for True Peace to Come

⁹ Some might feel that God should simply make some changes in the present system, rather than destroy it. But the Bible shows that God realistically recognizes that it is beyond reform.

¹⁰ Consider for yourself the many changes that have been made by humans down through the centuries. Think of all the different kinds of government that men have developed. There have been city-states, monarchies, democracies, communistic and socialistic governments, and dictatorships. Remember how often the existing ruler or government has been replaced with a

9, 10. How does human history show that something more drastic is needed than just a reform of the present world?

new one—by election, coup d'état, or revolution. Yet there has been no lasting solution to the problems of mankind. Even well-meaning men who try to improve man's lot find their efforts frustrated by the system of things into which they themselves are locked. As a wise ruler of ancient times discovered, by human efforts alone "that which is made crooked cannot be made straight."—Ecclesiastes 1:14, 15.

¹¹ The world's cities, for example, are plagued with problems. But men cannot dismantle them and start afresh. The same is true of the whole economic and industrial system of the world. Self-interest and nationalism undermine and block any real change for the good of mankind as a whole.

¹² The entire system of things is thus like a house built on a bad foundation, according to poor plans, and constructed with defective materials. What good will it do to rearrange the furniture or to remodel the house? As long as it stands, the problems will continue, and the house will keep deteriorating. The only sensible thing to do is to tear down the house and build another, on a good foundation.

¹³ Jesus Christ used a somewhat similar illustration in saying that people do not "put new wine into old wineskins." The old wineskin would burst from the new wine. (Matthew 9:17) He therefore did not try to reform the Jewish system of things under which he lived. Instead, he preached God's Kingdom as the only

11-13. (a) What prevents men from making changes in the present system for the good of all mankind? (b) So, how might the extent of the change needed be illustrated?

hope for peace and security. (Luke 8:1; 11:2; 12:31) So, too, in our day Jehovah God will not simply adjust the present system of things, because that could bring no lasting benefit.

¹⁴ God's Word emphasizes the truth that it is impossible to legislate righteousness into people's hearts. If they have no love for what is right, no amount of legislation will ever put it there. At Isaiah 26:10 we read: "Though the wicked one should be shown favor, he simply will not learn righteousness. In the land of straightforwardness he will act unjustly and will not see the eminence of Jehovah."—Compare Proverbs 29:1.

¹⁵ The hard fact is that many people prefer to stay with this present system despite its failures and evils. They do not want to turn to righteousness and submit to rule from God. They may see the corruption of this world's political systems, the futility of its wars, the hypocrisy of its religions, and the clear evidence that its technology has created even greater problems than it has solved. But despite all of this, many prefer to be lulled into a false sense of security by religious and political leaders whose interests lie in maintaining the status quo. They are like the Israelites of whom God said: "The prophets themselves actually prophesy in falsehood; and as for the priests, they go subduing according to their powers. And my own people *have loved it that way*; and what will you men do in the finale of it?"—Jeremiah 5:31; Isaiah 30:12, 13.

14. Would the passing of new laws make people love righteousness?

15, 16. How is the lack of true love for righteousness on the part of many people shown in their response to God's will?

¹⁶ Likely you know of people who have habits that endanger their own health and security and that of their families. Yet they resist all efforts to help them change. But when people resist God's counsel and guidance, the matter is far more serious. Those who do this show that they really do not love truth and righteousness. Of such ones Jesus said: "For the heart of this people has grown unreceptive, and with their ears they have heard without response, and they have shut their eyes; that they might never see with their eyes and hear with their ears and get the sense of it with their hearts and turn back, and [God] heal them."—Matthew 13:15.

¹⁷ Rightly, God's patience and mercy have their limits. If not, where would his love for the righteous ones be? He cannot turn a deaf ear to their pleas for relief from the suffering that wickedness brings upon this earth. (Luke 18:7, 8; Proverbs 29:2, 16) So, the circumstances require world destruction. They oblige God to act if he is to remain true to what is right and if he is to show compassion for those who also love what is right. It is not a case of God's taking pleasure in bringing destruction upon mankind. "'Do I take any delight at all in the death of someone wicked,' is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, 'and not in that he should turn back from his ways and actually keep living? . . . So cause a turning back and keep living, O you people.'"—Ezekiel 18:23, 32.

¹⁸ The destruction of those who prefer this present

17. If it is true that God does not take pleasure in bringing destruction on mankind, why is he going to do it?

18. What is the price that must be paid to redeem from insecurity the people who love what is right?

system of things, then, is the price that must be paid to redeem from insecurity and suffering those who love what is right. This is in agreement with the Bible principle: “The wicked is a ransom for the righteous one.”—Proverbs 21:18; compare Isaiah 43:1, 3, 4.

Beneficial Results

¹⁹ The destruction of the present system and its supporters will allow for a righteous new system earth wide in which the survivors will be able to work together unitedly, not in selfish competition. Down will come divisive national frontiers and political boundaries. Gone will be the crushing burden of military spending. And gone too will be the social barriers that keep mankind from being a united family. A vital factor in all of this will be that everyone then living will speak the ‘one pure language’ of truth to one another, worshiping their Creator “with spirit and truth.” This will keep them free from divisive religious superstitions, traditions, and man-made creeds.—Zephaniah 3:8, 9; John 4:23, 24.

²⁰ With God’s government by his Son Christ Jesus exercising sole dominion over all the earth, the ancient psalm of the Bible will see fulfillment: “In his days the righteous one will sprout, and the abundance of peace until the moon is no more. And he will have subjects from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.”—Psalm 72:7, 8.

19. What barriers to world peace will be removed by the destruction of this system of things?

20. As indicated by Psalm 72, what condition will come to exist earth wide?

²¹ The earth will benefit from the coming world destruction. It will no longer be marred by greedy polluters and ruthless destroyers. The lakes, rivers, oceans, and atmosphere will gain relief from the wastes poured into them and will soon cleanse themselves. God will thus demonstrate that he has not abandoned his purpose to have a clean, gardenlike planet filled with people who reflect their Creator's splendid qualities.—Genesis 1:26-28; Isaiah 45:18; 55:10, 11.

²² So, God's bringing world destruction is not contrary to his being the 'God of peace.' Nor is it contrary to Jesus' being the "Prince of Peace." It is because of their love of peace and justice that they take this action to restore earth to a clean, righteous state.—1 Corinthians 14:33; Isaiah 9:6, 7.

²³ As individuals, then, what should we do? Jesus showed that those ignoring God's instructions were building their hopes for the future on "sand," and that such building would never endure the coming destructive storms. He showed the vital need to build our hopes on obedience to God's Word if we are to have a peaceful and secure future.—Matthew 7:24-27.

²⁴ But why has God waited so long to bring wickedness and suffering to an end? The Bible answers this question also, and it shows what God has been doing during all the centuries past in working out his purpose.

21. How will the earth itself benefit from the coming world destruction?

22. How is the bringing of such destruction consistent with God's being a 'God of peace'?

23, 24. If we are to enjoy a future of peace and security, what is it vital for us individually to do now?

Chapter 5

An Issue That Involves You

DESPITE the common desire for peace and security, man's history has been marred by bloodshed and hurtfulness. Since the Bible shows that God detests such things, why has he not put a stop to these conditions before now? Surely it cannot be for lack of interest. The Bible, as well as the beauty of God's earthly handiwork, gives abundant evidence of his love and concern for mankind. (1 John 4:8) More importantly, the honor of God's own name is involved, since these conditions have caused people to reproach him. What reason could there be, then, for his putting up with thousands of years of unrest and violence?

² The answer is found in the Bible's opening account about Adam and Eve. This is no mere allegory. It is historical fact. The Bible supplies a complete, documented record of genealogy reaching from the first century of the Common Era all the way back to the first humans. (Luke 3:23-38; Genesis 5:1-32; 11:10-32) As our first ancestors, Adam and Eve had a definite influence on us. And what the Bible tells us about them helps us to understand the circumstances that affect our lives today.

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1. Why have people found it difficult to understand why God has permitted badness among mankind?
 2. (a) Where in the Bible do we find out why God has permitted bad conditions for so long? (b) What makes it evident that the Bible account about Adam and Eve is historical fact?

³ The Bible reveals that all of God's provisions for the first human couple were very good. They had everything for a happy life—a parklike home in Eden, abundant varieties of food, satisfying work, the prospect of seeing their family grow and fill the earth, and the blessing of their Creator. (Genesis 1:28, 29; 2:8, 9, 15) Who could reasonably have asked for more?

⁴ The inspired record in Genesis reveals that humans occupied a unique position on earth. Unlike the animals, they had a moral sense and were endowed with free will. That is why they were equipped with powers of reason and judgment. To guide them, God implanted in man and woman the faculty of conscience so that, as perfect humans, their normal inclination would be toward good. (Romans 2:15) Besides all of this, God told them why they were alive, what they were to do, and who had provided all the splendid things around them. (Genesis 1:28-30) How, then, do we explain why such bad conditions exist now?

⁵ The Scriptural record shows that an issue arose—one that involves each of us today. It came about through circumstances that developed not long after the creation of the first human pair. God gave the man and the woman the opportunity to demonstrate loving appreciation to their Creator by obedience to a require-

3. What kind of provisions did God make for mankind at the start?

4. (a) At their creation, in what ways were humans different from other earthly creatures? (b) In what manner was needed guidance provided for them?

5. (a) What simple requirement did God set for the first human pair, and for what reason? (b) Why were their life prospects for the future rightly involved?

ment. The requirement was nothing that would imply that they had depraved tendencies that had to be curbed. Rather, it involved something that in itself was normal and proper—the eating of food. As God told the man: “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) This requirement did not deprive the first pair of anything necessary for life. They could eat from all the other trees in the garden. Yet their life prospects for the *future* were definitely involved, and rightly so. Why? Because the One who asked obedience was the very Source and Sustainer of human life.

⁶ God’s purpose was not for humans to die. No mention of death was made to Adam and Eve except for disobedience. Our first parents had before them the prospect of living forever in their peaceful, parklike home. To attain to this, what was required of them? They had to recognize that the earth on which they lived belongs to the One who made it, and that, as the Creator, God rightfully has authority over his creation. (Psalm 24:1, 10) Surely this One, who had given man everything he needed, including life itself, deserved obedience to anything that he asked of them. However, he did not wish that obedience to be forced. Rather, it must be from willing hearts, motivated by love. (1 John 5:3) But our first human parents failed to show such love. How did this come about?

6. (a) Our first parents could have lived forever if they had acted in harmony with what basic truth regarding rulership? (b) Why should they have felt moved to obey God?

The Origin of Resistance to Divine Rule

⁷ The Bible shows that resistance to God's rulership first began, not on earth, but in a realm invisible to human eyes. Should we, like many, doubt that such a realm exists simply because we cannot see it? Well, gravity cannot be seen, neither can the wind. Yet their effects are very real. So, too, the effects of the invisible realm can be observed. Though "God is a Spirit," his works of creation can be seen all around us. If we believe in him, we are obliged to believe in a spirit realm. (John 4:24; Romans 1:20) But does anyone else inhabit that realm?

⁸ According to the Bible, millions of spirit persons, angels, were brought into existence before man. (Job 38:4, 7; Psalm 103:20; Daniel 7:10) All of these were created perfect, without evil tendencies. Yet, like God's later creation, man, they were granted free will. They could therefore choose a course of faithfulness or of unfaithfulness toward God.

⁹ But the question asked by many is: How, as perfect creatures, could any of them even feel inclined to do wrong? Well, how many times in our own lives do circumstances arise that confront us with various possibilities—some good, some bad? Having the intelligence to discern the bad possibilities does not automat-

7. (a) According to the Bible, where did resistance to God's rulership begin? (b) Why is it reasonable to believe in the spirit realm?

8. What kind of persons are the angels?

9, 10. (a) How is it possible for a perfect spirit creature to feel inclined to do wrong? (b) So, how did one of the angels come to be Satan?

ically make us bad, does it? The real question is: On which course will we fix our mind and heart? If we focus on harmful thoughts, we could be drawn into cultivating wrong desire in our hearts. Such desire could move us eventually to commit wrong acts. This ruinous cycle was described by the Bible writer James: "Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire. Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin; in turn, sin, when it has been accomplished, brings forth death."—James 1:14, 15.

¹⁰ The Scriptures reveal that this happened to one of God's spirit sons. He was enticed by his own desires. He saw possibilities in God's human creation. Could they come into submission to him rather than to God? Evidently he began to crave at least a share in the worship belonging to God. (Luke 4:5-8) Acting on his desire, he became a resister of God. For that reason he is referred to in the Bible as Satan, which means Resister.—Job 1:6.

¹¹ In this materialistic 20th century, belief in such a spirit person as Satan is not popular. But, then, has popular thinking ever been a sure guide to truth? Among those who study disease, it was once unpopular to believe that unseen germs were a factor. But now their influence is well known. Certainly, then, the unpopularity of something does not mean that it can be ignored. Jesus Christ had himself come from the spirit realm and so could speak with authority on life there. He definitely identified Satan as an evil spirit

11. What sound basis is there for believing that Satan really does exist?

person. (John 8:23; Luke 13:16; 22:31) Only by taking into account the existence of this spirit adversary is it possible to understand how such bad conditions got started on this earth.

¹² The inspired record, in Genesis chapter 3, describes how Satan set about satisfying his wrong desire. In the garden of Eden he approached the woman Eve in a manner that concealed his real identity. He employed an animal commonly seen by the human pair—a serpent. Evidently using what we would call ventriloquism, he made it appear that his words proceeded from this creature. Its naturally cautious manner fitted well with the impression that Satan wanted to make. —Genesis 3:1; Revelation 12:9.

¹³ Rather than make a direct bid for the woman to look to him as her ruler, Satan first sought to plant doubt in her mind, asking: “Is it really so that God said you must not eat from every tree of the garden?” In effect, he was saying: ‘It is too bad that God has said you may not eat from all the trees in the garden.’ By this he implied that possibly God was holding back something good. Eve answered by quoting God’s prohibition, which involved only one tree, as well as stating that the penalty for disobedience was death. At that, Satan attempted to undermine her respect for God’s law, saying: “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:

12. How did Satan communicate with the woman Eve, and why in that manner?

13. What did Satan say to Eve, and with what evident intent?

1-5) Faced with such a situation, what would you have done?

¹⁴ Eve allowed herself to be drawn along by selfish desire. She ate what God had forbidden. Afterward, under her urging, her husband Adam also ate. He chose to cast his lot in with her rather than with his Creator. (Genesis 3:6; 1 Timothy 2:14) What was the outcome?

¹⁵ The entire human family was plunged into sin and imperfection. Now Adam and Eve could not pass on to their offspring the perfection that they once had. Just as copies produced from a defective pattern all have the same defect, so all of their offspring were born in sin, with an inherited tendency toward selfishness. (Genesis 8:21) This inclination, left unchecked, has led to the evils that have taken peace and security from mankind. It is this inheritance of sin that has also resulted in disease and death.—Romans 5:12.

The Issues Raised

¹⁶ In the light of these facts, our minds go back to the question of why God has put up with this situation, allowing it to develop to the extent that it has. It is because of a grave issue that was raised and its effect on the entire universe. How is that so?

¹⁷ By his argument that God's law to Adam and Eve was not good for them and by challenging God's stated

14. (a) Why did Eve fall victim to Satan? (b) What did Adam do?

15. So, then, what accounts for the crime and violence, as well as the disease and death, that have marked human existence?

16, 17. (a) To understand why God has put up with this situation for so long, what must we appreciate? (b) What really is the issue that was raised?

outcome for disobedience, Satan was calling into question God's rulership. No, he did not question the fact that God is ruler. Rather, the issue that Satan raised centered on the *rightfulness* of Jehovah's rulership, His sovereignty, and the *righteousness* of His ways. Deceptively, Satan argued that humans would do better by acting independently, making their own decisions rather than submitting to God's direction. (Genesis 3:4, 5) In reality, however, by so doing they would be following the leading of God's adversary.

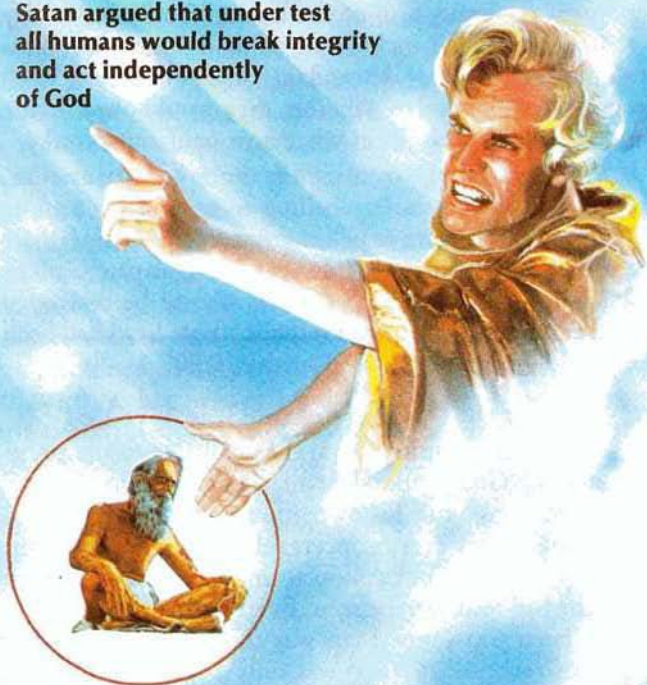
¹⁸ Another issue was involved. Since these creatures of God turned against him there in Eden, what would others do? Later, in the days of the man Job, Satan openly charged that those who serve Jehovah do so, not because of any love for God and his rulership, but selfishly, because God provides everything for them. Satan implied that no one who was put under pressure would loyally support Jehovah's sovereignty. So the loyalty and integrity of every intelligent creature in heaven and on earth were called into question. The issue thus involves you.—Job 1:8-12; 2:4, 5.

¹⁹ Faced with such a challenge, what would Jehovah do? He could easily have destroyed Satan and Adam and Eve. That would have demonstrated Jehovah's sovereign power. But would it have answered the questions now raised in the minds of all of God's creatures who had observed these developments? The eternal peace

18. (a) What other issue was involved, and where is this shown in the Bible? (b) How does this issue involve us?

19, 20. By not destroying the rebels immediately, what opportunity did Jehovah afford his creatures, both spirit and human?

**Satan argued that under test
all humans would break integrity
and act independently
of God**



and security of the universe required that these questions be settled completely, once and for all time. Besides that, the integrity and loyalty of all of God's intelligent creation had been called into question. If they loved him, they would want to answer that false charge themselves. Jehovah gave them the opportunity to do just that. Also, by allowing Adam and Eve to bring forth offspring (though imperfect), God would

prevent the extinction of the human family—a family that has come to include all of us living today. This would give these descendants the opportunity to choose for themselves whether they would obey divine rulership. That choice is what now confronts you!

²⁰ So, instead of executing the death penalty at once, Jehovah allowed those rebelling to remain for a time. Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden, to die before a thousand years passed. (Genesis 5:5; compare Genesis 2:17 and 2 Peter 3:8.) Satan was also to be destroyed in due time, as if he were a serpent whose head had been crushed.—Genesis 3:15; Romans 16:20.

What the Passing of Time Has Revealed

²¹ What has resulted from the challenge to the rightfulness of God's rule? Has man benefited himself by endeavoring to run his own affairs? Mankind has been permitted to try every conceivable type of government. Jehovah did not put a stop to man's efforts too early for the full results to be seen. Even a century ago would have been too soon. Man was then just entering the "era of technology" and was only beginning to make great claims about what he would accomplish.

²² But is another century needed to see what the outcome of man's course of independence from God will be? Even prominent men in government and science acknowledge that the earth faces grave danger of ruination. Certainly God need not permit complete ruin to prove the utter failure of man's independent

21, 22. (a) As to rulership, what have Satan and mankind been doing during the time allowed by God? (b) What does human history show as to government that endeavors to ignore God?

rule. With the testimony of six thousand years bearing witness to what happens when government ignores God, never can it be said that there was not enough time to perfect human rule. The facts show that no government independent of God can bring real peace and security for all mankind.

²³ As we will later see, long in advance and with perfect timing Jehovah God marked a particular generation that would see him cleanse the universe of all rebellion against his divine rulership. Not only will wicked men be destroyed but Satan and his demons will be restrained as in an abyss, unable to influence the affairs of either men or angels. This is to open the way for the righteous rule of earth by the government of God's Son. During a period of a thousand years, that government will undo all the harm brought by man's thousands of years of selfish rule. It will restore this earth to paradisaic loveliness and bring obedient mankind back to the perfection enjoyed in Eden.—Revelation 20:1, 2; 21:1-5; 1 Corinthians 15:25, 26.

²⁴ The Bible states that at the close of that thousand-year rule Satan and his demons will be released from their restraint for a brief time. Why? In order that all those then living may have an opportunity to show themselves loyal to Jehovah's sovereign rule. Untold numbers will have come forth in the resurrection. For many of them this will be their first opportunity to demonstrate under test their love for God. The issue

23. What is soon to take place that will clear the way for righteous rule of the earth by God's Son?

24. (a) Why are Satan and his demons to be released at the end of a thousand years? (b) What will the outcome be?

will be the same as one of those raised in Eden—whether they will uphold Jehovah’s sovereignty by faithful obedience. Jehovah desires as his subjects only those whose love motivates such loyalty. Those who wish to side with God’s adversary and his demons in whatever attempts these make to disturb anew the peace of God’s universe will be free to make that choice. But by thus spurning government by God, they will merit destruction. And this time it will come promptly, as if by fire from heaven. All rebels, spirit and human, will then have perished for all time.—Revelation 20:7-10.

²⁵ True, for thousands of years mankind has suffered much. But this was due to our first parents’ choice, not God’s. God has endured reproach and has put up with things detestable to him for all this time. But God, for whom ‘a thousand years is as one day,’ takes a long-range view of matters, and this works out for the good of his creatures. As the inspired apostle writes: “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 Peter 3:8, 9) Had it not been for God’s patience and long-suffering, none of us would have any opportunity for salvation.

²⁶ However, we should not conclude that during the past six thousand years God’s role has been merely a passive one. No, he has not simply been tolerating wickedness, biding his time and taking no action himself. As we shall see, the facts show just the opposite.

25, 26. How has Jehovah’s handling of matters really worked out for the benefit of each one of us?

Chapter 6

What Has God Been Doing?

MANY people today believe that God is not actively interested in the earth or that he is not doing anything about the problems troubling mankind. But the truth is that God does care very much. True, he may not have done what men expected him to do. But this does not mean he has done nothing. Actually, he has been doing things for mankind from the beginning of human history right down to the present day.

² One reason some people conclude that God is not doing anything is their own short life span. This makes them impatient to get things done in the brief time their life allows. So a desire to see changes during their own lifetime dominates their thinking. Their tendency, then, is to judge God on the basis of such human experience, with all its limitations.

³ On the other hand, Jehovah lives forever. (Psalm 90:2, 4; Isaiah 44:6) From his viewpoint he can see precisely where in the stream of time his acts will accomplish the most good for everyone concerned as well as most effectively develop his purpose. (Isaiah 40:22; 2 Peter 3:8, 9) That is exactly what God has been doing.

-
1. What do many people today believe about God, but is it true?
 2. How may their own short life span affect people's thinking on this matter?
 3. How does the length of Jehovah's life affect his ability to handle situations at the best possible time?

How God Has Revealed Himself

⁴ Jehovah's purpose is to provide a righteous administration for all creation, one that will bring mankind together in peace and unity, enjoying full security. (Ephesians 1:9, 10; Proverbs 1:33) However, God does not force anyone to come under his administration. Only those who serve him and who love his way of ruling are welcome. With a view to founding an entire world that would live by his administration's righteous standards, God has made available to mankind a knowledge of those standards and how his administration operates. At the same time God has been making it possible for mankind to gain vital knowledge concerning himself and his personal qualities.—John 17:3.

⁵ Being spirit, Jehovah is, of course, invisible to man. So, how would he make men of flesh and blood understand these things? For one thing, much can be learned about the qualities of the Creator from his handiwork. (Romans 1:20) The marvelous interrelationships among living things and the physical laws that govern all matter bear testimony to his wisdom. The tremendous power manifest in the oceans, in the weather, and in the energy of the stars gives evidence of his almightiness. (Job 38:8-11, 22-33; 40:2) And the variety of foods to delight the palate, the beauty of flowers, birds, sunrises and sunsets, the playful antics of animals—all tell of the Creator's love for mankind and his desire that we find life a joy. Yet God's revelation of himself does not stop with these things.

4. What has Jehovah declared his purpose to be, and so what knowledge has he provided for mankind?

5. From the works of creation what can we learn about God?

⁶ On various occasions he has also spoken from the heavens. In some cases he did this personally. In other instances he spoke through angels, as at Mount Sinai on the Arabian Peninsula, where he gave his law to millions of Israelites. (Exodus 20:22; Hebrews 2:2) Then, by means of his prophets he communicated with men over many centuries and had them write down the revelations of his will. (2 Peter 1:21) Thus, Jehovah gradually has acquainted man with His righteous standards and His will. An important aspect of this is the way he has revealed his principles and qualities by means of his dealings with humans. This has added the warm appeal of human experience to his written Word. How much more instructive and convincing it is not only to hear and read God's declarations of purpose but also to have in the Bible record living examples that help us to understand his will better! (1 Corinthians 10:11) And what does that record reveal?

⁷ It provides evidence that *God does not forever tolerate unrighteousness*. True, he let the offspring of Adam and Eve go their own way, building up the inevitable record of man's inability to govern himself successfully. But God did not leave mankind without evidence of His judgment against their unrighteous ways. Thus he brought a flood in Noah's day because 'the earth had become full of violence.' (Genesis 6:11-13) He de-

6. (a) By what means has God provided specific revelations of his will? (b) By what other means has God revealed his principles and qualities to man?

7. (a) How has God demonstrated that he does not forever tolerate unrighteousness? (b) On learning how God views such conduct, what should we do?

stroyed the morally depraved cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Genesis 19:24, 25; Jude 7) He let the nation of Israel, which professed to serve him, go into exile because they practiced false religion. (Jeremiah 13:19, 25) On learning how God views such conduct, we have an opportunity to make changes in our lives to show our love for what is right. Will we?

⁸ The Bible record also reveals that God differentiates between the righteous and the wicked. In the global Flood, God did not destroy Noah, who was “a preacher of righteousness,” but spared him and seven others. (2 Peter 2:5) And, before fire and sulfur rained down on Sodom, escape was made possible for righteous Lot and his household.—Genesis 19:15-17; 2 Peter 2:7.

⁹ When the people of Israel, who had sworn to serve God, proved unfaithful he did not immediately cast them off. As he told them: “I kept sending to you all my servants the prophets, daily getting up early and sending them.” But they did not listen. (Jeremiah 7: 25, 26) Even when the time drew near for the destruction of Jerusalem, Jehovah said: “Do I take any delight at all in the death of someone wicked, . . . and not in that he should turn back from his ways and actually keep living? . . . So cause a turning back and keep living, O you people.”—Ezekiel 18:23, 32.

¹⁰ What do we see, then? That in a way that deeply

8. When God brings destruction, are there any survivors? Illustrate.

9. What do we learn from the way that Jehovah dealt with ancient Israel?

10. Besides his being patient, what else do these Bible accounts teach us about God?

touches the heart of righteously disposed persons, Jehovah has made clear his great patience with mankind. At the same time, his dealings also forcefully impress on us his love of righteousness and the importance of our living in harmony with his requirements.

¹¹ Something else, very basic, stands out. From the beginning it becomes clear that God has had a definite *purpose* in everything that he has done. And he has never failed to act when the fulfillment of his purpose required action. This fundamental purpose was stated right in Eden. When passing judgment on Satan, Jehovah foretold that Satan would have opportunity to raise up a “seed,” those who would manifest his traits and support him. He also foretold the producing of another “seed,” a righteous deliverer. This One would fatally wound “the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan,” thus releasing mankind from his ruinous domination. (Genesis 3:15; Revelation 12:9) After declaring this statement of purpose, Jehovah proceeded to make definite preparations for the eventual administration of earth’s affairs under the promised “seed.” This preparatory work would take time, as we shall see.

Why He Dealt Specifically With Ancient Israel

¹² Long before the nations of today came into existence, God selected one nation that he used for hundreds of years as his own people. Why? In order to

11. (a) What statement of purpose did Jehovah make in Eden?
 (b) What has God been doing since then?

12, 13. (a) Why did God select Israel and give his laws to just that one nation? (b) So, what can we learn from the history of Israel and from that of other nations?

provide a *living demonstration* of the operation of his righteous principles. That nation, ancient Israel, was made up of descendants of Abraham, a man who had displayed great faith in the Creator. To them Jehovah said: “It was not because of your being the most populous of all the peoples that Jehovah showed affection for you so that he chose you, for you were the least of all the peoples. But it was because of Jehovah’s loving you, and because of his keeping the sworn statement that he had sworn to your forefathers.” —Deuteronomy 7:7, 8; 2 Kings 13:23.

¹³ After delivering them from slavery in Egypt, Jehovah offered to take them into a special relationship with him, and they replied: “All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do.” (Exodus 19:8) Jehovah then gave them his regulations, thus setting them apart from all other nations and providing detailed information concerning his righteous standards. (Deuteronomy 4:5-8) So, the history of ancient Israel provides a record of what happens when God’s righteous laws are either obeyed or disobeyed. Meanwhile, the history of other nations reveals the outcome to those who live without God’s law.

¹⁴ What about those other nations? They went their own way, choosing their own forms of government. Their people were not totally without goodness in their lives. They still had the faculty of conscience, and this at times moved them to act with humanitarian concern for their fellowman. (Romans 2:14; Acts 28:1, 2) But

14. (a) Did God wrong the non-Israelite nations by not interfering in their affairs? (b) Yet, how did they benefit from God’s undeserved kindness?

their inherited sin and rejection of divine guidance caused them to pursue a self-seeking course that led to cruel wars and depraved practices. (Ephesians 4:17-19) God certainly could not be held responsible for the woes brought on by a course of life that they themselves chose. The only times that God intervened were when human activities conflicted with the outworking of his purposes. In the meantime, God kindly allowed them a share in the joy of living, in the beauties of creation and in earth's fruitage.—Acts 14:16, 17.

¹⁵ Nor did Jehovah exclude the people of these nations from eventually receiving the benefits promised through the “seed” of Abraham. Jehovah said of this “seed” that was to come through Abraham’s family line: “By means of your seed *all nations of the earth* will certainly bless themselves due to the fact that you have listened to my voice.” (Genesis 22:18) So even though Jehovah was dealing exclusively with Israel, he also was impartially working out his purpose to bless the other nations later, although they were unaware of this.—Acts 10:34, 35.

¹⁶ During the time that Jehovah was dealing with ancient Israel, he provided numerous prophecies that filled a vital need for men of faith—how to identify the promised Seed of Abraham when he eventually arrived. Even his family line, through the tribe of Judah and the house of David, was specified. (Genesis 49:10;

15. What arrangements for the eventual blessing of people of these nations was God working out?

16. (a) During all this time, what was God doing in connection with the promise about the Seed? (b) Who did that Seed of promise prove to be?

**By living among humans, earth's new ruler
came to understand mankind better**



Psalm 89:35, 36) The place of his birth, Bethlehem, was named. (Micah 5:2) Centuries in advance the very year when he would be anointed as Messiah was indicated. (Daniel 9:24-27) His priestly services on behalf of mankind were foreshadowed. And so was the sacrifice of himself that opened the opportunity for eternal life to people of all nations. (Hebrews 9:23-28) Thus, when the appointed time arrived, everything unmistak-

ably identified Jesus Christ as the Seed of promise through whom blessings would eventually come to mankind.—Galatians 3:16, 24; 2 Corinthians 1:19, 20.

The Preparing of Rulers for Mankind

¹⁷ Before Jesus' birth his mother Mary had been told by an angel that her son would be given an everlasting kingdom. Shepherds near Bethlehem were notified of his birth, and then they heard a multitude of the armies of heaven praising God and saying: "Glory in the heights above to God, and upon earth peace among men of goodwill."—Luke 1:31-33; 2:10-14.

¹⁸ Consider the benefits of this future heavenly King's having lived on earth. As a man he came to know and understand the problems of mankind. He lived and worked with them, sharing their grief and personally suffering hardship. Under the most severe tests he proved both his loyalty to Jehovah and his love of righteousness. In this way God was preparing Jesus to be an understanding King as well as High Priest to administer life-giving benefits to mankind. (Hebrews 1:9; 4:15; 5:8-10) Furthermore, by sacrificing his own life, Jesus Christ opened the way for mankind to regain peaceful relations with God.—1 Peter 3:18.

¹⁹ After Jesus' death, God raised him to life again, and

17. Through Jesus, what was God going to bring about, and how was this emphasized at the time of his birth?

18. (a) In what way did his experiences on earth prepare him for the offices of king and priest? (b) What effect did his death have on the gaining of peace?

19. (a) How do we know that Jesus was resurrected and ascended to heaven? (b) As to his kingship, what did he do after returning to heaven?

he was seen by over 500 human witnesses who could testify that the resurrection had actually occurred. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8) Forty days after Jesus was raised, he ascended heavenward and disappeared from the sight of his onlooking disciples. (Acts 1:9) From heaven he proceeded to exercise his kingship toward his own faithful followers, and the benefits of his rule made them stand out in contrast to the rest of mankind. But was now the time for him to begin ruling the nations? No, for other matters in God's grand program required attention.—Hebrews 10:12, 13.

²⁰ A great task remained to be done earth wide. Prior to Jesus' death and resurrection none of the Israelites had gone out as preachers to convert people of other nations. Yet any who desired to take up the worship of Jehovah could always share in the benefits along with Israel. (1 Kings 8:41-43) However, the advent of Christianity opened up a major new undertaking. Jesus Christ himself set the example and left it as a legacy with his disciples, telling them before his ascension to heaven: "You will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth."—Acts 1:8.

²¹ Was world conversion the objective? No. Rather, Jesus showed that during the period down into "the conclusion of the system of things" there would be a gathering primarily of "the sons of the kingdom." Yes, the other members of the coming Kingdom govern-

20. What new work had Jesus opened up for his disciples on earth?

21. Instead of world conversion, what was God accomplishing by means of that witnessing?

ment had to be selected. (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43) Anyone reading the Christian Greek Scriptures can readily see that starting with Pentecost of 33 C.E., others were being invited to share with Jesus Christ in his heavenly Kingdom rule.—2 Timothy 2:12; Hebrews 3:1; 1 Peter 1:3, 4.

²² Selecting these future corulers over mankind would take time. Why? For one thing, that opportunity had to be extended to people of all nations. And, while many professed to lay hold of it, few truly proved to be faithful followers of God's Son. (Matthew 22:14) High standards had to be met. Though Christians have not lived as a separate national group like ancient Israel, they have been viewed as aliens, advocating another way of life. (1 Peter 2:11, 12) They must keep clean from the immoral and corrupt practices of the world around them. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) To be real "sons of God," they must prove themselves "peaceable," not participating in the wars of the nations and not retaliating when persecuted for their faith. (Matthew 5:9; 26:52; Romans 12:18, 19) They must demonstrate loyalty to God's rulership by refusing to advocate political governments, pictured in the Bible as 'beasts.' (Revelation 20:4, 6) Because of all of this and because they have held high the name of Jesus Christ in his role as God's anointed King, they have been "objects of hatred by all the nations." (Matthew 24:9) So those who are to be the heavenly rulers of mankind along with Christ have not been hastily chosen.

22. (a) What qualities did God require in these prospective heirs of the heavenly Kingdom? (b) So, was the choosing done hastily?

²³ It is not because the number chosen was to be great that selection has taken so long. According to the Scriptures, God limited the number of this select administrative body under Jesus Christ to just 144,000 persons. (Revelation 14:1-3) But God has chosen them carefully. They have been taken “out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” (Revelation 5:9, 10) Among them are people from all walks of life, men and women, persons who have shared all the varied problems of mankind. In the course of their putting on the new Christian personality, there is simply no problem that some of them have not faced and overcome. (Ephesians 4:22-24; 1 Corinthians 10:13) How glad we can be for this! Why? Because it gives us the assurance that they will be sympathetic and merciful kings and priests, able to help men and women of all kinds to benefit from God’s provision for eternal life.

²⁴ What of mankind outside this arrangement? During all this time, God did not interfere with the various governments. He let men go in the way that they chose. Of course, millions of people lived and died, many of them never hearing about the Bible or the Kingdom of God. Yet *God had not forgotten them*. He was preparing for the time spoken of by the apostle Paul: “I have hope toward God . . . that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Acts 24:15) Then, under the favorable conditions of God’s

23. (a) How many are to be in that heavenly administrative body with Christ? (b) From among whom have they been selected, and why?

24. What about the millions of other persons who lived and died during this time, many of them ignorant of the Bible?

New Order, they would be given a full opportunity to learn Jehovah's ways. Based on this, they could take a personal stand on the issue of universal sovereignty. Those who love righteousness would gain the opportunity to live forever.

As "the End" Draws Near

²⁵ Before the incoming of that New Order, thrilling events must occur. The Bible foretold a momentous change in world affairs. Jesus Christ would then be enthroned as King not merely to rule over his own disciples but with authority to act toward the whole world. The proclamation would be made in heaven: "The kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will rule as king forever and ever." (Revelation 11:15) The King's first move would be against "the ruler of the world" himself, Satan the Devil, and his demons. (John 14:30) These wicked forces would be hurled down from the heavens and confined to the vicinity of the earth. With what result?

²⁶ The prophetic description records a voice out of heaven as saying: "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." (Revelation 12:12) Unprecedented turmoil would take place among the nations, but the end would not come at once.

25, 26. (a) In due time, what further authority would Christ be given, and against whom would he take action? (b) How would this affect conditions on the earth?

²⁷ This would be the time for a great separating work. Under the direction of the enthroned Jesus Christ, his faithful followers would press the preaching of “this good news of the kingdom” into all the inhabited earth for a witness to all nations. People everywhere would be given an opportunity to show their attitude toward divine rulership. (Matthew 24:14; 25:31-33) With this accomplished, as Jesus explained, “then the end will come.” It will be a “great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world’s beginning until now, no, nor will occur again.” (Matthew 24:21) Never again will men ask, What has God been doing? The only ones to survive will be those who cared enough to find out what he was doing and to bring their lives into harmony with his requirements before the world destruction arrived.

²⁸ But when are all these events to take place? When is Christ given power to rule as King and to proceed with separating people of all nations? The facts show that God has been doing these things during this 20th century. Christ is already on his heavenly throne, and the separating work is now nearing completion. The time for identifying yourself with Jehovah’s side of the issue of universal sovereignty is very short. The “great tribulation” is near at hand! An examination of Bible prophecy in the light of recent history proves this to be true. We urge you to consider it carefully.

27. (a) As “the end” would draw near, what great separating work would take place, and how? (b) How great will the foretold world destruction be?

28. (a) When do the enthronement of Christ and the dividing of people of all nations take place? (b) So, what is it urgent for you individually to do?

Chapter 7

When Will the Foretold World Destruction Come?

WHAT a relief it would be to see war, crime, and pollution of the earth brought to an end! How pleasant it would be to live under a truly righteous administration, where there could be full security for oneself and one's family! The Bible shows that God will make these things a reality. But when?

² Regarding the world destruction that clears the way for God's New Order, the apostle Paul says: "Jehovah's day is coming exactly as a thief in the night." He adds: "But you, brothers, you are not in darkness, so that that day should overtake you as it would thieves." (1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4) So when "Jehovah's day" arrives, those who fail to heed the warnings will be like animals caught suddenly in a snare. But that does not have to happen to you. As the scripture states, there are people who "are not in darkness." This is because they investigate and take to heart what God's Word says about our day.—Luke 21:34-36.

³ The Bible clearly describes events of this 20th century. But it did this some two thousand years in advance! While many of the events themselves are

-
1. What grand purpose does God have for mankind?
 2. (a) When "Jehovah's day" comes, who will be caught by surprise? (b) How can we avoid having that happen to us?
 - 3, 4. (a) Where is the full significance of the events of the 20th century explained? (b) What five main points set out in Bible prophecy are we going to examine?

common knowledge, only the Bible points out their full significance.

⁴ Prophetic information in the Bible about our day details the following: (1) The *specific year* when God would give “the kingdom of mankind” to “the one whom he wants to.” (2) *Significant events* that would take place during the period known as “the conclusion of the system of things.” (3) Noteworthy *religious developments* at that time. (4) The *survival of at least some* of the generation that saw the beginning of “the conclusion of the system of things.” (5) A striking development in world affairs as *a final signal* that world destruction is imminent. Let us examine these points.

(1) The Marked Year—1914 C.E.

⁵ As far back as 1876, Jehovah’s Witnesses realized that Bible prophecy marked the year 1914 C.E. as a time when major events would take place that would have far-reaching effects on human affairs. They gave the reason for this fact wide publicity.

⁶ If you open your Bible to Daniel chapter 4, you will find a prophecy that reveals God’s purpose with regard to sovereignty over the earth. The purpose behind that prophecy’s fulfillment is stated to be “that people living may know that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind and that to the one whom he wants to, he gives it.” (Verses 2, 3, 17) This “one” to whom the Most High gives “the kingdom” is Christ

5. At how early a date did Jehovah’s Witnesses realize that the Bible pointed to 1914 C.E. as a significant year?

6. (a) What is discussed at Daniel 4:2, 3, 17? (b) Who is “the one” to whom Jehovah gives “the kingdom”?

Jesus. And the last book of the Bible tells of the time when "the kingdom of the world" is given to him as heavenly King. (Revelation 11:15; 12:10) This means, then, that Daniel's prophecy deals with the time when God would intervene in human affairs by giving "the kingdom of the world" to Jesus Christ. When does the prophecy indicate that would be?

⁷ The prophetic dream in Daniel describes a huge tree that was chopped down and banded with iron and copper until "seven times" passed over it. During that time, "the heart of a beast" would be given to it. (Daniel 4:10-16) What did this mean? God caused Daniel to explain: Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, would lose his sanity and be removed from his throne and driven from among men to live as a beast. After seven years the king's sanity would return. This actually happened to the king, and he was restored to his throne as one who acknowledged the superiority of God's rulership. (Daniel 4:20-37) All of this had a greater meaning, however, and for that reason it is recorded in the Bible.

⁸ The greater meaning relates to a mightier rulership that would benefit all living things on earth. From it, the prophecy says, there would be "food for all" and protection for even animals and birds. (Daniel 4:12) The only rulership that can truly provide these benefits

7. (a) What prophetic dream is described at Daniel 4:10-16? (b) How did it apply to King Nebuchadnezzar?

8. (a) The greater meaning of the prophecy relates to what kingdom? (b) In the greater fulfillment, what is represented by the cutting down of the tree, and how was 'the heart of a beast given to it'?

is the Kingdom of God. This government's righteous principles were demonstrated by the history of Judah, with its kings in Jerusalem. But because of unfaithfulness, Jehovah let Judah be conquered by Babylon in 607 B.C.E. It was as if the tree in the dream had been cut down and bands of restraint put around the stump. Without divine interference, national governments have exercised world domination since then. Since these national kingdoms are represented in the Bible as "beasts," it was as if an angel from heaven had announced: "Let the heart of a beast be given to it, and let seven times pass over it." (Daniel 4:16; 8:1-8, 20-22) But eventually, those "seven times" of rulership by beastlike governments would expire. Then the 'bands' would be removed, and the "tree" would again grow as world domination began to be exercised by the one to whom Jehovah would give "the kingdom of the world."

⁹ How long were those "seven times"? Far more than seven years, because centuries later Jesus Christ indicated that these "appointed times of the nations" were still continuing. They had held world domination since Babylon's conquest of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. and would continue to do so for some time yet.—Luke 21:24.

¹⁰ Notice for yourself how the Bible refers to prophetic "times." Revelation 11:2, 3 shows that 1,260 days comprise 42 months, or three and a half years.

9, 10. (a) In figuring the length of the "seven times," how long does each "time" prove to be, and how does the Bible indicate this? (b) When did the "seven times" begin, how many years do they cover, and when do they end?

Revelation 12:6, 14 mentions the same number of days (1,260) but refers to them as “a time [1] and times [2] and half a time,” or three and a half “times.” Each of those “times” is 360 days ($3\frac{1}{2} \times 360 = 1,260$). Each day of these prophetic “times” stands for a whole year according to the principle, “a day for a year.” (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6) Thus the “seven times” equals 2,520 years (7×360). Counting from the autumn of 607 B.C.E., when God’s typical kingdom in Judah was brought low by Babylon, 2,520 years bring us to the autumn of 1914 C.E. ($606\frac{1}{4} + 1913\frac{3}{4} = 2,520$) That is the year when “the kingdom of the world” was due to be entrusted to Jesus Christ.

¹¹ After going on record that the Bible pointed to 1914, Jehovah’s Witnesses had to wait for several decades before they saw the outcome. Early in 1914 the peacefulness of the world made it appear to many that nothing was going to happen. But before the summer was over, the Witnesses’ confidence was justified when the world plunged into a war that was without precedent. In a review of the book *1914*, historian A. L. Rowse wrote: “If ever there was a year that marked the end of an era and the beginning of another, it was 1914. That year brought to an end the old world with its sense of security and began the modern age, characteristic of which is the insecurity that is our daily portion.”⁴⁴ A report about British statesman Winston Churchill noted: “The shot which was fired on June 28, 1914, in Sarajevo, had shattered the world of security and cre-

11. What do historians say as to the significance of the year 1914?

ative reason . . . The world has never been the same place since. . . . It was a turning point, and the wonderful, calm, attractive world of yesterday had vanished, never again to appear.”⁴⁵ That year, marked by Bible prophecy centuries earlier, indeed proved to be a turning point in history.

¹² It may at first seem strange that the enthronement of Christ would be marked by unprecedented war on earth. But do not forget that “the ruler of the world” is Satan the Devil. (John 14:30) He did not want to see God’s Kingdom in control of earth’s affairs. To divert attention from the Kingdom, he maneuvered men into a war to uphold their own claims to sovereignty. Furthermore, the Bible shows that Satan and his demons endeavored to devour the Kingdom government at its birth. With what result? “War broke out in heaven . . . Down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him.” Since only “a short period of time” remained for Satan, his anger was great. (Revelation 12:3-12) Nineteen centuries in advance the Bible provided an accurate description of the result.

(2) Events With Special Significance

¹³ In the year 33 C.E., Jesus described in detail ‘the sign of his presence and of the conclusion of the system

12. What was the reason for the great upheaval in human affairs in 1914 and thereafter?

13. What led up to Jesus’ stating ‘the sign of his presence and of the conclusion of the system of things’?

of things.’ This is recorded in Matthew chapters 24 and 25, Mark 13, and Luke 21. While with a group of his disciples in Jerusalem, Jesus had foretold the destruction of the temple there. Then his disciples 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 24:1-3.

¹⁴ In answer Jesus said: “You are going to hear of wars and reports of wars; see that you are not terrified. For these things must take place, but the end is not yet. For 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.” As Luke 21:11 shows, he also mentioned ‘pestilences in one place after another.’ He warned of “the increasing of lawlessness.” And because of this, he said that “the love of the greater number will cool off.” Also, significantly, he foretold: “This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come.”—Matthew 24:4-14.

¹⁵ But the question may be asked: ‘Were not some of those prophecies fulfilled before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70 C.E.?’ Yes, some were. But more was to come, as the prophecies themselves show. True, Jesus was answering a question

14. Name some of the significant events that Jesus included in “the sign.”

15, 16. (a) Were any of Jesus’ prophecies fulfilled before Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 C.E.? (b) How do we know that there must also be another fulfillment, an even more important one?

of immediate concern to his disciples. But he used the opportunity to provide long-range information about the time when “the Son of man” would come “with power and great glory” and when “the kingdom of God” would be near.—Luke 21:27, 31.

¹⁶ Of course, these things did not take place by the time of Jerusalem’s destruction in 70 C.E. The last book of the Bible, written about 96 C.E., shows that these events regarding the Kingdom were yet future. (Revelation 1:1; 11:15-18; 12:3-12) In symbolic language the Revelation shows that the wars, food shortages, and pestilences that Jesus foretold would be yet future events, and on an unusual scale. They would mark the time when Christ would begin and complete his conquest of all opposers of God’s Kingdom. (Revelation 6:1-8) The fact that some portions of Jesus’ prophecy did have a fulfillment in the first century stamped it as truthful, giving sound reason for confidence in everything else Jesus said would happen.

¹⁷ Have these prophecies seen the greater, complete fulfillment in this 20th century? Uninformed persons less than 70 years of age may feel that our times are normal because they do not remember a time when things were different. But older persons, and also those who are informed on history, know otherwise. As one history book stated concerning the events of 1914: “Only fifteen countries did not get involved in the war . . . But among them there was no great country that would have had the power to act as peace mediator.

17. Are conditions in the world today very different from what they were before 1914?

This had never occurred in world history; no war had ever had such dimensions. The prophecy of the Holy Bible: 'Nation will rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom,' was literally fulfilled."⁴⁶

¹⁸ But such things were not the only part of what Jesus stated to be "the sign." Using an illustration, he said: "Note the fig tree and all the other trees: When they are already in the bud, by observing it you know for yourselves that now the summer is near. In this way you also, when you see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I say to you, This generation will by no means pass away until all things occur." (Luke 21:29-32) If you were to see just one tree putting forth leaves out of season, you would not think that summer was at hand. But when you see *all* the trees budding at the right time, you know what it means. Likewise, Jesus foretold that his "presence" and "the conclusion of the system of things" would be marked not just by war but by a number of things all taking place in the lifetime of one generation.

¹⁹ Have those things occurred? As you examine the accompanying chart headed "What Will Be the Sign?" you may recall reading about wars of earlier centuries. But World War I stands out from all the others as distinctive, a turning point in history. You may recall, also, that food shortages, pestilences, earthquakes,

18. Why would we be wrong if we were to conclude that widespread war was all there was to "the sign"?

19. (a) As shown on the accompanying chart, how have the various features of "the sign" been fulfilled since 1914? (b) Why do earlier wars, food shortages, earthquakes, and so forth, not constitute "the sign" of which Jesus spoke?

"What Will Be the Sign?"

"Nation Will Rise Against Nation"—

"World War I ushered in the century of Total War, of—in the first full sense of the term—global war. . . . Never before 1914–1918 had a war . . . covered so large a part of the earth. . . . Never had the slaughter been so comprehensive and indiscriminate."—*World War I*, by H. Baldwin.

World War I killed 14 million combatants and civilians; World War II killed 55 million. Since World War II hundreds of coups, rebellions, and wars have taken the lives of some 35 million people.

Thus, since 1914 over 100 million lives have been lost to war!

"There Will Be Food Shortages"—

Food shortages ravaged many lands after World War I and World War II.

Now, despite years of scientific advance, almost a quarter of the world is hungry. An estimated 12 million children each year die before their first birthday due to malnutrition. Annually millions of others also die for the same reason.

"Pestilences"—

No recorded pestilence has ever equaled the Spanish influenza of 1918–1919. It struck at least 500 million persons; over 20 million died.

Medical research has not been able to prevent such things as heart disease from reaching epidemic proportions. Cancer is a growing scourge. The number of cases of sexually transmitted diseases has skyrocketed.

"Earthquakes" in Many Places—

Depending on the sources, estimates of casualties vary. But to give a few examples: 30,000 to 32,000 died in an earthquake in Italy in 1915; 100,000 to 200,000 in China in 1920; 95,000 to 150,000 in Japan in 1923; 25,000 to 60,000 in India in 1935;

12,000 to 20,000 in Iran in 1968; 54,000 to 70,000 in Peru in 1970; 20,000 to 23,000 in Guatemala in 1976; 100,000 to 800,000 in China in 1976. Since 1914 many thousands of others have died in hundreds of large earthquakes all over the earth.

Data from various sources shows that the average number of severe earthquakes each year since 1914 has been many times greater than the average number for the 2,000 preceding years.

"Increasing of Lawlessness"—

You know the facts. Rising crime affects every country on earth. Your own life has been affected. In your community, what has been happening in the schools? Is there illegal use of drugs in your area? What about dishonesty in business? How safe do you feel on the streets at night?

The lawlessness is not only as regards human law, but is even more so as regards the law of God. (See 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13.)

God's Kingdom Preached Worldwide—

This work is regularly being done by millions of Jehovah's Witnesses in over 200 lands.

During just the past ten years, about four billion (thousand million) hours have been devoted by Jehovah's Witnesses to public preaching of this message. In that same period they published, in some 190 languages, more than 5 billion pieces of literature pointing to God's Kingdom as man's only hope.

The Proclaiming of "Peace and Security"—

Leaders recognize the need for peace to avoid nuclear catastrophe and to address other growing problems. A step in this direction is the proclamation by the United Nations of 1986 as the year of "peace, international security and cooperation." —General Assembly, Agenda item 32, 39th session.

Of what are all these things "the sign"? That we are living now in "the conclusion of the system of things." That Christ has taken his heavenly throne and is separating out from people of all nations those who truly want to do the will of God. That the "great tribulation" is very near. For further details, read Matthew chapters 24 and 25, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

times of lawlessness, and unusual efforts to promote peace and security have taken place before 1914. Yet, no other time in history has seen all these things come on one generation in such overwhelming measure. In all honesty, if the events since 1914 do not fulfill the sign, what more is required? Without a doubt, we live at the time of Jesus' "presence" in Kingdom power.

²⁰ The appearance of features of "the sign" did not mean that God's Kingdom would immediately sweep wickedness from the earth. As Jesus foretold, "all these things are a *beginning* of pangs of distress." (Matthew 24:8) Others were to follow. *The World Book Encyclopedia* states: "World War I and its aftermath led to the greatest economic depression in history during the early 1930's. The consequences of the war and the problems of adjustment to peace led to unrest in almost every nation."⁴⁷ A few years later World War II erupted. It was many times more horrible than the first. Since then, disregard for life and property has grown, and fear of crime has become part of everyday life. Morals have been shoved aside. The population explosion poses problems that are not being solved. Pollution is spoiling the quality of life and even endangering it. And there is also the threat of a nuclear holocaust.

²¹ When did these "pangs of distress" begin? The *London Star* observed: "Some historian in the next century may well conclude that the day the world went mad was . . . [in] 1914."⁴⁸ That year, 1914, had long in advance been marked by Bible prophecy.

20, 21. How did the events associated with World War I prove to be only "a beginning of pangs of distress," as Jesus foretold?

(3) Noteworthy Religious Developments

²² Also among the significant events that Jesus said would mark “the conclusion of the system of things” are the following: “Many false prophets will arise and mislead many; and because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off.” (Matthew 24:11, 12) Jesus associated the increased lawlessness and the cooling off of love with the influence of false prophets—religious teachers who falsely claim to speak for God. Earlier, this book presented evidence that the clergy have backed the wars of the nations, belittled Bible standards of morality as being out of date, and labeled portions of the Bible as untrue. With what result? A ‘cooling off’ in love for God and his laws. This has been a major factor in the breakdown of morality, along with disregard for authority and lack of concern for one’s fellowman.—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

²³ Because of such conditions, millions have left religious organizations. Some turn to the Bible and conform to its ways. Others withdraw in disappointment and disgust. Many are becoming enemies of religion. One columnist said: “One cannot but be struck by how much of the world’s trouble is rooted in religion. And few secular political rivalries ever generate the bloodthirsty fervor of religious war.” In view of this, he asked: “Why not abolish religion?”⁴⁹

²⁴ The decline of the major religions is well documented. For example, a report about Italy shows that

22. (a) With what did Jesus associate his forecast of increased lawlessness and the cooling off of love? (b) How have the teachings of the clergy contributed to this situation?

23, 24. What has been happening to religion in recent years?

while 95 percent of the people identify themselves as Catholics, “Sunday church attendance is estimated at less than 20 percent.”⁵⁰ Another report reveals that the number of priests throughout the world declined by 25,000 in ten years.⁵¹ In the United States a church study predicted a further “shrinkage of up to 50 percent in the American Catholic priesthood by the year 2000.”⁵² *U.S. News & World Report* noted “a huge drop in the number of men entering Catholic seminaries” in the United States, from a peak of 48,992 to 11,262 in less than 20 years.⁵³ *The New York Times* reported that worldwide “the number of nuns has fallen from 181,421 to 121,370” in 15 years.⁵⁴ The situation is similar in most religions.

²⁵ In contrast, the Bible indicates that “a great crowd” out of all nations would be drawn to the worship of Jehovah in this time of the end. Jesus foretold this gathering, saying that he would separate people one from another, either for preservation through “the great tribulation,” or “everlasting cutting-off.” (Revelation 7:9, 10, 14; Isaiah 2:2-4; Matthew 25:31-33, 46) What is it that separates people for survival? The Bible answers: “The world is passing away and so is its desire, *but he that does the will of God remains forever.*” (1 John 2:17) And how would people know what God’s will is? By responding to the worldwide educational work Jesus foretold when he said: “This good news of the kingdom

25. (a) In contrast, what does the Bible indicate would be taking place regarding true worship at this time? (b) Under whose direction is this gathering of worshipers of the true God done, and on what basis? (c) With what issue are people of all nations being confronted?

will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14) This preaching confronts people of all nations with the issue: Are they for rulership by God? Or, in line with Satan’s urging in Eden, do they want independent rulership by men? Jehovah gives people the opportunity to choose.

²⁶ A worldwide witness to the Kingdom is being given with increasing force. In over 200 lands, millions of Jehovah’s Witnesses visit people in their homes and offer to study the Bible with them, free of charge. The publications they use are by far the most widely circulated Bible publications on earth. In fact, they are among the most widely circulated publications of any type. And these are available in some 190 languages.

²⁷ This separating work has been proceeding for many years. It is now near its conclusion. According to God’s Word, those who have rejected his Kingdom rule, as well as those who indifferently pass up the opportunity to learn of him, will be cut off. (Matthew 25:34, 41, 46; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9) For others who identify themselves as supporters of God’s Kingdom, this will mark a time of grand relief. But when will this judgment come?

(4) ‘This Generation Will Not Pass Away’

²⁸ As to “that day and hour,” Jesus said, “nobody

26, 27. (a) To what extent has this witness work already been done? (b) Why is one’s response to the Kingdom message a serious matter?

28. Within what time limit did Jesus say the foretold world destruction would come?

knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.” But Jesus did give a helpful time indicator when he said: “This generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur.” (Matthew 24:34, 36) Thus all the various features of “the sign,” as well as the “great tribulation,” must take place within the lifetime of one generation—the generation of 1914. This means that some persons who observed the events of 1914, when “the conclusion of the system of things” began, would still be alive to see its end when the “great tribulation” strikes. Those who remember the events of 1914 are getting up in years now. Most of their number have already died. But Jesus assured us that “this generation will by no means pass away” before destruction of this wicked system of things comes.—Matthew 24:21.

²⁹ How patient God has been in providing this extended opportunity for repentance! (2 Peter 3:9) For the first time in history, one problem after another has reached gigantic proportions—war, pollution, overpopulation, and more. Any of them could bring complete ruin. By letting such evidence pile up, God has made it easier for people to see that man does not have the answers. At the same time, the preaching of the “good news of the kingdom” has helped honesthearted ones recognize that the Kingdom of God is the only hope for true peace and security. Thus God gives them time to identify themselves on his side of the great issue.

29. By allowing events since 1914 to develop to the point that they have, how has God made it easier for humans to make the right decision?

(5) A Final Signal

³⁰ Yet one more event will come as an *unmistakable signal* that world destruction is imminent. Of this the apostle Paul wrote: "Jehovah's day is coming exactly as a thief in the night. Whenever it is that they are saying: 'Peace and security!' then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them . . . and they will by no means escape."—1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3; Luke 21:34, 35.

³¹ The world's leaders know that a nuclear war means virtual extinction. Also, critical problems such as pollution, the population explosion, and domestic problems demand attention and money. So they want to relax the strained international relations. An evidence of this is the proclamation by the United Nations of 1986 as the 'international year of peace and security.' This, no doubt, is a step toward the fulfillment of Paul's above-quoted words. Of course, political negotiations and treaties are not making any real changes in people to cause them to love one another. They are not putting a stop to crime, nor are they eliminating disease and death. Yet the prophecy shows that the time will come when the nations will declare that they have achieved a measure of "peace and security." When that happens, then "sudden destruction" will come "instantly" upon those misleaders of mankind, along with all who put their trust in them.

³² But there will be survivors. Will you be one?

30. What final signal of the closeness of world destruction does the Bible specify?

31, 32. (a) Will the "peace and security" that political rulers proclaim be genuine? (b) Why would it be dangerous to be misled by it?

Chapter 8

Who Will the Survivors Be?

SURVIVAL of the coming world destruction will not be a matter of chance, as is so often the case in human wars. It will not be determined by where a person lives, nor by his hurrying to some bomb shelter or other refuge at the sound of a warning siren. Survival will depend on God's mercy along with the choice each one makes before "the great tribulation" begins. How can you make the choice that will put you among those surviving to live on earth in God's peaceful, paradisaic New Order?—Revelation 7:9, 10, 14, 15.

² The Bible not only foretells that there will be survivors of the coming world destruction. It also provides a pattern to help us know what kind of persons they will be. Since God makes possible the survival, rightly it is he who sets the terms.

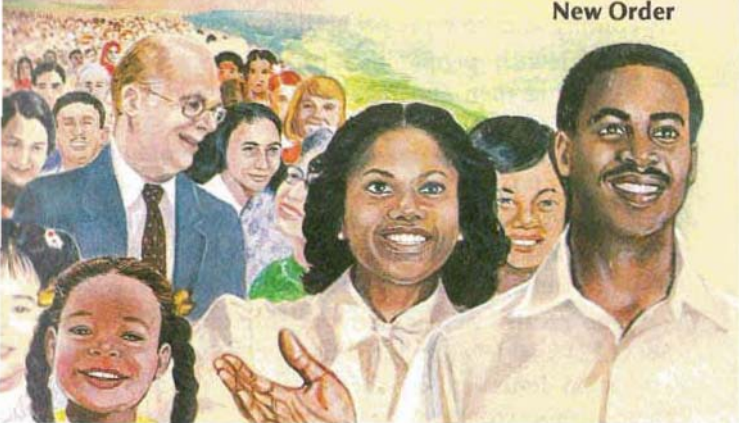
³ God will wisely and justly see to it that the survivors are persons who will be an asset in his New Order, not those who would work to its harm. If he let unrighteous persons survive, there would be no peace and security for the righteous. Their homes and personal safety would still be endangered. But the Bible promises: "Evildoers themselves will be cut off, but those hoping

1. (a) Upon what will one's survival into God's peaceful New Order depend? (b) How does Revelation chapter 7 describe those who will survive to live on earth in Paradise?

2. Who sets the terms for survival, and where are these found?

3. For there to be peace and security, why is it necessary for evildoers to be cut off?

**"A great crowd" will survive
world destruction to live
on earth in God's
New Order**



in Jehovah are the ones that will possess the earth." Only by God's applying that standard, as set forth at Psalm 37:9-11, will survivors be able to "find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." How God will do this is seen in past occasions when men's wickedness obliged God to bring destruction.

Past Examples of Survival

⁴ In the city of Rome today there still stands a memorial arch from the first century of the Common Era, the Arch of Titus. On it are depicted items being carried away from the temple in Jerusalem after the

4-6. (a) What testifies that the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. is a historical fact? (b) Why did the destruction come? (c) What made it possible for the disciples of Jesus to escape?

destruction of 70 C.E. Hence that destruction is a historical fact. Equally historical is the fact that decades before that destruction Jesus Christ had foretold both its coming and how people could survive.

⁵ The Jewish people had turned away from God to following men and man-made religious traditions. (Matthew 15:3-9) They put their confidence in human political rulers rather than in God's promised Kingdom. (John 19:15) They went so far as to reject and fight against the truth proclaimed by God's Son and his apostles. Jesus warned of the consequences that such a course would bring.—Matthew 23:37, 38; 24:1, 2.

⁶ The results were exactly as foretold. In the year 66 C.E., the Jews revolted against Rome. An initial attack on Jerusalem by the Romans was followed by their unexpected retreat. This was the signal and opportunity for those who believed Jesus to do what he had said: Flee—get out of the doomed city and out of the whole province of Judea, no matter what must be left behind. Genuine disciples of Jesus did just that. Then, in the year 70 C.E., the Romans returned and, after a siege, destroyed Jerusalem and those who failed to listen. An eyewitness, Jewish historian Josephus, says that 1,100,000 persons in Jerusalem died by famine, disease, civil strife, or the Roman sword. Yet the Christians who took positive action escaped.—Luke 19:28, 41-44; 21:20-24; Matthew 24:15-18.

⁷ A similar situation had prevailed nearly seven centuries earlier when God allowed Babylonian forces

7. What did persons need to do to survive when Babylon wrecked the Israelite nation?

under King Nebuchadnezzar (II) to wreck the Israelite nation. That destruction, too, is documented history. For years before, God through his prophets had warned the apostate people that their course was leading to disaster. "Turn back, turn back from your bad ways, for why is it that you should die?" was God's call to them. (Ezekiel 33:11) The majority put no faith in the warning, and even when Babylon's forces besieged Jerusalem, those Israelites still kept hoping that no destruction would come. But it did take place just as foretold. Yet God saw to it that those who demonstrated their faith by obedience were preserved.—Jeremiah 39:15-18; Zephaniah 2:2, 3.

⁸ Further back in human history we find the earliest expression of the divine pattern for survival. It involved not merely national but world destruction. And that too is a historical fact, involving the global Flood during the years 2370/2369 B.C.E., in the days of Noah. Of the conditions prevailing before that world destruction, the Bible says: "Consequently Jehovah saw that the badness of man was abundant in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time. And the earth came to be ruined in the sight of the true God and the earth became filled with violence."—Genesis 6:5, 11.

⁹ The wickedness and violence obliged God to act. Only Noah and his family showed faith and obedience. Out of mercy to them, and to preserve justice and righteousness on earth, Jehovah God "did not hold

8-10. (a) Why did Jehovah bring a world destruction in the days of Noah? (b) Why were Noah and his family spared?

back from punishing an ancient world . . . of ungodly people.” The result was that “the world of that time suffered destruction when it was deluged with water.” —2 Peter 2:5; 3:5-7.

¹⁰ Yet Noah and his family survived. Why? First, they did not go along with that “world of ungodly people” in their unrighteousness. They did not become so engrossed with the ordinary things of life, eating, drinking, and marrying, that they became insensitive to God’s will or deaf to his warning. Noah ‘walked with God’ in righteousness. This did not mean that he and his family merely refrained from doing harm. Rather, they took positive action to do right. They really believed what God said, and they showed it by building a huge three-story ark that was over 400 feet long. Noah also acted positively in being “a preacher of righteousness,” telling others about God’s purposes, advocating the way of righteousness.—Genesis 6:9, 13-16; Matthew 24:37-39; Hebrews 11:7.

¹¹ These eight persons survived because of their faith and their works stemming from faith. Jesus and his apostles referred to that world destruction as prophetic of what faces people in this “time of the end.” So it is clear that we too must disassociate ourselves from a world headed for destruction, just as Noah and his family did. We too must live in harmony with God’s will. We cannot simply be guided by our own standards and expect to survive. God’s Word says: “There exists a way that is upright before a man, but the ways of

11. As indicated by these warning examples, what must we do if we are to survive the coming world destruction?

death are the end of it afterward.” (Proverbs 16:25) Nor will any superficial appearance of righteousness bring survival. For Jehovah God sees what is in the heart.—Proverbs 24:12; Luke 16:15.

What Jehovah Looks For in Human Hearts

¹² Many are unhappy with present conditions, and they show it by complaints, demonstrations, and in some lands by violent revolt. Many resent high taxation and the soaring cost of living. They bemoan the danger of crime. Fear makes them want a change. But, is this enough to assure their survival into God’s New Order? No, it is not. Why not?

¹³ Because one could be unhappy over these conditions and still be selfish. He might even approve of certain forms of dishonesty and immorality—as long as he himself does not suffer. However, righthearthed persons view things differently. When they study the Bible they see that bad conditions are but outward evidences of the world’s real sickness. They discern that behind these symptoms is a lack of concern for knowing and doing Jehovah’s will and for living by his righteous standards. Hence, they are not primarily grieved by social injustices, crime, pollution, or the threat of war. Rather, such righthearthed persons are *especially* grieved at seeing God’s name defamed by mankind’s corrupt course. And they grieve that *others*, not just they themselves, suffer so much as a result.

12, 13. (a) What conditions cause many people to want a change? (b) Why is this not enough to assure their survival into God’s New Order? (c) To be among the survivors, what must motivate our grief over present bad conditions?

¹⁴ To survive the coming world destruction, we must be like those who were spared when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E., persons described as “sighing and groaning over all the detestable things” being done in that city. (Ezekiel 9:4) Conditions were “detestable” in various ways. For example, the poor were being oppressed, some even being held in slavery illegally by their countrymen. (Jeremiah 34:13-16) The moral state of the kingdom of Judah had become even worse than that of the northern kingdom of Israel, which was earlier described by the prophet Hosea: “There are the pronouncing of curses and practicing of deception and murdering and stealing . . . and acts of bloodshed have touched other acts of bloodshed.” (Hosea 4:2; Ezekiel 16:2, 51) Only those grieved at heart by such unrighteousness and the disrespect it showed for God were ‘marked’ for survival.—Ezekiel 9:3-6.

¹⁵ Though many today would like to enjoy life on earth forever in peace, prosperity, and comfort, they do not want to make the changes in their way of life that learning and following the Bible’s pattern for right living would bring. Deep down, they really do not have a love of righteousness or a sincere concern for their fellowmen. Since God’s New Order will produce a new society in which “righteousness is to dwell,” the good news about it appeals only to those who love righteousness. Others feel condemned by it.—2 Peter 3:13; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17.

14. Who were the ones ‘marked’ for survival at the time of Jerusalem’s destruction by Babylon?

15. What holds some persons back from making the changes needed to survive the coming world destruction?

What You Can Do Now

¹⁶ Jehovah will preserve only those who sincerely want to live under his righteous rule. He will not force any to live then under circumstances they themselves do not want. Therefore, those preserved will have to prove their genuine acceptance of his divine rulership now. They become ‘marked’ for survival by putting on a Christian “new personality,” conforming their lives to God’s ways and giving evidence that they are disciples of God’s Son. Thereby they “choose life” and blessings, not death. (Colossians 3:5-10; Deuteronomy 30:15, 16, 19) What will you choose?

¹⁷ Your choice involves submission to God in worship. Jesus said: “The hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshipers will worship the Father with spirit and truth, for, indeed, the Father is looking for suchlike ones to worship him.” (John 4:23) Surviving the coming world destruction therefore requires that one abandon all false worship and participate in true worship. Too, survivors will not be found among those who put their trust in the United Nations or in other political institutions, since these are part of the world that will be destroyed.—Revelation 17:11; 18:17-21.

¹⁸ Unending blessings await those who take the course that leads to survival. Consider now some of the grand things that God promises to those who put faith in his Word and prove that faith by positive action.

16-18. (a) How does a person become ‘marked’ for survival? (b) What action must he take, as to false worship, and then as to true worship? (c) How must he view political institutions such as the UN?

Chapter 9

Peace and Security Earth Wide—A Reliable Hope

THIS earth could be a most pleasant and interesting place in which to live if truly peaceful, secure conditions prevailed everywhere. Though it is far from that now, the Bible foretells that the earth will yet become a splendid home where the human family will enjoy life to the full.

² Just what does the Bible promise? How can we be sure that it will be fulfilled?

Solid Basis for Confidence

³ Certain basic laws control the universe. Many of them we take for granted. Sunrise, sunset, moon phases, and seasons come and go in a manner that contributes to the stability of human living. Men draw up calendars and plan activities years ahead. They know that the movements of the sun, moon, and planets are reliable. What can we learn from this?

⁴ The Maker of those laws is completely reliable. We can depend on what he says and does. It is in his name, as Creator of heaven and earth, that the Bible promises

1, 2. What conditions, foretold in the Bible, would make this earth a most pleasant place to live?

3, 4. (a) What do we learn from the reliability of the basic laws that control the universe? (b) Who is the Maker of those laws, and so in what else do we have good reason to put our trust?

a righteous new order. (Isaiah 45:18, 19) In our daily routine of life, we normally rely in some measure on other people—those who bring food to the market, those who deliver the mail, and close friends. Is it not reasonable, then, to place far, far more confidence in God and in the certain fulfillment of his promises?—Isaiah 55:10, 11.

⁵ Though the promises of men are often unreliable, God's promises are completely reliable and are for our advantage, not his own. Though God does not need anything from us, he does find delight in those who put faith in him because they love him and his righteous ways.—Psalm 50:10-12, 14.

⁶ Then, too, the Bible appeals to our powers of reason. It does not demand blind faith or credulity. In fact, it defines true faith as “the *assured expectation* of things hoped for, the *evident demonstration of realities* though not beheld.” (Hebrews 11:1) In the Bible, God gives us a sound basis for faith. The soundness of that basis becomes more and more evident as we grow in knowledge of God's Word and see its truth at work in our own lives and in the fulfillment of its prophecies.—Psalm 34:8-10.

⁷ The Bible's promises of future blessings go far beyond what men dare to offer. Yet those promises do not require us to believe things that go against all human experience. Nor are they contrary to normal

5. How does the lack of any selfish motive in what God has promised give us faith?

6. What kind of faith does the Bible help us to acquire?

7. As we examine the Bible's promises of future blessings what should we not expect belief in them to require of us?

human desires. Consider some of these grand blessings and see how this is true.

Earth to Become a Garden Home

⁸ The word “paradise” comes from similar words used in ancient times (Hebrew, *par-des'*; Persian, *pai-ri-dae'za*; Greek, *pa-ra'dei-sos*), words that were used to describe things then actually existing on earth. These words all have the basic idea of a beautiful park or parklike garden. As in ancient times, so today there are many such places, some of them parks of great size. And man has a natural yearning for their beauty. The Bible promises that the day will come when this whole planet will be such a parklike garden or paradise!

⁹ When God created the first human pair he gave them as a home the garden of Eden, a name meaning “Paradise of Pleasure.” But Paradise was not to be limited to that one location. God said to them: “Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it.” (Genesis 1:28; 2:8, 9) This would involve spreading the boundaries of Paradise to the ends of the earth, a divinely stated purpose not ended by the disobedient course of Adam and Eve. Jesus Christ himself showed confidence in this purpose when he promised a man who died alongside him that he would have an opportunity to live in such an earthly Paradise. (Luke 23: 39-43) How will this come about?

8, 9. (a) What idea should be conveyed to our minds by the term “paradise”? (b) Has such a thing ever existed on earth? (c) What shows that it is God’s purpose for Paradise to prevail earth wide?

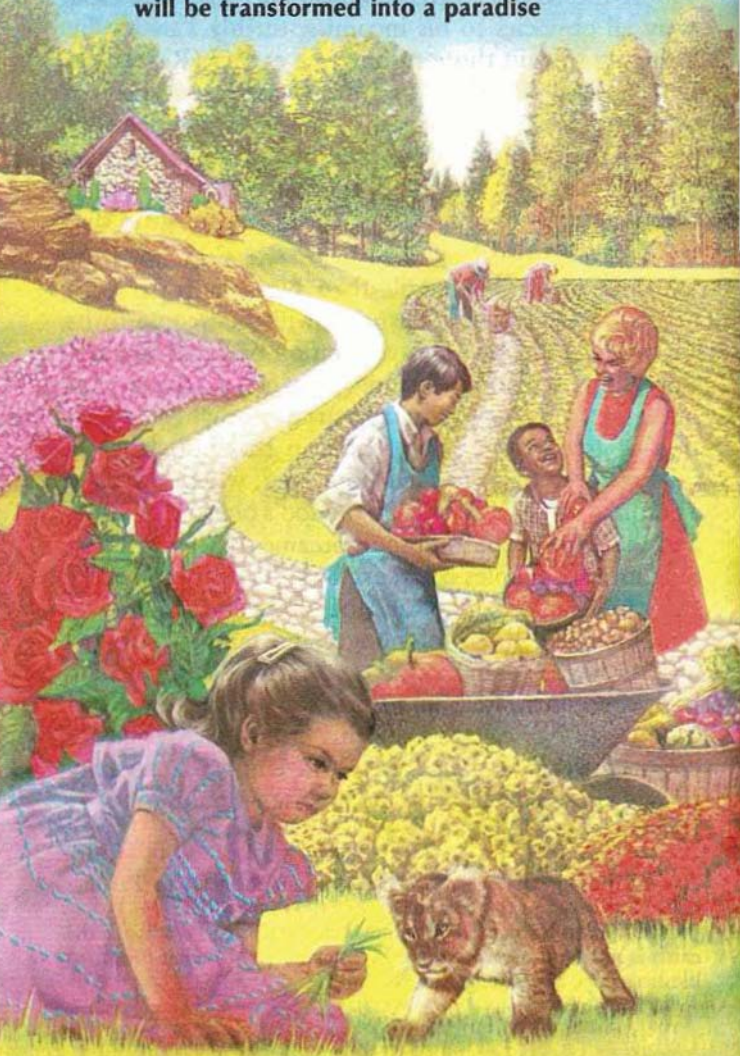
¹⁰ In the coming “great tribulation” God will clear away all obstacles to his incoming earthly Paradise by ‘bringing to ruin those ruining the earth.’ (Revelation 11:18) God will thus do what human governments could never do. He will clear out all those who selfishly pollute the earth to satisfy commercial greed, all who wage devastating wars, and all who misuse the earth because they lack respect for the bountiful gifts that God has provided.

¹¹ The whole earth will then blossom forth with beauty. Freshness and cleanness will then come to its air, water, and land. This restoration of Paradise is not something beyond believing, nor is it contrary to human experience. Many centuries ago, when the nation of Israel came out of exile in Babylon, Jehovah God restored them to their homeland, which was then a desolate waste. Yet, because of God’s blessing on them and their work, the land soon became so beautiful that neighboring peoples could exclaim: ‘It has become like the garden of Eden!’ It also became very productive, removing any threat of hunger and famine. (Ezekiel 36:29, 30, 35; Isaiah 35:1, 2; 55:13) What God did back then illustrated on a small scale what he will yet do on a global scale to fulfill his promises. All persons counted worthy to live then will enjoy the divinely provided pleasures of life in Paradise.—Psalm 67:6, 7; Isaiah 25:6.

10. According to Revelation 11:18, what obstacles to Paradise does God promise to remove?

11. (a) What historical event shows that restoring Paradise to the earth is not contrary to human experience? (b) In what promised blessing does this strengthen our faith?

**The day will soon come when the entire earth
will be transformed into a paradise**



End of Poverty and Economic Slavery

¹² Poverty and bondage to national economic systems are common earth wide. There could be no real enjoyment of Paradise if millions went on laboring for just bare subsistence or doing monotonous work that makes a person an impersonal cog in a huge machine.

¹³ God's will for man in this regard is seen in the way he directed such matters with ancient Israel. There, each family received a hereditary possession of land. (Judges 2:6) Although this could be sold, and individuals could even sell themselves into servitude if they fell into debt, Jehovah still made provisions to guard against the building up of huge landholdings or any long-term enslavement of people. How?

¹⁴ By means of economic provisions in the Law he gave his people. The seventh year of servitude was a 'year of release' when any Israelite in bondage must be set free. Also, every 50th year was "a Jubilee" year for the whole nation, a year to "proclaim liberty" to all its inhabitants. (Deuteronomy 15:1-9; Leviticus 25:10) Then any hereditary possession that had been sold was returned to its original owner. All in servitude were released, even though seven years might not have elapsed. It was a joyful time of happy family reunion and a new start in life economically. Thus, no land could be sold for all time. Its sale was, in effect, just a

12. What economic and working conditions must be remedied if we are to have real enjoyment in life?

13-15. (a) Where do we find a historical example that shows us what God's will for man is in this regard? (b) How did that arrangement contribute to the security and enjoyment of life of each individual and family?

lease that would end, at the latest, in the Jubilee year.
—Leviticus 25:8-24.

¹⁵ All of this contributed to the economic stability of the nation and to the security and peace of each family. When these laws were observed, the nation was kept from falling into the sad picture we see today in so many lands where extremes of wealth and poverty exist side by side. The benefits to the individual strengthened the nation, for none needed to be underprivileged and crushed by bad economic conditions. As reported during the reign of King Solomon, “Judah and Israel continued to dwell in security, everyone under his own vine and under his own fig tree.” (1 Kings 4:25) Today many cannot employ all their talents and initiative because they are trapped in economic systems that force them to serve the desires of a few or of even just one. Under God’s laws the industrious person was helped to contribute his abilities to the welfare and enjoyment of all. This gives us an indication of the sense of personal worth and dignity that those gaining life in God’s New Order will enjoy.

¹⁶ Earth wide the prophecy of Micah 4:3, 4 will have a wonderful fulfillment. Peace-loving persons living under God’s righteous rule will “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.” None of the subjects of God’s Kingdom will live in squalid slums or crowded tenements. They will have land and homes that are their

16. As to living conditions and one’s economic situation, what will God’s Kingdom provide for all of its subjects?

own. (Isaiah 65:21, 22) The King, Christ Jesus, long ago promised that ‘the mild-tempered ones will inherit the earth,’ and he has ‘all authority in heaven and on earth’ to see that this happens.—Matthew 5:5; 28:18.

Enduring Health and Life

¹⁷ None of these very fine conditions, however, could make life genuinely peaceful and secure as long as sickness, old age, and death cloud the future. Is it irrational or contrary to human experience to hope for relief from these distressing things? It certainly is not contrary to man’s nature to *want* this, for men have spent lifetimes and untold sums of money trying to accomplish it.

¹⁸ So the hope of lasting health and life is not at all unreasonable. Indeed, what really is unreasonable is this: Just when humans reach an age where they begin to have the knowledge, experience, and ability to do worthwhile things, they begin to grow old and then eventually die. Yet, there are trees that live for thousands of years! Why should man, who was made in God’s likeness, live for only a fraction of the time that some unintelligent vegetation does? Reasonably, should he not live far, far longer?

¹⁹ For specialists who study aging, the process is still largely a mystery. Mystifying, too, is the fact that the human brain is designed to take in virtually unlimited

17-19. (a) What shows that good health and long life are natural desires of mankind? (b) What facts about human life and about vegetation make man’s short life span seem strange? (c) What is there about the human brain that shows it is reasonable to believe that man was designed to live forever?

amounts of information. As a science writer said, the brain is “perfectly capable of handling any load of learning and memory which the human being is likely to put upon it—and a billion times more than that quantity, too.”⁵⁵ That means that your brain is capable of handling not only any load you might put on it in a lifetime of 70 or 80 years but also *a thousand million times more!* No wonder man has such a thirst for knowledge, such a desire to learn to do and accomplish things. Yet he is blocked by the shortness of his life. Does it make sense that the prodigious capacity of the human brain should be there and yet no more than a tiny fraction of its potential be used? Is it not far more reasonable to conclude, as the Bible does, that Jehovah designed man to live forever on earth and gave him a brain admirably suited to that purpose?

²⁰ The Bible shows that originally man had the opportunity to live forever but lost it through rebellion: “Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned.” (Romans 5:12) But the Bible also contains God’s promise that in the restored Paradise, “death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.” (Revelation 21:3, 4; compare 7:16, 17.) It states that everlasting life, free from the effects of sin, is God’s purpose for mankind. (Romans 5:21; 6:23) More than this, it promises that the blessings of God’s New Order will be opened to the billions who have died in the past. How? By a resurrec-

20. What does the Bible say that God has promised to do for mankind in regard to the effects of sin, including death itself?

tion that empties mankind's common grave. Jesus confidently foretold: "The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out."—John 5:28, 29.

²¹ Medical science today is able to produce "miracle drugs" and perform surgical feats that would have seemed incredible even a few decades ago. Should we doubt that the One who created humans can do far more astounding feats of healing? Surely the Creator has the ability to restore righteoushearted persons to vibrant health, even reversing the aging process. And he can do this without resorting to drugs, surgery, or artificial organs. Considerately, God has provided evidence that such blessings are not too much to hope for.

²² God empowered his Son while on earth to perform powerful works of healing. These works assure us that no weakness, defect, or disease is beyond God's power to heal. When a man whose flesh was filled with leprosy implored Jesus to heal him, Jesus compassionately touched the man and said: "Be made clean." And, as the historical record says, "Immediately his leprosy was cleansed away." (Matthew 8:2, 3) Jesus did things like this in full view of many witnesses, as the historian Matthew reports: "Great crowds approached him, having along with them people that were lame, maimed, blind, dumb, and many otherwise, and they fairly threw them at his feet, and he cured them; so that the crowd felt amazement . . . and they glorified the God of Israel." (Matthew 15:30, 31) Read for yourself the

21, 22. Why is the prospect of restoration to full health not something that is too much to hope for?

account at John 9:1-21 to see how factual and true to life the historical report of such cures is. The truthfulness of these events is testified to by many witnesses, including a doctor, the physician Luke.—Mark 7:32-37; Luke 5:12-14, 17-25; 6:6-11; Colossians 4:14.

²³ For similar reasons we need not view as beyond belief the Bible promise that “there is going to be a resurrection” of the dead. (Acts 24:15) Even years after death, a person’s voice, appearance, and actions can be restored from film or videotape. Should not the One who created man, who knows the precise atomic and molecular structure of man, be able to do far more than that? Man-made computers can store and coordinate literally billions of pieces of data. But God created the awesome universe with its billions (thousands of millions) of galaxies, each galaxy containing billions of stars. That totals trillions, quadrillions, and even more! Yet, Psalm 147:4 says: “He is counting the number of the stars; all of them he calls by their names”! Surely it would be simple for God, who has such enormous memory capacity, to remember the personalities of individuals in order to restore them to life.—Job 14:13.

²⁴ Again, Jehovah provided historical examples to strengthen our faith in such a marvelous hope. He granted his Son power to demonstrate on a small scale what he will do on a large scale during his righteous rule over earth. Jesus resurrected a number of dead persons, often in full view of onlookers. Lazarus, whom he resurrected near Jerusalem, had even been dead long

23, 24. Why is it not unreasonable to believe that the dead will be restored to life under God’s Kingdom?

enough for his body to begin to decompose. Certainly the resurrection hope has a sound basis.—Luke 7: 11-17; 8:40-42, 49-56; John 11:38-44.

The Earth's Ability to Contain Such Population

²⁵ Can this planet provide comfortable living space for such a population as would result from the resurrection of the dead? It took over 5,000 years for the earth's population to reach one billion in the early 1800's. Today, it is about five billion.

²⁶ Therefore, those alive today represent a sizable portion of the total number of people who have ever lived. Some have estimated the total population throughout all human history at about 15,000,000,000 persons. The earth's land area is more than 36,000,000,000 acres (15,000,000,000 ha). That would allow more than two acres (1 ha) per person. Not only would this provide space for food production but it would also allow for forests, mountains, and other scenic areas—with no undue crowding in Paradise. Then, too, the Bible shows that not all those now living will survive and live in that New Order. Indeed, Jesus said, "Broad and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are the ones going in through it." He also noted that when world destruction comes, those not doing Jehovah's will are to "depart into everlasting cutting-off."—Matthew 7:13; 25:46.

²⁷ But could the earth produce enough food for so

25, 26. When the dead are resurrected, where will there be room for everyone to live?

27. Could the earth produce enough food for all those people?

many people? Scientists claim that it could, even under present conditions. A *Toronto Star* report noted: "According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) there is already enough grain grown globally to feed everyone on earth with 3,000 calories per day, which is . . . about 50 per cent above the minimum acceptable level."⁵⁶ As for the future, it explained that even under today's conditions, there could be enough food to satisfy the needs of double the present world population. Also, we must remember that Jehovah will direct his people to utilize the earth's agricultural potential properly, for Psalm 72:16 assures us: "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow."

²⁸ We should note what God's purpose is, as originally stated to the first human pair. They were told to "fill the earth and subdue it," extending Eden's limits to the farthest reaches of earth. (Genesis 1:28) Clearly, this means filling the earth to a comfortable extent, not overfilling it with people. That would still allow for the 'subdued' earth to be a global park in the pattern of man's original parklike home. So, this divine command indicates that in God's due time and way, population growth would be controlled.

A Sure Foundation for Enduring Happiness

²⁹ However, even beautiful surroundings, material

28. Why is there no danger that with people living forever, the earth would in time become overcrowded?

29. What effect do relationships with other people have on a person's happiness?

prosperity, interesting work, and good health would not guarantee your lasting happiness. Many today have these things and yet are unhappy. Why? Because of people around them who may be selfish, quarrelsome, hypocritical, or hateful. Enduring happiness in God's New Order will come in large measure from an earth-wide change in the attitude of people. Their love and respect for God and their desire to carry out his purposes will bring *spiritual* prosperity. Without that, material prosperity becomes unsatisfying and empty.

³⁰ Yes, it is a real pleasure to be around people who are kind, humble, friendly—people you can really love and trust, who feel the same way about you. (Psalm 133:1; Proverbs 15:17) Love of God is what ensures true love of neighbor, which will make life so pleasant in His righteous New Order. All those whom God will favor with eternal life will have proved their love for him and for their fellowman. With such neighbors, friends, and work companions, you will be able to enjoy real peace and security and enduring happiness.—1 John 4:7, 8, 20, 21.

³¹ Truly, such a grand prospect is open to you! So the course of practical wisdom is to find out what is required to receive it. Now is the time to bring your life into harmony with God's requirements for those who will be spared through the coming "great tribulation."—2 Peter 3:11-13.

30. How do we know that those who live in God's New Order will be only persons who contribute to the peace and security of others?

31. If we really want life in God's New Order, what should we do now?

Chapter 10

Are You Willing to Face the Truth in Your Life?

KNOWING the truth can be invaluable. Used wisely, it can protect you from harm or loss and contribute to your happiness and security. This is especially so regarding the truth about what is ahead for this generation.

² In light of what is presented in this book, you may agree that man cannot bring true peace and security. You may realize that what the Bible says is the truth—that only God, by means of his Kingdom, can solve the problems facing mankind. Then would it not be wise to shape your course of life in harmony with what you now know to be the truth? (James 1:22) What does this involve?

³ The Bible sets out certain standards that must be met by those whom God will accept as part of his righteous New Order. These standards require changes *now* in the life of everyone who wants to live *then*. True, from a human standpoint, not everyone's present way of life is considered to be bad. Nevertheless, the change to Bible standards involves a completely new

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- 1, 2. (a) How can truth benefit us? (b) What do you believe is the real source from which true peace and security will come?
3. How important are the changes that a person must make in his life if he wants to live in God's New Order?

outlook on life. That is why Romans 12:2 says: "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."

⁴ Such a transformation will affect how we determine right and wrong. In the past we may have relied on the opinions of others or set our own standards. But now we realize that it was this very outlook that caused Adam and Eve to reject God as their Ruler, with disastrous consequences. If we want God's approval, we must look to him for true standards of what is right and what is wrong. Those standards are readily available in God's Word, the Bible. As Psalm 119:151 says: 'All his commandments are truth.' Therefore, conforming to them means 'walking in the way of the truth.' (Psalm 86:11) Is that not what you want to do?

The Need for Counsel and Discipline

⁵ If a person is going to make changes in his life, he must see that there is a need for this. "There is no man that does not sin," says the Bible. (1 Kings 8:46) Yet many people are unwilling to admit mistakes. Why? Pride stands in their way. Instead of humbly acknowledging their wrong, they often blame others. This only worsens the problem.

4. If we are really going to 'walk in the way of the truth,' on what basis must we determine what is right and what is wrong?

5. (a) If we are going to make changes in our lives, what truth about ourselves must we be willing to face? (b) What often prevents a person from admitting a mistake, and with what result?

⁶ An equally great problem is that we are imperfect and we do not always discern the proper course to take. We can even be deceived into thinking that a harmful course is quite all right. (Proverbs 16:25) So we need discipline from a source higher than man if we are consistently to act in our own best interests as well as those of our fellow humans. Proverbs 3:11 identifies that Source: “The discipline of Jehovah, O my son, do not reject.”

⁷ How does Jehovah provide discipline? By means of his Word, the Holy Bible. So when we read the Bible, or have its counsel drawn to our attention by a fellow believer, and learn that in some way we are not measuring up, we are receiving God’s discipline. By accepting that discipline as right and doing something about it, we prove that we are facing up to the truth. We are acknowledging God’s right to give us direction and are showing that we are the kind of people he wants in his New Order. Yes, our life depends upon heeding divine discipline!—Proverbs 4:13.

⁸ Surely if we are going to benefit from God’s discipline, we must be honest with ourselves. It would do us little good to put on a pretense when observed by others, only to go back to our former ways when out of their view. For us to play the role of hypocrites

6. To what source should we look for discipline, and why?

7. (a) How does the discipline from Jehovah reach us? (b) Our accepting and applying such discipline shows what about us?

8. (a) Why would we actually be hurting ourselves if we put on a pretense of accepting discipline but did not really change our ways? (b) Why is it comforting to know that Jehovah sees us wherever we are?

would only dull our consciences. And though men may look upon us with admiration, we cannot deceive the Creator. Proverbs 15:3 tells us: "The eyes of Jehovah are in every place, keeping watch upon the bad ones and the good ones." Knowing that Jehovah God is watching should restrain us from doing wrong. At the same time we can find encouragement in the assurance that he looks favorably 'upon the good ones.'

"Speak Truthfully With One Another"

⁹ Though not claiming to follow the Bible strictly, most people today do not consider themselves dishonest. But how many are there who consistently speak the truth? Many persons commonly conceal truth or speak only what they believe will further their own ends. Though this is viewed as normal in the world, that does not make it right. The world of mankind alienated from God "is lying in the power of the wicked one." That "wicked one," Satan the Devil, is "the father of the lie." Lying originated with him. (1 John 5:19; John 8:44) So it should not surprise a person to find that he needs to make quite a change in the matter of truthfulness if he is going to "quit being fashioned after this system of things."

¹⁰ There is good reason for being honest. Nothing undermines peace and security more than a failure to be honest at all times—at home, at work or business,

9. (a) When it comes to speaking the truth, what is accepted as normal in the world? Why? (b) So, if a person is going to "quit being fashioned after this system of things," what change is required?

10. How does the vicious circle of dishonesty work against true peace and security?

in recreation, and in social relations. When people do not keep their word, when they deceive or cheat, no one gains. Victims of dishonesty often become bitter and angry. Aside from emotional and mental pressures, dishonesty can cause physical injury and even death. For example, poor workmanship, inferior materials, and deceptive claims have contributed to serious accidents. The person who thinks he is gaining through his own dishonesty is at the same time losing through the dishonesty of others. He, too, pays higher prices for goods and services because both employees and customers steal. Dishonesty thus creates a vicious circle. As more people take advantage of others, frustrations, violence, injuries, and even deaths multiply.

¹¹ In view of such bad fruitage, it is not surprising that among the things “Jehovah does hate” are lying, perjury, false weights, and false scales. (Proverbs 6: 16-19; 20:23) Habitual liars will not have any share in the blessings that God has in store for those loving him. (Revelation 21:8) Is this not what we would expect from a righteous God? If God were to continue tolerating those desiring to profit by deceit at their neighbor’s expense, how could anyone feel secure in His New Order?

¹² The Bible is therefore not to be taken lightly when it commands: “Speak truthfully with one another.” (Zechariah 8:16; Ephesians 4:25) As to promises or agreements, our “Yes” should mean *Yes*, and our “No,”

11. How does Jehovah feel about dishonesty and lying?

12, 13. (a) What does the Bible itself say about truthful speech?
 (b) What bearing does our honesty have on whether we can serve Jehovah as his witnesses?



**Can a person be truthful and honest
and still survive financially
in this world?**

No. (James 5:12) If we want to represent “Jehovah the God of truth,” we must be consistent about speaking truth. (Psalm 31:5) If a person does not tell the truth, he cannot gain the respect of God or of his fellowmen. Nor can he represent God as one of His witnesses. Said the psalmist: “To the wicked one God will have to say: ‘What right do you have to enumerate my regulations, and that you may bear my covenant in your mouth? Your mouth you have let loose to what is bad, and your tongue you keep attached to deception.’”—Psalm 50: 16, 19.

¹³ But some may wonder: Can a person be truthful and honest and still survive in this world? Can he ‘make a go of it’ in business without doing what everybody else is doing?

God Cares for Those Applying the Truth

¹⁴ To say that a person cannot make a living without being dishonest would be to say that God does not care about those who love him. But this is contrary to the experience of God's servants for thousands of years. (Hebrews 13:5, 6) The psalmist David observed: "A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread." (Psalm 37:25) This does not mean that righteous persons do not experience difficulties or hard times. David himself had been forced to live for a time as an outcast from society. But he had the necessities of life.

¹⁵ The appeal of true worship is not one of materialistic gain. However, Jesus did teach his followers that it is proper to pray to God for His blessing on their efforts to obtain the "bread for the day." (Luke 11:2, 3) Acknowledging their need for life's necessities, he assured his disciples: "Your heavenly Father knows you need all these things." But he urged them: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:25-34) Do you believe that? If so, you will not be tempted to discard God's righteous standards just because other people do. Instead, you will appreciate the wisdom of what is recorded at 1 Timothy 6:6-8, which says: "To be sure, it is a means of great gain, this godly devotion along with self-sufficiency. For we have

14. How does the Bible help us to appreciate that it is possible to make a living without being dishonest?

15. What did Jesus say about God's interest in our obtaining material things to sustain life?

brought nothing into the world, and neither can we carry anything out. So, having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things.”

¹⁶ Following this admonition requires a viewpoint quite different from what is common in the world today. This, then, is also involved in ‘making our minds over.’ Contentment with life’s necessities prevents us from making the pursuit of money and material things the main objective in life and from being tempted to take advantage of other persons to get these. (Proverbs 28:20; Matthew 6:24; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10) Those who make riches their goal may think that these represent security and happiness. But instead it is as the Bible says, a “lover of silver will not be satisfied with silver, neither any lover of wealth with income.” (Ecclesiastes 5:10) Those who have much want more. Often they sacrifice their health and their family life to obtain it. Instead of feeling secure, they live in fear of losing what they have.

¹⁷ A person who chases wealth is not facing up to the fact that as Jesus said, “even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses.” (Luke 12:15) It is far better to put faith in God’s ability to provide for his servants. In over 200 lands among millions of Jehovah’s Witnesses, there is living proof that God does make such provision. Under

16. How can our applying these Scriptural principles safeguard us?

17. (a) When a person sets his heart on the acquiring of material wealth, what truth is he ignoring? (b) What evidence is there that it is practical to apply the principles of honesty in making a living?

all forms of government and in every kind of legitimate employment, Witnesses of all races and backgrounds are able to live happy lives, with their needs supplied. Their faith in God's ability to provide, even when honesty seems to put them at a disadvantage, has been rewarded. They have gained the respect of fellowmen and are often preferred as employees because people still want to deal with those who are trustworthy. But what is more important is that upright ones enjoy a clean conscience because of their honesty.

¹⁸ Before becoming Jehovah's Witnesses, they had fitted into the world's pattern to a greater or lesser degree. But study of the Bible and facing its truth caused them to drop bad practices. Now they are striving hard to exhibit "good fidelity to the full, so that they may adorn the teaching of our Savior, God, in all things." (Titus 2:10) It has not always been easy for them to face up to the truth and make changes in their lives. But love for truth has helped them to act in harmony with it.

¹⁹ Do you have a similar love for truth? If you do, you are the kind of person God is looking for to preserve alive into his New Order. To be accepted by God, you "must worship with spirit and *truth*." (John 4:24) This will mark you as different from the world around you. There are also other ways in which you must differ from the world if you are to please Jehovah. What are these?

18, 19. (a) Why have these people changed their lives to conform to God's standards? (b) What kind of persons is God looking for to preserve into his New Order?

Chapter 11

Survivors Must Be “No Part of the World”

WHAT did Jesus mean in saying that his followers are “in the world,” and yet that they must be “no part of the world”? (John 17:11, 14) To be among those surviving to live in God’s New Order, we need to understand this.

² First consider what being “no part of the world” does *not* mean. It does not mean that we isolate ourselves like hermits in a cave or that we withdraw into a monastery or other remote place. On the contrary, the night before his death Jesus prayed to his Father on behalf of his disciples, saying: “I request you, *not to take them out of the world*, but to watch over them because of the wicked one. They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world.”—John 17:15, 16.

³ Rather than be hidden from people, Jesus’ disciples were ‘sent forth into the world’ to make known the truth. (John 17:18) In doing so, they served as “the light of the world,” letting the light of truth shine so that men might see how God’s truth affects people’s lives for the good.—Matthew 5:14-16.

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- 1, 2. (a) What did Jesus say about the relationship of his disciples to the world? (b) What does that *not* mean, and why?
3, 4. (a) In what activities is it necessary for Christians to have contact with people of the world? (b) But what must they avoid?

⁴ Christians have contact with many people as they work to support themselves and their families and as they bring the good news of God's Kingdom to mankind. So, as the apostle Paul shows, they are not expected to "get out of the world" in a physical way. They cannot entirely "quit mixing in company" with people of the world. But they can and must keep away from the wrong practices of the majority of mankind. —1 Corinthians 5:9-11.

⁵ The situation is similar to that of Noah's day when Jehovah took note that "all men had lived corrupt lives on earth." (Genesis 6:12, *The New English Bible*) But Noah and his family lived differently. By refusing to join in with the corruption around them and by preaching righteousness, Noah "condemned the world." He showed it to be inexcusably out of harmony with God's will. (Hebrews 11:7; 2 Peter 2:5) That is why, when the global Flood brought an end to ungodly mankind, he and his family survived. They were "in the world" yet at the same time were "no part of the world." —Genesis 6:9-13; 7:1; Matthew 24:38, 39.

What Is Proper Love for People of the World?

⁶ Would becoming "no part of the world" also mean becoming a hater of mankind? To do so would put one at odds with Jehovah God, who, his Son Jesus said, "loved the world [of mankind] so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercis-

5. How is the needed separateness from the world illustrated in the case of Noah and his family?

6. Is it proper to show any love toward people of the world?

ing faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." So God's kindness and compassion toward people of all sorts sets the example for us to follow.—John 3:16; Matthew 5:44-48.

⁷ But does not the apostle John tell us, "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him"? If God himself loved the world, why did the apostle say this?—1 John 2:15.

⁸ The Bible shows that God loves the world of mankind simply as *humans* who are in an imperfect, dying state and in desperate need of help. On the other hand, Satan has organized most of humankind in opposition to God. It is that "world"—human society alienated from God and under Satan's control—from which true Christians must be separate. (James 1:27) God's Word warns against loving the wrong desires and deeds of that world: "Everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world. Furthermore, the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:15-17.

⁹ Yes, those desires of the flesh and of the eyes and for personal exaltation do 'originate with the world.' They were what developed in mankind's first parents

7, 8. (a) What does the Bible say about loving the world? (b) What is the world from which we must be separate? (c) Why must we shun the world and its desires?

9, 10. (a) How can it be said that these desires 'originate with the world'? (b) What effect have these desires had on mankind?

and led them to seek independence from God so that they could follow selfish interests. Following these selfish worldly desires led to breaking God's laws. —Genesis 3:1-6, 17.

¹⁰ Consider what you see around you. Do not most people build their lives around the desires of the flesh and of the eyes and “the showy display of one's means of life”? Is it not these things that shape their hopes and interests, governing the way they act and deal with one another? Because of this, human history is one long record of disunity and war, of immorality and crime, of commercial greed and oppression, of proud ambition, and of striving for fame and power.

¹¹ We can see, then, that loving the world as God does is far different from loving its wrong desires and practices, which he condemns. God's love for mankind has opened the way to freedom from those sinful desires and their bad results, including death itself. He expressed that love by giving his own Son to ransom mankind. But if anyone rejects that sacrifice and continues in disobedience, the Bible says that “the wrath of God remains upon him.”—John 3:16, 36; Romans 5:6-8.

Keeping Free From Control by “the Ruler of This World”

¹² What, then, about us? Do we “love” persons in the world in the sense of sincerely wanting to help them

11. So, then, why is God's love for the world not inconsistent with what his Word condemns?

12. How can we analyze whether the love we may have for persons of the world is pleasing to God or not?

find the way to life in God's favor? Or do we love the very things that hold them back from becoming God's servants—their spirit of independence, their showy display of their means, their confidence in their own importance and glory? If we love to be with people for such qualities, then we are 'loving the world' in the way the apostle condemned.

¹³ Many people in Jesus' day loved the world's ways. So they avoided taking a bold stand as Jesus' disciples. They did not want to lose their popularity and position among the people in their social and religious circles. They loved the praise of men more than the approval of God. (John 12:42, 43) True, some performed works of charity and did other religious acts. But they did so primarily because they wanted to be looked up to by others. (Matthew 6:1-6; 23:5-7; Mark 12:38-40) Do you not see people showing this same love for the world's wrong course today? Yet the Bible shows that this kind of "love" can only lead to destruction.

¹⁴ God's own Son was subjected to temptation along these same lines. An effort was made to stir up in him the selfish desire to make a showy display to impress people—to become like the world. He was even offered rulership over all the nations of the world with their glory. But he flatly rejected those appeals to selfish desires. They came from the one who first challenged Jehovah God's sovereignty, Satan the Devil.—Luke 4: 5-12.

13. How could love for the world hold a person back from serving God?

14. Who subjected Jesus to temptation when he was on earth, and with what outcome?

¹⁵ Knowing of Satan's offer of rulership to Jesus is vital to understanding why we must be "no part of the world." It shows that the world of mankind in general, including its rulerships, has God's Adversary as its invisible ruler. Jesus himself spoke of Satan as "the ruler of this world." (John 12:31; 14:30; 2 Corinthians 4:4) The apostle Paul also referred to "wicked spirit forces," demons under Satan's control, as being the invisible "world rulers of this darkness." Paul warned Christians of the need for spiritual armor to defend against these "rulers."—Ephesians 6:10-13.

¹⁶ Only a minority has ever stayed free from the control of this invisible ruler and his forces. Thus the "world," that is, the mass of mankind alienated from God, "is lying in the power of the wicked one." Through demon influence he 'misleads the entire inhabited earth,' including its earthly rulers, steering them against God and his Kingdom.—1 John 5:19; Revelation 12:9; 16:13, 14; 19:11-18.

¹⁷ This may sound hard to believe. Yet, do not most people of this world clearly manifest the attitude and works of God's Adversary? Worldwide we see the lying, hatred, violence, and murder that identify those who 'originate with the Devil,' having him as their spiritual "father." (1 John 3:8-12; John 8:44; Ephesians 2:2, 3) Surely this spirit does not come from a Loving Creator.

15. Show from your Bible who "the ruler of this world" is.

16. How much of the world has been misled by Satan and is in his power?

17. (a) What does the attitude manifested by the world testify as to the one who is leading mankind? (b) Would it be pleasing to the Creator if we manifested such a spirit?

¹⁸ Also, do not the vast majority of people trust in human schemes to bring peace and security? How many people do you know who really look to God and his Kingdom for the solution to mankind's problems? Yet their confidence in human political systems is wrongly placed, as Jesus said: "My kingdom is no part of this world." His Kingdom does not have its "source" in this world, because men do not set it up or keep it in power. It is God's own provision. (John 18:36; Isaiah 9:6, 7) So, to be among those hoping to survive when that Kingdom comes against all of its opponents, we need to recognize the hard fact that Satan dominates this world and its systems. That includes its political arrangements such as the United Nations. We need to keep free from all of these by our firm stand for Jehovah's righteous government by Christ Jesus.—Matthew 6:10, 24, 31-33.

¹⁹ History shows that early Christians were respectful, law-abiding citizens. But they were determined to be "no part of the world," even though this brought persecution upon them. We read statements such as these:

"Early Christianity was little understood and was regarded with little favor by those who ruled the pagan world. . . . Christians refused to share certain duties of Roman citizens. . . . They would not hold political office."—*On the Road to Civilization, A World History*.⁵⁷

"They refused to take any active part in the civil administration or the military defence of the empire. . . . It was impossible that the Christians, without renouncing a more sacred duty, could assume the

18. How does our attitude concerning rulership show whether we are free from the control of "the ruler of this world"?

19. As testified to by history, in what ways did the early Christians show that they were "no part of the world"?

TRUE PEACE AND SECURITY—HOW CAN YOU FIND IT?

character of soldiers, of magistrates, or of princes.”—*History of Christianity*.⁵⁸

“Origen [who lived in the second and third centuries of the Common Era] . . . remarks that ‘the Christian Church cannot engage in war against any nation. They have learned from their Leader that they are children of peace.’ In that period many Christians were martyred for refusing military service.”—*Treasury of the Christian World*.⁵⁹

²⁰ By keeping free from involvement in the world’s affairs, Jehovah’s servants do not contribute to its divisive nationalism, its racialism, or its social conflicts. Their God-directed attitude contributes toward peace and security among men of all sorts. (Acts 10:34, 35) Survivors of the coming “great tribulation” will, in fact, come “out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.”—Revelation 7:9, 14.

Friends of the World or Friends of God?

²¹ Jesus told his disciples: “If you were part of the world, the world would be fond of what is its own. Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you. . . . If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also.” (John 15:19, 20) The simple truth is that the only way to have the world’s friendship is to become like it—to share its desires, ambitions, and prejudices, to admire its thinking and philosophies, and to take up its practices and ways. But supporters of this world resent having their errors exposed or being

20. To keep free from control by “the ruler of this world,” from what divisive activities of the world do Jehovah’s servants abstain?

21. Why cannot a person who follows the Bible also expect to be loved by the world?

warned of the dangers to which their course is leading. That is why, if a person follows the Bible's teachings in conduct and manner of life and speaks in favor of it, he simply cannot escape the world's hatred.—John 17:14; 2 Timothy 3:12.

²² So, the Bible shows we have a clear choice. At James 4:4 we read: "Do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God." God also has his standards for friendship, and they are not in harmony with those of the world of sinful mankind.—Psalm 15:1-5.

²³ Our having God's friendship depends upon much more than our belonging or not belonging to certain of this world's organizations. If we manifest the world's *spirit*, share its *viewpoint* of life, then we identify ourselves as friends of the world, not of God. The world's spirit produces "works of the flesh" such as "fornication, uncleanness, loose conduct, idolatry, practice of spiritism, enmities, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, contentions, divisions, sects, envies, drunken bouts, revelries, and things like these." The Bible clearly says that "those who practice such things will not inherit God's kingdom." On the other hand, if we are God's friends, we will have his spirit with its fruits of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control."—Galatians 5:19-23.

22. What choice as to friendship confronts each one of us?

23. (a) What would show that a person is a friend of the world?

(b) How can we show that we are friends of God?

²⁴ Whose spirit, then, do *we* reflect? That will help us to determine whose friends we really are. Living as we do, subject to the influence of this present evil world, we should not be surprised to find a need for changes in our lives in order to please God. Worldly people, for example, heap honor and glory on those whose ambitious drive leads them to great wealth, power, or fame. People pattern themselves after such worldly heroes and idols, imitating them in speech, conduct, appearance, and dress. Do you want to be identified as an admirer of such people? Their achievements are just the opposite of what God's Word urges us to make our goals in life. The Bible directs us to spiritual wealth and strength and the honor of serving as God's representatives and spokesmen on earth. (1 Timothy 6:17-19; 2 Timothy 1:7, 8; Jeremiah 9:23, 24) The world's commercial propaganda turns people to materialism, to believing that happiness depends on possessions. So they give these far greater importance than things of spiritual value. Yes, following the world's course will gain the world's friendship for you. But it will cut you off from God's friendship. Which means more to you? Which will lead to greater and more enduring happiness?

²⁵ It is easy to give in to the world's pattern. And, because of its bad spirit, supporters of this world will

24. (a) Why is it unwise to become imitators of persons on whom the world bestows honor? (b) How can our attitude toward material possessions show whose friendship we are really seeking?

25. (a) What should we expect from the world when we leave behind its ways? (b) What will enable us really to 'make our minds over' to view things as God does?

resent it if you take a separate course. (1 Peter 4:3, 4) Pressures will be brought on you to conform, to let worldly human society mold you into its likeness. The world's wisdom, its philosophies as to what brings success in life, will be used in an effort to control your thinking. So, it takes real effort and faith to 'make your mind over' to see things from God's viewpoint, understanding why 'the wisdom of this world is foolishness in his sight.' (Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 1:18-20; 2:14-16; 3:18-20) By diligent study of God's Word we can see through the world's false wisdom. We can see the harm already resulting from such "wisdom," and the disastrous end to which it must lead. Then we can also come to appreciate fully the wisdom of God's way and the sure blessings that it guarantees.

Useless to Give Life and Energies to a Passing World

²⁶ Some may object: 'But many of the organizations of the world do good, working for the protection, health, education, and freedom of the people.' True, certain organizations do give some temporary relief from a few of the people's troubles. Yet they are all part of the world alienated from God. And they turn the people's attention toward perpetuating this present system of things. None of them advocate God's government for earth, his Kingdom by his Son. After all, even some criminals may raise families, provide for them, and do charitable works for the community. But would these things justify giving our support to crim-

26. Would it be wise to get involved in the work of humanitarian organizations of the world with a view to improving conditions?

inal organizations in any way?—Compare 2 Corinthians 6:14-16.

²⁷ Can we really show true love for mankind by associating with any of the world's schemes, devoting time and energy to them? If you want to help someone who is sick or diseased, will you do so by getting so close that you contract the same sickness or disease? Or will you not be of far greater aid if you stay healthy yourself and try to help the person find the way to health? The present human society is spiritually sick and diseased. None of us can save it, for God's Word shows its sickness is leading to its death. (Compare Isaiah 1:4-9.) But we can help *individuals* in the world to find the way to spiritual health and to survival into God's New Order—provided we ourselves keep separate from the world. (2 Corinthians 6:17) Wisely, then, shun involvement in the world's schemes. Exert yourself to avoid becoming infected by the spirit of the world and imitating its unrighteous ways. Never forget: "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:17.

27. What is the only way that we can help people in this world to be among the survivors into God's New Order?

Chapter 12

Respect for Authority Essential for Peaceful Living

A SPIRIT of independence permeates today's world. A general distrust of authority has developed, particularly among those born since World War II. Why? For one thing, their parents had observed oppression on an unprecedented scale, as well as high-handed and corrupt tactics by those in power. They developed a dim view of authority. Consequently, many of them, on becoming parents, did not instill in their children a respect for authority. Nor have official injustices seen by the children helped matters. As a result, disrespect for authority has become common.

² That disrespect is shown in various ways. Sometimes it is by adopting a type of dress or grooming that indicates rejection of accepted standards. It may involve public defiance of the police, or even violence and bloodshed. But it is not limited to these. Even among those who do not express themselves in these more open ways, many ignore or sidestep laws if they disagree with such laws or find them inconvenient.

³ This situation has deeply affected the atmosphere in homes, in schools, at places of employment, and in contacts with government officials. More and more, people do not want anyone telling them what to do.

1-3. (a) What has contributed to widespread rejection of authority in our day? (b) In what various ways is this attitude expressed? (c) Where are the effects felt?

They reach out for what they believe to be greater freedom. Faced with this situation, what will you do?

⁴ Your course will show where you stand on the issue of Jehovah's universal sovereignty. Do you really respect Jehovah as the Source of true peace and security? Will you seek out and apply in your life what his Word directs? Or will you go along with those who independently make their own decisions as to what is good and what is bad?—Genesis 3:1-5; Revelation 12:9.

⁵ An accurate knowledge of the Bible can protect you against being misled by those who, while 'promising freedom, are themselves existing as slaves of corruption.' Following the lead of such persons would merely put you in the same enslaved condition. (2 Peter 2: 18, 19) True freedom can only be had by learning and doing the will of God. His divine commandment is "the perfect law that belongs to freedom." (James 1:25) This can be said because Jehovah does not needlessly restrict us, hedging us in with rules that serve no useful purpose. But his law does provide the kind of guidance that brings freedom, peace, and security based on a right relationship with God and with our fellowman.

⁶ Better than anyone else, God knows the extent of man's corruption and misuse of authority. And he has given his word that regardless of how highly situated

4. By what we do in this matter, we show our attitude on what issue?

5. (a) What often results from following the lead of humans who promise "freedom"? (b) How free is the person who does God's will?

6, 7. (a) Who is in the best position to do something about the misuse of authority? (b) How did Jesus show what happens to persons who take the law into their own hands?

those causing oppression may be, he will call them to account. (Romans 14:12) In God's appointed time, "the wicked . . . will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it." (Proverbs 2:22) But no lasting good for ourselves will result if we grow impatient and take the law into our own hands.—Romans 12:17-19.

⁷ On the night of his betrayal and arrest, Jesus emphasized this to his apostles. Because of conditions in the land, including the presence of wild beasts, people often carried weapons. So on that occasion there were two swords among Jesus' apostles. (Luke 22:38) What happened? Well, they saw a flagrant distortion of justice when Jesus was being arrested without cause. So the apostle Peter impulsively drew his sword and struck off the ear of one of the men. But Jesus restored the severed ear and admonished Peter: "Return your sword to its place, for all those who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Matthew 26:52) Many persons, even in our day, could have been saved from untimely death by following this advice.—Proverbs 24:21, 22.

Proper View of Secular Authority

⁸ When writing to Christians in Rome, the apostle Paul was inspired by God to discuss how they were to conduct themselves in relation to secular authorities. He wrote: "Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities, for there is no authority except by God; the existing authorities stand placed in their

8. (a) As stated at Romans 13:1, 2, how are Christians to view secular rulers? (b) What is meant by the statement that they are "placed in their relative positions by God"?

relative positions by God. Therefore he who opposes the authority has taken a stand against the arrangement of God; those who have taken a stand against it will receive judgment to themselves.” (Romans 13:1, 2) Does this mean that God has put these secular rulers in power? The Bible definitely answers no! (Luke 4:5, 6; Revelation 13:1, 2) But they do exist *by his permission*. And the ‘*relative position*’ that they have occupied in the course of history was determined by God. What has that position been?

⁹ The scripture just quoted says that it is a “superior” one. Thus government officials are not to be treated with disrespect. The laws put into force by them are not to be disregarded. This does not mean that you necessarily admire the individuals, nor that you approve of any corruption in which they might engage. But respect is properly shown because of the office they occupy.—Titus 3:1, 2.

¹⁰ In large measure, secular laws work for good. They help to maintain order and assure a measure of protection for people and their property. (Romans 13:3, 4) Also, governments usually provide roads, sanitation service, fire protection, education, and other services that benefit the people. Are they to be paid for these services? Should we pay taxes? This question often prompts strong feelings because of high taxes and frequent misuse of public funds. In Jesus’ time, too, the question had political overtones. But Jesus did not take the position that the existing situation warranted any

9. Even though officials engage in wrong practices, why can we show them respect?

10. How is the payment of taxes to be viewed, and why?

refusal to pay. Referring to the money that had been minted by the Roman Caesar, he said: "Pay back, therefore, Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." (Matthew 22:17-21; Romans 13:6, 7) No, Jesus did not endorse the idea of each one becoming a law to himself.

¹¹ However, Jesus showed that "Caesar," the secular state, was not the only authority to be considered. "The superior authorities" are not superior to God or even equal to him. On the contrary, they are very inferior to him. So their authority is limited, not absolute. Because of this, Christians have often been confronted with a critical decision. It is a decision that you too must face. When men in power demand for themselves what belongs to God, what will you do? If they forbid what God commands, whom will you obey?

¹² The apostles of Jesus respectfully but firmly stated their position to the members of the high court in Jerusalem: "We cannot stop speaking about the things we have seen and heard. . . . We must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 4:19, 20; 5:29) Governments have at times imposed restrictions in emergencies, and that is understandable. But sometimes governmental restrictions may be designed to interfere with our worship of God and make it impossible to fulfill God-given obligations. What then? God's inspired Word answers: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."

11, 12. (a) How do the Scriptures show that there is another authority to be considered? (b) What would you do if secular rulers issued orders that conflicted with God's requirements, and why?

The apostles of Jesus told the high court: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men"



¹³ Though honoring this obligation to God may conflict with what "Caesar" requires, this is far different from independently breaking laws that we do not agree with. It is true that, from a personal standpoint, certain laws may seem unnecessary or unduly restrictive. But that does not justify ignoring laws that are not in conflict with God's laws. What if all people obeyed only the laws they considered to be of benefit to themselves? It could only lead to anarchy.

13, 14. (a) How careful should we be not to disobey secular laws just for personal reasons? (b) From the Scriptures, point out reasons for this.

¹⁴ At times a person may feel that he can ignore authority and do what he pleases because he is not likely to get caught and punished. But there is grave danger in this. While disregard for law may at first involve minor matters, a person's going unpunished may embolden him to greater lawlessness. As Ecclesiastes 8:11 states: "Because sentence against a bad work has not been executed speedily, that is why the heart of the sons of men has become fully set in them to do bad." But is the real reason for obeying the law merely fear of punishment for disobeying? For a Christian, there must be a far stronger inducement. The apostle Paul called it a "compelling reason"—the desire for a clean conscience. (Romans 13:5) A person whose conscience has been trained by Scriptural principles knows that pursuing a lawless course would be taking a stand "against the arrangement of God." Regardless of whether other humans know what we are doing, God knows, and our prospects for future life depend on him.—1 Peter 2:12-17.

¹⁵ The same is true of a young person's attitude toward his schoolteacher and of an adult's attitude toward his secular employer. The fact that many people around us do wrong things should not be the determining factor. Whether the teacher or the employer knows what we do should not make any difference. The question is, What is right? What is pleasing to God? Again, if what we are asked to do does not conflict with God's law or righteous principles, we cooperate.

15. (a) What should guide a person in his attitude toward a schoolteacher or an employer? (b) In this way we avoid being influenced by whose spirit?

Schoolteachers are generally representatives of the secular government, hence agents of “the superior authorities,” and so deserve respect. And as to secular employers, the Bible principle at Titus 2:9, 10 may be applied, even though Paul was there writing of a different relationship, that of slaves to their owners. Paul said: “Please them well, . . . exhibiting good fidelity to the full, so that [you] may adorn the teaching of our Savior, God, in all things.” (Titus 2:9, 10) Thus, we avoid the influence of Satan, whose spirit “operates in the sons of disobedience,” and we build peaceful relations with our fellowmen.—Ephesians 2:2, 3.

Authority Within the Home

¹⁶ The family circle is another area in which respect for authority can make for peaceful relations. Too often such a wholesome respect is lacking, resulting in the breakdown of family relations and often the break-up of the household. What can be done to improve the situation? The principle of headship, as set out at 1 Corinthians 11:3, holds the answer: “The head of every man is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man; in turn the head of the Christ is God.”

¹⁷ Notice that this statement of Jehovah’s arrangement does not point first to man’s headship. Rather, it draws attention to the fact that there is someone to whom the man should be looking for direction, someone whose example he should be following. That

16. What requirement for harmonious family life is stated at 1 Corinthians 11:3?

17. (a) As to headship, what is the man’s position? (b) What fine example as to husbandly headship did Christ set?

someone is Jesus Christ. He is the head of man. And in his dealings with his congregation, which is likened to a bride, Christ demonstrated the way to make a success of husbandly headship. His fine example stirred a willing response in his followers. When he took the lead, instead of being a boss, harsh and demanding toward his followers, Jesus was "mild-tempered and lowly in heart," so that they found refreshment for their souls. (Matthew 11:28-30) Did he belittle them for their shortcomings? On the contrary, he lovingly counseled them and even laid down his life to cleanse them of sins. (Ephesians 5:25-30) What a blessing to any household to have a man who sincerely endeavors to follow that example!

¹⁸ When there is such headship in the home, it is not difficult for a woman to look up to her husband. And obedience comes more readily from the children. But there also is much that the wife and children can contribute to family happiness. By her diligence in caring for the household and by her spirit of cooperation, a wife shows that she has "deep respect for her husband." Is that true in your household? (Ephesians 5:33; Proverbs 31:10-15, 27, 28) As for the children, willing obedience to both father and mother shows that they honor their parents, as God requires. (Ephesians 6:1-3) Would there not be far more peace and a much greater feeling of personal security in such a household than in one where respect for authority is lacking?

18. (a) In what ways can a wife show that she respects the authority of her husband? (b) How are children to show respect for their parents, and why?

¹⁹ You can help to make your home such a place. Whether other members of the family choose to uphold Jehovah's ways or not, you can do so. The others may respond to your fine example. (1 Corinthians 7:16; Titus 2:6-8) Even if they do not, what you do will stand as a testimony to the rightness of God's ways, and that is something of no little value.—1 Peter 3:16, 17.

²⁰ Keep in mind that the entire framework of family authority originates with God. Thus men are to be in subjection to Christ, wives to their husbands "as it is becoming in the Lord," and children to their parents "for this is well-pleasing in the Lord." (Colossians 3:18, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:3) So God cannot be left out of account, can he? This means that the authority of a husband over his wife, and of parents over their children, is a relative one. That is, the Christian mate and children are subject to God and Christ first, obeying their counsel. To some unbelieving mates or parents that idea might at first be displeasing. But really it works for their good, because it will help to make the believing mate and children more dependable and respectful.

²¹ However, what if a husband was to demand that his wife do something that would not be "becoming in the Lord"? What she does will show whether she really

19. If you are the only one in the family who tries to be guided by God's Word, what should you do?

20, 21. (a) How does the Bible show that the authority of a husband and of parents is not absolute? (b) So, with what decision may a Christian wife or believing children be faced, and what should motivate them?

'fears the true God' or not. (Ecclesiastes 12:13) The same is true when children are old enough to understand and obey God's Word. If their parents do not share their desire to serve Jehovah, the children must decide whether they will be loyal to God or share the lot of parents who are not. (Matthew 10:37-39) But aside from their first obligation to God, children should be submissive in "everything," even if it means doing things that are not to their liking. (Colossians 3:20) This course of conduct may even attract their parents to Jehovah's provisions for salvation. It is truly "well-pleasing in the Lord" when one's motivation is loyalty to Jehovah and his righteous ways, instead of disobedience born of an independent spirit.

In the Christian Congregation

²² The same loyalty to Jehovah should be reflected in our attitude toward his Christian congregation and those caring for it. Jehovah has provided overseers to shepherd "the flock." They receive no salary but give of themselves because of genuine concern for their Christian brothers and sisters. (1 Peter 5:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9) They help the congregation to carry out the work of preaching the good news of God's Kingdom. Also, with concern for each member of the congregation, they assist these to learn how to apply Bible principles in their lives. Too, if any member of the congregation takes a false step without being fully aware of it, effort is made to readjust him. (Galatians

22, 23. (a) How do Christian overseers serve the members of the congregation? (b) So, what attitude does Hebrews 13:17 say that we should have toward them?

6:1) If a member disregards Scriptural counsel and persists in serious wrongdoing, the overseers see that he is expelled. Thus the congregation is protected from his corrupting influence.—1 Corinthians 5:12, 13.

²³ In appreciation for this loving provision of Jehovah to assure peace among his people, we should heed the admonition found at Hebrews 13:17: “Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.”

²⁴ The Bible emphasizes that a principal reason these overseers or elders deserve respect is that they are teaching “the word of God.” (Hebrews 13:7; 1 Timothy 5:17) And concerning the power of that “word,” Hebrews 4:12, 13 states: “The word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword and pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of joints and their marrow, and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart. And 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.”

²⁵ Thus the truths in Jehovah’s Word expose the difference between what a person may appear to be and what he really is. If he has genuine faith in God and a genuine desire to please his Creator, his motivation will

24, 25. (a) How should what the elders teach influence the way we view them? (b) When and where should we apply what we are taught from the Bible? Why?

properly reflect “the glory of God” even when out of the sight of the congregation elders. (Romans 3:23) He would not engage in some unscriptural conduct simply because it is not among the serious wrongs for which a person could be expelled from the congregation. Hence, if anyone is inclined to take lightly any of the counsel found in God’s Word, he ought to examine carefully what his attitude toward God really is. Is he becoming like that person concerning whom Psalm 14:1 says: “The senseless one has said”—no, not publicly—but “in his heart: ‘There is no Jehovah’”?

²⁶ When tempted by the Devil, Jesus declared: “Man must live . . . on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah’s mouth.” (Matthew 4:4) Do you believe that “every utterance” of Jehovah is important, that none are to be ignored? Obeying some of Jehovah’s requirements, while treating others as unimportant, simply is not enough. Either we uphold the rightfulness of Jehovah’s sovereignty or we take the Devil’s side of the issue by setting our own standard of what is good and what is bad. Happy are those who show that they truly love Jehovah’s law.—Psalm 119:165.

²⁷ Such persons are not ensnared by the divisive spirit of the world. Nor do they indulge in the shameful conduct of those who throw off moral restraint. Deep respect for Jehovah and his righteous ways gives stability to their lives. Such respect for Jehovah and his ways enables them to have proper respect for earthly authorities, which is essential for peaceful living.

26, 27. (a) Why is it important to take seriously “every utterance” of Jehovah? (b) How are our lives affected when we thus show respect for authority?

Your View of Sex—What Difference Does It Make?

SOME people have the idea that the Bible frowns on anything having to do with sex. However, an examination of the Bible itself reveals that this is not true. After telling about God's creation of the first man and woman, it goes on to relate: "God blessed them and God said to them: 'Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth.'"—Genesis 1:27, 28.

² Sexual relations between man and woman, then, clearly have divine approval. But does God approve of unrestrained sex? Would this bring the greatest enjoyment in life? Would it result in true peace and security for us and for those around us?

³ Sex is just as subject to misuse as are other human functions. Eating is good and essential for life. Yet gluttony can impair health and shorten one's life. Sleep, too, is vital. But an excess robs life of accomplishment and can even weaken the body. Just as real enjoyment of life does not result from gluttony, drunkenness, and laziness, so too it does not result from unrestrained use of one's sexual powers. Human experience for thousands of years bears testimony to this. Must we learn this from bitter personal experience? There is a better way.

1-3. (a) How does the Bible show that sexual relations between man and woman have divine approval? (b) Would it be for a person's good to indulge in unrestrained use of his sexual powers?

⁴ God's Word gives a balanced view of sex that will protect our happiness now and in the future. Yet, it is not just for the sake of our own peace and security that we should learn and hold to God's standards concerning the use of these faculties. More importantly, we should do so out of respect for our Creator. If we truly take his side on the issue of sovereignty, we will gladly submit to his superior wisdom and sovereign authority in this matter, too.—Jeremiah 10:10, 23.

Keeping Marriage Honorable Among All

⁵ The Bible counsels: "Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers." (Hebrews 13:4) So, God is against sexual relations outside of marriage. This is consistent with the fact that when providing the first man with a mate, God showed that his will was for the two to become "one flesh," in a lasting bond of union. Some four thousand years later, God's Son showed that his Father had not abandoned this standard. (Genesis 2:22-24; Matthew 19:4-6) But is such a standard needlessly restrictive? Does it deprive us of something good?

⁶ Adultery violates the divine standard, and Jehovah God promises to become "a speedy witness" in judgment against adulterers. (Malachi 3:5) The bad fruits of sexual relations outside the marriage union empha-

4. What should motivate us to uphold God's standards regarding sex?

5. What does the Bible say about engaging in sexual relations outside of marriage?

6. What shows that God's law against adultery is for our good?

size the wisdom of God's law. Adultery produces broken confidence and distrust. It causes insecurity and undermines marital peace. The resulting bitterness and heartbreak often lead to divorce. Children suffer as they see their family torn apart. Clearly, God's condemnation of adultery is for our good. His Word shows that anyone having genuine love of neighbor will not commit adultery.—Romans 13:8-10.

⁷ As we have observed, the Bible also expresses God's judgment against fornicators. Exactly what is fornication? While the Bible's use of this term can include sexual intercourse on the part of unmarried persons as well as adultery, it often has a much wider meaning. The word for "fornication" that was used when recording the statements of Jesus and his disciples is the Greek word *por-nei'a*. It is drawn from the same root as the modern term "pornography." In Bible times *por-nei'a* was used in referring to a broad range of unlawful sexual relations outside of marriage. *Por-nei'a* involves the grossly immoral use of the genital organ(s) of at least one human (whether in a natural or a perverted way). Also, there must have been another party to the immorality—a human of either sex or a beast.

⁸ When urging Christians to "abstain from fornication," the apostle Paul gave strong reasons, saying: "That no one go to the point of harming and encroach upon the rights of his brother in this matter, because Jehovah is one who exacts punishment for all these

7. Explain what is meant by fornication, as referred to in the Bible.

8. For what strong reasons did the apostle Paul urge Christians to "abstain from fornication"?

things . . . For God called us, not with allowance for uncleanness . . . So, then, the man that shows disregard is disregarding, not man, but God.”—1 Thessalonians 4:3-8.

⁹ One committing fornication does indeed ‘harm and encroach upon the rights of others.’ This is true, for example, of couples who live together without benefit of legal marriage. Why do they do it? Frequently it is so that they can abandon the union whenever they please. They do not give their partner the security that responsible marriage ought to bring. But if both persons enter the relationship willingly, are they still ‘harming and encroaching on the rights of others’? Yes, definitely so.

¹⁰ There are many effects of the actions of fornicators that do ‘encroach on the rights of others.’ For one thing, anyone participating in fornication shares in damaging the other person’s conscience as well as any clean standing that one may have had with God. The fornicator destroys the other person’s opportunity to enter marriage with a clean start. He likely brings disrespect, reproach, and distress on members of the other person’s family, as well as his own. He may also endanger the mental, emotional, and physical health of the other person. Dreadful sexually transmitted diseases such as the deadly AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) are often linked with sexual immorality.

9, 10. (a) Why do some people hold back from legal marriage, even though living with someone of the opposite sex? (b) Even though fornication is by mutual agreement, how is there ‘harm and an encroaching on the rights of others’?

¹¹ Many choose to be blind to these harms. But do you believe that God, in his righteousness, will condone such callous disregard for the rights of others? God's Word calls for 'honoring,' not debasing or repudiating, his sacred marriage arrangement.—Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 22:39.

¹² What of homosexuality? As we have seen, this practice is covered by the word *por-nei'a* ("fornication"), used by Jesus and his disciples. The disciple Jude used that word when referring to the unnatural sex acts of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Jude 7) Homosexuality there caused degradation that produced a loud "cry of complaint." And it led to God's destruction of those cities and their inhabitants. (Genesis 18:20; 19:23, 24) Has God's view changed since then? No. First Corinthians 6:9, 10, for example, lists "men who lie with men" among those who will not inherit God's Kingdom if they continue such a practice. Also, describing the results to persons who 'dishonor their bodies in uncleanness,' going after "flesh for unnatural use," the Bible says that they "became violently inflamed in their lust toward one another, males with males, working what is obscene and receiving in themselves the full recompense, which was due for their error." (Romans 1:24, 27) Such persons not only fall under God's condemnation, but they also receive a "recompense" of mental and physical corruption. Today, for example, there is a disproportionately high rate

11. Why is there no reason for anyone to believe that God will condone fornication?

12. (a) What is God's view of homosexuality? (b) Against what does God's law forbidding homosexuality protect us?

of syphilis, AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases among homosexuals. The high moral standards of God's Word protect us against such harm, rather than deprive us of something good.

Accepting God's View of Divorce

¹³ "I hate divorce." That is how Jehovah God expressed himself when reproving those who 'dealt treacherously' with their marriage mates. (Malachi 2: 14-16, *Revised Standard Version*) His Word gives abundant counsel to help couples to make a success of marriage and to avoid the bitterness of divorce. It also makes clear that God views faithfulness to one's marriage vows as a sacred responsibility.

¹⁴ This is emphasized by the fact that he acknowledges only one proper basis for divorce. Jesus showed what this is: "Whoever divorces his wife, except on the ground of fornication [*por-nei'a*], and marries another commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9; 5:32) *Por-nei'a*, as we have seen, refers to sexual relations outside of marriage, whether natural or unnatural.

¹⁵ If one's mate becomes guilty of fornication, does this automatically break the marriage tie? No, it does not. The innocent mate can decide whether to forgive or not. Where divorce is decided upon, the Christian's recognition of secular authority will cause him to dissolve the marriage legally, doing so on a truthful

13. How serious is the matter of faithfulness to one's marriage vows?

14, 15. (a) What is the only proper basis for divorce? (b) Does fornication automatically break the marriage tie? (c) Under what circumstances is remarriage allowable?

basis. (Romans 13:1, 2) When the proceedings are finalized, remarriage is allowable. But the Scriptures counsel that any such marriage should be only to another Christian, one who is really “in the Lord.” —1 Corinthians 7:39.

¹⁶ What if the laws of a land do not allow *any* divorce, even on the ground of sexual immorality? An innocent mate in such a case might be able to obtain a divorce in a country where divorce is permitted. Circumstances, of course, may not allow for this. But some form of legal separation may be available in one's own country and could be sought. Whatever the case, the innocent mate could separate from the guilty one and present definite proof of Scriptural ground for divorce to the overseers in the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. What if that person were later to decide to take another mate? The congregation would not act to remove him as an adulterer if he provided the congregation with a written statement containing a vow of faithfulness to the present mate and an agreement to obtain a legal marriage certificate if the former marriage should be dissolved either legally or by death. Nevertheless, the individual would have to face whatever consequences might result as far as the world outside the congregation is concerned. For the world does not generally recognize that God's law is superior to human laws and that human laws have only relative authority.—Compare Acts 5:29.

16. In lands where secular law does not allow for divorce on any basis whatsoever, how do Jehovah's Witnesses show respect for God's law on the matter?

**Wisely Avoiding
All Uncleaness and Sexual Greed**

¹⁷ Sexual relations plainly have a proper place in the lives of married persons. God provided this as the means by which children would be produced, and also as a source of pleasure to the parents. (Genesis 9:1; Proverbs 5:18, 19; 1 Corinthians 7:3-5) Nevertheless, he warned against abusing this gift.—Ephesians 5:5.

¹⁸ Because of the emphasis placed on sex today, many young folks find that their desire for sexual satisfaction is aroused even before they are in position to marry. As a result, some of them seek pleasure through self-stimulation of their sexual parts. This is masturbation, or self-abuse. Is it a proper or wise practice?

¹⁹ The Scriptures counsel: “Deaden, therefore, your body members that are upon the earth as respects fornication, uncleanness, sexual appetite, hurtful desire, and covetousness.” (Colossians 3:5) Is one who practices masturbation ‘deadening his body members as respects sexual appetite’? On the contrary, he is stimulating the sexual appetite. The Bible urges that one avoid the thinking and conduct that lead to such problems, replacing them with wholesome activity, and that one cultivate self-control. (Philippians 4:8; Galatians 5:22, 23) When earnest effort is put forth to do this, such self-abuse can be avoided, with benefits mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

17. From the Scriptures, explain the proper place that sexual relations have in the lives of married persons.

18, 19. (a) Why is the practice of masturbation, or self-abuse, not proper for a Christian? (b) What can help a person to avoid such a practice?

²⁰ What the Bible says respecting “uncleanness, sexual appetite, hurtful desire” applies to all Christians, single and married. It is true that husband and wife have a Scriptural right to engage in sexual relations with each other. But does this mean that they can throw off all restraint? The fact that God’s Word urges all Christians to cultivate self-control argues against such a view. (2 Peter 1:5-8) The inspired Bible writer did not have to explain the natural way in which the reproductive organs of husband and wife complement each other. Homosexual relations obviously cannot follow this natural way. So, male and female homosexuals employ other forms of intercourse in what the apostle refers to as “disgraceful sexual appetites” and “obscene” practices. (Romans 1:24-32) Could married couples imitate such homosexual forms of intercourse in their own marriage and still be free in God’s eyes from expressing “disgraceful sexual appetites” or “hurtful desire”?

²¹ On considering what the Scriptures say, a person may realize that his former thinking on these matters was molded by those who are, as the Bible says, “past all moral sense.” But, with God’s help, one can “put on the new personality,” which is molded in accord with God’s standards of righteousness. (Ephesians 4:17-24) In this way a person shows that he truly means it when he says that he wants to do God’s will.

20. What shows that it would not be proper for husband and wife to throw off all restraint in their sexual relations with each other?

21. Regardless of what a person’s way of life may have been in the past, what opportunity is open to him now?

Your View

Vitally Affects Your Peace and Security

²² Applying the counsel of God's Word as respects sexual morality is not burdensome. Contrast the fruitage of the course the Bible outlines with the world's high rate of divorce, broken homes, delinquent children, prostitution, disease, and the violence and murders committed in connection with sexual passion. (Proverbs 7:10, 25-27) How evident the wisdom of God's Word! When you reject worldly thinking based on selfish desire and bring your thinking into harmony with Jehovah's counsel, your heart is greatly strengthened in right desires. Instead of fleeting pleasures of sexual immorality, you enjoy a clean conscience and enduring peace of mind. Marriage and family ties are fortified with the growth of mutual trust between marriage mates and with respect from the children.

²³ And do not lose sight of the fact that your very hope of eternal life is involved. So Scriptural morality will contribute to more than your present health. (Proverbs 5:3-11) It will become part of the evidence that you truly deplore the detestable things done by people who have no regard for God and that you have been 'marked' for survival into God's "new earth," where, not immorality, but righteousness is to dwell. How vital, then, that you 'do your utmost now to be found finally by God spotless and unblemished and in peace.'—Ezekiel 9:4-6; 2 Peter 3:11-14.

22. What immediate benefits come to those who apply the counsel of God's Word in regard to sexual morality?

23. How is a person's view of sex a factor in his being 'marked' for survival into God's "new earth"?

Chapter 14

Respect for the Gift of Life

DEEP respect for the gift of life is a foundation of true peace and security. But such respect for life is sadly lacking today. Humans have become adept at taking life, but none of them can restore life once it is gone.

² Respect for life is a sacred obligation to the Giver of life, Jehovah God. Of him the psalmist said: "With you is the source of life." (Psalm 36:9) We owe our lives to God, not only because he created man but also because he has allowed mankind to continue until now and has provided the means for sustaining life. (Acts 14:16, 17) More than that, he arranged for his Son to become the Repurchaser, or Redeemer, of the human family, buying it with his lifeblood. (Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 1:7) As a result, he now extends to all who will accept it an opportunity to live forever in his righteous New Order. In view of all of this, how can we show our deep respect and appreciation for God's gift of life?

³ For one thing, if we are serious about showing respect for life, we will not join with those who, simply for diversion, feed their minds on entertainment that features violence. Accepting violence as "entertaining" has caused many to become hardened and unfeeling toward human suffering and loss of life. But if we are

1, 2. Why should we show deep respect for the gift of life?

3. How does watching violence for entertainment affect a person's attitude toward life?

grateful for God's goodness and the hope he gives, we will resist such a spirit. We will cultivate appreciation for life as a gift from God. This will affect how we use our own lives, how we treat other people, even how we view those who have not yet been born.

Respecting the Life of the Unborn

⁴ The power to pass on life is a grand privilege, divinely given. That life is passed on, not at birth, but at the time of conception. As the *Encyclopædia Britannica* states, it is then that "the life-history of the individual, as a distinct and biological entity, begins." It also says: "A new individual is created when the elements of a potent sperm merge with those of a fertile ovum, or egg."⁶⁰ Similarly, God's interest in a human life begins before birth. The psalmist David wrote, saying to God: "You kept me screened off in the belly of my mother. . . . Your eyes saw *even the embryo of me*, and in your book all its parts were down in writing." —Psalm 139:13-16; Ecclesiastes 11:5.

⁵ The lives of millions of unborn children are deliberately ended each year by abortion. Is this morally right? Some argue that the unborn baby is not conscious of life and is incapable of existing outside the womb. But that is also basically true of a newborn baby. At birth it has no grasp of life's meaning, nor could it continue existing apart from constant care. The living cell formed at conception becomes such a baby if not

4. (a) When is life passed on to one's offspring? (b) What shows whether God is interested in a human life before birth?

5. Why are the arguments put forth in an effort to justify abortion not sound?

interfered with. So if taking the life of a newborn is viewed as a crime nearly everywhere, and tremendous efforts are made to save even premature babies, why, then, is it not also a crime to take the life of the unborn? Why should life be viewed as sacred only *after* it leaves the womb and not also while inside the womb?

⁶ The important thing is not just how men view matters but what God, the Giver of life, says. To Jehovah the life of the unborn child is precious, not to be trifled with. He gave a law to ancient Israel specifically protecting that life. If, in a struggle between two men, a pregnant woman was injured or a miscarriage resulted, this law set forth strict penalties. (Exodus 21: 22, 23) Taking the life of an unborn child deliberately would be even more serious. According to God's law, anyone who deliberately took human life was to be sentenced to death as a murderer. (Numbers 35:30, 31) God maintains the same high regard for life now.

⁷ Deep respect for God's will regarding the life of the unborn child works to real benefit. By making parents fully responsible for that life, Jehovah provides a curb to sexual promiscuity with all its bad effects. These include sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, illegitimate children, broken families, and the mental strain of an unclean conscience. Thus, respect for life can contribute to family peace now and is an important factor in our gaining future blessings.

6. How does the Bible show God's view toward the deliberate taking of the life of an unborn child?

7. Against what are we protected when we respect God's will regarding the life of an unborn child?

Respect for Your Own Life

⁸ What about the way we treat our own life? Many people say: 'I didn't choose to be born. So what I do with my life is up to me. I'll do whatever I want.' But must a gift be requested for the receiver to appreciate it? Life itself is undeniably good. It is only human imperfection and hurtfulness that rob life of much of its joy. Jehovah God is not to blame for that. And he promises to correct it by his Kingdom government. So, we should live the life he gives us in a way that shows respect for his will and purpose.—Romans 12:1.

⁹ One way that we can show such appreciation is by moderation in food and drink. Gluttony and drunkenness are condemned by God. (Proverbs 23:20, 21) Also, just as eating in moderation is proper so is the use of alcoholic beverages in moderation. This is shown by many scriptures.—Deuteronomy 14:26; Isaiah 25:6; Luke 7:33, 34; 1 Timothy 5:23.

¹⁰ So it is not drinking that is condemned in the Bible. It is alcohol abuse. And with good reason, for that damages the body, makes drinkers act stupidly, and can even make them a danger to others. (Proverbs 23:29-35; Ephesians 5:18) In the United States alone, at least 10 million people suffer from alcoholism, one result being over 30,000 deaths annually from cirrhosis of the liver. The National Council on Alcoholism says:

8. Why should we show respect for God's will in the way we treat our own body?

9. What does the Bible say about gluttony and drunkenness?

10. (a) How does a drunkard show disrespect for life? (b) As shown at 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10, why is it important to avoid drunkenness?

“The total cost to the nation is nearly 43 billion dollars a year due to absenteeism, health and welfare services, property damage and medical expenses. . . . Of all fatal accidents occurring on the roads today, 50% involve alcohol. Over 80% of the fire deaths, 65% of drownings, 22% of home accidents, 77% of falls, 36% of pedestrian accidents and 55% of arrests are linked to the use of alcohol. Up to 44% of pilots involved in accidents have been drinking. Violent behavior attributed to alcohol use accounts for approximately 65% of murders, 40% of assaults, 35% of rapes, 30% of other sex crimes, 30% of suicides, 55% of fights or assaults in the home and 60% of cases of child abuse.”⁶¹ The cost in broken homes, ruined lives, and human suffering is beyond calculation. Thus it is not surprising that God’s Word says: “Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, . . . nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God’s kingdom.”—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

¹¹ True, some feel keenly the depressing effect of the world situation. Its wars, crime, inflation, poverty, and also its stress and pressures contribute to personal problems. But nothing is gained by trying to escape these through harmful excessive drinking. This only creates more problems for oneself and for others and, in the process, destroys one’s dignity, purpose in living, and standing with God.

Use of Drugs

¹² In trying to escape from the problems of life, many

11. Is it sensible to try to escape from personal problems by excessive drinking?

12. Why do many persons turn to drugs?

people have turned to hallucinogenic drugs. Users of such drugs exchange reality for a dreamy feeling or trancelike state. Many use hard drugs such as heroin and cocaine. Some take large doses of various drugs in the form of pills. How are their lives affected?

¹³ Their use of these drugs easily leads to loss of self-control, producing effects similar to those seen in a drunk person. (Proverbs 23:29-34) And it is generally recognized that these drugs can be dangerous. In New York City, for example, heroin addiction is the leading cause of death among persons between the ages of 18 and 35. What gross disregard for the gift of life!

¹⁴ But what of the soft drug marijuana? It too can be dangerous in several ways. Marijuana users are often exposed to stronger drugs through contacts with drug sellers and other users. Also, many who have come to depend on the drug, believing that it will relieve tension and depression, are likely to go on to stronger drugs.

¹⁵ But even if this does not happen, smoking marijuana is dangerous. It contains more cancer-causing agents than do cigarettes, and it is more damaging to the lungs. Continued use can cause liver damage, genetic defects, and brain damage. Canada's Addiction Research Foundation says that marijuana "is a powerful drug with a broad range of risks to health."⁶² A drug expert said: "Marijuana is a very harmful drug. Over the past 10 years something like 10,000 papers have been published in the scientific community pointing

13. What effects do some of these drugs have on the user, and how does the Bible warn of these?

14, 15. Why are those who smoke marijuana not showing respect for the gift of life?

out the health risk.” He noted “an acute risk which is very serious in adolescents trying to memorise,” in that it weakens memory storage and the ability to concentrate. Of the marijuana user, he said: “He cannot drive a car properly or use a typewriter. Prolonged use causes more serious damage to the immunity system which defends the body against disease.”⁶³ Women who smoke marijuana during pregnancy have a much greater risk of having children with brain damage. In view of all of this, can it be said that using marijuana shows respect for the gift of life?

¹⁶ There is another powerful reason for avoiding the use of drugs. They can open the way for a person to come under the control of the demons. This linking of drugs with occultism is by no means new. Sorcerers in the past employed drugs. Vine’s *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* observes: “In sorcery, the use of drugs, whether simple or potent, was generally accompanied by incantations and appeals to occult powers.” These comments are made in connection with the Greek word rendered “practice of spiritism” (*phar·ma·ki’a*, literally “druggery”) at Galatians 5:20. (See also Revelation 9:21; 18:23.) So drugs can expose one to demon influence. How could a person who has respect for his Life-giver expose himself to that danger for just a momentary feeling?

¹⁷ It is well known that drug use is inseparably linked

16. To what other serious danger can the use of drugs expose a person, and how should this affect our view on the matter?

17, 18. (a) What other bad fruitage has become associated with drug use? (b) So, how do Jehovah’s Christian witnesses view the use of drugs?

with crime and the moral breakdown in society. Illicit drug sales are a major source of income for organized crime. Many drug addicts steal to support their habit. Others turn to prostitution. Families are torn apart when a member becomes an addict. Pregnant mothers pass on addiction to their babies, who sometimes die undergoing the agonies of withdrawal. And in most lands the possession and use of such drugs for non-medical reasons is illegal.—Matthew 22:17-21.

¹⁸ Do you want to have anything to do with a practice that is associated with all that bad fruitage? Jehovah's Witnesses do not! They want no part of the use of drugs for thrills or to flee from reality. They have a high regard for life and want to use it in a way that is consistent with God's will.

Use of Tobacco and Similar Products

¹⁹ More common today is the use of tobacco and, in some lands, betel nut and coca leaves. Each damages the body and, in some cases, the mind. Governments have warned of tobacco's connection with diseases such as lung cancer, heart ailments, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema. Does it show respect for the gift of life to use such addictive and harmful products?

²⁰ One might say that these things are all God's creation. True, but so are mushrooms. Yet some vari-

19. Why does respect for the gift of life enter into one's view toward use of tobacco, betel nut, and the leaves of the coca plant?
20, 21. (a) Does the fact that the Bible does not condemn such habits by name mean that they are all right? (b) What Bible principles show that such habits have no place in the life of a servant of God?

eties prove fatal if eaten. Another might say that the Bible does not specifically condemn such habits. No, but, as we have seen, there are many things not specifically condemned in the Bible that are obviously wrong. The Bible nowhere specifically forbids using a neighbor's backyard to dump garbage. Yet its command to "love your neighbor as yourself" should be enough for any of us to recognize how wrong that would be. Similarly, smoking displays lack of love, since the fumes may irritate others and can even damage their health.—Matthew 22:39.

²¹ At 2 Corinthians 7:1 God's Word tells us to "cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear." For something to be "holy" means for it to be "clean, untarnished, uncorrupted." Jehovah keeps himself clean from corruption, never lowering himself to act in an unholy manner. Rightly he expects us to continue "perfecting holiness" to the extent possible for humans. (Romans 12:1) Also, he expects us to 'love him with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength.' But how can anyone do this if he indulges in practices that defile his body, damage his health, and shorten his life? —Mark 12:29, 30.

²² Though one or another of such habits may seem to have a stranglehold on a person, he can overcome it and gain freedom. Knowledge of God and his purposes provides a powerful motivation for doing so. A person can 'be made new in the force actuating his mind.'

22. What can enable a person to break the hold that such a bad habit may have on him?

(Ephesians 4:23) This will open up a new way of life that results in personal contentment and honors God.

Respect for Life as Represented by Blood

²³ Our blood, too, deserves consideration when we speak of life. God has chosen both human and animal blood as the symbol of life. This is evident from the law he gave to Noah and later to the nation of Israel. The only approved use of blood was sacrificial. (Genesis 9:3, 4; Leviticus 17:10-14) The sacrifices all pictured the one sacrifice of Jesus, by which he poured out his lifeblood on behalf of mankind. (Hebrews 9:11-14) This in itself should cause us to give careful attention to God's will in this matter.

²⁴ Is God's restriction regarding the use of blood still in force for true Christians? Yes, as is shown by the official statement made by the apostles and other elders of the first-century Christian congregation. Under guidance of God's spirit, they wrote: "The holy spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you, except these necessary things, to keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled [hence, unbled] and from fornication. If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper."—Acts 15:28, 29.

²⁵ Many people disregard God's will regarding blood.

23. (a) What is the only use of blood that God approved in his law to Israel? (b) Why should the meaning of those sacrifices cause us to consider carefully God's will in this matter?

24. What does Acts 15:28, 29 say as to the view that Christians should have toward use of blood?

25. By what practices does the world show disregard for God's will regarding the use of blood?

They use it in food, for medical purposes, even in commercial products. But this should not surprise us, since the world shows so little regard for the gift of life itself. However, if we appreciate life and our accountability to God, we will not ignore his will or insult him by violating his commands.

²⁶ Thus, though we should be concerned over our health and seek to protect our lives, there are certain limits to observe. Jesus made this clear when he said: “He that is fond of his soul [or, life] destroys it, but he that hates his soul in this world will safeguard it for everlasting life.”—John 12:25.

²⁷ If it is a question of facing death for obeying God or of disobeying him to avoid death, the servant of God will prefer death to disobedience. By disobeying God, Jesus could have escaped death. But he did not. And men before him had shown the same unbreakable devotion to God. (Matthew 26:38, 39, 51-54; Hebrews 11:32-38) They did not let their present life stand in the way of their qualifying for everlasting life.

²⁸ Is that how you too view life? Do you appreciate that for life to have real meaning, you must live it in harmony with the will of God? Cultivating that viewpoint now is part of preparation for life in God’s New Order. How secure and safe we will then feel, anywhere and at any time, knowing that all those living on earth have genuine respect for God’s gift of life!

26, 27. Why would efforts to preserve one’s present life by disobeying God not show respect for him?

28. By cultivating appreciation for the Bible’s view toward life, for what are we preparing?

Chapter 15

Why Care About Other People?

UNSELFISH concern for others is rare today. Though everyone is born with a capacity for love, when others unfairly seek their own advantage or when one's own efforts to show love are misunderstood, a person may decide it is better just to look out for himself. Others, seeing that some who exploit their fellowman prosper materially, may think that this is the way to success. The result is that many people have a spirit of distrust and have few real friends, if any. What accounts for this unhappy state of affairs?

² Love is missing, the kind of love that manifests itself in sincere concern for the lasting welfare of others. And why is it missing? Getting right to the root of the problem, the Bible states: "He that does not love has not come to know God, because God is love." (1 John 4:8) Of course, many self-seeking individuals do *profess* to believe in God and even attend church. But the fact is that they do not really *know* God. To know God means to be well acquainted with his personality, to recognize his authority, and then to act in harmony with what we know about him. (Jeremiah

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1. (a) What has caused many people to look out for themselves and not be too concerned about others? (b) What has been the result?
 2. (a) How does the Bible identify the root of the problem? (b) What does it mean to know God?

22:16; Titus 1:16) So, then, to find the true enjoyment in life that comes only when one expresses love and receives it, we must get to know God well and apply what we learn.

³ “By this the love of God was made manifest in our case, because God sent forth his only-begotten Son into the world that we might gain life through him,” wrote the apostle John. “The love is in this respect, not that we have [first] loved God, but that he loved us and sent forth his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins. Beloved ones, if this is how God loved us, then we are ourselves under obligation to love one another.” (1 John 4:9-11) God did not let the unloving conduct of mankind stifle his own love. As stated at Romans 5:8: “God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

⁴ How many people do you love so much that you would lay down your life for them—people who have never done anything for you? If you are a parent, who is there that you would be willing to have your child die for? That is the kind of love that God showed for us. (John 3:16) How does knowing this make you feel toward God? If we really appreciate what he has done, we will find that it is no burden to obey his commandments.—1 John 5:3.

⁵ On the night before his death Jesus gave his disci-

3. How has God shown his great love for mankind?

4. How does that make you personally feel toward God?

5. (a) What is the “new commandment” that Jesus gave to his disciples? (b) How is our devotion to God as ruler involved in it? (c) What, then, does obedience to this “new commandment” require?

ples one of those commandments. It would identify them as being different from the rest of the world. He said: "I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another." Jesus' commandment was "new" in that he was saying to love others, not merely as they loved themselves, but "just as I have loved you"—to be willing to lay down their lives for one another. (John 13:34, 35; 1 John 3:16) This kind of love shows our devotion to God by proving false the Devil's claim that no human will obey God at the risk of his own life. (Job 2:1-10) Obviously, obedience to this "new commandment" requires deep concern for one another. —James 1:27; 2:15, 16; 1 Thessalonians 2:8.

⁶ But Christ died for the world of mankind, not just his disciples. Thus the Scriptures urge: "As long as we have time favorable for it, let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith." (Galatians 6:10) Opportunities to 'work good toward all' arise every day. When our love is not narrow, but openhearted and generous, we imitate God, "since he makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous."—Matthew 5:43-48.

Respect for the Person and Property of Others

⁷ We live in the midst of an unloving world. You perhaps realize that you have not always been as considerate of others as you could have been. But if a

6. Toward whom else is love to be shown, and why?

7. What may influence how we treat the person and property of others?

person is to serve God, there is need for a conscientious effort for him to ‘make his mind over.’ (Romans 12: 1, 2) He needs to change his attitude toward the person and property of others.

⁸ In some areas there is shocking disregard for what belongs to others. Just for a thrill, youths destroy both private and public property. Or they deliberately deface things that others have worked hard to acquire. Some may express dismay at such vandalism, yet contribute to it by discarding litter in parks, on streets, or in public buildings. Are these actions consistent with Jesus’ admonition: “All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them”? (Matthew 7:12) Such unloving conduct demonstrates that one is not in full accord with God’s purpose for this earth to become a paradise.

⁹ In many places, concern for one’s life and possessions makes locked doors, barred windows, and watchdogs commonplace. Stores raise prices to compensate for what is stolen. But stealing will have no place in God’s New Order. Hence, any who hope to be there must learn to live now in a way that contributes to the security of their fellowmen. The Bible shows that a “gift of God” is that a man “see good for all his hard work.” So it is wrong to try to deprive him of the results of his work. (Ecclesiastes 3:13; 5:18) Many people who were dishonest in the past have changed.

8. (a) What shows widespread disregard for the property of others? (b) What counsel in the Bible, if followed, would hold a person back from doing such things?

9. (a) How does stealing affect the lives of all? (b) Why is stealing wrong in the eyes of God?

Not only do they refrain from stealing but they have also learned the joy of giving to others. (Acts 20:35) With a desire to please God, they have taken to heart what is written at Ephesians 4:28: "Let the stealer steal no more, but rather let him do hard work, doing with his hands what is good work, that he may have something to distribute to someone in need."

¹⁰ Often, especially when things go wrong, what others need is not something material, but they need kindness. However, what happens in situations where a person's failings come to light? There may be angry outbursts, abusive speech, or cutting remarks. Even some who acknowledge that this course is wrong fail to control their tongue. How can a person overcome such a habit? Basically, what is lacking is love, and that indicates a need to get to know God. When a person comes to appreciate the extent of God's mercy to him, he will find it far less difficult to forgive others. He may even begin to see ways to aid the offender, offering kind assistance with a view to improvement.—Matthew 18: 21-35; Ephesians 4:31-5:2.

¹¹ It is true that other people may not apply this fine counsel from God's Word in their dealings with us. Despite our sincere motives, we may at times find ourselves the object of their abuse. What will we do then? The Bible counsels: "Do not let yourself be conquered by the evil, but keep conquering the evil

10. (a) How, by the way we speak to others, can we show consideration for them? (b) What will help a person to learn to show love in this way?

11. Why should we not be abusive in our speech, even when others are unkind to us?

with the good.” (Romans 12:17-21; 1 Peter 2:21-23) Continued kindness on our part may in time soften their attitude and bring out their better qualities. Whatever their reaction, when we continue to display kindness, we show that we uphold God’s way of ruling, which is based on love.

Overcoming Racial, National, Social Prejudice

¹² An individual who has real love is not influenced by race, skin color, nationality, or social status. Why not? Because he appreciates the Bible truth that “[God] made out of one man every nation of men.” (Acts 17:26) All humans are therefore related. No race is inherently superior to another.

¹³ No one has any reason to boast because of his ancestry, race, color, nationality, or station in life. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) Therefore everyone is dependent on the ransom sacrifice of Christ. And the Bible shows that those who will be spared through the coming “great tribulation” come from “all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.”—Revelation 7:9, 14-17.

¹⁴ Attempting to justify his prejudice, a person may call to mind a bad experience that he had with someone of a certain race or nationality. But was everyone of that race or nationality involved in the wrongdoing? And have not people of one’s own race or nationality

12, 13. How does the Bible help a person to eliminate any feelings of racial, national, or social prejudice?

14. Why is a bad personal experience not a valid basis for prejudice against people of a certain race or nationality?

been guilty of the very same thing? If we hope to live in God's peaceful New Order, we need to clean out of our hearts any pride that tends to alienate us from other people.

¹⁵ What is in our hearts sooner or later comes out of our mouths. As Christ Jesus said: "Out of the heart's abundance [the] mouth speaks." (Luke 6:45) What if remarks reflecting prejudice were to stumble someone who was showing interest in Jehovah's organization? The matter is so serious that Jesus warned: "Whoever stumbles one of these little ones that believe, it would be finer for him if a millstone such as is turned by an ass were put around his neck and he were actually pitched into the sea."—Mark 9:42.

¹⁶ Christians are obligated to show a loving interest in others regardless of their race, nationality, or station in life. (James 2:1-9) As Jesus urged: "When you spread a feast, invite poor people, crippled, lame, blind; and you will be happy, because they have nothing with which to repay you." (Luke 14:13, 14) By taking this kind of caring interest in other people, we reflect the loving qualities of our heavenly Father.

Loving Concern for the Eternal Welfare of Others

¹⁷ Our concern for others should not be limited to

15. If a person's comments about race or nationality were to stumble a fellow believer, how would this affect his own standing before God and Christ?

16. How did Jesus indicate the impartiality we should show other people?

17. (a) What is the most valuable thing that we can share with others? (b) Why should we feel moved to do so?

their physical needs. Nor would our love be complete simply because we were kind to all sorts of people. For life to have real meaning, people need to know Jehovah and his purposes. In prayer to his Father, Jesus said: “This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ.” (John 17:3) If you have read this book from the beginning, you know how to gain that prize. You have seen for yourself what the Scriptures foretell about the “great tribulation,” and the physical evidences that confirm its nearness. You know that God’s Kingdom is the only hope for mankind. But does love for Jehovah and for your fellowman move you to share this vital knowledge with others?

¹⁸ When speaking of “the conclusion of the system of things,” Jesus foretold: “This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:3, 14) What a privilege it is to represent the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, Jehovah himself, as one shares in this “witness”! Opportunity to take part in this special work is still open, but not for much longer.

¹⁹ When considering the prospect of sharing in this “witness to all the nations,” it is good to realize that it is, not one’s personal ability, but God who causes the message to produce results. (Acts 16:14; 1 Corinthians 3:6) If you are moved by a willing heart, Jehovah can

18. (a) At Matthew 24:14, what work did Jesus foretell for our day? (b) How should we view participation in it?

19. Why should we not allow any feeling of lack in personal ability to hold us back from sharing in this work?

The kind of love Jehovah's servants must have obligates them to show genuine consideration for others regardless of race, nationality, or station in life



use you to accomplish his will. As the apostle Paul said: "Now through the Christ we have this sort of confidence toward God. Not that we of ourselves are adequately qualified to reckon anything as issuing from ourselves, but our being adequately qualified issues from God."—2 Corinthians 3:4-6.

²⁰ We should not expect, of course, that everyone will respond favorably. Many will be indifferent. Some will oppose. Yet they can change. Saul of Tarsus, who

20. (a) Will everyone respond favorably to the good news? (b) What good is accomplished by preaching to people who are indifferent or even opposed?

was once a persecutor of Christians, became a zealous apostle of Jesus. (1 Timothy 1:12, 13) Whether others know it or not, they need the Kingdom message. So we need to be concerned about them, willing to expend ourselves to further their lasting welfare. (1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8) Even if they do not want the Kingdom message, good is still accomplished. The witness is given, Jehovah's name is magnified, the 'separating' of the people is done, and we demonstrate our own loyalty to Jehovah.—Matthew 25:31-33.

Caring About What Happens to Your Own Family

²¹ Your efforts to help others to benefit from Jehovah's loving provisions should also be directed to your own family. A family head, for example, is responsible for the spiritual growth of his family. This is directly influenced by the regularity of his arrangements for family discussion of God's Word. And when a father's prayers on behalf of the family show depth of devotion and gratitude, this can mold the attitude of the entire household.

²² His responsibility also includes administering discipline. When problems arise, it may seem easier to ignore them. But if discipline is administered only when the father becomes irritated, or if problems are handled only when they become serious, something is missing. Says Proverbs 13:24: 'The father who *loves* his

21. What responsibility does a family head have as to the spiritual well-being of his household?

22. Why is it important for a father to discipline his children, and what should motivate him?

son is he that does look for him with discipline.' Hence a loving father administers discipline consistently. He patiently explains things to his children and considers the mental, emotional, and physical limitations of each one. (Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21) If you are a father, do you have that kind of love for your children? Are you willing to shoulder this responsibility, with an eye not only on the present but also on the future welfare of your family?—Proverbs 23:13, 14; 29:17.

²³ A wife, too, can make a major contribution to the family. Her cooperation with her husband and her wise use of time in molding their children's lives in a godly way is usually reflected in the conduct and attitude of the children. (Proverbs 29:15) Even where there is no father in the home, careful teaching from the Bible coupled with a fine example yields good results.

²⁴ But what if a father who is in the home does not accept God's Word, or even persecutes his wife? What should she do? If she loves Jehovah, she certainly will not turn her back on Him. It is Satan who charged that humans would forsake God if subjected to hardship. She surely does not want to be doing Satan's bidding. (Job 2:1-5; Proverbs 27:11) At the same time, the Bible urges her to seek the lasting welfare of her husband. Forsaking what she knows to be the truth would mean the loss of eternal life for both of them. But if she

23. How can a mother contribute toward the spiritual welfare of her family?

24. (a) If faced with opposition from one's marriage mate, what issue should the believer keep in focus? (b) Under such circumstances, how would love be shown for the unbelieving mate?

remains firm in her faith, she may help him to gain salvation. (1 Corinthians 7:10-16; 1 Peter 3:1, 2) Furthermore, by continuing to honor her marriage vows, even under difficulty, she shows her deep respect for the Author of marriage, Jehovah God.

²⁵ Another powerful reason for a believing parent to be loyal to God when faced with opposition is the children. God gives assurance that the young children of his devoted servants will be preserved through the coming "great tribulation." Even if only one parent is a servant of Jehovah, He counts such young children as "holy." (1 Corinthians 7:14) But if the parent were to "beg off" from doing the will of God, what then? Such parent would give up an approved standing before God not only for himself or herself but also for the young children. (Hebrews 12:25) What a tragic loss that would be!

²⁶ No matter what aspect of life we view, then, it is evident that we need to consider not just ourselves but others too. We will receive love if we practice showing love to others. (Luke 6:38) But to demonstrate genuine love and not to be misled by shortsighted human reasoning, we need to know Jehovah and to enjoy a good relationship with him. Our doing so, however, involves a choice that we must personally make.

25. How does the decision of the parent affect the life prospects of children?

26. To act with real benefit to ourselves and others, what do we need to do?

The Choice Assuring Life in True Peace and Security

WHAT a joy it is to have a real purpose in living, to know where you are going! And what peace of mind and heart comes from the certainty that there is no better course you could possibly take! Such peace and confidence can be yours, but only if you make the right choice now.

² The evidence is clear that we cannot look to this world as the source of true peace and security. The commercial, religious, and political systems, including the United Nations with its proclamations of 'peace and security,' cannot bring it. The Bible points us, therefore, to Jehovah God as the only Source of true peace and security. Coming to know him and his purposes helps us to understand why we are here on earth and why things are as they are today. We learn of the great issue involving Jehovah's universal sovereignty, and how it affects each of us. We learn to weigh the rightness and wisdom of our goals, and we gain reliable moral standards by which to live. When faced with sickness, old age, or death, we have the comforting hope of life in a righteous, healthful new order, even by a resurrection from the dead, if necessary.

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1. If we make the right choice, what peace and confidence can be ours now?
 2. How does our coming to know Jehovah and his purposes help us with regard to our outlook on life?

³ No wonder, then, that Isaiah 26:4 exhorts: “Trust in Jehovah, you people, for all times, for in Jah Jehovah is the Rock of times indefinite.” Unchanging, almighty, and eternal, Jehovah is indeed the one on whom to rest all of our hopes. Do you want to enjoy his guidance and protection not just for the present but for all future time in his promised New Order? If so, what must you do?

⁴ Mankind as a whole has been alienated from God because of the sin of our first parents. But God has opened the way to reconciliation and friendship with himself by means of his Son’s sacrifice. (2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Ephesians 2:12, 13) Yet, it is not enough for us now simply to *say* we want God’s friendship.

⁵ We should be willing, even eager, to *prove* to him that we want this, and out of a right motive. For example, do we seek Jehovah’s friendship primarily to escape disaster? If we are to gain a right standing with God, it cannot be just for this period of urgency before his judgment nor just to survive the coming “great tribulation.” (Matthew 24:21, 22) It must be for all time to come. Only genuine love will give us this motivation. So we can demonstrate the sincerity of our desire for his friendship, Jehovah has set out in his Word certain things we each must do to be reconciled to him.

3. Why is Jehovah the one on whom to rest all our hopes?

4. To gain Jehovah’s favor, what do we need, and what makes it possible?

5. What should be our motivation in seeking Jehovah’s friendship?

A Living Faith

⁶ Jehovah is a God of truth. So we can have absolute confidence in his promises. In fact, “without faith it is impossible to please him well, for he that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him.” (Hebrews 11:6) If you have such faith, then you know that everything that God does has a righteous purpose, and that he always has our best interests at heart. From his creative works and from his written Word, you see that he is not only all-wise and all-powerful but also a God of loving-kindness. He will, of course, never turn aside from his righteous standards. Yet, even though we are imperfect and make mistakes, if we love righteousness, he has a way of dealing with us that will result in blessings.

⁷ Thus, when we receive correction from God, we will know that it is for our eternal welfare. We will come to trust Jehovah as a son or daughter trusts a loving, wise, and strong father. (Psalm 103:13, 14; Proverbs 3:11, 12) Having such faith, we will doubt neither the wisdom of his counsel nor the rightness of his ways, even though for a time we may not entirely understand certain matters. We thereby place ourselves among those whom the psalmist describes: “Abundant peace belongs to those loving your law, and for them there is no stumbling block.”—Psalm 119:165; Proverbs 3:5-8.

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6. To please God, what confidence must we have regarding him?
 7. How will confidence in Jehovah’s rightness and wisdom safeguard us?

⁸ But “faith without works is dead,” James 2:26 points out. Genuine faith moves a person to action. And one of the first things it moves a person to do is what the apostle Peter urged: “Repent . . . and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, that seasons of refreshing may come from the person of Jehovah.” (Acts 3:19) What does this mean?

Repenting and Turning Around

⁹ In the Bible, repentance denotes a change of mind accompanied by heartfelt regret for a former way of life or for wrong actions. (2 Corinthians 7:9-11) But if we are to enjoy the promised “seasons of refreshing” from God, we cannot just repent over wrong acts of the past. Instead, we must show repentance because we recognize that, as offspring of Adam, our very *nature* is sinful. As the apostle John states: “If we make the statement: ‘We have no sin,’ we are misleading ourselves . . . we are making [God] a liar, and his word is not in us.” (1 John 1:8, 10) We should properly mirror our Creator, reflecting ‘his image and likeness.’ Yet inherited sin keeps us from doing this in a perfect way. Hence, we ‘miss the mark,’ which is what the word “sin” means in the Bible.—Genesis 1:26; Romans 3:23.

¹⁰ So we need God’s forgiveness. (Matthew 6:12) We realize that we owe our life to him as our Creator. But now we learn that through the sacrifice of God’s Son,

8. (a) Why is faith alone not enough? (b) To what action mentioned at Acts 3:19 should faith move us?

9. (a) What is true repentance? (b) Over what do we need to repent?

10, 11. (a) To whom are we indebted for life, and why? (b) So, how should we be using our lives?

mankind was also “bought with a price” of great value. So we should not be “slaves of men,” not even of our own selfish desires. (1 Corinthians 7:23) Yet, before learning and accepting the truth, is that not what all of us were?—John 8:31-34.

¹¹ In your heart, do you appreciate God’s gift of his Son and what he has done through Christ to provide escape from bondage to sin and death? Then surely you will sincerely regret any past failure to use your life in obedience to your Creator. This will move you to heartfelt repentance over having followed a life course like that of the world, out of harmony with God’s will and purposes.—Acts 17:28, 30; Revelation 4:11.

¹² This true repentance leads to a ‘turning around,’ which is what the word “conversion” means. The genuinely repentant person does not merely regret having misused his life. He *rejects* that wrong course and actually comes to hate his wrong ways. He shows this by ‘turning around’ and performing “works that befit repentance,” bringing his life into harmony with God’s will.—Acts 26:20; Romans 6:11.

¹³ Part of this repenting and turning around includes what Jesus called ‘disowning ourselves.’ (Matthew 16:24) That is, we no longer live according to just our own selfish desires with no concern for God’s will and purposes. Instead, we recognize that Jehovah God actually has full claim on our lives as our Creator and

12. How does a repentant person show that he really has rejected his former course?

13. (a) What is the meaning of Jesus’ statement that his followers must ‘disown themselves’? (b) For what reason do we thus submit ourselves to Jehovah, and how does it affect our lives?

our Purchaser through his Son's ransom sacrifice. As the Bible expresses it, we 'do not belong to ourselves, for we were bought with a price.' (1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20) So, instead of misusing the grand freedom opened to us by the truth, we submit ourselves fully to the doing of God's will. (Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 2:16) And we do this not only because it is right but because we love Jehovah God with 'all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.' (Mark 12:29, 30) Surely this calls for each of us to live a life of dedication to God. Instead of being a burden, this course enables us to enjoy life as never before.—Matthew 11:28-30.

Making Public Declaration for Salvation

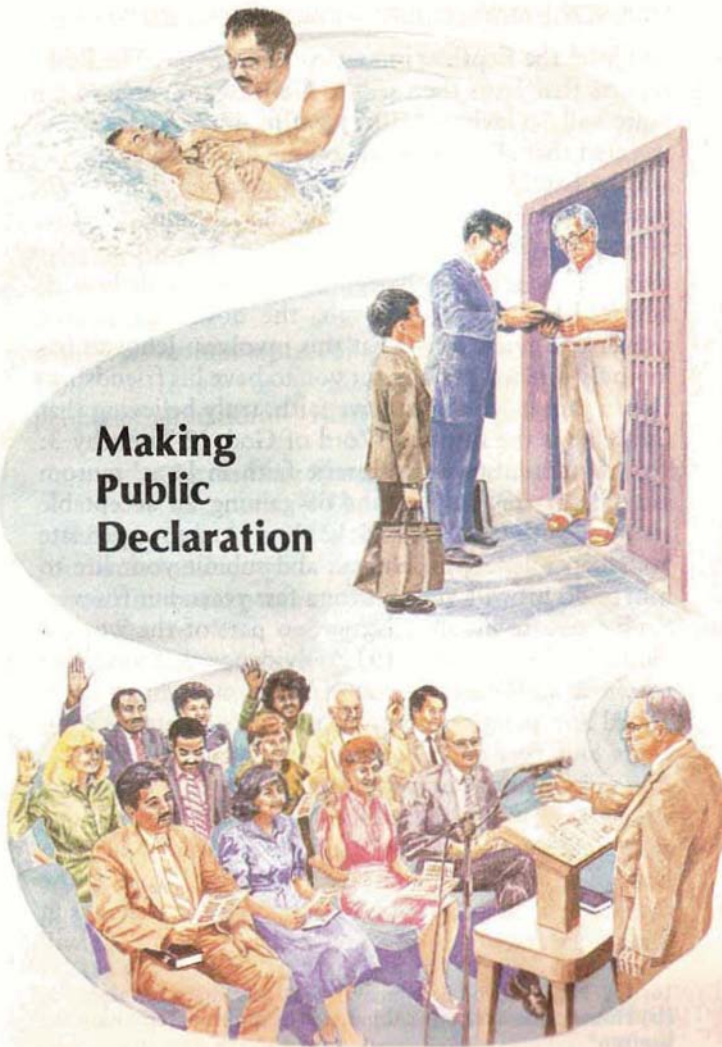
¹⁴ It is a fine thing to express in prayer our faith in God's provisions, acknowledging his ownership of us. But we can and should want to carry our expression of faith still further, as Romans 10:10 tells us: "With the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation." This "public" expression of our faith in Jehovah and his provisions should come gladly from a heart full of appreciation. Making this declaration involves dedicating our life to Jehovah to do his will and symbolizing this by water baptism.

¹⁵ When Jesus Christ began his public ministry, he

14. (a) When a person acknowledges Jehovah's rightful ownership of him, how can he make expression of this to God? (b) What else should he desire to do, as indicated at Romans 10:10?

15. Why should we think seriously about water baptism?

**Making
Public
Declaration**



had John the Baptizer immerse him in water. The Bible reports that Jesus then said to God: “I am come to do your will.” (Hebrews 10:9; Psalm 40:7, 8) Jesus instructed that all those who become his disciples should also be baptized. Are you such a disciple? Then your water baptism will be a “public declaration” of this. —Matthew 28:19, 20.

¹⁶ It is a grand privilege to become a dedicated, baptized witness of Jehovah, the Sovereign of the universe. Review now what this involves: Jehovah has lovingly opened the way for you to have his friendship. But to gain it, you must have faith, truly believing that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) You also must exercise faith in Jesus’ ransom sacrifice as the only means of gaining an acceptable standing with God. (Acts 4:12) You need to appreciate your dependence on Jehovah and submit your life to him to do his will, not just for a few years, but forever. Such a course involves being “no part of the world.” (John 17:16; 1 John 2:15) As evidence that you have repented and ‘turned around,’ you must have abandoned any practices contrary to God’s righteous standards and you must be doing what God commands. Have you made your mind over so that this is now the way you view life? (Romans 12:1, 2) If so, the Bible encourages you to make “public declaration” of such faith. The first step would be to approach one of the overseers of the congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses in your area and let him know how you feel. He will

-
16. (a) How can you determine if you are ready to get baptized?
 (b) How do the overseers aid individuals in their preparation for baptism?

arrange for a review with you of the basic teachings of the Bible in preparation for baptism.

¹⁷ The step of baptism will not mark the end of your making ‘public declaration of your faith.’ As a Christian dedicated to Jehovah God, you will want to declare your hope by expressing yourself in public assembly, ‘lauding him in the big congregation.’ (Psalm 35:18; 40:9, 10) You will also want to share in the special work of “public declaration” that Jehovah assigns to all who would serve him—preaching the good news of the Kingdom in all the world and making disciples of people of all nations.—Matthew 24:14; 28:19.

Cherishing Your Relationship With God

¹⁸ Now, then, how can you ensure that, once gained, your relationship with Jehovah will *endure* for an eternity in joyful peace and security? For one thing you will want to keep growing in knowledge of him. Through personal study you will find real pleasure in acquiring the treasures of wisdom stored up in God’s Word. You can be like the person Psalm 1:2, 3 describes: “His delight is in the law of Jehovah, and in his law he reads in an undertone day and night. And he will certainly become like a tree planted by streams of water, that gives its own fruit in its season and the foliage of which does not wither, and everything he does will succeed.” Yes, gaining knowledge of God, and applying

17. Using the Bible, show how we must continue to make ‘public declaration of our faith.’

18. How important is personal study in ensuring that one’s relationship with Jehovah will endure?

it, will enable you to walk in “ways of pleasantness” and in ‘roadways of peace,’ because it will give you the wisdom to face all of life’s problems. (Proverbs 3:13, 17, 18) Your thirst for such Bible knowledge now will demonstrate your suitability for life in God’s New Order, because then “the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea.”—Isaiah 11:9.

¹⁹ Something else that you vitally need is regular attendance at meetings with other servants of Jehovah. There you will find genuine incitement to love and fine works, encouragement to persevere in your right relationship with God. (Hebrews 10:23-25) The pleasant, familylike association of Jehovah’s servants offers strengthening evidence that the peacefulness and security promised for God’s New Order are a reality. —Psalm 133:1; 1 Corinthians 14:26, 33.

²⁰ In the congregation you can benefit from another loving provision. Jesus, the ‘Fine Shepherd,’ has ‘undershepherds’ on earth. These are the overseers, or spiritually older men, who care for his “sheep.” They are a powerful factor in promoting peace and security among God’s congregated people worldwide. (1 Peter 5:2, 3) These men “prove to be like a hiding place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rain-storm, like streams of water in a waterless country, like the shadow of a heavy crag in an exhausted land.” (Isaiah 32:1, 2) Yes, in stormy times of pressure and

19. Why is regular meeting attendance a necessity in the life of Jehovah’s people?

20. How can the older men in the congregation aid us in times of opposition and personal difficulty?

stress due to worldly opposition or personal difficulties, by their rocklike faith and their firm adherence to God's Word, these spiritually older men can give real support. They can supply you with refreshing counsel and encouragement.

²¹ It is true that human imperfections will manifest themselves, even among God's servants. We all make mistakes daily. (James 3:2) But will we let ourselves be stumbled by the imperfections of others and let this damage our relationship with Jehovah? Since we, too, make mistakes, should we not show others the same forgiveness we want for ourselves? (Matthew 6:14, 15) If we are to prove ourselves fit subjects for God's peaceful New Order, we must now demonstrate our ability to get along with others in peace. We cannot love God without also loving our spiritual brothers and sisters for whom Christ died.—1 John 4:20, 21.

²² Your right relationship with God gives you another grand privilege: the approach to God by prayer with the assurance that he hears you. Cherish that privilege and use it daily, throughout the day. Problems will arise. Your own imperfections may trouble you. Yet the Bible counsels: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Philippians 4:6, 7.

21. What will prevent us from ever allowing the imperfections of others to damage our relationship with Jehovah?

22. What place should prayer have in our lives?

²³ By choosing to serve Jehovah, the true Source of peace and security, and placing your hope in his New Order, you will have made a right start. Now, as the Bible says, “you have need of endurance, in order that, after you have done the will of God, you may receive the fulfillment of the promise.” (Hebrews 10:36) Having tasted the blessing of a right relationship with Jehovah, determine never to give it up. Never let the fleeting pleasures of the world draw you away. Though trials from an enemy world become severe, remember that these are temporary. Compared with the blessings that Jehovah will give those who love him, such sufferings are as nothing.—2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

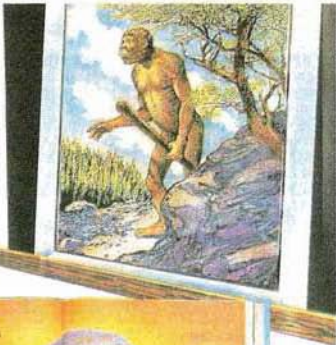
²⁴ Continue in the course of godly devotion, confident that it is the best way of life now and that it will lead to eternal life in God’s New Order. (1 Timothy 4:8) Rejoice in the evidence of the nearness of that New Order and the everlasting peace and security it will bring. As you keep building your relationship with Jehovah, always feel as the inspired psalmist did, who wrote: “God is the rock of my heart and my share to time indefinite. For, look! the very ones keeping away from you will perish. You will certainly silence every one immorally leaving you. But as for me, the drawing near to God is good for me. In the Sovereign Lord Jehovah I have placed my refuge, to declare all your works.”—Psalm 73:26-28.

23. When faced with trials and sufferings for our faith, what will help us to endure?

24. (a) In what do we especially have reason to rejoice today?
 (b) Like the psalmist, how should we always feel about Jehovah and our relationship with him?

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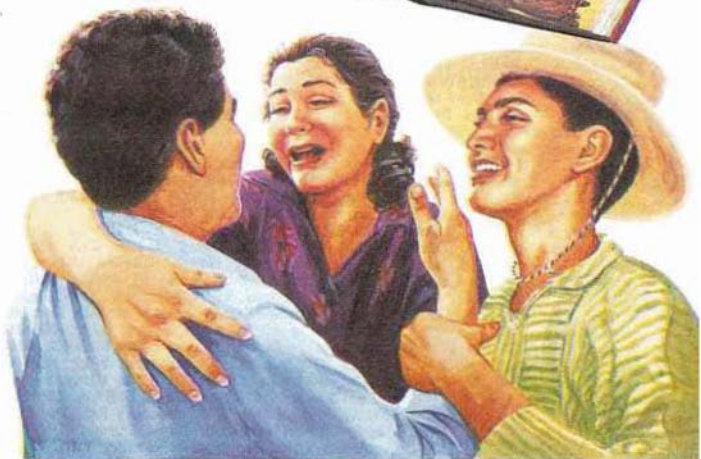


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