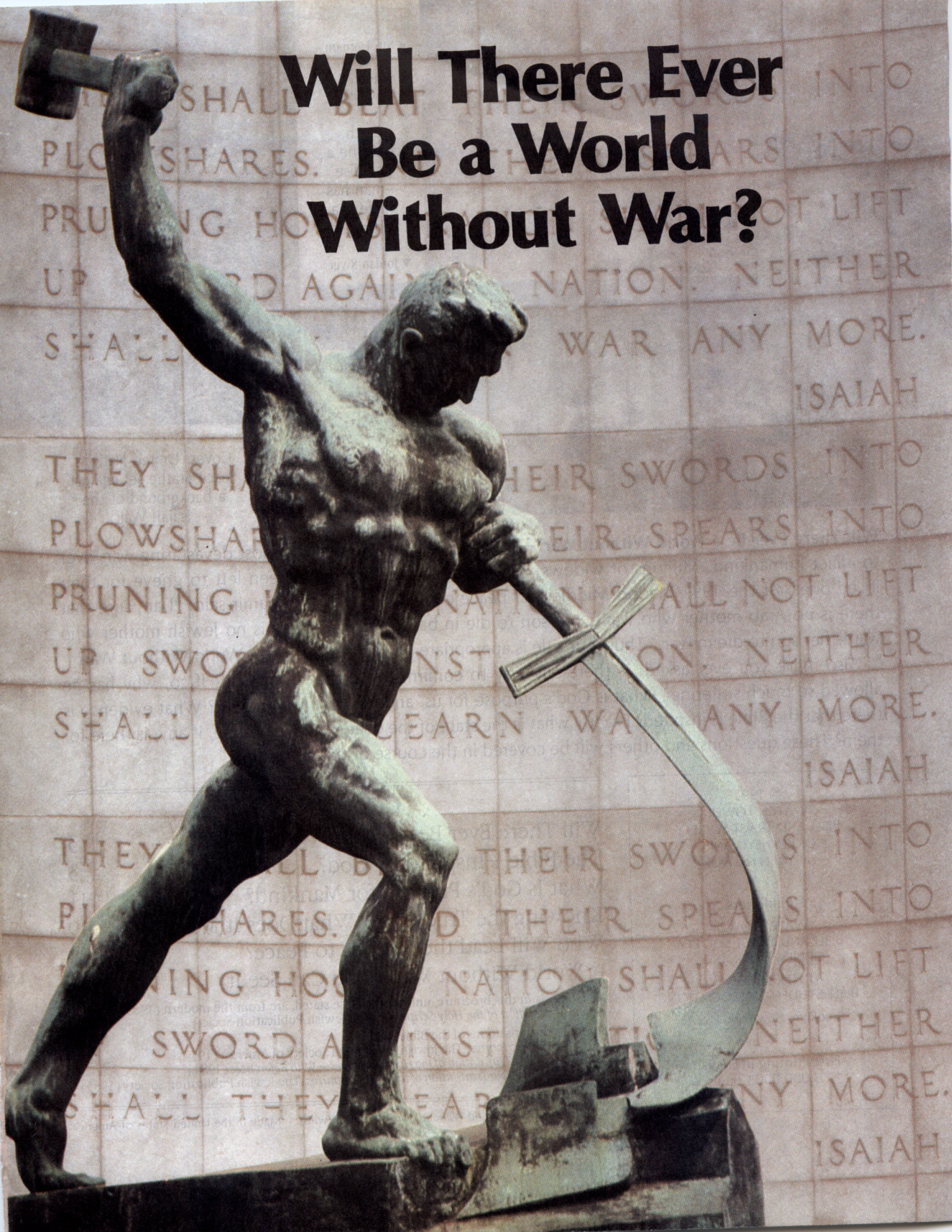


Will There Ever Be a World Without War?



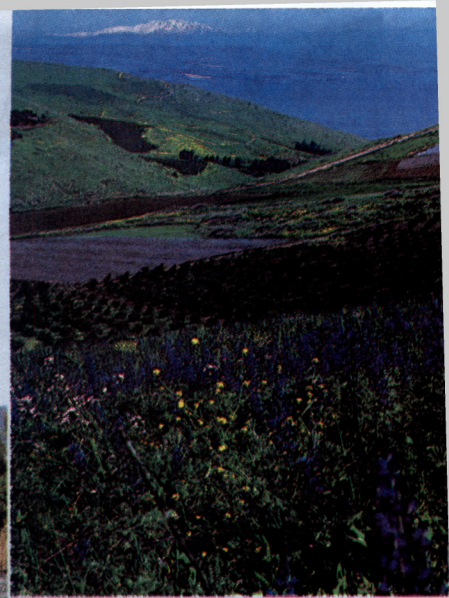


◀ Mt. Hermon

Near the Sea
of Galilee ▶

Earth
could be a
paradise
—man has
made it a
battlefield

▼ Jordan River



Cover: United Nations
Peace Statue set against
a background of the
Isaiah Wall

Will There Ever Be a World Without War?—In our time we have seen the most devastating wars ever to afflict humankind. Millions of widows, widowers, and orphans have been left to grieve for their loved ones. At the 1991 Madrid Middle East peace conference, Yitzhak Shamir said: "I am sure that there is no Arab mother who wants her son to die in battle—just as there is no Jewish mother who wants her son to die in war." Thus, our title is appropriate, *Will There Ever Be a World Without War?*

Also, have you ever asked: Is there any way to confirm the existence of God? If so, why has he allowed so much suffering? What is God's purpose for us, and how can we know it? What evidence is there that the Bible is inspired? Exactly what is the state of the dead, and what hope, if any, is there for them? These questions and others will be covered in the course of this discussion.

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All citations in this brochure, unless otherwise stated, are from the modern (1985) *Tanakh*, *A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, The Jewish Publication Society.

Symbols for translations of the Bible used:

JP - *The Holy Scriptures*, The Jewish Publication Society of America (1955)

NW - *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References* (1984)

Ta - *Tanakh*, *A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, The Jewish Publication Society (1985)

Will There Ever Be a World Without War? English (wi-E) Made in the United States of America

WILL THERE EVER BE A WORLD WITHOUT WAR?

EVER since its establishment as a modern state in 1948, Israel has been in readiness against its neighbors. This confrontation, this running dispute, has left a trail of bereaved and mourning mothers, wives, children, and others—on both sides. Yet, one of mankind's natural desires, especially at the family level, is to be able to live in peace.

² However, war and strife are not just Middle Eastern problems. Powder kegs waiting to be ignited seem to be lying around all over the world. So the question is, Will peace, not just in the Middle East but world peace, ever be achieved? If so, how will it be accomplished? Will it be by means of mankind's political, religious, and ethnic goodwill? Does that seem likely? Or will God, the earth's Owner and Creator, have to intervene?

³ The Hebrew Scriptures give us heartening

1, 2. What questions arise regarding the world's future?

3-5. (a) What promise regarding peace is given in the Bible? (b) What questions need further investigation?

prophecies about a time when the nations "shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not take up sword against nation; they shall never again know war."—Isaiah 2:4.

⁴ It was not only Isaiah who spoke of this world-encompassing peace. (Psalm 46:9-11 [46:8-10, NW]) A time of complete peace and harmony among men is really a major theme in the Bible. As Israeli statesman and author Abba Eban noted, the Hebrew Scriptures gave the ancient Israelites a unique future perspective and hope, as "Israel alone looked forward to a golden age in the future."¹ Yes, a marvelous future is near at hand for all mankind, an end to war, and much more. Isaiah also prophesied of Paradise conditions earth wide—an end to poverty, sickness, and even death.—Isaiah 11:9; 25:8; 33:24; 35:5, 6; 65:21.

⁵ Some may respond, "Those prophecies were written thousands of years ago, yet war still exists. How can the Bible be considered a reliable source of hope? What concrete proof exists that the Bible is truly the Word of God?"

THE BIBLE—INSPIRED BY GOD?

THE *New Encyclopædia Britannica* calls the Bible "probably the most influential collection of books in human history." The Bible is held in high regard by many because of its antiquity—parts were written 3,500 years ago. Yet, its practical, up-to-date advice is one of the reasons that over three billion copies have been distributed and that it has been translated, in whole or in part, into almost two thousand languages, making it the world's all-time best-seller.

1, 2. Why do many respect the Bible, and what claim do its writers make?

² Aside from these factors, all of which inspire respect for the Bible, there is yet another feature that has made it so influential and appealing throughout the ages—its claim to be the inspired revelation of Almighty God. Moses, who compiled the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) "wrote down" all that God told him to, which included the account of creation, the record of the Flood of Noah's day, and the history of Abraham and of Moses' own dealings with God. (Exodus 24:3, 4) King David said: "The spirit of the LORD has spoken through me, his

EVOLUTION—A FACT?

THE Genesis account of creation states that all living things were created 'after their kinds,' or basic groups. (Genesis 1:12, 24, 25) In promoting their theory, many evolutionists have scoffed at the Bible account. But is there any proof that a new kind has ever appeared because of cross-breeding or mutations?* From the earliest records until now, dogs are still dogs, and cats continue to be cats. Even cockroaches, found among

* A distinction should be made between what has been termed "microevolution," or progressive developments, adaptations, and changes within a kind, and "macroevolution," which teaches that one kind evolves into another. Those who teach evolution are usually referring to the latter concept.

the earliest fossil insects, are virtually identical to modern ones.

Indeed, what evidence has been produced by the scientific community in well over a hundred years of intensive investigation since Darwin's *Origin of Species*?* What conclusions have some experts reached?

THE FOSSIL RECORD: Fossil evidence is called by some 'the final court of appeal' because it is the only authentic history of life available to science. What does it show?

* For a detailed discussion, see the book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

Professor of natural science John Moore reported on the results of an extensive study made by the Geological Society of London and the Palaeontological Association of England. "Some 120 scientists, all specialists, prepared 30 chapters in a monumental work of over 800 pages to present the fossil record for plants and animals . . . Each major form or kind of plant and animal is shown to have a separate and distinct history from all the other forms or kinds! Groups of both plants and animals appear suddenly in the fossil record. . . . There is not a trace of a common ancestor, much less a link with any

message is on my tongue." (2 Samuel 23:2) Other Bible writers made similar claims of divine guidance. All these writings together form God's own explanation of history—its true meaning, interpretation, and final outcome. The many different writers of the Scriptures—kings, hired laborers, priests, and others—were all acting as secretaries in recording the thoughts of God, the Bible's Author and the Guarantor of its promises.

³ Since the Bible claims divine authorship, perhaps the foremost question for many relates to the very existence of its Author. Many reject God's existence outright. Others, under the impression that all intelligent people have rejected the idea of God and belief in the Bible, ask: "Why don't scientists believe in God?" Is this impression really true? An article in the magazine *New Scientist* said that the "view that commonly expects scientists to be nonbelievers . . . is a view that is wildly wrong."² The same article reports that random surveys among universities, research establishments, and industrial laboratories indicate that "as many as eight of every 10 scientists follow a religious faith

or countenance principles that are 'non-scientific.'" So it cannot accurately be said that faith is incompatible with science or scientists. (See box, pages 4-5.)

Is There Proof of Inspiration?

⁴ When one reaches the conclusion that there is convincing evidence of a Creator's existence, the question still remains whether he has inspired men to record his thoughts and purposes in the Bible. There are many reasons why we can be sure that this is the case, one of which is its scientific accuracy. (See box, page 6.) For example, over 3,000 years ago, Job said that God "hangeeth the earth over nothing." (Job 26:7, *JP*) About 2,700 years ago, the prophet Isaiah stated that God "sitteth above the circle of the earth." (Isaiah 40:22, *JP*) Now, how could Job or Isaiah have known these basic scientific truths that the earth is suspended in space and is a sphere? They may be well-known today, but these statements were made at a time when such notions were unheard of. Is not divine revelation the most reasonable explanation?

3. What shows that belief in God and belief in science are not incompatible?

4. What scientific truths were mentioned thousands of years ago in the Bible?

reptile, the supposed progenitor."
—*Should Evolution Be Taught?*, 1970,
pages 9, 14.

COULD MUTATIONS HAVE CAUSED EVOLUTION? Because of the harmful nature of mutations, *The Encyclopedia Americana* acknowledged: "The fact that most mutations are damaging to the organism seems hard to reconcile with the view that mutation is the source of raw materials for evolution. Indeed, mutants illustrated in biology textbooks are a collection of freaks and monstrosities and mutation seems to be a destructive rather than a constructive process."—1977, Volume 10, page 742.

WHAT ABOUT THE APE-MEN?
Science Digest stated: "The remark-

able fact is that all the physical evidence we have for human evolution can still be placed, with room to spare, inside a single coffin! . . . Modern apes, for instance, seem to have sprung out of nowhere. They have no yesterday, no fossil record. And the true origin of modern humans—of upright, naked, toolmaking, big-brained beings—is, if we are to be honest with ourselves, an equally mysterious matter."—May 1982, page 44.

A THEORY IN CRISIS: Notice the following comments by Michael Denton, a molecular biologist, as quoted from his book *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*:

"There can be no question that

Darwin had nothing like sufficient evidence to establish his theory of evolution. . . . His general theory, that all life on earth had originated and evolved by a gradual successive accumulation of fortuitous mutations, is still, as it was in Darwin's time, a highly speculative hypothesis entirely without direct factual support and very far from that self-evident axiom some of its more aggressive advocates would have us believe. . . . One might have expected that a theory of such cardinal importance, a theory that literally changed the world, would have been something more than metaphysics, something more than a myth."—1986 edition, pages 69, 77, 358.

⁵ Prophecy, in effect history written before it happens, is perhaps the main feature of the Bible that substantiates its claim of divine inspiration. For example, the prophet Isaiah foretold not only that Jerusalem would be destroyed by Babylon and that the entire Jewish nation would be taken captive but also that in time the Persian general Cyrus would conquer Babylon and liberate the Jews from captivity. (Isaiah 13: 17-19; 44:27-45:1) Can you think of any means, other than divine inspiration, by which, 200 years in advance, Isaiah could have successfully predicted Cyrus' birth, his name, and precisely what he would do? (See box, page 7.)

⁶ Some of the most remarkable prophecies are recorded by Daniel, a prophet who lived in the sixth century B.C.E. Not only did he foretell the fall of Babylon to the Medes and the Persians but he also predicted events far beyond his time, into the distant future. For example, Daniel's prophecy foretold the rise of Greece as a world empire under Alexander the Great (336-323 B.C.E.), the division of Alexander's empire among his four generals after his untimely death, and the rise of the Roman Empire,

with its fearful military might (first century B.C.E.). (Daniel 7:6; 8:21, 22) All these events are now indisputable historical facts.

⁷ Because Bible prophecies have been so exact, critics have branded them as deceptions, that is, history written after the fact and disguised as prophecy. But how can one rationally assert that Jewish priests would dare to invent a prophecy? And why would they invent prophecies that contained the hardest diatribes imaginable against themselves? (Isaiah 56:10, 11; Jeremiah 8:10; Zephaniah 3:4) In addition, how could an entire literate nation, trained and educated with the Bible as its sacred text, be taken in by such a hoax?—Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

⁸ How could there have been any fraud connected with the disappearance of entire civilizations, such as Edom and Babylon, when these events took place many centuries after the completion of the Hebrew Scriptures? (Isaiah 13: 20-22; Jeremiah 49:17, 18) Even if one maintains that these prophecies were not written in the time period of the prophets themselves, they were still recorded prior to the third

5, 6. What fulfillments of prophecy give evidence that the Bible writers were inspired by God?

7, 8. (a) What accusation have some made about Bible prophecies? (b) What proves that the accusation of fraud is not well-founded?

"IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED" . . .

. . . "THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH." (Genesis 1:1, *JP*)—Most scientists today agree that the universe had a beginning. Astronomer Robert Jastrow wrote: "Now we see how the astronomical evidence leads to a biblical view of the origin of the world. The details differ, but the essential elements in the astronomical and biblical accounts of Genesis are the same: the chain of events leading to man commenced suddenly and sharply at a definite moment in time, in a flash of light and energy."—*God and the Astronomers*, 1978, page 14.

. . . "LIVING CREATURES." (Genesis 1:20)—Physicist H. S. Lipson, realizing the odds against a spontaneous origin of life, said: "The only acceptable explanation is *creation*. I know that this is anathema to physicists, as

indeed it is to me, but we must not reject a theory that we do not like if the experimental evidence supports it."—*Physics Bulletin*, Volume 31, 1980, page 138.

Even if the odds are against it, could not spontaneous generation have happened anyway? Physicist and astronomer Fred Hoyle says: "There is not a shred of objective evidence to support the hypothesis that life began in an organic soup here on the Earth." He also states: "As biochemists discover more and more about the awesome complexity of life, it is apparent that the chances of it originating by accident are so minute that they can be completely ruled out. Life cannot have arisen by chance." Hoyle adds: "Biologists indulge in unsubstantiated fantasies in order to deny what is so

patently obvious, that the 200,000 amino acid chains, and hence life, did not appear by chance." In effect, he asks, 'Just how could the accidental coupling of chemicals in an organic ooze alone produce the 2,000 enzymes essential to life?' He says the possibilities are one in $10^{40,000}$, or "about the same as the chance of throwing an uninterrupted sequence of 50,000 sixes with unbiased dice!" (*The Intelligent Universe*, F. Hoyle, 1983, pages 11-12, 17, 23) He adds, "If one is not prejudiced either by social beliefs or by a scientific training into the conviction that life originated [spontaneously] on the Earth, this simple calculation wipes the idea entirely out of court."—*Evolution From Space*, Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe, 1981, page 24.

century B.C.E., for by then they were already being translated into Greek in the *Septuagint*. Also, the Dead Sea Scrolls (which include portions of all the prophetic Bible books) are dated to the second and first centuries B.C.E. As noted, many prophecies were fulfilled only *after* these dates.

Is the Bible Full of Contradictions?

⁹ But some object: 'The Bible is full of contradictions and discrepancies.' Very often, those who make this assertion have not personally investigated the matter but have just heard an alleged example or two from others. In reality most supposed discrepancies are easily resolved if it is remembered that the writers of the Bible frequently condensed their subject to a few words. An example of this is found in the account of creation. In comparing Genesis 1:1, 3 with Genesis 1:14-16, many have asked how it can be that God "made" the luminaries on the fourth creative day when light—evidently from

9-12. (a) Why do some say that the Bible contradicts itself? (b) How are some "contradictions" resolved?

these same luminaries—was reaching the earth on the first creative day. In this case the Hebrew writer eliminated the need for long explanations by a careful choice of words. Note that verses 14-16 speak of "making" in contrast to "creating" in Genesis 1:1, and "lights" in contrast to "light" in Genesis 1:3. This indicates that it was on the fourth creative day that the sun and moon, already in existence, became clearly visible through the earth's dense atmosphere.*

¹⁰ Genealogical lists have also caused some confusion. For example, Ezra lists 23 names in his priestly genealogy at 1 Chronicles 5:29-40 (6:3-14, *NW*) but lists only 16 names for the same period when giving his own genealogy at Ezra 7:1-5. This is, not a discrepancy, but a simple condensation. Additionally, according to a

* It should be noted that the six "days" of creation do not include the statement at Genesis 1:1, which refers to the creation of the heavenly bodies. Furthermore, the Hebrew word translated "day" allows for the thought that the events described at Genesis 1:3-31 took place during six 'periods of time' that could have been many thousands of years in length.—Compare Genesis 2:4.

GOD — 'THE REVEALER OF MYSTERIES' THROUGH PROPHECY

WHEN speaking to an ancient king, the prophet Daniel said: "The mystery about which the king has inquired—wise men, exorcists, magicians, and diviners cannot tell to the king. But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries." (Daniel 2:27, 28) Is there evidence that God really is a Revealer of mysteries through prophecy? The following are some examples.

The fall of Babylon: "Thus said the LORD to Cyrus, His anointed one—whose right hand He has grasped, treading down nations before him, ungirding the loins of kings, opening doors before him and letting no gate stay shut."—Isaiah 45:1, prophesied c. 732 B.C.E. See also Jeremiah 50:35-38; 51:30-32, prophesied b. 625 B.C.E.

The fate of Tyre: "Thus said the Lord GOD: I am going to deal with you, O Tyre! I will hurl many nations against you, as the sea hurls its waves. . . . And I will scrape her soil off her and leave her a naked rock. . . . And they shall cast into the water your stones and timber and soil."—Ezekiel 26:3, 4, 12, prophesied c. 613 B.C.E.

The destruction of Jerusalem: "Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, 'Hear the word of the LORD of Hosts: A time is coming when everything in your palace, which your ancestors have stored up to this day, will be carried off to Babylon; nothing will be left behind.'"—Isaiah 39:5, 6, prophesied c. 732 B.C.E.; see also Isaiah 24:1-3; 47:6. Jeremiah the prophet proclaimed: "I am going to . . . bring them [the Babylonians] against this land and its inhabitants . . . This whole land shall be a desolate ruin. And those nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years."—Jeremiah 25:9, 11, prophesied b. 625 B.C.E.

Fulfillment—539 B.C.E.: Historians Herodotus and Xenophon relate that Cyrus the Persian diverted the waters of the Euphrates, which ran through the center of Babylon, and sent his forces up the riverbed, catching the Babylonian guards unawares and taking the city in one night. Even with this strategy, Cyrus could not have entered the city had the gates on the banks of the Euphrates leading into the city not been carelessly left open. The 'gates did not stay shut,' just as the prophecy foretold.

Fulfillment—332 B.C.E.: Alexander the Great built a land bridge, or mole, from the mainland to the island portion of Tyre (half a mile offshore) so that his soldiers could march across and attack the island city. *The Encyclopedia Americana* reports: "With the debris of the mainland portion of the city, which he had demolished, he built a huge mole in 332 to join the island to the mainland." After a relatively short siege, the island city was destroyed, and Ezekiel's prophecy was fulfilled in all its details. Even the 'stones and woodwork and dust' of old Tyre (the mainland part of the city) were 'placed in the very midst of the water.'

Fulfillment—607 B.C.E. (586 B.C.E. according to most secular chronologies): Babylon destroyed Jerusalem after a year and a half siege. The city and temple were razed, and the Jews themselves were carried off to Babylon. (2 Chronicles 36:6, 7, 12, 13, 17-21) The entire nation remained in captivity for 70 years, as Jeremiah had foretold. Their miraculous release in 537 B.C.E. by Cyrus the Great, who conquered Babylon, fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which had mentioned him by name. (Isaiah 44:24-28) The prophet Daniel, in captivity in Babylon, calculated the exact time of the release of his people, basing his conclusion on Jeremiah's prophecy.—Daniel 9:1, 2.

writer's intention in recording an event, he highlighted, minimized, included, or omitted details that another Bible writer expressed differently in recording the same event. Such are not contradictions but, rather, are differing accounts reflecting the writers' point of view and intended audience.*

¹¹ Often, apparent inconsistencies can be resolved if we just look at the context. For example, "Where did Cain get his wife?" is a question often heard, highlighting the belief that this exposes a discrepancy in the Biblical account. The supposition is that Adam and Eve had only two sons, Cain and Abel. The difficulty is easily resolved if one reads on. Genesis 5:4 says: "After the birth of Seth, Adam lived 800 years and begot sons and daughters." So Cain married one of

* For examples, see the book *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?* chapter 7, "Does the Bible Contradict Itself?", published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

his sisters or perhaps a niece, which would have been in full harmony with God's original intention for the expansion of the human race.—Genesis 1:28.

¹² There are obviously many details of human history not recorded as part of the Divine Record. But every necessary detail, both for those who first read it and for us today, has been included without making it cumbersome and impossible to read.

To Be Understood Only by Scholars?

¹³ Have you ever asked: "Why are there so many conflicting interpretations of the Bible?" After hearing religious authorities contradict one another, some sincere people become confused and discouraged. The conclusion that

13-15. (a) Why do some believe the Bible is too difficult for us to understand? (b) How do we know that God intended that his Word be understood?

WHERE WAS THE ORAL LAW . . .

. . . when Moses repeated all of God's commands to the entire nation of Israel? The nation then agreed to carry out what he had repeated, and then Moses "wrote down all the commands of the LORD."—Exodus 24:3, 4, Italics ours.

. . . when Joshua gathered the nation of Israel after entering the Promised Land and read to them once again all the words that they had agreed to carry out? "There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua failed to read in the presence of the entire assembly of Israel."—Joshua 8:35, Italics ours.

. . . when in the days of King Josiah the misplaced 'book of the Law of Moses' was found while the temple was being renovated? Upon hearing the contents read to him, Josiah rent his garments in grief, realizing that

for generations the Law had not been carried out according to what was written. He then made arrangements to celebrate the Passover festival, which had not been properly celebrated during the entire period of the kings and of the judges before them. Where was the 'faithfully transmitted' oral law during those hundreds of years? Had it existed, this information would never have been forgotten. Only an accurately preserved written record enabled the nation to return to doing God's will properly.—2 Kings 22:8–23:25.

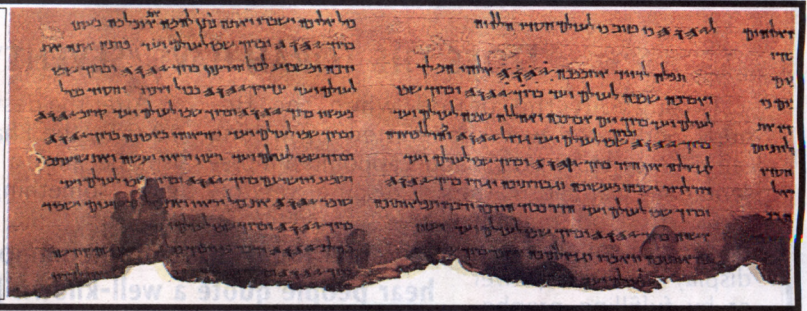
. . . when the prophet Jeremiah declared: "From the smallest to the greatest, they are all greedy for gain; priest and prophet alike, they all act falsely"? (Jeremiah 6:13) Throughout much of the nation of Israel's history, this was the spiritual condition of the

nation's leaders, especially the priests, who were responsible to teach the Law. (Malachi 2:7, 8) *Written records speak for themselves, but could men who were so unfaithful be depended on to preserve faithfully an oral tradition?*

. . . during the more than a thousand years of recording the Hebrew Scriptures? From Moses to Malachi, there is no mention of the existence of such an oral law. Only hundreds of years later, during the period of the rabbis, when conflicting religious sects struggled for control and authority over the Jewish nation, do we find this concept mentioned. Do not those hundreds of years of silence on the subject and the testimony of inspired Scripture negate the claim that there ever was such an inspired oral law?

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Dated to before the Common Era, they reveal the accuracy of the transmission of the Bible text through the centuries. They also confirm that prophecies were recorded *before* their fulfillment



many reach is that the Bible is unclear and contradictory. As a result, many reject the Bible outright, believing that it is too difficult to read and understand. Others, when confronted with this vast array of religious interpretation, are reluctant to make a serious investigation of the Scriptures. Some say: "Learned men have studied for years in religious seminaries. How could I have any basis for questioning what they teach?" But is this how God views matters?

¹⁴ When God gave the Law to the nation of Israel, he did not indicate that he was giving them a system of worship that they could not understand, one that would have to be left in the hands of theological sages or "scholars." Through Moses at Deuteronomy 30:11, 14, God declared: "Surely, this Instruction which I enjoin upon you this day is not too baffling for you, nor is it beyond reach. No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe it." All the nation, not just the leaders, were told: "Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day. Impress them upon your children. Recite them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up." (Deuteronomy 6: 6, 7) God's commandments, all committed to writing, were clear enough for the entire nation, both parents and children, to follow.*

¹⁵ As far back as Isaiah's day, religious leaders incurred God's condemnation by taking it

upon themselves to add to and interpret God's laws. The prophet Isaiah wrote: "That people has approached Me with its mouth and honored Me with its lips, but has kept its heart far from Me, and its worship of Me has been a commandment of men, learned by rote." (Isaiah 29:13) Their worship had become a commandment of men, not of God. (Deuteronomy 4:2) It was these 'commandments of men,' their own interpretations and explanations, that were contradictory. God's words were not. The same is true today.

Any Biblical Basis for the Oral Torah?

¹⁶ Some believe that Moses received an "Oral Torah" in addition to the "Written Torah." According to this belief, God directed that certain commands not be written down but rather be passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation, thus being preserved only by oral tradition. (See box, page 10.) However, the Bible account clearly shows that Moses was never commanded to transmit an oral law. Exodus 24: 3, 4 tells us: "Moses went and repeated to the people all the commands of the LORD and all the rules; and all the people answered with one voice, saying, 'All the things that the LORD has commanded we will do!'" Moses then "wrote down all the commands of the LORD." Further, at Exodus 34:27 we are told: "And the LORD said to Moses: Write down these commandments, for in accordance with these commandments I make a covenant with you and with Israel." An unwritten oral law had no place in the covenant

16, 17. (a) What do some believe regarding an oral law? (b) What does the Bible indicate regarding an oral law?

* Difficult questions for judicial cases were handled by a clearly outlined judicial arrangement. (Deuteronomy 17: 8-11) In any other important matters that seemed obscure, to receive God's answer, the nation was directed, not to an oral law, but rather to the Urim and Thummim in the hands of the priests.—Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8; Numbers 27: 18-21; Deuteronomy 33:8-10.

DOES THE TORAH HAVE "SEVENTY FACES"?

Throughout the period when the Hebrew Scriptures were committed to writing (c. 1513–c. 443 B.C.E.), God's appointed representatives clarified matters of dispute, very often with God himself backing them up by a display of divine power or by fulfilling prophecies that he had given them to utter. (Exodus 28:30; Numbers 16:1–17:15 [16:1–50, NW]; 27:18–21; Deuteronomy 18:20–22) At that time if someone taught contradictory explanations and interpretations, he was viewed, not as a scholar, but as an apostate. God warned the entire nation: "Be careful to observe only that which I enjoin upon you: neither add to it nor take away from it."—Deuteronomy 13:1 (12:32, NW).

However, in time a fundamental change occurred in the thinking of the nation of Israel. The Pharisees, who became prominent in Judaism during the first century C.E., espoused the teaching of the "Oral Torah," which they had developed two centuries previously. They taught that in addition to giving the nation of Israel a written Law at Mount Sinai, God also transmitted to them at the same time an oral law. According to such belief, this inspired oral law interpreted and clarified details of the written Law, details that God had deliberately told Moses not to record. The oral law was not to be written down but was to be transmitted only by word of mouth, from master to disciple, from generation to generation. It therefore gave special authority to the Pharisees, who viewed themselves as guardians of this oral tradition.*

* This teaching, initially promoted by the Pharisees, was rejected by many of their contemporaries within the Jewish nation. The Sadducees, many of whom were priests, as well as the first-century Essenes, rejected this Pharisaic concept. Today,

After the destruction of the second temple in 70 C.E., the Pharisaic view won out, and Judaism became a rabbi-dominated form of religion, something it had not been previously.*

IN Israel today it is not uncommon to hear people quote a well-known Jewish expression—"There are seventy faces to the Torah"—indicating that they believe that the Scriptures can be interpreted in many different, even contradictory, ways. This is viewed as true both of the written Law and of the so-called oral law. *The Encyclopedia of Judaism* comments: "The Oral Law is not a definitive code; it includes many diverse and even conflicting opinions. Concerning these the sages said, 'All of them are the words of the living God.'" (Page 532) However, is it reasonable to believe that God would inspire conflicting and divisive opinions? How did the acceptance of such contradictions come about?

With new prominence given to rabbis rather than to priests or prophets, the oral law became the new centerpiece of Judaism. As *The Encyclopedia of Judaism* states: "The Oral Torah came to be regarded as more important than the Written Torah inasmuch as the explanation and understanding of the latter depended upon the former."—1989, page 710.

As rabbis gained prestige and as traditions multiplied, the ban on writing down this oral law was lifted. In the late second and early third centuries C.E., Judah Ha-Nasi (135–219 C.E.) systematically recorded these rabbinic oral traditions in a work called the

Mishnah. Additions made later were called the Tosefta. The rabbis in turn saw the need to give commentary on the Mishnah, and these interpretations of oral tradition became the foundation of a voluminous collection of books called the Gemara (compiled from the third to the fifth century C.E.). Together these works came to be known as the Talmud. Commentary on all these rabbinic opinions continues to our day. Since it is impossible to harmonize all these greatly differing views, is it any wonder that many prefer to see "seventy faces to the Torah"?

the Karaites (since the eighth century C.E.), as well as the Reform and Conservative movements of Judaism, do not view such an oral law as divinely inspired. However, Orthodox Judaism today considers these traditions both inspired and obligatory.

* *The Encyclopaedia Judaica* states: "The title rabbi is derived from the noun *rav*, which in Biblical Hebrew means 'great' and does not occur in the [Hebrew] Bible."

that God made with Israel. (See box, page 8.) Nowhere in the Bible is there any mention of the existence of an oral law.* More important, its teachings contradict the Scriptures, adding to

* Some have read into the text at Deuteronomy 17:8-11 an implication of an inspired oral tradition. However, as mentioned in the footnote to paragraph 14, the text deals solely with the procedure of judgment in judicial cases. Notice that the issue was not whether different customs or traditions were passed down through many centuries or not. There were no doubt some traditions passed down as to how to carry out specifically certain aspects of the Law. But the fact that a tradition is long-standing does not prove inspiration. For example, note the tradition that developed regarding the bronze serpent.—Numbers 21:8, 9; 2 Kings 18:4.

the misimpression that the Bible is self-contradictory. (See box, page 22.) But it is man, and not God, who is responsible for this confusion.—Isaiah 29:13. (See boxes, pages 20-1.)

¹⁷ In contrast with the contradictory interpretations of men, the Bible itself is clear and trustworthy. God has provided us with ample proof within his Word that the peaceful world envisioned at Isaiah 2:2-4 is not just a dream but an impending reality. None other than God himself, the God of prophecy, the God of the Bible, will bring it about.

WHAT IS GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MANKIND?

THE promise of a world without war as revealed at Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-4 not only provides us with a well-founded hope for the near future but also tells us something very important about our Creator. He is a God of purpose. The prophecy at Isaiah chapter 2 is actually part of a long series of prophecies that runs from the first pages of the Bible right through to the last, making clear to us how God will bring his original purpose to fruition.

² When God created the first human couple, he told them clearly what his purpose was for them. At Genesis chapter 1, verse 28, we read: "God blessed them and God said to them, 'Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it; and rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth.'" When we relate that command to what is stated in the next chapter of Genesis—"The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden, to till it and tend it"—it becomes clear that God intended for the original couple, together with their offspring, to extend Paradise

beyond the limits of the garden of Eden, eventually to encompass the entire earthly globe.* —Genesis 2:15.

³ How long would they enjoy their paradisaic home? The Scriptures imply that man was created to live forever on earth. Death for mankind would come about *only* if they disobeyed their Creator, as stated at Genesis chapter 2, verses 16 and 17: "The LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat; but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall die.'" Reasonably, therefore, continued obedience would have resulted in continued life, everlasting life, in these paradisaic conditions.—Psalm 37:29; Proverbs 2:21, 22.

⁴ However, an angel, later referred to as Satan (meaning "Adversary"), influenced that first couple to misuse their free will in choosing to disobey God. (Job 1:6-12; compare

1-4. (a) What was God's original purpose for mankind? (b) Why did man prove to be disobedient? (See box, page 13.)

* The account in the book of Genesis describing the garden of Eden is not a parable, but Eden was an actual locality that was quite extensive. The text points to a location north of the Mesopotamian plains, the source of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. (Genesis 2:7-14) It was to serve as a model, according to which man could pattern and cultivate the rest of the earth.

Deuteronomy 30:19, 20.) Creating the illusion that a serpent was speaking, this rebellious angel convinced Eve and, through her, Adam, that they would become wiser and their lives would become more complete by not submitting to God as the Ultimate Authority.* (Genesis 3:1-19) Because of their open rebellion, they were condemned to death. Did that mean that God's purpose for mankind was frustrated or aborted? No, rather, it meant that another means would be needed to fulfill God's original purpose of a paradise earth filled with obedient humans enjoying everlasting life. How would this come about?

A Promised Seed

⁵ In pronouncing judgment on those involved in rebellion against his authority, Jehovah God declared that he would raise up a "seed," or "offspring," that would undo the damage caused by the instigator of the rebellion. In symbolic terms, God spoke of the serpent, representing Satan, as being struck, or crushed, in the head by this Seed, thus putting an end to Satan's existence and rebellion. Through the years this verse in Genesis has been interpreted in various and contradictory ways. But since the word "seed" is used in many prophecies, other related promises reveal what it means.—Genesis 3:15.

⁶ The term "seed" is often related to the outworking of God's purpose for mankind as a whole. As recorded at Genesis 22:18, the faithful Hebrew Abraham was given this promise by God: "*All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants [seed, JP], because you have obeyed My command.*" (Italics ours.) God showed special interest in Abraham as a man who searched for Him in truth. However, although God directly rewarded Abraham, this text clearly shows that God's interest was not in Abraham alone, nor in his fleshly descendants exclusively. God was keeping close in

mind his original purpose of a paradise earth for all mankind, "all the nations." He was now revealing to Abraham that as a result of his faithfulness, he would have the privilege of producing the "seed" by which all the nations would bless themselves.

⁷ Abraham was the father of many great nations. (Genesis 17:4, 5) But Jehovah God clearly revealed through which of these lines of descent the promised Seed would come, bringing blessings to all mankind. (Genesis 17:17, 21) Both Abraham's son Isaac and grandson Jacob were mentioned as belonging to the line that would produce the "seed." One of the nations that sprang from Abraham was the nation of Israel, comprising the 12 tribes who descended from the sons of Jacob, Abraham's grandson. It was in this nation that the promised "seed" would finally appear.—Genesis 26:1, 4; 28:10, 13-15, JP.

⁸ Prophecy later revealed that a special seed, or ruler, would come specifically through the tribe of Judah. Genesis 49:10 states: "The rod shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and his be the obedience of peoples."³ The Bible commentator Rashi states that the phrase "until Shiloh come" means "*until the King Messiah will come, whose will be the kingdom.*"⁴ Like Rashi, many Bible commentators have understood this prophecy to have Messianic meaning.

⁹ The first ruler from the line of Judah, King David, was promised by God: "Your house and . . . your throne shall be established forever." (2 Samuel 7:16) God further promised: "I will set up thy seed after thee, . . . and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne for ever." (1 Chronicles 17:11, 12, JP) David's son and successor, King Solomon, did indeed build Jehovah's house, or temple, but he obviously did not rule forever. However, one of David's seed would be the same "Shiloh," or Messiah, prophesied at Genesis 49:

7, 8. How did this promised Seed become linked with the concepts of kingship and the Messiah?

9. (a) What did God promise King David regarding the Seed? (b) How is the promise at Genesis 49:10 related to the one at Psalm 72:7, 8?

* For a deeper understanding of the implications of this rebellion, see box, pages 16-17.

5, 6. (a) What did God promise as a solution to the problems on earth caused by Satan's rebellion? (b) What did God promise to Abraham?

10. (JP) Speaking prophetically about that one, King David wrote: "In his days let the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, till the moon be no more. May he have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River unto the ends of the earth." —Psalm 72:7, 8, JP.

¹⁰ If we follow the gradual revelation through prophecy, we come to understand that the blessings promised to Abraham—"in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"—will in fact be fulfilled through this same Ruler from the line of David. (Genesis 22:18, JP) In this way the prophecies about the Seed become joined with the hope of the Jewish nation in the Messiah, during whose rule the earth will have total peace. In fact, he is the "seed" mentioned at Genesis 3:15 who would put an end to the original rebellion against God's sovereignty and undo the damage that has resulted. (Psalm 2: 5, 8, 9) Other questions and information about the promised Messiah are dealt with on pages 24-31. But now let us consider God's further dealings with Abraham's descendants.

Purpose of the Law Covenant

¹¹ The Israelites became a nation a few hundred years after Abraham's time. God freed these descendants from captivity in Egypt, and under the leadership of Moses, another man of faith whom He had chosen, God concluded a special covenant, or agreement, with them. (Exodus 19:5, 6; Deuteronomy 5:2, 3) This Law covenant gave the nation clear direction as to how

10. What was to be accomplished by the Seed promised in Genesis 3:15, and how does this agree with the promise given to Abraham?

11-13. How did the Law covenant benefit the nation, and was it meant to last forever?

WHO IS SATAN?

THE Bible speaks of Satan, not as "the evil inclination" within man, but rather as an invisible spirit creature, an angel. (Job 1:6) As one of the angels, or sons of God, he was created perfect, but later he caused himself to become the first rebel, or adversary, against God. (Deuteronomy 32:4; compare Ezekiel 28:12-17.) As part of his rebellion against God's sovereignty, he accuses men of being unfaithful, acting only in self-interest. Note some of the scriptures that openly expose Satan's subtle attempts to lead men into a course of disobedience and wrong conduct:

1. Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7

2. 1 Chronicles 21:1

3. Zechariah 3:1, 2

God desired to be worshiped. It organized them as a nation for such worship.

¹² We might note that from the start this covenant was conditional. Before revealing to the nation of Israel the Ten Commandments and the entire covenant of which these were a part, God informed them: "Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19: 5, 6) In order to continue to be used by God as a treasured possession, they would

have to obey him faithfully. These were the terms of the covenant.

¹³ The promised reward for their faithfulness—that they would serve as a kingdom of priests—reveals that the Law covenant was not an end in itself but, rather, a transitional step toward qualifying a priesthood that would help other nations come to know the true God. From the start *God's purpose was that all mankind, and not just the people of one nation, should bless themselves.*—Genesis 22:18.

¹⁴ Since the Law covenant was not an end in itself, what was its purpose? It unequivocally exposed and denounced all false religious concepts that man had begun to develop independently since the time of the rebellion in the garden of Eden. (Deuteronomy 18:9-13) It also protected the nation of Israel from the disgusting practices and worship of the surrounding nations by minimizing all contact with those nations. (Deuteronomy 7:1-6) As long as Israel kept that Law, they would be preserved in a

14. What other benefits resulted from the Law covenant?

pure religious condition, in which they could eventually both identify and welcome the promised Seed, or Messiah.

¹⁵ The Law covenant also highlighted the need for atonement, incorporating a well-defined system of sacrifices that were an integral part of Jewish worship. (Leviticus 1:1-17; 3:1-17; 16:1-34; Numbers 15:22-29) From the time of the rebellion of Adam and Eve, mankind lost the perfection that would have enabled them to live everlastingly in perfect health. (Genesis 2:17) As a result of the first sin, Adam and Eve's offspring (all born after the rebellion) inherited imperfection and the innate tendency to sin. (Genesis 8:21; Psalm 51:7 [51:5, NW]; Ecclesiastes 7:20) Imperfection led to sickness, aging, and death, as well as to the creating of a barrier between man and God. (1 Kings 8:46; compare Lamentations 3:44.) Some basis was needed to undo this damage as well as to overcome and bring about atonement for man's imperfect state. Men of faith were always acutely aware of that need.—Job 1:4, 5; Psalm 32:1-5.

¹⁶ The Law covenant emphasized that God has legal standards that must be met. It also provided the basis for understanding how God's standards of justice would be fully satisfied.* The provisions of sacrifice in the Law covenant could never restore God's original purpose for mankind, since their effect was temporary, highlighting the condition of sin but not removing or preventing it. Therefore, the Law was a transitional step to help this organized nation of worshipers understand at the appropriate

* The legal precedent codified by Moses in referring to the mode of payment for infractions of the Law—"life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth"—reflects the guiding principle applied by God himself in solving the question of man's salvation. (Deuteronomy 19:21) A perfect man, Adam, had been responsible for the condemnation of the human race, so another perfect man was needed to atone for this loss by surrendering his life. Thus his death would perfectly atone for Adam's sin and its consequences for mankind. Only the coming of the promised "seed," whose life would be offered as a legal ransom, could fully bring about such a release. (Genesis 3:15, JP) For a fuller discussion of this aspect of the Seed in God's purpose, see pages 28-9, paragraphs 17 to 20.

15, 16. What important spiritual lessons embodied in the Law covenant also point to its temporary nature?

time how to identify the Seed and how that Seed would undo the damage caused by Adam's sin. Where did the Torah indicate this?

Promise of a Prophet Like Moses

¹⁷ At Deuteronomy chapter 18, verse 15, Moses told the nation of Israel: "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet from among your own people, like myself; him you shall heed." In the same chapter, at verses 18 and 19, Jehovah spoke to Moses, the one whom He had appointed as mediator between himself and His people, saying: "I will raise up a prophet for them from among their own people, like yourself: I will put My words in his mouth and he will speak to them all that I command him; and if anybody fails to heed the words he speaks in My name, I myself will call him to account." How should this prophecy be understood?

¹⁸ The prophet mentioned here is clearly a specific and special individual. The context makes clear that this is not merely a general principle regarding God's intention to continue to raise up prophets for the nation, as some have supposed. The Hebrew word for prophet (*na-vi'*) is in the singular, comparing him to Moses, who was unique in the history of the nation. Additionally, the closing words in the same book of Deuteronomy state: "Never again did there arise in Israel a prophet like Moses—whom the LORD singled out, face to face." (Deuteronomy 34:10-12) The one who recorded these words was very likely Joshua, the son of Nun, who himself was a great leader and prophet appointed by God. But from his own expression, there is no question that he did not see in himself a fulfillment of Moses' words about a prophet like Moses. So, what did God mean when he promised to raise up a prophet like Moses? What was Moses like?

A New Covenant Prophesied

¹⁹ Moses was a great leader; he was a legislator, a prophet, a miracle worker, a teacher, and a judge. He was also a mediator, the only proph-

17, 18. What was meant by God's promise at Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19 to raise up a prophet?

19. (a) How was Moses unique? (b) A prophet like Moses would have to serve as what else?

et who had mediated a covenant between God and man (in this case, the nation of Israel). A prophet truly like him would have to do something similar. Does this mean that God intended that the Law covenant be superseded by another covenant? Yes, it does. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God clearly stated his intention to conclude a new covenant. A new covenant would require a new mediator. Only someone like Moses could fit the requirements for such an assignment. If we examine what the new covenant entails, we can better understand the role of the mediator.

²⁰ It was about 900 years after Moses that Jeremiah conveyed to the nation of Israel God's words: "See, a time is coming—declares the LORD—when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, a covenant which they broke, . . .—declares the LORD. But such is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel after these days . . . I will forgive their iniquities, and remember their sins no more."*—Jeremiah 31:31-34.

²¹ If the prophet like Moses is to serve as a new mediator of a new covenant, then it also becomes clear that all the specific details of worship required under the Mosaic Law would be

* A standard explanation by modern-day Judaism is that Jeremiah was simply predicting a renewal or reaffirmation of the Law covenant with Israel, as occurred after their return from exile in Babylon in 537 B.C.E. (Ezra 10:1-14) But again the prophecy itself negates such an explanation. God stated clearly that this will be a "new covenant," not merely a renewed covenant. Further, he emphasizes that it is *unlike* the covenant made when he led them out of Egyptian bondage. Some have said that it was "new" in the sense that now they would faithfully keep the same covenant, but history shows otherwise. In fact, their lack of faithfulness led to the destruction of the second temple.—Deuteronomy 18:19; 28:45-48.

20, 21. (a) What is promised at Jeremiah 31:31-34? (b) What was the new covenant's stated purpose? (c) As a result, what would become of the Law covenant?

WILL THERE EVER BE A WORLD WITHOUT WAR?

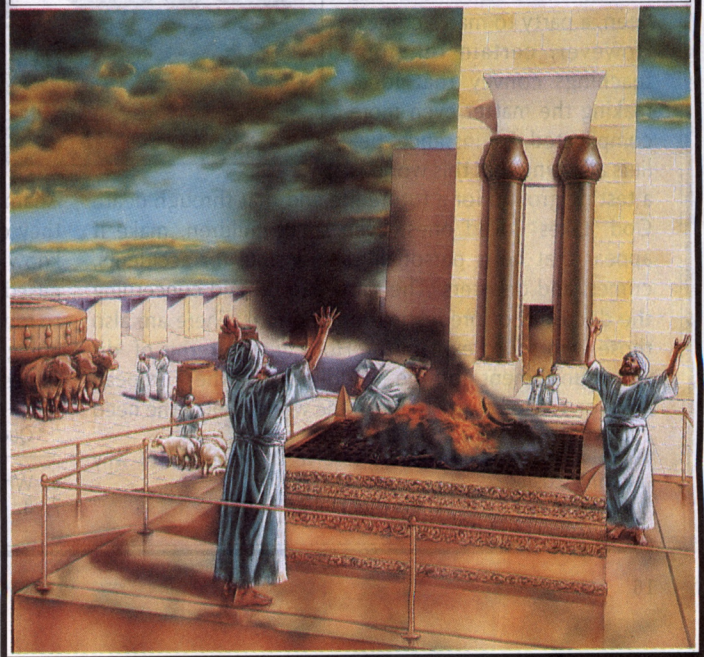
in force not permanently but rather only until the new covenant would be established. Certainly, when God would provide a basis for 'forgiving their iniquities and remembering their sins no more,' there would no longer be a need for the entire system of sacrifices provided by the temple arrangement, which brought about only temporary forgiveness. With the establishment of the new covenant, ceremonial aspects of the Law covenant, such as observing the Sabbath and holidays, would also no longer hold the same meaning. In his due time, God would certainly reveal what would be required of those in that promised new covenant arrangement.—Amos 3:7.

Blessings for All Nations

²² Understanding that the prophet like Moses and the Seed of Abraham are one and the same helps us to see another very important aspect of the new covenant; it would be the legal means by which people of all nations could worship the true God. Since Genesis 22:18 says it is by

22, 23. (a) What was the purpose of the new covenant regarding the nations? (b) How do other prophecies show what God's purpose was for all nations?

Why did God require sacrifices as part of the Law covenant?



WHY DOES GOD PERMIT WICKEDNESS?

AT SOME time in your life, you may have asked: 'If God exists, why does he permit suffering?' or, 'If suffering exists by God's permission, why for such a long time?' Questions of this nature are difficult to resolve, especially when related to the Holocaust, which perhaps more than any other single occurrence has become the ultimate symbol of human suffering. In their efforts to find an explanation, some deny the existence of God, whereas others deny the existence of evil. Are such conclusions realistic? Does a satisfying answer exist?

² Some assert that questions of this nature should not even be asked. However, faithful prophets, such as Habakkuk, did not feel it improper to make such inquiries. Habakkuk asked God: "How long, O LORD, shall I cry out and You not listen, shall I shout to You, 'Violence!' and You not save? Why do You make me see iniquity why do You look upon wrong?"—Habakkuk 1:2, 3.

³ Unfortunately, there are those who are unable to accept any answer, regardless of whether it is right or wrong. Cruel events and man's brutality have impeded their capacity for impartial analysis. So the person seeking an answer must honestly evaluate his own disposition as well as the reasonableness of the explanation given.

Putting the Blame Where It Belongs

⁴ God is not, and never has been, a party to man's crimes. However, certain religious teachings convey that idea, making the matter even more complicated. For instance, beliefs affirming that this world is a testing ground for a future life and that through death God "takes" loved ones, even small children, make it appear that he is personally responsible for accidents, crimes, and disasters. The same can be said concerning the doctrines of predestination and fate. There are also those who try to explain the Holocaust in terms of 'divine punishment for the worldliness of the European Jews' or as 'God's way to make the world realize the need

for a Jewish State.' Many may find such rationalizations not only unacceptable but also offensive.

⁵ Do not such beliefs malign God? Is it not man, rather than God, who has been responsible for all the injustices committed throughout the centuries? (Ecclesiastes 8:9) It is as historian Arnold Toynbee stated: "Human beings are unique in being able to be wicked, because they are unique in being conscious of what they are doing and in making deliberate choices."* So man's misuse of his own free will has resulted in untold suffering. Then why did not God create him in such a way that he could not harm his fellowman?

⁶ Man was created in God's "image" and with the gift of free will. (Genesis 1:26) Were that not the case, man would not be able to experience the satisfaction and joy associated with spontaneously doing good things for others. Conscience would have no meaning, and man's existence would be similar to that of lower forms of life. Free will is a blessing for man and makes him human, rather than a robot. But free will implies freedom of choice, including a wrong or a harmful choice. However, accepting the fact that God is not responsible for evil does not answer the questions: Why does he permit it? and Why did he not put an immediate end to suffering?

How Could God Allow It?

⁷ Why does evil exist when there is a power capable of stopping it? The Bible's answer to this question is found primarily in the account concerning the first man and woman,

Adam and Eve. Chapters 2 and 3 of Genesis relate that they chose to disobey God by eating from "the tree of knowledge of good and bad." Important issues were raised by their disobedience. The one who induced them to rebel (see box, page 13) did so by saying: "You are not going to die," thus bringing into question God's truthfulness, since God had clearly stated that disobedience

* Quoted from *Mankind and Mother Earth*, 1976, page 13.

6. What does mankind's having free will imply?
7, 8. What issues were raised early in mankind's history?



1-3. How have some tried to resolve the question of why suffering exists?

4, 5. What are some beliefs that malign God?

would be punished by death. (Genesis 2:17; 3:4) The tempter continued by saying: "God knows that as soon as you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like divine beings who know good and bad." (Genesis 3:5) The clear implication was that God was unjustly holding something back from them. Thus doubts were cast upon the validity of God's laws and his way of governing. This constituted an attack on God's sovereignty, on his very *right* to be the only and absolute Ruler of humankind.

⁸ Profound issues had been raised: Does man really need God's guidance to govern himself and the entire earth successfully? If not, then perhaps God was unjust in demanding obedience from him. If man is capable of ruling himself, why should God be the one to decide what is right and wrong for man? Execution of the lawbreakers would not have provided an answer to these questions. Only with the passage of time would humans demonstrate man's inability to govern himself effectively.

Who Has the Right to Decide?

⁹ Perhaps the main question, one that each of us must answer personally, is: Does not God have the right to decide what matters are of primary importance and when they should be dealt with? The suggestion that an issue or a moral question could be sufficiently important to justify the permission of human suffering is difficult for many to accept. But is it unreasonable to accept that God's long-range view enables him to act in the best interests of all his creatures?

¹⁰ The prophet Isaiah wrote: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD." (Isaiah 55:8, *JP*) God certainly is not indifferent to human suffering, but being all-wise and eternal, he is in the best position to determine not only all the factors bearing on the issues involved but also how and when to solve them to the utmost benefit of all concerned.

¹¹ By allowing enough time to settle the issues raised, God establishes a permanent precedent. If in the future

God's exercise of sovereignty should again be challenged, it would not be necessary to allow the rebel any additional time to prove his contention. (Nahum 1:9) Everything that needs to be proved will already have been proved. In the meantime, we have the privilege of taking God's side in the matter, as many faithful ones of old did. Job, for example, though completely unaware of the reason for his suffering, was determined to remain loyal to God. (Job 2:9, 10) Does not God, man's Creator, deserve such loyalty?

What Is God's Solution?

¹² The period of time allowed by God to solve the various issues involved is drawing to a close. Evil and all who cause it will soon be removed. (Proverbs 2:21, 22; Daniel 2:44) God himself will ensure eternal peace and happiness for mankind on a paradise earth. (Isaiah 14:7) As the God of righteousness, Jehovah will not forget those who suffered and died unjustly. They will be resurrected, restored to life right here on earth. (Job 14: 14, 15; Isaiah 25:6-8) According to God's own promise, "the former things shall not be remembered, they shall never come to mind." Everlasting life will provide ample opportunity for people to consider in perspective God's reasons for permitting wickedness. None of those who receive such blessings will be disgruntled because of their own past suffering or that of others. 'Re-joining forever in what I am creating' will be more than sufficient compensation.—Isaiah 65:17, 18.

¹³ By means of the Bible, God has clearly told us why suffering exists. However, one short article cannot answer all the questions related to such a deep issue.* The complete answer can be found only by means of a thorough examination of the Bible in all its facets. Will you meet the challenge, being willing to devote the time needed for such an investigation? The issues at stake make it worthwhile.

* For a fuller discussion of this subject, see the book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?*, chapter 16, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.



12, 13. How will God soon restore justice to the earth?

9-11. Why has God permitted suffering for so long?

means of this “seed” (*JP*) that “all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves,” it is clear that at some juncture in human history, God would no longer be dealing exclusively with just one nation, the descendants of Abraham. After the nation of Israel had served in this vital role of providing this promised Seed and after the establishing of a new covenant, the worship of the true God would be opened up for people of all nations and races.

²³ Certainly no one could reasonably dispute God’s fairness in allowing sincere people of every nation and race to worship him. This was God’s intention from the beginning, and there are many prophecies in the Bible that confirm the fact that people of *all nations* would bless themselves by the seed of Abraham. (Zechariah 8:20-23) One example can be found at Zephaniah chapter 3, verse 9, where God declares: “For then I will make the peoples pure of speech, so that they all invoke the LORD by name and serve Him with one accord.” The very prophecy from Isaiah chapter 2 mentioned at the beginning of this brochure highlights this unifying aspect of God’s worship, with people of many nations turning to serve him in truth, learning the ways of peace; it also highlights *when* this would occur: “It shall come to pass in the end of days.” (Isaiah 2:2, *JP*) What is meant by this expression, “the end of days”?

²⁴ The Scriptures time and again speak of the day when God will bring all the nations into judgment. (Isaiah 34:2, 8; Jeremiah 25:31-35; Joel 4:2 [3:2, *NW*], Habakkuk 3:12; Zephaniah 1:18; 3:8) Since the rejection of God’s sovereignty in the garden of Eden, mankind’s failure to rule himself successfully has become more and more evident. Man’s governments have been an utter failure, causing untold suffering. If allowed to go on much longer in this age of nuclear weapons and worldwide environmental pollution, men could destroy themselves and their earthly home. Therefore, God, using his appointed Messiah, the Seed, will intervene.

24. (a) What is meant by the expression “the end of days”? (b) What is described in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39?

(Psalm 2:1-11; 110:1-6) The prophet Ezekiel foresaw the final battle of God against man’s governments. In chapters 38 and 39 of his book, he describes God’s war against “Gog of the land of Magog.” (Ezekiel 38:2) This is widely recognized as a prophecy of the last days. A careful study of the Scriptures reveals that here “Gog” is a symbolic name for that same spirit rebel, Satan, who led Adam and Eve in a course of disobedience to God. The defeat of that spirit along with his forces, longtime enemies of God, is actually the initial part of the fulfillment of the original promise that the “seed” would, symbolically speaking, fatally bruise the “serpent,” Satan, in the head.—Genesis 3:15, *JP*.

²⁵ Following the destruction of Satan’s forces, the original Edenic paradisaic conditions will be restored. But this time, under the new covenant arrangement, mankind will be obedient to God. (Isaiah 11:1-9; 35:1-10) Not only will sins be forgiven but mankind will be completely restored to perfection. (Isaiah 26:9) As a result they will be granted everlasting life. (Psalm 37:29; Isaiah 25:8) At that time even the dead, both those who died faithful to God and billions who never had a full opportunity to learn about him in truth, will be restored to life—resurrected! (Daniel 12:2, 12 [12:2, 13, *NW*, *JP*]; Isaiah 26:19) Does not such a wonderful hope draw us closer to the God who conceived such things?

²⁶ These are just some of the blessings for people of all nations who come to identify and listen to the voice of the prophet like Moses, the Seed who will rule on the throne of David “till the moon is no more,” meaning forever. (Psalm 72:7) Regarding this prophet like Moses, Deuteronomy 18:19 also says: “If anybody fails to heed the words he speaks in My name, I myself will call him to account.” Will you take the time, will you make the needed effort, to identify this Prophet like Moses, this Messiah, thereby learning *all* that God requires? Will you personally come to know the true God?

25. What is prophesied to occur after the destruction of Satan’s forces?

26. What does the coming of the prophet like Moses require of us?

KNOWING THE TRUE GOD

—WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

ISAIAH'S stirring prophecy concerning the last days holds out an invitation that should interest people of every nation. The invitation is to get to know the true God personally: "And the many peoples shall go and say: 'Come, let us go up to the Mount of the LORD, to the House of the God of Jacob; that He may instruct us in His ways, and that we may walk in His paths.'"—Isaiah 2:3.

² This prophecy shows that in the last days, people of many nations worldwide would be guided to a common source of instruction to help them come to know the true God. What truths will they learn that serve to unite them in bonds of true peace?

³ An outstanding feature of the Bible, almost lost as a result of tradition, is that of establishing a relationship with God, our heavenly Father and Creator, in the most personal of terms, by addressing him by his name. Who is the person that has a dear and beloved friend whose name he refuses to use or even to mention when asked about it? Usually only an enemy is so despised that one prefers not to honor him by even mentioning his name. The special relationship that existed between ancient Israel and their God—whereby they knew him by his name—is beautifully expressed by the ancient psalmist: "Because he is devoted to Me I will deliver him; I will keep him safe, for he knows My name."—Psalm 91:14.

* A casual reading of this prophecy could give the impression that in the last days, there will be a massive conversion to Judaism. However, the context itself, as well as current events, shows that this is not the correct view. The discussion in this section and the next will also be of aid in understanding why we reach this conclusion.

1, 2. According to Isaiah 2:3, what invitation is made in the last days, and to whom?

3. How was an important feature of the Bible almost lost as a result of tradition?

Should We Use the Divine Name?

⁴ From the point of view of the Bible, there has never been any question as to the name of the true God. When God spoke to Moses, explaining that He would use him to lead the nation of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, Moses asked a logical question: "When I come to the Israelites and say to them 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" God answered: "Thus shall you speak to the Israelites: The LORD [Hebrew, יהוה = *YHWH* = Yahweh, or, since the 13th century C.E., Jehovah], the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you: *This shall be My name forever, this My appellation [memorial, JP] for all eternity.*"—Exodus 3:13, 15, italics ours.

⁵ This name is full of meaning for one who speaks the Hebrew language. It comes from the basic Hebrew root הוה, *h-w-h*, meaning "to become." However, the name is in the causative form, *Hiph'il*, according to Hebrew grammar. Therefore its basic sense is not relating to God's eternal existence but rather to his causing things to come to be or to come about. This is especially true in a unique way regarding his purposes. As he purposed to free his chosen nation from Egyptian bondage, so he *caused* it to be. No power could stand in the way of his express will. Jehovah is the God who causes his purposes to be fulfilled. He thus causes *himself* to become the Fulfiller of his promises. This was also true of his purpose to free his nation from Babylonian captivity. The same is true regarding his purpose to bring paradisaic conditions to this earth. His very name gives meaning and a guarantee to these promises.—Isaiah 41:21-24; 43:10-13; 46:9, 10.

4, 5. What is the meaning of God's name?

⁶ But do not the Ten Commandments forbid the pronouncing of God's name? By no means! Although many have interpreted the third commandment in this way, note what the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* comments: "The avoidance of pronouncing the name YHWH . . . was caused by a misunderstanding of the Third Commandment (Ex. 20:7; Deut. 5:11) as meaning 'Thou shalt not take the name of YHWH thy God in vain,' whereas it really means 'You shall not swear falsely by the name of YHWH your God.'"⁵ Notice

that the text does not forbid 'taking up' or pronouncing God's name. However, even if it meant taking God's name "in vain," note what the Hebrew lexicon by Koehler and Baumgartner states regarding the Hebrew term translated "in vain" (Hebrew, *lash-shaw'*): "name a name without reason . . . misuse a name."⁶ Therefore, this commandment does not forbid the use of God's name but, rather, its *misuse*.

⁷ But what of the argument that God's name is "too holy to be pronounced?" Well, does it not seem reasonable that if God viewed his name as too holy for men to pronounce, he would not have revealed it in the first place? The very fact that in the original text of the Hebrew Scriptures, God's personal name appears over 6,800 times shows that he wants men to know him and to use his name. Far from restricting the use of his name to prevent disrespect, God repeatedly encourages and even commands his people to use his name and to make it known. Doing so was evidence of their close relationship with him, as well as their love for him. (Psalm 91:14) The prophet Isaiah showed clearly what God's will is in this matter when he stated: "Praise the LORD

6-9. (a) How do we know that God does not forbid the use of his name? (b) How and when did a prohibition on the use of God's name become part of Judaism?

GOD'S NAME IN THE BIBLE

—WHAT GOD SAID

"And God said moreover unto Moses: 'Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: The LORD [Hebrew, יהוה = YHWH = Jehovah], the God of your fathers, . . . hath sent me unto you; *this is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations.*'"—Exodus 3:15, *JP*, italics ours.

"Presently Boaz arrived from Bethlehem. He greeted the reapers, 'The LORD [יהוה] be with you!' And they responded, 'The LORD [יהוה] bless you!'"—Ruth 2:4.

"Praise the LORD [יהוה], *proclaim His name*. Make His deeds known among the peoples; de-

clare that His name is exalted."^{*}—Isaiah 12:4, italics ours; Psalm 105:1.

"For then I will make the peoples pure of speech, so that *they all invoke the LORD [יהוה] by name* and serve Him with one accord."—Zephaniah 3:9, italics ours.

"Pour out Your fury on the nations that do not know You, upon the kingdoms that *do not invoke Your name.*"—Psalm 79:6, italics ours.

^{*} The phrase "proclaim His name" (Hebrew, קראו בשמו) may also be translated "call him by his name." (Compare *The New English Bible*.) The same Hebrew construction is found at Genesis 12:8, where it is translated by the *Tanakh*: "[Abram] invoked the LORD by name."

[Hebrew, יהוה = YHWH = Jehovah], proclaim His name. Make His deeds known among the peoples; declare that His name is exalted."—Isaiah 12:4. See also Micah 4:5; Malachi 3:16; Psalm 79:6; 105:1; Proverbs 18:10.

⁸ If Jehovah did not want men to pronounce his name, he could have explicitly forbidden it. However, nowhere does the Bible forbid the proper use or the pronouncing of his name. Faithful men of Bible times used his name freely. (Genesis 12:8; Ruth 2:4; 4:11, 14) In fact, God repeatedly condemned those who would cause his people to forget his holy name.—Jeremiah 23:26, 27; Psalm 44:21, 22 (44:20, 21, NW).

⁹ But how did this prohibition become a part of Jewish thought, since it was so clearly not a part of the Bible? Comments by Dr. A. Cohen, a rabbi and author of the book *Everyman's Talmud*, show that the tradition took hold gradually over a period of many centuries. Dr. Cohen writes: "In the Biblical period there seems to have been no scruple against its use in daily speech. The addition of *Jah* or *Jahu* to personal names, which persisted among the Jews even after the Babylonian exile, is an indication that there was no prohibition against the employment of the four-lettered Name. But in the early Rabbinic period the pronunciation of the Name

GOD'S NAME IN THE TALMUD

—WHAT MEN SAID

"It was ordained that a man should greet his friends by mentioning the Name."—*Berakhot* 9:5.

"Thus did he [the High Priest on the Day of Atonement] say: O JHVH, Thy people, the House of Israel, have committed iniquity, have transgressed, have sinned before Thee. I beseech Thee by the Name JHVH . . . And when the priests and the people that stood in the Court heard the glorious and revered Name pronounced freely out of the mouth of the High Priest, in holiness and purity, they knelt and prostrated themselves, falling on their faces, and exclaiming: Blessed be His glorious,

sovereign Name for ever and ever."—*Yoma* 6:2.

"In the Sanctuary the Name was pronounced as written; but beyond its confines a substituted Name was employed."—*Sotah* 7:6.

"At first the High Priest used to proclaim the Name in a loud voice; but when dissolute men multiplied, he proclaimed it in a low tone."—*The Jerusalem Talmud, Yoma* 40d.

"[Among those excluded from the world to come is] he who pronounces the Name according to its letters."—*Sanhedrin* 10:1.

"Whoever explicitly pronounces the Name is guilty of a capital offence."—*Pesikta* 148a.

was restricted to the Temple service." Regarding further developments during this period, he remarks: "Instead of JHVH the Name was pronounced *Adonai* (my Lord) in the Synagogue service; but there is a tradition that the original pronunciation was transmitted by the Sages to their disciples periodically—once or twice every seven years (*Kiddushin* 71a). Even that practice ceased after a while, and the method of pronouncing the Name is no longer known with certainty."⁷ Such was the effect of the "commandment of men."—*Isaiah* 29:13; *Deuteronomy* 4:2; see page 9, paragraphs 15, 16.

Requirements for Those Who Bear the Name

¹⁰ Obviously, just knowing or even using God's name is not enough for a person to please God. Bearing God's name as one of his true worshipers is a unique privilege, as the prophet Jeremiah proclaimed: "Your word brought me the delight and joy of knowing that Your name is attached to me." (*Jeremiah* 15:16) But this grand privilege brings with it a weighty responsibility. Jehovah stated emphatically to kings of Gentile nations: "I am bringing the punishment first on

10-14. (a) What does God require of those who would bear his name? (b) What forms of purity are required of those who desire to please God? (c) What foreign pagan influence left a deep impression on Judaism?

the city that bears My name." (*Jeremiah* 25:29) When Jehovah released the nation of Israel from 70 years of captivity in Babylon, he had already warned his people through the prophet Isaiah: "Turn, turn away, touch naught unclean as you depart from there; keep pure, as you go forth from there, you who bear the vessels of the LORD [יהוה]" (*Isaiah* 52:11) What would be involved today in keeping pure as true worshipers, as bearers of the name of the most holy God, Jehovah?

¹¹ Certainly a person who desires to please God in his worship would have to remain pure in conduct, especially with respect to the moral standards that God himself establishes. In contrast with the permissive standards of today's society, the Scriptures leave no doubt or room for interpretation when expressing God's condemnation of lying, stealing, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, murder, and every form of deceit. (*Exodus* 20:12, 13 [20:12-16, NW]; 23:1, 2; *Leviticus* 5:1; 19:35, 36; 20:13) The Scriptures condemn not only the wrong action itself but also the wrong thinking that leads to wrong conduct.—*Exodus* 20:14 (20:17, NW); *Leviticus* 19:17; *Psalm* 14:1-5; *Job* 31:1, 9.

¹² In addition to moral purity, religious purity would certainly be required of those bearing Jehovah's name. Repeatedly Jehovah warned the ancient nation of Israel not to be influenced by the religious thinking, practices, and customs of the neighboring nations, who worshiped other gods. In fact, it was on this condition alone—that they would not imitate the false worship of the nations—that they could remain in the Promised Land. (*Leviticus* 18:24-30; *Deuteronomy* 12:29-31) Not only idolatry was clearly forbidden but also all forms of superstitious

DEATH AND THE SOUL—WHAT ARE THEY?

WHAT THE SCRIPTURES SAY:

"Then the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and *man became a living soul* [*ne'phesh*]." (Genesis 2:7, *JP*, italics ours.) Notice man was *not* given a soul but *became* one.

"But as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall die." (Genesis 2:17) Notice that death was mentioned to the first man, Adam, only as a punishment for disobedience.

"By the sweat of your brow shall you get bread to eat, until you return to the ground—for from it you were taken. For dust you are, and to dust you shall return."—Genesis 3:19.

"In the towns of the latter peoples, . . . you shall not let a soul [*nesha-mah'*] remain alive."—Deuteronomy 20:16.

"And they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, . . . all the souls [*ne'phesh*] that were therein; he left none remaining, . . . but he utterly destroyed it, and all the souls [*ne'phesh*] that were therein."—Joshua 10:37, *JP*.

"They proscribed and put to the sword every person in it. Not a soul [*nesha-mah'*] survived."—Joshua 11:11.

"Behold, all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine; *the soul* [*ne'phesh*] *that sinneth, it shall die*."—Ezekiel 18:4, *JP*, italics ours.

"The living know they will die. But the dead know nothing . . . For there is no action, no reasoning, no learning, no wisdom in Sheol [mankind's common grave], where you are going."—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10.

WHAT THE RABBIS HAVE SAID:

"In the seventh heaven, *Araboth*, are stored the spirits and souls which have still to be created."—*Hagigah* 12b, Talmud.

"An additional soul is given to man on the eve of the Sabbath, which is taken from him at the termination of the Sabbath."—*Taanit* 27b, Talmud.

"For full 12 months [after death] the body continues to exist and the soul ascends and descends."—*Shabbat* 152b, Talmud.

"Worms are as painful to the dead as a needle in the flesh of the living."—*Shabbat* 13b, Talmud.

"If a statement is said in a person's name in this world after his death his lips move in the grave."—*Sanhedrin* 90b, Talmud.

"Judaism is 'the religion which insures the immortality of the soul after the demise of the body.'"—*The Kuzari* 1:103, Judah Halevi, 12th-century rabbi.

practice and belief, such as astrology, spiritism, fortune-telling, magic, and praying to or inquiring of the dead, were prohibited.—Exodus 20:3-5; 22:17 (22:18, *NW*); Leviticus 20:27; Deuteronomy 18:9-13; Isaiah 8:19, 20; 47:13; Jeremiah 10:2.

¹³ Closely related to religious purity is the matter of doctrinal purity. The warning not to imitate the morals and worship of the nations around them applied more than just at the time when the nation of Israel took over the land from the Canaanites. Jehovah had revealed religious truth to his people. Only they worshiped the true God, Jehovah. (Exodus 19:5, 6; Deuteronomy 4:32-37; Psalm 147:19, 20) Only they knew this God personally and, being his witnesses, were in a position to teach others about him. (Isaiah 43:9-12; Psalm 105:1) In contrast, the religious customs and practices of other nations reflected a basic lack of knowledge of God.—Isaiah 60:2.

¹⁴ Despite its good start, the nation of Israel was repeatedly enticed by foreign religious ideas. (Judges 2:11-13; 1 Kings 18:21; Jeremiah 2:11-13; Ezekiel 8:14-18) While the Canaanite and Babylonian cultures left their mark, by far the greatest challenge ever to face Judaism came during the period of Hellenization by the Greek Empire.* Summing up this prolonged period of Greek cultural influence, extending from the fourth century B.C.E. well into the early centuries of the Common Era, the Jewish author Max

* From the time of Alexander the Great's rule (336-323 B.C.E.), the Greeks made a concerted effort to spread their philosophy, culture, and language to all lands encompassed by the Greek Empire. Those who adopted Greek culture and thought were considered Hellenized. This effort to win other cultures over to that of Greece was perpetuated under the Roman Empire, which, although having conquered Greece, found its culture and philosophy appealing. Even among many of those who ostensibly fought diligently to resist this tidal wave of Greek influence, we find clear evidence of their adopting Greek philosophical ideas, reasonings, and doctrines.

Dimont remarked: "Enriched with Platonic thought, Aristotelian logic, and Euclidian science, Jewish scholars approached the Torah with new tools. . . . They proceeded to add Greek reason to Jewish revelation."

Does Man Have an Immortal Soul?

¹⁵ Were Judaism's doctrines and religious beliefs influenced during this period? The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* frankly admits: "It was probably under Greek influence that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul came into Judaism."⁸ The Hebrew Scriptures teach simply and clearly that God originally intended for men to live forever in perfect health on this earth. (See pages 11-12, paragraphs 2 to 4.) At Genesis 2:7 we read: "The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (JP) Notice that the text does not state that man *was given* a soul but, rather, that he *became* a soul. Because of disobediently rebelling against God, the first man, Adam, was sentenced to death. Therefore, Adam, as a human soul, died. No part of him continued living in another realm. Thus, the concept of an immortal soul is not a Bible teaching.* The Bible says plainly: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."—Ezekiel 18:4, JP.

¹⁶ What the Scriptures reveal about the condition of the dead harmonizes with the Bible teaching that the soul dies. At Ecclesiastes chapter 9, verses 5 and 10, we read: "The living know they will die. But the dead

know nothing . . . For there is no action, no reasoning, no learning, no wisdom in Sheol [man-kind's common grave], where you are going." (Compare Psalm 146:3, 4.) Death was given as a punishment by God. (Genesis 2:17) It is the opposite of life, not another form of life. Since this is true, we should not be surprised to discover that nowhere do the Scriptures speak of a burning punishment of hellfire (*geh hin-nom'*). This too is a concept absorbed from Greek philosophy and pagan doctrine. Respecting the Jewish mystical belief in reincarnation, *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia* states: "The idea seems to have originated in India. . . . In Kabbalah [mystical books of Judaism] it first emerges in the book *Bahir*, and then, from the Zohar onward, was commonly accepted by mystics, playing an important role in Hasidic belief and literature."⁹

¹⁷ Since death is the opposite of life and the soul does not live on in another realm, what hope is there for those who have died? God's Word clearly teaches that after the restoration of paradisaic conditions to mankind on earth by the intervention of the Messianic King appointed by God, the majority of the dead will be brought back to life. This Bible teaching is often referred to as 'the resurrection of the dead.' The resurrected ones will include not only those who faithfully served God but also many millions, even billions, who never received a full opportunity to learn about him and serve him in truth.—Daniel 12: 2, 12 (13, NW, JP); Isaiah 26:19; Job 14:14, 15.

* In Biblical Hebrew the word translated "soul" is *ne'phesh*. However, in Judaism today, the Hebrew word *nesha-mah'* is often considered the part of man that continues to exist after death. But a careful study of the Scriptures reveals that the word *nesha-mah'* never conveyed such a meaning; it simply refers to the breathing process or a breathing creature, man or animal.—Genesis 7:22; Deuteronomy 20:16; Joshua 10:39, 40; 11:11; Isaiah 2:22.

15-17. (a) What does the Bible teach about death and the soul? (See box, page 22.) (b) What hope does the Bible hold out for those who have died?

This ancient synagogue floor in Tiberias, Israel, is just one example of the extent to which Greek thought and culture influenced Judaism. Notice the signs of the zodiac with their names written in Hebrew. The figure in the center is the sun-god Helios



¹⁸ Is not this Bible hope of the resurrection to perfect life on earth powerful motivation for people of all nations to search for and come to know the true God? But where is the true source of instruction from Jehovah for these last days, as mentioned at Isaiah 2:2, 3? Who can instruct

18, 19. Why should a person come to know the true God, and how can he do so?

people in Jehovah's ways, that they "may walk in His paths"? Can either Judaism or Christendom provide such instruction, in the light of the Bible information considered up to this point?

¹⁹ According to prophecy there would be a group of people bearing Jehovah's name in purity, who would truly serve both as his Witnesses and as a source of spiritual light to the nations.—Isaiah 60:2, 3.

WHO WILL LEAD THE NATIONS TO PEACE?

ISAIAH chapter 2 is much more than a prophecy about the return of the Jewish people to Jerusalem after 70 years of Babylonian captivity. Indeed, the prophecy refers to nothing less than the turning of peoples of all nations to the pure worship of the only true God, Jehovah. It implies the forming of an international brotherhood rendering sacred service acceptable to God.

² A transformation of such magnitude, encompassing people in every part of the world, would be not only dramatic but also visible, as if happening on a mountain in full view of everyone. This is exactly what is happening today among Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide. Millions from Christendom's religions have learned that God is one and have stopped worshiping the Trinity. In India, Hindus have abandoned their pantheon of gods and myriads of idols for the one true God. The same is true of people in Africa, on faraway islands, and in the Middle East. Those who have gone up to Jehovah's holy mountain, his pure worship, have put away all racial, tribal, and political hatreds; they literally 'learn war no more.'—Isaiah 2:2-4.

Messiah's Identity—A Source of Controversy

³ This international brotherhood is also related to the fulfillment of God's purpose for all

1, 2. How is the prophecy at Isaiah 2:2-4 being fulfilled in our day?

3. According to Isaiah 11:10, what effect would the Messiah have on the nations?

mankind: that people of *all nations* would bless themselves by means of a promised "seed," a descendant of Abraham, and so worship God in truth and unity. (Genesis 3:15; 22:18, *JP*) Later prophecies indicated that this "seed" was also to be the 'prophet like Moses,' who would mediate a new covenant that would serve as the legal basis for sincere people of all nations to worship God in unity. (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19; Jeremiah 31:31-34) In addition this very one was to be the Messiah, a ruler from the line of David, whose throne God would establish forever. (1 Chronicles 17:11, 12) According to the prophet Isaiah, the Messiah would be the rallying figure who would unite people out of all nations (Hebrew, *Goh-yim*'). Isaiah 11:10 says: "It shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign ["as a signal," *NW*] of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting-place shall be glorious."—*JP*.

⁴ The identity of the Messiah has been debated for centuries. According to Isaiah 11:10 and other texts, he would be a Jew, a descendant of King David (Jesse's son), and people of all nations would accept him as the legitimate Messiah sent by God. Referring to the first-century Jewish teacher Jesus, Rabbi H. G. Enelow wrote: "No sensible Jew can be indifferent to the fact that a Jew should have had such a tremendous part in the religious education and in-

4. What did one rabbi state regarding Jesus' effect on the human race?

rection of the human race.”¹⁰ What other Jew have so many Gentiles accepted as the Messiah? Could some other Jew receive wider acceptance? Still, there are those who find the idea that Jesus may be the Messiah very disturbing. Their reasons are worth examining.

Christendom's Apostasy

⁵ For the majority of non-Christians, it is Christendom, whose adherents supposedly follow Christ's teachings, that has caused an aversion to the very name of Jesus. In the name of Jesus, many nations have suffered at the hands of Christendom, but without a doubt the Jewish people have suffered more than any of them.

⁶ In our own time, anti-Semitism in Christendom culminated in the Nazi Holocaust. Though many factors were involved, religious hatred cannot be ignored as one of the main ones. And if some in Christendom would deny this, the fact that “Christians,” both Catholics and Protestants, were among the ones that did the killing or condoned it is undeniable. Elie Wiesel sums up the Jewish view in his book *A Jew Today*: “How is one to explain that neither Hitler nor Himmler was ever excommunicated by the church? That Pius XII never thought it necessary, not to say indispensable, to condemn Auschwitz and Treblinka? That among the S.S. a large proportion were believers who remained faithful to their Christian ties to the end? That there were killers who went to confession between massacres? And that they all came from Christian families and had received a Christian education?”¹¹ Therefore, just how much faith

5-7. Why do many find the very names of Jesus and of Christianity offensive?

could Jewish people be expected to demonstrate in someone whose name was for centuries connected with every humiliation and blow that they received?

⁷ Aside from outright persecution, what kind of moral example have the “Christian” countries given to the rest of the world? Little more than wars, Crusades, and “holy” Inquisitions. Even World War I and World War II were begun in “Christian” lands. Could it be said that “Christian” morality has been exemplary? AIDS for example, is rampant in countries where the majority of the population profess Christianity. The scandals among Christendom's clergy are notorious. Immoral televangelists who rake in millions of dollars and live like kings as well as homosexual clergy, some of whom have even been sued for committing sexual abuses against male minors, are just a few of the things that non-Christians feel characterize Christianity—fruitage that besmirches the name of Jesus, whom “Christians” claim to follow.

⁸ Additionally, both Judaism and Islam are rightly repelled by the idolatry rampant in Christendom. Many of Christendom's unscriptural doctrines, such as the veneration of Mary as the “Mother of God,” are also objectionable to these religions. The Trinity doctrine is especially viewed with disdain by Jews as a clear contradiction of the essence of Judaism—the monotheistic concept embodied in the words “HEAR O ISRAEL: THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE.” —Deuteronomy 6:4, *JP*.

8-10. (a) Why cannot Christendom rightly claim to represent Jesus and true Christianity? (b) What warning did the Scriptures give about an apostasy from Jesus' true teachings?

Jehovah's Witnesses, here seen by the Sea of Galilee, Israel, are also active worldwide, inviting people of all nations to learn more about God's purposes and requirements



WHO WAS THE 'ANOIDED ONE'? WHEN WOULD HE COME?

Daniel 9:24 (JP): "Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people."

◆ What is the purpose of the time period mentioned?

"To make an end of sin, and to forgive iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal vision and prophet." From these words alone, one would expect this to be one of the most important prophecies in the Scriptures.

Daniel 9:26 (JP): "After the threescore and two weeks shall an anointed one ["Messiah," Hebrew, *Mashi'ach*] be cut off, and be no more." Notice that the Messiah's cutting off, or death, would occur before the destruction of the second temple in 70 C.E., as the verse goes on to say: "And the people of a prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary."

◆ How do Jewish commentators understand this prophecy?

There is no one standard, accepted interpretation for this prophecy on the part of Jewish commentators. Some try to relate portions of it to the return from Babylonian exile (537 B.C.E.), others to the period of the Maccabees' rebellion against the forces of Hellenization (168-165 B.C.E.), and others to the destruction of the second temple by the Romans in 70 C.E., while still others relate portions of the prophecy to a yet future coming of the Messiah.

On the whole one could say that present-day Jewish interpretations fall short on two basic points:

1. They tend to minimize the importance of this prophecy, totally ignoring its stated purpose to bring an end to sin and iniquity and to establish everlasting righteousness.

2. None of these standard explanations accurately fit into any reasonable time calculation, which was the very purpose in giving Daniel this prophecy in a form that could be used to determine when the fulfillment would come about.—Compare Daniel 9:2.

◆ Is there an explanation of this prophecy that harmonizes both with its stated purpose and with historical facts?

Notice the following:

Seventy weeks: Jewish commentators almost universally understand

this to mean weeks of years, in other words, 490 years. This is in harmony with the Scriptural prophetic calculation of "a year for each day."—Numbers 14:34; Leviticus 25:8; Ezekiel 4:6.

◆ From the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem: Nehemiah relates that in the 20th year of King Artaxerxes, he was given the commission to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. This was in the year 455 B.C.E.—Nehemiah 2:1-8; see *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, pages 614-16, 899-900, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

Seven weeks: Seven weeks (of years, or 49 years) relates to the period of completing the restoration of the city, Jerusalem.

Sixty-two weeks: Sixty-two weeks (of years, or 434 years) relates to the period after the completion of the city until the coming of the Messiah.*

Adding these two time periods together, one comes to 69 weeks of years, or 483 years. Counting from the starting point of 455 B.C.E. shows the end of the 69th week to be 29 C.E.

*The punctuation found in the present-day Hebrew text (the original Hebrew text had no vowel pointing or punctuation), which causes a different understanding of this time division, is not original but rather is an addition by scribes in the Middle Ages who evidently were reacting to the interpretation of this text as being fulfilled in Jesus.

29 C.E.: A Jew named Jesus (Hebrew, *Yeshua*), born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth, from the line of David, begins preaching throughout the land of Israel.—Luke 3:1-3, 21, 22.

◆ "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah will be cut off" (Daniel 9:26, NW): In the year 33 C.E., Jesus is killed, after preaching for three and a half years. This corresponds to what Daniel 9:27 states.

◆ "He will cause sacrifice and gift offering to cease" (Daniel 9:27, NW): Jesus spoke of his death as a sacrifice. (Matthew 20:28) It brought a culmination in God's eyes to the sacrifices offered under the Law covenant. (Hebrews 8:1-13) Jesus' sacrificial death provided the basis for all that was mentioned in Daniel 9:24.

It would bring forgiveness of sin.

It confirmed God's promises and prophecies.

It provided a legal basis according to God's standards for everlasting righteousness in the future.

All of this occurred, as the prophecy indicated, *before* the destruction of the second temple.

Would not any other explanation indicating a past fulfillment fall short of the stated purpose?

Pointing to a future fulfillment of this prophecy would take it far out of its given time period of 70 weeks of years and it would not be prior to the destruction of Jerusalem's second temple.

⁹ The persecutions perpetrated by Christendom, its wars, immorality, hypocrisy, and blasphemous doctrines are unpardonable not only in the eyes of non-Christians but also in the eyes of God Almighty. For this reason, Jehovah's Witnesses, though followers of Jesus Christ, are no part of Christendom. Christendom, on the other hand, is no part of true Christianity. Virtually the only similarity between Christendom and the first Christians is the use of the name Jesus. But if Jesus' teachings were so outstandingly good and practical, how did such an apostasy come about?

¹⁰ Actually, that false Christians would arise and that there would be an apostasy from Jesus' true teachings were prophesied by Jesus himself as well as by the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures, incorrectly referred to as the New Testament. (Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Peter 2:1, 2) According to Matthew 7:21-23, the Messiah himself would judge these apostate ones for what they are and would say to them, "I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness."—NW; compare Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43.

Why Were Additional Scriptures Needed?

¹¹ At first, all the followers of Jesus were Jews. In fact, thousands of Jews in the first century, including "a great crowd of priests," accepted Jesus as the 'prophet like Moses,' the Messiah. (Acts 2:5, 37, 41; 4:4; 6:7; Deuteronomy 18:18) These same Jews became the foundation of a new international group of worshipers of Jehovah God, legally established on the basis of "a new covenant," mediated by this prophet like Moses.—Jeremiah 31:31-34.

¹² With a new covenant came the need for further inspired writings that would provide necessary additional information for those who would serve God under this new-covenant arrangement. These writings, the Christian Greek Scriptures, were all written by Jews.

11, 12. (a) What are the Christian Greek Scriptures? (b) Who wrote these Scriptures? (c) Why was God's inspiration necessary for these writings?

They report on Jesus' life and teachings, fill in details concerning many prophecies recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures, and clarify points concerning the Messiah and his role in the divine purpose. Additionally, they include letters that serve as counsel and encouragement for the new international body of worshipers.*

Was Jesus the Promised Messiah?

¹³ But wasn't Jesus rejected by the religious leaders of his day? Yes, and these in turn influenced the masses. But were not Jeremiah and other prophets also rejected by the religious leaders of their day? (Jeremiah 7:25, 26; 20:1-6; 2 Chronicles 36:15, 16) Those of Jesus' generation who believed in him, who had a firsthand opportunity to examine his teaching and his works as well as the prophecies concerning him, were not dissuaded by the opposition of the religious leaders, who saw their religious monopoly threatened. What those sincere Jews had personally witnessed convinced them that the Messianic prophecies had been fulfilled in Jesus. What were the powerful proofs that made those first-century Jews willing to risk everything, even death, by declaring belief in Jesus as the promised Messiah?—John 9:22; 16:2.

¹⁴ In the first place, *the time was right*. The prophecy at Daniel chapter 9, concerning the Messiah, indicated that he would appear before the destruction of the second temple.[#]—Daniel 9:24-27.

* Some allege that these writings are self-contradictory or that they contradict the Hebrew Scriptures. However, examination of these supposed contradictions proves that this is not the case. In fact, the same principle applies here that applied to supposed contradictions within the Hebrew Scriptures themselves. (See pages 6 and 8, paragraphs 9 to 12.) Since all the first Christians, including those who wrote the books making up the Christian Greek Scriptures, were Jews, they did not foment anti-Semitism any more than did the Jewish prophets before them who denounced the religious leaders of their own day.

[#] Among the first-century Jews, there was a general understanding that this prophecy would be fulfilled in their own time. (Luke 3:15) In his work *De Terminis Vitae* (Concerning the End of Life), a 17th-century rabbi, Menasseh ben Israel, wrote: "Some would accept those 70 weeks as meaning that after their end the Messiah would come who would constitute them rulers of the whole world. Indeed, all who took up arms against the Romans at that time held that opinion."

13-16. What convinced many first-century Jews that Jesus was the Messiah?

"MY SERVANT"—WHO IS HE?

"Indeed, My servant . . . was despised, shunned by men . . . We held him of no account. Yet it was our sickness that he was bearing, our suffering that he endured. . . . But he was wounded because of our sins, crushed because of our iniquities. . . . We all went astray like sheep . . . And the LORD visited upon him the guilt of all of us.' . . . Though he had done no injustice and had spoken no falsehood. . . . 'My righteous servant makes the many righteous, it is their punishment that he bears . . . He exposed himself ["poured out his soul," NW] to death and was numbered among the sinners, whereas he bore the guilt of the many and made intercession for sinners.'"—Isaiah 52:13–53:12.

The picture Isaiah presents here is of a completely innocent, pure individual whose suffering and death provided atonement for his own nation, which did not acknowledge him.

Today, however, most Jewish commentators accept as an established fact that the reference is to the nation of Israel as a whole or to a righteous group within the nation.

The question is, Did the nation of Israel, or even a portion of it, ever fit this description, or does it apply to an individual?

For over 800 years after Isaiah's

writing these words of prophecy (c. 732 B.C.E.), there is no record of any Jew or rabbi who taught that this "servant" was to be viewed in a collective sense. Throughout this period, the prophecy was universally understood to refer to an individual and was generally regarded as a prophecy concerning the Messiah.

In addition, notice the comment in the prologue to the book *The Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Interpreters*: "Surviving Jewish exegesis up to the end of the amoraic period [up to the sixth century C.E.] suggests that

it was then frequently, perhaps even generally assumed without question that the figure referred to was the Messiah, which is of course how the Targum also, somewhat later, interprets it." —Edited by H. M. Orlinsky, 1969, page 17.

What could be the motive for rejecting and reinterpreting the most natural understanding of this scripture as referring to an individual, even the Messiah? Was it not simply an effort to avoid any connection between this prophecy and Jesus, the first-century Jew who fitted its description in every detail?

¹⁵ Secondly, *the man himself was right*. He was from the tribe of Judah and a descendant of King David. (Genesis 49:10; 1 Chronicles 17:11-14; compare Matthew 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-31.) Also, he was born in Bethlehem, which was commonly understood among first-century Jews to be the designated birthplace for the Messiah.* (Micah 5:1 [5:2, NW]; compare Matthew 2:4-6; Luke 2:1-7; John 7:42.) All of these were important credentials that Jews of Jesus' day expected the Messiah to have as a means of identification.

¹⁶ Then, *the teaching of the man was right*. It was not political or legalistic but spiritual and ethical.* Quite simply, he got to the heart of

* The ancient Jewish Aramaic paraphrase, or Targum, of Micah 5:1 states: "From thee [Bethlehem] Messiah shall go out before me."

* Jewish historian Joseph Klausner wrote: "A man like Jesus, for whom the ethical ideal was everything, was something hitherto unheard of in the Judaism of the day. . . . Thus, his ethical teaching, apparently goes beyond that of *Pirkē Aboth* and of other *Talmudic* and *Midrashic* literature. It is not lost in a sea of legal prescriptions and items of secular information."¹²

matters. Furthermore, he dared to appeal solely to the Scriptures as his final authority, not to the sayings of previous religious leaders, as was the custom. This astounded the crowds, for "he was teaching them as a person having authority, and not as their scribes." (Matthew 7:29, NW) The accounts of Jesus' life reveal a personality so powerful, and a teaching so clear, that historians cite this as one of the reasons that it can be asserted that he was no mythical character.*

¹⁷ Various prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures, long accepted as Messianic, were fulfilled through the suffering and death of Jesus. Such prophecies link the Messiah's death with the

* For a complete account of the life and ministry of Jesus, see the book *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

17-20. (a) What prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures spoke of the time of the Messiah's coming and of his sacrificial death? (b) Why was it necessary for the Messiah to die?

forgiveness of sins. In the Christian Greek Scriptures, this atonement provided by the death of the Messiah is referred to as the 'ransom sacrifice.' (Matthew 20:28; Romans 3:24) What were some of these prophecies?

¹⁸ Notice the words of the prophecy at Daniel 9:24, 25 (JP): "Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to forgive iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness . . . unto one anointed ["Messiah," Hebrew, *Ma-shi'ach*], a prince." One cannot avoid noticing the link established in the text between the "Messiah" (the Anointed One) and the 'finishing of transgression and making an end to sin.' Verse 26 goes on to state that "after the threescore and two weeks shall an anointed one ["Messiah," Hebrew, *Ma-shi'ach*] be cut off," in other words, be killed. (See box, page 26.)

¹⁹ Another text that is related to the Messiah's being "cut off," or killed, as an atonement sacrifice, is found at Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12. (See box, page 28.) Rabbis in the first century applied this text to the Messiah, as did Rambam and others in the Middle Ages. The text makes it perfectly clear that forgiveness is linked with the Messiah and his death.

²⁰ For the above reasons, the teaching that the Messiah's death would make possible the complete forgiveness of sin in God's sight was readily understood by many first-century Jews. They knew that the Scriptures spoke of man's inherent imperfection. (Ecclesiastes 7:20) The need for sacrifice to atone for sin was a lesson perceived daily; it was implicit in the very framework and nature of the Law covenant. The events described in the accounts of Jesus' life present him as a perfect man whose death could bring atonement for mankind's sin.* (Matthew 20:28; Luke 1:26-38) When the Christian Greek Scriptures highlighted that the various sacrifices under the Law foreshadowed this one final

and complete sacrifice, fuller meaning was given to the entire framework of the Law, as well as to other portions of the Scriptures.*—Hebrews 10:1-10.

Like Moses—A Reliable Prophet

²¹ In addition to explaining Jesus' death as a ransom sacrifice, the Christian Greek Scriptures also highlight his role as a 'prophet like Moses.' (Deuteronomy 18:18; see page 14, paragraphs 17 to 19.) As such, he prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and instructed his disciples to flee the city when they would see it surrounded by armies. (Matthew 23:37-24:2; Luke 21:20, 21) But how can one flee a city when it is besieged by troops? The Jewish historian Yoseph ben Mattatياهو (Josephus), himself an eyewitness of these events, records the answer: "Cestius [the Roman commander, 66 C.E.] . . . suddenly called off his men, abandoned hope though he had suffered no reverse, and flying in the face of all reason retired from the City."¹³ That was the opening the Christians needed to flee the city. Four years later, in 70 C.E., the Roman troops, now under General Titus, returned and again besieged the city. Jesus had prophesied of the city that the enemy would build 'a fortification with pointed stakes and would encircle the city and distress it from every side.' (Luke 19:43, NW) Josephus confirms that Titus built such a fortification of pointed stakes, nearly five miles long, denuding the countryside of trees for a radius of about ten miles. Jesus' prophecies gave precise instructions on how to avoid destruction at the hands of the Romans,

* In this light the entire story of Abraham takes on new meaning. God was not asking Abraham to kill his son just to test his faith but also to act out a pictorial drama so that men could understand that God himself was going to provide a sacrifice, someone dear to him, for the eternal benefit of mankind. The One provided would be the very Seed of Abraham, by means of whom God had promised that "all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves." (Genesis 22:10-12, 16-18; compare John 3:16.) The similarity and concept are too clear and specific for this to be a coincidence or a clever invention of men.

* The apostle Paul referred to Jesus as the 'second Adam,' whose death brought atonement for sin inherited from Adam. (1 Corinthians 15:45-47; Romans 5:12, 15-19) For more information on why such an arrangement was essential, see page 14, paragraphs 15 and 16 and footnote.

21, 22. (a) How do historical events regarding the destruction of Jerusalem prove that Jesus was a true prophet? (b) How do historical events regarding our day also prove this?

and their veracity is proved by the fact that the lives of all those who heeded them were saved.—Luke 21:20-24.

²² Jesus also prophesied about the future destruction by God of all wickedness and those who cause it. At Luke 21:24 (NW), he referred to “the appointed times of the nations,” showing that God had a limit as to how long he would tolerate human rule.* Jesus also foretold that the last days of man’s rule would be marked by wars, famine, earthquakes, pestilence, crime, and violence, and that before the end of man’s rule, a worldwide educational work would be carried out to inform people of all nations that God’s government was ruling from the heavens. (See Matthew 24:3-14; Luke 21:10, 11.) Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that this great composite sign has been in evidence since 1914, when “the appointed times of the nations” came to their end. Long before that time they had been announcing that 1914 would be a marked date in human history. When the first world war began in August of that year, their expectations on that were confirmed. In reality, none of the Witnesses had received any divine visions; it was their diligent study of the Holy Scriptures that led them to this conclusion.

Nations Educated in the Ways of Peace

²³ However, the Messiah’s role in providing a ransom sacrifice and in being a prophet like Moses would have only limited value if the final aspect of his role in the outworking of God’s purpose was not fulfilled—his becoming the appointed King of God’s Kingdom. (Isaiah 9:5, 6 [9:6, 7, NW]) But how could Jesus hold this position if he died? In harmony with prophecies regarding the Messiah, God resurrected Jesus on the third day after his death. (Psalm 16:8-11; Isaiah 53:10, 12; compare Matthew 28:1-7; Luke

* In mentioning “the appointed times of the nations,” Jesus was evidently referring to the prophecy at Daniel 4:10-34 (4:10-37, NW). For an in-depth explanation of this prophecy, see *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 1, pages 132-5, and “*Let Your Kingdom Come*,” chapter 14 and appendix, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

23. How could Jesus become the appointed King of God’s Kingdom?

24:44-46; Acts 2:24-32; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.) God restored him to life, not as a man, since he had offered his perfect human life in sacrifice, but as a powerful spirit creature, waiting at God’s right hand for further instructions.—Psalm 110:1; Acts 2:33-35; Hebrews 10:12, 13.

²⁴ King David wrote that at the time that the Messiah would begin to rule, ‘God’s people would offer themselves willingly.’ (Psalm 110:3) Although world conditions have progressed from bad to worse since that marked year of 1914, there has also been a fulfillment of the positive aspect of the prophecy; God’s people have willingly volunteered their time to preach ‘the good news of the kingdom in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations.’ (Matthew 24:14, NW) For example, every year the Witnesses spend hundreds of millions of hours in speaking to people about God’s Kingdom and conducting free home Bible studies with those interested in examining the facts.

²⁵ All this time is given free of charge. The ones doing the work are from every walk of life, of all ages, and from about every profession imaginable. These are the ones described at Isaiah 2:3 by the words: “The many peoples shall go and say: ‘Come, let us go up to the Mount of the LORD [Hebrew, יְהוָה, Jehovah].’” This is no mere campaign to “win souls.” It is a worldwide educational program with two objectives: (1) Inform people in every nation that God’s Kingdom is ruling and tell them exactly what it will soon do, and (2) educate, free of charge, all those who want to examine the facts and serve the living God according to his wishes. The success of the work and the fulfillment of the prophecy are assured. Why? Because Jehovah God himself is backing it.—Zechariah 4:6.

²⁶ Is it not reasonable to see the work of Jehovah’s Witnesses as fulfillment of this prophecy at Isaiah 2:3? Do you know of anyone else who is doing this work? Or do you think it is just a matter of coincidence that millions of people make time in their lives to speak about a message

24-26. How are Jehovah’s Witnesses having a share in the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy?

prophesied some two thousand years ago, a message that was to be heralded during a time of unprecedented upheaval? Yes, in these last days, it is Jehovah's Witnesses who have become 'a light to the nations.' (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6)

They are the only international brotherhood serving Jehovah God unitedly and peacefully under the direction of the Messiah, "the root of Jesse," whom they proclaim to be the 'signal' for the nations.—Isaiah 11:10, *NW, JP*.

A WORLD WITHOUT WAR —YOU CAN SEE IT

THE inspiring prophecy of Isaiah chapter 2 is indeed finding its fulfillment in our days. A world without war is near at hand. Already millions of Jehovah's Witnesses around the earth have beaten "their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks." Though they come from every nation and background, they have learned to overcome any former prejudice and hatred, and they have learned the ways of the God of true peace, Jehovah. (Isaiah 2:4) Because of this peace-loving stand, they shared the experience of the concentration camps with the Jews (1933-45).

² As bright as the prospects are for the future, they are not bright for all. Jehovah will not wait endlessly for all men to beat their swords into plowshares. There are those who are unwilling to do so. The psalmist leaves no doubt as to the fate of such ones: "For evil men will be cut off, but those who look to the LORD—they shall inherit the land. A little longer and there will be no wicked man; you will look at where he was—he will be gone." (Psalm 37:9, 10) Yes, in the very near future, Jehovah will act, 'putting a stop to wars throughout the earth.'—Psalm 46:9-11 (46:8-10, *NW*).

³ The same prophecy of Jesus that gave the sign of the last days also highlighted the nearness of God's intervention. Jesus said: "This generation [the generation of 1914 that wit-

nessed the end of "the appointed times"] will by no means pass away until all these things occur." (Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:24, *NW*) That generation is very near to passing away. Yes, now is the time of decision for all mankind! Now, in these last days, or "end of days," (*JP*) we must choose whether we will 'go up to the mountain of Jehovah' to be 'instructed in His ways' or not. But as we have seen from this discussion, much is involved in coming to know the true God, 'in being instructed in His ways, in walking in His paths.' (Isaiah 2:2, 3, *NW, Ta*) Doing so is not simply a matter of reading a brochure or taking a short study course. It involves much deeper instruction that affects one's whole way of life. Would you like to know more about the God of peace?

⁴ Jehovah's Witnesses stand ready to help you to make such a serious investigation. We encourage you to continue examining this subject in all earnestness, that you too may be among those 'going up to the mountain of Jehovah, being instructed in His ways.' For further help, contact Jehovah's Witnesses at a Kingdom Hall near you, or write to the publishers of this brochure. (See page 32.) The satisfying result is well expressed by the prophet Micah: "And they will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble." May you too come to be among those who "walk in the name of Jehovah . . . forever" in a world without war!—Micah 4:4, 5, *NW*.

1-4. (a) Why is this an urgent time of decision?
(b) What is required if one is to make a proper decision?

THEY SHALL BEAT THEIR SWORDS INTO
 PLOWSHARES. AND THEIR SPEARS INTO
 PRUNING HOOKS. NATION SHALL NOT LIFT
 UP SWORD AGAINST NATION. NEITHER
 SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANY MORE.
 ISAIAH

The 'Isaiah Wall,' United Nations Plaza

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For further information, please write Watch Tower, using the appropriate address below.

ARGENTINA: Casilla de Correo 83 (Suc. 27B), 1427 Buenos Aires. **AUSTRALIA:** Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **BRAZIL:** Caixa Postal 92, 18270-970 Tatui, SP. **BRITAIN:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **CANADA:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **FRANCE:** B.P. 625, F-27406 Louviers cedex. **GERMANY:** Niederselters, Am Steinfels, D-65618 Selters. **HUNGARY:** Cserkút u. 13, H-1162 Budapest. **ISRAEL:** P. O. Box 961, 61-009 Tel Aviv. **ITALY:** Via della Bufalotta 1281, I-00138 Rome RM. **MEXICO:** Apartado Postal 896, 06002 Mexico, D. F. **POLAND:** Skrz. Poczt. 13, PL-05-830 Nadarzyn. **SOUTH AFRICA:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:** 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483.