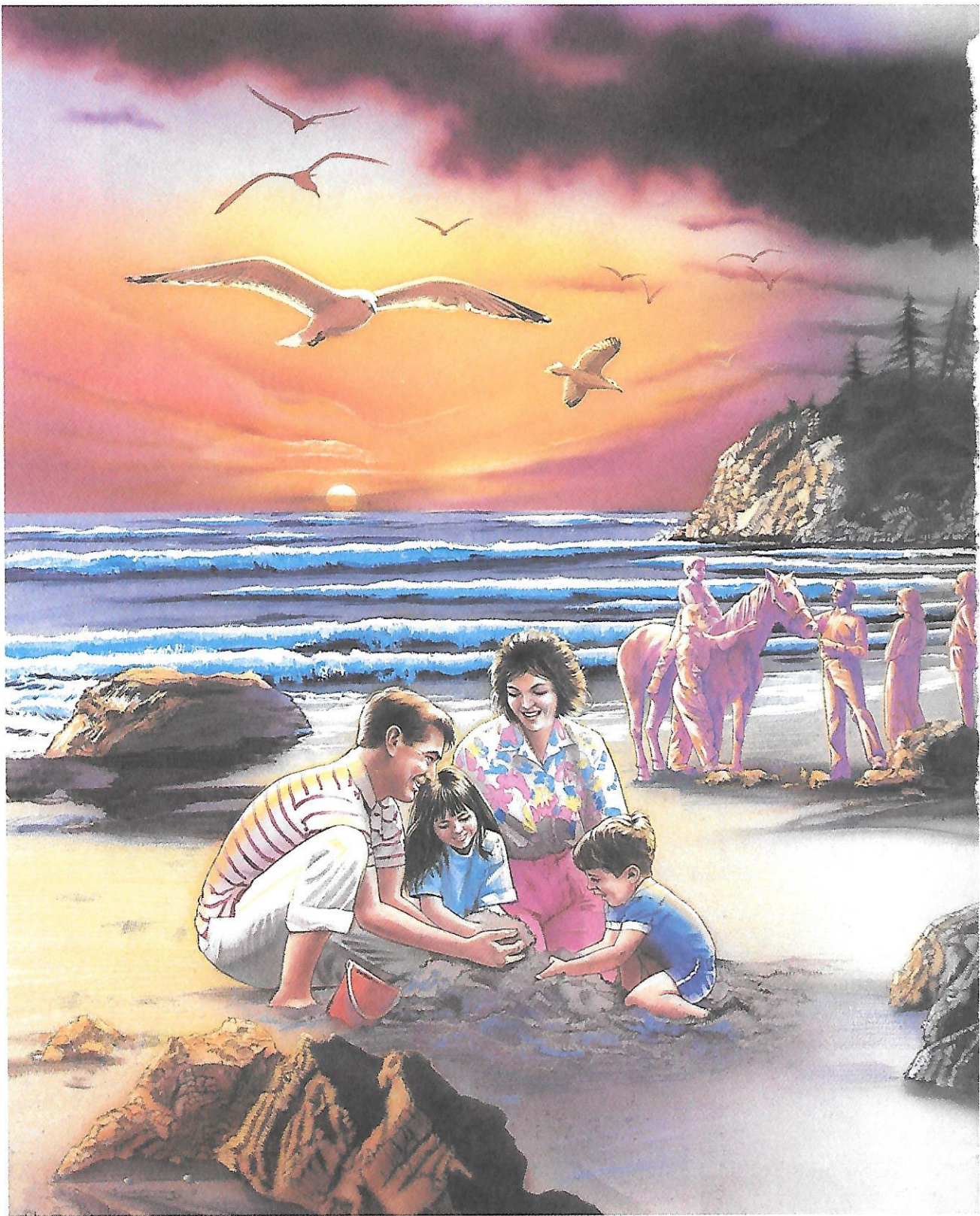
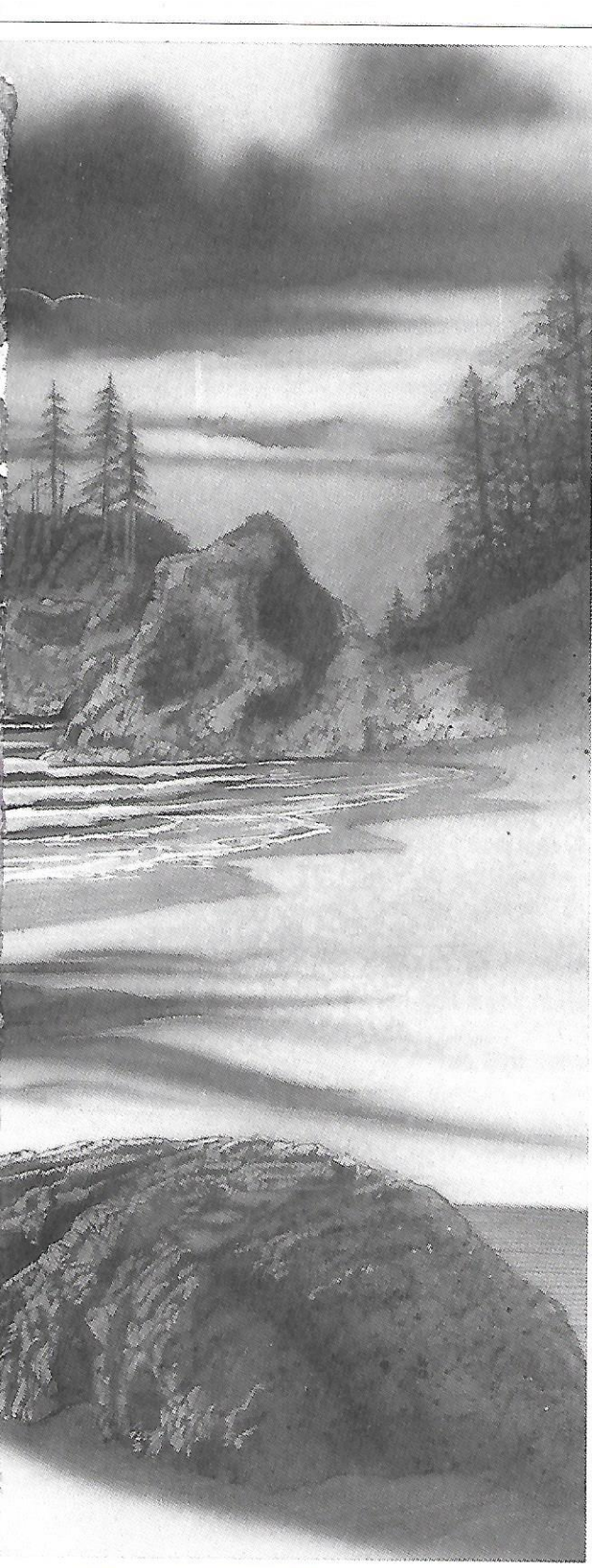




WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LIFE?

How Can You Find It?





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How Can You Find It?

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LIVE FOREVER ON
A PARADISE EARTH

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What Is the Purpose of Life?
How Can You Find It?

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IS THERE A PURPOSE TO LIFE?

Sooner or later, nearly everybody wonders what the purpose of life is. Is it to work hard to improve our living conditions, to provide for our families, to die after perhaps 70 or 80 years, and then to be nonexistent forever? One young person who felt this way said that there is no other purpose in life than "to live, to have children, to be happy and then to die." But is that true? And does death really end it all?

² Many in both Eastern and Western lands feel that the main purpose in living is to acquire material wealth. They believe that this can lead to a happy, meaningful life. But what of people who already have material wealth? Canadian writer Harry Bruce said: "A baffling number of rich people insist they are not happy." He added: "Polls suggest a terrible pessimism has infected North America . . . Is *anybody* happy out there? If so, what's the secret?"

³ Former U.S. president Jimmy Carter stated: "We've discovered that owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning. . . . Piling up material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose." And another political leader said: "I have for several years now been engaged in an intensive search for truths about myself and my life; many other people I know are doing the same. More people than ever before are asking, 'Who are we? What is our purpose?'"

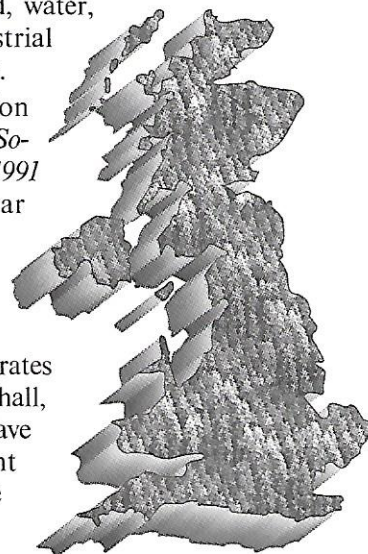
Conditions More Difficult

⁴ Many doubt that life has a purpose when

1. What is often asked about the purpose of life, and how did one person comment on it?
- 2, 3. Why is the acquiring of material wealth not enough of a purpose in life?
4. Why do some doubt that life has any purpose?

they see that living conditions have become more difficult. Throughout the world more than a billion people are seriously ill or malnourished, resulting in the death of some ten million children each year in Africa alone. Earth's population, nearing 6 billion, continues to grow by more than 90 million a year, more than 90 percent of that growth in developing countries. This constantly expanding population increases the need for food, housing, and industry, which brings further damage to land, water, and air from industrial and other pollutants.

⁵ The publication *World Military and Social Expenditures 1991* reports: "Every year an area of forest equal to the whole surface of [Great Britain] is destroyed. At present rates (of clearance) we shall, by the year 2000, have removed 65 percent of forests in the humid tropical zones." In those areas, according to a UN agency, 10 trees are cut for every 1 planted; in Africa the ratio is more than 20 to 1. So desert areas increase, and each year an area the size of Belgium is lost for agricultural use.



"Every year an area of forest equal to the whole surface of [Great Britain] is destroyed"

⁶ Also, this 20th century has had four times as many deaths from war as the previous four centuries put together. Everywhere, there is a

5. What is happening to vegetation on the earth?
- 6, 7. What are some of the problems human leaders are unable to solve, so what questions need to be answered?

***"I've been asking
why I'm here most of my life"***

rise in crime, especially violent crime. The breakdown of the family, drug abuse, AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, and other negative factors are also making life more difficult. And world leaders have not been able to provide solutions for the many problems plaguing the human family. Thus, it is understandable why people ask, What is the purpose of life?

⁷ How has that question been addressed by scholars and religious leaders? After all these many centuries of time, have they provided a satisfactory answer?

What They Say

⁸ Confucian scholar Tu Wei-Ming said: "The ultimate meaning of life is found in our ordinary, human existence." According to this view, humans would continue to be born, struggle for existence, and die. There is little hope in such an outlook. And is it even true?

⁹ Elie Wiesel, a survivor of the Nazi death camps in World War II, observed: "Why are we here?" is the most important question a human being has to face. . . . I believe that life has meaning in spite of the meaningless death I have seen." But he could not say what the meaning of life was.

¹⁰ Editor Vermont Royster stated: "In the contemplation of man himself, . . . of his place in this universe, we are little further along than when time began. We are still left with questions of who we are and why we are and where we are going."

¹¹ Evolutionary scientist Stephen Jay Gould noted: "We may yearn for a 'higher' answer—but none exists." For such evolutionists, life

8, 9. (a) What did a Chinese scholar say about life's purpose? (b) What did a Nazi death-camp survivor state?

10, 11. (a) How did one editor show that man does not have the answers? (b) Why is the view of an evolutionary scientist not satisfying?



is a struggle for survival of the fittest, death ending it all. There is no hope in that view either. And, again, is it true?

¹² Many religious leaders say that the purpose of life is to lead a good existence so that at death a person's soul can go to heaven and spend eternity there. The alternative offered for bad people is eternal torment in hellfire. Yet, according to this belief, on earth there would continue to be more of the same unsatisfactory existence that has prevailed throughout history. But if God's purpose was to have people live in heaven like angels, why did he not just create them that way to begin with, as he did the angels?

¹³ Even clergymen have difficulty with such views. Dr. W. R. Inge, a former dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, once said: "All my life I have struggled to find the purpose of living. I have tried to answer three problems which always seemed to me to be

12, 13. What are the views of church leaders, and are they any more satisfying than those of secular observers?

fundamental: the problem of eternity; the problem of human personality; and the problem of evil. I have failed. I have solved none of them."

The Effect

¹⁴ What is the effect of so many different ideas by scholars and religious leaders on the question of life's purpose? Many respond as did an elderly man who said: "I've been asking why I'm here most of my life. If there's a purpose, I don't care anymore."

¹⁵ Quite a number who observe the profusion of views among the world's religions conclude that it really does not matter what one believes. They feel that religion is just a diversion for the mind, something to provide a little peace of mind and comfort so that one can cope with life's problems. Others feel that religion is nothing more than superstition. They feel that centuries of religious speculation has not answered the question about life's purpose, nor has it improved the life of the common people. Indeed, history shows that this world's religions have often held mankind back from progress and have been the cause of hatreds and wars.

¹⁶ Yet, is it even important to find the truth about the purpose of life? Mental-health professional Viktor Frankl answered: "The striving to find a meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man. . . . There is nothing in the world, I venture to say, that would so effectively help one to survive even the worst conditions, as the knowledge that there is a meaning in one's life."

¹⁷ Since human philosophies and religions have not satisfactorily explained what the purpose of life is, where can we go to find out what it is? Is there a source of superior wisdom that can tell us the truth about this matter?

14, 15. What effect do the conflicting views have on many people?

16. How important can finding life's purpose be?

17. What questions do we now need to ask?

WHO CAN TELL US?

¹ Who can tell us what the purpose of life really is? Well, if you were to visit a machine designer and saw him working on a complicated piece of machinery that you did not recognize, how could you find out what it was for? The best way would be for you to ask the designer.

² What, then, of the magnificent design we see all around us on earth, such as in all living things, down to the smallest living cell? Even the much smaller molecules and atoms inside the cell are wonderfully designed and orderly. What, too, of the marvelously designed human mind? And what of our solar system, and our Milky Way galaxy, and the universe? Did not all these awesome designs require a Designer? Surely he could tell us why he designed such things.

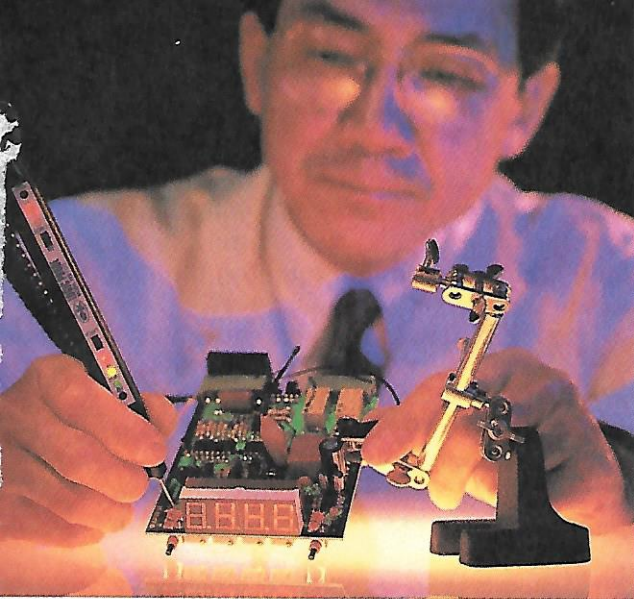
Did Life Originate by Chance?

³ *The Encyclopedia Americana* noted "the extraordinary degree of complexity and of organization in living creatures" and stated: "A close examination of flowers, insects, or mammals shows an almost incredibly precise arrangement of parts." British astronomer Sir Bernard Lovell, referring to the chemical composition of living organisms, wrote: "The probability of . . . a *chance* occurrence leading to the formation of one of the smallest protein molecules is unimaginably small. . . . It is effectively zero."

⁴ Similarly, astronomer Fred Hoyle said: "The entire structure of orthodox biology still holds that life arose at random. Yet as biochemists discover more and more about the awesome complexity of life, it is apparent that the chances of it originating by accident are

1, 2. What is the best way to find the purpose of something that is designed?

3, 4. What likelihood is there that life arose by chance?



The best way to find out why something was designed is to ask the designer

functional protein or gene—is complex beyond our own creative capacities, a reality which is the very antithesis of chance, which excels in every sense anything produced by the intelligence of man?” He also states: “Between a living cell and the most highly ordered non-biological system, such as a crystal or a snowflake, there is a chasm as vast and absolute as it is possible to conceive.” And a professor of physics, Chet Raymo, states: “I am dazzled . . . Every molecule seems miraculously contrived for its task.”

⁷ Molecular biologist Denton concludes that “those who still dogmatically advocate that all this new reality is the result of pure chance” are believing in a myth. In fact, he calls the Darwinian belief regarding living things arising by chance “the great cosmogenic myth of the twentieth century.”

Design Requires a Designer

⁸ The idea that nonliving material could come to life by chance, by some haphazard accident, is so remote as to be impossible. No, all the superbly designed living things on earth could not have come about by accident, since everything that is designed must have a designer. Do you know of any exceptions? There are none. And the more complicated the design, the more capable the designer has to be.

⁹ We may also illustrate the matter this way: When we see a painting, we accept it as evidence that a painter exists. When we read a book, we accept that an author exists. When we see a house, we accept that a builder exists. When we see a traffic light, we know that a law-making body exists. All those things were made with a purpose by those who made them. And while we may not understand everything about the people who designed them, we do not doubt that the people exist.

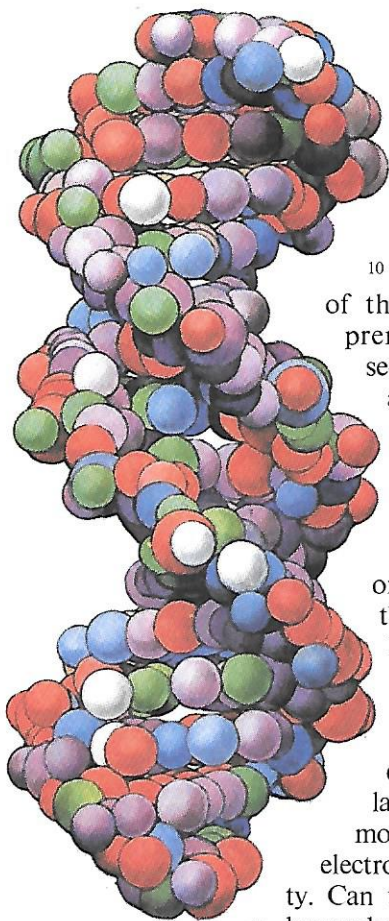
so minute that they can be completely ruled out. Life cannot have arisen by chance.”

⁵ Molecular biology, one of the more recent fields of science, is the study of living things at the level of genes, molecules, and atoms. Molecular biologist Michael Denton comments on what has been found: “The complexity of the simplest known type of cell is so great that it is impossible to accept that such an object could have been thrown together suddenly by some kind of freakish, vastly improbable, event.” “But it is not just the complexity of living systems which is so profoundly challenging, there is also the incredible ingenuity that is so often manifest in their design.” “It is at a molecular level where . . . the genius of biological design and the perfection of the goals achieved are most pronounced.”

⁶ Denton further states: “Everywhere we look, to whatever depth we look, we find an elegance and ingenuity of an absolutely transcending quality, which so mitigates against the idea of chance. Is it really credible that random processes could have constructed a reality, the smallest element of which—a

5-7. How does molecular biology verify that living things cannot arise by chance?

8, 9. Give an illustration showing that everything designed must have a designer.



The complexity and design of living things can be seen in the DNA molecule

¹⁰ Similarly, the evidence of the existence of a Supreme Designer can be seen in the design, order, and complexity of living things on earth. They all bear the marks of a Supreme Intelligence. This is also true of the design, order, and complexity of the universe with its billions of galaxies, each containing billions of stars. And all the heavenly bodies are controlled by precise laws, such as those for motion, heat, light, sound, electromagnetism, and gravity. Can there be laws without a lawmaker? Rocket scientist

Dr. Wernher von Braun stated: "The natural laws of the universe are so precise that we have no difficulty building a spaceship to fly to the moon and can time the flight with the precision of a fraction of a second. These laws must have been set by somebody."

¹¹ True, we cannot see the Supreme Designer and Lawgiver with our literal eyes. But do we deny the existence of such things as gravity, magnetism, electricity, or radio waves just because we cannot see them? No, we do not, for we can observe their effects. Then why should we deny the existence of a Supreme Designer and Lawgiver just because we cannot

10. What evidence of a Supreme Designer can be seen?

11. Why should we not deny the existence of a Supreme Designer just because we cannot see him?

not see him, when we can observe the results of his amazing handiwork?

¹² Paul Davies, a professor of physics, concludes that man's existence is not a mere quirk of fate. He states: "We are truly meant to be here." And he says regarding the universe: "Through my scientific work, I have come to believe more and more strongly that the physical universe is put together with an ingenuity so astonishing that I cannot accept it merely as a brute fact. There must, it seems to me, be a deeper level of explanation."

¹³ Thus, the evidence tells us that the universe, the earth, and living things on the earth could not have come about just by chance. They all give silent testimony to a highly intelligent, powerful Creator.

What the Bible Says

¹⁴ The Bible, mankind's oldest book, draws the same conclusion. For example, in the Bible book of Hebrews, written by the apostle Paul, we are told: "Of course, every house is constructed by someone, but he that constructed all things is God." (Hebrews 3:4) The last book of the Bible, written by the apostle John, also says: "You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created."—Revelation 4:11.

¹⁵ The Bible shows that while God cannot be seen, the kind of God he is can be perceived by what he has made. It states: "[The Creator's] invisible attributes, that is to say his everlasting power and deity, have been visible, ever since the world began, to the eye of reason, in the things he has made."—Romans 1:20, *The New English Bible*.

¹⁶ So the Bible takes us from cause to effect.

12, 13. What does the evidence say about the Creator's existence?

14. What does the Bible conclude about the Creator?

15. How can we perceive some of God's attributes?

16. Why should we be glad that humans cannot see God?



"Problem solving by a human brain exceeds by far the capacity of the most powerful computers"

The effect—the awesome things made—is evidence of the intelligent, powerful Cause: God. Also, we can be grateful that he is invisible, since as the Creator of all the universe, he no doubt has power so enormous that humans of flesh and blood cannot expect to see him and survive. And that is just what the Bible says: "No man may see [God] and yet live."—Exodus 33:20.

¹⁷ The concept of a Great Designer, a Supreme Being—God—should be very important to us. If we were made by a Creator, then surely he must have had a reason, a purpose, in creating us. If we were created to have a purpose in life, then there is reason to hope that things will be better for us in the future. Otherwise, we just live and die without hope. So it is very important that we find out God's purpose for us. Then we can choose whether we want to live in harmony with it or not.

¹⁸ Also, the Bible states that the Creator is a loving God who cares very much about us. The apostle Peter stated: "He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7; see also John 3:16 and 1 John 4:8, 16.) One way we can see how much God cares is by considering the wonderful way he has made us, mentally and physically.

17, 18. Why should the concept of a Creator be important to us?

"Wonderfully Made"

¹⁹ In the Bible the psalmist David acknowledged: "In a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made." (Psalm 139:14) Surely that is the truth, for the human brain and body were marvelously designed by the Supreme Designer.

²⁰ For instance, your brain is far more complex than any computer. *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* notes: "Transmission of information within the nervous system is more complex than the largest telephone exchanges; problem solving by a human brain exceeds by far the capacity of the most powerful computers."

²¹ Hundreds of millions of facts and mental images are stored in your brain, but it is not merely a storehouse of facts. With it you can learn how to whistle, bake bread, speak foreign languages, use a computer, or fly an airplane. You can imagine what a vacation would be like or how delicious a fruit will taste. You can analyze and make things. You can also plan, appreciate, love, and relate your thoughts to the past, the present, and the future. Since we humans cannot design such a thing as the awesome human brain, then the One who designed it obviously has wisdom and ability far greater than that of any human.

²² Regarding the brain, scientists admit: "How these functions are carried out by this magnificently patterned, orderly and fantastically complex piece of machinery is quite obscure. . . . Human beings may never solve all the separate individual puzzles the brain presents." (*Scientific American*) And physics professor Raymo says: "If truth be told, we still

19. What truth does the psalmist David call to our attention?

20. How does an encyclopedia describe the human brain?

21. When we see what the brain does, what should we conclude?

22. What do scientists admit about the human brain?

don't know much about how the human brain stores information, or how it is able to call up memories at will. . . . There are as many as a hundred billion nerve cells in the human brain. Each cell is in communication, through a treelike array of synapses, with thousands of other cells. The possibilities of interconnection are staggeringly intricate."

²³ Your eyes are more precise and adaptable than any camera; in fact, they are fully automatic, self-focusing, color motion-picture cameras. Your ears can detect a variety of sounds and give you a sense of direction and balance. Your heart is a pump with capabilities that the best engineers have not been able to duplicate. Also magnificent are other body parts: your nose, tongue, and hands, as well as your circulatory and digestive systems, to name a few.

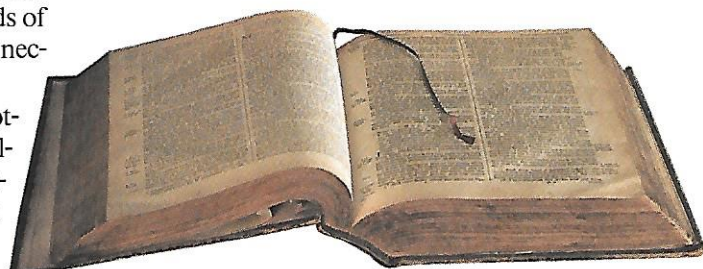
²⁴ Thus, an engineer who was hired to design and build a large computer reasoned: "If my computer required a designer, how much more so did that complex physio-chemical-biological machine which is my human body—which in turn is but an extremely minute part of the well-nigh infinite cosmos?"

²⁵ Just as people have a purpose in mind when they make airplanes, computers, bicycles, and other devices, so the Designer of the brain and body of humans must have had a purpose in designing us. And this Designer has to have wisdom superior to that of humans, since none of us can duplicate his designs. It is logical, then, that he is the One who can tell us why he designed us, why he put us on earth, and where we are going.

²⁶ When we learn those things, then the wonderful brain and body God gave us can be used toward fulfilling our purpose in life. But where can we learn about his purposes? Where does he give us that information?

23, 24. Name some wonderfully designed body parts, and what comment did an engineer make?
25, 26. What should the Great Designer be able to tell us?

A UNIQUE SOURCE OF SUPERIOR WISDOM



¹ Is the Bible the record of that superior wisdom? Can it give us truthful answers to the important questions that have to do with the purpose of life?

² Certainly the Bible is worthy of our examination. One reason is that it is the most unusual book ever assembled, very different from any other book. Consider the following facts.

Oldest, Most Widely Distributed Book

³ The Bible is the oldest book ever written, parts of it being composed some 3,500 years ago. It is many centuries older than any other book considered sacred. The first of the 66 books that it contains was written about a thousand years before Buddha and Confucius and some two thousand years before Muhammad.

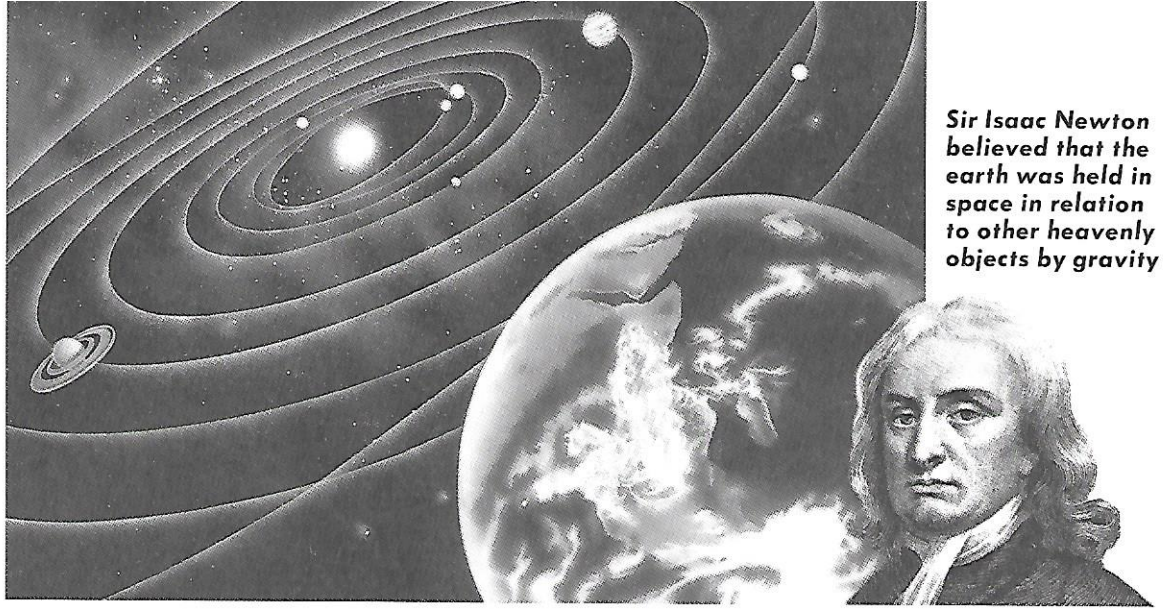
⁴ The history recorded in the Bible goes back to the beginning of the human family and explains how we came to be here on earth. It even takes us back to the time before humans were created, giving us facts about the formation of the earth.

⁵ Other religious books, and nonreligious ones too, have only a few copies of their old manuscripts left in existence. About 13,000

1, 2. Why should we examine the Bible?

3, 4. How old is the Bible?

5. How many ancient manuscripts of the Bible exist, compared with ancient secular writings?



Sir Isaac Newton believed that the earth was held in space in relation to other heavenly objects by gravity

The picture the Bible presents of an earth surrounded by empty space is recognized by scholars as a remarkable vision for its time

handwritten copies of the Bible or parts of it exist in Hebrew and Greek, some of which date from close to the time of the original writing. These have survived even though the most concentrated onslaughts imaginable have been attempted against the Bible.

⁶ Also, the Bible is by far the most widely distributed book in history. About three billion Bibles or parts of it have been distributed in some two thousand languages. It is said that 98 percent of the human family have access to the Bible in their own language. No other book comes close to that circulation.

⁷ In addition, no other ancient book compares with the Bible in accuracy. Scientists, historians, archaeologists, geographers, language experts, and others continually verify Bible accounts.

Scientific Accuracy

⁸ For example, while the Bible was not written as a science textbook, it is in harmony

with true science when it deals with scientific matters. But other ancient books regarded as sacred contain scientific myths, inaccuracies, and outright falsehoods. Note just four of the many examples of the Bible's scientific accuracy:

⁹ **How the earth is held in space.** In ancient times when the Bible was being written, there was much speculation about how the earth was held in space. Some believed that the earth was supported by four elephants standing on a big sea turtle. Aristotle, a Greek philosopher and scientist of the fourth century B.C.E., taught that the earth could never hang in empty space. Instead, he taught that the heavenly bodies were fixed to the surface of solid, transparent spheres, with each sphere nested within another sphere. Supposedly the earth was on the innermost sphere, and the outermost sphere held the stars.

¹⁰ Yet, rather than reflect the fanciful, unscientific views existing at the time of its writing, the Bible simply stated (in about the year 1473 B.C.E.): "[God is] hanging the earth *upon nothing*." (Job 26:7) In the original Hebrew,

6. How widely has the Bible been distributed?

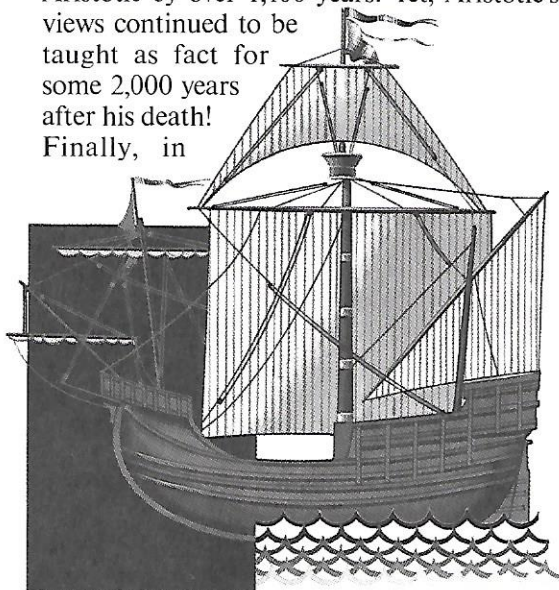
7. What can be said of the Bible's accuracy?

8. How accurate is the Bible in matters of science?

9, 10. Rather than reflect the unscientific views of its time, what did the Bible say about the earth's support?

the word for “nothing” used here means “not any thing,” and this is the only time it occurs in the Bible. The picture it presents of an earth surrounded by empty space is recognized by scholars as a remarkable vision for its time. The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* says: “Job 26:7 strikingly pictures the then-known world as suspended in space, thereby anticipating future scientific discovery.”

¹¹ The Bible’s accurate statement predated Aristotle by over 1,100 years. Yet, Aristotle’s views continued to be taught as fact for some 2,000 years after his death! Finally, in



Some early navigators even feared sailing off the edge of the flat earth

1687 C.E., Sir Isaac Newton published his findings that the earth was held in space in relation to other heavenly objects by mutual attraction, that is, gravity. But that was close to 3,200 years after the Bible had stated with elegant simplicity that the earth is hanging “upon nothing.”

¹² Yes, nearly 3,500 years ago, the Bible correctly noted that the earth has no visible support, a fact that is in harmony with the more recently understood laws of gravity and mo-

11, 12. When did humans come to understand the truth of Job 26:7?

tion. “How Job knew the truth,” said one scholar, “is a question not easily solved by those who deny the inspiration of Holy Scripture.”

¹³ **The shape of the earth.** *The Encyclopedia Americana* said: “The earliest known image that men had of the earth was that it was a flat, rigid platform at the center of the universe. . . . The concept of a spherical earth was not widely accepted until the Renaissance.” Some early navigators even feared that they might sail off the edge of the flat earth. But then the introduction of the compass and other advancements made possible longer ocean voyages. These “voyages of discovery,” another encyclopedia explains, “showed that the world was round, not flat as most people had believed.”

¹⁴ Yet, long before such voyages, about 2,700 years ago, the Bible said: “There is One who is dwelling above the *circle* of the earth.” (Isaiah 40:22) The Hebrew word here translated “circle” can also mean “sphere,” as various reference works note. Other Bible translations, therefore, say, “the globe of the earth” (*Douay Version*) and, “the round earth.” —*Moffatt*.

¹⁵ Thus, the Bible was not influenced by the unscientific views prevalent at the time regarding the earth’s support and its shape. The reason is simple: The Author of the Bible is the Author of the universe. He created the earth, so he should know what it hangs on and what its shape is. Hence, when he inspired the Bible, he saw to it that no unscientific views were incorporated in it, however much they may have been believed by others at the time.

¹⁶ **The composition of living things.** “Jehovah

13. How did people regard the earth’s shape centuries ago, but what changed their mind?

14. How did the Bible describe the earth’s shape, and when?

15. Why was the Bible not influenced by unscientific views about the earth?

16. How does the makeup of living things agree with the Bible’s statement?

God proceeded to form the man out of dust from the ground,” Genesis 2:7 states. *The World Book Encyclopedia* says: “All the chemical elements that make up living things are also present in nonliving matter.” So all the basic chemicals that make up living organisms, including man, are also found in the earth itself. This harmonizes with the Bible’s statement that identifies the material God used in creating humans and all other living things.

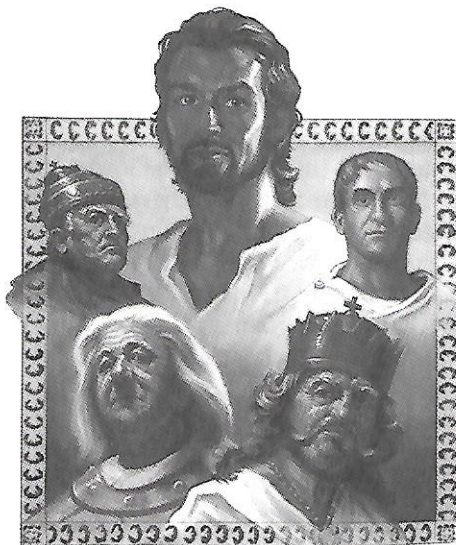
¹⁷ **“According to their kinds.”** The Bible states that God created the first human pair and that from them all other humans descended. (Genesis 1:26-28; 3:20) It says that other living things, such as fish, birds, and mammals, did the same, coming forth “according to their kinds.” (Genesis 1:11, 12, 21, 24, 25) This is just what scientists have found in the natural creation, that every living thing comes from a parent of like kind. There is no exception. In this regard physicist Raymo observes: “Life makes life; it happens all the time in every cell. But how did nonlife make life? It is one of the biggest unanswered questions in biology, and so far biologists can offer little more than wild guesses. Somehow inanimate matter managed to get itself organized in an animate way. . . . The author of Genesis may have had it right, after all.”

Historical Accuracy

¹⁸ The Bible contains the most accurate ancient history of any book in existence. The book *A Lawyer Examines the Bible* highlights its historical accuracy this way: “While romances, legends and false testimony are careful to place the events related in some distant place and some indefinite time, thereby violating the first rules we lawyers learn of good pleading, that ‘the declaration must give time and place,’ the Bible narratives give us the date

17. What is the truth of how living things came into existence?

18. What does a lawyer say about the Bible’s historical accuracy?



There is more evidence that Jesus Christ existed than there is that Julius Caesar, Emperor Charlemagne, Oliver Cromwell, or Pope Leo III lived

and place of the things related with the utmost precision.”

¹⁹ *The New Bible Dictionary* comments: “[The writer of Acts] sets his narrative in the framework of contemporary history; his pages are full of references to city magistrates, provincial governors, client kings, and the like, and these references time after time prove to be just right for the place and time in question.”

²⁰ Writing in *The Union Bible Companion*, S. Austin Allibone says: “Sir Isaac Newton . . . was also eminent as a critic of ancient writings, and examined with great care the Holy Scriptures. What is his verdict on this point? ‘I find,’ says he, ‘more sure marks of authenticity in the New Testament than in any profane [secular] history whatever.’ Dr. Johnson says that we have more evidence that Jesus

19. How does one source comment on the Bible’s historical details?

20, 21. What does a Bible scholar say about the Bible’s history?

Christ died on Calvary, as stated in the Gospels, than we have that Julius Caesar died in the Capitol. We have, indeed, far more.”

²¹ This source adds: “Ask anyone who professes to doubt the truth of the Gospel history what reason he has for believing that Caesar died in the Capitol, or that the Emperor Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of the West by Pope Leo III. in 800? . . . How do you know that such a man as Charles I. [of England] ever lived, and was beheaded, and that Oliver Cromwell became ruler in his stead? . . . Sir Isaac Newton is credited with the discovery of the law of gravitation . . . We believe all the assertions just made respecting these men; and that because we have historical evidence of their truth. . . . If, on the production of such proof as this, any still refuse to believe, we abandon them as stupidly perverse or hopelessly ignorant.”

²² Then this source concludes: “What shall we say, then, of those who, notwithstanding the abundant evidence now produced of the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures, profess themselves unconvinced? . . . Surely we have reason to conclude that it is the heart rather than the head which is at fault;—that they do not wish to believe that which humbles their pride, and will force them to lead different lives.”

Internal Harmony and Candor

²³ Imagine that a book began to be written during the time of the Roman Empire, continued down through the Middle Ages, and was completed in this 20th century, with many different writers contributing. What result would you anticipate if the writers were as diverse in their occupations as soldiers, kings, priests, fishermen, herdsman, and doctors? Would you expect the book to be harmonious and coherent? ‘Hardly!’ you may say.

22. Why do some refuse to accept the Bible’s authenticity?

23, 24. Why is the Bible’s internal harmony so unusual?

Well, the Bible was written under these circumstances. Yet, it is harmonious in its entirety, not just in overall concepts but in minute details too.

²⁴ The Bible is a collection of 66 books written over a period of 1,600 years by some 40 different writers, beginning in 1513 B.C.E. and ending in 98 C.E. The writers came from different walks of life, and many had no contact with the others. Yet, the book that resulted follows a central, coherent theme throughout, as though produced by one mind. And contrary to the belief of some, the Bible is not a product of Western civilization, but it was written by Orientals.

²⁵ While the majority of ancient writers reported only their successes and virtues, the Bible writers openly admitted their own mistakes, as well as the failings of their kings and leaders. Numbers 20:1-13 and Deuteronomy 32:50-52 record the failings of Moses, and he wrote those books. Jonah 1:1-3 and 4:1 list the failings of Jonah, who wrote those accounts. Matthew 17:18-20; 18:1-6; 20:20-28; and 26:56 record poor qualities shown by Jesus’ disciples. Thus, the honesty and candor of the Bible writers give support to their claim of being inspired by God.

Its Most Distinctive Feature

²⁶ The Bible itself reveals why it is so accurate in scientific, historical, and other matters and why it is so harmonious and honest. It shows that the Supreme Being, the almighty God, the Creator who authored the universe, is the Bible’s Author. He merely used human Bible writers as his penmen, moving them by his powerful active force to put down what he inspired them to write.

²⁷ In the Bible the apostle Paul states: “All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things

25. The Bible’s honesty and candor support what claim of the Bible writers?

26, 27. Why is the Bible so accurate in scientific and other matters?

straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work.” And the apostle Paul also said: “When you received God’s word, which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of

men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God.”—2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

²⁸ Thus, the Bible comes from the mind of one Author—God. And with his awesome power, it was a simple thing for him to make certain that the integrity of what was written was preserved down to our day. Of this a leading authority on Bible manuscripts, Sir Frederic Kenyon, in 1940, said: “The last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed.”

²⁹ Humans have the ability to send radio and television signals to the earth from thousands of miles in space, even from the moon. Space probes have sent back to the earth physical information and pictures from planets that are hundreds of millions of miles away. Surely man’s Creator, the Creator of radio waves, could do at least as much. Really, it was a simple thing for him to use his almighty power to transmit words and pictures to the minds of those he chose to record the Bible.

³⁰ Moreover, there are many things about the earth and life on it that give evidence of God’s interest in mankind. Therefore, it is un-

28. From where, then, does the Bible come?

29. How may God’s ability to communicate be illustrated?

30. Does God want humans to find out what his purpose is for them?



The fulfillment of prophecies Jesus gave about Jerusalem’s destruction in 70 C.E. is attested to by the Arch of Titus in Rome

derstandable that he would want to help humans find out who he is and what his purpose is for them by expressing these things clearly in a book—a permanent document.

³¹ Consider, too, the superiority of a book authored by God, compared with information handed down by humans only by word of mouth. Word of mouth would not be reliable, as people would paraphrase the message, and over a period of time, its meaning would be distorted. They would relay the information by the spoken word according to their own viewpoint. But a God-inspired, permanent written record is much less likely to contain errors. Also, a book can be reproduced and translated so that people reading various languages can benefit from it. So is it not reasonable that our Creator used such a means to provide information? Indeed, it is more than reasonable, since the Creator says that this is what he did.

Fulfilled Prophecy

³² In addition, the Bible bears the mark of divine inspiration in a uniquely outstanding way: It is a book of prophecies that have had and continue to have unerring fulfillment.

³³ For example, the destruction of ancient

31. Why is an inspired message that is recorded far superior to information that is handed down by word of mouth?

32-34. What does the Bible have that no other book contains?

Tyre, the fall of Babylon, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the rise and fall of the kings of Medo-Persia and Greece were foretold in great detail in the Bible. The prophecies were so accurate that some critics tried, in vain, to say they were written after the events took place.—Isaiah 13:17-19; 44:27-45:1; Ezekiel 26:3-6; Daniel 8:1-7, 20-22.

³⁴ The prophecies that Jesus gave about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. were accurately fulfilled. (Luke 19:41-44; 21:20, 21) And prophecies about “the last days” given by Jesus and the apostle Paul are being fulfilled in detail in our very own time.—2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13; Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21.

³⁵ No human mind, however intelligent, could so accurately predict future events. Only the mind of the all-powerful and all-wise Creator of the universe could, as we read at 2 Peter 1:20, 21: “No prophecy of Scripture springs from any private interpretation. For prophecy was at no time brought by man’s will, but men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit.”

It Gives the Answer

³⁶ Hence, in many ways, the Bible bears the evidence of being the inspired Word of the Supreme Being. As such, it tells us why humans are on the earth, why there is so much suffering, where we are going, and how conditions will change for the better. It reveals to us that there is a supreme God who created humans and this earth for a purpose and that his purpose will be fulfilled. (Isaiah 14:24) The Bible also reveals to us what true religion is and how we can find it. Thus, it is the only source of superior wisdom that can tell us the truth about all the important questions of life.—Psalm 146:3; Proverbs 3:5; Isaiah 2:2-4.

³⁷ While there is abundant proof of the authenticity and truthfulness of the Bible, do all

who say that they accept it follow its teachings? Consider, for example, the nations that claim to practice Christianity, that is, Christendom. They have had access to the Bible for many centuries. But do their thinking and actions truly reflect God’s superior wisdom?

4

CHRISTENDOM HAS BETRAYED GOD AND THE BIBLE

¹ People in many lands have avoided the Bible and have lacked respect for it because of the bad conduct of those who claim to follow it. In certain lands it has been said that the Bible is a book that leads to war, that it is a white man’s book, and that it is a book that supports colonialism. But those are mistaken views.

² The Bible, written in the Middle East, does not support the colonial wars and greedy exploitation that have been carried on in the name of Christianity for such a long time. On the contrary, by reading the Bible and learning the teachings of true Christianity taught by Jesus, you will see that the Bible strongly condemns warring, immorality, and the exploiting of others. The fault lies with greedy people, not with the Bible. (1 Corinthians 13:1-6; James 4:1-3; 5:1-6; 1 John 4:7, 8) So do not let the misconduct of selfish people who live contrary to the Bible’s good counsel prevent your benefiting from its treasures.

³ Included among those who do not live by the Bible are the peoples and nations of Christendom. “Christendom” is defined as that part

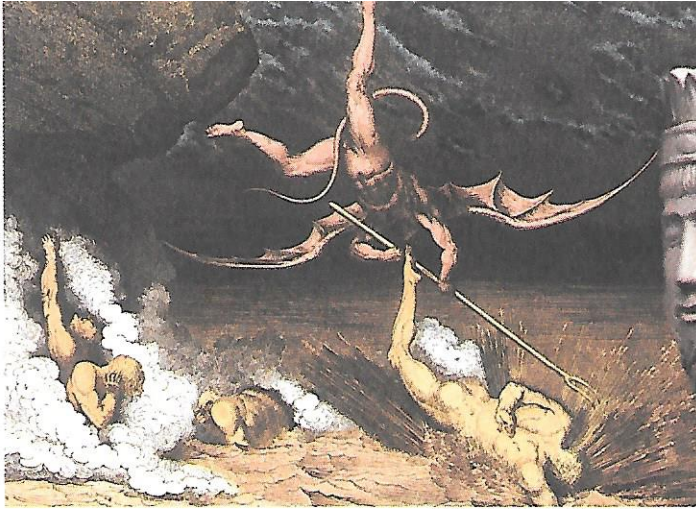
35. Why can Bible prophecy come only from the Creator?

36. What does the Bible tell us?

37. What must be asked about Christendom?

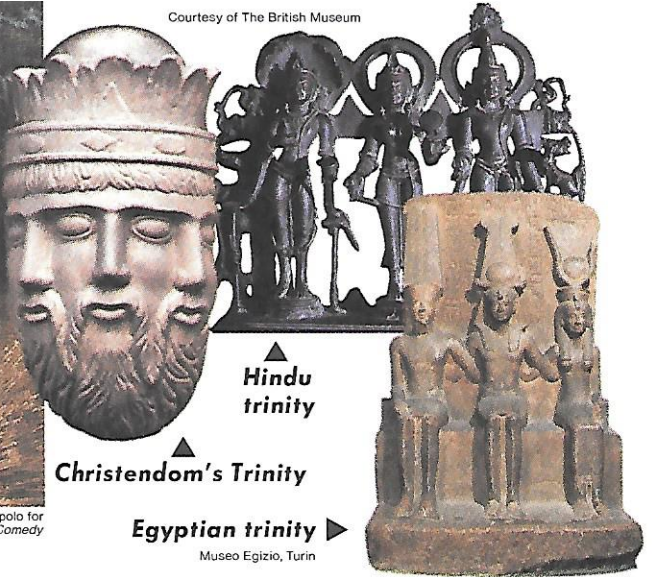
1, 2. Why do some people lack respect for the Bible, but what does the Bible say?

3. What do the facts of history show about Christendom?



Dante's "Inferno"

Dore's illustration of Barrators—Giampolo for Dante's *Divine Comedy*



Courtesy of The British Museum

**Hindu
trinity**

Christendom's Trinity

Egyptian trinity ▶

Museo Egizio, Turin

of the world where Christianity prevails. It is largely the Western world with its church systems, which from about the fourth century C.E. became prominent. Christendom has had the Bible for centuries, and its clergy claim to teach it and to be God's representatives. But do the clergy and missionaries of Christendom teach the truth? Do their actions really represent God and the Bible? Does Christianity really prevail in Christendom? No. Since its religion came to the forefront in the fourth century, Christendom has proved to be an enemy of God and of the Bible. Yes, the facts of history show that Christendom has betrayed God and the Bible.

Unbiblical Doctrines

⁴ The fundamental doctrines of Christendom are based not on the Bible but on ancient myths—those of Greece, Egypt, Babylon, and others. Teachings such as the inherent immortality of the human soul, eternal torment in hellfire, purgatory, and the Trinity (three persons in one Godhead) are not found in the Bible.

⁵ For example, consider the teaching that bad people will be tortured forever in a fiery hell. How do you feel about this idea? Many

find it repugnant. They find it unreasonable that God would forever torture humans, keeping them in excruciating pain. Such a fiendish idea is contrary to the God of the Bible, for "God is love." (1 John 4:8) The Bible is clear that such a teaching 'had not come into the heart' of Almighty God.—Jeremiah 7:31; 19:5; 32:35.

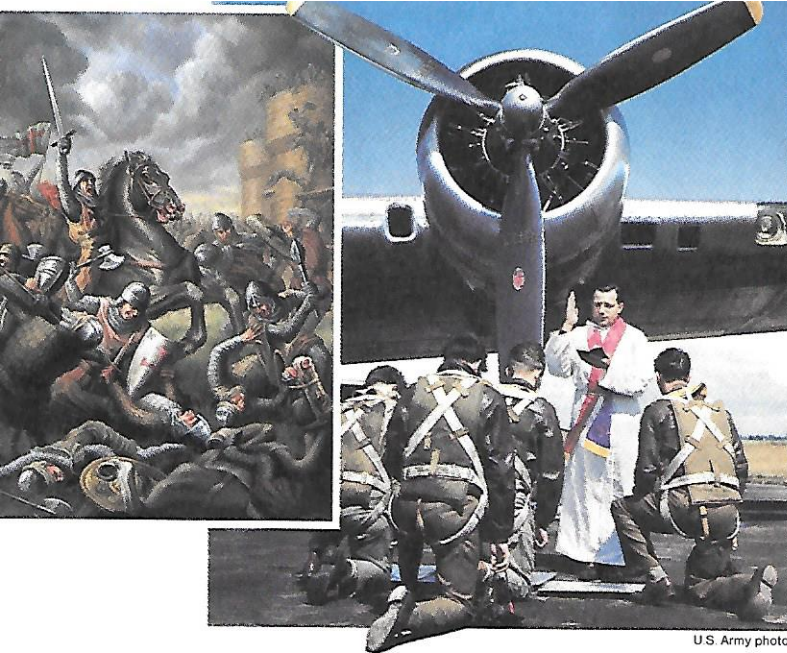
⁶ Today many religions, including the churches of Christendom, teach that humans have an immortal soul, which at death goes to heaven or hell. This is not a Bible teaching. Instead, the Bible clearly states: "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all, . . . for there is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol [the grave], the place to which you are going." (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10) And the psalmist states that at death man "goes back to his ground; in that day his thoughts do perish."—Psalm 146:4.

⁷ Recall, too, that when Adam and Eve broke God's law, the punishment was not immortality. That would have been a reward, not a punishment! Instead, they were told that they would "return to the ground, for out

6. How does the Bible refute the immortal-soul teaching?

7. What was the punishment of Adam and Eve for breaking God's law?

4, 5. What unbiblical doctrines are taught by the churches?



Contrary to the teachings of Jesus, the clergy on both sides have backed wars

Ungodly Actions

¹⁰ In addition to teaching false doctrines, Christendom has betrayed God and the Bible by her actions. What the clergy and churches have done in past centuries, and have continued to do in our time, is the opposite of what the God of the Bible requires and the opposite of what the Founder of Christianity, Jesus Christ, taught and did.

¹¹ For instance, Jesus taught his followers not to meddle in this world's political affairs nor to get involved in its wars. He also taught them to be peace-loving, to be law-abiding, to have love for their fellow humans free from any prejudice, even being willing to sacrifice their own lives rather than take the lives of others.—John 15:13; Acts 10:34, 35; 1 John 4:20, 21.

¹² Indeed, Jesus taught that love for other humans would be the mark that would identify true Christians from false Christians, pretenders. He said to those who would follow him: “I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves.”—John 13:34, 35; 15:12.

¹³ Yet, century after century, the clergy of Christendom have meddled in politics and have supported the wars of their nations. They have even supported the opposing sides

of it [they] were taken.” God emphasized to Adam: “For dust you are and to dust you will return.” (Genesis 3:19) Thus, the teaching of inherent immortality of the soul is not in the Bible but was borrowed by Christendom from non-Christian peoples who lived before them.

⁸ Also, Christendom's Trinity doctrine portrays God as some mysterious three-in-one God. But that teaching is not found in the Bible either. For instance, at Isaiah 40:25, God clearly states: “To whom can you people liken me so that I should be made his equal?” The answer is obvious: No one can be his equal. Also, Psalm 83:18 simply states: “You, whose name is Jehovah, you *alone* are the Most High over all the earth.”—See also Isaiah 45:5; 46:9; John 5:19; 6:38; 7:16.

⁹ The teachings of the Bible about God and his purposes are clear, easy to understand, and reasonable. But the teachings of Christendom's churches are not. Worse, they contradict the Bible.

8. How does the Bible refute Christendom's Trinity doctrine?

9. What can we say about the Bible's teachings and about the teachings of Christendom's churches?

10, 11. In what ways are the Bible's teachings the opposite of those of Christendom's churches?

12. What did Jesus say would identify true Christians?

13, 14. What shows that the churches of Christendom do not represent God?

in wars within Christendom, such as the two world wars of this century. In those conflicts the clergy on each side prayed for victory, and members of one religion from one country were killing members of that same religion from another country. But that is how the Bible says Satan's children, not God's, act. (1 John 3:10-12, 15) Thus, while the clergy and their followers have claimed to be Christian, they have contradicted the teachings of Jesus Christ, who told his followers to 'put away the sword.'—Matthew 26:51, 52.

¹⁴ For centuries the churches collaborated with the political powers of Christendom when those nations conquered, enslaved, and humiliated other peoples during the age of imperialism. That was the case for centuries in Africa. China too experienced this, when Western nations carved out spheres of influence by force, as during the Opium Wars and the Boxer Rebellion.

¹⁵ The religions of Christendom have also been in the forefront of the persecuting, torturing, and even killing of those who disagreed with them during those centuries of history called the Dark Ages. During the Inquisition, which lasted for hundreds of years, fiendish practices, such as torture and murder, were authorized and carried out against decent, innocent people. The perpetrators were the clergy and their followers, all of whom claimed to be Christian. They even tried to stamp out the Bible so that the common people could not read it.

Not Christian

¹⁶ No, the nations and churches of Christendom were not, and are not, Christian. They are not God's servants. His inspired Word says of them: "They publicly declare they know God, but they disown him by their

works, because they are detestable and disobedient and not approved for good work of any sort."—Titus 1:16.

¹⁷ Jesus said that false religion could be identified by what it produced, its fruitage. He said: "Be on the watch for the false prophets that come to you in sheep's covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you will recognize them. . . . Every good tree produces fine fruit, but every rotten tree produces worthless fruit; a good tree cannot bear worthless fruit, neither can a rotten tree produce fine fruit. Every tree not producing fine fruit gets cut down and thrown into the fire. Really, then, by their fruits you will recognize those [false prophets]."—Matthew 7:15-20.

¹⁸ Thus, by what they have taught and what they have done, the religions of Christendom have demonstrated that their claim of believing in the Bible and of being God-fearing and Christian is a lie. They have betrayed God and the Bible. In doing so, they have disgusted millions of people and caused them to turn away from belief in a Supreme Being.

¹⁹ However, the failure of the clergy and churches of Christendom, as well as the failure of other religions outside Christendom, does not mean the failure of the Bible. Nor does it mean that God has failed. Rather, the Bible tells us about a Supreme Being who does exist and who does care about us and our future. It shows how he will reward honesthearted people who want to do what is right, who want to see justice and peace prevail throughout the earth. It also shows why God has allowed wickedness and suffering to exist and how he will rid the earth of those who harm their fellowman, as well as those who claim to serve him but do not.

15. What evils have been perpetrated by Christendom?

16, 17. Why can we say that the churches are not Christian?

18. What has resulted from Christendom's teachings and actions?

19. Does Christendom's failure mean that God and the Bible have failed?

LIFE HAS A GRAND PURPOSE

¹ The way the earth and its living things were made shows that their Creator is a God of love who really cares. And his Word, the Bible, shows that he cares; it gives us the ultimate answers regarding the questions: Why are we here on earth? and, Where are we going?

² We need to search the Bible for those answers. God's Word says: "If you search for him, he will let himself be found by you, but if you leave him he will leave you." (2 Chronicles 15:2) So then, what does a search of God's Word reveal about his purpose for us?

Why God Created Humans

³ The Bible shows that God prepared the earth especially with humans in mind. Isaiah 45:18 says regarding the earth that God "did not create it simply for nothing [but] formed it even to be inhabited." And he provided the earth with everything that people would need, not just to exist, but to enjoy life to the full.—Genesis, chapters 1 and 2.

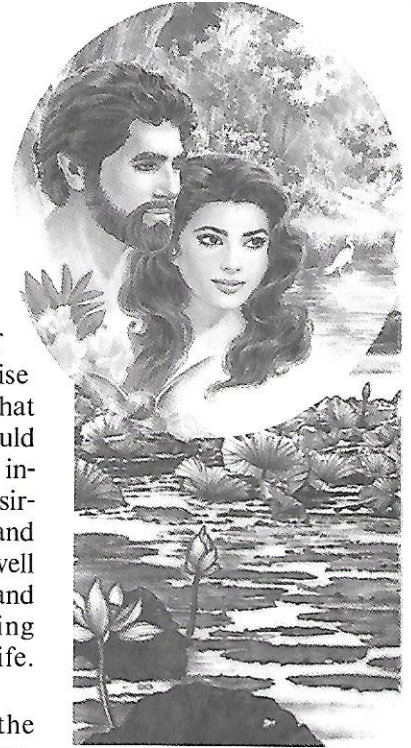
⁴ In his Word, God tells of creating the first humans, Adam and Eve, and reveals what he had in mind for the human family. He said: "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and the domestic animals and all the earth and every moving animal that is moving upon the earth." (Genesis 1:26) Humans were to have oversight of "all the earth" and its animal creation.

⁵ God made a large, parklike garden in an

area called Eden, located in the Middle East. Then he "proceeded to take the man and settle him in the garden of Eden to cultivate it and to take care of it." It was a paradise that contained all that the first humans would need to eat. And it included "every tree desirable to one's sight and good for food," as well as other vegetation and the many interesting kinds of animal life.—Genesis 2:7-9, 15.

⁶ The bodies of the first humans were created perfect, so they would not get sick, grow old, or die. They were also endowed with other qualities, such as that of free choice. The way they were made is explained at Genesis 1:27: "God proceeded to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him; male and female he created them." Since we are created in God's image, we were given not only physical and mental attributes but also moral and spiritual aspects, and these must be satisfied if we are to be truly happy. God would provide the means for filling those needs as well as the need for food, water, and air. As Jesus Christ said, "man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth."—Matthew 4:4.

⁷ Moreover, God gave a wonderful mandate to the first pair while they were in Eden: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth." (Genesis 1:28) So they would be able to repro-



1. 2. How can we tell that God cares about us, and where should we turn for answers to life's questions?

3. Why did God create the earth?

4. Why did God create the first humans?

5. Where were the first humans placed?

6. With what mental and physical qualities were humans created?

7. What mandate was the first pair given?



God purposed that humans live forever on a paradise earth. That is still his purpose

duce and bring forth perfect children. And as the human population increased, they would have the delightful work of expanding the boundaries of the original parklike, paradise area of Eden. Ultimately, the entire earth would be developed into a paradise, inhabited by perfect, happy people who could live forever. The Bible informs us that after setting all of this in motion, “God saw everything he had made and, look! it was very good.”—Genesis 1:31; see also Psalm 118:17.

⁸ It is evident that humans were to use the subdued earth for their benefit. But this was to be done in a responsible way. Humans were to be respectful stewards of the earth, not the despoilers of it. The destruction of the earth that we witness today is against God’s will, and those who share in it are going contrary to the purpose of life on earth. They will have to pay the penalty for that, for the Bible says

8. How were humans to care for the earth?

that God will “bring to ruin those ruining the earth.”—Revelation 11:18.

Still God’s Purpose

⁹ Thus, from the beginning it was God’s purpose for a perfect human family to dwell on earth forever in a paradise. And it is still his purpose! Without fail, that purpose will be fulfilled. The Bible states: “Jehovah of armies has sworn, saying: ‘Surely just as I have figured, so it must occur; and just as I have counseled, that is what will come true.’” “I have even spoken it; I shall also bring it in. I have formed it, I shall also do it.”—Isaiah 14:24; 46:11.

¹⁰ Jesus Christ spoke about God’s purpose to restore a paradise on earth when he told a certain man who wanted hope for the future: “You will be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43) The apostle Peter too spoke of the coming new world when he foretold: “There are new

9. Why are we confident that God’s purpose will be fulfilled?

10, 11. How did Jesus, Peter, and the psalmist David speak of Paradise?

heavens [a new governmental arrangement ruling from heaven] and a new earth [a new earthly society] that we are awaiting according to [God's] promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell."—2 Peter 3:13.

¹¹ The psalmist David also wrote about the incoming new world and how long it would endure. He foretold: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." (Psalm 37:29) That is why Jesus promised: "Happy are the mild-tempered ones, since they will inherit the earth."—Matthew 5:5.

¹² What a grand prospect that is, living forever on a paradise earth free from all wickedness, crime, sickness, sorrow, and pain! In the final book of the Bible, God's prophetic Word



The owner can call to account tenants who ruin his house

summarizes this grand purpose by declaring: "[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." It adds: "And the One seated on the throne said: 'Look! I am making all things new.' Also, he says: 'Write, because these words are faithful and true.'" —Revelation 21:4, 5.

¹³ Yes, God has a grand purpose in mind. It will be a new world of righteousness, an eternal paradise, foretold by the One who can and will do what he promises, for his "words are faithful and true."

12, 13. Summarize God's grand purpose for mankind.

6 WHY SO MUCH SUFFERING AND INJUSTICE?

¹ However, if the Supreme Being purposed that perfect people live on earth forever amid paradise conditions and if that is still his purpose, why is there no paradise now? Why, instead, has mankind experienced so many centuries of suffering and injustice?

² Without question, human history is filled with misery caused by war, imperialistic conquest, exploitation, injustice, poverty, disaster, sickness, and death. Why have so many bad things happened to so many innocent victims? If God is all-powerful, why has he allowed this enormous amount of suffering for thousands of years? Since God designed and ordered the universe so well, why would he allow disorder and destruction on earth?

An Example

³ Let us use an example to illustrate why a God of order would allow disorder on earth. Imagine, if you will, walking into a forest and coming upon a house. As you inspect the house, you see that it is in disorder. The windows are broken, the roof has serious damage, the wooden porch is full of holes, the door is hanging on one hinge, and the plumbing does not work.

⁴ In the face of all these defects, would you conclude that no intelligent designer could possibly have designed that house? Would the disorder convince you that only chance could have produced the house? Or if you conclud-

1, 2. In view of human experience, what questions may be asked?

3-5 (a) What illustration could help us to understand why a God of order would allow disorder on earth? (b) Which of several alternatives fits the situation regarding earth?

ed that someone did design and construct it, would you feel that this person was not skilled and not thoughtful?

⁵ When you more thoroughly examine the structure, you see that it was originally put together well and gives evidence of much thoughtful care. But it was now simply run down and on the way to ruin. What could the defects and problems indicate? They could suggest that (1) the owner died; (2) he is a capable builder but is no longer interested in the house; or (3) he temporarily leased his property to unappreciative tenants. The latter is similar to the situation regarding this earth.

What Went Wrong

⁶ From the early Bible record, we learn that it was not God's purpose for people to suffer or to die. Our first parents, Adam and Eve, died only because they disobeyed God. (Genesis, chapters 2 and 3) When they disobeyed, they were no longer doing God's will. They pulled out from under God's care. In effect, they disconnected themselves from God, "the source of life."—Psalm 36:9.

⁷ Like a machine that slows down and stops when disconnected from its power source, their bodies and minds degenerated. As a result, Adam and Eve deteriorated, grew old, and eventually died. What happened then? They went back to where they came from: "Dust you are and to dust you will return." God had warned them that death would be the consequence for disobedience to his laws: "You will positively die."—Genesis 2:17; 3:19.

⁸ Not only did our first parents die but all their descendants, the entire human race, have also been subjected to death. Why? Because according to the laws of genetics, children inherit the characteristics of their parents. And what all the children of our first

parents inherited was imperfection and death. Romans 5:12 tells us: "Through one man [Adam, mankind's forefather] sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned [by inheriting imperfection, that is, sinful tendencies]." And since sin, imperfection, and death are the only things people know, some view them as natural and inevitable. Yet, the original humans were created with the capacity and desire to live forever. That is why most people find the prospect that their life will be cut short by death so frustrating.

Why So Long?

⁹ Why has God allowed humans to have their own way for so long? Why has he allowed suffering to exist all these many centuries? One vital reason is that a very important issue was raised: Who has the right to rule? Should God be the Ruler of humans, or can they rule themselves successfully apart from him?

¹⁰ Humans were created with free will, that is, with the ability to choose. They were not made like robots or like animals, who are guided mainly by instinct. So humans can choose whom they will serve. (Deuteronomy 30:19; 2 Corinthians 3:17) Thus, God's Word counsels: "Be as free people, and yet holding your freedom, not as a blind for badness, but as slaves of God." (1 Peter 2:16) However, while humans have the wonderful gift of free choice, they must accept the consequences of their choice of action.

¹¹ Our first parents made the wrong choice. They chose the course of independence from God. True, God could have put the first rebellious pair to death immediately after they

6, 7. What happened to Adam and Eve when they broke God's law?

8. How did the sin of our first parents affect the human family?

9. Why has God allowed suffering to go on for so long?

10. What ability was given to humans, with what responsibility?

11. What would be the only way to find out if a course independent of God could be successful?

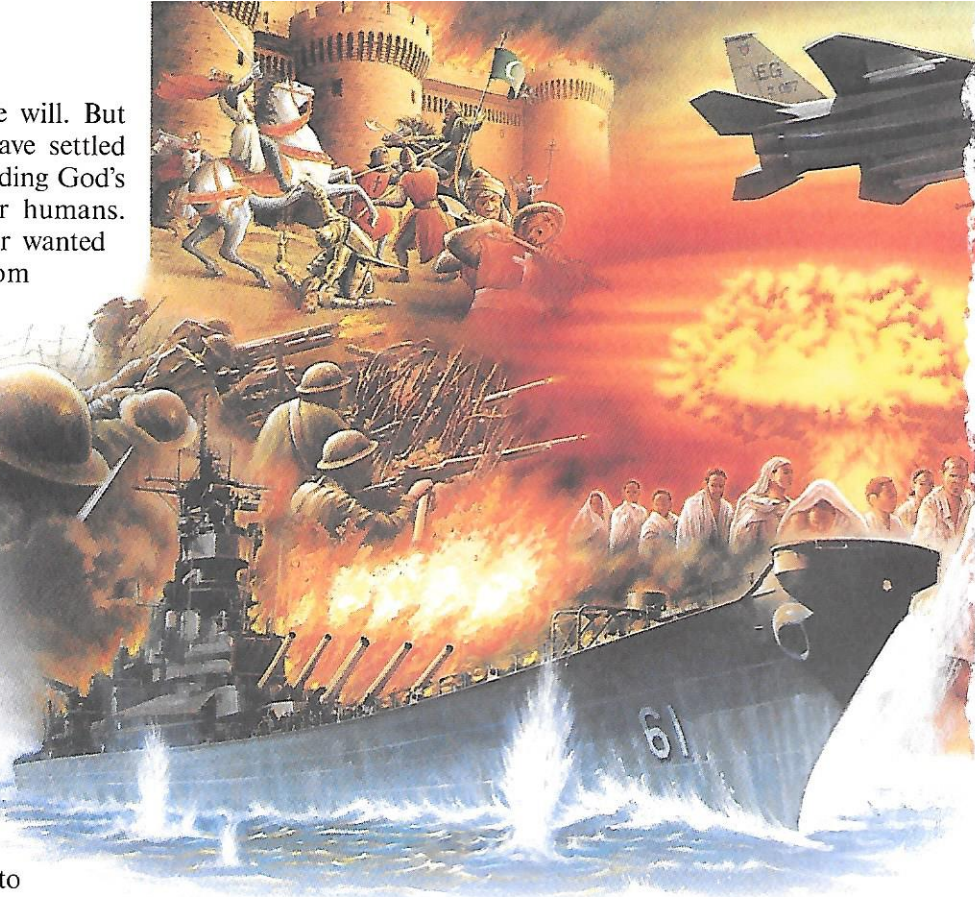
misused their free will. But that would not have settled the question regarding God's right to rule over humans. Since the first pair wanted independence from God, the question must be answered: Could that course result in a happy, successful life? The only way to find out was to let our first parents and their offspring go their own way, since that was their choice. Time would demonstrate whether humans were created to be successful in ruling themselves independent of their Creator.

¹² The Bible writer Jeremiah knew what the result would be. Directed by God's powerful holy spirit, or active force, he truthfully wrote: "I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step. Correct me, O Jehovah." (Jeremiah 10:23, 24) He knew that humans must have the guidance of God's heavenly wisdom. Why? Simply because God did not create humans to be successful apart from his guidance.

¹³ The results of thousands of years of human rule show beyond any doubt that it is not

12. How did Jeremiah assess human rule, and why is this so?

13. What have the results of thousands of years of human rule shown beyond a doubt?

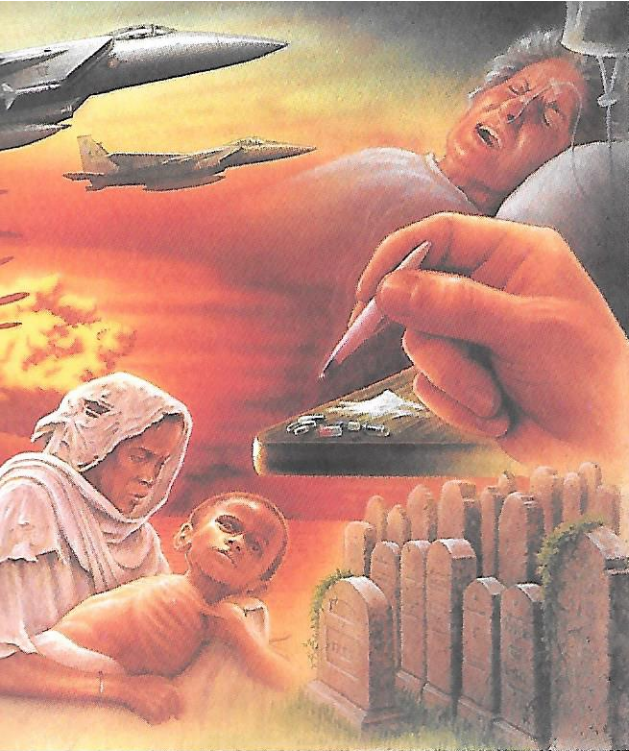


in humans to direct their own affairs apart from their Creator. Having tried it, they have only themselves to blame for the catastrophic results. The Bible makes this clear: "The Rock [God], perfect is his activity, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice; righteous and upright is he. They have acted ruinously on their own part; they are not his children, the defect is their own."—Deuteronomy 32:4, 5.

God Soon to Intervene

¹⁴ Having allowed an ample demonstration of the failure of human rule during centuries of time, God can now proceed to intervene in human affairs and bring a halt to suffering, sorrow, sickness, and death. Having allowed

14. Why will God no longer delay his intervention in human affairs?



Even sincere world rulers have not been able to bring about a peaceful, paradisaic world

humans to come to the peak of their achievements in science, industry, medicine, and other fields, there is no longer any need for God to allow more centuries of time for humans independent of their Creator to demonstrate whether they can bring about a peaceful, paradisaic world. They have not and cannot. Independence from God has resulted in a very ugly, hateful, death-dealing world.

¹⁵ While there have been sincere rulers who have desired to help mankind, their efforts have not succeeded. Everywhere today there is evidence of a breakdown in human rulership. That is why the Bible counsels: “Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs.”—Psalm 146:3.

15. What Bible counsel would we do well to heed?

GOD'S PURPOSE SOON TO BE REALIZED

¹ Although God has permitted imperfection and suffering for a long time from the human viewpoint, he will not allow bad conditions to go on indefinitely. The Bible tells us that God has a specific time period for allowing these things to happen.

² “For everything there is an appointed time.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1) When God's allotted time for permitting wickedness and suffering comes to its conclusion, then he will intervene in human affairs. He will bring an end to wickedness and suffering and will fulfill his original purpose to have the earth filled with a perfect, happy human family enjoying total peace and economic security amid Paradise conditions.

God's Judgments

³ Note a few of the many Bible prophecies that state what God's intervention, that is, the results of his judgments, will soon mean for the human family:

⁴ “The upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it.”—Proverbs 2:21, 22.

⁵ “Evildoers themselves will be cut off, but those hoping in Jehovah are the ones that will possess the earth. And just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more . . . But the meek ones themselves will possess the

1, 2. Why can we be sure that God will take action to end wickedness and suffering?

3, 4. How does the book of Proverbs describe the results of God's intervention?

5, 6. How does Psalm 37 show what will happen when God intervenes?

**God's perfect heavenly
Kingdom will be mankind's only
rulership in the new world**

observe, because length of days and years of life and peace will be added to you." In fact, eternal life will be added to those who choose to do God's will! Thus, God's Word counsels us: "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight."—Proverbs 3:1, 2, 5, 6.

God's Rule From Heaven

⁸ God will accomplish this cleansing of the earth by means of the best government that mankind could ever have. It is a government that reflects heavenly wisdom because it rules from heaven under God's direction. And that heavenly Kingdom will remove all forms of human rule from earth. Humans will never again have the option of trying to rule independent of God.

⁹ In this regard the prophecy at Daniel 2:44 states: "In the days of those kings [present-day governments] the

God of heaven will set up a kingdom [in heaven] that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people [humans will never again be permitted to rule independent of God]. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms [now existing], and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—See also Revelation 19:11-21; 20:4-6.

¹⁰ Thus, mankind will never again have corrupt forms of rule, for after God brings this system to its end, human rule independent of him will never exist again. And the Kingdom

8, 9. By what means will God cleanse this earth?

10. Why can we be certain that under God's heavenly Kingdom, there will never again be corruption in rulership?

earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Psalm 37:9-11.

⁶ "Hope in Jehovah and keep his way, and he will exalt you to take possession of the earth. When the wicked ones are cut off, you will see it. Watch the blameless one and keep the upright one in sight, for the future of that man will be peaceful. But the transgressors themselves will certainly be annihilated together; the future of wicked people will indeed be cut off."—Psalm 37:34, 37, 38.

⁷ Therefore, in view of the marvelous future that will come to those who recognize the almighty Creator's right to rule us, we are urged: "My commandments may your heart

7. What sound counsel does God's Word give us?

ruling from heaven will not be corrupted, since God is its Originator and Preserver. Instead, it will operate in the best interests of its human subjects. God's will is then going to be done throughout the earth as it is in heaven. That is why Jesus could teach his disciples to pray to God: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth."—Matthew 6:10.

How Close Are We?

¹¹ How close are we to the end of this unsatisfactory system of things and the beginning of God's new world? Bible prophecy clearly gives us the answer. For instance, Jesus himself foretold what to look for so that we could determine our position in relation to, as the Bible puts it, "the conclusion of the system of things." This is recorded in Matthew chapters 24 and 25, Mark 13, and Luke 21. Also, as recorded in 2 Timothy chapter 3, the apostle Paul foretold that there would be a period of time called "the last days" when various events would further verify where we are in the stream of time.

¹² Jesus said that this period of time would begin with these events: "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another." (Matthew 24:7) Luke 21:11 shows that he also mentioned "in one place after another pestilences." And he warned, too, of "the increasing of lawlessness."—Matthew 24:12.

¹³ The apostle Paul foretold: "But know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers,

without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power . . . Wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse, misleading and being misled."—2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13.

¹⁴ Have those things that Jesus and Paul foretold taken place in our time? Yes, they certainly have. World War I was by far the worst war up to that time. It was the first world war and was the turning point in modern history. Along with that war went food shortages, disease epidemics, and other calamities. Those events from 1914 onward were, as Jesus put it, "a beginning of pangs of distress." (Matthew 24:8) They began the foretold period of time called "the last days," the beginning of the last generation when God would permit wickedness and suffering.

¹⁵ Likely you are familiar with the events of the 20th century. You know the chaos that has arisen. Some 100 million people have been killed in wars. Hundreds of millions of others have died from hunger and from sickness. Earthquakes have taken countless lives. Disregard for life and property grows. Fear of crime has become part of everyday life. Moral standards have been shoved aside. The population explosion poses problems that are not being solved. Pollution is spoiling the quality of life and is even endangering it. Truly, we have been in the last days since 1914 and are nearing the culmination of Bible prophecies involving our time.

¹⁶ How long a time period would these last days prove to be? Jesus said regarding the era that would experience the "beginning of pangs of distress" from 1914 onward: "This generation will by no means pass away until

11. Where in the Bible do we find prophecies that will help us determine how close we are to this system's end?

12, 13. What did Jesus and Paul say about the time of the end?

14, 15. How do the events of this 20th century verify that we have indeed been in the last days?

16. How long a time period do the last days encompass?

all these things occur.” (Matthew 24:8, 34-36) Thus, all the features of the last days must take place within the lifetime of one generation, the generation of 1914. So some people who were alive in 1914 will still be alive when this system comes to its end. That generation of people is now very advanced in years, indicating that there is not much time left before God brings this present system of things to an end.

¹⁷ Another prophecy showing that the end of this system is very near was given by the apostle Paul, who foretold: “Jehovah’s day is coming exactly as a thief in the night. Whenever it is that they are saying: ‘Peace and security!’ then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them . . . , and they will by no means escape.”—1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3; see also Luke 21:34, 35.

¹⁸ Today the Cold War is over, and international war may no longer be a major threat. So the nations may feel that they are well on the way toward a new world order. But when they feel that their efforts are succeeding, it will mean the opposite of what they think, for that will be the final signal that this system’s destruction by God is imminent. Remember, political negotiations and treaties are not making any real changes in people. They are not making people love one another. And world leaders are not putting a stop to crime, nor are they eliminating disease and death. So do not put your trust in any development of human peace and security and think that this world is on its way to solving its problems. (Psalm 146:3) What such a cry will really mean is that this world is very near to being on its way out.

17, 18. What prophecy shows we are very near this world’s end?



Preaching Good News

¹⁹ Another prophecy that shows we have been in the last days since 1914 is one that Jesus gave: “In all the nations the good news has to be preached first.” (Mark 13:10) Or as Matthew 24:14 renders it: “This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come.”

²⁰ Today as never before in history, the good news of this world’s end and of the incoming Paradise new world under God’s Kingdom is being preached all over the earth. By whom? By millions of Jehovah’s Witnesses. They are preaching in every country on earth.

²¹ In addition to their preaching about God’s Kingdom, Jehovah’s Witnesses are behaving in the manner that identifies them as Christ’s true followers, for he declared: “By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves.” Thus, Jehovah’s Witnesses are united in a global brotherhood by an unbreakable bond of love.—John 13:35; see also Isaiah 2:2-4; Colossians 3:14; John 15:12-14; 1 John 3:10-12; 4:20, 21; Revelation 7:9, 10.

²² Jehovah’s Witnesses believe what the Bible says: “God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him.” (Acts 10:34, 35) They view their fellow Witnesses in all countries as spiritual brothers and sisters, regardless of race or color. (Matthew 23:8) And the fact that such a global brotherhood does exist in the world today adds to the evidence that God’s purpose will soon be realized.

19, 20. What prophecy involving preaching in the last days do we see undergoing fulfillment?

21, 22. What, especially, identifies Jehovah’s Witnesses as true Christians?

LIVE FOREVER ON A PARADISE EARTH

¹ What will life be like when God removes wickedness and suffering from the earth and ushers in his new world under the loving control of his heavenly Kingdom? God promises to 'open his hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.'—Psalm 145:16.

² What are your legitimate desires? Are they not for a happy life, worthwhile work, material abundance, beautiful surroundings, peace among all peoples, and freedom from injustice, sickness, suffering, and death? And what about a joyful spiritual outlook? All those things will be realized soon under the rulership of God's Kingdom. Note what Bible prophecies say of the wonderful blessings to come in that new world.

Mankind at Perfect Peace

³ "[God] is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth. The bow he breaks apart and does cut the spear in pieces; the [war] wagons he burns in the fire."—Psalm 46:9.

⁴ "They will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore."—Isaiah 2:4.

⁵ "The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Psalm 37:11.

⁶ "The whole earth has come to rest, has become free of disturbance. People have become cheerful with joyful cries."—Isaiah 14:7.

1, 2. What will life be like under the rule of God's Kingdom?

3-6. What assurance do we have that humans will have peace in the new world?

Man and Animals at Peace

⁷ "The wolf will actually reside for a while with the male lamb, and with the kid the leopard itself will lie down, and the calf and the maned young lion and the well-fed animal all together; and a mere little boy will be leader over them. And the cow and the bear themselves will feed; together their young ones will lie down. And even the lion will eat straw just like the bull. And the sucking child will certainly play upon the hole of the cobra; and upon the light aperture of a poisonous snake will a weaned child actually put his own hand. They will not do any harm or cause any ruin."—Isaiah 11:6-9.

⁸ "For them I shall certainly conclude a covenant in that day in connection with the wild beast of the field and with the flying creature of the heavens and the creeping thing of the ground . . . I will make them lie down in security."—Hosea 2:18.

Perfect Health, Everlasting Life

⁹ "At that time the eyes of the blind ones will be opened, and the very ears of the deaf ones will be unstopped. At that time the lame one will climb up just as a stag does, and the tongue of the speechless one will cry out in gladness."—Isaiah 35:5, 6.

¹⁰ "[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore."—Revelation 21:4.

¹¹ "No resident will say: 'I am sick.'"—Isaiah 33:24.

¹² "Let his flesh become fresher than in youth; let him return to the days of his youthful vigor."—Job 33:25.

¹³ "The gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord."—Romans 6:23.

¹⁴ "Everyone exercising faith in him [will] . . . have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

7, 8. What peace will there be between people and animals?

9-14. Describe health conditions in the new world.

The Dead Restored to Life

¹⁵ “There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.”—Acts 24:15.

¹⁶ “The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs [God’s memory] will hear his voice and come out.”—John 5:28, 29.

¹⁷ “The sea gave up those dead in it, and death and Hades [the grave] gave up those dead in them.”—Revelation 20:13.

Earth, a Paradise of Plenty

¹⁸ “Pouring rains of blessing there will prove to be. And the tree of the field must give its fruitage, and the land itself will give its yield, and they will actually prove to be on their soil in security.”—Ezekiel 34:26, 27.

¹⁹ “The earth itself will certainly give its produce; God, our God, will bless us.”—Psalm 67:6.

²⁰ “The wilderness and the waterless region will exult, and the desert plain will be joyful and blossom as the saffron.”—Isaiah 35:1.

²¹ “The mountains and the hills themselves will become cheerful before you with a joyful outcry, and the very trees of the field will all clap their hands. Instead of the thicket of thorns the juniper tree will come up. Instead of the stinging nettle the myrtle tree will come up.”—Isaiah 55:12, 13.

²² “You will be with me in Paradise.”—Luke 23:43.

Good Housing for All

²³ “They will certainly build houses and have occupancy . . . They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating. . . . The work of their own hands my chosen ones will use to the full. They will not toil for nothing,

15-17. What hope is there for those who have already died?

18-22. Into what will the entire earth be transformed?

23, 24. What assurance do we have that there will be enough good housing for all?

nor will they bring to birth for disturbance.”—Isaiah 65:21-23.

²⁴ “They will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble.”—Micah 4:4.

You Can Live Forever in Paradise

²⁵ What a marvelous outlook for the future! What real purpose lives can now have when anchored to the solid hope that in God’s new world all of today’s problems will forever be things of the past! “The former things will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart.” (Isaiah 65:17) And how comforting to know that life then will be eternal: “[God] will actually swallow up death forever.”—Isaiah 25:8.

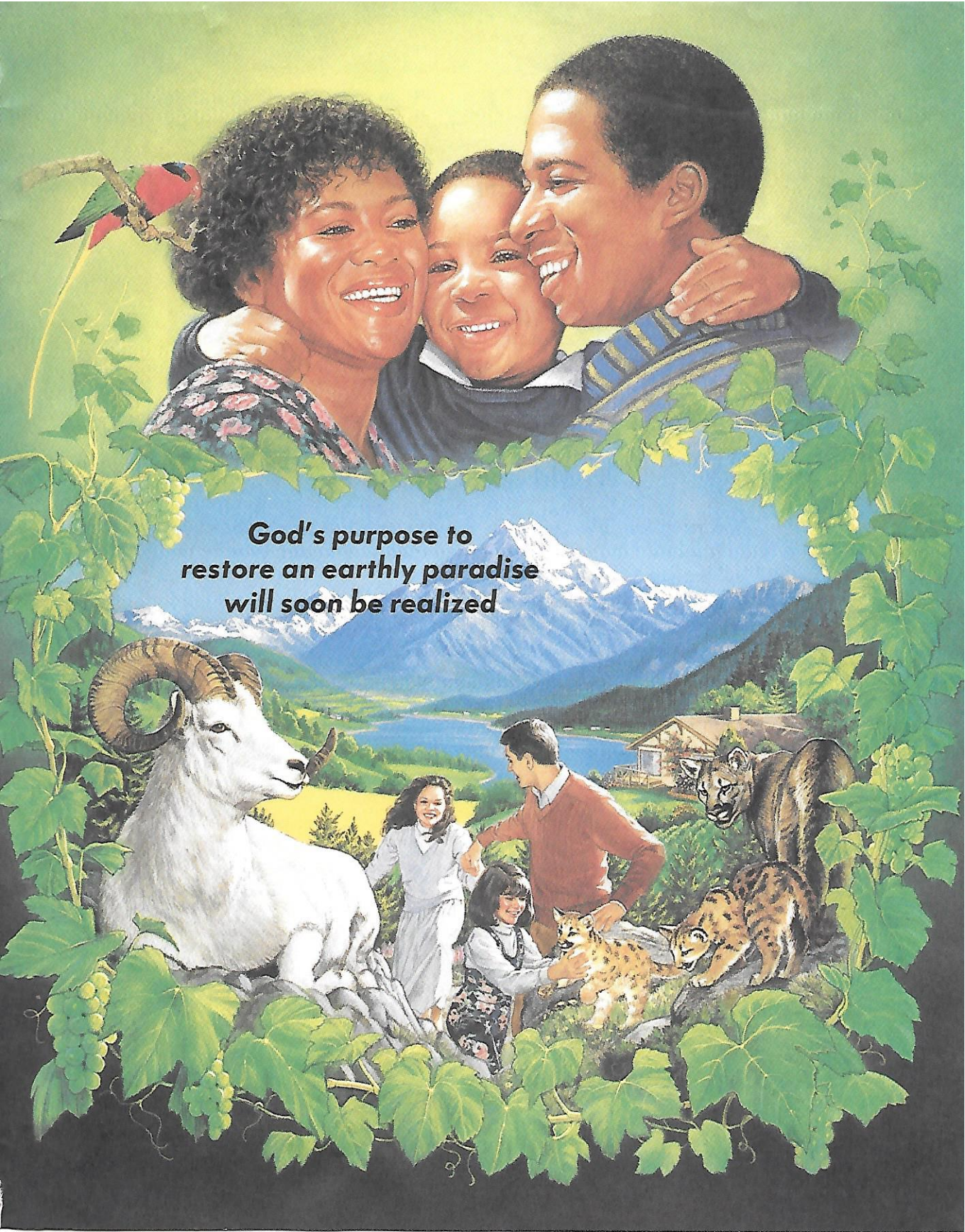
²⁶ Do you want to live forever in that Paradise new world now so near? ‘What would I need to do to get God’s favor at this world’s end and live on into his new world?’ you may ask. You need to do what Jesus indicated in a prayer to God: “This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ.”—John 17:3.

²⁷ Therefore, obtain a Bible, and confirm what you have read in this brochure. Search out others who study and teach these Bible truths. Break free from hypocritical religions that teach and do things contrary to the Bible. Learn how you, along with millions of others who are already doing God’s will, can share in God’s purpose that humans live forever on a paradise earth. And take to heart what God’s inspired Word declares about the near future: “The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever.”—1 John 2:17.

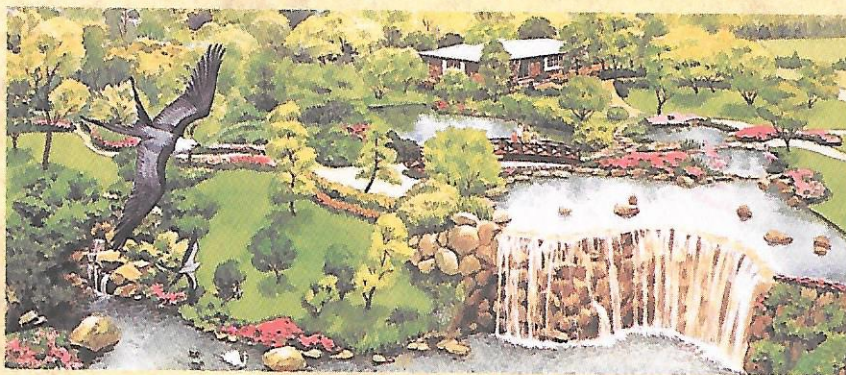
25. What marvelous outlook do we have for the future?

26. What is the key to living forever in God’s new world?

27. What must you do to take part in God’s purpose?



**God's purpose to
restore an earthly paradise
will soon be realized**



IF YOU COULD LIVE FOREVER

Would You Choose To?

You really can live forever in Paradise on earth, as this brochure clearly shows. God's purpose for such conditions is certain to be fulfilled! But you have to *choose* to live forever.

That choice, Jesus Christ taught, must be based on accurate knowledge of God. This brochure was provided to help you gain that knowledge. Further help can be received from Jehovah's Witnesses. They would be pleased to visit you at a time and place convenient for you. And if you would like to have a free home Bible study, you may make this known by writing to Watchtower, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201, or an appropriate address below.

ALASKA 99507: 2552 East 48th Ave., Anchorage. **AUSTRALIA:** Box 280, Ingleburn, N.S.W. 2565.
BAHAMAS: Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P. **BARBADOS:** Fontabelle Rd., Bridgetown. **BELIZE:** Box 257, Belize City. **CANADA L7G 4Y4:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario. **ENGLAND NW7 1RN:** The Ridgeway, London. **FIJI:** Box 23, Suva. **GERMANY:** Postfach 20, W-6251 Selters/Taunus 1. **GHANA:** Box 760, Accra. **GUAM 96913:** 143 Jehovah St., Barrigada. **GUYANA:** 50 Brickdam, Georgetown 16. **HAWAII 96819:** 2055 Kam IV Rd., Honolulu. **HONG KONG:** 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong. **INDIA:** Post Bag 10, Lonavla, Pune Dis., Mah. 410 401. **IRELAND:** 29A Jamestown Road, Finglas, Dublin 11. **JAMAICA:** Box 180, Kingston 10. **JAPAN:** 1271 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-04. **KENYA:** Box 47788, Nairobi. **LEEWARD ISLANDS:** Box 119, St. Johns, Antigua. **LIBERIA:** P.O. Box 10-0380, 1000 Monrovia 10. **MALAYSIA:** 28 Jalan Kampar, Off Jalan Landasan, 41300 Klang, Sel. **NEW ZEALAND:** P.O. Box 142, Manurewa. **NIGERIA:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City, Edo State. **PAKISTAN:** 197-A Ahmad Block, New Garden Town, Lahore 54600. **PANAMA:** Apartado 6-2671, Zona 6A, El Dorado. **PAPUA NEW GUINEA:** Box 636, Boroko, N.C.D. **PHILIPPINES, REPUBLIC OF:** P. O. Box 2044, 1099 Manila [186 Roosevelt Ave., San Francisco del Monte, 1105 Quezon City]. **SIERRA LEONE:** P. O. Box 136, Freetown. **SOUTH AFRICA:** Private Bag 2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **SWITZERLAND:** P.O. Box 225, CH-3602 Thun [Ulmenweg 45, Thun]. **TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, REP. OF:** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:** 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. **WESTERN SAMOA:** P. O. Box 673, Apia. **ZAMBIA:** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **ZIMBABWE:** 35 Fife Avenue, Harare.