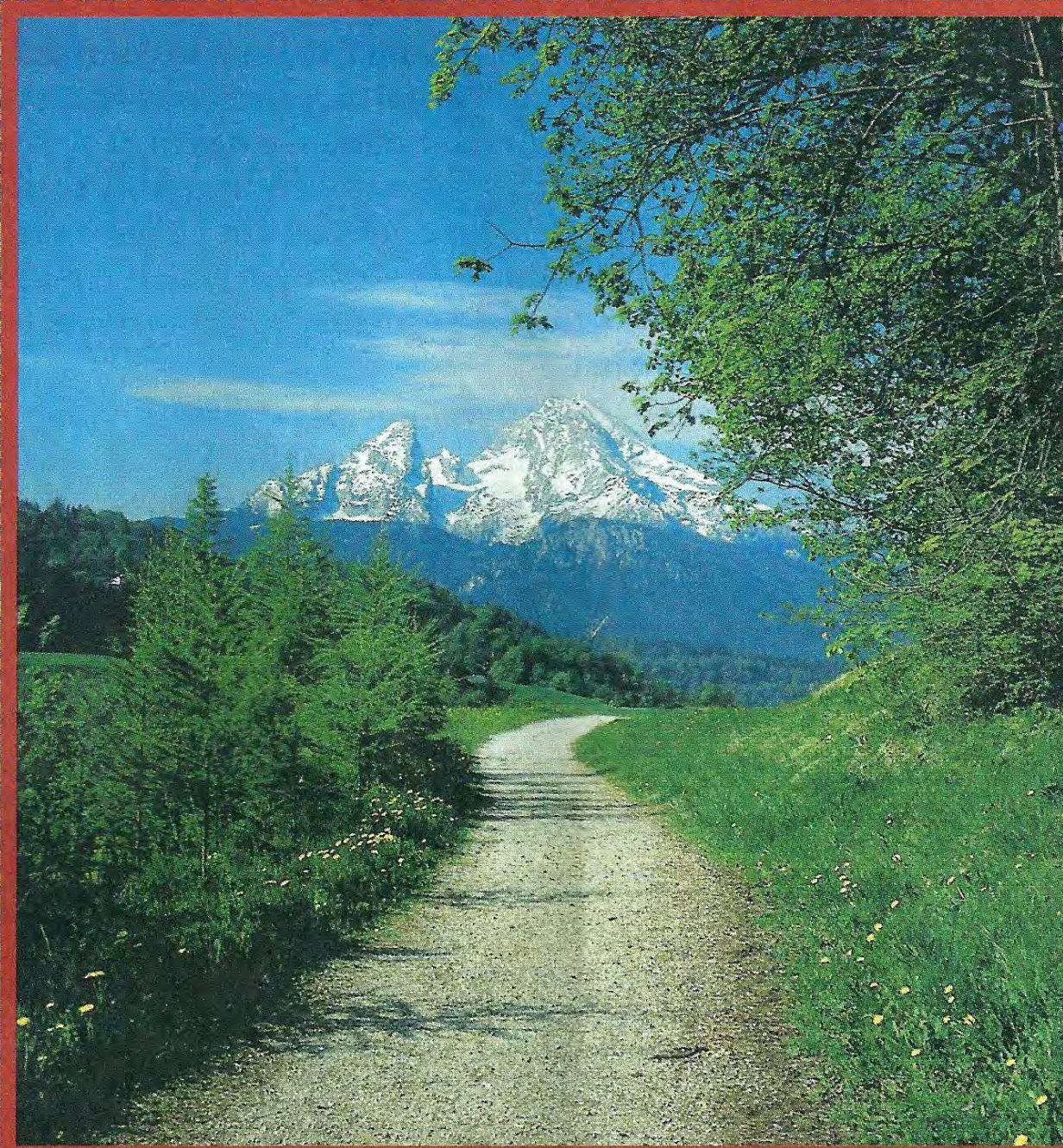




**THE GUIDANCE
OF GOD**
Our Way to Paradise

THE GUIDANCE OF GOD

Our Way to Paradise

GOD created man in Paradise. There, Adam and Eve lived in complete happiness. However, after they were put out of Paradise, conditions deteriorated rapidly. All mankind was affected. Selfishness nourished hostility, and envy inflamed hatred. Conflicts prevailed, and corruption and immorality spread like pestilences, so that love became rare, and kindness all but disappeared. To-day, society as a whole has become devoid of basic values; united and happy families have become a rarity. These tragedies affect every individual in all communities, even people who believe in God.

This brochure is designed to show how mankind lost Paradise. As you read it, you will see that it examines the reasons for our problems. It also shows how the guidance that God has provided is indeed our way to Paradise.

Symbols for translations of the meanings of the Qur'ān used:

MMP - *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān*, translation
by Muhammad M. Pickthall (1970)

NJD - *The Koran*, translation by N. J. Dawood (1974)

Rodwell - *The Koran*, translation by J. M. Rodwell (1909; 1957 printing)

Unless otherwise stated, Qur'ān quotations or citations are from *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān*, translation by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1934)

All Scripture quotations in this brochure, unless otherwise stated, are from the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

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page 25: Screaming child: WHO photo by W. Cutting

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The Guidance of God—Our Way to Paradise
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WHY DO WE NEED GOD'S GUIDANCE?



DO YOU not gaze with joy at pastures and hills covered with foliage and brilliant flowers? Are you not fascinated by the rays of golden sunlight as they filter through silvery clouds? Do you not enjoy watching a butterfly as it flutters over a blossoming garden? Are not the sounds of bubbling brooks, chirping birds, and rustling leaves enchanting to your ears? Do you not delight in the sweet smell of earth moistened with dew, the pleasant scent of herbs, and the perfume of flowers? No doubt you do.

² These delights are not the products of a human artist, musician, or perfumer. They are God's creations. They were all created in praise of God and for the enjoyment of mankind.

³ However, you may ask: 'How can we find enjoyment

- 1, 2. (a) What things in life normally make us joyful?
- (b) Who created them, and for what purpose?
3. What things rob us of our joy in life?

when illness and death render life so bitter? Where is happiness when the world is filled with war, hatred, and discord?' Conflicts are spreading like plagues. People do not hesitate to use the most savage means to torture and kill one another mercilessly. Families are being ripped apart by separation and divorce. Overwhelmingly, badness permeates the earth.

⁴ God did not make the beauty around us to be a mere work of art that we have no time to enjoy. Life was not meant to be futile. God

- 4, 5. For what kind of life did God create us, and what pleasures does he want us to enjoy?

created us not only to live but also to enjoy life.

⁵ God's purpose has not changed. He still desires that we should live and find delight in living. This is in harmony with his qualities and creations. He wants us to lead contented lives that are blessed with good health, peace, and security. It is his will that we live together as brothers and sisters—undivided by color, race, or border—and be united by justice and equality. God also wishes our families to be happy and to share an abundance of delicious food and drink. He has placed in us the natural desire to wish for all of this.

⁶ Does it not seem contradictory that life is very often grievous, while our natural desire is to enjoy it? Through past centuries, man has struggled in vain to overcome obstacles that have often embittered him. This has proved that man is not able to solve his problems on his own and that he is in need of counsel and guidance from a superior source in order to traverse the difficulties of life. Who, other than God, is better able to guide mankind? Really, can we even imagine that he would leave mankind without guidance and assistance?

How God Provides Guidance

⁷ God has shown concern for mankind ever since creation. He gave his guidance to Adam first. Later God gave it to mankind through his prophets, such as Enoch (*Idrīs*),

Noah (*Nūḥ*), Abraham (*Ibrāhīm*), Job (*Ayyūb*), and Moses (*Mūsā*). Beginning with His prophet Moses, God inspired books, which are still available in our day. God wanted all mankind to be instructed by Him and to find happiness in following His guidance.

⁸ Concerning the obligation to exercise faith in these books, the Qur'ān emphasizes: "Each one (of them) [the men of faith] believeth in God, His angels, His books, and His apostles." (*Al-Baqarah* [2]:285)* The Qur'ān also speaks about the faithful "who believe in the Revelation sent to thee, and sent before thy time, and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter." (*Al-Baqarah* [2]:4) But what is meant by "the Revelation . . . sent before thy time"?

⁹ The Holy Scriptures are God's books. They preceded the Qur'ān, which mentions them often and emphasizes that they contain God's guidance. We read at *Āl 'Imrān* [3]:3, 4, *NJD*: "He has revealed to you the Book with the truth, confirming the scriptures which preceded it; for He has already revealed the Torah and the Gospel [*Injīl* in Arabic] for the guidance of men." (See also *Al-Mā'idah* [5]:46, 47.) And we find at *Al-Nisā'* [4]:163: "To David We gave the Psalms." The Qur'ān also encourages going back to these books: "If thou wert in doubt as to what We have revealed unto thee, then ask those who have been reading the Book from before thee."—*Yūnus* [10]:94.

¹⁰ What does it mean to exercise faith in God's books? Surely, it signifies more than acknowledging their existence. True faith would include reading them, knowing their contents, and applying what they say. When we receive letters from loved ones, we are eager to read them. We are naturally more interested in the letters and in the one who sent them than in the person who delivered them. How much more so when God sends letters through his messengers. We should be eager to have these letters, read them, and receive guidance from him. Although we respect God's messengers, our prime concern is to listen to him and to

* For your convenience, references to the Qur'ān include both the name and the traditional number (in brackets) of the Sūrah.

6. What do we need in order to overcome our problems, and why?

7. When did God begin to give his guidance to man, and how?

8, 9. According to the Qur'ān, in which books must faith be exercised?

10. How does one show faith in God's books, and what should be our prime concern?

They Have Betrayed God and His Books

Wrong Acts and False Beliefs of Judaism and Christendom*

What God Says in the Holy Scriptures

Some doubt the presence of God, the Creator, and believe that man evolved from inferior animals.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."—Genesis 1:1.

They practice immorality, and their history abounds with wars and the shedding of innocent blood.

"[God] has a legal case with the inhabitants of the land . . . There are the pronouncing of curses and practicing of deception and murdering and stealing and committing of adultery that have broken forth, and acts of bloodshed have touched other acts of bloodshed."—Hosea 4:1, 2.

They have abandoned God's word in his books and have turned to traditions of men.

"It is in vain that they keep worshiping me, because they teach commands of men as doctrines."—Matthew 15:8, 9; Isaiah 29:13.

By use of the cross, images, and icons in their churches and their worship, professed Christians promote idolatry.

"You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything . . . You must not bow down to them nor be induced to serve them."—Exodus 20:4, 5.

"Little children, guard yourselves from idols."—1 John 5:21.

Most professed Christians believe in the Trinity, claiming that the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit are one God. They worship Christ as God and also give veneration to Mary and the "saints," thus failing to worship the one true God.

"[The Lord] our God is one."—Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29, 32.

"It is [the Lord] your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service."—Matthew 4:10.

They celebrate feasts of pagan origin, such as Easter and Christmas.

"For what fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? . . . 'Quit touching the unclean thing.'"—2 Corinthians 6:14, 17.

They have developed a clergy class and have elevated it over the common people.

"But you, do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, whereas all you are brothers."—Matthew 23:8.

* By "Christendom" we refer to those nations and peoples professing Christianity but who are not truly following Christ.

obey him. We should follow his books and make no distinction between one and another of his prophets.

¹¹ God, as the Preserver and the Guardian of his books, has made them available for us today. No one can ever succeed in either eliminating or altering God's Word.* This is because they are God's books, not man's. God has given them to us so that we may be guided to the straight path. You will be deeply moved as you discover the message they contain.

* In order to be assured that the text of the ancient books of God is trustworthy, see the Appendix on pages 29-31.

11. Why is it reasonable to expect that God's books should still be available for us?

¹² Do you think that everyone who claims to believe in God applies what is written in His books? Many Jews and Christians say they believe in him, but do their deeds show that they stick to his books? We should not judge the Holy Scriptures in the light of those who claim to follow them. Many have deviated from the true faith and have removed themselves from under God's guidance.—Compare Titus 1:14, 16.

¹³ Do you desire to quench your thirst for the knowledge of God? Then you should be eager to know the answers to such important questions as these: What was God's purpose in creating man? Where did God place him? What is the cause of all human distress? What solution has God provided so that we may live happily, according to our normal desires? As we consider these questions, search for and follow God's guidance, and you can be sure that he will satisfy the desires of your heart.

12. Why should we not judge God's books by the conduct of those who claim to follow them? (See box, page 5.)

13. What questions will we consider later?

HOW MAN TURNED AWAY FROM GOD'S GUIDANCE



IN THE beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) Then, in six successive creative "days," or time periods, he prepared the earth to be a home for man, whom he would place as caretaker of the earth and all that was on it.—Genesis, chapter 1.

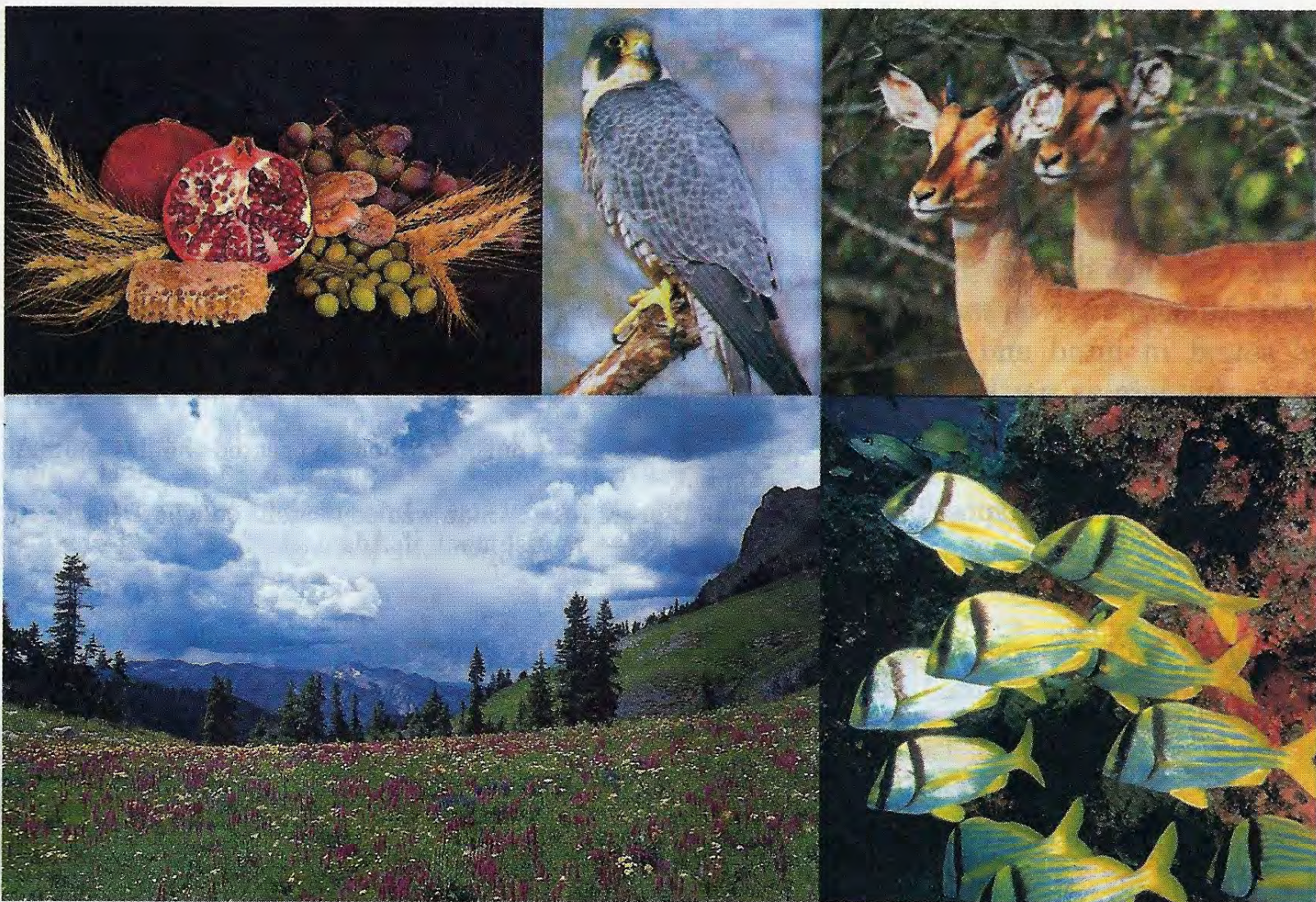
² God created trees, flowers, rivers that flowed into large sea ba-

1, 2. What information does the book of Genesis give us regarding the creation of our earth and its being prepared for habitation?

sins. He created the fish that swam in those waters and the birds that flew in the air above. In the vast universe, the earth alone abounded with innumerable creatures. It became like a jewel of splendid beauty, fashioned by God for a special purpose.—Genesis 1: 11, 20, 25.

³ Finally, God formed man from the dust of the earth and placed him in Paradise. (Genesis 2:7, 8) God's will was that the first man, Adam, should live in Paradise with his wife, Eve (*Hawwā*). But why in Paradise? What do you think of when you hear the word "paradise"?

3. From what did God form man, and where did He place him?



God prepared the earth for mankind's enjoyment

⁴ No doubt conditions inside Paradise differed from those on the outside. Surrounding the man and the woman were appealing shrubs and trees bearing delicious fruits. God endowed man with the capacity to observe everything around him and to enjoy it. So God placed him in the garden of Eden, where he could delight in happiness and enjoy peace and contentment.—Genesis 2:15.

⁵ But where was this Paradise? God did not form a physical man from the dust of the earth in order to place him in heaven. Neither did he plant trees in the skies. Nor did he cause rivers to flow in space.* Paradise existed on earth. God prepared everything on

* The Torah names the Euphrates as one of the rivers that watered the Paradise of Eden.—Genesis 2:10, 14.

4. What was life in Paradise like?
5. Where was Paradise, and how do we know?

earth with a purpose. The beauty of nature on earth was meant for man's enjoyment and for the praise of the Creator.

⁶ Man was created to be different from the animals, who act out of instinct. He was given the gift of free will—the faculty of freedom of choice. God also gave him the ability to think, weigh matters, make decisions, and know right from wrong. In so doing, God rendered man superior to all other creatures on earth. Man was created with the qualities of love, wisdom, justice, and power. He could meditate

6. How is man different from the animals?

on what God had brought into existence and could understand its significance. Man also possessed the capacity to worship his Creator.

⁷ Everything that God produced was perfect. (Deuteronomy 32:4) There was no defect. Therefore, both Adam and Eve were created sound in mind and body and were complete as perfect humans. They could have fully carried out the purpose that God had for them. But what was that purpose?

7. In what sense was Adam perfect?

⁸ God told Adam and Eve: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it." So God's purpose for man was to have the earth filled with perfect humans and to have them extend the boundaries of their Paradise earth wide.—Genesis 1:28-30.

⁹ But did God create Adam and Eve so that they would die? No. He placed them in Paradise, not for it to become their cemetery, but rather, for them to live in it forever. However, this was conditional, dependent on their love for God and their obedience and loyalty.

8. What was God's purpose when he created the first human couple?

9. (a) Eternal life for man was dependent on what? (b) What was to be the punishment if Adam ate from the forbidden tree?

Some of What the Qur'ān Says on Paradise and Adam

- ◆ "Thy Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vicegerent on earth.'"
—*Al-Baqarah* [2]:30.
- ◆ "He Who has made everything which He has created Most Good: He began the creation of man with (nothing more than) clay . . . But He fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him something of His spirit."
—*Al-Sajdah* [32]:7, 9.
- ◆ "Surely We created man of the best stature."—*Al-Tīn* [95]:4, MMP.
- ◆ "We said: 'O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden; and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) ye will; but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression.'"
—*Al-Baqarah* [2]:35.
- ◆ "Gardens of Eden underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide for ever."—*Tā-Hā* [20]:76, MMP.
- ◆ "Then did Satan make them slip from the (Garden), and get them out of the state (of felicity) in which they had been."—*Al-Baqarah* [2]:36.
- ◆ "Thus did Adam disobey his Lord, and allow himself to be seduced."
—*Tā-Hā* [20]:121.
- ◆ "We said: 'Get ye down all from here; and if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me, whosoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.'"
—*Al-Baqarah* [2]:38.

alty to him. Therefore, God gave Adam this command: "From every tree of the garden you may eat to satisfaction. But as for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will positively die."—Genesis 2:16, 17.

¹⁰ As Creator, God is also the supreme Lawgiver—the ultimate Guide for man—and the one who decides what is good or bad. Therefore, he has the right to demand obedience from his creatures. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command and partook of the fruit of "the tree of the knowledge of good and bad," they were denying God's sovereignty. It was imperative that Adam and Eve follow God's guidance and acknowledge his sovereignty if they wished to remain in Paradise, have God's approval, and live a happy life devoid of misery and suffering. But what caused them to reject God's guidance?

¹¹ A spirit being from among God's heavenly creation intervened. Becoming haughty and coveting man's worship of God for himself, he rebelled against God and became known as Satan the Devil (*Al-Shayṭān Iblīs*). (Compare Ezekiel 28:12-19.) Using a common serpent as a decoy, he approached Eve and deceived her, so that she disobeyed God by eating from the forbidden tree. Later, she enticed her husband, Adam, to share in her rebellion.—Genesis 3:1-6; Revelation 12:9.

¹² Adam and Eve had misused their free will. Instead of obeying the divine command, they chose to do what God had declared to be bad, and so they sinned. Sin means missing the mark—the goal of perfect obedience to God. But what was the punishment for this sin?

¹³ God had warned Adam: "In the day you eat from

10. What did man have to do to remain in Paradise and enjoy life there?

11. Who caused Adam and Eve to disobey God, and how?

12. What does "sin" mean, and how did Adam and Eve sin?

13. What sentence did God pronounce on Adam because of his sin?

**"Before this We wrote
in the Psalms, after the
Message (given to Moses):
'My servants, the righteous,
shall inherit the earth.'**"
—Al-Anbiyā' [21]:105.

it [the forbidden tree] you will positively die." (Genesis 2:17) Afterward, God pronounced this sentence upon Adam: "In the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For dust you are and to dust you will return."—Genesis 3:19.

¹⁴ God did not forgive Adam for his disobedience. Instead, He put Adam and his wife out of Paradise and did not allow them back in. (Genesis 3:23) Why? Because

their transgression was grave. They had willfully disobeyed God and had gone against his will for them. Never may it be said that God was responsible for their offense. He had created them perfect and had endowed them with the quality of free

will and the accountability that came with it. They were fully able to obey him and so remain in Paradise forever. However, they chose to turn away from God's guidance and to follow Satan, thereby meriting punishment.

¹⁵ Outside Paradise, Adam and Eve experienced suffering, anxiety, and pain and had to work hard to obtain sustenance. But worst of all, illness, old age, and death befell them—conditions not found in Paradise, where man was to have lived.

14. Why did God not allow Adam and Eve back into Paradise?

15. What befell Adam and Eve after their expulsion from Paradise?

The Greatest Name of God

THE divine name is found more than 7,000 times in the Holy Scriptures. Later, however, the Jews superstitiously refused to pronounce it, using instead the word "Lord." (Jeremiah 23:27, 36) Christendom has followed the same tradition, even leaving the name out when copying the Scriptures. This has resulted in widespread ignorance concerning the greatest name. Although many have heard of the expression "the greatest name of God," they still believe that today there is no way one can know this name. But is that true?

The Qur'ān tells of someone "who was deeply versed in the Scriptures." (*Al-Naml* [27]:40, *NJD*) In explaining this verse, a commentary known as *Tafsīr Al-Jalālayn* says: "It was Asaph the son of Berechiah. He was a righteous man. He knew God's

greatest name, and whenever he called on it, he was answered." But who is this Asaph the son of Berechiah who knew the greatest name of God? The Qur'ān very often advises turning back to God's ancient books in order to obtain the answers. (See *Yūnus* [10]:94; *Al-Nahl* [16]:43; *Al-Anbiyā'* [21]:7.) These tell us that Asaph the son of Berechiah was the one who by inspiration wrote Psalm 83. (1 Chronicles 15:17; Psalm 83, superscription) Verse 18 of this psalm says: "That people may know that you, whose name is *Jehovah*, you alone are the Most High over all the earth." We thereby see that "Jehovah" is the greatest name.

Asaph was not the only one who knew this great name. All the prophets whom God had inspired in the past to write the Holy Scriptures knew that name and used it. It also constitutes a part of many proper nouns, some of which we find in the Qur'ān. The name of the prophet John (*Yaḥyā*) means "Jehovah Has Been Gracious";* that of the prophet Elijah (*Ilyās*) means "My God Is Jehovah";# the name Zechariah means "Jehovah Has Remembered."

*See the footnote of *Maryam* [19]:7 in *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān* by Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

#See the commentary on *Al-Ṣāffāt* [37]:123 in *Al-Tafsīr Al-Kāshif* (Arabic). See also the *Comparative Encyclopaedia of Aleppo* (Arabic), under "Ilyās."

¹⁶ Thus, Adam and Eve died. Mankind had lost Paradise, which later disappeared during the Deluge of Noah's day. True to the laws of heredity, they passed both sin and death on to their offspring. (Job 14:4) Thereafter, every soul would have to taste death, just as it is written: "The soul that is sinning—it itself will die." (Ezekiel 18:4) The divine record also states: "Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned."—Romans 5:12.

¹⁷ Did God's original purpose for humans to live forever in Paradise fail? Never may that be said of God! He says: "My own counsel will stand, and everything that is my delight I shall do." (Isaiah 46:10) Thus, God never fails. And when we consider his excellent attributes and his great name, it also becomes possible for us to know him better and reach a better understanding of his ways of handling matters.

God's Name and His Attributes

¹⁸ God has numerous excellent attributes. He is perfect in wisdom and in power. He is also "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, preserving loving-kindness for thousands, pardoning error and transgression and sin, but by no means will he give exemption from punishment."—Exodus 34:6, 7; see also Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 103:8, 9.

¹⁹ Love and justice are also among God's outstanding attributes. (Psalm 33:5; 1 John 4:8) It was love that motivated God to create man and place him in Paradise with the opportunity to live with his offspring forever. Both God's justice and his faithfulness to the principles of righteousness demanded that he punish our first parents for their disobedience. So he drove them out of Paradise. They would grow old and die outside that beautiful garden. However, how was God to fulfill his loving purpose for Adam's offspring

**"Every soul shall have
a taste of death."**

—Al-'Ankabūt [29]:57.

without violating his own exalted and just standards? God's very name holds the key to the answer. What is this name?

²⁰ The Holy Scriptures refer to God in many ways, such as Lord, Mighty God, Creator, the Ancient of Days, the God of truth, the living God, the One enduring to times indefinite, the Most High, the Holy One, the Master. (Psalm 97:5; Isaiah 10:21; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Daniel 7:9; Psalm 31:5; Daniel 6:26; Psalm 18:13; Isaiah 5:24; Ephesians 6:9) Each of these expressions describes God from a different aspect. But God took upon himself a personal name—a unique name that embraces all his attributes.

²¹ By ourselves we could never find out what God's personal name is. Therefore, he has revealed it to us through his servants the prophets. For instance, we read in the Torah: "Then God said once more to Moses: 'This is what you are to say to the sons of Israel, "*Jehovah* the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name to time indefinite, and this is the memorial of me to generation after generation.'"

16. What has Adam's sin meant for all his descendants, and why?

17. Why can God's purpose never fail?

18. What are some of God's attributes?

19. What two attributes are outstanding in God, and how did he exercise them?

20. What is the difference between God's attributes and his personal name?

21. What is God's personal name, and how did we come to know it? (See box, page 10.)

(Exodus 3:15) Thus God himself has guided us to the knowledge of his distinguished name, which fully expresses his divine self.

²² The name Jehovah means “He Causes to Become.” This indicates that he causes himself to become the fulfiller of promises, the one who always brings his purposes to realization. This very name, which God took upon himself and has disclosed to us, is a guarantee that he will always bring his purposes to realization and will fulfill his promises.

22. How does God’s name relate to the realization of his purposes?

²³ God’s original purpose that man should live everlastingly in Paradise will not fail. Therefore, He provided guidance right after Adam’s disobedience. It started with the first prophecy in the Scriptures, concerning the coming of a “seed” to free mankind from the consequences of sin. This “seed” would bruise the head of the original serpent, Satan.—Genesis 3:15.

²⁴ But who is this promised “seed,” and how will he fulfill God’s purpose? Also, how can we gain God’s guidance? To find the answers to these questions, we need to meditate on God’s dealings with mankind. We will thereby see how God has provided guidance gradually, through revelations to his first prophets and in the books he successively inspired them to write.

23. How did God set about to accomplish his original purpose?

24. To what questions do we still need to find answers?

GOD’S GUIDANCE THROUGH HIS FIRST PROPHETS



OUTSIDE Paradise, man faced many difficulties and pains. Sin became even more apparent in the form of crime and wickedness. Despite God’s warning, Adam’s firstborn son, Cain (*Qābīl*), killed his brother Abel (*Hābīl*).—Genesis 4:3-8.

² As the years passed, corruption and evil increased among men. But God would not allow wickedness or wicked people to continue indefinitely. He sent his prophet Enoch (*Idrīs*), who prophesied that God

1. (a) What was life like outside Paradise? (b) What happened to Adam’s first two sons?

2. Why did God send his prophet Enoch?

would “execute judgment against all, and [would] convict all the ungodly.” (Jude 14, 15) In contrast with the wicked men around him, Enoch walked with God and obeyed him.—Genesis 5:22.

³ Seventy years after Enoch died, Noah (*Nūh*) was born. (Genesis 5:21-29) By then mankind had turned away even further from God. The earth was full of violence, and all flesh had ruined its way. Very few remained who worshiped God. But Noah was different.—Genesis 6:5, 12.

⁴ “Noah was a righteous man. . . . Noah walked with the true God.” (Genesis 6:9) What did Noah’s walking with God mean? It meant that Noah enjoyed an intimate relationship with Him. Noah did not fear the violence of the wicked ones but trusted in God’s help, and because he followed God’s guidance, he was tranquil.

3. What was the situation on earth in Noah’s day?

4. What was Noah’s relationship with God?

⁵ It was through Noah that God warned the people about the coming global Flood. God's justice demanded that the wicked should be punished. Yet, God does not destroy the good along with the wicked. Instead, he guides the upright toward the way of survival. So, at God's direction, Noah constructed an ark—the only way to survive the Deluge.—Genesis 6:13, 14; 2 Peter 2:5.

⁶ The Deluge showed that God does not tolerate wickedness forever, that he will never permit the wicked to harass the righteous indefinitely, and that he is the one who determines the way of survival. Righteous Noah exercised faith and boldly proclaimed God's message. Therefore, God saved him and his family from the Deluge. (Hebrews 11:7) Despite his righteous standing, at 950 years of age, Noah died—just like the rest of mankind. As a descendant of Adam, he inherited the condemnation to death.—Genesis 9:29.

⁷ Many years after the Flood, Abraham (*Ibrāhīm*) was born in Mesopotamia. He lived among people who worshiped idols, the moon, and the stars. Even Abraham's father had served idol gods. (Joshua 24:2) Abraham, though, believed in the true God and was willing to obey Him.—Genesis 12:1, 4, 5.

⁸ Abraham was a righteous servant of God. Just as a meek servant obeys his master without objection, Abraham obeyed God. However, God wanted Abraham to be more than a mere servant. He took Abraham as 'His friend.' (Isaiah 41:8) So Abraham became known as 'God's friend.' (James 2:23) But what did this friendship mean?

⁹ Normally, a master does not reveal his secrets and inner thoughts to his slave. On the other hand, a friend frankly relates his thoughts and opinions and

**“And the people of Noah,
—when they rejected the
apostles, We drowned them,
and We made them as a
Sign for mankind.”
—*Al-Furqān* [25]:37.**

reveals his secrets to his friend. In such a manner, God took Abraham as a friend.

¹⁰ This friendship became more apparent when God wanted to destroy the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. At

that time, Abraham's nephew Lot (*Lūt*) was dwelling in Sodom. Treating Abraham as a friend, God trusted him with His inmost thoughts. “Jehovah said: ‘Am I keeping covered from Abraham what I am doing?’” (Genesis 18:17) God also permitted Abraham to ask: “Will you really sweep away the righteous with the wicked?” (Genesis 18:23-33) In destroying those wicked cities, “the Judge of all the earth”

**“God did take Abraham
for a friend.”
—*Al-Nisā'* [4]:125.**

showed that he is truly just and not unrighteous. This event also demonstrated that God does not want us merely to be his servants, but out of his love and compassion, he elevates us and treats us as friends, revealing to us many hidden things.

¹¹ However, the greatest test of Abraham's faith took place when

5. What did God's justice demand, but what provision did he make for those who were good?

6. What does the Deluge account teach us?

7. How did Abraham differ from the people around him?

8, 9. (a) What special relationship with God did Abraham enjoy? (b) How does a friend differ from a servant?

10. (a) How was God's friendship with Abraham highlighted in regard to Sodom and Gomorrah? (b) What blessings come from being God's friend?

11. What was the greatest test of Abraham's faith?

God asked him to offer his son as a sacrifice. Abraham did not hesitate to obey God but went up the mountain with his son in order to carry out God's command. At the crucial moment, when Abraham took the slaughtering knife to kill his son, God's angel ordered him to stop.—Genesis 22:10-12.

¹² God did not want Abraham to slay his son. God had more in mind than testing Abraham, for His request also had prophetic implications. In order for a sacrifice to be offered, though, God provided a ram. Upon seeing it, Abraham took the ram and presented it, instead of his son, as a burnt

12. (a) Was God merely testing Abraham's obedience? (b) What did God provide for sacrifice, and what promise did he then give to Abraham?

offering to God. (Genesis 22:13) God showed favor to Abraham and blessed him, saying: "I shall surely bless you and I shall surely multiply your seed . . . due to the fact that you have listened to my voice." (Genesis 22:17, 18) Thus, we see the importance of obedience and

faith, for 'without faith it is impossible to please God.'—Hebrews 11:6.

¹³ God also promised Abraham: "By means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly

bless themselves." (Genesis 22:18) This "seed" was the one that God had previously spoken of in Paradise. (Genesis 3:15) Mankind's hopes are dependent on this promised "seed," since he is to crush Satan and fulfill God's original purpose for man to live in Paradise. But how is all of this to take place? To obtain the answer, let us meditate on the meaning of God's dealings with Abraham's offspring, the sons of Israel, and on the guidance that God gave them in the Torah.

13. What promise in connection with the "seed" did God give to Abraham, and how does this involve us?

"And We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice."

—Al-Şāffāt [37]:107.

God provided a ram for Abraham's sacrifice



GOD'S GUIDANCE IN THE TORAH



JACOB (*Ya'qūb*) was the grandson of Abraham (*Ibrāhīm*) through his son Isaac (*Ishāq*). Also known by the name Israel, given to him by God, Jacob became father to 12 sons. (Genesis 49:1, 2, 28) His offspring—the sons of Israel—became enslaved in Egypt for some time. So God sent his prophet Moses (*Mūsā*) to lead them out of that land. Other prophets received visions from God, but Moses was able to communicate directly with God at any time.

² Moses became the mediator of a covenant that God made with the sons of Israel. That covenant confirmed the promise that had been given to Abraham. God had Moses record His regulations and commandments (called the Law), which contained the guidance needed by man at that time. That guidance can be found in the Torah. God's dealing with the sons of Israel in a special way was conditional upon their obeying his commandments.—Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 9:5, 6.

³ The Law that God gave to Moses consisted of some 600 commandments, including these: "I am Jehovah your God . . . You must not have any other gods against my face. You must not make for yourself a carved image . . . You must not bow down to them nor be induced to serve them . . . Honor your father and your mother in order that your days may prove long upon the ground that Jehovah your God is giving you. You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely as a witness against your fellowman. You must not desire [covet] . . . anything that belongs to your fellowman."—Exodus 20:1-5, 12-17.

"To Moses God spoke direct."—*Al-Nisā'* [4]:164.

⁴ The most important commandment was: "Listen, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah. And you must love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your vital force." (Deuteronomy 6:4, 5) Only God should be worshiped. (Leviticus 26:1) Jehovah established the fact that belief in one God is the truth and that to worship other gods is a serious crime. (Exodus 22:20) Moreover, love must be a person's motive in worshiping God.

⁵ Second to the commandment to love God was the law to love one's neighbor as oneself. (Mark 12:28-31) God told his people: "You people must not steal, and you must not deceive, and you must not deal falsely anyone with his associate. You must not defraud your fellow . . . You must not hate your brother in your heart. . . . You must not take vengeance nor have a grudge against the sons of your people; and you must love your fellow as yourself. I am Jehovah." (Leviticus 19:11, 13, 17, 18) These laws served to govern man's relationship with his fellowman and stressed that everything should be done out of love.

⁶ Moreover, love was to be directed not only to those of their own race but also to others. Says the

1. Who was Moses, and why did God send him to the sons of Israel?

2. (a) Why did God make a covenant with the sons of Israel? (b) What did God have Moses record, and where can it be found today? (c) What means of giving guidance did God use? (See box, page 16.)

3. What were some of the commandments in the Law?

4. What is the most important commandment in the Law?

5. What is the second most important commandment?

6. To whom was love to be directed?

Torah: "In case an alien resident resides with you as an alien in your land, you must not mistreat him. . . . You must love him as yourself." —Leviticus 19:33, 34; see also Deuteronomy 10:17-19.

⁷ The Law abounded in counsel and advice for true believers. Its regulations covered every facet of their lives—religious, domestic, judicial, commercial. Thus, the Law was God's guidance for his people and showed them how to worship him acceptably.

7. What aspects in the life of the sons of Israel did the Law cover?

The Purpose of the Law

⁸ God had purposed that *all* the nations of the earth would bless themselves by means of Abraham's "seed." (Genesis 22:18) However, God made the Law covenant only with the nation of Israel and not with all the nations of the earth. (Deuteronomy 5:1-3; Psalm 147:19, 20) Consequently, the Law was not in itself the end but rather was a means toward the fulfillment of God's purpose. What, then, was its objective?

⁹ The Law taught God's requirements and exposed as unacceptable to him all false religious concepts that man developed after he was put out of Paradise. (Deuteronomy 18:9-13) By minimizing all contact with the surrounding nations, the Law also protected Israel from the disgusting practices and false worship of those neighbors.—Deuteronomy 7:5, 6.

¹⁰ The Law made it clear that all people, including the Israelites, were sinners in need of atonement. Because it originated from God, the Law was holy and was a standard of perfection. Any who could keep it perfectly would be worthy of life. (Leviticus 18:5) Although the sons of Israel tried to keep the Law, they failed because, like all mankind, they were imperfect humans—descendants of Adam. When their conduct was measured according to the standards of the Law, they fell short; they were shown to be sinners, worthy of death. This was in harmony with the divine justice that "the wages sin pays is death."—Romans 6:23.

¹¹ While not violating his own law, God took action to save mankind, who

God's Ways of Inspiration

God gave man His guidance "in many ways." (Hebrews 1:1) God supplied the Ten Commandments in written form. (Exodus 31:18) He transmitted the Law to Moses by verbal dictation, word for word. (Exodus 34:27) God used dreams and visions, and he often sent his angels to transmit his words. On many occasions, God gave his inspired writers the freedom to choose words and expressions to describe visions and to write his message. Thus, they used their different styles to convey his guidance to men. But God controlled and directed what happened. He did so to prevent the infiltration of mistakes and to ensure that the writings would be accurate, precise, and in harmony with his purpose.

8. How do we know that the Law was not in itself the end?

9. How did the Law protect the sons of Israel?

10. In what way did the Law show the need for atonement?

11. What makes atonement for the soul?

had unwittingly inherited sin and death. Mercifully, therefore, in the Law, God highlighted the need for something that would atone for sins, or cover them. He declared: "The soul [life] of the flesh is in the blood, and I myself have put it upon the altar for you to make atonement for your souls, because it is the blood that makes atonement by the soul in it."—Leviticus 17:11-14.

¹² Blood is therefore considered to be the equivalent of life. Hence, instead of dying because he broke God's commandments, the sinner could offer an animal for sacrifice on God's altar. In effect, the life of the sacrificed animal took the place of the life of the sinner. Its blood made atonement—that is, to the extent that it could. (Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:22) The sacrifice had to be sound and without blemish, for God had admonished the sons of Israel: "It should prove to be a sound

12. Explain the principle of the ransom. (See box below.)

one . . . in order to gain approval. No defect at all should prove to be in it." (Leviticus 22:21; Deuteronomy 15:21; 17:1) God thus laid the foundation for understanding the principle of a ransom as a price to be paid to save a life. But further guidance would be forthcoming through God's prophets.

Guidance Through the Prophets

¹³ The prophet David (*Dāwud*) lived about five centuries after Moses. David was a descendant of

13, 14. (a) Who was David? (b) What covenant, relating to Abraham's "seed," did God make with David? (c) Who followed David in the line leading to the promised "seed," and what additional guidance did God give them?

The Meaning of Ransom

Absolute divine justice demands that "soul will be for soul, eye for eye, tooth for tooth." (Deuteronomy 19:21) In place of this punishment, however, a ransom could sometimes be offered. A ransom is something that releases. Ransoming someone means paying a price to deliver him from captivity or punishment.

To illustrate: Exodus 21:28-32 speaks of a bull that gores a person to death. If the owner knew of the bull's disposition but did not take proper precautions, he would share responsibility for the death that occurred. Since justice demands that "soul will be for soul," however, the owner might have to pay for the life of the slain person with his own life.

Yet, the Law was not strict to the point of blindness, for God's mercy takes into consideration both motives and circumstances. Hence, the owner of the dangerous bull would not have to be put to death in every case. If the judges found extenuating circumstances or other factors that permitted lighter punishment, then a ransom, or fine, could be imposed upon the guilty party. This redemption represented an atonement to cover his sins. He would pay the fine instead of having his own life taken in exchange for the life that was lost.

Justice can therefore be satisfied if an equivalent price, or ransom, is offered. A ransom can satisfy justice and yet allow for mercy.



Animal sacrifices pointed to the need for a ransom

Judah, a son of Jacob. A pious man who praised God in psalms, David had faith and courage. This is attested to in the account of his victory over the giant Goliath (*Jālūt*), a well-known event. (1 Samuel 17:26-54) When Saul (*Tālūt*) proved to be a wicked king, God chose David as

“We gave (in the past) knowledge to David and Solomon.”—*Al-Naml* [27]:15.

king instead and made a covenant with him. (1 Samuel 16:1, 12, 13) We read at Psalm 89:3, 4: “I have concluded a covenant toward my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant, ‘Even to time indefinite I shall firmly establish your seed, and I will build your throne to generation after generation.’” God thus established that Abraham’s “seed,” by which all the nations of the earth would bless themselves, would be a king who descended from King David.

¹⁴ Wise King Solomon (*Sulaymān*) succeeded his father, David, to the throne. Solomon was the forerunner of many kings, whose offspring would include the “seed” that was promised in the Garden (Paradise) of Eden. (Genesis 3:15) The Torah relates that in the days of those kings, God sent many prophets and messengers to guide the nation and turn it back to the straight way. One of them was the well-known prophet Elijah (*Ilyās*), who called upon the sons of Israel to reject idol worship and return to the worship of God. —1 Kings 18:21, 22.

¹⁵ Likewise, in the Torah we find scores of prophecies that point to the promised “seed.” The prophet Daniel (sixth century B.C.E.) specified the date of His appearance. The prophet Isaiah (eighth century B.C.E.) foretold that He would be born in a miraculous way —of a virgin, without a human father. According to the prophet Micah (eighth century B.C.E.), He would be born in Bethlehem. The prophet Jeremiah (seventh century B.C.E.) foretold the slaying of infants upon His birth. The Psalms foretold that one of his followers would betray him and that his enemies would use false witnesses against him. And the prophet Zechariah (sixth century B.C.E.) predicted that the promised “seed” would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver.*

¹⁶ Until the appearance of this “seed,” God’s guidance was to be found in the Torah. Through it, God disclosed his supreme standards, revealed the need for atonement and ransom, and prepared the way for the promised “seed.” Those things were needed to prepare the way for all mankind to obtain God’s blessing and return to Paradise. Let us see how such was to be accomplished through God’s guidance in the *Injīl*.

* Daniel 9:25; Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; Jeremiah 31:15; Psalm 41:9; 27:12; Zechariah 11:12.

15. What were some of the prophecies that were to help identify the promised “seed”?

16. What purposes did the Torah serve?

GOD'S GUIDANCE IN THE *INJIL*



THOUSANDS of years had passed since Adam and Eve were removed from Paradise. Mankind's deviation from God's guidance continued to cause suffering, grief, pain, sickness, and death. Good news was sorely needed. How could man return to Paradise? We find the answer in the *Injil*, which means "good news." It is called this because it pertains to joyful news. What is this news?

² God sent the angel Gabriel (*Jibrīl*) to a virgin named Mary to tell her the good news of a son to whom God would give "the throne of David his father." Mary replied: "How is this to be, since I am having no intercourse with a man?" The angel answered: "Holy spirit will come upon you, and power of the Most High will overshadow you. For that reason also what is born will be called holy, God's Son."—Luke 1:32, 34, 35.

³ These words referred to the birth of Jesus Christ (*ʿĪsā*). Through him were fulfilled all the prophecies concerning the "seed" that God had promised in Paradise.* (Genesis 3:15) He is the "seed" of Abraham, by whom all the nations of the earth would bless themselves, for God's angel also announced: "You must call his name Jesus [meaning "Jehovah Is Salvation"], for he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21) But how is Jesus related to salvation from sin?

Christ as the Ransom

⁴ The Law that God gave to Moses revealed that all mankind, including the Jews, were under sin. They deserved death because "the wages sin pays is death."

* Fulfillment of the prophecies referred to in paragraph 15 of the preceding part can be found at Luke 3:1, 21, 22; Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 2:4-11; Matthew 2:16-18; John 13:18, 26-30; Matthew 26:59-61; and Matthew 26:15.

1. (a) Why is good news needed? (b) What is the meaning of the word "*Injil*"?

2. (a) What message did Gabriel deliver to Mary? (b) In what sense is Jesus "God's Son"? (See box, page 20.)

3. (a) Through whom were the prophecies concerning the promised "seed" fulfilled? (b) Why was the "seed" called Jesus?

4. Why were sacrifices offered by the sons of Israel, and what did it impress upon them?

(Romans 6:23) Consequently, for centuries the sons of Israel offered sacrifices to atone for their sins. This impressed on them the fact that sin exists and that "unless blood is poured out no forgiveness takes place."—Hebrews 9:22.

⁵ Nevertheless, the millions of sacrifices offered did not succeed in removing sin or in eliminating death, "for it is not possible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take sins away." (Hebrews 10:4) Why not? Because animals are inferior to humans. God does not consider the life of an animal to be equal in value to that of a human. What could therefore be offered to provide complete atonement?

⁶ Complete atonement and forgiveness could come only through a ransom that was equal in value to the perfect life lost by Adam, through whom sin entered into the world. Divine justice demanded 'soul for soul.' (Deuteronomy 19:21) Hence, the ransomer would have to be a perfect human, one without sin.

⁷ But no human descendant of Adam could be that ransomer. All of Adam's offspring had inherited sin and imperfection from him. All of us are dying humans, "for there is no man that does not sin." (1 Kings 8:46) The Holy Scriptures go so far as to say: "Not one of them can by any

5. Why did the animal sacrifices not provide complete atonement?

6. What was needed for complete atonement and forgiveness, and why?

7. Why could no descendant of Adam provide the ransom?

means redeem even a brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; (and the redemption price of their soul is so precious that it has ceased to time indefinite) that he should still live forever and not see the pit." (Psalm 49:7-9) Who, then, could that ransom be? Who would be the promised "seed"?

⁸ Remember that by sinning,

8. How did Jesus' death provide complete atonement? (See box, page 21.)

Adam brought death to all his descendants. Since Jesus' life came directly from God, without a human father, Jesus is the only one who was born as a perfect human on this earth, without inherited sin. (1 Peter 1:19) And just as it was possible for sin to enter the world through the disobedience of the perfect man Adam, it is likewise possible for complete atonement to come through the obedience of the only other perfect man, Jesus. (Romans 5:12, 17) Therefore, he could save all mankind. That is why Jesus said that he came "to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." —Matthew 20:28.

Can It Possibly Be Said That Christ Is the Son of God?

IT IS unthinkable that God should have a son resulting from relations with a woman or that he would marry and beget children. God is unique. What humans do to reproduce should never be applied to him. This is precisely what the Holy Scriptures teach and emphasize.

Why, then, do the Holy Scriptures use the expression "son of God" in many instances? For example, it is said that Adam was a "son of God." (Luke 3:38) But how could that be? The Torah explains: "And Jehovah God proceeded to form the man [Adam] out of dust from the ground and to blow into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man came to be a living soul." (Genesis 2:7) Therefore, Adam was called a son of God because his life came from God without human

parents. Similarly, Jesus Christ is called the son of God, for his life came directly from God. We read in the Qur'ān: "The similitude of Jesus before God is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: 'Be': And he was."—*Āl 'Imrān* [3]:59.

Language also permits a figurative use of the word "son." In Arabic, for example, the expression "son of the village" is used to refer to a native villager, and the expression "the son of the language" is used to indicate the speaker of a tongue. Of course, such expressions do not mean that either the village or the language has literally begotten children through marriage! Similarly, in *Al-Baqarah* [2]:177 the rendering "wayfarer" is a translation of the Arabic expression "son of the road." Here again no one can say that the road has actually married and thereby produced a son. Likewise, when the Qur'ān employs such expressions as "the face of God," "the Hand of God," and "mounted He the Throne," these are not understood literally. (*Al-Baqarah* [2]:109, Rodwell; *Al-Fath* [48]:10; *Al-A'rāf* [7]:54, MMP) Finally, not all Muslim scholars object to the use of the expression "son of God" in the *Injīl*. Both Imām Abū Ḥāmid Al-Ghazālī and Ibn Qutaybah accept it as a figure of speech.

⁹ Jesus disclosed that he was to die in order to bring about man's salvation. His death, however, was due, not to weakness on his part in the face of his enemies, but rather to his acceptance of the divine will. (Hebrews 10:7) Jesus said: "This is why the Father loves me, because I surrender my soul, in order that I may receive it again. No man has taken it away from me, but I surrender it of my own initiative." —John 10:17, 18.

¹⁰ Would God allow faithful Jesus to sleep forever in death? Of course not! God promised that his "loyal one" would not remain dead. (Psalm 16:10) The Jews thought that by killing Jesus, they would be forever rid of him, but on the third day, God resurrected him from death to life and later lifted him up to heaven.—Acts 2:32, 33.

¹¹ Do you find it strange that Christ had to die? Even Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, objected to this thought. (Matthew 16:21-23) It was apparent that he did not fully understand God's purpose for Jesus. Consequently, when Peter rushed to defend Jesus with a sword, Jesus told him: "Return your sword to its place, for all those who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father to supply me at this moment more than twelve legions of angels? In that case, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must take place this way?" (Matthew 26:52-54) What was to take place according to the Scriptures?

¹² Over seven hundred years before Jesus' birth, Jehovah had referred to him through the prophet Isaiah as "my servant." He

9. Was Jesus' death due to any weakness on his part, and how do we know?

10. Did Jesus remain dead?

11. Why did some regard the idea of Jesus' death as strange?

12, 13. (a) Which prophecies had foretold Christ's death? (b) What further evidence confirmed that Jesus would die as the ransom? (See box, page 23.)

What the Qur'ān Says About Christ

- ◆ The angels announced good news from God to Mary. She would give birth to Jesus.—*Āl 'Imrān* [3]:45.
- ◆ He was born of God's spirit, without a human father.—*Al-Anbiyā'* [21]:91.
- ◆ He was born holy ("faultless," *MMP*).—*Maryam* [19]:19.
- ◆ God made of him a sign for mankind and a mercy from Him.—*Maryam* [19]:21.
- ◆ It was said of him that he was the Word of God and his Spirit.—Compare *Āl 'Imrān* [3]:45; *Al-Nisā'* [4]:171.
- ◆ God appointed him as prophet and apostle.—*Al-Nisā'* [4]:171; *Maryam* [19]:30.
- ◆ God taught him the Book and Wisdom, the Torah and the *Injīl*.—*Āl 'Imrān* [3]:48.
- ◆ He performed miracles from God, and was strengthened by Him with holy spirit.—*Al-Baqarah* [2]:87; *Al-Mā'idah* [5]:113.
- ◆ He healed the blind and the lepers, raised the dead, and foretold the unknown.—*Āl 'Imrān* [3]:49.
- ◆ God rendered him to be in honor in this world and forever after and in the company of those nearest to God.—*Āl 'Imrān* [3]:45.
- ◆ God caused Christ to die, raised him to life, and then lifted him up to Him.—*Āl 'Imrān* [3]:55, *NJD*; *Maryam* [19]:33, *NJD*.

* One *Hadīth* says that Christ is the only one that Satan did not touch: "When any human being is born, Satan touches him at both sides of the body with his two fingers, except Jesus, the son of Mary, whom Satan tried to touch but failed."—*The Book of the Beginning of Creation* from *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*.

compared him to “a sheep [brought] to the slaughtering” and said that he would be given as “a guilt offering.” God would then reward him “due to the fact that he poured out his soul to the very death, . . . and he himself carried the very sin of many people, and for the transgressors he proceeded to interpose.”—Isaiah 52:13-53:12.

¹³ In Daniel’s prophecy, which revealed the time of Christ’s appearance, God also spoke of the provision of an “atonement for error” that would terminate transgression, or sin. God further made known that Christ would be “cut off” (killed) and would cause the need for sacrifice and gift offering to cease.—Daniel 9:24-27.

¹⁴ But what is God’s will for us? “God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,” the Holy Scriptures say. This was in order that everyone “exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.” (Romans 5:8; John 3:16) God desires that we live forever in Paradise. How grateful we should be to Jehovah, who showed so much love by providing this greatest and most precious atoning sacrifice!

¹⁵ What should this move us to want to do? The Scriptures say: “For the love the Christ has compels us . . . He died for all that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised up.” (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15) To live for him, we need to know his teachings. Let us examine some of them.

14, 15. (a) How do you feel about Christ’s ransom sacrifice? (b) What should it move us to do?

The Teachings of Christ in the “Injil”

¹⁶ During his ministry on earth, Christ taught people much about God. His teachings were aimed at reaching the hearts of his listeners so that they might be motivated to worship God. Among the best-known examples of his teachings are those found in what is known as the Sermon on the Mount.—Matthew, chapters 5-7; Luke, chapter 6.

¹⁷ Christ stressed principles instead of detailed commandments and laws. Not only were wrong deeds to be avoided but so were the attitudes that led to those acts. For example, when speaking of adultery, he remarked: “Everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matthew 5:27, 28) On the matter of murder, he said: “I say to you that everyone who continues wrathful with his brother will be accountable to the court of justice.”—Matthew 5:21, 22.

¹⁸ Christ also denounced the hypocrisy of people who have only an outward display of godly devotion. In regard to the giving of alms, he admonished: “When making gifts of mercy, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing.”—Matthew 6:1-4.

¹⁹ As for prayer, Christ taught: “When you pray, go into your private room and, after shutting your door, pray to your Father who is in secret; then your Father who looks on in secret will repay you. But when praying, do not say the same things over and over again, just as the people of the nations do . . . God your Father knows what things you are needing before ever you ask him.” (Matthew 6:5-8) We thereby see that God answers only heartfelt prayers, not those said merely to impress listeners and draw their admiring compliments.

²⁰ Love was the main theme of Christ’s teachings. He knew that all of God’s requirements could be summed up in the two greatest commandments, and he therefore said: “‘You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your

16. What was the purpose of Christ’s teachings?

17. How did Christ stress the need to suppress the attitudes that lead to wrong deeds?

18. What form of hypocrisy did Jesus denounce?

19. What kind of prayer pleases God?

20. (a) What is the summation of all of God’s instructions to man? (b) What is the Golden Rule?

whole mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. The second, like it, is this, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments the whole Law hangs, and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40) Illustrating what is involved in the second-greatest commandment are Jesus' words known as the Golden Rule: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them; this, in fact, is what the Law and the Prophets mean." (Matthew 7: 12) Christ excelled in teaching the way of love. Both by word and by deed, he acquainted others with the love that is shown by self-sacrifice.

²¹ Christ's teachings were not in opposition to the Torah. He said: "Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I came, not to destroy, but to fulfill." (Mat-

21. Were Christ's teachings in opposition to the Torah? Explain. (See Romans 13:8-10.)

thew 5:17) Not only did he fulfill the letter of the Law but he also fulfilled the spirit behind it.

²² How grateful we should be to God for His guidance through Christ's teachings and for all that He has done since Eden to save us and have our sins covered by the ransom! But how and when will mankind be freed from all the troubles that make people unhappy? How will famine and misery disappear? What about wars, murders, stealing, and corruption? By what means will those problems be solved, and what is Christ's role in it?

22. What do we now need to know?

Why Were Sacrifices Offered?

- ◆ Propitiatory sacrifices were not offered to God in Paradise because perfect Adam was without sin.
- ◆ Abel was the first to offer an animal sacrifice to God. He did this in an attempt to obtain God's favor.—Genesis 4:4.
- ◆ After the Deluge, Noah offered clean animals as thanksgiving sacrifices to God. Thus, he and his children were blessed.—Genesis 8:20, 21; 9:1.
- ◆ To test Abraham's obedience and faith, God demanded a human sacrifice. Abraham went to the point of offering his son and gained God's approval. Afterward, though, God accepted a ram as a burnt offering in place of Abraham's son. Therefore, it was apparent that the offering of sacrifices signified more than just a means of seeking God's approval.—Genesis 22:13.
- ◆ Job offered sacrifices to God according to the number of his children, "for, said Job 'maybe my sons have sinned and have cursed God in their heart.' " (Job 1:5; see also Job 42:7, 8.) It is thus evident that sacrifices were linked to human sin.
- ◆ God specified in the Law covenant that the sons of Israel should offer sacrifices, the blood of which would atone for their sins.—Leviticus 17:11.

All these sacrifices typified Christ's ransom sacrifice. That explains why John the Baptist (Yahya) said of Jesus: "See, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) After Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice, there was no further need for sacrifices.—Daniel 9:27; Hebrews 10:1.

GOD'S GUIDANCE POINTS TO HIS KINGDOM



WHEN the angel Gabriel announced Jesus' birth to Mary, he said: "Jehovah God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule as king . . . , and there will be no end of his kingdom." (Luke 1:32, 33) Jesus was called Christ after God anointed him with spirit at his baptism. The title "Christ," or "Messiah" (*al-Masīh*), means "Anointed One." (Matthew 3:13-17) From that time onward, he preached "the good news of the kingdom of God." —Luke 4:43.

1. (a) What did the angel reveal to Mary about Jesus? (b) What does the title "Christ" mean?

² What is this Kingdom of God? It is a heavenly government that will restore paradisaic conditions on earth. It is under Kingdom rule that people of all the nations will experience God's blessings earth wide. (Matthew 6:9, 10; 12:21) During his ministry on earth, Jesus performed miracles, thereby giving a preview of what the Kingdom will accomplish on an earth-wide scale. Given authority by God, Jesus healed the sick, the lame, the blind, the deaf, and the mute. He even raised the dead!—Matthew 15:30, 31; Luke 7:11-16.

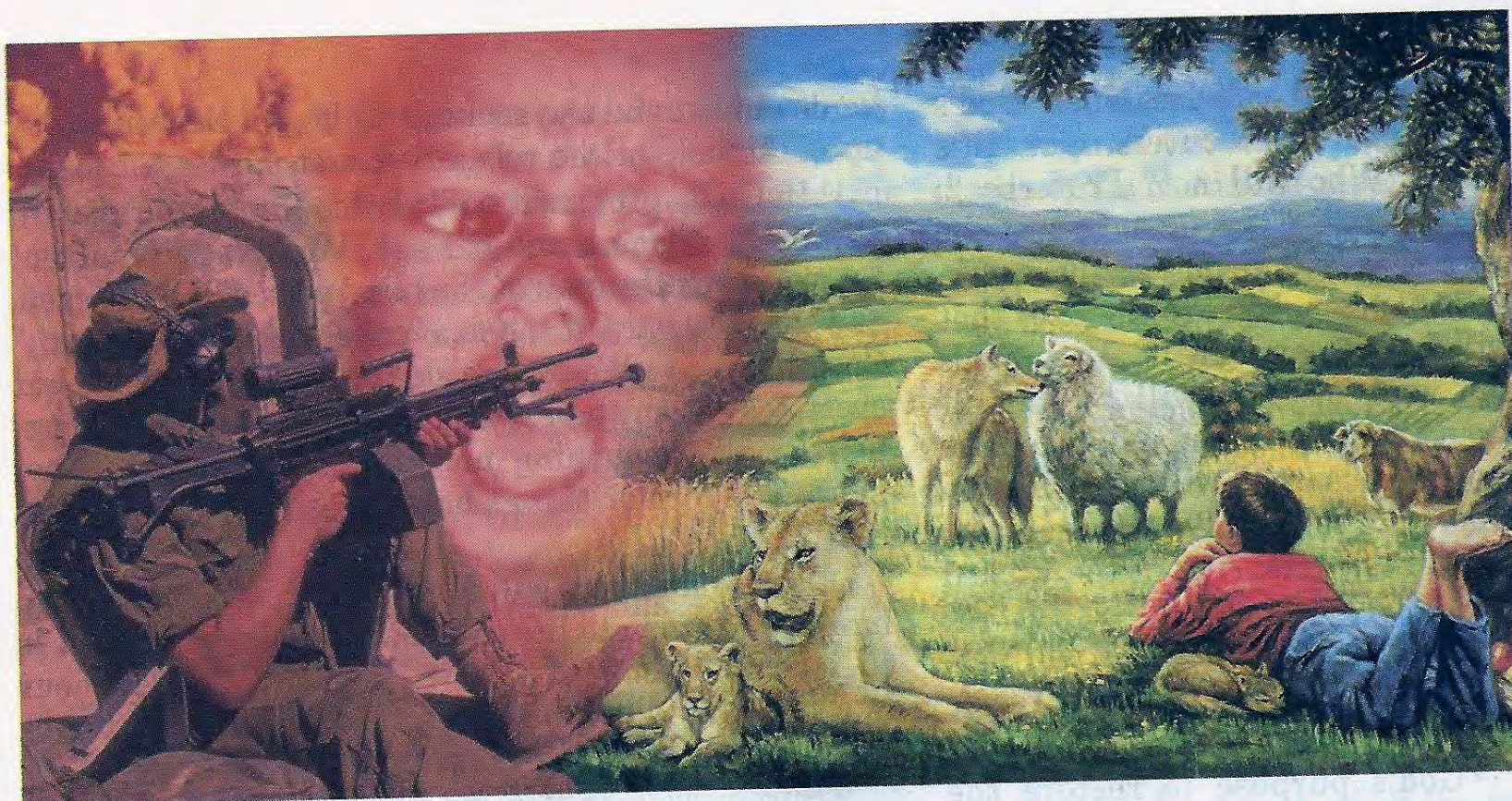
³ Jesus demonstrated the qualities that are much desired in a king. He was kind and compassionate. He possessed a great love for people and helped all. (Matthew 9:36; Luke 19:2-10) His loving invitation is: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded

2. What is the Kingdom, and what will it accomplish?

3. Why is it appropriate for Jesus to be the King of the Kingdom?

Do You Recognize the Features of the Last Days?

- ◆ Unprecedented warfare.—Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:4.
- ◆ Famine, pestilences, and earthquakes.—Luke 21:11; Revelation 6:5, 6, 8.
- ◆ Cooling off of love and increasing of lawlessness.—Matthew 24:12.
- ◆ Global preaching of God's Kingdom.—Matthew 24:14.
- ◆ Man's ruining of the earth.—Revelation 11:18.
- ◆ Indifference toward divine warnings.—Matthew 24:39.
- ◆ Critical times.—2 Timothy 3:1.
- ◆ Love for self and for money.—2 Timothy 3:2.
- ◆ Disobedience to parents.—2 Timothy 3:2.
- ◆ Love of pleasures rather than of God.—2 Timothy 3:4.
- ◆ Hypocritically claiming godly devotion.—2 Timothy 3:5.



Soon, war will end and earth will be a paradise

down, and I will refresh you.” (Matthew 11:28-30) God-fearing people were drawn to Christ and looked forward eagerly to his reign.—John 12:19.

⁴ But when will we benefit from the blessings of the Kingdom? When will it transform the earth into a paradise, according to God’s original purpose? How can we tell whether we are near the time when God will put an end to all wickedness and pain?

Evidence of the Last Days

⁵ The *Injil* furnishes us with answers and guidance. It tells of a composite sign—made up of a series of events that must occur during one period of time called “the last days.” (2 Timothy 3:1; Matthew, chapter 24; Mark, chapter 13; Luke, chapter 21) This sign would indicate Christ’s reigning in Kingdom power.

⁶ The events taking place since 1914 give conclusive evidence that we are living in the last days. Some of those events are unprecedented wars, serious famines

4. What questions come to mind when we talk of Kingdom rule?

5. According to the *Injil*, in what period of time are we now living?

6. What events were prophesied to occur during the last days? (See box, page 24.)

and food shortages, pestilences, and major earthquakes.

⁷ One of the prophecies in the *Injil*, yet to be fulfilled, foretells that humans will claim to have achieved “peace and security.” However, when men are uttering this expression, sudden destruction will befall them. (1 Thessalonians 5:3) The Kingdom of God must do away with all human rulerships so that the world may be united under divine rulership. The prophecy at Daniel 2:44 tells us: “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 [for God will never again permit mere human rule]. It [God’s Kingdom] will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite.”

7. What are two prophecies that will soon be fulfilled?

⁸ Who will survive when God's judgment is executed upon this world? Who will not? Proverbs 2: 21, 22 says: "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." Psalm 37:28, 29 also reads: "As for the offspring of the wicked ones, they will indeed be cut off. The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."

⁹ God's purpose to restore the earth to a paradise will be fulfilled under his Kingdom. (Isaiah 35:1) Peace will prevail between humans and animals. The Holy Scriptures say: "The wolf will actually reside for a while with the male lamb, and with the kid the leopard itself will

8. Who will survive God's judgment against the world?

9, 10. What are some of the wonderful things that the Kingdom of God will accomplish?

lie down, . . . and the sucking child will certainly play upon the hole of the cobra."—Isaiah 11:6-8.*

¹⁰ In God's promised new world, Kingdom rule will eliminate sickness and old age. We are assured that "at that time the eyes of the blind ones will be opened, and the very ears of the deaf ones will be unstopped." (Isaiah 35:5, 6) We also read: "He [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."—Revelation 21:4.

¹¹ What happiness will fill the earth when those who have died return to life to rejoin their loved ones! It is then that Christ's promise will be fulfilled: "The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out."—John 5:28, 29.

¹² Surely, we look forward eagerly to the time when God will fulfill his promises. Then we will be filled with joy as Christ, the "seed" of Abraham, brings blessings to people of all nations. Yes, we yearn to see Paradise restored earth wide. So, what must we do to gain life in that Paradise?

* A commentary by Ibn Kathīr (in Arabic) gives a similar description. Regarding *Al-Nisā'* [4]:159, it says: "Lions and camels, leopards and cattle, wolves and sheep—all will pasture together pleasantly; boys will play with serpents that do not harm them."

11. What promise for dead ones will be fulfilled?

12. While we await future blessings, to what question should we know the answer?

HOW WE CAN FOLLOW GOD'S GUIDANCE TODAY



WE ARE living in critical times. The Holy Scriptures assure us that these are the last days of this world's corrupt system. Very soon God will intervene to crush the wicked, and

1. Why are the times we live in so critical?

he will make the earth a paradise, which was his original purpose. But what does he expect of us?

² We can learn from previous examples. Instead of acting as Adam and Eve did, we must obey God and oppose the Devil. We should follow the examples of Enoch (*Idrīs*) and Noah (*Nūh*), who courageously and boldly

2. What do we learn from previous examples?

ly took their stand for God and proclaimed his message, despite opposition from most of the people. Abraham (*Ibrāhīm*) too had the courage to follow the true God and be different from his father, who had served idols. Like Abraham, we must show our faith by our actions, and we must strive to follow God's guidance, even though that may call for many sacrifices on our part. These things are necessary to obtain God's approval. Yet, more is required.

³ It is also necessary that we exercise faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice. God lovingly sent him as "a propitiatory sacrifice" for the whole world's sins.—1 John 2:2.

⁴ We should always remember that it is God who determines the way to salvation; we do not. Therefore, if it seems hard for us to adjust our thinking to the knowledge we are acquiring from the Holy Scriptures, we must realize that gaining God's approval should be of utmost importance to us. God is willing to help us if we approach him in prayer with sincere hearts and a genuine desire to please him.—Psalm 143:10, 11.

⁵ Without delay, then, act to make sure that you have accurate knowledge of God, his purposes, and his requirements. Jesus said in 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) However, we cannot gain this knowledge unless we refer to the guidance God has provided for us in his books. After that, we must also exert ourselves to apply what we learn so that we may become "doers of the word, and not hearers only."—James 1:22-25.

⁶ As we observe God's dealings with mankind over the ages, we realize that we cannot worship him on our own—without being part of his people. God's servants have always worshiped him in an organized manner. Men of faith like Abraham led their families and servants in the worship of Jehovah. (Genesis 12:1-5; 18:19) Later, the sons of Israel became a nation united in true wor-

ship. Centuries thereafter, though, God rejected the nation of Israel because of its continued rebellion and lack of faith. Instead, God gave his approval to Christ's followers. If we had been true worshipers of Jehovah during any one of these periods in history, we would have had to be part of his approved people—not separate from them.

⁷ We also note that in any one time period, Jehovah did not deal with more than one group of worshipers. For instance, in Noah's day, only Noah and those in the ark with him came under God's protection and were carried safely through the waters of the Deluge. (1 Peter 3:20) Likewise in our day, we should expect to find only one people acceptable to God as his true worshipers. But how can we identify the congregated people who are following God's guidance today, so that we can join with them in worshipping him?

⁸ We find this people where we find real unity. God is one and his guidance is one—harmonious, not contradictory. Those who follow God's guidance constitute a united body, where all members apply God's righteous principles. We do not find divisions or prejudice among them, but rather we find harmony and brotherly love, even though they come from diverse backgrounds, nationalities, religions, and races. (1 John 4:20, 21) Who, then, are God's people in our day?

3. In what must we exercise faith in order to be saved?
4. Who determines the way to salvation, and what does this mean for us?
5. What must we do to gain everlasting life?
6. How do we know that we must be part of God's organized people?

7. At any one time, why can there not be more than one group of true worshipers who represent God?

8. What qualities identify the true people of God? (See box, page 28.)

⁹ We read: “‘You are my witnesses,’ is the utterance of Jehovah.” (Isaiah 43:10-12) Jehovah’s Witnesses today boldly witness to all nations about God, his great name, and his wonderful purposes.

¹⁰ By living lives fully in harmony with God’s guidance, Jehovah’s Witnesses prove that they are his true people. They endeavor to apply God’s laws in every aspect of their lives. God will not accept among his people liars, thieves, immoral indi-

9. To whom should God’s people give witness, and to what extent?

10. What kind of people will God not accept as his worshipers?

viduals, or practicers of what he has forbidden. God condemns lawlessness. He insists that his people remain clean and follow his guidance.—Luke 16:10; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

¹¹ Love and unity are prominent qualities among God’s true people. Jehovah’s Witnesses are a united people serving God in harmony, no matter where they are located. They number over five million, living in more than 230 lands. They are not part of this wicked world alienated from God. (John 17:16) They do not take part in the world’s conflicts, wars, or politics. Their international brotherhood is not undermined by nationalistic, racial, or religious interests that foment strife and disagreements.—Isaiah 2:2-4.

¹² Jehovah’s Witnesses love their neighbors and are active worldwide. (Matthew 22:39) They wish to help all those who desire to obey God. They follow Jesus’ example by preaching about

God’s Kingdom and proclaiming that it is the only solution for the problems of mankind. Jehovah’s Witnesses encourage you to take a vital step—study the Holy Scriptures to acquire the accurate knowledge that leads to everlasting life.

¹³ Each one of us has the responsibility of making a choice. Will you choose God’s guidance? It alone shows the way to Paradise. (Deuteronomy 30:19, 20) Take in the accurate knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and apply it in your life. Only then can you get God’s approval and gain life eternal in a delightful and happy paradise where there will be no pain, suffering, sickness, and death.—Revelation 21:4.

11. What qualities characterize the people who follow God’s guidance?

12. What do Jehovah’s Witnesses encourage you to do?

13. What steps must you take to gain God’s guidance and to reach Paradise?

The People Who Follow God’s Guidance

God does not require of humans what they cannot do. Therefore, his people can be distinguished by the fact that they apply all his laws and follow his guidance.

Zeal alone is insufficient. Without accurate knowledge, misdirected zeal made the Jews reject the prophets and even Christ. (Romans 10:2) Can all religions be the true faith when individuals associated with them fail to apply God’s principles?—Matthew 7:21-23.

Jesus said: “By their fruits you will recognize them.” (Matthew 7:16-18) Anyone who claims to be worshiping God properly must produce good fruits in words and in deeds.

IS THE TEXT OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES TRUSTWORTHY GUIDANCE FROM GOD?

APPENDIX

MANY religions agree that God inspired the Holy Scriptures. Have you already seen these books? Have you read them? Some people hesitate to look into them because of the charge that these writings have been changed. However, is it not audacious to claim that God's books have been corrupted, as if God were incapable of preserving them!

² The Devil does not want God's guidance to reach man. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that he and

his cohorts would try to have the Holy Scriptures corrupted so that mankind might be misled and turned away from God. Over the centuries, various individuals have tried to add to certain verses. But did they succeed in corrupting God's words? Would God allow them to do so? No! Throughout the Scriptures, he affirms that he would preserve his words. "The green grass has dried up, the blossom has withered; but as for the word of our God,

1. Why do some hesitate to look into the Holy Scriptures?
2. (a) How do we know that attempts to corrupt God's words have not succeeded? (See box below.) (b) What assurances do we have that no corruption has occurred?

Have Judaism and Christendom Corrupted the Torah and the "Injīl"?

PEOPLE usually try to change what disturbs them. However, God did not allow opposers to corrupt his holy books. Consider: If it were true that Jews had succeeded in corrupting the words in God's books, why did they not alter the texts that denounce their disobedience and rebellion against God? And why did they leave intact the passages that reveal that God would deal with other nations and that he would put an end to the covenant he had made with them as his special people? (Isaiah 1:2-20; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Daniel 9:24-27) Moreover, why did the Jews not change the text of the scores of prophecies concerning Christ in order to justify their refusal of him? (See paragraph 15 on page 18.) Likewise, if Christendom has succeeded in corrupting the Holy Scriptures, why have they not been able to distort the texts that refute their beliefs? (See the box on page 5.) Indeed, we can be confident that God has preserved the purity of the message of his books so that all mankind can have his guidance today.

it will last to time indefinite," says Isaiah 40:8. (See also 1 Peter 1:24, 25.) Likewise, the Qur'ān says: "There is none that can alter the Words (and Decrees) of God." (*Al-An'ām* [6]:34) Thus, all attempts to change God's words have failed because it is inconceivable that God would permit any manipulation of his books.

³ We can also be certain that the text of the Holy Scriptures is authentic by taking a closer look at the old manuscripts that still exist. We will thereby note the accuracy with which the Scriptures have been copied. And you will also be interested to see that the Qur'ān has many things to say concerning the authenticity of the text.

What the Manuscripts Demonstrate

⁴ From the start, handwritten copies (manuscripts) were made of the original texts of all the Holy Scriptures. This was done under God's direction so that his guidance would be known and followed by man. (Compare Deuteronomy 17:18.) The copyists were extremely meticulous in their work. For example, early Hebrew copyists even counted every letter in the Torah to prevent mistakes from creeping in when manuscripts were being copied. Each time they copied one, they would count the letters in their copy and compare it with that of the original to make sure that both were identical. It

3. What helps to assure us that the text of the Holy Scriptures is authentic?

4. (a) To what extent did copyists of the Holy Scriptures strive for accuracy? (b) Did Jesus and his followers express any doubts concerning the accuracy of the copies they used?

is reported that they counted 815,140 individual letters in the Hebrew Scriptures. In the first century C.E., Jesus and his followers quoted from the copies on hand without expressing any doubt at all concerning the accuracy of the text. (Luke 4:16-21; Acts 17:1-3) The precision of those who have copied the Scriptures over the centuries has contributed toward an accurate transmission of the text down to our day.

⁵ By studying the thousands of manuscripts extant in our time and comparing them with one another, we can see that the original text has been accurately passed down to us. Existing today are some 6,000 manuscripts of either all the Hebrew Scriptures or parts thereof. The Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947, have demonstrated that the centuries of copying and recopying have not distorted God's message.

⁶ More than 13,000 manuscripts of the Greek Scriptures are said to be available today. A study of them shows that the original text of the Christian Greek Scriptures has also been preserved accurately. For example, the Institute for New Testament Textual Studies in Germany has made about 95 percent of its approximately 5,300 handwritten copies of the Christian Greek Scriptures available for scientific study, either on microfilm or in photographs. A comparison of them shows just how exact the transmission of the Bible text down to our day has been. The interval of time between the original writing of the Christian Greek Scriptures and the writing of the oldest extant papyrus manuscripts is very short, not more than 25 years.

What the Qur'ān Says About the Holy Scriptures

⁷ The Qur'ān calls the Torah and the *Injīl* "the Book of Enlightenment." (*Āl 'Imrān* [3]:184; *Fāṭir* [35]:25) Scores of Qur'ānic verses state that these books are from God. (*Al-Baqarah* [2]:89; *Al-An'ām* [6]:92) Concerning both the Torah and *Injīl*, we read: "Wherein is guidance and a light." (*Al-Mā'idah* [5]:44, 46, *MMP*) Furthermore, *Al-Mā'idah* [5]:46 says about the Torah: "Therein is the (plain) com-

5. How can we prove that the text of the Scriptures in use today is sound?

6. Why can we say that the Christian Greek Scriptures have not been corrupted?

7. What does the Qur'ān say about the Torah and the *Injīl*?

mand of God.” Many of the great interpreters (such as Al-Jalālayn, Al-Fakhr Al-Rāzī, Al-Ṭabarī, and Al-Bayḍāwī) acknowledge that according to the Qur’ān, the Torah is called “the Book of God” (Āl ‘Imrān [3]:23) and “the Book which helps to make things clear.” (Al-Ṣāffāt [37]:117) Nevertheless, some still believe that the present-day Torah and *Injīl* have been corrupted and cannot be trusted. But if this were true, when did this falsification take place?

⁸ From a Qur’ānic viewpoint, no corruption could possibly have occurred *before* the writing of the Qur’ān because many Qur’ānic verses call for faith in the Torah and the *Injīl*. (For example, see *Al-Baqarah* [2]:136; *Āl ‘Imrān* [3]:84; *Al-Nisā’* [4]:136.) The Qur’ān also recommends seeking out those versed in the Torah and the *Injīl*, saying: “If ye realise this not, ask of those who possess the Message.” (*Al-Nahl* [16]:43; *Al-Anbiyā’* [21]:7) Would it do so if these texts had been corrupted? Furthermore, many Qur’ānic verses call out to “People of the Book” (the Torah and the *Injīl*) to turn back to their books. (For instance, see *Al-Mā'idah* [5]:50, 71.) Surely, an invitation would not be given to turn back to corrupted books!

⁹ Likewise, no corruption could possibly have occurred *after* the writing of the Qur’ān, since a comparison of our modern-day Holy Scriptures with manuscripts of the Torah and the *Injīl* written four or five centuries before the writing of the Qur’ān shows that there have been no changes, or corruption. These manuscripts are available in public libraries and museums.

¹⁰ Nevertheless, some individuals still object, saying that there are certain Qur’ānic verses that speak of such corruption (Arabic, *tahrīf*). But what do Muslim scholars say about this? Commentaries explain corruption in two ways: (1) Falsification of the text (altering any written character) and (2) twisting (distorting) the meaning of the text. Muslim commentators are not unanimous that the corruption referred to is that of altering the written text.

¹¹ In “The Book of Monotheism,” which is part of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Imām Al-Bukhārī explains the meaning of the

word “*tahrīf*” as follows: “*Tahrīf* means alteration. However, no one can alter any written character in a book of God. *Tahrīf* was done to the text in the sense of twisting its meaning [misinterpreting it].” In his commentary on *Al-Nisā’* [4]:46, Imām Al-Fakhr Al-Rāzī says: “The meaning of corruption (*tahrīf*) is the introduction of vain doubt and wrong explanations and changing the word from its true meaning to a baseless sense by means of verbal tricks, as heretics do presently with the verses which contravene their own sect. This is the view that is more true.” In his commentary on *Al-Mā'idah* [5]:13, he says: “This corruption (*tahrīf*) could be [1] false interpretation, and it could be [2] altering the written text. However, we have already shown that the first explanation is most probable, because it is impossible to alter the written text of a book that was handed down in unbroken and widespread succession.” Examples of twisting the meaning of God’s books can be seen in the interpretations that many religions give in support of their false beliefs.

¹² The Holy Scriptures are indeed sound! Anyone who believes in the Qur’ān must agree that the text of the Holy Scriptures has not been corrupted. There can be no doubt that they are God’s Word, for the Holy Scriptures have not been changed since the time that the Qur’ān said that the Torah and the *Injīl* are “guidance and a light” and that “there is none that can alter the Words (and Decrees) of God.”—*Al-An‘ām* [6]:34.

8, 9. (a) Could corruption of the Holy Scriptures possibly have occurred before the writing of the Qur’ān? (b) Could such corruption have occurred after the writing of the Qur’ān?

10. What two meanings have been given to “corruption,” and what do Muslim commentators say in this regard?

11. Which meaning of the word “corruption” has been accepted by some learned ones?

12. Respecting the Holy Scriptures, of what can we be sure?

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