



**"This
Good News
of the
Kingdom"**

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

-THE PUBLISHERS

PUBLISHERS

Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Inc.
International Bible Students Association
Brooklyn, New York, U. S. A.

Made in the United States of America

"THIS GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM"

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

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

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

4

message he called "this good news of the kingdom." -Matthew 24:14, in The Holy Bible, NW*

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

4 Who is God? How and why did he make man? Why are there wickedness and suffering

* NW stands for the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures.

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

5

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

THE TRUE GOD

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

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

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

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

6

83:18 says about him: "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth." Therefore, to become a true worshiper of him one must come to know him by his name Jehovah.

CHRIST JESUS

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

8 Jesus and Jehovah God are not the same person, nor is Jesus equal to God. Jehovah alone is supreme. Therefore, Jesus said about Jehovah: "My Father is greater than I." (John 14:28) He always has been and is obedient to his Father in heaven and has always been united or at one with him in God's works of righteousness. Because they were in harmony together Jesus could say: "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30) But he did not mean that they were one person. It would be foolish to say that, since later we find Jesus praying to his Father in these words: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: never-

7. Who is the chief of God's creatures, and why was he called the Word?

8. Are Jesus and Jehovah God the same person, and are they equal? What did Jesus say about this?

7

theless not as I will, but as thou wilt." -Matthew 26:39; compare John 17:20-22.

9 Jesus is God's chief Son and most beloved One and he has become the King of God's kingdom, through which righteousness and peace will be brought about in a new world. While he was on the earth he taught his followers to pray for that kingdom and to direct that prayer to Jehovah, their heavenly Father. "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:9,10) But before we go on to discuss why Jesus came to earth as a man and died, and why his preaching about the Kingdom was such good news, let us go back to the time when God created the first man in the garden of Eden.

SIN, DEATH, AND THE DEVIL

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

11 If they were faithful and obedient to the

9. Of what has Jesus now become the ruler, and for what did he teach his followers to pray?

10. How did the first man and woman come to be, and what were they commanded to do?

11. How was their obedience tested out, and by what creature were they led to act as they did?

8

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

12 In God's command about the fruit of this tree he had said to Adam: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:17) And so now God put this sentence into effect. First, he drove out Adam and Eve from the paradise garden, and from that day on they began to die, and in due time they did die and returned to the dust from where they were taken. Their act of disobedience to God, their rebellion against God's commandment, brought

12. What happened to Adam and Eve after they had sinned, and who was the invisible power behind the serpent in the garden of Eden?

9

death to them; and, since all their children were born after they sinned, then they passed on sin and death to their offspring and so down to us. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Romans 5:12) The invisible power behind the serpent who led them into rebellion against God was therefore responsible for their death and he was a murderer. Jesus identified that murderer for us when he said to other followers of the evil one: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John

8:44) So, then, it is Satan the Devil who was the invisible power behind the serpent in Eden and who is the great rebel against God and his purposes.

13 The Devil was originally a spirit son of God and, as such, he was perfect; but he allowed pride and his thirst for power to be like God to develop in his heart and this led him to rebel and to get Adam and Eve to join him in his rebellion. He wanted to be like the Most High God and have creatures worship and serve him. (Ezekiel 28:14,15,17) The way he got Adam and Eve to follow him was to tell them a lie. God, you will remember, had said that if the

13. (a) How did the Devil come to be? (b) Who told the truth about the results of eating the forbidden fruit, and how has the Devil tried to support what he told Eve?

10

first human pair ate of the forbidden fruit they would die, but the Devil through the serpent said: "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:4, 5) Who told the truth, God or the Devil? Did Adam really die? The Record says he did: "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died." (Genesis 5:5) However, Satan, in order to try to continue his original lie, brought forth the idea that when man dies he just appears to die, that it is just the body that dies, but something inside him, a soul or spirit, lives on, either being born again to some other human or into an animal, or going off into some spirit world. Is that true? What does happen to man at death?

14 When God said that Adam would die for disobedience he said nothing about just the body's dying and his soul's going on living somewhere else. He just said: 'You will SURELY die.' Note these Bible texts that show clearly that when a person dies he is completely dead and not alive somewhere else. "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." (Psalm 146:3,4) "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more

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

11

a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Ecclesiastes 9:5,10) "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." -Ezekiel 18:4.

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

16 Many people have been led to believe that sickness and disease are caused by the influence of the "spirits" of the dead, and these persons have gone to witch doctors, persons who claim that they can appease the "spirits." There are witches who claim that they can get in touch with the

dead and communicate messages to the living, or that they have supernatural powers by the help of the "spirits" of the dead. These beliefs are likewise based on the Devil's lie and he has caused these beliefs to spread

15. So, then, at death does a person's soul go direct to some invisible world, and on what are teachings of that kind based?

16. What have people been led to believe about so-called "spirits" of the dead and about witches, and what does the Bible have to say about the practice of witchcraft?

12

in order to make man believe that he does not die at death. The Bible specifically warns against anyone's practicing such things as witchcraft. "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee." -Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

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

THE RANSOM

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

17. So, when man dies, what about him? And hence what provision has God made for the dying human race?

18. What is a ransom? How did God provide one for mankind, and with what benefit to man exercising faith in it?

13

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

19 As we have already seen, sin and death entered into the world when Adam rebelled against God. Adam lost for himself and for his offspring perfect human life on a paradise earth! By means of the ransom Christ Jesus bought back this that was lost, namely, perfect human life with its rights and earthly prospects. God's law at Deuteronomy 19:21 was that like should go for like; hence, a perfect human life had to be sacrificed for the perfect human life that was lost. No man on earth who was a descendant of sinner Adam could provide this ransom, because each one was himself under condemnation of sin and death by inheritance from Adam. They did not have perfect human life to offer. So only God could provide the ransom, and he did this by

transferring the life of his only-begotten Son, who was with him in heaven, to the womb of Mary, a Jewish virgin. (Matthew 1: 23) So without the help of

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

14

an earthly father Jesus was miraculously born. In this way he did not inherit condemnation from Adam. This child, Jesus, grew up to become a perfect man, and, as such, he possessed the valuable thing, a perfect human life, which could provide a ransom.

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

21 Who are the ones that benefit from the ransom? The answer is: Only those that believe or exercise faith. John 3:36 says: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Adam was a willful sinner and was justly sentenced to death, and so he will not benefit by the ransom. Likewise, all other willful rebels against Jehovah will not receive the benefit of

20. Why was Jesus sacrificed in death, and how was he enabled to present the value of the ransom? Where and to whom?

21. Who are the ones that benefit from the ransom, and how does their faith come about?

15

this merciful arrangement. In order for men to be saved from death due to the effects of sin they must inform themselves of God's mercy through Christ Jesus and then have faith in this provision He has made. Such faith comes from a study of God's Word, which makes plain God's provision of the ransom. They must recognize that they are sinners and are under condemnation of death because of being descended from Adam. They appreciate their need for the ransom.

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

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

23 The word "heaven," when referring to the home of intelligent creatures, refers to the spirit realm. It is here that God dwells with his holy angels. The term "heavens" also refers to rulers higher and more powerful than man or to the invisible rule of the earth by spirit powers. Originally Satan, while he was still the "covering cherub" and before he sinned, had authority toward man on earth and was thus the invisible "heavens" or invisible ruling power directly over him. With the rebellion of

22. The providing of the ransom opened up what hope, to be realized where?

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

16

the covering cherub God purposed to set up a new heavenly rulership over the earth. It would be called the "kingdom of the heavens." (Matthew 3:2, NW) This heavenly kingdom was pictured by Zion, the capital of the nation of Israel, who were once God's chosen people. The heavenly kingdom, or Zion, would be made up of tried and tested creatures who would maintain their integrity down till death in following faithfully the footsteps of Christ Jesus. At Revelation chapters 7 and 14, the number of these is limited to 144,000, quite a small number when compared with earth's population. When Jesus was on earth he began the selection of those who would be associated with him in this heavenly kingdom. He compared them to sheep and said: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32) From the time of Jesus until now the selecting of the members of the heavenly kingdom has gone on, and today, after nineteen centuries of selecting, there is yet a small remnant of the 144,000 on earth.

24 Those that make up this kingdom of heaven class are "called" by means of Jehovah's Word and his spirit; that is, through Jehovah's Word they come to know this hope of service in the heavenly kingdom, and by means of his spirit operating toward them he makes them his spiritual sons and convinces them that this hope is for them. At Romans 8:16,17 we read: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit,

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

17

that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (See also John 3:3-5.) When the last members of the Kingdom class finish their earthly course faithful to death, then the heavenly kingdom of the 144,000 under Christ Jesus the King will be completed by their resurrection from the dead to life in heaven. It will rule over all other creatures in the heavens and all those who gain life on earth.

25 Those of this class who still remain on earth today in the flesh (the remnant) have the commission from God to preach the "good news of the kingdom." And how good this news about the Kingdom is! It is this heavenly kingdom that will crush out all rebellion and restore peace and righteousness in the universe. It will destroy Satan and all his agents. Under the righteous rule of the Kingdom the original purpose of the Creator will be carried out: namely, the populating of the earth with humans who will serve, praise and honor their loving God. All this will vindicate or clear the name, word and purpose of Jehovah God. It will show that he is supreme. Since it is the kingdom of heaven that will accomplish this, it means that the Kingdom is of greater importance than anything else and that the teaching about it is the most important doctrine in the Bible.

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

LIFE ON EARTH

26 Long ago the psalmist prophetically wrote: "The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever." (Psalm 37:11, 29) Jesus later quoted from this psalm, in Matthew 5:5, and thus confirmed this hope of everlasting life on earth as true. Some religious organizations hold out the prospect of either life in heaven or eternal torment in a hell-fire. As we have seen, the Bible does not support the idea of eternal torment and it does not limit the hope of future life in peace and happiness only to heaven. Under the heavenly kingdom (for which only a *limited* number are called) an *unlimited* number will receive the blessing of perfect human life on the earth. That is why Jesus taught his followers to pray to God: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will come to pass, as in heaven, also upon earth." -Matthew 6: 9, 10, NW.

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

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

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

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

JESUS' PRESENCE IN KINGDOM POWER

29 When Jesus said he would come again he did not mean he would return in the flesh visible to men on earth. He has given up that earthly life as a ransom and therefore cannot take such life back again. When he came to earth the first time in human form, that was a humiliation for him. (Hebrews 2:9) However, in his second presence he does not come as a human "lower than the angels," but he comes as a spirit creature in all his glory. (Matthew 25: 31) As such, his return in Kingdom power is invisible to man on the earth. Before he left the earth he had said to his disciples: "A little while, and the world seeth me no more." (John 14:19) Jesus has now been made the "express image"

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

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

20

of his Father and therefore dwells with his Father in a light which "no man hath seen, nor can see." (Hebrews 1:3; 1 Timothy 6:16) So Jesus' second coming or presence is not seen with the literal eyes, but with the eyes of understanding. -Ephesians 1:18.

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

31 That question arose in the minds of Jesus' apostles, for they asked: "Tell us, when shall these things be! and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3) In answer Jesus said: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in [various] places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." -Verses 7 and 8.

32 According to this, then, the great sign would commence with a world war. In the years 1914 to 1918 thirty nations were engaged in war with one another, and it was therefore called the First World War. It was accompanied by famines and pestilences in many places, and

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

31. How did Jesus' apostles frame their question on this, and what did Jesus say would be the beginning of sorrows?

32. How was this prediction of the "beginning of sorrows" fulfilled, and how did Jesus foretell the time of sorrows since then?

21

these things continued to bring woe and misery on earth after World War I ended. Indeed, more died from pestilence than were killed in the four years of the war. Also, since 1914 there have been reported more earthquakes than ever before in history, causing great destruction to both property and life. Yet Jesus said: "All these are the beginning of sorrows." And so, since World War I, the time of sorrows has continued and has included another world war even more terrible than the first. Today there is fear of yet another war using more terrible weapons of destruction. Famine still afflicts mankind, and earthquakes too. There is a feeling of insecurity on the part of all mankind as they wonder just what the future has in store for them. Jesus well described these conditions which are a part of the sign he prophesied. He said that there would be "upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." -Luke 21: 25,26.

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

34 Satan, who is Jehovah God's chief adversary, had, up until this time, been able to come among God's creatures in heaven. Satan would

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

22

not want the Kingdom to begin to rule, or "be born," as the symbolic language of Revelation chapter 12 describes it. Satan wanted the ruler-ship of the earth for himself; so, when the time came for Jehovah to command his Son, Christ Jesus, to reign, there was certain to be a fight between the newborn Kingdom and Satan. We read at Revelation 12:7-10: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were east out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is east down, which accused them before our God day and night."

35 Although this victory over Satan caused rejoicing in the heavens it did not remove Satan's influence over the earth. He was now confined to the earth, and therefore, knowing his end was drawing near, he would do all that he could to turn the inhabitants of the earth away from Jehovah. Verse 12 reads: "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." But our seeing these

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

23

conditions should not make us lose hope, for they are the sign that the long-promised Kingdom has been established in the heavens. It means that Satan's time is short, and soon he and all his agents will be destroyed at the final battle of Armageddon; so Jesus said: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." - Luke 21: 28.

36 There is another part of the sign we have not mentioned yet, and that is referred to at Matthew 24:14: "And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for the purpose of a witness to all the nations, and then the accomplished end will come." (NW) So while the world suffers woe and sorrow and is in fear for the future, there should, according to prophecy, be people going about in all the nations preaching, and they should be preaching "this good news of the kingdom." They should be telling the people of the Kingdom established. This part of the sign is also being fulfilled and you yourself have seen this. Has not someone come to you telling you about the Kingdom! And throughout the world in more than 150 lands and islands of the sea and in more than a hundred languages this good news about the established Kingdom is being preached by Jehovah's witnesses.

37 Because of their faithfulness in this Kingdom-preaching work Jehovah's witnesses have been bitterly persecuted in all lands. This too was foretold by Jesus to them: "And ye shall

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

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

be hated of all nations for my name's sake." -Matthew 24:9.

38 The purpose of this preaching work is that those who are of good will toward Jehovah and want to worship him so as to escape the destruction that will come upon Satan's world and then live forever in a new world of righteousness may be warned and take the right course. Those who would listen to the message and have faith in it Jesus likened to sheep. Those who reject the message and fight against it he likened to goats. The preaching about the Kingdom, then, is causing a division in the world: on the one hand, the sheep; and on the other, the goats. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." -Matthew 25: 31-33.

END OF THIS SYSTEM OF THINGS

39 Thus we see all the different parts of the sign Christ Jesus spoke of being fulfilled: World war, famines, pestilence, world-wide perplexity, woes on the earth, "this good news of the kingdom" being preached, the preachers of that good news being persecuted, and the people being divided into two classes. The fulfillment of this sign proves not only that Christ Jesus

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

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

is reigning from heaven, but also that the end of this "system of things" is at hand. (Matthew 24: 3, NW) This does not mean an end to our literal earth, for the Bible says: "The earth abideth for ever." (Ecclesiastes 1:4) What comes to an end is the wicked world over which Satan is the god, bringing destruction to him and his wicked demons and to all those who follow him upon the earth. (2 Corinthians 4:4) Thus the earth will be cleansed from all wickedness.

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

41 Have men been at all successful in removing wickedness and unrighteousness from the earth! Have they been able to bring unity and harmony between the nations so divided by language, race and religion? No, they have not. So, then, "this good news of the kingdom"

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

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

speaks of the only lasting remedy. "This good news" deals also with the end of this world and, for this reason, Jehovah's witnesses faithfully speak, not only of the blessings Jehovah has in store for those who love him and serve him, but also of his destructive judgments against those who oppose him and are wicked. The commission from the LORD God commands them to "preach good tidings unto the meek; ... to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn." -Isaiah 61:1, 2.

42 Yes, it is good news to know that shortly now wickedness, immorality, fighting, war, yes, and disease and sickness with the accompanying sorrow will all pass away forever. Speaking of the conditions that will prevail among those who turn to Jehovah God during this time of the end of this system of things, the Bible record reads: "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it." (Micah 4:3, 4) Not only will there be peace between man and man, but also between man and the animals. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down

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

together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." -Isaiah 11:6-9.

43 The righteous King Christ Jesus, the Son of the everlasting King Jehovah God, will have full sway and those then living on the earth will feel the benefit of his just and righteous rule. Hence the inspired psalmist prayed: "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations." -Psalm 72:1-5.

44 What a wonderful prospect to look forward to! Would you like to live in such a perfect world? You can do so if you show the sheeplike qualities of meekness and willingness to follow, and now do follow, the Right Shepherd, Christ Jesus, and get on Jehovah's side by putting faith in "this good news of the kingdom." With the prospect of new-world conditions in view the sheeplike ones can heed the words of Christ Jesus when he said, after discussing the sign

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

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

of his presence: "As these things start to occur raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near. Truly I say to you, This generation will by no means pass away until all things occur." (Luke 21: 28,32, NW) Yes, you can be one of the "sheep" living in this generation who will be delivered through the final battle of Armageddon into the cleansed earth beyond. What must one do to become one of the Lord Jesus' "other sheep" and gain his blessing? Let us look at the steps that the Bible shows we must take.

DEDICATION

45 Before we can do what God requires of us, we must come to know Him, we must have knowledge of his purposes and we must exercise faith in him and his Son, Christ Jesus. Faith is based upon knowledge, and the right knowledge is found in the Bible. Jehovah has seen to it in these days that the meek ones of the earth are being brought into contact with his Word, for he is having his witnesses go among the people preaching "this good news of the kingdom" and helping those of good will to study God's Word and thus gain the knowledge that will lead them to life. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."-Romans 10:17.

46 Faith means that, because of the Bible knowledge one has gained, he has a firm assurance that God exists and that He will reward those who earnestly seek him, and that the

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

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

Bible is true and is man's sure guide. Having faith also means acknowledging Jesus as one's Savior and Ransomer. Such faith causes one to make a change in his way of living. He turns away from following the wickedness of this world and serving his own selfish desires to doing God's will. Realizing that everything he has he owes to God and that the only way to please God is to serve Him, then he dedicates himself to do God's will. That means he agrees to do whatever God's Word tells him to do. Jesus said: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and follow me continually." -Matthew 16:24, NW.

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

48 What does baptism accomplish, and how should it be performed? Jesus was baptized by being completely immersed in the water of the Jordan River. So baptism today must be in like manner, by being immersed in water. This immersion does not cleanse the one being baptized from sin. That is not the purpose of the baptism of Christians. The going under the

47. How is public declaration of one's dedication made, as exemplified by Jesus and instructed by him?

48. What does baptism accomplish, and how should it be performed?

water symbolizes that the one being baptized has become dead to his old course of life. He has voluntarily given up doing his own will in order to do God's will. His being raised out of the water pictures his coming forth to the doing of God's will.

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

50 The apostle Paul, at Romans 12: 2, counsels us: "Quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and complete will of God." (NW) No longer, then, may we be like the people of this world who are filled with strife and jealousy and hatred, with its dishonesty and thieving, with its lying and murder, its uncleanness and immorality. Because of such

49. What must the dedicated and baptized person then do to be one whom Jehovah will want in his new world?

50. After what should we quit fashioning ourselves, and with what personality should we clothe ourselves? How?

31

things"the wrath of God is coming. In those very things you, too, once walked when you used to live in them. But now really put them all away from you, wrath, anger, injuriousness, abusive speech, and obscene talk out of your mouth. Do not be lying to one another. Strip off the old personality with its practices, and clothe yourselves with the new personality which through accurate knowledge is being renewed according to the image of the one who created it." - Colossians 3: 6-10, NW.

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

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

32

(Colossians 3:18-20, NW) Yes, children also must learn to live in harmony with the new world now, and the way they do so is by being obedient to their parents who have become Christians and are training them how to serve God.

CONCLUSION

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

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