

- Song 88 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Keep Training Your Conscience”:** (10 min.) [Play the video *Introduction to Romans.*] Ro 2:14, 15—Every person has a conscience (lvs 18 ¶6)

Ro 2:15—We must train our conscience for it to be a reliable guide (lvs 19-20 ¶8-9)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.) Ro 3:4—How do we “let God be found true”? (w08 6/15 30 ¶5)

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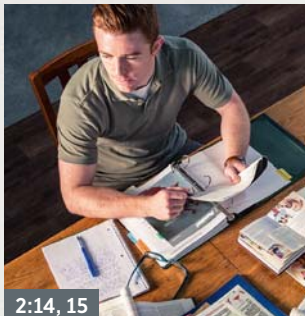
**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Conversational Manner*, and then discuss study 2 of the *Teaching* brochure.
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**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**


- Song 6
- **“Do You Perceive God’s Invisible Qualities?”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *The Wonders of Creation Reveal God’s Glory—Light and Color* (video category MOVIES).
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ROMANS 1-3 | Keep Training Your Conscience

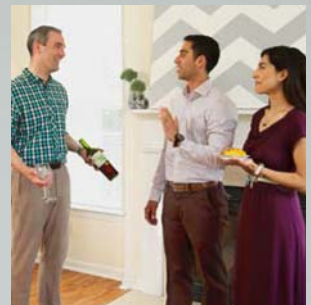


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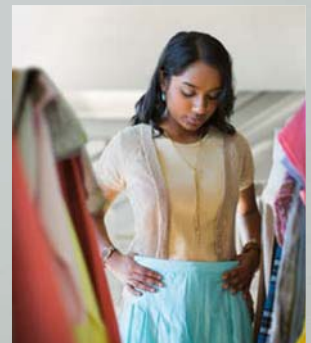
1. train it according to Bible principles
2. listen to it when it reminds us of those principles
3. pray for holy spirit to help us overcome the influence of our imperfect flesh.—Ro 9:1

 **What Bible principles should I consider . . .**

- when deciding whether or not to drink alcoholic beverages?



- when choosing my dress and grooming?



# *Make Me Know Your Ways*

(Psalm 25:4)

1. We're gathered together, Jehovah our God,  
Accepting your warm invitation.  
Your Word is a lamp that lights up our pathway,  
The source of divine education.

*(CHORUS)*

*Teach me your ways, and make me understand;  
Incline my ear to hear your wise command.  
Cause me to walk in ways of truth and right,  
And make your law my principal delight.*

2. Unreachably high is your wisdom, O God;  
Your judgments we find reassuring.  
Your Word is a source of unending wonder;  
Your sayings of truth are enduring.

*(Chorus)*

## Romans 1-3

**1** Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus and called to be an apostle, set apart for God's good news, **2** which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, **3** concerning his Son, who came to be from the offspring of David according to the flesh, **4** but who with power was declared God's Son according to the spirit of holiness by means of resurrection from the dead—yes, Jesus Christ our Lord. **5** Through him we received undeserved kindness and an apostleship with a view to obedience by faith among all the nations respecting his name, **6** among which nations you also have been called to belong to Jesus Christ— **7** to all those who are in Rome as God's beloved ones, called to be holy ones:

May you have undeserved kindness and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**8** First of all, I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ concerning all of you, because your faith is talked about throughout the whole world. **9** For God, to whom I render sacred service with my spirit in connection with the good news about his Son, is my witness of how without ceasing I always mention you in my prayers, **10** begging that if at all possible I may now at last succeed in coming to you by God's will. **11** For I am longing to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift to you for you to be made firm; **12** or, rather, that we may have an interchange of encouragement by one another's faith, both yours and mine.

**13** But I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that many times I have intended to come to you—but I have been prevented until now—in order that I might acquire some fruitage also among you just as among the rest of the nations. **14** Both to Greeks and to foreigners, both to wise and to senseless ones, I am a debtor; **15** so I am eager to declare the good news also to you there in Rome. **16** For I am not ashamed of the good news; it is, in fact, God's

power for salvation to everyone having faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it God's righteousness is being revealed by faith and for faith, just as it is written: "But the righteous one will live by reason of faith."

<sup>18</sup> For God's wrath is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who are suppressing the truth in an unrighteous way, <sup>19</sup> because what may be known about God is clearly evident among them, for God made it clear to them.

<sup>20</sup> For his invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship, so that they are inexcusable. <sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God nor did they thank him, but they became empty-headed in their reasonings and their senseless hearts became darkened.

<sup>22</sup> Although claiming they were wise, they became foolish <sup>23</sup> and turned the glory of the incorruptible God into something like the image of corruptible man and birds and four-footed creatures and reptiles.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore, God, in keeping with the desires of their hearts, gave them up to uncleanness, so that their bodies might be dishonored among them. <sup>25</sup> They exchanged the truth of God for the lie and venerated and rendered sacred service to the creation rather than the Creator, who is praised forever. Amen. <sup>26</sup> That is why God gave them over to uncontrolled sexual passion, for their females changed the natural use of themselves into one contrary to nature; <sup>27</sup> likewise also the males left the natural use of the female and became violently inflamed in their lust toward one another, males with males, working what is obscene and receiving in themselves the full penalty, which was due for their error.

<sup>28</sup> Just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to a disapproved mental state, to do the things not fitting. <sup>29</sup> And they were filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed,

and badness, being full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice, being whisperers, <sup>30</sup> backbiters, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, schemers of what is harmful, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> without understanding, false to agreements, having no natural affection, and merciless. <sup>32</sup> Although these know full well the righteous decree of God—that those practicing such things are deserving of death—they not only keep on doing them but also approve of those practicing them.

**2** Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are, if you judge; for when you judge another, you condemn yourself, because you who judge practice the same things. <sup>2</sup> Now we know that God's judgment is in harmony with truth, against those who practice such things.

<sup>3</sup> But do you suppose, O man, that while you judge those who practice such things and yet you do them, you will escape the judgment of God? <sup>4</sup> Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, because you do not know that God in his kindness is trying to lead you to repentance? <sup>5</sup> But according to your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and of the revealing of God's righteous judgment. <sup>6</sup> And he will pay back to each one according to his works: <sup>7</sup> everlasting life to those who are seeking glory and honor and incorruptibleness by endurance in work that is good; <sup>8</sup> however, for those who are contentious and who disobey the truth but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and anger. <sup>9</sup> There will be tribulation and distress on every person who works what is harmful, on the Jew first and also on the Greek; <sup>10</sup> but glory and honor and peace for everyone who works what is good, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. <sup>11</sup> For there is no partiality with God.

<sup>12</sup> For all those who sinned without law will also perish without law; but all those who sinned under law will be judged by law. <sup>13</sup> For

the hearers of law are not the ones righteous before God, but the doers of law will be declared righteous. <sup>14</sup> For when people of the nations, who do not have law, do by nature the things of the law, these people, although not having law, are a law to themselves.

<sup>15</sup> They are the very ones who demonstrate the matter of the law to be written in their hearts, while their conscience is bearing witness with them, and by their own thoughts they are being accused or even excused. <sup>16</sup> This will take place in the day when God through Christ Jesus judges the secret things of mankind, according to the good news I declare.

<sup>17</sup> If, now, you are a Jew in name and rely on law and take pride in God, <sup>18</sup> and you know his will and approve of things that are excellent because you are instructed out of the Law, <sup>19</sup> and you are convinced that you are a guide of the blind, a light for those in darkness, <sup>20</sup> a corrector of the unreasonable ones, a teacher of young children, and having the framework of the knowledge and of the truth in the Law— <sup>21</sup> do you, however, the one teaching someone else, not teach yourself? You, the one preaching, “Do not steal,” do you steal? <sup>22</sup> You, the one saying, “Do not commit adultery,” do you commit adultery? You, the one abhorring idols, do you rob temples? <sup>23</sup> You who take pride in law, do you dishonor God by your transgressing of the Law? <sup>24</sup> For “the name of God is being blasphemed among the nations because of you,” just as it is written.

<sup>25</sup> Circumcision is, in fact, of benefit only if you practice law; but if you are a transgressor of law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. <sup>26</sup> If, therefore, an uncircumcised person keeps the righteous requirements of the Law, his uncircumcision will be counted as circumcision, will it not? <sup>27</sup> And the physically uncircumcised person will, by carrying out the Law, judge you who are a transgressor of law despite having its written code and circumcision. <sup>28</sup> For he is not a Jew who is one on the outside, nor

is circumcision something on the outside, on the flesh. <sup>29</sup> But he is a Jew who is one on the inside, and his circumcision is that of the heart by spirit and not by a written code. That person's praise comes from God, not from people.

**3** What, then, is the advantage of the Jew, or what is the benefit of circumcision? <sup>2</sup> A great deal in every way. First of all, that they were entrusted with the sacred pronouncements of God. <sup>3</sup> What, then, is the case? If some lacked faith, will their lack of faith invalidate the faithfulness of God? <sup>4</sup> Certainly not! But let God be found true, even if every man be found a liar, just as it is written: "That you might be proved righteous in your words and might win when you are being judged." <sup>5</sup> However, if our unrighteousness highlights God's righteousness, what are we to say? God is not unjust when he expresses his wrath, is he? (I am speaking in human terms.) <sup>6</sup> By no means! How, otherwise, will God judge the world?

<sup>7</sup> But if by my lie the truth of God has been made more prominent to his glory, why am I also being judged as a sinner? <sup>8</sup> And why not say, just as some men falsely claim that we say, "Let us do bad things that good things may come"? The judgment against those men is in harmony with justice.

<sup>9</sup> What then? Are we in a better position? Not at all! For above we have made the charge that Jews as well as Greeks are all under sin; <sup>10</sup> just as it is written: "There is not a righteous man, not even one; <sup>11</sup> there is no one who has any insight; there is no one who searches for God. <sup>12</sup> All men have turned aside, all of them have become worthless; there is no one who shows kindness, not so much as one." <sup>13</sup> "Their throat is an open grave; they have deceived with their tongues." "Venom of asps is behind their lips." <sup>14</sup> "And their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." <sup>15</sup> "Their feet are swift to shed blood." <sup>16</sup> "Ruin and misery are in their ways,

<sup>17</sup> and they have not known the way of peace.” <sup>18</sup> “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

<sup>19</sup> Now we know that all the things the Law says, it addresses to those under the Law, so that every mouth may be silenced and all the world may become accountable to God for punishment.

<sup>20</sup> Therefore, no one will be declared righteous before him by works of law, for by law comes the accurate knowledge of sin.

<sup>21</sup> But now apart from law God’s righteousness has been revealed, as the Law and the Prophets bear witness, <sup>22</sup> yes, God’s righteousness through the faith in Jesus Christ, for all those having faith. For there is no distinction. <sup>23</sup> For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and it is as a free gift that they are being declared righteous by his undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup> God presented him as an offering for propitiation through faith in his blood. This was to demonstrate his own righteousness, because God in his forbearance was forgiving the sins that occurred in the past. <sup>26</sup> This was to demonstrate his own righteousness in this present season, so that he might be righteous even when declaring righteous the man who has faith in Jesus.

<sup>27</sup> Where, then, is the boasting? There is no place for it. Through what law? That of works? No indeed, but through the law of faith.

<sup>28</sup> For we consider that a man is declared righteous by faith apart from works of law. <sup>29</sup> Or is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also the God of people of the nations? Yes, also of people of the nations. <sup>30</sup> Since God is one, he will declare circumcised people righteous as a result of faith and uncircumcised people righteous by means of their faith. <sup>31</sup> Do we, then, abolish law by means of our faith? Not at all! On the contrary, we uphold law.



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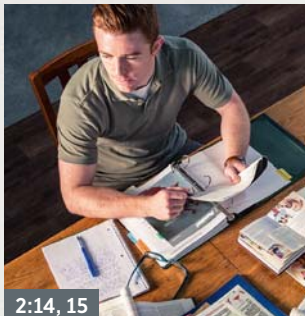
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ROMANS 1-3 | Keep Training Your Conscience

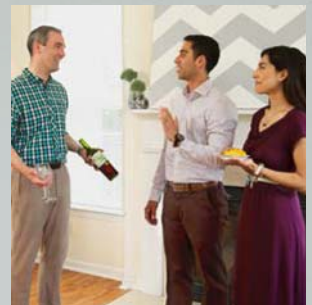


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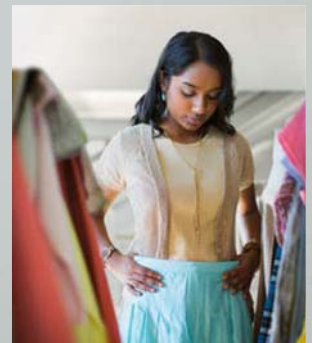
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- when deciding whether or not to drink alcoholic beverages?



- when choosing my dress and grooming?



**February 4-10**

**Treasures From God's Word**

**“Keep Training Your Conscience”:** (10 minutes)

[Play the video *Introduction to Romans*.]

Romans 2:14, 15—Every person has a conscience

**Romans 2:14, 15:** For when people of the nations, who do not have law, do by nature the things of the law, these people, although not having law, are a law to themselves. They are the very ones who demonstrate the matter of the law to be written in their hearts, while their conscience is bearing witness with them, and by their own thoughts they are being accused or even excused.

***Ivs 18* paragraph 6**

Even people who do not know Jehovah usually realize that there are things that are right and things that are wrong. The Bible says: “By their own thoughts they are being accused or even excused.” (Romans 2:14, 15) For example, most people know that it is wrong to murder or to steal. Though they may not realize it, they are actually listening to their conscience, the sense of right and wrong that Jehovah put inside of them. They are also following God's principles, or the basic truths Jehovah has provided to help us to make good choices in life.

Romans 2:15—We must train our conscience for it to be a reliable guide

**Romans 2:15:** They are the very ones who demonstrate the matter of the law to be written in their hearts, while their conscience is

bearing witness with them, and by their own thoughts they are being accused or even excused.

### ***Ivs 19-20 paragraphs 8-9***

8 Some people think that listening to their conscience simply means following their feelings. They think that they can do whatever they want as long as they feel good about it. But our feelings are imperfect, and they can mislead us. Our feelings can be so powerful that they affect our conscience. The Bible says: “The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate. Who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9) So we may begin to think that something is right even though it is wrong. For example, before Paul became a Christian, he viciously persecuted God’s people and believed that what he was doing was right. In his opinion, he had a good conscience. But he later said: “The one who examines me is Jehovah.” (1 Corinthians 4:4; Acts 23:1; 2 Timothy 1:3) When Paul learned how Jehovah felt about what he was doing, he realized that he needed to change. Clearly, before we do something, we need to ask ourselves, ‘What does Jehovah want me to do?’

9 When you love someone, you don’t want to displease him or her. Because we love Jehovah, we don’t want to do anything that will displease him. Our fear of displeasing Jehovah needs to be very strong. We see this from Nehemiah’s example. He refused to use his position as governor to get rich. Why? He explained that it was “because of the fear of God.” (Nehemiah 5:15) Nehemiah did not want to do anything that would displease Jehovah. Like Nehemiah, we too are afraid of displeasing Jehovah by doing something wrong. We can learn what pleases Jehovah by reading the Bible.— See Endnote 6.

## Digging for Spiritual Gems

Romans 3:4—How do we “let God be found true”?

**Romans 3:4:** Certainly not! But let God be found true, even if every man be found a liar, just as it is written: “That you might be proved righteous in your words and might win when you are being judged.”

### **w08 6/15 30 paragraph 5**

When man’s word conflicts with what God says in his Word, we “let God be found true” by trusting in the message of the Bible and acting in harmony with God’s will. By having a zealous share in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work, we can help others find God to be true.

Romans 3:24, 25—How could “the ransom paid by Christ Jesus” cover “the sins that occurred in the past”?

**Romans 3:24, 25:** and it is as a free gift that they are being declared righteous by his undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus. God presented him as an offering for propitiation through faith in his blood. This was to demonstrate his own righteousness, because God in his forbearance was forgiving the sins that occurred in the past.

### **w08 6/15 29 paragraph 6**

How could “the ransom paid by Christ Jesus” cover “the sins that occurred in the past” before it was paid? The first Messianic prophecy, recorded at Genesis 3:15, found fulfillment in 33 C.E. when Jesus was put to death on a torture stake. (Galatians 3:13, 16) The moment Jehovah uttered that prophecy, however, the ransom price was as good as paid from his viewpoint, for nothing can prevent God from fulfilling what he purposes. So on the basis

of the future sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Jehovah could forgive the sins of descendants of Adam who exercised faith in that promise. The ransom also makes possible a resurrection of those of pre-Christian times.—Acts 24:15.

What has this week's Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week's Bible reading?

**Bible Reading:** (4 minutes or less) Romans 1:1-17 (*th* study 10)

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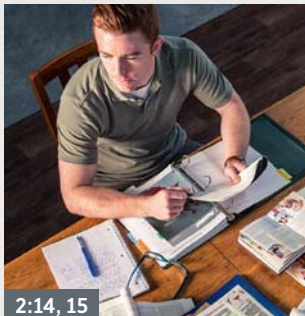
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ROMANS 1-3 | Keep Training Your Conscience



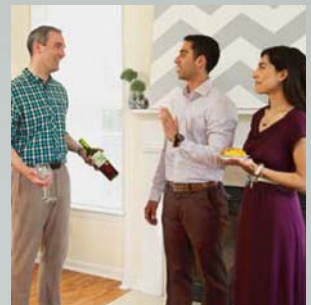
2:14, 15

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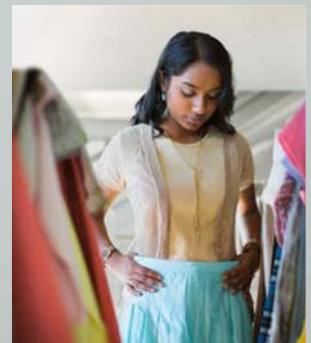
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 **What Bible principles should I consider . . .**

- when deciding whether or not to drink alcoholic beverages?



- when choosing my dress and grooming?



## Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

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Discussion. Play the video *Conversational Manner*, and then discuss study 2 of the *Teaching* brochure.

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### Find Contentment by Applying Bible Principles

You have no doubt seen a cat curled up and purring—a picture of obvious contentment. How fine it would be to curl up like him and enjoy the same contentment! For many, however, contentment is hard to find, and it is fleeting. Why is this so?

Because we often blunder in our imperfection, and we must endure the shortcomings of others. Furthermore, we are living in the time period that the Bible calls “the last days,” characterized by “critical times hard to deal with.” (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Even if we cherish some fond memories of contentment in childhood, most of us now feel the full impact of these “critical times.” Is it possible to find contentment in this day and age?

Notice that the Scriptures say that these critical times would be, not *impossible*, but *hard* to deal with. We can deal with them by applying Bible principles. We may not always solve our problems, but we will find a measure of contentment. Let us examine three such principles.

### Maintain a Realistic View

To find contentment, we must maintain a realistic view of our own limitations and those of others. In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul points out: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory

of God.” (Romans 3:23) Many facets of Jehovah’s glory lie far beyond our comprehension. One example is the simple fact stated at Genesis 1:31: “God saw everything he had made and, look! it was very good.” Whenever Jehovah chooses to look back on what he has done, he can always say that “it was very good.” No human can always claim that. Acknowledging our limitations is the first step toward gaining contentment. However, there is more to it. We need to understand and accept Jehovah’s view of the matter.

The Greek word translated “sin” comes from a root that means “to miss the mark.” (Romans 3:9, footnote) To illustrate: Envision someone who is hoping to win a prize by hitting a target with an arrow. He has three arrows at his disposal. He shoots the first one and misses by a yard. He aims better with the second arrow but still misses by a foot [30 centimeters]. With full concentration he lets the last arrow go and misses by only an inch [2 centimeters]. It was so close, but a miss is a miss.

We are all like that disappointed archer. Sometimes we seem to “miss the mark” by much. Other times we come close but still miss the mark. We are frustrated because we tried so hard, but it was still not good enough. Now, let us go back to the archer.

He is slowly turning away, dejected because he really wanted that prize. Suddenly, the man in charge calls him back and hands him a prize, saying: “I want to give you this because I like you, and I saw how hard you tried.” The archer is elated!

Elated! Everyone who receives from God “the gift” of everlasting life in perfection will feel this way. (Romans 6:23) Thereafter, everything they do will be good—they will never miss the mark again. They will be perfectly content. In the meantime, if we keep this view in mind, we will feel better about ourselves and those around us.



# 6      *The Heavens Declare God's Glory*

(Psalm 19)

1. The heavens tell the glory of Jehovah.  
    The work of his own hand,  
        we see in skies above.  
And each new day brings to him rightful praise.  
    The starlit night proclaims his might,  
        His wisdom, and his love.
2. Jehovah's law is perfect, life-restoring,  
    And his reminders guide  
        the steps of old and young.  
His rulings prove to be true, right, and just.  
    His word is sure, his law so pure,  
        So sweet upon the tongue.
3. The fear of God is pure and lasts forever.  
    The worth of his commands  
        exceeds the finest gold.  
His orders lead and preserve all his own.  
    His honor, fame, and holy name,  
        We loyally uphold.

- Song 88 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Keep Training Your Conscience”:** (10 min.) [Play the video *Introduction to Romans.*] Ro 2:14, 15—Every person has a conscience (lvs 18 ¶6)  
Ro 2:15—We must train our conscience for it to be a reliable guide (lvs 19-20 ¶8-9)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.) Ro 3:4—How do we “let God be found true”? (w08 6/15 30 ¶5)  
  
Ro 3:24, 25—How could “the ransom paid by Christ Jesus” cover “the sins that occurred in the past”? (w08 6/15 29 ¶6)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ro 1:1-17 (10)

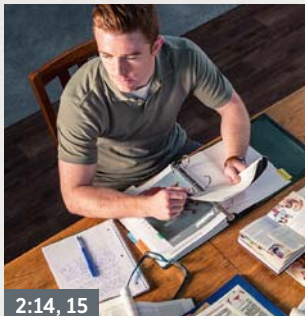
**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Conversational Manner*, and then discuss study 2 of the *Teaching* brochure.
- **Talk:** (5 min. or less) w06 6/1 12-13—Theme: Maintain a Realistic View of Your Limitations and Those of Others. (7)

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**


- Song 6
- **“Do You Perceive God’s Invisible Qualities?”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *The Wonders of Creation Reveal God’s Glory—Light and Color* (video category MOVIES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 53
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 142 and Prayer

ROMANS 1-3 | Keep Training Your Conscience

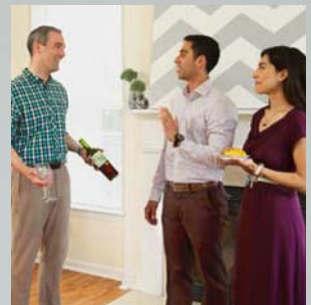


Our conscience will serve us well if we

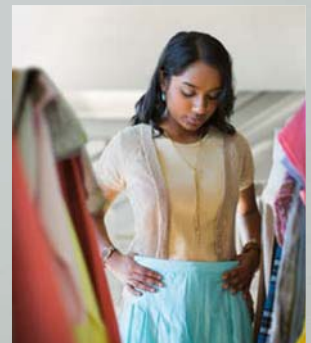
1. train it according to Bible principles
2. listen to it when it reminds us of those principles
3. pray for holy spirit to help us overcome the influence of our imperfect flesh.—Ro 9:1

 What Bible principles should I consider . . .

- when deciding whether or not to drink alcoholic beverages?



- when choosing my dress and grooming?



## The Wonders of Creation Reveal God's Glory

### Extra Features

#### Light and Color

Each artist's work is a reflection of the individual—a personal expression of creative skill and imagination.

But are such expressions limited to human works of art? Or are they also displayed in the natural world?

We live in a world rich in spectacular colors. Everywhere we look, different shades and hues captivate our eyes. Some are subtle variations. Others are sharp contrasts. Together, they draw our attention to the striking beauty that exists all around us in creation.

But where do all these colors come from? The answer has to do with the nature of light and how it interacts with different surfaces.

Light usually appears white to our eyes. However, white light can actually be separated into all the different colors of the visible spectrum, each color corresponding to a different wavelength. Most objects contain chemical substances called pigments that absorb certain wavelengths and reflect others. What is reflected back to the eye by each object appears as the wonderful variety of colors that we see.

However, among the most exquisite colors displayed in nature are those that come from a phenomenon known as iridescence. These brilliant colors can vary, depending on the angle of your view. How are these shimmering colors produced? In most cases, iridescence is caused, not by chemical pigments, but by precise structural patterns within the surface of an object. For example, the wings of Morpho butterflies are covered in tiny semitransparent scales. On each scale, we find layers of microscopic, evenly spaced ridges, which, in turn, have still smaller ridges on their sides. The distance between these tiny ridges is actually smaller than a wavelength of light. They break up the light waves and create an interference pattern. As a result, some colors are canceled out and others are intensified. These intensified light waves are reflected back to our eyes as a dazzling blue. Yes, these brilliant “works of art” are the result of ingenious and intricate design.

Spectacular colors can be found not only in objects around us but above us as well.

## The Wonders of Creation Reveal God's Glory

As the sun goes down, magnificent sunsets paint the sky with breathtaking colors. What is behind this artistry in the sky? As sunlight travels to the earth, the light strikes air molecules and dust particles and is diffused, or scattered. The extent to which a light wave is scattered, however, depends on its wavelength. Blue light waves have a shorter wavelength and are widely scattered throughout the atmosphere. That's why we see a blue sky when the sun is well above the horizon on a clear day. However, when the sun is near the horizon, the light must travel through more of the atmosphere to reach our eyes. Blue light, with its shorter wavelength, is scattered before it ever reaches us. On the other hand, the longer red and orange light waves can travel farther through the atmosphere and adorn the sky with the golden and crimson colors of the sunset.

What a rich diversity of colors have been used to “paint” our earthly home.

When we take time to observe their beauty, we are drawn closer to Jehovah God, the greatest Artist. For just as each artist's work is a reflection of the individual, so too the beautiful colors Jehovah has chosen for each of his creations are daily reminders of his deep love for us. Yes, “Everything he has made pretty in its time.”—Ec 3:11

## Do You Perceive God’s Invisible Qualities?

When you look at a colorful flower, a starry sky, or a thundering water-fall, do you see the handiwork of the Creator? The creation around us clearly reveals Jehovah’s invisible qualities. (Ro 1:20) By pausing to reflect on what we see with our eyes, we are able to perceive God’s power, love, wisdom, and justice, as well as his generosity.—Ps 104:24.

What are some of Jehovah’s creative works that you notice each day? Even if you live in a city, you may see birds or trees. Observing intently Jehovah’s creation can help us to reduce anxiety, put our problems in proper perspective, and increase our faith in Jehovah’s ability to care for us throughout eternity. (Mt 6:25-32) If you have children, help them to perceive Jehovah’s matchless qualities. As we grow in appreciation for the creation around us, we will draw closer to the Creator.—Ps 8:3, 4.

**WATCH THE VIDEO *THE WONDERS OF CREATION REVEAL GOD’S GLORY—LIGHT AND COLOR*, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

- How do pigments enable us to see colors?

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- What causes iridescence?

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- Why do we see different colors in the sky?

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- What striking colors in creation have you seen near your home?

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- Why should we take time to observe intently the natural world?

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**What do light and color reveal about Jehovah’s qualities?**

## A RULER WHO CAN CONTROL THE ELEMENTS

MATTHEW 14:22-36    MARK 6:45-56    JOHN 6:14-25

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- PEOPLE WANT TO MAKE JESUS KING
  - JESUS WALKS ON WATER, CALMS THE WIND
- 

Jesus' miraculous ability to feed thousands has a strong impact on the people. They conclude that "this really is the Prophet who was to come into the world," the Messiah, and that he certainly would make a desirable ruler. (John 6:14; Deuteronomy 18:18) So the people plan to seize Jesus and make him king.

Jesus, however, realizes what the people are planning. He dismisses the crowds and instructs his disciples to get back in their boat. Their route and destination? They are to head toward Bethsaida and then on to Capernaum. As for Jesus himself, he withdraws to the mountain to pray alone that night.

In the light of the moon shortly before dawn, Jesus observes the boat from a distance. The waves of the sea are being whipped up by a strong wind, and





the apostles are ‘struggling to row, for the wind is against them.’ (Mark 6:48) Jesus descends from the mountain and begins walking over the waves toward them. By now “they had rowed about three or four miles.” (John 6:19) The disciples observe Jesus seeming to pass by them, and they cry out in fear: “It is an apparition!”—Mark 6:49.

Jesus comfortingly responds: “Take courage! It is I; do not be afraid.” But Peter says: “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you over the waters.” Jesus answers: “Come!” At that, Peter gets out of the boat and actually walks on water toward Jesus. But when he looks at the windstorm, Peter becomes afraid and starts to sink. He cries out: “Lord, save me!” Stretching out his hand, Jesus catches hold of Peter and says: “You with little faith, why did you give way to doubt?”—Matthew 14:27-31.

Peter and Jesus get into the boat, and the wind abates. The disciples are amazed, but should they be? If they had grasped “the meaning of the loaves,” the miracle Jesus performed a few hours earlier when he fed thousands, it should not have been amazing that he could walk on water and calm the wind. Now they



react by doing obeisance to him, saying: “You really are God’s Son.”—Mark 6:52; Matthew 14:33.

Soon they reach the beautiful, fruitful plain of Gennesaret, south of Capernaum. They anchor the boat and then come ashore. The people recognize Jesus, and together with others from the surrounding country, they bring the sick to him. When these just touch the fringe of Jesus’ outer garment, they are made completely well.

Meanwhile, the crowd that had witnessed the miraculous feeding of the thousands discover that Jesus has left. So when little boats from Tiberias arrive, the people get aboard and sail to Capernaum to find Jesus. When they do, they ask: “Rabbi, when did you get here?” (John 6:25) With good reason, Jesus rebukes them, as we will see.

- ◇ After Jesus feeds the thousands, what do the people want to do to him?
- ◇ Why should the disciples not be amazed that Jesus can walk on water and calm the wind?
- ◇ What happens after Jesus reaches the shore near Capernaum?

# 142 *Holding Fast to Our Hope*

(Hebrews 6:18, 19)

1. Mankind has stumbled for centuries in darkness.  
Vain is their quest as they try to catch the wind.  
Man's tragic flaw is revealed in its starkness;  
None can they save, for they all have sinned.

*(CHORUS)*

*Sing with good cheer, for God's Kingdom is here!  
His Son's mighty reign brings us freedom from fear.  
Through him, at last, evil soon will be past;  
This hope, like an anchor, is holding us fast.*

2. "God's day is near!" rings the Kingdom proclamation;  
Men will no longer cry out to God: "How long?"  
Soon he will free all his groaning creation.  
Praise God Almighty, and join our song.

*(Chorus)*

DECEMBER 2018

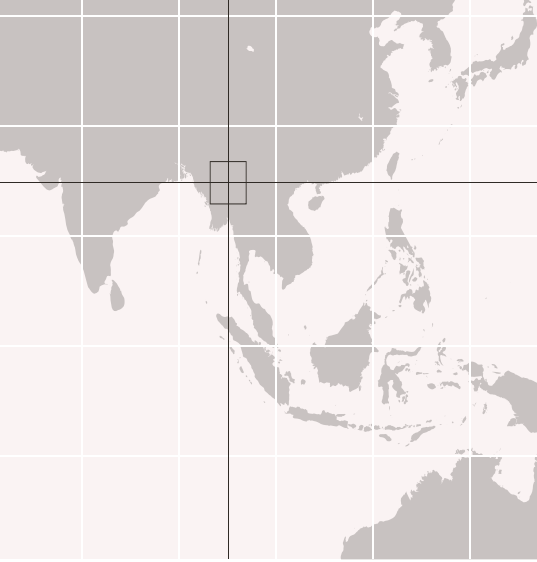
THE **WATCHTOWER**  
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
FEBRUARY 4–MARCH 3, 2019

LARGE  
PRINT  
EDITION





COVER IMAGE:

# MYANMAR

Two sisters find many with whom they can share the good news at a market in Taunggyi

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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### **4 WEEK OF FEBRUARY 4-10**

#### **“See You in Paradise!”**

True Christians fervently look forward to living in Paradise. This article discusses why we have a solid Scriptural basis for that hope and how the promise that Jesus made about Paradise is to be understood.

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### **16 WEEK OF FEBRUARY 11-17**

#### **Honor “What God Has Yoked Together”**

This article will present what the Bible says about honorable marriage. How can we show that we honor marriage? And how can we uphold what the Bible says about divorce and separation?

# 145      *God's Promise of Paradise*

(Luke 23:43)

1. A paradise our God has promised,  
    By means of Christ's Millennial Reign,  
When he'll blot out all sin and error,  
    Removing death and tears and pain.

*(CHORUS)*

*A paradise, the earth will be.  
With eyes of faith, this we can see.  
This promise Christ will soon fulfill,  
For he delights to do God's will.*

2. Soon here on earth, as God has purposed,  
    His Son will cause the dead to rise.  
Then it will be as Jesus promised:  
    'You'll be with me in Paradise.'

*(Chorus)*

3. The Paradise, our Lord has promised,  
    And he is now our reigning King.  
We daily thank our loving Father,  
    And from our hearts, his praises sing.

*(Chorus)*



**SONGS:**  
145, 139

**HOW WOULD YOU  
ANSWER?**

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How did God's dealings with Abraham suggest a future paradise?

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Regarding prophecies in Isaiah, what suggests that there will yet be a greater fulfillment?

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What indicates that Jesus and the criminal next to him did not go to Paradise on the day that they died?

## “See You in Paradise!”

*“You will be with me in Paradise.”*

—LUKE 23:43.

**IT WAS** a very emotional scene. As foreign delegates left the stadium after a convention in Seoul, Korea, local Witnesses crowded around. Many of them waved, calling out, “See you in Paradise!” What paradise do you think they meant?

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**1, 2.** What are some differing ideas about paradise?



<sup>2</sup> Paradise means different things to different people. Some say that paradise is a fantasy. Others say that paradise is wherever they find joy and satisfaction. A starving man sitting at a banquet might feel that he is in paradise. On seeing a glen full of wildflowers, a 19th-century visitor cried out, “Oh, what a paradise!” That site is still named Paradise, though it receives over 50 feet (15 m) of snow yearly. What does Paradise mean to you? Do you hope for it?

<sup>3</sup> The Bible speaks of both a paradise that once existed and a paradise still ahead. The idea of Paradise arises early in the Bible. In the Catholic *Douay Version*, which was translated from Latin, Genesis 2:8 reads: “The Lord God had planted a *paradise of pleasure* from the beginning: wherein he placed [Adam] whom he had formed.” (Italics ours.) The Hebrew text speaks of the garden of Eden. Eden means “Pleasure,” and that garden was indeed pleasant. There was ample food, beautiful scenery, and delightful interaction with many animals.—Gen. 1:29-31.

<sup>4</sup> *Pa·ra’dei·sos* is the Greek term that translates the Hebrew word for “garden.” The *Cyclopaedia* by

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3. How does the Bible get us thinking about a paradise?

4. Why can we refer to the garden of Eden as a paradise?

M'Clintock and Strong says about *pa-ra'dei-sos*: “A wide, open park, enclosed against injury, yet with its natural beauty unspoiled, with stately forest-trees, many of them bearing fruit, watered by clear streams, on whose banks roved large herds of antelopes or sheep—this was the scenery which connected itself in the mind of the Greek traveller.” —Compare Genesis 2:15, 16.

<sup>5</sup> God put Adam and Eve in such a paradise, but they did not remain in it. Why? They disqualified themselves by disobeying God. Thus, Paradise was lost for them and their offspring. (Gen. 3:23, 24) Though without human occupants, that garden apparently remained until the Deluge of Noah's day.

<sup>6</sup> Some may wonder, ‘Will any man, woman, or child ever be able to enjoy Paradise on earth?’ What do the facts show? If you hope to live with your loved ones in Paradise, do you have a valid basis for your hope? Could you explain why Paradise is sure to come?

## INDICATIONS OF PARADISE TO COME

<sup>7</sup> The logical place to find answers is in the book

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5, 6. How was Paradise lost, leading to what question?

7, 8. (a) God made what promise to Abraham? (b) God's promise might have led Abraham to think of what?



inspired by the Creator of the original Paradise. Consider what God told his friend Abraham. God said that he would multiply Abraham's offspring "like the grains of sand on the seashore." And Jehovah made this meaningful promise: "By means of your offspring *all nations of the earth* will obtain a blessing for themselves because you have listened to my voice." (Gen. 22:17, 18) God repeated that basic promise to Abraham's son and grandson.—Read Genesis 26:4; 28:14.

<sup>8</sup> There is no indication in the Bible that Abraham thought that humans would get a final reward in a heavenly paradise. So when God spoke of "all nations of the earth" as being blessed, Abraham would reasonably think of blessings *on earth*. The promise was from God, so it suggested better conditions for "all nations of the earth." Did further developments among God's people support such thinking?

<sup>9</sup> David, one of Abraham's descendants, pointed to a future time when "evil men" and "wrongdoers" would pass away. The result? "The wicked will be no more." (Ps. 37:1, 2, 10) Instead, "the meek will

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9, 10. What later promises provided a basis for expecting coming blessings?

possess the earth, and they will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.” David was also inspired to predict: “The righteous will possess the earth, and *they will live forever* on it.” (Ps. 37:11, 29; 2 Sam. 23:2) What effect do you think those assurances had on people who wanted to do God’s will? They would have a basis for expecting that if only righteous people were living on earth, in time a paradise like the garden of Eden would be restored.

<sup>10</sup> Over time, most Israelites claiming to serve Jehovah turned their backs on him and on true worship. So God let the Babylonians conquer his people, ruin their land, and carry many of them into exile. (2 Chron. 36:15-21; Jer. 4:22-27) Still, God’s prophets foretold that after 70 years, his people would return to their homeland. Those prophecies were fulfilled. But they also have meaning for us. As we consider some of them, bear in mind our focus—a coming paradise on earth.

<sup>11</sup> **Read Isaiah 11:6-9.** God foretold through Isaiah that after His people returned to their homeland, they would not have to struggle against harsh, dangerous elements; nor would they need to fear attacks from animals or beastlike men. Young and

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11. Isaiah 11:6-9 had what fulfillment, but what question remains?

old would be safe. Does that not bring to your mind conditions such as those God provided in the garden of Eden? (Isa. 51:3) That prophecy through Isaiah also said that the *whole earth*—not just the nation of Israel—would “be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.” When will that happen?

<sup>12</sup> **Read Isaiah 35:5-10.** Isaiah further emphasized that the returnees would not be threatened by animals or humans. Their land would produce abundant fruit, made possible by an ample supply of water, even as the garden of Eden was well-watered. (Gen. 2:10-14; Jer. 31:12) Would that be the only fulfillment? There is no evidence that those returning from exile were miraculously cured. For example, the blind did not regain their sight. So God was indicating that literal healings would yet occur.

<sup>13</sup> **Read Isaiah 65:21-23.** The Jews did not return to comfortable houses; nor did they find cultivated

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12. (a) Those returning from exile in Babylon experienced what blessings? (b) What indicates that Isaiah 35:5-10 has another fulfillment?

13, 14. How did former exiles see the fulfillment of Isaiah 65:21-23, but what part of that prophecy yet needs fulfillment? (See opening picture.)

How would the promise  
that Jesus made about  
Paradise be fulfilled?  
(See paragraphs 15, 16)



fields and vineyards. But that would change as God blessed them. What a joy for them to build houses and live in them! They could plant crops and enjoy the healthful fruitage.

<sup>14</sup> Notice an important detail of that prophecy. Will the time come when our days “will be like the days of a tree”? Some trees live thousands of years. Humans would have to be healthy in order to have lifespans of such length. If they could live in the conditions that Isaiah foretold, it would be a dream come true, a paradise! And that prophecy will be fulfilled!

<sup>15</sup> Reflect on how the promises just discussed point to a future paradise: People of the whole earth will be blessed by God. No one will face danger from animals or beastlike humans. The blind, deaf, and lame will be cured. People will be able to build their own homes and enjoy growing wholesome food. They will live longer than trees. Yes, we find indications in the Bible that such a future is ahead. Still, some might claim that we are reading more into those prophecies than is justified. How would you answer? What solid reason do you have to look forward to a real paradise on earth? The greatest man who ever lived provided a solid reason.

## **YOU WILL BE IN PARADISE!**

<sup>16</sup> Though he was innocent, Jesus was condemned and hung on a stake to die, with a Jewish criminal on each side of him. Before dying, one of them acknowledged that Jesus was a king and made the request: “Jesus, remember me when you get into your Kingdom.” (Luke 23:39-42) Your future is involved in Jesus’ reply, found

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**15.** How would you summarize some of the blessings mentioned in the book of Isaiah?

**16, 17.** In what situation did Jesus speak about Paradise?

at Luke 23:43. Some modern scholars give this word-for-word rendering: “Truly I say to you, today with me you will be in Paradise.” Note the word “today.” What was Jesus indicating? There are different views.

<sup>17</sup> In many modern languages, commas are used to convey or clarify the meaning of a sentence. But in the earliest available Greek manuscripts, punctuation was not consistently used. Thus, the question arises: Was Jesus saying, “I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise”? Or was he saying, “I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise”? Translators may insert a comma according to what they think that Jesus meant, and you can find either rendering in common Bible versions.

<sup>18</sup> However, recall that Jesus had earlier told his followers: “The Son of man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.” He also said: “The Son of man is going to be betrayed into men’s hands, and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised up.” (Matt. 12:40; 16:21; 17:22, 23; Mark 10:34) The apostle Peter reports that this happened. (Acts 10:39, 40) So Jesus did not go to any Paradise on the day he and that crimi-

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**18, 19.** How can we reason on what Jesus must have meant?

nal died. Jesus was “in the Grave [or “Hades”]” for days, until God resurrected him.—Acts 2:31, 32; ftn.\*

<sup>19</sup> We can thus see that Jesus’ promise to the criminal was introduced with the words: “Truly I say to you today.” That manner of expression was common even in Moses’ time. He said: “These words that I am commanding you today must be on your heart.”—Deut. 6:6; 7:11; 8:1, 19; 30:15.

<sup>20</sup> A Bible translator from the Middle East said of Jesus’ reply: “The emphasis in this text is on the word ‘today’ and should read, ‘Truly I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise.’ The promise was made on that day and it was to be fulfilled later. This is a characteristic of Oriental speech implying that the promise was made on a certain day and would surely be kept.” Accordingly, a fifth-century Syriac version renders Jesus’ reply: “Amen, I say to thee to-day that with me thou shalt be in the

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\* Professor C. Marvin Pate wrote: “Traditionally, the word ‘today’ has been understood to be a chronological reference to a twenty-four-hour period. The difficulty with this view is its apparent conflict with biblical teaching elsewhere which suggests that Jesus first ‘descended’ to hades after His death (Matt. 12:40; Acts 2:31; Rom. 10:7) and then afterward ascended to heaven.”

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**20.** What supports our understanding of what Jesus said?

Garden of Eden.” We should all be encouraged by that promise.

<sup>21</sup> That dying criminal did not know that Jesus had made a covenant with his faithful apostles to be with him in the heavenly Kingdom. (Luke 22:29) Furthermore, that criminal had not even been baptized. (John 3:3-6, 12) We can thus understand that what Jesus promised must be an *earthly* paradise. Years later, the apostle Paul related a vision of a man “caught away into paradise.” (2 Cor. 12:1-4) Unlike the dying criminal, Paul and the other faithful apostles were selected to go to heaven to share with Jesus in the Kingdom. Still, Paul was pointing to something to come in the future—a future “paradise.”\* Would that involve the earth? And can you be there?

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

<sup>22</sup> Bear in mind that David foresaw the time when “the *righteous* will possess the earth.” (Ps. 37:29; 2 Pet. 3:13) David was referring to a time when people on earth would live according to God’s righ-

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\* See “Questions From Readers” in this issue.

21. What did not happen to the criminal, and why?

22, 23. What can you hope for?



teous ways. The prophecy at Isaiah 65:22 says: “The days of my people will be like the days of a tree.” This implies that people will live for thousands of years. Can you expect that? Yes, for according to Revelation 21:1-4, God will turn his attention to mankind, and one of the promised blessings is that “death will be no more” for people serving God in his righteous new world.

<sup>23</sup> The picture is thus clear. Adam and Eve lost Paradise back in Eden, but it was not lost forever. As God promised, people on earth are yet to be blessed. Under inspiration, David said that the meek and righteous will inherit the earth and live on it forever. The prophecies in the book of Isaiah should whet our appetite for the delightful conditions that will prevail. When? When Jesus’ promise to the Jewish criminal comes to pass. You can be in that Paradise. At that time, the exclamation made to those delegates in Korea will be realized: “See you in Paradise!”

# 139      *See Yourself When All Is New* (Revelation 21:1-5)

1. Just see yourself, just see me too;  
    Just see us all in a world that is new.  
Think how you'll feel, how it will be,  
    To live in peace, to be truly free.  
No evil one will then prevail;  
    Rule by our God cannot ever fail.  
The time will have come for a new earthly start,  
    The song of our praises  
        will pour out from our heart:

## *(CHORUS)*

*"We thank you, our God, for all you have done.  
All things are new by the rule of your Son.  
The fullness of our heart overflows in our song;  
All glory and honor and praise to you belong."*

2. Now see yourself, and see me too;  
    And look ahead to a world that is new.  
No sight we see, no sound we hear  
    Will cause alarm or give rise to fear.  
All has come true, just as he said;  
    Now over mankind, his tent is spread.  
He now will awaken those sleeping in death;  
    Their voices will join ours with  
        ev'ry grateful breath:

## *(Chorus)*

(See also Ps. 37:10, 11; Isa. 65:17; John 5:28; 2 Pet. 3:13.)



