

So, too, with humans. The physical sensations of hunger, thirst and desire for rest after long hours of activity are normal. These physical sensations were built into man by his Creator.

What, then, of the Bible's grand promise that under the righteous rule of God's kingdom He "will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be any more"? What does this mean?—Rev. 21:3, 4.

The Bible describes here the removal of "the former things" that came in with the rebellion of the first human pair in Eden. These "former things" are the pain, suffering and death that their sinful course has brought to their descendants, all mankind.—Rom. 5:12.

Obviously that Bible account does not mean that, if a piece of dust should get in a person's eye, his tear ducts would then no longer produce tears to wash it out. The same with the reactions of the human nervous system that produce the feeling of touch, pressure and pain. A perfect man stepping with his bare foot on a thorn hidden in the grass would still feel pain as his perfect nerves reacted to the puncture. And the built-in defense system in his blood with its army of white corpuscles would go to work to heal up the wound inflicted. But a perfect man would not develop gangrene. Nor would he be plagued with such things as acid indigestion, ulcers, migraine headaches, arthritis, heart disease or cancer. Surely to be free of such things would not impair our happiness but greatly increase it!

Things of Interest Forever!

But would a person living forever always be able to find things to occupy his mental and physical powers? Would he find new challenges for his intelligence and ability? Would conversation continue to be stimulating and enjoyable? Or would the stage soon be reached where everyone knew what everyone else knew?

Those who think that persons would run out of things to do and learn, fail to consider what a vast and magnificently equipped Workshop and Laboratory our Creator made when he produced this planet. Consider all the things that man has made up to the present

time. And then remember that all man's complex inventions, his computers, his television sets, his airplanes, his rockets, were not formed out of materials brought from some faraway place in the universe. No, but they were formed from the *very ground* on which we live and its storehouse of chemical elements, its minerals and metals. How vast the possibilities are!

Today knowledge gained through research grows at a rate so swift that neither individuals nor organizations can keep up with it. Because their life-span is so short, persons must content themselves either with knowing a little about many things or a lot about just a very few things. Their knowledge is either broad, but generally shallow, or deep, but quite narrow. They often become specialists in a very restricted field, trying to "make their mark in life" before their short span of years runs out. Scientists say that every time they finally find the "key" to open one door in some field of research they invariably find a dozen other doors on the other side. Surely, then, there is no danger of earth's becoming filled with "know-it-alls" who have nothing to talk about because everyone knows what the other person knows.

How much do you know about your home, and how much of it have you seen in your lifetime? Not the house you live in, but the planet you live on—this immense satellite of the sun that astronauts describe as "a jewel in space."

Even world travelers rarely get well acquainted with more than just a fraction of the earth, often no more than its principal cities and so-called "major points of interest." Some have seen such places as Arizona's Grand Canyon, the Norwegian fjords, Africa's Serengeti plains, the snowcapped Alps of New Zealand's South Island and the tropical scenery of Tahiti.

But for every towering mountain, every plunging canyon, every cascading waterfall, fertile valley, winding river, table-like plateau, deep-shaded woods, rugged, rocky coast or glistening palm-lined beach they have seen, there are a thousand others, each with its own beauty and eye-holding appeal.

Plants, Animals and People

Botanists list some 335,000 species of plants. The United States alone has 1,035 different kinds of trees. They range from the desert-growing Joshua tree to the magnificent Giant Sequoias, and embrace the colorful Sugar Maple, White Ash and Blue Spruce.

From earth's flowers one could make a different combination every day for a hundred years. Even then one would barely begin to use the varieties to be found, from Morning Glories to Four-O'Clocks, from delicate Bleeding Hearts and Lilies of the Valley to the giant *Rafflesia arnoldi* of Indonesia, its flower measuring up to three feet across and weighing up to fifteen pounds.

And what of earth's animal life? Biologists list some 5,000 kinds of mammals, 3,000 kinds of amphibians, 6,000 kinds of reptiles, 9,000 kinds of birds and 30,000 kinds of fish, not to mention the more than 800,000 kinds of insects.

With how many of those living creatures are you really familiar? Perhaps you have seen some of them in a book or at a zoological garden. But how many of them have you observed in their native habitat, watching their fascinating habits and learning the different qualities of each? For example, with how many of the 400 varieties of hummingbirds are you well acquainted—such as the topaz hummingbird, the ruby-throated hummingbird, the tiny bee hummingbird that measures only two inches in length? These are living jewels that flash with iridescent colors of flaming red, deep violet, glowing orange and emerald green. Or have you carefully observed the majestic giant condor or the albatross with its twelve-foot wingspan?

It would take a long time to get to know all the living creatures of land, sea and air—far longer than present life-spans could begin to cover.

Of far greater interest, however, are earth's peoples. They are almost as varied as the flowers, in their features, styles of dress, preferences in food, architecture, music and other distinctive characteristics. Nor would perfection mean the removal of this variety

and contrast of personality, making them the same as one another, any more than for roses to be perfect must they all be red.

It is not easy today to get to know the many races of earth. In many cases, in fact, it is becoming increasingly dangerous. But the Bible promise of everlasting life is only for persons who love and appreciate their Creator, his truth, justice and righteous standards, and who love their neighbor as themselves. By producing the fruitage of God's spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control—they will make this planet a spiritual garden of friendly, cooperative, generous, warmhearted people.—Gal. 5:22, 23.

Their talents and abilities in craftsmanship, metalworking, architecture, landscaping, home decoration, artistry, music and literature will therefore be used with the right motive. This will stimulate new heights of expression and beauty. Surely meeting such persons, seeing the products of their activity, and getting to know them would be a continual source of pleasure.

Getting Better Acquainted with God

Above and beyond all this, everlasting life would allow for becoming better acquainted with the Universal Sovereign, Jehovah God. Nothing in life is more enriching, more satisfying or more ennobling.

Throughout all eternity one can learn more and more about God, our Creator—and still it would be impossible to know everything about Him. The Christian apostle Paul wrote of our Creator: “O the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How unsearchable his judgments are and past tracing out his ways are! For ‘who has come to know Jehovah's mind?’”—Rom. 11:33, 34; Eccl. 3:11.

That same apostle also wrote of Jehovah God: “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.”—Rom. 1:20.

Knowledge of the universe with its planets, stars and galaxies leaves no room for doubt as to God's awesome power and superlative

wisdom. He is the Supreme Physicist, Chemist, Mathematician, Designer and Builder. The psalmist of past centuries, filled with appreciation, wrote: “O Jehovah our Lord, how majestic your name is in all the earth, you whose dignity is recounted above the heavens! When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have prepared, what is mortal man that you keep him in mind, and the son of earthling man that you take care of him?”—Ps. 8:1, 3, 4.

Although the visible creation testifies about its Creator, it is by his Word the Bible that we really come to know him, know his personality, his purposes, his ways, his standards. It is through that Word, the Bible, that we see that he has kept mortal man in mind, that he cares for him.

Really, how could living forever in perfection ever be boring? Living would be filled with delight and pleasure and interest eternally.

But if men had everlasting life, where would all the people live? And could the earth provide for them all?

[Picture on page 16]

Has life afforded you time to get acquainted with all the beautiful places on earth?

[Picture on page 17]

. . . or the variety of birds and people?

Where Would All the People Live?

WHAT honest-hearted person would not thrill at the prospect of living forever on an earth where peace and righteousness prevailed, where health and strength never faded? The Bible promises this under the rule of God’s kingdom. These conditions are to prevail after God has removed the present unrighteous systems and all those who share in their corrupt ways. Then the earth will enjoy a righteous administration in the hands of God’s own Son, Christ Jesus.—Dan. 2:44.

But some ask, “If people gain freedom from old age and death and if they keep on having children, where will they all live?”

Not only that. The Bible additionally gives the stirring promise that those who have died in the past will be raised from the dead. Jesus himself said: “Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out.” (John 5:28, 29; compare Acts 24:15.) Surely it is in harmony with God’s love that those who have died are not to be overlooked or lose out on the grand prospect of living forever in his new order. But where will all these resurrected ones live?

That is a logical question. Even now some regard earth’s present population of about 3,600,000,000 as too large. They warn that the modern “population explosion” threatens to bring widespread famine and disturbances. So, what will happen in God’s new order if people are no longer subject to death?

First, certain factors must be recognized. One is that the earth is actually capable of sustaining a population many, many times greater than that which is now on it. Another is that the number of persons who have died in the past several thousand years is not nearly as great as some might imagine. And finally, the Bible does not say that God purposed procreation to continue endlessly. His command to the first human pair was to “fill the earth,” not overrun it with offspring. (Gen. 1:27, 28) Consider the full significance of these factors.

The Earth's Ability to Contain Such Population

²⁵ Can this planet provide comfortable living space for such a population as would result from the resurrection of the dead? It took over 5,000 years for the earth's population to reach one billion in the early 1800's. Today, it is about five billion.

²⁶ Therefore, those alive today represent a sizable portion of the total number of people who have ever lived. Some have estimated the total population throughout all human history at about 15,000,000,000 persons. The earth's land area is more than 36,000,000,000 acres (15,000,000,000 ha). That would allow more than two acres (1 ha) per person. Not only would this provide space for food production but it would also allow for forests, mountains, and other scenic areas—with no undue crowding in Paradise. Then, too, the Bible shows that not all those now living will survive and live in that New Order. Indeed, Jesus said, "Broad and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are the ones going in through it." He also noted that when world destruction comes, those not doing Jehovah's will are to "depart into everlasting cutting-off."—Matthew 7:13; 25:46.

If billions are to be raised from the dead, where will they all live?

A very liberal estimate of the number of people who have ever lived on earth is 20,000,000,000. As we have seen, not all of these will be resurrected. But, even if we assume that they would be, there would be ample room. The land surface of the earth at present is about 57,000,000 square miles (147,600,000 sq km). If half of that were set aside for other purposes, there would still be just a little less than an acre (c. 0.37 ha) per person, which can provide more than enough food. At the root of present food shortages is not any inability of the earth to produce sufficient but, rather, political rivalry and commercial greed.

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²⁷ But could the earth produce enough food for so many people? Scientists claim that it could, even under present conditions. A *Toronto Star* report noted: "According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) there is already enough grain grown globally to feed everyone on earth with 3,000 calories per day, which is . . . about 50 per cent above the minimum acceptable level."⁵⁶ As for the future, it explained that even under today's conditions, there could be enough food to satisfy the needs of double the present world population. Also, we must remember that Jehovah will direct his people to utilize the earth's agricultural potential properly, for Psalm 72:16 assures us: "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow."

²⁸ We should note what God's purpose is, as originally stated to the first human pair. They were told to "fill the earth and subdue it," extending Eden's limits to the farthest reaches of earth. (Genesis 1:28) Clearly, this means filling the earth to a comfortable extent, not overfilling it with people. That would still allow for the 'subdued' earth

to be a global park in the pattern of man's original parklike home. So, this divine command indicates that in God's due time and way, population growth would be controlled.

What Are the Prospects?

Judging by the optimistic proclamations and predictions by some of those who have engaged in such research, it would seem that life much longer than we are accustomed to is just around the corner. Here are a few examples gleaned from the late 1960's.

"The knowledge we acquire in such a search will give us the weapons we need to fight the last enemy—Death—on his own grounds. It will place relative immortality within our reach . . . It could come in our time."—Alan E. Nourse, physician and writer.

"We will lick the problem of aging completely, so that accidents will be essentially the only cause of death."—Augustus B. Kinzel, then president of Salk Institute for Biological Studies.

"Immortality (in the sense of indefinitely extended life) is technically attainable, not only for our descendants but for ourselves."—Robert C. W. Ettinger in *The Prospect of Immortality*.

While at the time not all gerontologists and researchers shared such enthusiasm, the general consensus of experts appeared to be that by the beginning of the 21st century, aging would be controlled and life would be extended significantly.

Now that we are much closer to the beginning of the 21st century, what is the picture? Is longer life, let alone immortality, within reach? Consider these observations.

"Many gerontologists will agree that these are highly muddled times for us. We neither know what is the underlying mechanism of aging, nor are we able to measure the rate of aging in precise biochemical terms."—*Journal of Gerontology*, September 1986.

"No one knows exactly what the process of aging is or why it runs a different course in different people. Nor does anyone know how to increase human longevity, despite the often fraudulent and sometimes dangerous claims of the 'life extension' hucksters and others who traffic in the fears and ills of the elderly."—*FDA Consumer*, the official journal of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, October 1988.

Predictions made in the past about conquering death and extending life indefinitely are clearly overenthusiastic. Immortality through science is still a farfetched dream. Does this mean that until there is a major breakthrough in science or technology, there is nothing that can be done to prolong or at least improve life?

Wonderfully Made to Live, Not Die

IF AGING could only be postponed! Do you long for such a breakthrough? Why, yes. Who would not like to escape wrinkles, gray hair, brittle bones, loss of stamina, forgetfulness, vulnerability to sickness, and finally death?

Since the commercial system knows how people feel about aging, advertisements appeal to a desire to camouflage or postpone its effects. The subject is often featured in magazine articles and books. Some make amazing claims. *The Complete Book of Longevity* begins like this:

“Some of you who are reading these words may be among the first of the immortals. With the diseases of aging—and the mechanism of death itself—about to fall to the advancing armies of science, the question is not whether the immortality breakthrough will occur . . . but how to stay alive until it does.”

From what science has already achieved, is there any real basis for such optimism?

Has Science Increased Man's Life Span?

During this century, the developed countries of the world have experienced a dramatic increase in life expectancy. For example, in the year 1900 the average life expectancy of men in the United States was 46 years. “From 1900 to 1980 male life expectancy at birth increased 51% to 69.9 years,” states the American *Journal of Gerontology*. Now it is 71.8 years for men and 78.8 years for women. A number of other countries have an even higher life expectancy, with Japan the highest—74.2 years for men and 79.8 years for women. Does this prove that man's life span has been extended?

The dramatic increases noted above are due largely to a lower infant-mortality rate. Today, more babies survive to adulthood than in past centuries. “Medical advances,” explains *The Body Book*, “have increased *average life expectancy*, but they have not increased the *maximum life span*.” As Brian Stableford, a biologist at the University of Reading, England, expressed it in his book *Future Man*: “Our

lifespan has been reckoned since Biblical times as 70 years, and although two thousand years of scientific advancement have allowed many more people to reach that term, scientists have so far done nothing to extend it.”

Stableford was referring to words penned 3,500 years ago by the ancient Israelite Moses: “In themselves the days of our years are seventy years; and if because of special mightiness they are eighty years, yet their insistence is on trouble and hurtful things.” (Psalm 90:10) ‘Why,’ you may wonder, ‘has modern medicine been unable to change this fact of life?’

Aging—According to Science

Aging is such a common experience that few people question why it happens. To the scientific mind, however, aging has long been a puzzle. Why? “It seems to conflict with the drive to survive that underlies most bodily activities,” explains the book *The Living Body*, by Karl Sabbagh. How close are scientists to understanding the cause of aging?

“There is no single theory that explains all of the phenomena of aging.”—*The New Encyclopædia Britannica*.

“The contemporary student of aging is faced with more theories than a centipede has legs.”—Dr. Gairdner Moment, professor emeritus of biological sciences.

“Many gerontologists will agree that these are highly muddled times for us. We neither know what is the underlying mechanism of aging, nor are we able to measure the rate of aging in precise biochemical terms.”—*Journal of Gerontology*, September 1986.

“The parable of the blind man trying to describe an elephant also illustrates the problems of researchers in aging.”—Dr. C. E. Finch, professor of biology and gerontology.

One way to explain aging, as suggested in the book *The Living Body*, is that cells have “a built-in clock” that allows them to reproduce until “it is time to stop.” What, though, about brain cells, which do not reproduce after birth? Most neurons survive from the person’s birth on

into old age. Thus, in the case of a centenarian, the same neurons have functioned for a hundred years.

Yet, millions of neurons die during the life of a human, and the neuron death rate increases with age. Another theory of aging is that cells gradually function less efficiently because of wear and tear. “But since living systems can repair and rebuild themselves, why aren’t these capabilities used fully to fix up the wear and tear?” asks Dr. Richard Cutler in the book *The Biology of Aging*. “Another difficulty with the wear-and-tear hypothesis,” he adds, “is how to explain the wide range of life-spans characteristic of different mammalian species.”

Chimpanzees have a life expectancy of 40 years, and the gorilla, which is bigger, one of only 30 years. Why do humans live so much longer if aging is due to wear and tear? Why do some reptiles, like the giant tortoise, outlive man? And why do some forms of life seem to last indefinitely?

What Does Jesus' Death Mean to You?

“ALL the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever were built, all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has this one solitary personality.” So wrote author James A. Francis regarding Jesus Christ.

People view Jesus in various ways, but the Bible identifies him as God's Son and a man of self-sacrificing love. Jesus cited a principal way in which he showed that love when he said of himself: “The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.”—Matthew 20:28.

What is the significance of this ransom? Why was it needed? Who is ransomed? Indeed, what does Jesus' death mean to you?

What Is It?

A ransom is something that releases. Ransoming someone means delivering him from captivity or punishment by paying a price. In a spiritual sense, “to ransom” means to bring about deliverance from sin and its penalty. That is why Jesus died. As the Christian apostle Paul wrote: “The wages sin pays is death, but the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord.”—Romans 6:23.

A redemption price is Scripturally associated with paying a ransom. Psalm 49:6-9 says: “Those who are trusting in their means of maintenance, and who keep boasting about the abundance of their riches, not one of them can by any means *redeem* even a brother, nor give to God a *ransom* for him; (and the *redemption price* of their soul is so precious that it has ceased to time indefinite) that he should still live forever and not see the pit.” The ransom is a redemption accomplished by God, not by any imperfect human.

Why Needed?

The ransom is needed because our first human father, Adam, sinned. He thus lost endless perfect life, was justly sentenced to death, and eventually died. (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7, 17-19; 5:5) As his

descendants, we have inherited sin and death. “Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin,” wrote Paul, “and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned.” (Romans 5:12) Yes, “in Adam all are dying.” (1 Corinthians 15:22) So the psalmist David correctly said: “With error I was brought forth with birth pains, and in sin my mother conceived me.”—Psalm 51:5.

Deliverance from condemnation to sin and death is essential if any sinful descendant of Adam is to receive eternal life. Whereas imperfect humans cannot provide this ransom, Jehovah lovingly did so through Jesus Christ. Yet, what is bought with the ransom? Well, when Adam sinned, he lost everlasting perfect human life, with all its rights and prospects. Hence, the same thing was redeemed by means of Jesus’ ransom sacrifice.

What It Makes Possible

Justice was satisfied in mankind’s experiencing death, the penalty of sin. So the ransom is an act of God’s mercy and loving-kindness. Jesus’ perfect human life, with all its rights and prospects, was laid down in death and never taken back, for he was not resurrected as a man of flesh and blood but as an immortal spirit creature. (1 Corinthians 15:50; 1 Peter 3:18) The sacrificed human life of Jesus Christ therefore continued to have redemptive, or ransoming, power.

As a sinless human, Jesus stood in a position similar to that originally occupied by perfect Adam. For being obedient to God to death, Jesus was made the great High Priest, and he presented the value of his perfect human sacrifice in heaven. (Hebrews 9:24-26) Because God accepted this redemptive price, Jesus could redeem believing descendants of Adam from sin and death by applying the merit of his sacrifice in their behalf. (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; 1 John 2:1, 2) Jesus thus “became responsible for everlasting salvation to all those obeying him.” (Hebrews 5:8, 9) This makes it possible for them to attain a righteous standing before God through his Son.

Who Is Ransomed?

Who, then, benefit from the ransom? Humans who exercise faith in this provision and thus come into harmony with God. By serving him

faithfully, they can be freed from sin and its penalty death and receive eternal life.—John 17:3.

The first man could decide whether to obey God or not. He chose disobedience. “Adam was not deceived,” but he died a willful sinner. (1 Timothy 2:14) Yet, what about Adam’s descendants? They could choose either to serve God to the best of their imperfect ability or to disobey their Creator.—Joshua 24:15.

Jesus came “to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” (Mark 10:45) But who are the “many”? Adam is evidently excluded because he was a perfect man who deliberately chose to disobey God and died as an unrepentant, willful sinner. But what about his large family, numbering into the thousands of millions? With a corresponding price, Jesus Christ offsets the inherited condemnation resting on Adam’s family. (Compare 1 Timothy 2:5, 6.) In behalf of the “many” believers, Jesus applies the merit of his redemptive price.

Ransomed believers include both Jews and Gentiles, or people of the nations. Says Paul: “As through one trespass the result to men of all sorts was condemnation, likewise also through one act of justification the result to men of all sorts is a declaring of them righteous for life.” (Romans 5:18) By dying on a stake, “Christ by purchase released [Jews] from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse instead of [them], because it is written: ‘Accursed is every man hanged upon a stake.’” (Galatians 3:13; Deuteronomy 21:23) Romans 4:11 alludes to Gentiles when it says that while Abraham, forefather of the Jews, was yet uncircumcised, he became “the father of all those having faith while in uncircumcision.” So, then, Jesus’ ransom sacrifice benefits believing Jews and Gentiles.

The course taken by each individual determines whether he will benefit from Jesus’ sacrifice. Like Adam, the willfully wicked do not have ransom merit and eternal life forced upon them. As Christ said: “He that exercises faith in the Son has everlasting life; he that disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him.” (John 3:36) The ransom also makes a resurrection possible for those dead who are in God’s memory. (John 5:28, 29) If they prove obedient and appreciative, the application of ransom benefits to them

means that they will live forever. But for those living in these “last days,” there is the possibility of life eternal without the need to die at all.—2 Timothy 3:1-5; Matthew 24:3-14, 21, 34; John 11:25, 26.

Reasons for Gratitude

Anyone desiring to benefit from the ransom must have deep appreciation for it. And how fitting such gratitude is! After all, the ransom called for abundant love on the part of God and Christ.

Jehovah God showed great love in providing the ransom through his Son’s death. Said Jesus: “God loved the world [of mankind] so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life. For God sent forth his Son into the world, not for him to judge the world, but for the world to be saved through him.” (John 3:16, 17) Should you not appreciate this manifestation of God’s love?

Think further about the depth of Jehovah’s love in making provision for the ransom. Before God’s Son was sent to the earth to live and die as a perfect man, he had a prehuman existence. He was “the firstborn of all creation,” by means of whom “all other things were created in the heavens and upon the earth, the things visible and the things invisible.” (Colossians 1:13-16) How Jehovah loved his Son! Nevertheless, God did not send just any one of the millions of righteous angels to the earth. His love for mankind was so great that he sent his firstborn Son.

Consider, too, the deep love that Jesus showed in connection with the ransom. As a spirit creature in heaven, he was God’s “master worker.” True, “the things [God’s Son] was fond of were with the sons of men.” (Proverbs 8:22-31) Yet, it was not easy for him to leave heaven, with its very favorable circumstances in association with his Father and myriads of righteous angels. From his heavenly vantage point, the Son of God could see the evil conditions on the earth and the ravages of sin and death upon mankind. He also knew that providing the ransom would call for his death. Yet, he “took a slave’s form and came to be in the likeness of men. More than that, . . . he humbled himself and became obedient as far as death.” For such

faithfulness, Jesus was raised to glorious heavenly life. (Philippians 2:5-11) What love he showed with regard to the ransom! Do you appreciate what Jesus did?

What Will You Do?

The English prelate Richard of Chichester (c. 1198–1253) once prayed that men and women might come “to know Jesus Christ more clearly, to love him more dearly, and to follow him more nearly.” Jesus’ ransom sacrifice surely provides one sound reason to get to know, love, and follow him.

If it was not for the ransom, as sinners we would die without hope, for “the sting producing death is sin.” (1 Corinthians 15:56) Hence, to be saved from death that would result because of your having been stung by sin, what must you do? You need to learn about God’s provision for salvation through Jesus Christ. Then you must demonstrate that you exercise faith in the ransom. How? By showing heartfelt appreciation for it, devoting yourself to God, and telling others about this wonderful provision for salvation.

This course can put you among the “great crowd” who “come out of the great tribulation, and . . . have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” Jesus Christ. (Revelation 7:9, 14) Theirs is the hope of eternal life in an earthly paradise. (Luke 23:43) Yes, and you can be part of that happy throng, if Jesus’ death really is something precious to you.

[Picture on page 4]

Sinless Jesus stood in a position similar to that originally occupied by perfect Adam

[Picture on page 6]

Do you appreciate the real meaning of Jesus’ death?

Look to the Source of Life

If one is looking for long life, is it not reasonable to turn to the One who gave man life at the beginning? Only the Creator would fully know all our needs and be able to satisfy them. The Bible says of him: "With you is the source of life." (Ps. 36:9) "By him we have life and move and exist," said the apostle Paul to the men of Athens.—Acts 17:28.

Is it not logical, then, to see what God has to say about life? His Word the Bible is the only source that makes any promise of everlasting life on earth or gives any satisfying hope for those who have already died.

At this point the thought may arise: 'We have had the Bible for centuries. But still we do not see people now living on and on.' Well, the Bible tells us: "For everything there is an appointed time." (Eccl. 3:1) It identifies the time when life-giving benefits begin to flow to all obedient mankind. It shows that this time is at hand.

The first man Adam, our forefather, stepped out on a rebellious course of independence from God. He determined to go his own way. He wanted to 'know,' to decide, to judge for himself what was good and what was bad. (Gen. 3:5, 22) God has patiently let men try out their "independence." But now man has reached the peak of trouble. And now is also the time that God has purposed to end wickedness, in this generation, and to bring about conditions in the earth so that those who desire can live forever.—Rev. 11:18.

Just how will he bring this about? When we go to God and his Word, we learn of the provision he has made for man to gain everlasting life.

Need for a "Corresponding Ransom"

Jesus Christ said that he came into the world of mankind that men might have everlasting life. (John 3:16, 17) But how could they gain everlasting life since all mankind inherited sin and death from Adam? Jesus explained: "The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Matt.

20:28) And Jesus' apostle Paul said that God's Son "gave himself a corresponding ransom for all." (1 Tim. 2:5, 6) As you know, a ransom is the means for buying out persons from captivity or slavery. Christ Jesus gave his human life as a ransom to bring persons out of slavery to sin and death. (Rom. 5:21) That sacrifice provides the basis for restoring vital right relations with God, the Life-Giver. But why is Jesus' sacrifice called a "corresponding ransom"? And how does it bring the needed relief for mankind?

In the case of Adam's offspring not just any kind of ransom would do. It had to be a "corresponding ransom." In what way? Well, what valuable possession did Adam lose for himself and all his offspring? It was human perfection. So the real ransom sacrifice would have to correspond to the perfect Adam and possess human perfection. Only thereby could the ransom satisfy God's perfect justice that requires like for like, a 'soul for a soul.'—Ex. 21:23-25; Deut. 19:21.

No animal could pay the ransom price, for animals are lower than man. They are not of equal value with man, and so it was "not possible for the blood of bulls and of goats [actually] to take sins away," as the Bible says. (Heb. 10:1-4) And no man descended from Adam could pay the "corresponding ransom." Why not? Because they were all imperfect. They all had inherited sin and death.—Rom. 5:12-14; Ps. 49:6-9.

So a perfect man was needed. God provided this need at tremendous cost to himself. As Jesus said: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son . . . For God sent forth his Son into the world . . . for the world to be saved through him." (John 3:16, 17) How the love of God is magnified by this! For God gave the life of his Son, "the Son of his love," his "only-begotten Son," to provide the ransom price.—Col. 1:13; Rom. 5:6-8.

This required his Son's becoming human to correspond with the perfect Adam. And God accomplished this by transferring his Son's life from heaven to the womb of the Jewish virgin Mary. (Luke 1:26-37; John 1:14) Since Jesus did not owe his life to any human father descended from the sinner Adam, Jesus was born free from any inheritance of sin. He was, as it were, "an unblemished and spotless

lamb,” whose blood could provide an acceptable sacrifice.—1 Pet. 1:18, 19.

New Life Heritage Through Jesus Christ

We belong to an imperfect family, with a heritage of death. The rule has been found to be scientifically true: Short-lived or diseased parents do not transmit the life vigor to their children that strong, healthy parents can. We need a new life heritage. We need regeneration. For that very reason Jesus came to earth. But how does the new life heritage come in?

The Bible’s explanation as to how this is accomplished is both simple and profound—even as the problem of mankind’s dying condition can be simply stated but is profoundly difficult to overcome. First, it should be recognized that at the time of Adam’s sin and his being sentenced to death, his offspring or race were all unborn in his loins and so all died with him. (Compare Hebrews 7:4-19; Romans 7:9.) Jesus as a perfect man, “the last Adam,” had a possible race of offspring unborn in his loins. And when he died innocently as a perfect human sacrifice, this potential human race died with him. Jesus had willingly abstained from marrying and producing a family of his own. Jesus dying as a childless man, his unborn human offspring justly counterbalanced all the race that Adam had reproduced till now.—1 Cor. 15:45; compare Romans 5:15-17.

So, by giving his human life, together with the potential of having children of his own, Jesus Christ bought “parental” life rights that Adam lost. He holds “credit” for those of Adam’s family who desire to draw upon it.

To illustrate how this satisfies justice, we might use the case of a man who has died leaving a large debt on his estate. His children are unable to pay the debt. But a friend with sufficient money redeems the estate from the dead man’s creditors and then divides out portions thereof as inheritance to those who are worthy children. In Jesus’ case, of course, it is not land or other material possessions that he redeems and grants to worthy ones but life, perfect human life.

By providing the “corresponding ransom,” Jesus repurchased all mankind descended from Adam so that they could become his family. He did this by presenting the full value of his ransom sacrifice to the God of absolute justice in heaven. He “entered . . . into heaven itself, now to appear before the person of God” on behalf of the world of mankind.—Heb. 9:24.

Jesus Christ can thus have children on earth, not by natural procreation, but by redemption of Adam’s offspring. This was foretold in Messianic prophecies that show that Jesus will have “offspring” as an “Eternal Father.” (Isa. 53:10-12; 9:6, 7) Jesus would not be an “Eternal Father” for his earthly children if they died off. So for this title to be true of him, the earthly children to whom he becomes father by means of his ransom will be given the opportunity to live forever on earth.

Therefore, by faith in Jesus Christ the dying children of dead Adam can transfer to the family of a Father who lives forever. This “Eternal Father” can regenerate their minds and bodies with life, and he can thereafter maintain that life vigor in them. (Rom. 6:23) Yes, by faith in Jesus Christ you can have a new life heritage. And this entire arrangement for a new life heritage manifests Jehovah God’s wisdom and his righteousness in a wonderful way. How so? In his perfectly balancing the scales of justice while at the same time showing undeserved kindness and forgiving sins.—Rom. 3:21-26.

Righteous Rule Also Through Jesus Christ

To enjoy everlasting life on earth in happiness man needs more than a new life heritage. He needs a new government. God has provided this also through Jesus Christ. This new government is God’s kingdom. For this kingdom Jesus taught his followers to pray: “Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth.”—Matt. 6:10.

For God’s will to be done upon earth the present system of things must end. And the Bible shows that very soon now God’s kingdom will crush out of existence and replace all systems of man that now cause such grief. (Dan. 2:44) That time of destruction is described by Jesus

as “great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world’s beginning until now, no, nor will occur again.” (Matt. 24:21) After the destruction of this entire wicked system, God’s kingdom, ruling from heaven, will control all of earth’s affairs.

That heavenly kingdom will be the only government that earth will ever have after the end of this wicked system. Its administration will be far superior to anything men have ever devised. Ruling with justice and righteousness, it will work to bring benefits to all, not to just a few.

What assurance do we have that the ruler Jesus Christ will never permit corruption in high places? Because he has proved his subjection to the Creator. And he rules, not for his own glory, but for God’s, and for the benefit of earth’s population. Of him it is written that he ‘loves righteousness and hates lawlessness.’ (Heb. 1:9) The Bible speaks of his loyalty and the exalted position that he has been granted in these words:

“Christ Jesus, who, although he was existing in God’s form, gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God. . . . More than that, when he found himself in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake. For this very reason also God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name.”—Phil. 2:5-11.

The One Worthy of Fatherhood

⁶ In refusing to worship “the god of this system,” Jesus proved that he was the One to be entrusted with the second fatherhood of the human family. (2 Corinthians 4:4; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13) From his human birth in 2 B.C.E., he was the One to whom the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6 applied:

⁷ “There has been a child born to us, there has been a son given to us; and the princely rule will come to be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” So the “Prince of Peace” has another vital role to play for mankind—that of being its “Eternal Father.”

⁸ The Son of God is to become the “Eternal Father” to this human family, for which he laid down his perfect human life in sacrifice. It is just as the apostle Paul writes: “For if by one man’s trespass many died, the undeserved kindness of God and his free gift with the undeserved kindness by the one man Jesus Christ abounded much more to many. So, then, as through one trespass the result to men of all sorts was condemnation, likewise also through one act of justification the result to men of all sorts is a declaring of them righteous for life.”—Romans 5:15, 18.

⁹ Thus, there is a perfect balancing of these vital matters. The one committing the “one trespass” was the first man on earth, Adam. The “one act of justification” was performed by the only other perfect man, Jesus. This allowed for him to become the “Eternal Father” of the descendants of the trespassing Adam. In this way he becomes a second Adam toward the human family. The sacrifice of his perfect human life and the presenting of that human life-right to the Great Judge in heaven make it impossible for him to serve here on earth as an eternal father of mankind. When he was resurrected from the dead, he was returned to the spirit realm and was exalted to his Resurrector’s right hand. Thus it is stated: “It is even so written: ‘The first man Adam became a living soul.’ The last Adam became a life-

giving spirit.” (1 Corinthians 15:45) Mankind’s new, adoptive Father will give it the best start in life possible.

The First Human Creatures to Be Fathered

¹⁰ The “Eternal Father,” Jesus Christ the King, will demonstrate who are the first ones to be fathered by him. How? By preserving through “the great tribulation” the dedicated lives of millions now living. They are the “great crowd” of “other sheep.”—Revelation 7:9, 14.

¹¹ Unparalleled is the earthly opportunity that is set before the “great crowd” after “the great tribulation.” Described as part of “the sign” of this “conclusion of the system of things,” the figurative goats of Jesus’ parable will be cut off from life on this earth, which will mean everlasting destruction for them. But not so the “great crowd” of sheeplike ones who lovingly and loyally did good to the remnant of Christ’s spiritual “brothers” yet on earth. (Matthew 25:31-46) The preservation of such “sheep” clear to the other side of “the great tribulation” and into the Millennial Reign of the foretold “Prince of Peace” will make it possible for these survivors to enter into the blessings of the Kingdom realm. They will be the earthly subjects of the “Prince of Peace.”

¹² At that time the words that Jesus spoke before he raised Lazarus from the dead will be fulfilled toward those who enter the Kingdom’s earthly realm. He said: “I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life; and everyone that is living and exercises faith in me will never die at all.” (John 11:25, 26) For their obedience to him, they will attain to perfect human life in the King’s earthly realm. Even the sympathetic evildoer who died alongside Jesus at Calvary will be favored with the opportunity of entering the Paradise. (Luke 23:43) Jesus will live up to all that his name “Eternal Father” implies.

The Happy Prospect for the Dead

¹³ Jesus, the most outstanding descendant of Abraham, said that this forefather, his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob would be seen in the earthly realm of God’s Kingdom. (Matthew 22:31, 32) This would be made possible by the resurrection. As Jesus said, all the

human dead in the memorial tombs will hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth. Their future thereafter will depend upon the course of action that they take.—John 5:28, 29; Revelation 20:12-15.

¹⁴ Tremendous preparations will have to be made for the ones of mankind who will be brought up from the grave to life on earth under the Kingdom of the “Eternal Father.” These preparations will first be undertaken by the survivors of “the war of the great day of God the Almighty” at Armageddon. (Revelation 16:14, 16) How many in number the “great crowd” of the “other sheep” of the “Prince of Peace” will have become by that time we do not now know, but there will be enough for the task.

¹⁵ Psalm 45 is addressed to this “Prince of Peace” as King, and since he is to be to mankind the “Eternal Father,” this psalm says to him: “In place of your forefathers there will come to be your sons, whom you will appoint as princes in all the earth.” (Psalm 45:16) But even before the resurrection of those faithful “forefathers,” male members of the “great crowd” of Armageddon survivors will have been appointed to such princely office. Thousands of these prospective survivors of Armageddon are already serving as elders in the more than 49,000 congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses, superintending the spiritual interests of their respective congregations.

Life in the Global, Restored Garden of Eden

¹⁸ In the restored Paradise, everyone is a friend to everybody else. The bonds of the worldwide family relationship are felt to the depths of each one's soul. All understand one another. They are speaking a common world language. It is likely mankind's original language, which everybody on earth spoke for the first 1,800 years of human existence—from Adam's creation in 4026 B.C.E. until Peleg's day (2269 to 2030 B.C.E.), for "in his days the earth [that is, earth's population] was divided." (Genesis 10:25; 11:1) Everyone is enjoying the privilege of living, and each new day is greeted with thankfulness for the added day of life. Bodily infirmity is not increasing as time goes on. Physical forces are building up, and bodies are not wearing out.—Compare Job 33:25.

¹⁹ And look! The once lame are walking, yes, skipping about for joy. Lost arms and legs have been miraculously restored. The previously blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak and sing for sheer joy. (Compare Isaiah 35:5, 6.) Unsightliness about human form and figure disappears. Human masculinity is beautifully balanced by human femininity. (Genesis 2:18) Human perfection glorifies Jehovah God, the Creator of the perfect human body.

²⁰ The whole earth is becoming one global beauty spot. From no part of the earth is there any report of drought or of rainfall in ruinous downpours or of destructive cyclones, hurricanes, typhoons, and tornadoes. (Compare Mark 4:37-41.) All the forces of nature are being brought into a perfect balance for making the whole earth an exquisite place in which to live. There is no lack of food anywhere, for the earth is yielding its produce to the full. (Psalm 72:16) Peace and security obtain worldwide for both man and animal, just as Jehovah states: "They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain." (Isaiah 11:9; see also verses 6-8.) In this way the earth will be made a delightful place in which to live and carry on the worship and service of Jehovah God, the Creator and Owner of the earth. It being his property by right of creation, it deserves to be used in a way that pleases him and that glorifies him.—Compare Isaiah 35:1, 2, 6, 7.

²¹ Refreshingly new—that is what everything on earth is for redeemed humans who were never inside the Paradise garden of Eden where human life started out in beautiful perfection! (Revelation 21:5) What delightful music, instrumental and vocal, will then be heard—all of it praising Jehovah!—1 Chronicles 23:4, 5; Psalm 150:3-6.

²² How wonderful it will be to live in an earth in which human life abounds to the full and where all the stages of the dying process due to the original sin of Adam will have been effaced! (Compare John 10:10.) Yes, it will be an earth wherein every approved human creature radiates the image and likeness of Jehovah God with which the first man Adam was created! (Genesis 1:26, 27) The earth will then no longer be an eyesore to the seraphs, to the cherubs, and to the radiant angels of heaven. When they turn lovable faces toward the earth, peering down at it adorned with paradisaic beauty, they will have only praise and gratitude to express to the One whose countenance they have the privilege of beholding directly—Jehovah, the Universal Sovereign.—Matthew 18:10.

A Happy, Endless Future

²³ It is within the realm of possibility and of likelihood that, some day in the future, the names of all those anointed Christians who have made their “calling and choosing” to the heavenly Kingdom sure and who have been blessed by this supernal resurrection will be published in full for the information of the human family in their earthly Paradise. (2 Peter 1:10; Psalm 87:5, 6) Thus, the absence of the 144,000 spirit-begotten anointed disciples of Jesus Christ from the earthly Paradise will be fully understood to the satisfaction of everybody and with a wholehearted rejoicing over them and together with them.

²⁴ Happy will be the endless future for all who remain in unbreakable devotion to Jehovah, the ideal Sovereign of all the universe. The comfortably filled Paradise earth will be a suitable place, a creditable place, as a “footstool” upon which God’s feet may figuratively rest. Yes, for all eternity Jehovah will have glorified ‘the very place of his feet,’ and all mankind will be in unswerving subjection to him! (Matthew 5:34, 35; Acts 7:49) The new world will be a world

without end because “to the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end.” (Isaiah 9:7) Then, the prophetic song of the heavenly angels at the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem of Judea in 2 B.C.E. will be fulfilled: “Glory in the heights above to God, and upon earth peace among men of goodwill.”—Luke 2:13, 14.

²⁵ Those who belong to the “great crowd” of the Fine Shepherd’s “other sheep” appreciate the soul-stirring words of promise of Paradise restored. It is their privilege to be associated with God’s organization now and to be zealously engaged in the work foretold by the Lord Jesus Christ, the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom in all the inhabited earth for the final witness. (Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10) Our sincere, heartfelt desire as Jehovah’s Witnesses is to maintain our integrity unsullied throughout all eternity, to the everlasting glory and vindication of the Universal Sovereign, Jehovah God, and under the royal rulership of his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. “Hallelujah!”—Revelation 19:1, 3, 4, 6, *RSV, New International Version*; Proverbs 10:9.

Chapter 21

The Garden of Eden Restored—Earth Wide

THE GARDEN of Eden was “a paradise of pleasure,” and in that sense it will be restored. (Genesis 2:8, *Douay Version*) The original Paradise covered a limited area of the globe. But Jehovah purposed that its borders were to be extended outward, all around, by the growing human family until Paradise enveloped the entire earth and enrobed it with exquisite natural beauty. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:8, 9, 15) Jesus’ words to the sympathetic evildoer who died alongside him at Calvary assured the man that he would be resurrected when the restoration of Paradise is well along, and he will then notice the delightful change in the earthly scene. (Luke 23:43) What will the restored global Paradise be like? How will it be different from the original garden of Eden?

² In the entrancing prophecies of glorious things that are just ahead, we do see something missing from the restored, earth-wide Paradise. What is that? It is “the tree of the knowledge of good and bad” that was “in the middle of the garden.” (Genesis 2:17; 3:3) This was evidently a single tree. Would it be reasonable to think that in the middle of the restored, earth-wide garden of Eden there should be such a single tree upon which there would be a divine prohibition? No. It would require a tremendous amount of traveling for people in the far corners of the earth to go to the location of such a tree in the Middle East so as possibly to eat fruit from it in disobedience to the Most High God.

³ Moreover, there will not be at such a location a “talking” serpent to invite those who approach the tree to partake of its attractive-looking fruit out of sheer spite for God’s orders. And there will not be any invisible wicked spirit to manipulate a serpent and make it appear to talk and to invite the beholder to rebel against God by adopting a course of disobedience to the Creator, with fatal consequences.

⁴ No, the invisible spirit creature that was behind the “talking” serpent back there in the garden of Eden will not be on hand during

the Millennial Reign of the “Prince of Peace,” Christ Jesus. That wicked one, Satan the Devil, will be put under complete restraint after Armageddon. Revelation 20:2, 3 tells us that the “Prince of Peace” will seize “the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan,” and bind him and hurl him into the abyss for a thousand years.

True Peace and Security in the Restored Paradise

⁵ What peace and security will follow! Gone will be Satan’s influence and domination over mankind as “the ruler of the world”! (John 14:30) With Satan’s hordes of demons also abyssed, the earth will at last be free of all kinds of spiritism, occultism, and black magic—yes, every form of demonism, which Jehovah detests.—Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

⁶ The animal creation will not do injury or be any threat to the dwellers in the restored Paradise. God will return to the lower creatures any lost measure of fear of humans. Thus we can look for the charming description of animal life that is set out in Isaiah 11:6-9 to have a literal fulfillment during the Millennial Reign of the “Prince of Peace”:

⁷ “The wolf will actually reside for a while with the male lamb, and with the kid the leopard itself will lie down, and the calf and the maned young lion and the well-fed animal all together; and a mere little boy will be leader over them. And the cow and the bear themselves will feed; together their young ones will lie down. And even the lion will eat straw just like the bull. And the sucking child will certainly play upon the hole of the cobra; and upon the light aperture of a poisonous snake will a weaned child actually put his own hand. They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain; because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea.”

⁸ It would be inconsistent for God to inspire such a prophecy to have only a spiritual meaning and not to reflect such things in actual earthly life. Similarly, Isaiah 65:25 tells us: “The wolf and the lamb themselves will feed as one, and the lion will eat straw just like the bull; and as for the serpent, his food will be dust.” Does this signify the

annihilation of the serpent family out of the global garden of Eden? No, the prophetic statement that the serpent's food "will be dust" means that members of the reptile family will never again be a menace to the life and good health of human creatures. They will have to recognize that humankind is their master who has dominion over everything that moves upon the earth, just as was the case of Adam in the garden of Eden when he named all the animals without fear.—Genesis 2:19, 20; Hosea 2:18.

⁹ The beauty and abundance of that earth-wide garden of Eden is beyond our imagination. But the Bible does give us a prophetic description of it in the 65th psalm, addressed to God. In part, this psalm says: "You have turned your attention to the earth, that you may give it abundance; you enrich it very much. The stream from God is full of water. You prepare their grain, for that is the way you prepare the earth." No droughts then but, rather, "copious showers"! (Psalm 65:1, 9-13) There will be an abundance of food for all earth's inhabitants.

¹⁰ This abundance is also foretold at Isaiah 25:6: "Jehovah of armies will certainly make for all the peoples, in this mountain, a banquet of well-oiled dishes, a banquet of wine kept on the dregs." The inhabitants of the restored Paradise will eat well-oiled dishes that sustain the heart and make the face shine. They will drink wine, well aged on the dregs and filtered, making their hearts glad. (Psalm 104:14, 15) No food shortages under the Millennial Reign of the "Prince of Peace"! Instead, there will be "an overflow."—Psalm 72:16.

Changes in Language and in Weather

¹¹ Will the earth-wide Paradise suffer from the confusion of having many languages? No, because the "Prince of Peace" is also referred to as the "Mighty God." (Isaiah 9:6) Thus he is able to reverse the confusion of language that began at the Tower of Babel. (Genesis 11:6-9) What will become the common language of all the earthly children of the "Eternal Father"? Will it be the original language of the first Adam, the language with which Jehovah endowed him? Likely. In any event, all language barriers will be wiped out. You will be able to travel anywhere and communicate with people. You will be able to

understand them, and they will be able to understand you. There will be one language for all mankind, and it would be appropriate for the entire Bible to be available in that language. (Compare Zephaniah 3:9.) In that language all the earth will be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah “as the waters are covering the very sea.”—Isaiah 11:9.

¹² Fulfilled then will be the words of Zechariah 14:9: “In that day Jehovah will prove to be one, and his name one.” Jehovah alone will be worshiped as the one true God. In “that day” of Jehovah’s Kingdom by the “Prince of Peace,” God will reveal the exact pronunciation of his name. Then there will be just one pronunciation of that holy name by everybody on earth. His name will be one.

¹³ What weather and environmental changes there will be are also a matter of keen interest to those looking forward to the global Paradise of the “Prince of Peace.” One thing is certain: The whole earth will be made an exquisite place in which to live. Never will that Paradise be disturbed by destructive storms, tornadoes, tidal waves, hurricanes, or typhoons. Wind, waves, and weather will all obey the “Prince of Peace.” (Mark 4:37-41) The global garden of Eden will have complete weather control. All the earth will be beautified into a paradise of pleasure, where it will be the happy privilege of all mankind to dwell securely to time without end.

¹⁴ No reason for any tears of sorrow then! Jehovah’s prophetic Word assures us: “The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.”—Revelation 21:3, 4.

¹⁵ The heavens are God’s throne, and the earth is his footstool. (Isaiah 66:1) So God cannot dwell on the earth in a literal sense. But he will tent with mankind. During the Thousand Year Reign, Jehovah will tent among mankind representatively by his glorified Son, Jesus Christ. How apt it is that Jehovah’s presence will be represented by his “Prince of Peace”! This brings to mind the words of Isaiah 7:14 about the name applied to the Messiah—Immanuel. That name means “With Us Is God.” (Matthew 1:23) How thrilling that, by means

of his dearest Son, God will “reside” with mankind! Then tears of joy will likely come into our eyes as we see the marvelous miracles performed by this “Mighty God,” especially when dead loved ones are brought back to life in the resurrection to Paradise conditions. (Acts 24:15) Such miracles will be marvelous evidence that God is with mankind and that he is wiping out all the sorrowful tears from our eyes forever.

A Beauty Spot in the Boundless Universe

¹⁶ The first Adam was told how to start off the project of extending Paradise from right there in the garden of Eden. The accomplishment of that original purpose to extend it earth wide will be realized. But will the resurrection of the dead have to wait until the Paradise extends all around the globe? No. For example, those who come back in an early resurrection will be resurrected into the portions of the earth where the Armageddon survivors are and have converted such areas into a paradise. As the resurrection of mankind in general progresses, these Paradise areas will expand until they join to form the earth-wide Paradise.

¹⁷ The Paradise to come will surpass all the lovely parks or gardens today. Radiantly, the entire earth will bloom as a peaceful paradise, one that delights not only the eye of men but even the eye of the Creator. It will be a global garden of Eden adorned with vegetation and trees—good to look at and producing food for sustaining creature life in perfection. The earth will forever remain a beauty spot in all of Jehovah’s boundless universe. And all unified mankind will have the everlasting obligation and privilege to keep the earth such a beauty spot.

¹⁸ All members of this godly human family will dwell together peaceably as brothers and sisters in all purity, for they will actually be children of the “Eternal Father,” the “Prince of Peace.” So there will be no arrogant dominating on the part of men over women, their sisters. But the perfected women will be what Jehovah God purposes, even as he purposed Eve to be “a helper for” her perfect husband, Adam.—Genesis 2:18; see also 1 Peter 3:7.

¹⁹ The sight that the paradisaic earth filled with perfect men and women will then present to those in the invisible heavens will be far grander and lovelier than the appearance of the earth when first created, at which time “the morning stars joyfully cried out together, and all the sons of God began shouting in applause.” (Job 38:7) Then the Most High God, Jehovah, will have been fully vindicated as the One whose glorious purpose can never be defeated. All praise to him!

g75 1/8 28

By causing a virgin girl to conceive and bear a son without the aid of a human father. The child, named Jesus, was “God’s Son.” (Luke 1:34, 35) As a sinless, perfect man Jesus could “give his soul a ransom in exchange for many,” “a corresponding ransom for all.” (Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6) Thus Jesus could say: “God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) Where will people be able to enjoy this “everlasting life”?

Keep in mind that the ransom allows for the restoration of what was lost, namely, perfect *human* life. Humans live on earth. (Ps. 115:16; 1 Cor. 15:50) Jesus, when saying that “the mild-tempered ones . . . will inherit the earth,” drew upon Psalm 37, which also says: “The righteous themselves will possess the *earth*, and they will *reside forever* upon it.” (Matt. 5:5; Ps. 37:10, 11, 29) The Scriptures also speak symbolically of a “new earth” where “death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.”—Rev. 21:1-4; 2 Pet. 3:13.

The thought of living forever upon earth need not surprise you. That under perfect conditions human life could be extended indefinitely can be seen from the extremely long life-spans of certain individuals recorded in the Bible. Adam, for example, lived 930 years; Methuselah, 969; Noah, 950.—Gen. 5:5, 27; 9:29.

Would you like to gain eternal life in an earth free from all the woes that presently cause ‘mourning and outcry and pain’? What must you do to attain to that goal?

Note Jesus’ words, as rendered in *The Amplified New Testament*: “And this is eternal life: [it means] to know (to perceive, recognize, become acquainted with and understand) You, the only true and real God, and [likewise] to know Him, Jesus [as the] Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah, Whom You have sent.”—John 17:3.

Getting to “know” God and Jesus Christ, becoming acquainted with God’s personality, his purpose and dealings with mankind, calls for a

careful study of the Bible, which is “inspired of God.” (2 Tim. 3:16) But there is more involved than just Bible study.

The Bible writer James counsels: “Only be sure that you act on the message and do not merely listen; for that would be to mislead yourselves.” (Jas. 1:22, *NEB*) He adds: “A man is justified by deeds and not by faith in itself. . . . As the body is dead when there is no breath left in it, so faith divorced from deeds is lifeless as a corpse.” (Jas. 2:24, 26, *NEB*) The “deeds” that make one’s faith alive in God’s eyes are not mere religious ceremonies or “charitable works,” but deeds done in imitation of Jesus and his disciples.—Matt. 28:19, 20; John 14:12; Acts 1:8.

God created man to live forever upon earth. It was through the sin of the first human pair that death invaded the human family. Jesus Christ, by giving up his perfect human life in sacrifice, paid the required ransom price to set mankind free from sin and death. Will you benefit from this loving provision of God? That depends on your willingness to make a careful study of the Word of God and prove by deeds that you really believe it.

Becoming an Ordained Minister—God's Way!

A VISITOR would likely have been intrigued—perhaps even perplexed—by what he heard. The scene was a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses. An address was being given to a group of people who were about to get baptized. Surprisingly, the speaker told these baptismal candidates: "Your presence in this group of baptismal candidates indicates your desire to be an *ordained minister* of the Kingdom."

'How can that be?' a visitor might have asked. 'Is not baptism for persons freshly exposed to Christianity—and for babes? Does it not take years of extensive training and education to become an ordained minister?' Perhaps you would reason similarly. But what the Bible actually says about baptism and ordination may surprise you.

Before One Is Baptized

First of all, baptism is not for persons barely acquainted with the Christian message. The Bible, at Acts 8:12, shows that people in the first century were baptized after "they believed." Matthew 28:19 also shows that a person must become a 'disciple' before baptism. And how does one become a 'believer,' or 'disciple,' ('taught one')? Through careful study of the Bible! In this way, a person gains an accurate knowledge of Jesus and Jehovah God. (John 17:3) Only after gaining this knowledge is a student in a position to consider getting baptized. In the first century, established Christians gave such instruction to new converts.—Acts 8:31, 35, 36.

In congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses today, arrangements are similarly made for interested individuals to enjoy a free home Bible study. A person with a responsive heart gradually comes to appreciate what he is learning. He is moved to share his newfound convictions with others. (Romans 10:8-10) He begins regularly attending Christian meetings, where he gains yet more Biblical instruction. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) And after weeks or months of this, the new believer develops a desire to follow the Bible's counsel at Romans 12:1: "Consequently I entreat you by the compassions of God, brothers, to

present your bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God, a sacred service with your power of reason.”

Knowledge alone, however, does not qualify one to make this dedication. One must also repent and “turn around.” (Acts 3:19) Why is this? Frankly, some have had immoral life-styles prior to learning God’s standards. Others have been wrapped up in selfish pursuits. But to present themselves to God as “holy, acceptable,” they must show regret for such past actions. They must be remorseful for having used their life, vitality, and abilities in unscriptural pursuits. Such remorse must also be accompanied by appropriate action so as really to “turn around,” or change their life course.

To help the new believer further, Christian elders arrange to meet with him and spend time reviewing the basic teachings of the Bible. This, for one thing, assures the elders that the prospective Christian has acquired an accurate knowledge of God’s purposes. And, of course, the review proves most helpful to the student. As needed, certain matters that were not correctly understood are clarified.

Baptisms are generally held in connection with conventions or assemblies of Jehovah’s Witnesses. On such occasions, a pointed talk is given to the baptismal candidates. They are reminded that baptism is not a matter of joining a new religion. Jesus said: “If anyone wants to come after me, let him *disown himself* and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me.”—Matthew 16:24.

The candidates are further reminded of the deep significance of baptism. The text at 1 Peter 3:21 is often read: “That which corresponds to this is also now saving you, namely, baptism, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the request made to God for a good conscience,) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Here, Peter compares baptism to Noah’s experience of passing through the waters of the Flood. While those waters proved death-dealing to earth’s wicked populace, they proved life-saving to Noah as they safely carried him in the ark. Likewise, baptism ‘saves’ Christians from this wicked world. When someone, on the basis of his faith in the benefits of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, gets baptized, such a person is, in a sense, in a ‘saved’ condition before God. He is

no longer considered a part of this wicked generation doomed to destruction.—See Acts 2:40.

Therefore, getting baptized is not a step that should be taken in the heat of emotion, as so often happens at religious revival meetings. Highlighting this is the fact that before new disciples are actually immersed, the minister presiding at the baptism asks them two penetrating questions. Their answers in the affirmative are a “public declaration” of their faith in the ransom and of the fact that they have unreservedly dedicated themselves to Jehovah. (Romans 10:9, 10) Now they are ready for water baptism.

“Never Die at All”

¹⁸ While the sure hope for dead people is the resurrection, there is another marvelous hope in our time. It has to do with what Jesus went on to tell Martha. After saying: “He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life [in the resurrection],” Jesus added, *“and everyone that is living and exercises faith in me will never die at all.”* (John 11:25, 26) In this latter statement, Jesus foretold an astounding thing: A time would come when people living would no longer need to die! But when would that be?

¹⁹ Now—our day—is the time for that promise to be realized! All the evidence shows that we are very near the end of this evil world. (Matthew 24:3-14; 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13) Thus, people who today exercise faith in God and in his Son have the thrilling hope of surviving this system’s end and continuing alive into God’s new world—never dying at all! These are spoken of at Revelation 7:9, 14 as “a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues . . . [who] come out of the great tribulation,” preserved by God because of their exercising faith. Jesus spoke of the coming dissolution of this present evil system as a “great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world’s beginning until now, no, nor will occur again.”—Matthew 24:21; see also Proverbs 2:21, 22; Psalm 37:10, 11, 34.

²⁰ Throughout the world, millions of the great crowd who want to live forever on earth are already exercising faith in God’s promises and in the one whom he has authorized to be “the resurrection and the life,” Jesus Christ. And they have dedicated themselves to God, symbolizing this by water baptism. (Matthew 28:19, 20) They acknowledge that they owe salvation entirely to “God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb,” Jesus Christ.—Revelation 7:10.

²¹ Those of the great crowd who survive this world’s end will not need a resurrection from the dead because they “will never die at all”! Are you taking steps to be one of this group? If so, what an amazing, unique privilege is open to you—that of surviving the end of Satan’s evil system and being ushered into a righteous new era that will bring

you perfect health and everlasting life on a paradise earth! (Luke 23:43; Revelation 21:4, 5) By learning what is God's will and persevering in doing it, you may demonstrate that you 'are not of the sort that shrink back to destruction.' You too may "have faith to the preserving alive of the soul."—Hebrews 10:39; 1 John 2:15-17; Revelation 7:15.

So, during the thousand-year period of the absolute rule of the kingdom of God, every individual on earth can choose to live on and on, or he can terminate his existence at any time he chooses. If he hates to do what is right and does not have love, respect and regard for his fellowman, and particularly if he does not appreciate the loving-kindness of God, he can choose to be disobedient. But he cannot continue living, for during this time those whose deeds disqualify them from being written in the “book of life” will be put to death permanently. They will be “hurled into the [symbolic] lake of fire,” “the second death,” from which there will be no resurrection.—Rev. 20:14, 15.

Hence, it is just as Moses said to the Israelites as they were about to enter the Promised Land, to live under God’s government there: “Choose life in order that you may keep alive.” We may now make a choice, not merely to prolong our present life, as those Israelites then could do, but to assure permanent life in a “new earth”—an unbroken life-span.—Deut. 30:19; 2 Pet. 3:13.

Is this not fully desirable? Certainly it is to those who appreciate life. But if a person cannot tolerate righteous conditions and insists on carrying on practices that bring harm to himself and his fellowman, he has no place in the “new earth” society.

Bible Knowledge Will Help You to Choose Life

It all comes down to the question: Do you want to live forever? You may not be able to do much toward your life now, except make it more purposeful, better and happier, while entertaining a hope for the future. But you can choose now how long you want to live in ‘the life that is to come.’ (1 Tim. 4:8) Choosing life now by taking hold of God’s instructions and provisions, you may be among the “great crowd” that survives the destruction of the present system of things, which all the evidence indicates is near at hand. Or you can join them in the righteous “new earth” by a resurrection.

To strengthen yourself to maintain a God-pleasing course in the midst of a frustrated, confused and corrupt world, you will want to identify and associate with “God’s household, which is the

congregation of the living God, a pillar and support of the truth” in the earth. (1 Tim. 3:15) Those now looking forward to Christ’s Kingdom rule over earth are striving to live so as eventually to inherit life and are happy to help you in your sincere search to see *from the Bible* what is the truth that leads to life and what is the true congregation of God. Jehovah’s Witnesses devote their time and energy freely and voluntarily to assisting all seekers of Bible truth, that they may find the way to “everlasting life.”—John 3:16.