



This eight-part series in “Awake!” is examining an outstanding feature of the Bible—its prophecies, or predictions. The articles will help you to answer these questions: Are Bible prophecies merely the work of clever humans? Do they bear the hallmark of divine inspiration? We invite you to weigh the evidence.

“The End Will Come”

DO YOU feel incensed when corrupt governments oppress and exploit their citizens? Does it offend your sense of justice when big business fattens the rich at the expense of the poor? Are you angered when religious leaders fleece their flocks or teach outright falsehoods? If so, you may be pleased to learn that the Bible too condemns these evils. This article will consider (1) Bible prophecies that foretell the end of all wickedness and wicked people and (2) the reason why these prophecies merit our full trust.

The End of Wickedness

The preceding article in this series considered the composite sign Jesus gave, which in-

dicates the nearness of the end of the present world. That sign includes a global proclamation of the good news of God’s Kingdom—God’s government that will soon rule the entire earth. (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 24:3, 14) When that proclamation work is finished, “the end will come,” said Jesus. You may be surprised to learn that the first thing that God will remove will be false religion, which misrepresents him. In the Bible, false religion is symbolized by a harlot named “Babylon the Great.”—Revelation 17:1, 5; see the box “Identifying Babylon the Great,” on page 13.

Prophecy 1: “[Babylon the Great’s] plagues will come, death and mourning and famine, and

she will be completely burned with fire, because Jehovah God, who judged her, is strong.”—Revelation 18:2, 8.

Fulfillment: The Bible reveals that at his appointed time, God will move the world’s political powers to turn against Babylon the Great and destroy her. They will “make her devastated and naked” and “eat up her fleshy parts.” (Revelation 17:16) In other words, they will expose her shameful character and plunder her immense wealth. Her destruction will be quick and so complete that not a trace of her will remain.—Revelation 18:21.

The political rulers may think that their deed was of their own making. However, the fulfillment of this amazing prophecy will confirm that Babylon’s end was an act of God. He will have “put it into their hearts to carry out his thought.”—Revelation 17:17.

Prophecy 2: *“In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom. . . . It will crush and put an end to all these [man-made] kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite.”*
—Daniel 2:44.

Fulfillment: Having disposed of false religion, God will turn his attention to other organizations—political and commercial—as well as to wicked people. (Proverbs 2:22; Revelation 19:17, 18) Like a landlord who evicts destructive tenants, God will “bring to ruin those ruining the earth.” He will destroy those who fill it with violence and sexually degrading practices.—Revelation 11:18; Romans 1:18, 26-29.

Who will survive? The Bible answers: “The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed

IDENTIFYING BABYLON THE GREAT

How do we know that the symbolic woman named Babylon the Great, described in the Bible book of Revelation, pictures all false religion? Consider the evidence:

- She could not be a literal woman because the imagery in Revelation is in the form of “signs,” or symbols.—Revelation 1:1.

- Babylon the Great sits on waters, which represent “peoples and crowds and nations.” (Revelation 17:1, 5, 15) A literal woman cannot do that. False religion, however, gets its support from its huge membership.

- This symbolic woman is a “great city that has a kingdom over the kings of the earth.” In other words, she is organized and has international influence.—Revelation 17:18.

- A spiritual harlot, Babylon the Great forms alliances *with* “the kings of the earth.” Moreover, these mourn her destruction. (Revelation 17:1, 2; 18:9) So she cannot be a political entity.

- The commercial leaders also mourn her destruction. (Revelation 18:15) Hence, she cannot be a secular commercial power.

- The Bible describes the blending of the worship of God with a love for the world as spiritual adultery. (James 4:4) Babylon the Great fits that profile. Also, she promotes spiritism, a religious practice.—Revelation 18:23.

- The ancient city of Babylon, after which Babylon the Great is named, was a *profoundly* religious city.—Isaiah 47:1, 12, 13; Jeremiah 50:1, 2, 38.

Thus, we can say with confidence that Babylon the Great pictures the combined false religions of the world.

find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.”—Psalm 37:11; 72:7.

Can we trust Bible prophecies? Can we be sure that God will terminate wickedness and suffering and preserve the righteous? Yes!

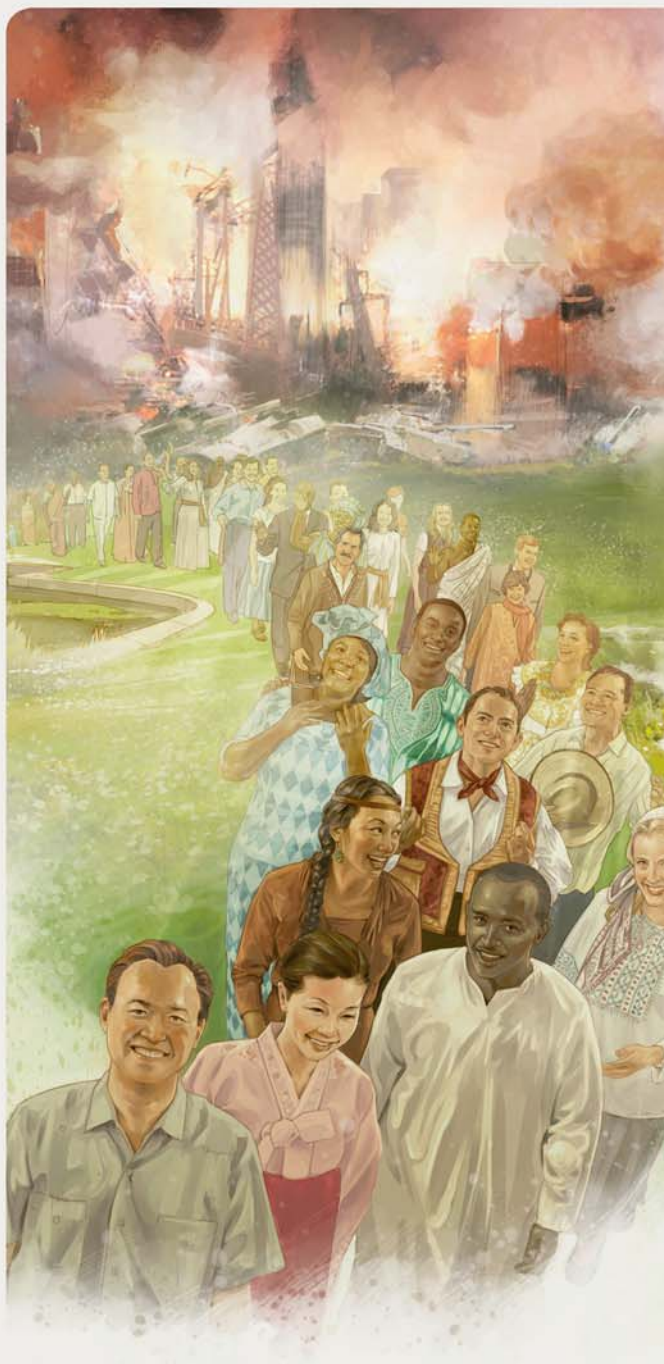
Bible Prophecies Are Trustworthy

Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that Jehovah God is the Author of the Bible and that everything he has promised he will do. (2 Timothy 3:16) Is this belief reasonable?

If you had a lifelong friend who truly loved you and never lied to you, would you believe him if he promised to do something good for you and if what he promised was within his means? Undoubtedly you would. God is even better than any human friend we may have. “God never tells a lie!”—Titus 1:2, *Contemporary English Version*.

God does not approve of blind faith, or credulity. Accordingly, he inspired the Bible writers to record many prophecies that only he, the Almighty, could fulfill. A number of those prophecies and their amazing fulfillment were discussed in the first six installments in this series of articles. (See the box “Fulfilled Bible Prophecies,” on page 15.) We can be confident, then, that God will fulfill the predictions that involve our future, including those mentioned in this article.

Yes, the Creator *will* bring an end to false religion, oppressive rulership, and the greedy commercial world. Would you like to learn more about what will happen after those events occur? The next issue of *Awake!* will help you. It will contain the final article in this series.



God’s Kingdom will bring an end to all false religion, corrupt governments, and greedy commerce

FULFILLED BIBLE PROPHECIES

Below is a list of the many remarkable Bible prophecies that were discussed in the first six installments of this series. As those articles showed, these prophecies proved to be accurate!

PROPHECIES ABOUT ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS

- The descendants of the faithful man Abraham would become a great nation, later called the nation of Israel.—Genesis 12:1, 2.

- Abraham's descendants would return to the land of Canaan after living in a foreign land for four generations.—Genesis 15:13, 16.

- Abraham's descendants would take possession of "the entire land of Canaan."—Genesis 17:8.

- Because the Israelites rebelled against God, he would allow them to be conquered and taken captive.—Jeremiah 25:8-11.

- God would restore the Jews to their homeland after they spent 70 years in captivity.—Jeremiah 25:12; 29:10.

- The Babylonian world power would be overthrown, and in time Babylon would become rubble.—Isaiah 13:19, 20.

PROPHECIES ABOUT THE MESSIAH AND HIS FOLLOWERS

- The Messiah, or Christ, would stem from the family line of King David.—Isaiah 9:7.

- The future Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.—Micah 5:2.

- The Messiah would appear 483 years after "the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem." That word was given in 455 B.C.E.—Daniel 9:25.

- Before his execution, the Messiah would be severely flogged.—Isaiah 50:6.

- The Messiah would be executed as a despised criminal, yet he would be buried with "the rich class."—Isaiah 53:9.

- Christ's followers would spread his message throughout Judea, Samaria, and the rest of the known world.—Acts 1:8.

- Christians would be persecuted.—Mark 13:9.

- Deceitful and oppressive individuals would infiltrate the Christian congregation, causing many to become apostate.—Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Peter 2:1, 2.

PROPHECIES ABOUT THE LAST DAYS

The time of the end would be marked by

- Worldwide preaching of the "good news of [God's] kingdom."—Matthew 24:14.

- Warfare, even on a global scale.—Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:4.

- Food shortages.—Matthew 24:7.

- Great earthquakes.—Luke 21:11.

- Terrible diseases.—Luke 21:11.

- Hatred and violence.—Matthew 24:10, 12.

- Greedy, self-centered people and money lovers.—2 Timothy 3:1-5.