

The  
Time  
for True  
Submission  
to God

In many countries persons have their religion registered on their identity cards. But how many are really concerned about whether they measure up to the requirements of their religion? Even more important, how many persons feel the need to investigate whether their religion, which they might not have personally chosen, is really pleasing to God?

So why should we think about God and religion? Why should we touch upon a subject that many people do not like to discuss, namely, whether the various religions of mankind are right or wrong? Well, do we not live in a time in which people more than ever need God? Can we not see that world events are developing toward a climax? Do we not feel that the world's problems are getting out of hand? God's Word explains world events and shows us that salvation of humans depends on our having a good relationship with God. In other words, it depends on whether someone has really submitted to God. Yes, it is now the time for mankind *really* to submit to God.

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Publishers

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

Branch addresses:

America (U.S.A.)	25 Columbia Heights	Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201
England	The Ridgeway	London NW7 1RN
Kenya	Box 47788	Nairobi
Nigeria	P.M.B. 1090	Benin City, Edo State
Pakistan	197-A Ahmad Block	New Garden Town, Lahore 54600

*The Time for True Submission to God*  
English (sm-E)

Made in the United States of America

## The Time for True Submission to God

DO YOU love righteousness? Do you hate fights, divisions, hostilities and bloodshed? Does it distress you to see some people acting as if they were superior to those of a different race, religion, social class, age or sex? Would you like to see all humans living together in unity, like brothers and sisters? If you can answer Yes to these questions, then this booklet has an important message for you.

<sup>2</sup> Needless to say, people today do not live in unity like brothers and sisters. Think of your neighbors or those you work with. How many do you know that are *truly* honest? How many can you trust? Probably not many. Can you walk the streets alone in the dark without fear? Would you dare to go to bed at night without securely locking your doors? Most of us would not.

<sup>3</sup> And what about the nations as a whole? While people suffer and social problems go unsolved, many politicians struggle with each other for wealth and power. While millions are starving, governments spend huge amounts of money on armaments. Meantime, the economy of most countries gets worse and worse, and people fear for the future.

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1. (a) What questions are asked? (b) How do you answer these questions yourself?
  - 2, 3. What problems make life difficult for us today?

<sup>4</sup> The truth is, we are living in the most critical time in human history, and thoughtful people recognize this fact. Recently, two authors investigated some of the problems of the modern world: the arms race, inflation, the population problem, the depletion of resources, limitless industrialization, faulty nutrition, environmental pollution and the upset in the balance of nature. They wrote a book about their findings and the title they chose was *Is The World Going Down?* (by Sezer Duru and Orhan Duru, published in Istanbul, Turkey, 1975). Consider their comment about men's efforts to solve these problems.

<sup>5</sup> "Authorities who are constantly telling the tale of good days to come with peace and happiness, refrain from giving tangible proofs for their optimism. . . . One day they gather in Bucharest for the 'World Population Conference.' The next day in Rome they talk about the problem of nutrition. Another day in Stockholm pollution of the environment is discussed. All these conventions and conferences are organized by the United Nations. So these matters must have a real side to them. But these conventions and conferences mostly become the forum for airing conflicting scientific, political, social and economic views."

<sup>6</sup> Can you disagree with these words? Even when experts have the best of intentions, they seem to accomplish very little. It is as if an invisible hand is blocking their good intentions, and meanwhile the world becomes gradually worse. What is the real reason that they cannot solve today's problems?

- 4, 5. Have the experts been able to solve any of today's outstanding problems?  
 6. In view of the failure of the world's leaders, what question is asked?

### WHY THE FAILURE?

<sup>1</sup> Suppose you go to a tailor with a piece of material and ask him to make you a suit. However, the suit he makes does not fit you. The tailor says that this is not his fault, but it is because of the poor quality of the cloth you gave him. So you buy the kind of cloth that he wants and go back to him. Again, the suit he makes for you does not fit. How many times would you go back to that tailor before you realized that the problem was not the cloth but the tailor himself?

<sup>2</sup> The situation with mankind is similar. During the centuries, many different kinds of government have been tried by man. There have been kingdoms, sultanates, oligarchies, dictatorships and democracies. Just like a customer who keeps going back to the tailor with different material, man has tried all these different kinds of government. And not one of them has "fitted." Not one has brought happiness to the majority of its subjects. Injustices have been rife. Individuals have been trampled on, and sometimes misrule has been so bad that the oppressed have revolted. Yet even governments brought about by revolution have not "fitted."

<sup>3</sup> In the last century, it was suggested that the root of most of man's ills was economic. A new system was put forward called communism, which many philosophers felt would eliminate injustice and bring peace. During this century, governments based on the communist theory have been established in many lands. What has been the

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- 1, 2. (a) What illustration is presented here? (b) How does this help us to see whether human governments can solve humanity's problems?  
 3, 4. Have either communism or capitalism been successful in bringing peace and happiness?

result? While not wishing to compare communism with capitalism, or to suggest that one is superior to the other, we have to take note of the fact that communism has been just as unable as capitalism to solve mankind's problems.

<sup>4</sup> It has not even brought peace. In Southeast Asia communist governments have recently made war against one another, provoking the following comment in *The New York Times*:

"The conflict that spread this weekend from Cambodia to the border of China and Vietnam and to hostile exchanges between China and the Soviet Union provides the final proof that no ideology makes men immune to ethnic and racial strife, or aggression and chauvinism. While an impotent United Nations looks on, hotheaded governments with no apparent economic interest at stake risk even major war. Ugly nationalism has triumphed once again in the human family."

<sup>5</sup> What is the real reason for the failures of all these forms of government? In our illustration of the tailor and the cloth, it eventually became clear that the tailor himself was the problem. Similarly, if man has tried so many different kinds of government, and they have *all* failed, then we have to conclude that the problem is with man himself. Man is not capable of ruling himself successfully! As a wise man said many years ago: "It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step."\*

<sup>6</sup> But if man cannot rule himself, who can govern him? There is only one: God himself. Of

\* Quoted from Jeremiah 10:23, in the Bible. All quotations from here on are either from the Bible or from the Qur'an (Koran), unless otherwise stated.

5. What is the real reason for the failure of human government?

6. Who is the only One who can rule mankind successfully?

course, atheists will argue that there is no God, so it is valueless to talk about God's ruling mankind. But their reasoning is shortsighted. It is impossible to *disprove* the existence of God. On the other hand, when we see things such as a house, an automobile or an airplane, common sense tells us that someone must have made them. They could not have made themselves. If these ordinary things must have makers, then surely things as wonderful as the human body, this earth, or a bird in flight, must also have a maker. And that Maker must be God.\*

<sup>7</sup> Now, granted the fact that God exists, do you feel he is pleased with the way his earthly creatures are conducting themselves? If you were a father, would you be happy to see your children lying, cheating, killing and oppressing one another? Of course not. Surely then, neither is God happy to see the humans that he put on this earth doing the same things. For one thing, it shows that they are not submitting themselves to his rule.

<sup>8</sup> True, many today claim to worship God, but does that mean that they have submitted to him and accept him as their ruler? Some store owners, for example, hang up an inscription proclaiming: "What God Says Occurs." But does that sign guarantee that the store owner will not cheat you, or that he will pay his taxes honestly—as God would want him to do? Similarly, many statesmen say that they will accomplish certain things with the help of God. But how many statesmen

\* See Romans 1:20; Hebrews 3:4, in the Bible.

7. How must God view the conduct of mankind?

8. Does the fact that many claim to serve God prove that they have truly submitted themselves to him?

act in a truly God-fearing way? In times of war, is it not true that statesmen on each side of the conflict often belong to the same religion, even to the same sect? How could people who had truly submitted to God and looked to him for guidance fight wars against one another?

<sup>9</sup> Hence, an individual's claim to worship God is no guarantee that he has really submitted to God's rule. However, it cannot be denied that, throughout history, religion has had a great effect on events. In most countries, kings, princes, politicians, as well as ordinary folk, have been powerfully influenced by their religious affiliations, and by what their religious leaders have told them. This raises the question: To what extent have the world's religions helped individuals to submit to God's rule?

9. Nevertheless, what power has religion had over mankind through the centuries?

#### THE PART RELIGION HAS PLAYED

<sup>1</sup> Today, about one and a half billion people claim to belong to one of three religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam. Judaism is the religion of the Jews, who claim to be followers of the Law of Moses. Christians claim to follow Jesus of Nazareth, whom they view as the Messiah, or Christ. One who adheres to Islam is called a Muslim, or Mussulman. These two words have an interesting meaning. In one authoritative work they are defined like this: "Muslim (Mussulman): person surrendered to God."—*Lexicon of a Translation of the Qur'an*, Volume 2, page 439, by Muhammad Bin Hamza, published by the Turkish Ministry of Culture.

1. What are three of the major religions of the world?

<sup>2</sup> Of course, believers in all these religions claim that their religion is the true one. Yet we have to ask ourselves: Why have none of these religions prevented mankind from coming into the critical situation that we see around us today? A close look at the followers of these religions will help us to understand.

<sup>3</sup> Let us examine, first, the adherents of Judaism: Have these really followed the Law of Moses and served God the way Moses did? Have they acted in harmony with his words? For example, Moses said to the forefathers of the modern-day Jews who lived in his day: "A prophet from your own midst, from your brothers, like me, is what Jehovah your God will raise up for you—to him you people should listen." (Deuteronomy 18:15) When did that prophet appear? Well, he did not appear during the time that the holy books of the Jews were being written. In fact, some Jews are still waiting for him.

<sup>4</sup> But consider. About fifteen hundred years after Moses pronounced that prophecy, a man did appear who, in his ministry, bore a striking resemblance to Moses. Moreover, there were more than three hundred prophecies in the books accepted as holy by the Jews that were fulfilled in this remarkable man.

<sup>5</sup> This man himself said to the Jews: "If you believed Moses you would believe me, for that one wrote about me." (John 5:46) In spite of this, the Jews of those days rejected him. Who was this man? Jesus, who was called the Christ, or

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2. What do all religions claim, yet what question is raised?
  3. What prophecy did God give to Moses?
  - 4, 5. (a) Who fulfilled God's prophecy to Moses? (b) Did the Jews accept this one, and what does this prove as to the Jews?

anointed one. Surely, those who rejected the one promised by Moses cannot really be viewed as worshiping God the way Moses worshiped him, can they?

<sup>6</sup> What about those who claim to be Christians, who say that they do accept Jesus? Look at the hundreds of millions of persons around the world who belong to the countless confusing sects that claim to be Christian. Can you actually believe that they are all worshiping God the way Jesus did?

<sup>7</sup> Many religions claiming to be Christian use icons or images in their worship. Would Jesus have done this? Moses, who prophesied the coming of Jesus, warned: "You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or that is on the earth underneath or that is in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them nor be induced to serve them." (Exodus 20:4, 5) A close friend and follower of Jesus, the apostle John, said to worshipers of God in his day: "Little children, guard yourselves from idols." (1 John 5:21) Can you see the difference between what Moses and Jesus' friend, John, said, and what those who claim to be Christians are doing?

<sup>8</sup> Additionally, have you noticed that most of the great wars of this century have started either between "Christian" nations, or between a "Christian" and a non-Christian nation? Think, too, of the Crusades, and the Thirty Years' War. One was "Christian" aggression against Muslims, and

6, 7. (a) What do those who claim to be Christians say? (b) Is their claim correct?

8, 9. (a) What is Christendom's record with regard to war? (b) Is this evidence that she has followed Jesus' counsel, or not?

the other was vicious aggression between peoples claiming to be Christian. Jesus would never have acted in such a way.

<sup>9</sup> Jesus straightforwardly warned: "Those who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Matthew 26:52) For more than a thousand years, Christendom (those nations claiming to be Christian) has relied on the "sword," or on warfare. Even today, the nations of Christendom are prominent in stockpiling the many kinds of weapons of modern warfare.

<sup>10</sup> Jesus also told his followers: "I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:34, 35) When you look at the "Christian" nations, do you feel that they love one another? Surely not, when throughout history they have fought so many wars among themselves. And within these nations crime, oppression, lying, cheating, stealing and other unloving acts are just as rampant as in the non-Christian nations. We can only conclude that these nations are not made up of true disciples of Christ.

<sup>11</sup> But what about those who adhere to Islam? As pointed out above, a Muslim is one who feels he has "surrendered to God." "To surrender" means to yield oneself to someone, to submit to him. It says in the *Great Islamic Catechism* (by Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen): "As for the word Islam, its lexical meaning is obedience, submission, surrender to something. In particular: 'obedience to

10. (a) What is the outstanding sign of a true Christian? (b) Has Christendom manifested this sign?

11. What question do many Moslems doubtless ask about their fellow religionists?

God the Most High.' " This meaning is significant. If all Muslims had truly submitted themselves to God, would not an atmosphere of peace and brotherhood prevail among them? Yet we find bitter hatreds between different sects, and even wars between Muslim nations. Doubtless many upright Muslims, on seeing such things, have asked themselves: 'How many Muslims among us have truly surrendered to God?'

<sup>12</sup> Perhaps part of the reason for the above situation in these three religions is the attitude of the clergy—whatever their religion—toward material things. Do they supply their religious services free, or do their followers have to pay? Is it not true that the longer prayers are more expensive? Do clergymen willingly go to the funerals of poor men without taking money? Weddings and other religious ceremonies also have to be paid for, do they not? Often, you can only do the things prescribed by your religion in proportion to the amount of money you can afford. It has been made to appear that God's kindness can be bought for money, and the clergy are the ones who benefit from that money. The truth is, many have been led to hate religion for this reason.

<sup>13</sup> There is a saying, "Do what the priest says. Don't do what he does." This betrays the fact that many clergymen act contrary to the way they teach. But think: If someone who was without a single hair on his head claimed that he had a drug to make hair grow again, would you buy the drug from him? If the drug is really effective, then why is the man who is selling it still bald?

12. What has been the record of many religious leaders with regard to the love of money?

13, 14. What illustrates whether the clergy practice what they preach?

As long as he stays bald, no one is going to buy his supposedly hair-restoring drug.

<sup>14</sup> The case is similar to that of many of the clergy—and remember, we are speaking about the clergy of *all* religions. While what they say often sounds impressive, nevertheless, in their lives they do not live up to their own teachings. It is as if they were selling a hair-restoring drug but were bald themselves.

<sup>15</sup> Jesus once spoke about the religious leaders of his day. Read what he said, and see if you agree that, in principle, it applies to many of the clergy in most of the religions with which you have come in contact.

"They bind up heavy loads and put them upon the shoulders of men, but they themselves are not willing to budge them with their finger. All the works they do they do to be viewed by men . . . They like the most prominent place at evening meals and the front seats in the synagogues, and the greetings in the marketplaces and to be called Rabbi [Teacher] by men. But you, do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, whereas all you are brothers."

—Matthew 23:4-8.

Can you see now at least one reason why the influence of religion throughout history has done little to bring mankind closer to God?

15. (a) What was Jesus' comment about the religious leaders of his day? (b) Do you feel this applies to many religious leaders today?

### ONE GOD, ONE RELIGION

<sup>1</sup> If we really wish to surrender ourselves to God, we have to settle in our mind an important problem regarding religion. Is it God's will that

1, 2. Why is it not logical that the many contradictory religions in the world could all lead us to the same God?

there are so many religions in the world? Is he content to see people trying to worship him in many different organizations, with different beliefs, religious rituals and even different moral standards?

<sup>2</sup> The answer has to be No. God is a God of harmony. But the different religions of mankind are not in harmony with each other. They fight one another, persecute one another and contradict one another. Imagine that you were lost, and you asked four different people how you could get home. What would you think, if one told you to travel north, another said to travel south, the third said you had to go eastward, and the fourth, westward, in order to arrive back home? Could they all be right? Of course not. And similarly, all the religions of this world cannot be right, either, when they give contradictory instructions as to what we should do to submit to God.

<sup>3</sup> It is interesting, however, that the three main religions mentioned earlier, although they disagree about many things, all agree on one point: there is only one God. True, Christendom confuses this with her doctrine of the Trinity, teaching that there is one God made up of three persons. But the Bible, which Christendom accepts as holy, does not teach the Trinity. The Bible teaches the oneness of God.

<sup>4</sup> Thus it is that in the Hebrew Bible we read: "Listen, O Israel: Jehovah our God is *one* Jehovah." (Deuteronomy 6:4) In the Christian Scriptures we read: "There is . . . *one* God and Father [Life-Giver or Creator] of all persons, who is over

3. What is one point on which three of the major religions of the world agree?

4. How do the holy writings of each of these three religions demonstrate this fact?

all and through all and in all." (Ephesians 4:4, 6) In the Qur'an (also spelled Koran), it is written in the Unity (*Al-Ikhlas*) chapter, in the first verse: "Say: Allah is *One*."<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>5</sup> However, these three religions all describe God differently. It is as if you wished to learn about a certain important official, and you asked three different neighbors what kind of man he was. One said he was tall and blond, the other said he was small and dark, and the third one said he was of average height and gray-haired. While all your three neighbors would thus show that they believed this official existed, it would be obvious that at least two of them did not really know him personally.

<sup>6</sup> In the same way, when different religions describe God in contradictory ways, we have to ask ourselves: 'Which one is true, and which ones are mistaken?' If we really wish to submit ourselves to God, we will be anxious to find the answer to that question. The most important subject we can ever study is the truth about God.

5, 6. Why is it not possible that we could come to know the true God equally well through all three of these religions?

### THE NEED TO SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH

<sup>1</sup> Actually, we need to know the truth about everything we have dealings with. A businessman wants to know the truth when he is settling accounts. He does not let sentiment or prejudice

<sup>\*</sup> All quotations from the Qur'an in this booklet are taken from the translation by N. J. Dawood, published by Penguin Classics in 1956.

1. (a) Illustrate why it is to our advantage to know the truth about everything we have dealings with. (b) What problem often arises in discussions about religion?

blind him, otherwise he is likely to lose money. When we get married, we want to know the truth about our future partner. If we allow ourselves to be deceived, we will likely be unhappy later on. Yes, if we do not know the truth about a matter, we invariably lose out in one way or another. This is also true with respect to religion. The problem is, many people for one reason or another are not inclined to discuss religious matters.

<sup>2</sup> Here someone may say: 'But I have a religion. I belong to the same religion my parents and my grandparents belonged to. How can that be wrong?' Yes, at birth most of us received some religious faith as a heritage from our parents. Often, the name of that religion is put on our identity papers without our even being asked.

<sup>3</sup> But do we deserve honor or credit for belonging to a religion that we received from our parents, if we have never done anything to check whether that religion is right or wrong? A man born in Italy would likely be born into a Catholic family, and he would grow up a Catholic. A man born in Burma would likely be of the Buddhist religion. If a man is born in a Muslim family, he will likely grow up as a Muslim.

<sup>4</sup> Surely all of this means nothing as to his submitting himself to God. It is purely an accident. The man who truly surrenders himself to God is the one who carefully examines all aspects of the religion he was born into. If he finds it is true, he remains with it. But if he finds it is false, he sets out to find the true religion.

- 2, 3. Is it any credit to a person to belong to a religion merely because he inherited it from his parents?
4. How can a man be sure he has truly submitted to God?

<sup>5</sup> Some find it hard to reason on the subject of religion. They are strongly convinced theirs is the right religion and no more discussion is needed. In this, we may be a little like a fanatical supporter of a certain sports team. As you know, when a fanatical supporter watches his own team play another one, he supports his own, however badly it plays. If the opponents win, he may say that they cheated, or the referee was on their side, or something else happened. He thus ignores the good qualities of the other team, and all the bad qualities of his own.

<sup>6</sup> However, to see the true facts in a sports engagement, you have to be impartial. And this is even more so in the case of religion. If our mind is captive to prejudice, we will never see the truth. Is it reasonable to say whether something is right or wrong before you have looked into it, or before you have even thought about it?

<sup>7</sup> Yes, we may have received our religion from our parents, and we respect our parents. We owe them much, and many of the things they have given us are very good. But that does not mean we have to accept everything they say without thinking. Our parents are human, as we are. They make mistakes, as we do. In fact, many of the problems that we have to live with today are because of things that our parents' generation did. They did not do them deliberately to make things hard for us. They just made mistakes, because of being human.

<sup>8</sup> Hence, a wise man will examine the things he has received from his parents, including his

- 5, 6. Why should we be reasonable and open-minded when we discuss religion?
- 7, 8. How will a wise man view the things he received from his parents?

religion. He will keep the good things and reject those things that are not good. This is essential if he is to find the truth about religion.

#### IDENTIFYING THE BOOK OF TRUTH

<sup>1</sup> How can we learn the truth about religion? Take the example of a new employee starting work in a firm. Who tells him what work he should do and what rules he has to obey? Why, the employer, of course. The employer will either speak to him personally, send him a memorandum, or perhaps let him read a book of instructions giving him the needed information. Now, since God created us and put us on the earth, he is the one who should tell us what he wants us to do. How does he do this? Since he does not speak to each of us individually, it follows that he must tell us his will in writing.

<sup>2</sup> Where can we find God's written instructions for us? Readers of the Qur'an will already have some ideas about this, for there is frequent mention made in that book of writings of what is called "God's Word." In the beginning of the Qur'an we read: "[The righteous] trust what has been revealed to you [Mohammed] and to others before you, and firmly believe in the life to come."—Sura 2, *Al-Baqara* [the Cow], verse 4.

<sup>3</sup> What is meant by "what has been revealed . . . to others before you"? Three separate writings are mentioned in the Qur'an. One is alluded to in the fifth Sura, *Al-Ma'ida* [The Table], in verses 43 and 44. There, we read: "How will they come to you for judgement, when they already have the

1. How would we expect that God would communicate with us?

2, 3. (a) Does the Qur'an give any advice as to where to look for God's Word? (b) What writing does it refer to?

Torah which enshrines Allah's own judgement? Soon after they are bound to ignore you: they are no true believers. There is guidance, and there is light, in the Torah which We have revealed." Hence, the Torah, the writings of Moses, are referred to in the Qur'an as the Word of God.

<sup>4</sup> Again, we read in the Qur'an: "Your Lord is best aware of all who dwell in heaven and earth. We have exalted some prophets above others. To David We gave the Psalms." (Sura 17, *Al-Isra'* [The Night Journey], verse 55) Noteworthy, too, are the following words: "We have revealed Our will to . . . Noah and to the prophets who came after him; . . . to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and . . . David, to whom We gave the Psalms." (Sura 4, *Al-Nisa'* [Women], verse 163) Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob are all referred to in the writings of Moses, the Torah.

<sup>5</sup> The third writing referred to in the Qur'an is called the "Gospel." On this, the Qur'an reads: "After those prophets We sent forth Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming the Torah already revealed, and gave him the Gospel, in which there is guidance and light, corroborating that which was revealed before it in the Torah, a guide and an admonition to the righteous. Therefore let the followers of the Gospel judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed therein. Evil-doers are those that do not base their judgements on Allah's revelations."—Sura 5, *Al-Ma'ida* [The Table], verses 46, 47.

<sup>6</sup> Every careful reader of the Qur'an has seen that the Torah, the Psalms and the Gospel are

4, 5. What other two writings are referred to in the Qur'an as the Word of God?

6, 7. To which writings would every careful reader of the Qur'an be directed?

time and again shown to be God's Word. In the one hundred fourteen Suras, or chapters, of the Qur'an, at least sixty-two verses point out that these three writings come from God. And at least twelve other verses say that the Qur'an was written for the purpose of confirming these books.

<sup>7</sup> Here are some of these verses. "Children of Israel . . . Have faith in My revelations, which confirm your Scriptures." (Sura 2, *Al-Baqara* [The Cow], verse 41) "A Book confirming their own has come to them from Allah." (Sura 2, *Al-Baqara* [The Cow], verse 89) "When it is said to them: 'Believe in what Allah has revealed,' they reply: 'We believe in what was revealed to us.' But they deny what has since been revealed, although it is the truth, corroborating their own scriptures." (Sura 2, *Al-Baqara* [The Cow], verse 91) "He has revealed to you the Book with the truth, confirming the scriptures which preceded it; for He has already revealed the Torah and the Gospel for the guidance of men, and the distinction between right and wrong." (Sura 3, *Al-Imran* [The Imrants], verses 3, 4) "This is a blessed Book which We have revealed, confirming what came before it." (Sura 6, *Al-An'am* [Cattle], verse 92) "If you doubt what we have revealed to you, ask those who have read the Scriptures before you." (Sura 10, *Yunis* [Jonah], verse 94) "What We have revealed to you in the Book is the truth confirming previous scriptures."—Sura 35, *Al-Fatir* [The Creator], verse 31.

<sup>8</sup> However, the Qur'an makes the additional point that merely knowing which books are God's Word is not enough. We have to do what those books say. "Say: 'People of the Book, you shall

8. According to the Qur'an, what is needed besides merely knowing what God's Word is?

not be guided until you observe the Torah and the Gospel and that which is revealed to you from your Lord.' " (Sura 5, *Al-Ma'ida* [The Table], verse 68. See also Sura 3, *Al-Imran* [The Imrants], verse 93.) The Qur'an also says: "Those to whom the burden of the Torah was entrusted and yet refused to bear it are like a donkey laden with books."—Sura 62, *Al-Jum'a* [Friday], verse 5.

<sup>9</sup> To sum up, the Qur'an teaches that these three writings, the Torah, the Psalms and the Gospel, are from God. They should be both recognized and obeyed. Do you know where we can find these writings today? They have been collected together into one book, which has become the most widely distributed publication in the whole world. This book the whole or in part has been translated into more than seventeen hundred languages. It is the Bible. But before confirming that this book really does contain the Word of God, let us get to know it a little better.

9. Where are the writings located that are identified in the Qur'an as God's Word?

#### WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

<sup>1</sup> The Bible is viewed in the East as made up of three different books, namely, *Tevrat* (Torah), *Zebur* (Psalms) and *Injil* (Gospel). If you examine a Bible, you will find that each of these three books is divided into several smaller books. In fact, the word "Bible" comes from the Greek word *biblia*, which means "little books." In all there are sixty-six "little books" in the Bible. *Tevrat*, according to the way the Bible is spoken of in the Qur'an, consists of thirty-nine "little books,"

1. Of what is the Bible made up?

and includes the book of Psalms, or *Zebur*. *Injil* consists of twenty-seven "little books."

<sup>2</sup> Some call the first thirty-nine books of the Bible the "Old Testament," because the writing of these was finished hundreds of years before the next section was begun. They view this as less important than the second part, which they call the "New Testament." However, it is not logical to view one part of the Word of God as more important than another part. All the Word of God is important. A verse in the so-called New Testament says: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16) We use the term "Hebrew Scriptures" to refer to the first thirty-nine books of the Bible, since they were written in that language. And as the final part of the Bible was written in Greek, we call that section the "Greek Scriptures."

<sup>3</sup> The twenty-seven "little books" of the Greek Scriptures (*Injil*) are made up of five history books, several letters written by followers of Jesus, and one book consisting almost entirely of prophecies. This section is called *Injil*, or Gospel, because the first four books are Gospels (which word means "good news"). The writers of these Gospels were disciples of Jesus, named Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each Gospel contains an account of the life and death of Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup> At this point, you may ask: 'But why should there be four accounts of Jesus' life? Why not just one?' Perhaps you feel this shows that the account of Jesus' life has been distorted. Some

2. What are the two major divisions, or sections, of the Bible?

3. Describe the *Injil*.

4. 5. Why are there four accounts of Jesus' life?

people apparently stop their investigation of the Bible at this point. But let us remind you again of what was said earlier about prejudice. Before deciding what to think about this subject, consider what the Bible itself says.

<sup>5</sup> In the Hebrew Scriptures (*Tevrat*) we are told that when an important matter must be established, there should be more than one witness. It says: "At the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses the matter should stand good." (Deuteronomy 19:15) Now, the life of Jesus was extremely important historically. Hence, God provided not three witnesses, but four. We can be sure that what we read of Jesus, his sayings and his life, is the truth.

<sup>6</sup> But you might say: 'Suppose these four witnesses contradict one another?' Here is the wonderful thing: Although there are four, and they each give us an account of the life of Jesus from a different point of view and to suit different audiences, they do not contradict one another. The account that emerges is unified and it inspires confidence.

<sup>7</sup> That brings up a matter having to do with the writing of the Bible that many do not understand. Some feel that, for a book to be God's Word, every sentence should be dictated by God and come "from above," as it were. However, most of the Bible was not written that way. Some words in the Bible *were* directly dictated by God through the medium of angels. But at other times, men were commanded by God to write in their own words the things they had heard or seen. Hence, different parts of the Bible are written in different styles. Does this mean that

6. Do the Bible writers contradict one another?

7. How did God cause the Bible to be written?

there is a possibility of error? Not at all, because, as was mentioned in the scripture quoted above, "all Scripture is *inspired of God.*" (2 Timothy 3:16) Human writers wrote under the influence of God. God, who is Almighty, is able to produce a book in this way since that is his will.

<sup>8</sup> About forty persons were used in the writing of the Bible. They were from many different walks of life, including shepherds, herdsmen, fishermen, farmers, a doctor and a tax collector. At least two were kings. Others were priests, prophets or scribes. They all "spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit." (2 Peter 1:19-21) Each one wrote in total honesty, sometimes even describing his own personal faults.

<sup>9</sup> The time between the writing of the first and the last books of the Bible is about sixteen hundred years. Yet, despite this, the Bible is basically just one book. There is one major theme. And nowhere does it contradict itself. Surely, this is proof that there was only one Author behind the forty persons who wrote the sixty-six "little books"!

<sup>10</sup> But is the Bible complete in itself? Well, if you have a copy of the Bible, open it to the very first page, at the beginning of the Hebrew Scriptures, or *Tevrat*. There it says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) The book starts at the very beginning of creation with reference to our earth. Nothing on this subject could come before that. Hence, the Hebrew Scriptures were not the continuation of another

8. What kinds of people were used in the writing of the Bible?
9. How does the way the Bible was written prove it came from God?
10. How do we know that the *Tevrat* was not the continuation of a previous book?

book. They must have been the commencement of the written Word of God.

<sup>11</sup> Now look at the very end of the *Tevrat*, or Hebrew Scriptures. The final words are: "Remember, you people, the law of Moses my servant with which I commanded him in Horeb concerning all Israel, even regulations and judicial decisions. Look! I am sending to you people Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah. And he must turn the heart of fathers back toward sons, and the heart of sons back toward fathers; in order that I may not come and actually strike the earth with a devoting of it to destruction." (Malachi 4:4-6) Do these words sound like the end of a book? Or just the conclusion of an episode, with more to come? Yes, these concluding words of the Hebrew Scriptures show that the Word of God did not end with the book of Malachi.

<sup>12</sup> Now, what about the *Injil*, or Greek Scriptures? Should this be viewed as a book on its own? Let us read the very first words of this part of the Bible: "The book of the history of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham: Abraham became father to Isaac." (Matthew 1:1, 2) If the Greek Scriptures had been a book complete in itself, it would have been necessary to explain who Abraham, Isaac and David were, and why it was so important that Jesus be descended from them. It is only when we read the *Tevrat*, or Hebrew Scriptures, that we can understand these things. Hence, the Greek Scriptures are obviously meant to be viewed as an addition to the Hebrew

11. How do we know that the writing of God's Word was not concluded when the *Tevrat* or Hebrew Scriptures were concluded?
12. How do we know that the *Injil* or Greek Scriptures were a continuation of the Hebrew Scriptures?

Scriptures. But should we expect an addition to the Greek Scriptures?

<sup>13</sup> Well, the closing part of the Greek Scriptures reads: "I am bearing witness to everyone that hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone makes an addition to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this scroll; and if anyone takes anything away from the words of the scroll of this prophecy, God will take his portion away from the trees of life and out of the holy city, things which are written about in this scroll. He that bears witness of these things says, 'Yes; I am coming quickly.' 'Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.' May the undeserved kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ be with the holy ones."—Revelation 22:18-21.

<sup>14</sup> Surely, that sounds like a conclusion. On the hopeful note of awaiting the second coming of Jesus Christ, notice how we are warned against adding to or taking away from the writings. That must be the conclusion of the written Word of God.

<sup>15</sup> Some may have heard of the word "*parakletos*" and wonder where that fits into the picture. Jesus on one occasion informed his followers: "Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth, It is for your benefit I am going away. For if I do not go away, the helper [*parakletos*] will by no means come to you; but if I do go my way, I will send him to you." (John 16:7) Was this "helper" a book, a person, or something else that Jesus was going to send?

<sup>16</sup> The Greek word for "helper" is *parakletos*. Some have suggested that what Jesus really said

13, 14. Should we expect an addition to the Greek Scriptures, or was the Word of God concluded with that writing? 15, 16. What question do some raise, and why?

was *periklutos*, but because of poor pronunciation, *parakletos* is what came to be written in the Bible. *Periklutos* means, according to ones reasoning this way, "the one commanded, or praised." Hence, Jesus could be viewed as prophesying here the coming of some other person. But is this what he himself had in mind?

<sup>17</sup> Jesus actually explained what the *parakletos* is in another scripture. Just before his death, he said: "The helper [*parakletos*], the *holy spirit*, which the Father will send in my name, that one will teach you all things and bring back to your minds all the things I told you." (John 14:26) A little earlier, he had said: "If you love me, you will observe my commandments; and I will request the Father and he will give you another helper [*parakletos*] to be with you forever, the *spirit of truth*."—John 14:15-17.

<sup>18</sup> Hence, the *parakletos* is not a person or another book. It is active force from God, the *holy spirit*. Jesus referred to it again when he was speaking to his followers after his miraculous resurrection from the dead. He told them: "John, indeed, baptized with water, but you will be baptized in *holy spirit* not many days after this." (Acts 1:5) Were these words fulfilled?

<sup>19</sup> Well, read for yourself the account of what happened to those followers about ten days later. The record tells us: "Now while the day of the festival of Pentecost was in progress they were all together at the same place, and suddenly there occurred from heaven a noise just like that of a rushing stiff breeze, and it filled the whole house in which they were sitting. And tongues as if of

17, 18. How did Jesus explain what the *parakletos* is? 19, 20. (a) When did Jesus' followers receive this gift from God? (b) How was this a blessing for them?

fire became visible to them and were distributed about, and one sat upon each one of them, and they all became filled with holy spirit and started to speak with different tongues, just as the spirit was granting them to make utterance."

—Acts 2:1-4.

<sup>20</sup> This event occurred in the year 33 CE. At that time, none of the Greek Scriptures (*Injil*) had been written. Hence, as Jesus promised, that holy spirit was now available to ensure that all the things to be written down would be accurate and trustworthy. Obviously, this *parakletos* is not a person. It is active force coming from God himself. Since Jesus was no longer physically with his followers, this active force helped them to remember all the things that he had said and it strengthened them to apply these things in their lives.

<sup>21</sup> Hence, now we know a little about the *Tevrat* and the *Injil*, which the Qur'an identifies as the Word of God, and which together make up the Bible. The Bible was completed with the writing of the last book of the *Injil*, and Jesus' promise of the coming *parakletos* did not mean we should expect something in addition to that. However, some people have objections to believing in the Bible. Let us now discuss some of those objections.

21. What have you learned so far about the Word of God?

#### THE BIBLE AND CHRISTENDOM

<sup>1</sup> Many refuse to accept the Bible as God's Word because the nations that claim to believe in the Bible have acted so badly. It cannot be denied

1. (a) What has stopped many people from looking into the Bible? (b) Does the wickedness of Christendom mean that the Bible is not God's Word?

that the so-called Christian nations, usually referred to as "Christendom," have caused much suffering to mankind. Does this mean that the Bible is wrong too? No, for Christendom long ago abandoned the Bible and has not lived according to the teachings of Jesus. Hence, it would not be proper to condemn the Bible because of the things Christendom has done.

<sup>2</sup> To show that Christendom has largely rejected the teachings of the Bible, consider some of her beliefs. For example, a fundamental doctrine of Christendom is the Trinity. According to this, God is made up of three persons: the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit. These three are coequal and coeternal, three persons in one God. Christendom's theologians call this doctrine a mystery.

<sup>3</sup> Mystery or not, is this what the Bible teaches? Far from it. Jesus on one occasion stated: "The Father is greater than I am." (John 14:28) On another occasion, Jesus' follower, the apostle Paul, stated: "I want you to know that the head of every man is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man; in turn *the head of the Christ is God*." (1 Corinthians 11:3) Those two statements leave no room for believing that Jesus is equal to God. The idea of "three persons in one God" is completely foreign to the Hebrew Scriptures (*Tevrat*) and the Greek Scriptures (*Injil*). In fact, the word "Trinity" never appears in the Bible.

<sup>4</sup> Consider another teaching of Christendom. The outstanding symbol of Christendom is the cross. This is claimed as a symbol because it is taught that Jesus died on a cross. Hence, mem-

2. 3. (a) What is the central doctrine of Christendom? (b) Does the Bible teach this doctrine?

4. 5. What other central doctrine of Christendom is shown to be without Biblical foundation?

bers of Christendom's churches even bow down before images of the cross in their religious services. Is this what the Bible teaches?

<sup>5</sup> Definitely not. For one thing, there is evidence that Jesus did not die on a cross shaped like the one usually used in Christendom. Some scriptures in the Bible say that Jesus died on a tree. Others say he was hanged on what the original Greek language calls a *stauros*. What does *stauros* mean? An authoritative reference work states: "Homer [an ancient Greek poet] uses the word *stauros* of an ordinary pole or stake, or a single piece of timber. And this is the meaning and usage of the word throughout the Greek classics. It never means two pieces of timber placed across one another at any angle, but always of one piece alone. Hence, the use of the word *xulon* [or *xylon*, meaning "timber" or "tree"] in connection with the manner of our Lord's death . . . The evidence is thus complete, that the Lord was put to death upon an upright stake, and not on two pieces of timber placed at any angle."—Appendix to *The Companion Bible*, page 186.

<sup>6</sup> Of course, even if Jesus had died on a cross, would the way Christendom uses it be reasonable? If someone you loved very much was stabbed to death, would you worship the knife that killed him? Of course not. It would be an object of abhorrence to you. Further, according to the Bible, it is wrong to worship anything or anyone apart from God himself. The apostle John stated: "Little children, guard yourselves from idols." (1 John 5:21) Yet Christendom has made an idol of the cross.

6. Why is the worship of the cross both unreasonable and against what the Bible says?

<sup>7</sup> Many other doctrines and practices of Christendom could be mentioned to show that it is not truly Christian. For example, the adoration of Mary, the belief that the souls of the wicked will burn eternally in hellfire, and the celebration of Easter and Christmas are all derived from pagan practices and prove that Christendom's worship is not in harmony with the Bible.

<sup>8</sup> Should we be surprised that God would let such a thing happen? No. Jesus himself prophesied that it would. He told the Jews of his day: "Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?' And yet then I will confess to them: I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness." (Matthew 7:21-23) Christendom, while claiming to follow Jesus, has worked great lawlessness. Hence, God has abandoned her.

7. Name some other beliefs and practices of Christendom that are unscriptural.

8. How did Jesus foretell that there would be many claiming to serve him but who would in fact be workers of lawlessness, not true servants of God?

### IS THE BIBLE STILL THE WORD OF GOD?

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes a different objection is raised. Some feel that the Bible *was* the Word of God, but it has been distorted and corrupted by men so that now we can no longer trust it. Can this be true?

<sup>2</sup> Let us repeat a verse from the Qur'an that

1. What do some feel about the Bible's being the Word of God?

2. What does the Qur'an say about this?

was quoted earlier. But now we will discuss it from a different angle. "After those prophets We sent forth Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming the Torah already revealed, and gave him the Gospel, in which there is guidance and light, corroborating that which was revealed before it in the Torah, a guide and an admonition to the righteous. Therefore let the followers of the Gospel judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed therein. Evil-doers are those that do not base their judgements on Allah's revelations."—Sura 5, *Al-Ma'ida* [The Table], verses 46, 47.

<sup>3</sup> If, at the time these words were written, the Bible had already been corrupted, how could believers in the Gospel 'judge in accordance with what Allah had revealed therein'? Thus believers in the Qur'an accept that the Bible was uncorrupted at the time the Qur'an was written (about one thousand three hundred years ago). On the other hand, there exist manuscripts of the Bible written four hundred or five hundred years *before* that time that are on public display in museums today. When comparing our modern Bibles with these ancient manuscripts, it is easily seen that there is no significant difference. The Bible is substantially the same. Certainly, the Bible has not changed since those words were written in the Qur'an saying that in the Gospel "there is guidance and light."

<sup>4</sup> Thus, a person who believes in the Qur'an will agree that the Bible has not been corrupted and that it is still the Word of God. But even for people who do not believe in the Qur'an

3. How do these words of the Qur'an support the fact that the Bible has not been corrupted?

4. 5. How do we know that the Greek Scriptures have not been corrupted?

there is abundant proof that the Bible has not been corrupted by men since its original writing. What proof? Why, those ancient manuscripts mentioned in the previous paragraph.

<sup>5</sup> Regarding the preserving of the Greek Scriptures (*Injil*) until our day, a scientist pointed out: "The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed." (*The Bible and Archaeology*, by Sir Frederic Kenyon) Sir Frederic Kenyon is here expressing the widely accepted fact that we can read in the Greek Scriptures (*Injil*) substantially what the original writers, under inspiration, put there. There has been no gross distortion.

<sup>6</sup> Regarding the Hebrew Scriptures (*Tevrat*), the external proof is equally strong that they have been preserved faithfully. The ancient copyists of those scriptures were renowned for their accuracy. Today there are seventeen hundred ancient manuscripts of the Hebrew Scriptures of the Bible in existence, and comparison shows them to be substantially the same. In 1947, some very ancient manuscripts were discovered in the region of the Dead Sea. They included some that were a thousand years older than any hitherto extant. Yet a comparison of these ancient manuscripts with our modern Bible shows little significant variation, especially with regard to teaching and doctrine. After examining these newly discovered ancient documents, Professor Millar Burrows said: "The general reader and student of the Bible may be

6. How do we know that the Hebrew Scriptures have not been corrupted?

satisfied to note that nothing in all this changes our understanding of the religious teachings of the Bible . . . The essential truth and the will of God revealed in the Bible, however, have been preserved unchanged through all the vicissitudes in the transmission of the text."—*The Dead Sea Scrolls*, by Millar Burrows.

<sup>7</sup> Is this not reasonable? Should we not expect that the Almighty God would be able to preserve his Word uncorrupted? The Bible itself says: "The green grass has dried up, the blossom has withered; but as for the word of our God, it will last to time indefinite."—Isaiah 40:8.

7. Why is it reasonable to believe that the Bible we now have is substantially the same as the original that was written under God's inspiration?

#### DOES THE BIBLE CONTRADICT ITSELF?

<sup>1</sup> Some critics of the Bible claim that it contradicts itself. Is this true? No it is not. If you ask these critics which parts of the Bible are contradictory, they usually have no specific example in mind. When examples are mentioned, they often turn out to be cases where different Bible writers tell the same story from different angles.

<sup>2</sup> For example, on one occasion Jesus miraculously healed the manservant of a Roman army officer. In the account by the apostle Matthew, we read: "When he entered into Capernaum, an army officer came to him, entreating him and saying: 'Sir, my manservant is laid up in the house with paralysis, being terribly tormented.' "

1. What other objection is sometimes raised? What is the most usual reason why people think this?
- 2, 3. (a) Give an example of what some view as a contradiction in the Bible. (b) Why is this not really a contradiction? (c) Why is this a reasonable explanation?

(Matthew 8:5, 6) Jesus then agreed to go and heal the man. In the disciple Luke's account, we read: "When he [the army officer] heard about Jesus, he sent forth older men of the Jews to him to ask him to come and bring his slave safely through." (Luke 7:3) Once again, according to Luke's account, Jesus agreed to go. Is it a contradiction that one account says the army officer asked Jesus, and the other says that he sent older men of the Jews to represent him?

<sup>3</sup> A reasonable person would not think so. This is typical of what happens when two honest people tell of the same event. To Matthew, the important thing was that the army officer made the request of Jesus. Luke merely added the detail that he did not ask him personally, but sent Jews to represent him. This is similar to the way we often speak. For example, we may say that the mayor of a certain city built a new road. Now, did the mayor build the road himself? Or was the road built by a contractor, using many workers and engineers? Obviously, the latter is the case. Nevertheless, it is not wrong to say that the mayor built the road, since he is the one who initiated the work. Similarly, in this instance, the army officer made a request of Jesus, but he did it through certain representatives.

<sup>4</sup> Another alleged contradiction has to do with the two sons of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. The firstborn was named Cain, and the second, Abel. In a fit of rage, Cain committed the first murder and killed his brother, Abel. Afterward, the record says that Cain married and produced children. The question often asked is:

- 4, 5. (a) What is another alleged contradiction in the Bible? (b) Is it really a contradiction?

'Where did Cain get his wife? Surely, Eve was the only woman alive then.'—Genesis 4:1-17.

<sup>5</sup> Such a question springs from a limited knowledge of the Bible. In fact, Adam and Eve had many children. We read: "And the days of Adam after his fathering Seth [another son] came to be eight hundred years. Meanwhile he became father to sons and daughters." (Genesis 5:4) Hence, there were other women in those days, apart from Eve. Cain married one of his sisters. Later, of course, God forbade marriage among such close relatives.—Leviticus 18:9; 20:17.

#### IS THE BIBLE SCIENTIFIC?

<sup>1</sup> Another objection sometimes raised against the Bible is that it is unscientific. Today, science is highly thought of. Scientists have sent men to the moon. They have made life more comfortable for some. And they have made great strides in medicine, so that many sick people now recover from sicknesses that fifty years ago would have killed them. Hence, men tend to look down on things that they feel are not "scientific."

<sup>2</sup> However, there are more important things than science. Loving our neighbor and serving God are more important. With all the progress of science today, men still fight wars and oppress and kill one another. In fact, because of science, warfare is much more destructive than it used to be. Hence, we have a greater need than ever to learn about God and his purposes.

<sup>3</sup> The Bible tells us about God. That is why it is so valuable. It is not a book about science. Nev-

1. What other objection is sometimes raised against the Bible?

2. What is more important than science?

3, 4. (a) Is the Bible unscientific? (b) Give an example.

ertheless, when it touches on things that have to do with science, it often agrees with modern scientific thinking. For example, in Bible times there were many theories about the shape of the earth and how it was supported. Some thought it was held up by a huge turtle. Others taught that the Titan, Atlas, held it in place. What does the Bible say? "[God] is stretching out the north over the empty place, hanging the earth upon nothing." It also says about the shape of the earth: "There is One [God] who is dwelling above the circle of the earth."—Job 26:7; Isaiah 40:22.

<sup>4</sup> Does that sound unscientific to you? Or is that not exactly what the American and Russian astronauts see when they venture into outer space in their rocket ships? How could people thousands of years ago have known that the earth was hanging in empty space unless God himself had revealed it to them?

<sup>5</sup> Another instance where the Bible is largely in agreement with modern science is in the handling of disease. Of course, in the days when the Bible was written the medicines that are available today were unknown. But within the limitations of the times, God's Word protected his worshipers from the worst effects of sickness. In the days of Moses, for example, leprosy was a serious threat. The Bible gives detailed instructions that many modern doctors would agree with about how to quarantine someone suspected of having leprosy, and so keep the rest of the nation clean. (Leviticus 13:1-14:57) In fact this part of the Bible contains many laws about cleanliness that suggest a knowledge of sanitary principles far in advance of that early time. This, of course, is what we

5. How is the Bible's counsel on sanitation in accord with science?

would expect when we remember that it was God who gave them these laws.

<sup>6</sup> Hence, the objections raised by some that the Bible is contradictory or unscientific are no reason for rejecting this book as the Word of God. Most of these objections spring from a lack of understanding, and when investigated, they only add to the evidence that the Bible truly is divinely inspired.\* But there is greater evidence than what has been mentioned so far that the Bible (*Tevrat* and *Injil*) comes from God.

6. To what conclusion does a consideration of the above material lead us?

#### THE BIBLE'S PROPHECIES

<sup>1</sup> The most powerful proof that the Bible is truly God's Word is its prophecies. As you know, to prophesy means to tell in advance things that are going to happen. Men try to guess what is going to happen in the future. Sometimes they succeed, but most of the time they fail. There is only One who has the power to foretell infallibly what the future holds, and that is God. Hence, when we read literally hundreds of prophecies in the Bible, and can testify that they all came true in their due time, we have to admit that this is by the power of God.

<sup>2</sup> Consider, for example, God's pronouncements against the city of Babylon. We read: " 'There is

\* For further evidence of the accuracy of the Bible, see the book *Is the Bible Really the Word of God?* published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.

1. What is the strongest internal proof that the Bible is the Word of God?
2. What prophecy was uttered against Babylon, at the time she was the world's mightiest military power?

a sword against the Chaldeans,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and against the inhabitants of Babylon and against her princes and against her wise ones. There is a devastation upon her waters, and they must be dried up. For it is a land of graven images, and because of their frightful visions they keep acting crazy. Therefore the hauntings of waterless regions will dwell with the howling animals, and in her the ostriches must dwell; and she will nevermore be dwelt in, nor will she reside for generation after generation. Just as with God's overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah . . . no man will dwell there.' "—Jeremiah 50:35, 38-40.

<sup>3</sup> What a vivid description of abandonment and desolation! Yet this prophecy was written when Babylon was at the height of her authority. She was the mightiest military power in the world. But God warned that she would become like a desert. Was the prophecy fulfilled? You can see its fulfillment for yourself. In the country of Iraq, between the modern cities of Baghdad and Basra, there is a large tract of uninhabited ruins. That is all that remains of the mighty city of Babylon. God's prophecy, as recorded in the Bible, was completely fulfilled.

<sup>4</sup> Another impressive prophecy has to do with the succession of world powers after the fall of Babylon. If you have access to a Bible, open it to the book of Daniel and read the vision that Daniel was given in chapter 8. The angel who explained the meaning of that vision showed that Babylon would be succeeded by an empire ruled by the kings of Media and Persia. This kingdom in its turn would be overthrown by a conqueror

3. Was the prophecy of Babylon's destruction fulfilled?
4. What procession of world powers was prophesied in the Bible?

from Greece. However, this Greek empire would soon be divided into four smaller empires.—Daniel 8:1-8, 20-22.

<sup>5</sup> Was this parade of world powers fulfilled? It was indeed. Under King Cyrus the Great, Persia overthrew the Babylonian Empire in 539 BCE. This Persian Empire was eventually overtaken by Greek armies under the young Alexander the Great. However, when Alexander died, his empire was weakened, and eventually four of his generals became rulers in four divisions of it. Can you imagine a man being able to prophesy such coming events in so great detail?

<sup>6</sup> It has already been mentioned that many, many prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, including details such as where he would be born, what tribe he would be born into, how he would die and his betrayal by a close follower for thirty pieces of silver. Obviously, such prophecies could only have been by divine power. A man could not organize his own life to fulfill such details.

<sup>7</sup> There are prophecies being fulfilled in our own day, too. Read these words of the apostle Paul: “In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly

5. How was Daniel's prophecy about the world powers fulfilled?
6. What prophecies were fulfilled in the case of Jesus Christ?
7. (a) What remarkable prophecy has been fulfilled in our own day? (b) What does this indicate?

devotion but proving false to its power.” (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Can you discern the fulfillment of that prophecy today? We are sure you can.

<sup>8</sup> Then, too, there are the words of Jesus himself. When asked about the “sign” of the end of this world system, he related many things that would happen just before the end. Are his prophecies coming true today? Read some examples and see for yourself. Here is one: “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be great earthquakes, and in one place after another pestilences and food shortages.”—Luke 21:10, 11.

<sup>9</sup> You may say: ‘But there have always been wars.’ That is true, as Jesus himself knew. But he was speaking of unusual wars, such as we have seen only since 1914. Regarding the first world war, which started in that year, a military analyst wrote: “In its scope, its violence, and above all, in its totality, it established a precedent. World War I ushered in the century of Total War, of—in the first full sense of the term—global war. . . . Never before 1914-1918 had a war absorbed so much of the total resources of so many combatants and covered so large a part of the earth. Never had so many nations been involved. Never had the slaughter been so comprehensive and indiscriminate.” (*World War I*, by H. W. Baldwin) Needless to say, the carnage of the first world war was multiplied many times over in the second.

<sup>10</sup> How about the food shortages that Jesus mentioned? It is paradoxical that, despite the

8. What outstanding prophecy did Jesus utter?
9. How has Jesus' prophecy about war been fulfilled since 1914?
10. How has Jesus' prophecy about food shortages been fulfilled?

fact that some countries have the highest material standard of living in recorded history, there are more people hungry today than ever before. *The New York Times* reported: "Every 8.6 seconds someone in an underdeveloped country dies as a result of illness caused by malnutrition . . . 10,000 every day. Over 3,500,000 every year." Does that not fulfill Jesus' prophecy about food shortages?

<sup>11</sup> And has there been an unusual number of earthquakes? Well, in 1915, 29,970 people died in an earthquake in Italy. In 1920, 180,000 perished in China, 143,000 died in Japan in 1923, and in 1939, 32,300 people died in Turkey (Erzincan). According to *Scientific American*, since 1948 'one great quake is occurring each year.' We can probably remember many gigantic earthquakes that have struck in recent years. Many of us either have felt an earthquake or have relatives who have been affected by one.

<sup>12</sup> Finally, Jesus mentioned pestilences. It is another paradox of the modern world that in spite of the advances of medicine, there are still scourges that take millions of lives, especially in poorer countries. Immediately after World War I, an international epidemic of influenza brought death to twenty-one million victims. Today, poorer lands continue to suffer from plagues such as malaria, cholera and typhoid. Even in wealthier lands, cancer and heart attacks cut millions off in their prime. Venereal disease is called a "pandemic"—more severe than an epidemic. And spreading, worldwide pollution is threatening us with additional horrible illnesses. Regarding pollution, ecologist Barry Commoner said: "We have

11. What about earthquakes since 1914?

12. How, in spite of the advances in medical science, has Jesus' prophecy about pestilences been fulfilled?

come to a turning point in the human habitation of the earth. . . . I believe that continued pollution of the earth, if unchecked, will eventually destroy the fitness of this planet as a place for human life."

<sup>13</sup> There are many more details of Jesus' great prophecy that are clearly being fulfilled in our days. One of the most noteworthy is with regard to a worldwide preaching work. Jesus said: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matthew 24: 14) In our generation, modern communications and travel have made fulfillment of this prophecy more practical on a *global* scale. Today, Jehovah's Witnesses are preaching "this good news" in more than two hundred lands around the earth. Yes, this prophecy, too, is being fulfilled.

<sup>14</sup> Thus, Bible prophecy gives us strong reason to accept the truth that the Bible is the Word of God. And these same prophecies show that we are living in very unusual times, times called "the last days" by the apostle Paul. We will return to this subject again and see what it means for us. Meanwhile, let us see what the Bible's basic message is all about.

13. What other part of Jesus' prophecy is being fulfilled now as never before?

14. (a) What does the fulfillment of these prophecies indicate as to the Bible? (b) What does this prove with respect to the days in which we are living?

#### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT GOD?

<sup>1</sup> The most important person the Bible tells us about is, of course, God. It tells us that God is

1. (a) Who is the most important person in the universe? (b) What are some of the things the Bible tells us about him?

the one who created all things. "You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created." (Revelation 4:11) We also learn that "God is a Spirit," (John 4:24) and that he is eternal. "Before the mountains themselves were born, or you proceeded to bring forth as with labor pains the earth and the productive land, even from time indefinite to time indefinite you are God."—Psalm 90:2.

<sup>2</sup> It is true that many gods are worshiped in the world. But that does not change the fact that there is only one true God. The other gods are inventions of men or are demons. Only one God created the earth and deserves our worship. The apostle Paul said: "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no God but one. For even though there are those who are called 'gods,' whether in heaven or on earth, just as there are many 'gods' and many 'lords,' there is actually to us one God the Father, out of whom all things are, and we for him."—1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

<sup>3</sup> You may wonder why the apostle Paul calls God "the Father." Does this mean that God has a wife, in the way that a man must have a wife in order to become a father? No, God does not need such a wife in order to become a father. When the Bible calls God a Father, it is saying that he is the source of the existence of all things. In other words, he created them. For example, Adam is called the "son of God." (Luke 3:38) Yet, if you read the account of the creation of Adam,

2. How should we view the false gods that men have made for themselves?

3. 4. Why does the Bible refer to God as "the Father"?

you will see that he was made out of the dust. He was not born of woman.—Genesis 2:7.

<sup>4</sup> Hence, when the Bible speaks of God as a father, this is somewhat different from saying that a man is a father. But it is the same in this respect: A father gives life to his children. God gives life and existence to all things, but not by means of intercourse with a wife. God creates all things.

<sup>5</sup> You may remember another scripture that we have read that said: "You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power." (Revelation 4:11) You may wonder why in this chapter God is addressed as "Jehovah." We have come across this name a few times already in this booklet. Well, "Jehovah" is the name that God has given to himself.—Psalm 83:18.

<sup>6</sup> Right back in the beginning, the Bible tells us that "Jehovah God proceeded to form the man out of dust from the ground." (Genesis 2:7) Later, he said to Moses: "This is what you are to say to the sons of Israel, 'Jehovah the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name to time indefinite, and this is the memorial of me to generation after generation." (Exodus 3:15) Again, later on he said to Isaiah: "I am Jehovah. That is my name; and to no one else shall I give my own glory, neither my praise to graven images."—Isaiah 42:8.

<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, Jesus said in prayer to God: "I have made your name known to them and will make it known." (John 17:26) And after Jesus'

5. Who is addressed at Revelation 4:11?

6. How did God reveal his name to mankind?

7. How did Jesus show that he knew God's name?

death, we learn that "God for the first time turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name." (Acts 15:14) Hence, it is only proper to know God's name and to use it in our worship of him.

<sup>8</sup> We must come to know God, because only if we know him can we submit ourselves to him. "God is love." (1 John 4:8) He is also merciful, just and righteous. He has infinite wisdom and almighty power. Hence, we must worship only him.—Exodus 34:6, 7; 20:3.

<sup>9</sup> The next most important person spoken about in the Bible is Jesus. But before we see why Jesus is so important, we have to go back to the very beginning of the human race.

8. Why must we come to know God?

9. Who is the second most important person referred to in the Bible?

#### MANKIND'S BEGINNING

<sup>1</sup> The Bible tells us that God created man out of the dust of the ground. He gave him a wife and placed him in a paradise garden called Eden, where all his material needs were satisfied. We read that when he had completed the creation of Adam and Eve, "God saw everything he had made and, look! it was very good." (Genesis 1:31) There was no defect at all, just as there is no defect in anything that God does. Man's start was perfect.

<sup>2</sup> Hence, at that time man was not in conflict with God. God even gave him wide responsibilities. We read: "God blessed them [Adam and Eve, the first pair] and God said to them: 'Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue

1, 2. What kind of beginning did man have?

it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth.'" —Genesis 1:28.

<sup>3</sup> However, there was a condition attached to that good relationship: obedience. God expected man to obey him and thus show his submission to the will of his Creator. As God said at a later time, "To obey is better than a sacrifice." (1 Samuel 15:22) This is reasonable, is it not? In any organization, rules are necessary as is obedience by the members to those rules. Hence, God wanted man to be obedient to the rules he set down.

<sup>4</sup> What were the rules? God placed in the garden of Eden a tree called "the tree of the knowledge of good and bad." He said to Adam: "As for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will positively die." (Genesis 2:9, 17) We do not know what kind of fruit grew on that particular tree, but if Adam and Eve were to eat of that fruit, it would show that they were no longer submissive to God. The result of such a rebellious act would be death. However, if they remained obedient, they would keep on living forever.

<sup>5</sup> This shows that Adam and Eve had a clear choice, and *they* were the ones that would make the choice. It would not be made for them. Some people believe that we cannot make choices or exercise free will. They feel God has foreordained everything, and a person can only follow his destiny. If that is true, however, men and women

3. What was necessary for man to keep a good relationship with God?

4. How was man given an opportunity to show his obedience?

5. Did man have any choice as to whether he would obey God or not?

are not to blame when they commit sins. If destiny rules, murderers, thieves, liars, oppressors and all other evil men are merely following the path laid out for them. They have no choice. So why should they be punished?

<sup>6</sup> In fact, to say that we are controlled by destiny leads to a blasphemous doctrine. What is that? Just think about it. When an automobile kills a pedestrian, it is not the automobile that is responsible. The vehicle was only moving in the direction that the driver pointed it. The driver is responsible for what happened. Using similar reasoning, if we are all ruled by destiny, a murderer is not responsible when he kills someone. He is only doing what destiny directs him to do. The one who laid out his destiny is responsible. And who is that? Why, none other than God himself, according to those who believe this doctrine. It is the same as blaming God for all the suffering, all the heartache and all the misery that men have endured through the ages. Can you see why this idea is so harmful?

<sup>7</sup> Yet God is not like that. "God is love," we are told. (1 John 4:8) "You are not a God taking delight in wickedness; no one bad may reside for any time with you," the Bible says. (Psalm 5:4) Hence, God would never have foreordained all the wickedness we see around us today. This is largely a result of man's misuse of his free will.

<sup>8</sup> This belief in destiny has another bad effect. It means that people are not inclined to improve their situation or to try to serve God better. They say that what they do is already "written," hence, they are helpless in the matter. But is that

- 6, 7. Why is belief in destiny unreasonable and harmful?
8. (a) What other bad result comes from believing that we are ruled by destiny? (b) What choice do we all face?

true? The fact is that everyone can make choices. And today, we all have to make the same choice that was presented to God's people in times past: "Now if it is bad in your eyes to serve Jehovah, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve . . . But as for me and my household, we shall serve Jehovah." (Joshua 24:15) We have to choose whether or not we will submit to God.

#### ADAM'S SIN

<sup>1</sup> Jehovah God put a real choice before Adam and Eve. How did they choose? Unfortunately, they chose wrongly, and that is a basic reason for the problems we are experiencing today. What, then, happened back there?

<sup>2</sup> The record tells that another creature approached Eve in Eden when she was alone. This was an animal, a serpent. Surprisingly, the serpent spoke: "Is it really so that God said you must not eat from every tree of the garden?" At this the woman said to the serpent: 'Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat. But as for eating of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, God has said, "You must not eat from it, no, you must not touch it that you do not die.'" At this the serpent said to the woman: 'You positively will not die.' The woman believed the serpent and ate of the forbidden fruit. Later, she persuaded her husband, Adam, to join her in this sin.—Genesis 3:1-6.

<sup>3</sup> Does it sound strange to you that a serpent spoke to Eve? Of course, snakes cannot speak, so there must have been something uncanny behind this event. The Bible shows that Satan the Dev-

1. What choice did Adam and Eve make?
- 2, 3. (a) What events led up to Eve's sinning? (b) How does the Bible identify the deceiver?

it was supernaturally causing it to speak. He is identified in the very last part of the Bible: "The original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth." (Revelation 12:9) Satan's deceptive persuading of Eve through the medium of a snake caused her to sin. Of course, if the idea were true that we are all ruled by destiny, Satan would not have had to speak with Eve. It would already have been 'written in the book' that Eve and Adam were going to sin. But Satan knew that was not true. He had to persuade her to do that wrong act.

<sup>4</sup> After Adam and Eve had sinned, God informed them that the sentence of death would be carried out. What Satan had said was a lie. God told Adam: "In the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For dust you are and to dust you will return." (Genesis 3:19) Man's good relationship with God had been broken. He was no longer in submission to his Creator.

<sup>5</sup> The effect of sin on a perfect person can be compared to what happens to a piece of machinery when it is not used properly. If you allow grit and dirt to get into it, it will quickly wear out. Thus it was with the first pair. They allowed the uncleanness of sin to enter into their lives, and so they started to deteriorate. Eventually they died.

<sup>6</sup> This affects us because it was only *after* this sin that Adam and Eve had children. If you have a mold and start casting models from it, the models will only be good as long as the mold

4. What punishment came on Adam and Eve because they had sinned?
5. How can the effects of sin on a perfect person be illustrated?
- 6, 7. (a) How are we affected by Adam's sin? (b) How did the apostle Paul explain this?

is good. If the mold is blemished, the models will be blemished, too. In Adam's case, he had no children while he was perfect. It was only after he had sinned, rebelled against God and begun to die, that he produced children. Hence, the "mold" was blemished, and the "models," his children, were blemished too. They inherited his sin.—Compare Job 14:4.

<sup>7</sup> The apostle Paul explained this clearly. He said: "Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." (Romans 5:12) But perhaps you wonder, 'Why did God let wickedness continue after that first sin?' Actually, this was an act of mercy on God's part for us.

#### WHY DID SIN CONTINUE?

<sup>1</sup> When Satan led Adam and Eve into sin, he raised questions that God in his mercy decided should be answered. For one thing, Satan had called God a liar. God had said that man would die if he sinned; Satan said he would not die. When Adam and Eve did die, it showed that God is a God of truth.

<sup>2</sup> Then again, Satan made the seductive promise: "God knows that in the very day of your eating from it [the forbidden fruit] your eyes are bound to be opened and you are bound to be like God, knowing good and bad." (Genesis 3:5) He made it sound as if God were withholding something good from man, that man would do better if he submitted to someone else. So Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and Jehovah has allowed

- 1, 2. (a) What issues did Satan raise when he lied to Eve? (b) Why, then, has God permitted man to go his own way for so long?

man to go his own way for six thousand years. He has allowed man to try all kinds of religions, governments and systems. By now, it is very evident that man is not happy unless he submits to God's rule. In the garden of Eden, man started out happy. Since then, he has experienced suffering and hardship.

<sup>3</sup> On a later occasion, Satan challenged God regarding mankind. When discussing the faithful man Job, Satan said: "Is it for nothing that Job has feared God?" (Job 1:9) He went on to suggest that the only reason Job (and therefore all other servants of God) worshiped God was for the good things he got out of it. Hence, God allowed adversity to come upon Job as a test. And the same has happened to all his worshipers. When they faithfully submit to God, whatever the circumstances, this is a proof that the Devil is a liar, that he has slandered both God and His earthly servants.

<sup>4</sup> However, when the purpose of God's allowing sin and suffering has been served, then God will remove them from the earth. This brings us back to the second most important person mentioned in the Bible, Jesus Christ.

3. (a) What other challenge did Satan make to God? (b) Hence, for what further reason did God allow sin to continue?
4. What will God do when the issues raised by Satan have been solved?

### WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT JESUS

<sup>1</sup> After the first human pair had sinned, God said to the Devil: "I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and

1. What promise did God make immediately after Adam and Eve had sinned?

her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel." (Genesis 3:15) God foretold that, sometime in the future, a "seed" would appear who would eventually destroy Satan and undo all the evil that the Serpent had started in Eden. Thus we see that God did not just leave matters to run their own course. Immediately after the problem arose, he took active steps to counteract sin and wickedness.

<sup>2</sup> According to the history in the Bible, most of mankind followed the bad example of Adam and Eve and rebelled against God. However, there was a line of worshipers that remained faithful, sometimes in spite of the most bitter persecution. The first faithful man was Abel, and he died at his brother's hand. Another man of outstanding faith was Noah, who was used by God to build an ark to preserve mankind through the global flood. One of Noah's descendants, who became renowned for his faith, was Abraham. By means of Abraham, God revealed important information about the one who was going to be the promised "seed."

<sup>3</sup> Abraham and his wife Sarah submitted to the will of God during all their lifetime. God promised that they would have a son, but when they had grown old, they were still childless. At one time, Sarah gave to Abraham her slave girl Hagar, and he had a son by her named Ishmael. But this son was not the fulfillment of God's promise. God purposed that Abraham would have a son by Sarah, his natural wife, so He said to him: "As

2. (a) Who are some of those who proved faithful to God? (b) What important information was given to Abraham, and why to him?
3. 4. (a) Through which woman was God's promise to Abraham fulfilled? (b) What did God say would happen to Abraham's "seed"?

for Sarai your wife, you must not call her name Sarai, because Sarah is her name. And I will bless her and also give you a son from her; and I will bless her and she shall become nations; kings of peoples will come from her."—Genesis 17:15, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Sarah, though very old, did bear a son to Abraham, and they called his name Isaac. Many years after Abraham had fathered Isaac, Jehovah tested Abraham's faith and submission by requesting him to sacrifice this dear son. (Genesis 22:1, 2; see also Sura 37, *Al-Saffat* [The Ranks], verses 100-112.) When his faith was seen to be very strong, God told him not to go on with the sacrifice and promised: "I shall surely multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens and like the grains of sand that are on the seashore; and your seed will take possession of the gate of his enemies. And by means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves due to the fact that you have listened to my voice." (Genesis 22:17, 18) God was here speaking of Isaac. He showed that the "seed," promised back in the days of Adam and Eve, would appear through the line of Abraham's son Isaac.

<sup>5</sup> When Abraham died, Isaac and his half brother Ishmael buried him. Later, God repeated to Isaac the promise he had made to Abraham: "I will carry out the sworn statement that I swore to Abraham your father, 'And I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens and I will give to your seed all these lands; and by means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves,' due to the fact that Abraham listened to my voice and continued to keep his obligations to me.'" (Genesis 26:3-5) After Isaac, Jacob inherited this same promise, and Jacob

5. What promise was given to Isaac?

had twelve sons who became the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel.

<sup>6</sup> Throughout the centuries, God gave additional information about that promised "seed," and faithful Israelites waited patiently for his arrival. It was shown that the "seed" would appear in the tribe of Judah. Then, it was revealed that he would appear in the family of King David. Through the prophet Micah, God revealed that the seed would be born in Bethlehem. And through Isaiah, it was prophesied that he would declare good news and suffer for the sins of others.—Genesis 49:10; 2 Samuel 7:11-16; Micah 5:2; Isaiah 53:3-12.

<sup>7</sup> Finally, after thousands of years, the waiting was over. The seed arrived. Who was he? The apostle Paul explains: "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. It says, not: 'And to seeds,' as in the case of many such, but as in the case of one: 'And to your seed,' who is Christ." Yes, the promised seed was Jesus Christ.—Galatians 3:16.

<sup>8</sup> The Bible shows that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, as promised, but in an unusual way. His mother was a virgin. Hence his human life came about by a miracle. In a special way, then, the Bible speaks of Jesus as the son of God. An angel explained this to the young virgin Mary, who was to be his earthly mother: "Holy spirit will come upon you, and power of the Most High will overshadow you. For that reason also what is born will be called holy, God's Son."—Luke 1:35.

6. What further information did God give about this promised "seed" through the succeeding years?

7. Who eventually proved to be the promised "seed"?

8. In what unusual way was Jesus born?

<sup>9</sup> You may recall that the miraculous birth of Jesus was also remembered in the Qur'an. Here is the account: "And you [Mohammed] shall recount in the Book the story of Mary: how she left her people and betook herself to a solitary place to the east. We sent to her Our spirit in the semblance of a fullgrown man. And when she saw him she said: 'May the Merciful defend me from you! If you fear the Lord, leave me and go away.' 'I am the messenger of your Lord,' he replied, 'and have come to give you a holy son.' 'How shall I bear a child,' she answered, 'when I am a virgin, untouched by man?' 'Such is the will of your Lord,' he replied. 'That is no difficult thing for Him. "He shall be a sign to mankind," says the Lord, "and a blessing from Ourselves. This is Our decree."'"—Sura 19, *Maryam* [Mary], verses 16-21.

<sup>10</sup> Why was such an unusual birth necessary for this promised "seed"? Remember that all of Adam's children were born after he sinned; therefore, they were born in sin. Since the "wages sin pays is death," all therefore came under the condemnation of death. Even righteous men like Abraham had to die eventually.—Romans 6:23; 5:12.

<sup>11</sup> The only exception to this rule was Jesus. Jesus received his life, not from an earthly father, but—in a miraculous way—from God himself. Hence, Jesus was not born in sin. He was just like Adam was before Adam sinned. In fact, he is called "the last Adam." (1 Corinthians 15:

9. Why may readers of the Qur'an be familiar with Jesus' unusual birth?

10, 11. Why was Jesus different from all other men born of women?

45) Hence, Jesus possesses a special place among those who have submitted to God.

<sup>12</sup> A correspondency between Adam and Jesus is also noted in the Qur'an. There it is stated: "Jesus is like Adam in the sight of Allah." (Sura 3, *Al-Imran* [The Imrants], verse 59) The favor God showed to Jesus is also shown. "Allah will say: 'Jesus, son of Mary, remember the favour I have bestowed on you and on your mother: how I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit.'" (Sura 5, *Al-Ma'ida* [The Table], verse 110) In more than fifty verses in the Qur'an, it is recorded that Jesus was born without a father, performed miracles, even resurrected the dead.

<sup>13</sup> But what was the purpose of all of this? Only the Bible tells us. Jesus, as a perfect and sinless man, did not deserve to die. He could have lived forever, just as Adam could have if he had not sinned. Jesus did not sin, but he voluntarily sacrificed his human life on our behalf. He took upon himself the punishment for our sins and thus became a ransom for us. The Bible tells us: "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all." (1 Timothy 2:5, 6) Again, the Bible says: "By means of him [Jesus] we have the release by ransom through the blood of that one, yes, the forgiveness of our trespasses." (Ephesians 1:7) Jesus himself said: "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.

<sup>14</sup> To some, it seems strange that someone as

12. Is Jesus' special position in God's sight taken note of in the Qur'an?

13. What was the purpose of Jesus' being born of a virgin?

14. Was Jesus really put to death?

holy as Jesus should be put to death. Hence, some think that he did not really die. But if that were true, then the whole purpose of Jesus' being born in such a miraculous way would not have been accomplished. Consequently, man would have no chance of being ransomed, or freed from slavery to sin and death. However, the Bible says that Jesus did die for our sins. He paid the price God was willing to accept to purchase us out of the dying, sinful condition we inherited from Adam. Thus, "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.

#### DOES JESUS STILL LIVE?

<sup>1</sup> But what happened to Jesus after he died? The Bible tells us that God raised him back to life. Of course, he could no longer live as a human, because he had sacrificed his human life on our behalf. Hence, we read: "Christ died once for all time concerning sins, a righteous person for unrighteous ones, that he might lead you to God, he being put to death in the flesh, but being made *alive in the spirit*."—1 Peter 3:18.

<sup>2</sup> As a spirit creature he ascended to heaven, and there further blessings awaited him. The apostle Paul wrote: "[Jesus Christ] emptied himself and took a slave's form and came to be in the likeness of men. 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

1. What happened to Jesus after he died?

2, 3. (a) What further blessings has Jesus enjoyed? (b) What is Jesus' position now?

kindly gave him the name that is above every other name, so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground, and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."—Philippians 2:7-11.

<sup>3</sup> Jesus' great responsibilities extend to being King and Judge, in the name of Jehovah God. Hence, we read: "When the Son of man [Jesus Christ] arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." (Matthew 25:31, 32) The evidence of world events proves that this judging work of Jesus Christ in God's name has already started.—See Matthew, chapter 24; Mark, chapter 13; Luke, chapter 21.

<sup>4</sup> As God's appointed King and Judge, Jesus will rule over the entire earth. Long ago it was promised about him: "He will have subjects from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth." (Psalm 72:8) He will not tolerate wickedness and will destroy those who insist on doing bad things. But those who submit to God in meekness will be blessed: "Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give attention to his place, and he will not be. But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Psalm 37:10, 11.

<sup>5</sup> The blessings that will come in that not-so-

4. As God's appointed King, how will Jesus act toward mankind?

5, 6. Describe the blessings God has promised under Jesus' kingship.

distant future are well described in the last book of the Bible: 'I heard a loud voice from the throne say: 'Look! 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. The former things have passed away.' "—Revelation 21:3, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Is this not a remarkable prospect—perfect life without fear of death, sickness, oppression or any of the things that make life so difficult now? Everlasting life on earth under a truly loving and capable King! This is the sort of life that Adam would have enjoyed if he had not sinned. And God has said that we can enjoy it if we truly submit to him.

<sup>7</sup> Even the dead are not forgotten in God's wonderful purpose. Jesus himself promised: "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, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment." (John 5:28, 29) Most of us are familiar with the aching sorrow that comes when a loved one dies. Just imagine the opposite—the inexpressible joy when those loved ones will be raised again, and reunited with their families in a paradise earth!

7. What remarkable prospect is there for those who have died?

#### SUBMIT TO GOD NOW

<sup>1</sup> When will these things happen? You will re-

1. (a) When will these things happen, and how do you know?
- (b) What responsibility does this put upon each one of us?

call how, earlier, we discussed many prophecies that are clearly coming true today. The fulfillment of those prophecies since 1914 shows that we are living in what is called the "last days." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) That means that some of the generation of 1914 will survive to see God cleanse this earth of the results of thousands of years of misrule. (Matthew 24:34) If you have read the prophecies in Matthew chapter 24, Mark chapter 13 and Luke chapter 21, you will have noted the convincing proof that soon the wicked will be destroyed and a new system ushered in under God's own sovereignty. But this knowledge puts a big responsibility on each of us. Why? Because now is the time for us to submit ourselves to God.

<sup>2</sup> Do you remember how, long ago, Satan challenged God saying that Job was faithful only because of the blessings he received? He claimed that if God would withhold those blessings, Job would curse God. That challenge of Satan applies by implication to all mankind, including you. It suggests that nobody—including you—would serve God with an unselfish motive.—Job 1:9-11.

<sup>3</sup> How do you respond to that challenge? Job responded in a way that was pleasing to God. He did not curse God, even though he suffered much. He was determined to submit himself wholly to God's will. (Job 31:6) And he was not alone. Throughout history, many faithful men, women and children have remained faithful in spite of everything Satan did against them. They include people like Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David.

2. 3. (a) Who are included in Satan's challenge to Jehovah?
- (b) How have many responded to that challenge?

<sup>4</sup> In the book of Hebrews, the Bible writer lists a long line of these faithful ones, and at the end, he draws a lesson for us: "Because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."—Hebrews 12:1.

<sup>5</sup> Yes, our lifelong service to God is like a race, and we must endure to the end of that race, just like those ancient servants of God endured. Then we will prove the Devil to be a liar, just as they did. And God will bless us for it.

<sup>6</sup> Today, there are literally millions of men, women and children in many different lands who have submitted themselves to God and are working hard to do his will. Soon after the death of Jesus, God "turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name." (Acts 15:14) God's name, you will remember, is Jehovah. This people for Jehovah's name still exists. No, they are no part of Christendom. They have been 'taken out' of the nations, including the nations of Christendom. They remain separate from the world, having no share in its injustices, oppressions and inequalities. (John 17:16) Who are they?

<sup>7</sup> They are the modern equivalent of that "cloud of witnesses" that the Bible writer spoke of. They are Jehovah's Witnesses. For many years, they have been known for their steadfast preaching. In spite of persecution and opposition, they have continually told people about God, about Christ Jesus and about the purpose God has to make this earth into a paradise like Eden, where righ-

4, 5. How can we imitate the fine example of the faithful men of old?

6. What shows that a people for God's name still exists?

7. Who are these faithful ones today?

teous mankind will live forever. (Matthew 24:14) This small booklet is one of the means they are using to spread this good news.

<sup>8</sup> The Witnesses will be delighted to help you, too, to learn of the right way to submit to God's will. And they will show you how the Bible also has a message for you. No, they will not charge for this. Jesus said: "You received free, give free." (Matthew 10:8) Hence, Jehovah's Witnesses will help you freely, the same way that Jesus helped people of his day.

<sup>9</sup> Yes, if you love righteousness, if you hate fights, divisions, hostilities and bloodshed, if you are distressed to see some people acting as though they were superior to others, if you would like to see all humans living together in unity, like brothers and sisters, then we urge you to learn more about the Bible and its message for mankind today. These bad things will soon be done away with forever, and faithful mankind will learn to live together as one big family. Hence, now is the time to submit yourself completely to God and learn his will. Do not hesitate. Such a course of submission will bring you unimaginable blessings both now and on into the future.

8. How can these faithful ones help you?

9. If you love righteousness what must you now do?

The  
Time  
for True  
Submission  
to God