

THE WATCHTOWER
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



What Does the
Future Hold?

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Vol. 139, No. 6 2018 ENGLISH

Produced Each Issue: 69,804,000

Available in 334 LANGUAGES

THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, honors Jehovah God, the Ruler of the universe. It comforts people with the good news that God's heavenly Kingdom will soon end all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) Issue 6 May/June 2018 is published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; L. Weaver, Jr., President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. © 2018 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Have you ever wondered what the future will be for you and your family? The Bible says:

“The righteous will possess the earth, and they will live forever on it.”—Psalm 37:29.

This issue of *The Watchtower* will help you to understand God's wonderful purpose for mankind and the earth and what you must do to benefit from that purpose.

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Predicting the Future



Have you ever wondered what the future will be for you and your family? Does it promise riches or ruin, love or loneliness? Will you live a long life, or will your life be cut short? People have speculated about such questions for thousands of years.

Today experts study global trends and make projections about the future. While many of their forecasts have come true, others have failed, some miserably. For example, in 1912, Guglielmo Marconi, the inventor of a wireless telegraph, was quoted as predicting: "The coming of the wireless era will make war impossible." And an agent of the Decca Record Company, who rejected the Beatles in 1962, believed that guitar-playing groups were on the way out.

Many turn to the supernatural for clues about the future. Some seek the advice of astrologers; horoscopes are a regular feature in many magazines and newspapers. Others consult fortunetellers or psychics, who claim to "read" the future

by interpreting patterns in tarot cards, numbers, or the lines of one's hand.

In their effort to discern the future, some in the ancient world consulted oracles—priests or priestesses who passed on information from the god they claimed to represent. For instance, it is said that King Croesus of Lydia sent gifts of great value to the oracle at Delphi, Greece, with a request to learn what the outcome would be if he fought against Cyrus of Persia. The oracle said that Croesus would destroy "a great empire" if he marched against Cyrus. Confident of victory, Croesus sallied forth, but the great empire that was destroyed was his own!

The ambiguous forecast of the oracle was worthless; it would have appeared true no matter which side won the war. Croesus paid dearly for misinformation that brought him disaster. Have those who turn to today's popular methods of predicting the future fared any better?

ASTROLOGY AND FORTUNE-TELLING

—WINDOWS TO THE FUTURE?

ASTROLOGY

Astrology is a form of divination that holds that the stars, the moon, and the planets significantly influence the lives of people on earth. Astrologers claim that the position of these celestial bodies at the time of one's birth shapes his or her personality and future.

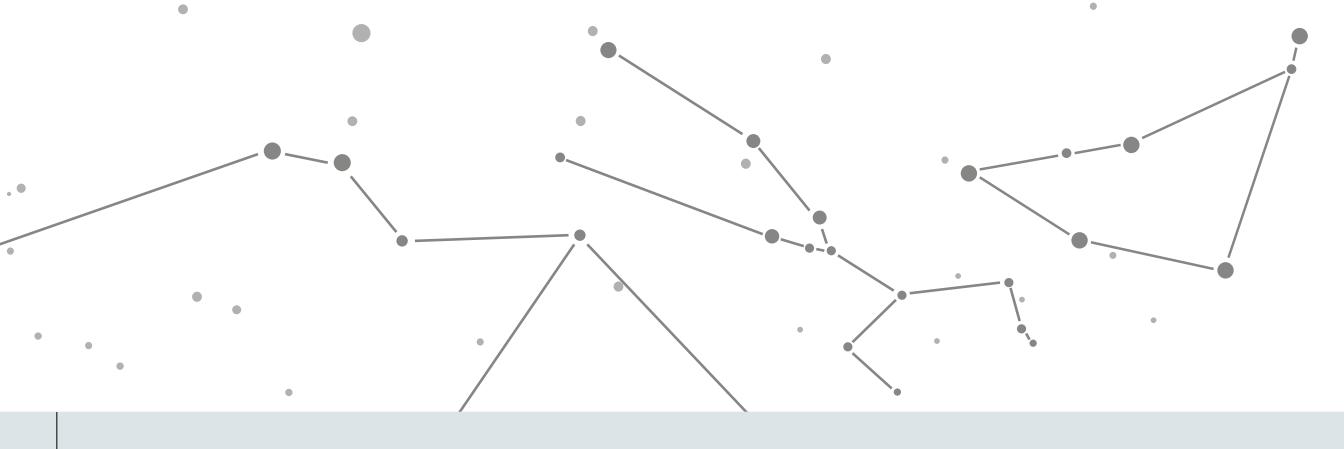
Though the roots of astrology can be traced to ancient Babylon, it remains popular. According to a 2012 survey in the United States, one third of those surveyed thought that astrology was "sort of scientific," and 10 percent said that it was "very scientific." Is it? No. Here is why.

- The planets and stars emit no force that could affect humans the way astrologers say they do.
- Often the predictions are so general that they could apply to anyone.
- Astrological calculations today are made according to the ancient belief that the planets revolve around

the earth. In fact, the planets revolve around the sun.

- Predictions made by different astrologers for the same individual do not match.
- Astrology classifies people under one of 12 categories, or zodiac signs, according to their date of birth. Because of changes in earth's position in space over the centuries, the dates associated with the signs of the zodiac no longer correspond to when the sun passes through the constellations for which the signs were named.

The zodiac signs are said to give clues to a person's character. In reality, people who have the same birthday do not have the same traits; one's birth date reveals nothing about his or her personality. Instead of seeing people as they really are, astrologers judge a person's behavior and character by a set of assumptions. Is this not a form of prejudice?



FORTUNE-TELLING

From ancient times, people have consulted fortune-tellers. Some practitioners looked for meaning in such things as the entrails of animals and humans or the way a rooster pecks at its grain. Others made projections based on patterns in tea leaves or coffee grounds. Today they use tarot cards, crystal balls, dice, and other means to "read" a person's future. Is fortune-telling a reliable way to discern the future? No, it is not. Let us reason on the matter.

Consider the issue of consistency. The predictions of differing fortune-telling methods often contradict one another. Even when the same method is used, forecasts vary. For example, if a person asks two fortune-tellers the same question about the future based on the "reading" of the same cards, logically the answers should be the same. But often they are not.

Fortune-tellers' methods or motives have come under suspicion. Critics say that the cards or crystal balls are mere props and that the fortune-teller reads the person's reactions rather than the props. For example, a skilled fortune-teller will ask general questions and carefully watch for verbal and nonverbal clues that could reveal something about the client. The fortune-teller will then take credit for knowing facts and situations that the client has just unknowingly given away. Having won the client's trust, some fortune-tellers have been able to obtain large sums of money from their customers.

WHAT THE BIBLE TELLS US

The practice of astrology and fortune-telling implies that our future is predetermined. But is it? The Bible tells us that we have the ability to choose what we believe or want

to do and that our choices affect our future.—Joshua 24:15.

Worshippers of God have an added reason to reject astrology and fortune-telling—God condemns all forms of divination. In the Bible we find these words: "There should not be found in you anyone . . . who employs divination, anyone practicing magic, anyone who looks for omens, a sorcerer, anyone binding others with a spell, anyone who consults a spirit medium or a fortune-teller, or anyone who inquires of the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to Jehovah."*—Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

* The name of "the Most High over all the earth."—Psalm 83:18.

Prophecies That Have Come True



Earlier we referred to the legend about Croesus' being misled by the oracle of Delphi, which resulted in his defeat by the king of Persia. The Bible, on the other hand, contains a remarkable prophecy involving the king of Persia that was fulfilled in minute detail.

About 200 years in advance—long before the king was born—the Hebrew prophet Isaiah mentioned Cyrus by name and described how he would conquer the mighty city of Babylon.

Isaiah 44:24, 27, 28: “This is what Jehovah says, . . . ‘the One saying to the deep waters, “Be evaporated, and I will dry up all your rivers”; the One saying of Cyrus, “He is my shepherd, and he will completely carry out all my will”; the One saying of Jerusalem, “She will be rebuilt,” and of the temple, “Your foundation will be laid.”’”

According to the Greek historian Herodotus, the army of Cyrus diverted the waters of the Euphrates River, which flowed through the city of Babylon. Cyrus' strategy enabled his troops to enter the city along the riverbed. After taking the city, Cyrus freed the Jews who had been captive in Babylon and allowed them to return and rebuild

Jerusalem, which had been destroyed 70 years earlier.

Isaiah 45:1: “This is what Jehovah says to his anointed one, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have taken hold of to subdue nations before him, to disarm kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut.”

The Persians entered the city through the massive two-leaved doors in the city wall, which had carelessly been left open. Had the Babylonians been aware of what Cyrus was planning, they could have shut all the gates that opened onto the river. But as it was, the city was defenseless.

This remarkable prophecy is but one of dozens found in the Bible that unerringly came true.* Unlike the predictions of men, often attributed to their false gods, Bible prophecies originate with the One who proclaimed: “From the beginning I foretell the outcome, and from long ago the things that have not yet been done.”—Isaiah 46:10.

Only the true God, whose name is Jehovah, can make such a claim. That name evidently means

* See the article “A Silent Witness to Accurate Prophecy.”

“He Causes to Become.” It points to his ability to know and shape future events in harmony with his will. It assures us that he is certain to bring about all that he has promised.

PROPHETIES BEING FULFILLED TODAY

Would you like to know what Bible prophecies have to say about our day? Some 2,000 years ago, the Bible foretold that “critical times hard to deal with” would come “in the last days.” Last days of what? Not of the earth or humankind, but of the strife, oppression, and suffering that have plagued mankind for millenniums. Let us examine just a few of the prophecies that earmark “the last days.”

2 Timothy 3:1-5: “In the last days . . . , men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, 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 an appearance of godliness but proving false to its power.”

Would you not agree that such behavior is increasingly evident in people today? Have you perceived that we are surrounded by people who adore themselves, love money, and are driven by pride? Have you not observed that people are more demanding and less willing to agree with others? Surely you notice that there is widespread disobedience to parents and that people in general love pleasures more than they love God. And things are getting worse by the day.

Matthew 24:6, 7: “You are going to hear of wars and reports of wars. . . . Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom.”

Some estimates place the total number of deaths in wars and armed conflicts since 1914 at well over 100 million, a figure that surpasses the entire population of many nations. Imagine the tears, grief, and suffering represented by that co-

lossal statistic. Have the nations taken note and put an end to war?

Matthew 24:7: “There will be food shortages.”

The World Food Programme stated: “In a world where we produce enough food to feed everyone, 815 million people—one in nine—still go to bed on an empty stomach each night. Even more—one in three—suffer from some form of malnutrition.” It is estimated that each year some three million children die from hunger.

Luke 21:11: “There will be great earthquakes.”

Each year, some 50,000 earthquakes are large enough to be felt by humans. About 100 bring substantial damage to buildings, and one very great earthquake occurs about every year. According to one estimate, between 1975 and 2000, earthquakes claimed the lives of 471,000 people.

Matthew 24:14: “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.”

Jehovah’s Witnesses, numbering more than eight million, have been preaching and bearing witness to the good news of God’s Kingdom throughout the earth in some 240 lands. They proclaim the good news in sprawling cities and remote villages, in jungles and on mountains. The prophecy foretells that when this work is completed to God’s satisfaction, “the end will come.” What will that mean? It will mean the end of human rule and the dawn of rule by God’s Kingdom. What promises will come true under God’s Kingdom? Read on to find out.

A SILENT WITNESS TO ACCURATE PROPHECY

IN CENTRAL ROME, ITALY, STANDS A TRIUMPHAL ARCH THAT ATTRACTS VISITORS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. THE ARCH HONORS ONE OF ROME'S FAVORITE EMPERORS—TITUS.

The Arch of Titus has two large reliefs depicting a well-known historical event. Less well-known, though, is the fascinating link between the arch and the Bible—the Arch of Titus bears silent witness to the remarkable accuracy of Bible prophecy.

A CITY CONDEMNED

Early in the first century C.E., the Roman Empire stretched from Britain and Gaul (now France) to Egypt, and the region enjoyed unprecedented stability and prosperity. But one remote area was a source of constant frustration for Rome—the restless province of Judea.

The *Encyclopedia of Ancient Rome* states: “Few territories under Rome’s control were marked by such intense dislike, on both sides, as Judaea. The Jews resented foreign masters who cared nothing for their traditions, and the Romans found Jewish stubbornness cause for severe intolerance.” Many Jews

hoped that a political messiah would expel the hated Romans and restore a golden era to Israel. But in 33 C.E., Jesus Christ declared that Jerusalem faced a coming catastrophe.

Jesus said: “*The days will come upon you when your enemies will build around you a fortification of pointed stakes and will encircle you and besiege you from every side. They will dash you and your children within you to the ground, and they will not leave a stone upon a stone in you.*”—Luke 19:43, 44.

Jesus’ words evidently puzzled his disciples. Two days later, on viewing Jerusalem’s temple, one of them exclaimed: “Teacher, see! what wonderful stones and buildings!” Indeed, some temple stones were reportedly over 11 meters (36 ft) long, 5 meters (16 ft) wide, and 3 meters (10 ft) high! Yet, Jesus replied: “*As for these things that you now see, the days will come when not a stone will be left upon a stone*

33 C.E.

Jesus Christ declared that Jerusalem faced a coming catastrophe

and not be thrown down.”—Mark 13:1; Luke 21:6.

Jesus further told them: “*When you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near. Then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains, let those in the midst of her leave, and let those in the countryside not enter into her.*” (Luke 21:20, 21) Did Jesus’ words come true?

DEATH OF A CITY

Thirty-three years passed, and Judea still chafed under the Roman yoke. But in 66 C.E. when the Roman procurator of Judea, Gessius Florus, seized funds from the sacred temple treasury, the enraged Jews had had enough. Soon, Jewish fighters swarmed into Jerusalem, slaughtered the local Roman garrison, and declared their independence from Rome.

About three months later, over 30,000 Roman troops, led by



66 C.E.

Roman troops led by Cestius Gallus advanced on Jerusalem to crush the Jewish rebellion

70 C.E.

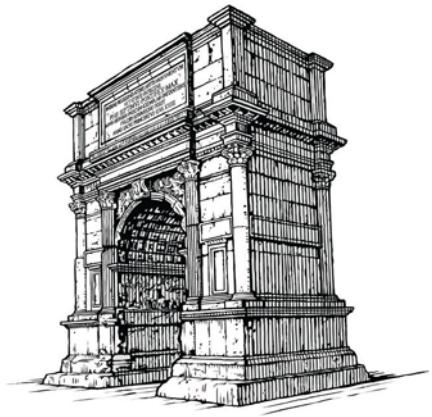
The Romans, under Titus, plundered and burned Jerusalem and its temple

71 C.E.

Titus returned to Rome to a rapturous reception

81 C.E.

Titus died, and shortly thereafter the arch was erected in his honor



The Arch of Titus in Rome today

Cestius Gallus, advanced on Jerusalem to crush the rebellion. The Romans quickly penetrated the city and undermined the outer wall of the temple area. Then, for no apparent reason, they retreated. The Jewish rebels rejoiced and promptly gave chase. With the warring parties away, the Christians, heeding Jesus' warning, fled from Jerusalem to the mountains beyond the Jordan River.
—Matthew 24:15, 16.

The following year, Rome renewed its campaign against Judea, headed by General Vespasian and his son Titus. However, soon after Emperor Nero died in 68 C.E., Vespasian returned to Rome to assume the throne, leaving the Judean campaign to his son Titus with an army of some 60,000.

In June 70 C.E., Titus ordered his soldiers to strip the Judean countryside of trees, which were used in building a 7-kilometer-long (4.5 mi) wall of pointed stakes around Jerusalem. By September, the Romans

had plundered and burned the city and its temple and had torn them apart stone by stone, just as Jesus had earlier foretold. (Luke 19:43, 44) According to a conservative estimate, "between a quarter and a half million people perished in Jerusalem and the rest of the country."

AN IMPERIAL TRIUMPH

In 71 C.E., Titus returned to Italy to a rapturous reception from the citizens of Rome. The whole city turned out to celebrate one of the greatest triumphal processions ever staged in the capital.

The crowds marveled as untold wealth paraded through Rome's streets. They feasted their eyes on captured ships, massive floats depicting battle scenes from the war, and items plundered from Jerusalem's temple.

Titus succeeded his father Vespasian as emperor in 79 C.E. But just two years later, Titus died unexpectedly. Domitian, his brother, took the

throne and promptly erected a triumphal arch in Titus' honor.

THE ARCH TODAY

Today the Arch of Titus is much admired by the hundreds of thousands of people each year who visit the Roman Forum. Some view the arch as a majestic work of art, others as a tribute to imperial Roman power, and yet others as an epitaph to fallen Jerusalem and its temple.

Careful readers of the Bible, however, view the Arch of Titus as having even greater significance. It is a silent witness that confirms the reliability and accuracy of Bible prophecies and establishes that they are inspired by God.—2 Peter 1:19-21.



Promises That Will Come True

The good news of God's Kingdom is being preached in all the earth, just as Jesus prophesied. (Matthew 24:14) The Bible book of Daniel tells us that this Kingdom is a government by God. Chapter 2 of that book contains a prophecy that traces the progression of certain dominant human governments, or kingdoms, from ancient Babylon down to our day. Foretelling what lies ahead, verse 44 says this:

"The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. And this kingdom will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it alone will stand forever."

This and other Bible prophecies foretell that God's Kingdom will replace all human rule and bring stability and order to people on earth. What will life be like under the Kingdom? Here are some marvelous promises that will soon come true.



NO MORE WAR

Psalm 46:9: "[God] is bringing an end to wars throughout the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the military wagons with fire."

Imagine what the world would be like if all the money and expertise that is now being spent to create weapons were channeled into areas that would benefit people rather than kill them! That promise will become a reality under God's Kingdom.



NO MORE SICKNESS

Isaiah 33:24: "No resident will say: 'I am sick.'"

Think about a world in which no one will suffer from heart disease, cancer, malaria, or any other ailment. Gone will be the need for hospitals and medications. Perfect health—that is the future for earth's inhabitants.



NO MORE FOOD SHORTAGE

Psalm 72:16: "There will be an abundance of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains it will overflow."

The earth will produce enough food for everyone, and all will have access to it. Hunger and malnutrition will be no more.



NO MORE PAIN, SORROW, AND DEATH

Revelation 21:4: "[God] 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."

That will mean life without end in perfection on a paradise earth! That is what our loving Creator, Jehovah God, has promised.

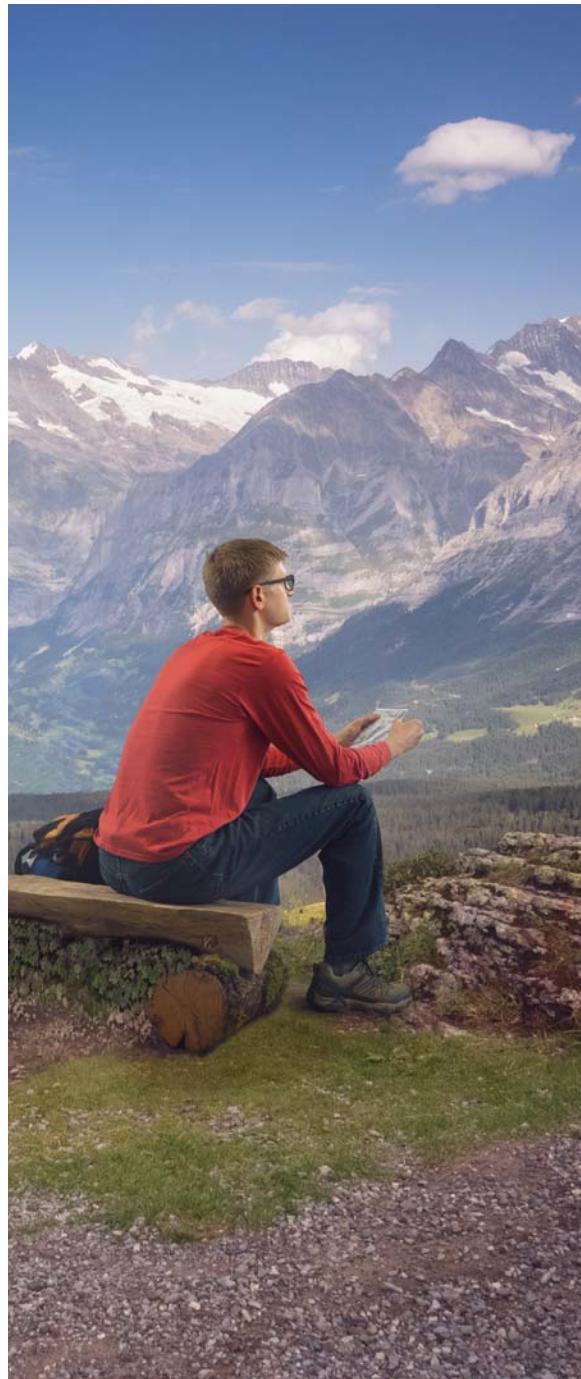
“IT WILL HAVE SURE SUCCESS”

Does all of this sound too good to be true? Though most people would readily agree that life as promised and described in the Bible is truly desirable, for various reasons many find the idea of living forever difficult to comprehend. That is not surprising, for no fellow human has ever experienced life like that to tell us about it.

Humankind has been enslaved by sin and death and has labored under the burden of pain, suffering, and adversity for so long that many people have come to accept this way of life as normal or natural. But that is far from what our Creator, Jehovah God, purposed for mankind.

To help us appreciate the certainty of all that he has promised, God said emphatically regarding his word: “It will not return to me without results, but it will certainly accomplish whatever is my delight, and it will have sure success in what I send it to do.”—Isaiah 55:11.

Jehovah is described in the Bible as the God “who cannot lie.” (Titus 1:2) Since he has promised all these wonderful things for the future, it would be prudent on our part to consider: Is it really possible for humans to live forever in the promised earthly Paradise? What must we do to benefit from God’s promise? In the following pages of this publication, you will find helpful information that answers those questions.



You Can Live Forever on Earth



WHAT AN AMAZING PROSPECT! Our Creator has promised to give us everlasting life, *right here on earth*. Many, however, find that difficult to believe. ‘Everyone has to die sometime,’ they say. ‘It is part of a natural cycle of life and death.’ Others feel that living forever is possible, but not here on earth. They say that everlasting life is attained only after you die and go to heaven. What do you think?

Before you decide, why not consider the Bible’s answer to these three questions: What does the way man was made show as to how long he was meant to live? What was God’s original purpose for the earth and for mankind? How did death come upon the human family?

MAN’S UNIQUE NATURE

Of all the forms of life that God has created on earth, humans are truly unique. How so? The Bible indicates that humans alone were created in God’s “image” and “likeness.” (Genesis 1:26, 27) What does that mean? It means that humankind was given characteristics and qualities that mirrored God’s own, such as love and a sense of justice.

In addition, humans were endowed with thinking and reasoning abilities, coupled with moral and spiritual capacities. That is why we can appreciate the grandeur of the universe and the wonders of nature, as well as art, music, and poetry. Above all, mankind has the unique capacity to worship the Creator. Such attributes put an immeasurable gulf between humans and all other living creatures on earth.

Thus, consider: Would God have given humans such remarkable qualities, along with a seemingly limitless potential to develop and enhance them, if he meant for us to live only a few short years? The truth is that God gave humans these unique qualities and abilities so that we could enjoy life right here on earth forever.

GOD’S ORIGINAL PURPOSE

Some say, however, that God never meant for humans to live on earth forever. They maintain that the earth was designed to be a temporary home, a testing ground to see which members of the human family deserve to go to heaven and live eternally with God. But if that were true, would it not, in effect, make God responsible for all the evil

and badness that fill the earth? That would be in direct contradiction to the very nature of God. About him, the Bible says: “For all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness who is never unjust; righteous and upright is he.”—Deuteronomy 32:4.

The Bible clearly reveals God’s original purpose for the earth in these words: “As for the heavens, they belong to Jehovah, but the earth he has given to the sons of men.” (Psalm 115:16) Yes, God created the earth to be a beautiful, permanent home for mankind, and he filled it with everything we need to enjoy meaningful, endless life.—Genesis 2:8, 9.

The Bible is also clear regarding God’s purpose for mankind. He commissioned the first human couple to “fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection . . . every living creature that is moving on the earth.” (Genesis 1:28) What a privilege for them to care for and expand their Paradise home earth wide! Indeed, the prospect that awaited Adam and Eve and their eventual offspring was everlasting life on earth, not a reward in heaven.

WHY DO WE DIE?

Why, then, do we die? The Bible shows that one of God’s spirit creatures, later identified as the rebel Satan the Devil, tried to sabotage God’s arrangements in Eden. How?

Satan induced our first parents, Adam and Eve, to join him in rebellion against God. When Satan claimed that God was withholding something good from them—the right to determine for themselves what is right and what is wrong—they went along with Satan and turned their backs on God. The result? In time, they died, just as God had warned. They lost the prospect of living forever in Paradise on earth.—Genesis 2:17; 3:1-6; 5:5.

Adam and Eve’s rebellion has affected all humans down to this day. God’s Word says: “Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men.” (Romans 5:12) We die because we inherited sin and death from our original parents,

not because of some predetermined, unfathomable ‘plan’ of God.

YOU CAN LIVE FOREVER ON EARTH

The rebellion in Eden did not thwart God’s original purpose for mankind and the earth. God’s perfect love and sense of justice moved him to provide a way to free us from the bondage of inherited sin and death. The apostle Paul explained: “The wages sin pays is death, but the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23) Lovingly, God “gave his only-begotten Son [Jesus Christ], so that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) By offering himself willingly as a ransom sacrifice, Jesus redeemed all that was lost through Adam.*

Soon, God’s promise of an earthly paradise will become a reality. This wonderful future can be yours if you take to heart Jesus’ admonition: “Go in through the narrow gate, because broad is the gate and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are finding it.” (Matthew 7:13, 14) Yes, your future is in your own hands. What will you do?

* For more information on what the ransom can do for you, see lesson 27 of the book *Enjoy Life Forever!* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses and available for free download at www.jw.org.

“As for the heavens, they belong to Jehovah, but the earth he has given to the sons of men.”

—Psalm 115:16

Your Future, Your Choice!



DO YOU HAVE ANY REAL CHOICE IN WHAT YOUR FUTURE WILL BE? Some people believe that fate or predestination, not personal choice, controls their life. When they fail to reach certain goals, they simply shrug it off as inevitable. “It was never meant to be!” they say.

Others become disillusioned when they see no way out of this oppressive and unjust world in which we live. They may have tried to make their lives better—only to see things like war, crime, natural disasters, and sickness wreck their plans time and again. ‘Why bother?’ they ask themselves.

It is true that circumstances in life can seriously affect your plans. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) However, when it comes to your ultimate destiny, you do have a very real choice. In fact, the Bible shows that your future depends on your choice. Consider what it says.

Moses, the leader of the ancient nation of Israel, told the people as they were about to enter the Promised Land: “I have put life and death before you, the blessing and the curse; and you must choose life so that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving Jehovah your God, by listening to his voice, and by sticking to him.”—**Deuteronomy 30:15, 19, 20.**

Yes! God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and put before them the prospect of a free and happy life in the Promised Land. But all that would not come upon them automatically. To gain

those blessings, they had to “choose life.” How? ‘By loving God, by listening to his voice, and by sticking to him.’

Today, a similar choice is before you, and how you choose will determine what your future will be. By choosing to love God, to listen to his voice, and to stick to him, you will in effect be choosing life—life everlasting on a paradise earth. But what is involved in each of those steps?

CHOOSE TO LOVE GOD

Love is God’s primary attribute. “God is love,” wrote the apostle John under inspiration. (1 John 4:8) For this reason, when asked what is the greatest of all commandments, Jesus said: “You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.” (Matthew 22:37) A real relationship with Jehovah God must be based, not on fear or blind obedience, but on love. Why, though, should we choose to love him?

Jehovah’s love for mankind is like that of loving parents for their children. Though imperfect, loving parents instruct, encourage, support, and discipline their children because they want them to be happy and to flourish. What do parents desire in return? They want their children to love them and to take to heart what they as parents have imparted to them for their good. Is it not reasonable that our perfect heavenly Father expects us to show loving appreciation for all that he has done for us?



“I have put life and death before you, the blessing and the curse; and you must choose life.”

—Deuteronomy 30:19

LISTEN TO HIS VOICE

In the original language of the Bible, the word “listen” often carries the sense of “obey.” Is this not what we mean when we say to a child, “Listen to your parents”? Thus, to listen to God’s voice implies learning and obeying what he says. Since we cannot literally hear God’s voice, we listen to him by reading and applying what is in his Word, the Bible.—1 John 5:3.

To show the importance of listening to God’s voice, on one occasion Jesus said: “Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every word that comes from Jehovah’s mouth.” (Matthew 4:4) As important as physical food is to us, taking in knowledge of God is, in fact, even more so. Why? Wise King Solomon explained: “Wisdom is a protection just as money is a protection, but the advantage of knowledge is this: Wisdom preserves the life of its owner.” (Ecclesiastes 7:12) Knowledge and wisdom from God can protect us today and help us to make the wise choice that leads to everlasting life in the future.

STICKING TO HIM

Recall Jesus’ illustration that we considered in the preceding article, in which he said: “Narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are finding it.” (Matthew 7:13, 14) Traveling on such a road, we would surely benefit from having and staying close to an expert guide if we wanted to reach the destination—life everlasting. Thus, there is good reason for us to stay

close to God. (Psalm 16:8) How, though, do we do that?

Every day, there are many things that we must do and many more that we would like to do. Such things can keep us so occupied or distracted that we have little or no time to consider what God wants us to do. That is why the Bible reminds us: “Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons, making the best use of your time, because the days are wicked.” (Ephesians 5:15, 16) We stay close to God by making our relationship with him the most important thing in our life.—Matthew 6:33.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS

Though there is nothing you can do to change your past, you can choose to secure a fine future for yourself and your loved ones. The Bible reveals that our heavenly Father, Jehovah God, deeply loves us and that he lets us know what he would like to see us do. Note the words of the prophet Micah:

“He has told you, O man, what is good. And what is Jehovah requiring of you? Only to exercise justice, to cherish loyalty, and to walk in modesty with your God!” —Micah 6:8.

Will you accept Jehovah’s invitation to walk with him and gain the eternal blessings he has in store for those who do? The choice is yours!

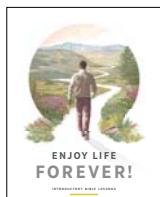
“THE MEEK WILL POSSESS THE EARTH”

Most of us have seen justice perverted and good, innocent people oppressed by evil ones. Will the time ever come when injustice and wickedness will be no more?

Psalm 37 in the Bible offers the answer, along with guidance for us now. Note what it says on the following important questions.

- **How should we react to those who oppress us?**—Verses 1, 2.
- **What will become of wicked people?**—Verse 10.
- **What is the future for those who do what is right?**—Verses 11, 29.
- **What should we do now?**—Verse 34.

The inspired words of Psalm 37 clearly point to a bright future for those who “hope in Jehovah and follow his way.” Jehovah’s Witnesses would be happy to assist you to study the Bible and to learn how you can secure that future for yourself and your loved ones.



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