

Awake!



**Will We Ever
Feel Safe and
Secure?**



Awake!®

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THE PROBLEM

Threats to Our Safety and Security

“This generation enjoys unprecedented technological, scientific and financial resources . . . And yet this is perhaps the first generation to take the world to the brink of a [political, economic, and environmental] systems breakdown.”

—*The Global Risks Report 2018, World Economic Forum.*

WHY ARE MANY INFORMED PEOPLE CONCERNED ABOUT OUR FUTURE AND THAT OF THE EARTH? CONSIDER JUST SOME OF THE CHALLENGES FACING US.

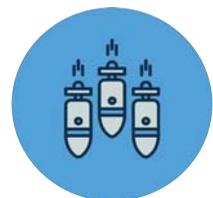
CYBERCRIME: “Increasingly the internet is proving to be a dangerous place to visit. It is a haven for pedophiles, bullies, trolls and hackers,” says the newspaper *The Australian*. “Identity theft is one of the fastest-growing crimes in the world. . . . The internet provides another outlet for one of the worst traits of humankind—the capacity to be vicious and cruel.”

FINANCIAL INEQUALITY: According to a recent Oxfam International report, the eight richest people own the same amount of wealth as the poorer half of humanity. “Our broken economies,” said Oxfam, “are funneling wealth to a rich elite at the expense of the poorest in society, the majority of whom are women.” Some fear that the growing inequality might trigger social unrest.

CONFLICT AND PERSECUTION: A 2018 United Nations Refugee Agency report said: “We are now witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record.” More than 68 million people have had to leave their homes, largely because of conflict or persecution. “Nearly 1 person is forcibly displaced every two seconds,” said the report.

THREATS TO THE ENVIRONMENT: “Biodiversity is being lost at mass-extinction rates,” states *The Global Risks Report 2018*, and “pollution of the air and sea has become an increasingly pressing threat to human health.” Also, insect numbers are in steep decline in some lands. Because insects pollinate plants, scientists are now warning of a potential “ecological Armageddon.” Coral reefs are in trouble too. Scientists estimate that about half the world’s reefs have died in the past 30 years.

Are we able to make the changes needed for a safer and more secure world? Some feel that education should be part of the answer. If so, what kind of education? The following articles will consider these questions.



THE CHALLENGE

Getting to the Root of Our Problems

Do you believe that mankind can solve the many problems that rob us of peace and security and that threaten our future? To be effective, any cure must surely address the root causes of our troubles, not just the symptoms.

To illustrate, a patient named Tom was sick and later died. Why did he die? “When his first symptoms appeared, no one thought to search for their underlying cause,” wrote the doctor whose hospital received Tom shortly before he died. It seems that Tom’s earlier caregivers had simply given him medication to make him feel better.

Are humans taking a similar approach to the world’s ills? For example, in fighting crime, governments enact laws, install video surveillance, and strengthen police forces. But these measures, while effective to some extent, do not address underlying causes. After all, behavior usually reflects attitudes, beliefs, and desires.

Daniel, who lives in a South American country that has a failing economy, says: “We once had normal lives. We did not dread armed robbery. But now there no longer exists a peaceful town or village. The failing economy has revealed what many people are really like—greedy and lacking in respect for the life or property of others.”

A man whom we will call Elias fled from a conflict in the Middle East and later studied the Bible. He states: “Many young men from my home city were encouraged by their families and the political-religious system to get involved in the war and be considered heroes. Those on the op-



A cure must do more than address symptoms; it must correct underlying causes

posing side were told the very same thing! All of this made me see how sad it is to put faith in human rulers.”

An ancient book of wisdom rightly states:

- “The inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up.”—Genesis 8:21.
- “The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate. Who can know it?”—Jeremiah 17:9.
- “Out of the heart come wicked reasonings, murders, . . . sexual immorality, thefts, false testimonies.”—Matthew 15:19.

Mankind has been unable to find a cure for the hurtful traits that lurk within us. In fact, those traits appear to be getting worse, as reflected in the problems mentioned in the preceding article. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) And this is so despite the vast amount of information that is available today, not to mention our unprecedented ability to communicate with others! So why can we not make the world peaceful and safe? Are we asking more of ourselves than we can give? Are we trying to do the impossible?

ARE WE ATTEMPTING THE IMPOSSIBLE?

Even if by some miracle we could cure mankind’s hurtful traits, we would still be unable to make the world safe and secure for all. The reason? Our human limitations.

The simple truth is this: “It does not belong to man . . . even to direct his step.” (Jeremiah 10:23)

KEY POINT

THE WISDOM IN THE BIBLE HELPS US TO MAKE SENSE OF MANKIND'S FAILURES AND TRAGIC HISTORY

Yes, we were not created to govern ourselves. In fact, we were no more created to rule over our fellow humans than we were created to live under water or in outer space!

Consider this: Do people in general like to have their equals tell them how to live or which moral values to live by? Do people like others to dictate how they should view such things as abortion or capital punishment or how they should discipline their children? These are just some of the issues that divide people. So, humbling though it might be, what the Bible says makes sense. We simply do not have the ability or the moral authority to rule over our fellow humans. Where, then, can we turn for help?

The most reasonable answer is for us to turn to our Creator. After all, he made us! And contrary to what some may think, he has not forgotten us. In fact, his concern for us is revealed in the wisdom found in the Bible. When we understand that unique book, we also understand ourselves better. And we can make sense of mankind's sad history. We can see why, as a German philosopher once wrote, "peoples and governments never have learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it."

BIBLE WISDOM PROTECTS US!

A wise man once said that "wisdom is proved righteous by all its children," or results. (Luke 7: 35) An example of that wisdom is found at Isaiah 2:22, which says: "For your own sakes, quit

trusting in mere man." That sound advice can protect us from false hopes and unrealistic expectations. Kenneth, who lives in a North American city plagued with violence, says: "One politician after another promises to make things better, but they cannot. Their failures are a regular reminder of Bible wisdom."

Daniel, quoted earlier, writes: "Every day convinces me more that humans cannot govern well. . . . Trusting in your bank account or in some pension scheme is no guarantee of a good retirement. I have seen people suffer terrible frustration in this regard."

The Bible does even more than protect us from unrealistic expectations. It also gives us hope, as we will go on to see.



We were no more created to rule over our fellow humans than we were created to live under water

Moral Education

While on a school trip, some teenage boys were accused of sexually assaulting another male student. All attended a prestigious private school in Canada. After the incident, Leonard Stern wrote in the *Ottawa Citizen* newspaper: “All the advantages of intellect and education and social class do not inoculate young people against making bad moral decisions.”

Stern also stated: “You’d think the single greatest goal of parenting would be the promotion of a child’s moral development. The reality is that many parents seem more concerned about academic or material advancement.”

To be sure, schooling is important. But even the best secular education cannot help a person to combat wrong desires or bad inclinations. Where, then, can we get an education that addresses those areas—that provides moral guidance?

EDUCATION THAT PROVIDES MORAL AND SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

The Bible is like a mirror. When we look into it, we see our limitations and weaknesses more clearly. (James 1:23-25) But the Bible does even more. It helps us to make needed changes, to develop qualities that foster true peace and harmony. Those qualities include goodness, kindness, patience, self-control, and love. Love is even called “a perfect bond of union.” (Colossians 3:14) Why is love so special? Note what the Bible says about this quality.

- “Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous. It does not brag, does not get puffed up [with pride], does not behave indecently, does not look for its own

interests, does not become provoked. It does not keep account of the injury. It does not rejoice over unrighteousness [badness], but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, . . . endures all things. Love never fails.”—1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

- “Love does not work evil to one’s neighbor.”—Romans 13:10.
- “Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”—1 Peter 4:8.

When you are with people who love you, how do you feel? Safe? Secure? Relaxed? Yes, you know that they want the best for you, that they would never intentionally hurt you.

Love can also move people to make sacrifices, even lifestyle changes, for the benefit of others. For example, when a man we will call George became a grandfather, he dearly wanted to spend

The Bible helps us to cultivate many fine qualities, such as goodness, kindness, and especially love



Parents teach their children
love by example

time with his grandson. But there was a problem. George smoked heavily, and his son-in-law did not want him smoking around the baby. What did George do? Even though he had smoked for 50 years, he gave up the habit for the sake of his grandson. Yes, what power love has!

Love is a quality that we learn. Parents play a big role in teaching their children how to love. They feed and protect their children and come to their aid when they are hurt or sick. Good parents talk with their children and teach them. They also discipline their children, which includes teaching them sound principles of right and wrong. Additionally, good parents set a fine example, becoming role models for their children.

Sadly, though, some parents fail in their responsibilities. Does this mean that their children are doomed to failure? Not at all! Even many older people, including some who grew up in dysfunctional families, have made amazing changes in their lives, becoming caring and trustworthy citizens. As we will see in the following article, that even includes some who may have been viewed by others as beyond reform!

KEY POINT

THE BIBLE CAN PROVIDE WHAT
SECULAR EDUCATION CANNOT
—TRUSTWORTHY MORAL AND
SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

NOT EVERYONE WILL CHANGE

The Bible frankly acknowledges that some people will simply refuse to change for the better. The wicked will continue to “act wickedly,” says Daniel 12:10. Does that reality doom our prospects for lasting peace and safety? If the future were just in human hands, our prospects would be grim indeed. But as we will see, that is not the case. In fact, the opposite is true —our future can be very bright!

THEY FACED THE CHALLENGE

The Stories of Ricardo and Andres

Education based on the Bible has amazing power to improve lives. Consider two examples of this: Ricardo and Andres.



RICARDO: At the impressionable age of 15, I joined a gang. My new friends had a big influence on me. In fact, it became my goal to spend ten years in prison! That may sound foolish. But in my neighborhood, those who had spent time in prison were admired and respected. And I wanted to be like them.

I experienced all that is associated with gang life, including drugs, sex, and violence. One night I was involved in a shoot-out. I thought I was going to be killed, but I escaped unharmed. After that, I began to think more seriously about my life and my goals, and I decided that I wanted to change. But how? Where could I find help?

Most of my relatives were unhappy. Their lives were full of problems. But that was not the case with the family of one of my uncles. I knew that they were good people, and I knew that they lived by Bible principles. In fact, I had once learned from them that God's name is Jehovah. So not long after the shoot-out, I prayed to Jehovah, addressing him by name and asking him to help me. To my astonishment, the

very next day, one of Jehovah's Witnesses knocked on my door! He became my Bible teacher.

I soon faced a big challenge. My old friends often phoned, asking me to hang out with them. Though it was not easy, I said no. I was determined to continue my Bible study, and I am glad that I did! My life improved dramatically, and I found true happiness.

I remember telling God in prayer that I had once been willing to spend ten years in prison to earn respect as a gang member. So I asked him to allow me to serve him for at least ten years as a full-time minister in order to help others just as I had been helped. God answered my prayer, for I have spent 17 years as a full-time minister! And I might add, I never went to prison.

Many of my former friends, however, are serving long prison sentences. Others are dead. Looking back, I am most grateful to my Witness relatives. They were willing to be different, to live by the Bible. I grew to respect them more than I ever respected anyone in the gang. Above all, I am thankful to God for teaching me the very best way to live.

KEY POINT

WHEN A PERSON IS HUMBLE AND HONEST, RECOGNIZES THAT HE HAS TO MAKE CHANGES, AND WANTS TO DO SO, THE BIBLE CAN HELP HIM. IT HAS AN EXCELLENT TRACK RECORD



ANDRES: I was born and raised in a poor neighborhood where drugs, extortion, murder, and prostitution were common. My father was an alcoholic and a cocaine addict. He and my mother were always fighting, verbally and physically.

At an early age, I began drinking alcohol and using drugs. I spent most of my time on the streets, stealing and then selling what I stole. As I got older, my father, in a misguided attempt to draw close to me, taught me how to smuggle drugs and other illegal products into the country and sell them. I made a lot of money—fast. Then one day the police came to my home. They arrested me, and I was sentenced to five years in prison for attempted murder.

One morning an announcement over the prison loudspeaker invited inmates to a Bible discussion held by Jehovah’s Witnesses. I decided to attend. What I heard made sense, so I began to study the Bible with the Witnesses. They did not water down the Scriptures but showed me God’s high moral standards.

I soon realized that I could not make the needed changes without help, especially when I received threats from fellow inmates who did not like what I was doing. So I prayed for strength and wisdom, and Jehovah helped me. In fact, I was even able to go on the offensive, as it were, by speaking to other prisoners about the Bible.

When my release came, I was so nervous that I actually wanted to stay in prison longer! As I was leaving, a number of inmates waved goodbye. Some even said affectionately, “Go home, little shepherd.”

It scares me to think about how my life might have turned out had I not allowed God to educate me. I am very, very thankful that God loves me and did not consider me a lost cause.*

* More examples that illustrate the Bible’s power to transform lives are found on jw.org. Go to LIBRARY, and search for the article series “The Bible Changes Lives.”

“Of . . . Peace There Shall Be No End”

The United Nations is promoting the concept of “global citizenship.” Goals include encouraging international cooperation, respecting human rights, and protecting our planet. The reason? As expressed by Maher Nasser in the *UN Chronicle*, “climate change, organized crime, rising inequalities, unresolved conflicts, mass displacement of people, global terrorism, infectious diseases, and similar threats do not recognize . . . borders.”

Others have gone even further, advocating a world government. They include the Italian philosopher, poet, and statesman Dante (1265-1321) and the physicist Albert Einstein (1879-1955). Dante believed that peace could not last in a politically divided world. A “kingdom divided against itself comes to ruin,” he said, quoting Jesus Christ.—Luke 11:17.

Shortly after World War II, which saw the use of two atomic bombs, Albert Einstein wrote an open letter to the General Assembly of the United Nations. “The United Nations,” he said, “must act with utmost speed to create the necessary conditions for international security by laying the foundations for a real world government.”

But could the politicians who would make up such a powerful government be immune to corruption, incompetence, and oppression? Or would they be just as prone to those dark traits as others have been? These questions call to mind the words of British historian Lord Acton, who said: “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

Even so, if the human family is to enjoy true peace and harmony, we have to be united. But how can that goal be achieved? Is it even realistic? The Bible’s answer is yes. It can and will be achieved. How? Not by a world government made up of corruptible politicians. Rather, it will be by a

government of God’s making. What is more, that government will express *his* right to rule over his creation. What is that government? The Bible even gives it a name—“the Kingdom of God,” or God’s Kingdom.—Luke 4:43.

“LET YOUR KINGDOM COME”

Jesus Christ had God’s Kingdom in mind when he said in his model prayer: “Let your Kingdom come. Let your will take place . . . on earth.” (Matthew 6:9, 10) Yes, God’s Kingdom will ensure that *God’s will* is done on earth, not the will of power-hungry or selfish humans.

God’s Kingdom is also called “the Kingdom of the heavens.” (Matthew 5:3) The reason? While it will rule *over* the earth, it will not rule *from* the earth but will rule from heaven. Think what that means. This world government will not require material or financial support. What a relief that will be for its human subjects!

As the term “kingdom” suggests, God’s Kingdom is a *royal* government. It has a King—Jesus Christ—who received his authority from God. Concerning Jesus, the Bible says:

- “The government shall be upon his shoulder . . . Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.”—Isaiah 9:6, 7, *King James Version*.

KEY POINT

GOD’S KINGDOM IS A WORLD GOVERNMENT CREATED BY GOD. ITS SUBJECTS WILL NOT BE SEPARATED BY POLITICAL BORDERS BUT WILL BE FULLY UNITED AND AT PEACE

- “To him there were given rulership, honor, and a kingdom, that the peoples, nations, and language groups should all serve him. His rulership . . . will not pass away.”
—Daniel 7:14.
- “The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord [God] and of his Christ.”—Revelation 11:15.

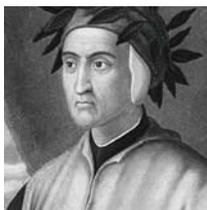
In fulfillment of Jesus’ model prayer, God’s Kingdom will fully accomplish God’s will on earth. Under it, all mankind will learn how to care for the planet so that it will be healthy again and teem with life.

Above all, God’s Kingdom will educate its subjects. All will be taught the same standards. There

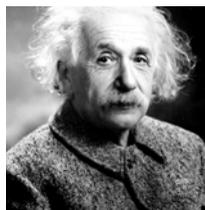
will be no discord or division. “They will not cause any harm or any ruin . . . because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea,” says Isaiah 11:9.

Earth’s inhabitants will truly be what the United Nations would like people to be—peace-loving global citizens. “They will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace,” says Psalm 37:11. In time, words like “crime,” “pollution,” “poverty,” and “war” will disappear from our vocabulary. But when will this happen? Yes, when will God’s Kingdom take charge? How will it do so? And how can you benefit from its rule? Let us now see.

THEY PROMOTED THE IDEA OF A WORLD GOVERNMENT



Dante believed that peace could not last in a politically divided world



Einstein called upon the United Nations to “create the necessary conditions for international security by laying the foundations for a real world government”

Under God's Kingdom "Peace Will Abound"

Soon the long-awaited Kingdom of God—a world government set up by God—will bring global peace and harmony to the earth. "Peace will abound," as promised at Psalm 72:7. But when will the Kingdom take charge? How will it do so? And how can you benefit from Kingdom rule?

WHEN WILL GOD'S KINGDOM COME?

The Bible foretold a number of striking events that would signal that God's Kingdom is coming soon. Those events make up a composite "sign" that includes international warfare, famine, disease, many earthquakes, and an increase in lawlessness.—Matthew 24:3, 7, 12; Luke 21:11; Revelation 6:2-8.

Another prophecy states: "In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, . . . disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, . . . puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God." (2 Timothy 3:1-4) Traits such as these have always been manifest to some extent. But now they are commonplace.

Those prophecies began to be fulfilled in the year 1914. Indeed, historians, statesmen, and writers have commented on how the world changed after that year. For example, Danish historian Peter Munch wrote: "The outbreak of the war in 1914 is the great turning point in the history of humanity. From a bright epoch of progress, . . . we entered an age of disaster, horror, and hatred, with insecurity everywhere."

On the positive side, those conditions are like a storm before the calm. They show that Kingdom rule over all the earth is near. In fact, Jesus included this positive element in his sign of the end:

"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.

That good news is a central theme of the message of Jehovah's Witnesses. Indeed, their leading journal is entitled *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*. It regularly discusses the wonderful things that God's Kingdom will do for mankind and the earth.

HOW WILL GOD'S KINGDOM TAKE CONTROL?

The answer involves these four important facts:

1. The Kingdom *will not* operate through or be represented by the political leaders of the present world.
2. The world's political leaders, in an attempt to cling to power, will foolishly defy rule by God's Kingdom.—Psalm 2:2-9.
3. God's Kingdom will need to destroy the political kingdoms that want to continue dominating mankind. (Daniel 2:44; Revelation 19:17-21) This final global conflict is called Armageddon.—Revelation 16:14, 16.
4. All who willingly submit to God's Kingdom will be preserved through Armageddon into a peaceful new world. They will make up what the Bible calls "a great crowd," likely numbering into the millions.—Revelation 7:9, 10, 13, 14.

KEY POINT

JESUS' TEACHINGS GIVE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL STRENGTH. ALL WHO RESPOND MAY BECOME TRUE GLOBAL CITIZENS, PEACE-LOVING SUBJECTS OF HIS WORLD GOVERNMENT



HOW WILL THE KINGDOM RULE?

When Jesus was on earth, he gave us a preview of what he will do as King of God's Kingdom. He healed the sick and the disabled. (Matthew 4:23) He fed many thousands. (Mark 6:35-44) He even controlled the natural elements.—Mark 4:37-41.

Above all, Jesus taught people how to live together in peace and harmony. All who humbly apply his teachings develop personality traits that will enable them to live happily under his Kingdom forever. No other educator can accomplish that. Fine examples of Jesus' teachings can be found in what is known as the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew chapters 5-7. Why not read it? The words themselves are simple. But the message is profound and truly touches the heart.



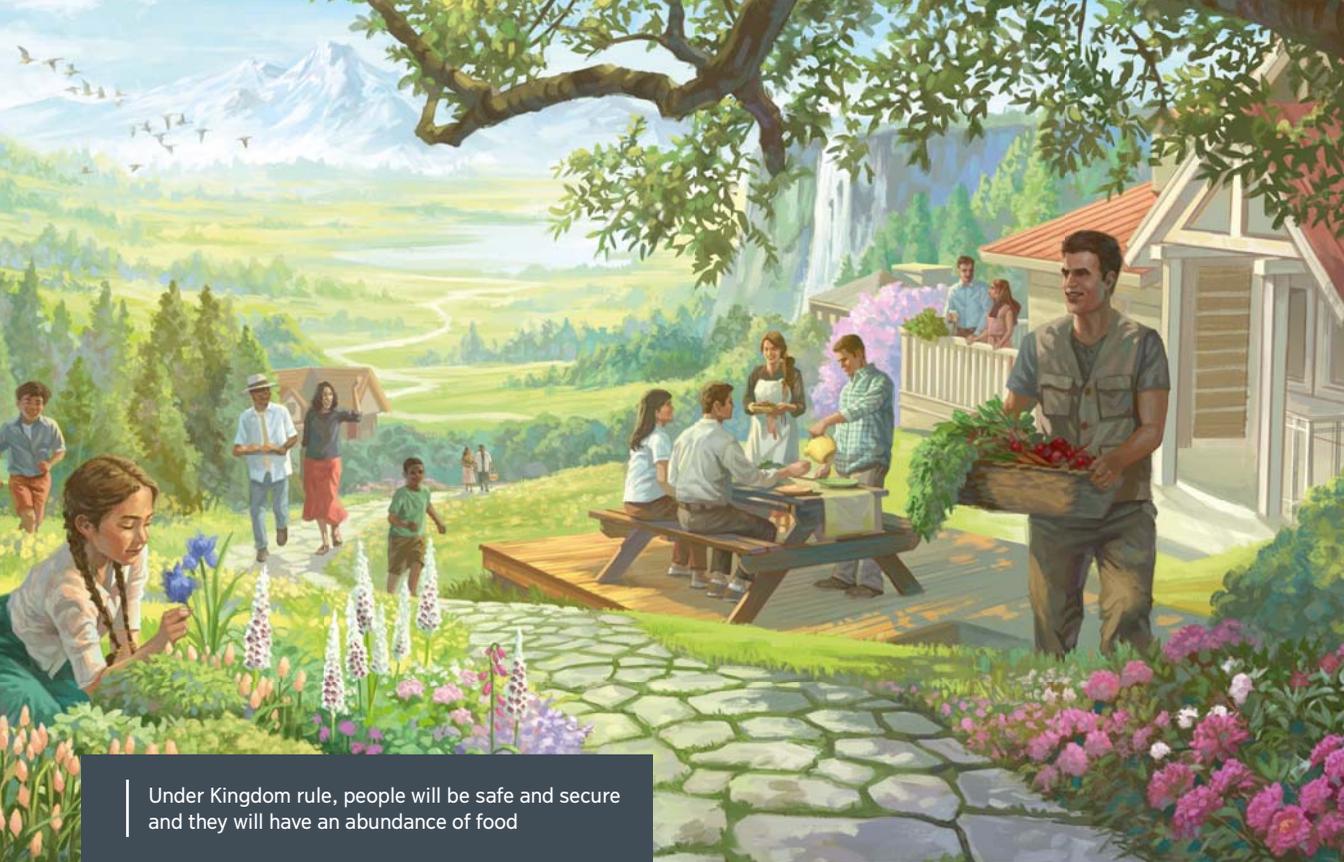
HOW CAN YOU BENEFIT FROM KINGDOM RULE?

A first step to becoming a subject of God's Kingdom is education. Indeed, Jesus said in prayer to God: "This means everlasting life, their coming to know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ."—John 17:3.

When people come to know Jehovah God as a Person, they benefit in many ways. Consider just two: First, they develop strong faith in him. That faith, which is based on evidence, convinces them that God's Kingdom is a reality and that its rule is near. (Hebrews 11:1) Second, they grow in love for God and for neighbor. Love for God impels them to obey him with a willing heart. Love for neighbor moves them to apply Jesus' words that are of-

ten called the Golden Rule. It states: "Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them." —Luke 6:31.

Like a loving father, our Creator wants the very best for us. He wants us to experience what the Bible calls "the real life." (1 Timothy 6:19) Life today is not "the real life." For millions, it is little more than existence—and is perilous at that. To give you a preview of that "real life," consider some of the wonderful things that God's Kingdom will do for its subjects.



Under Kingdom rule, people will be safe and secure and they will have an abundance of food

A PREVIEW OF THE REAL LIFE

● “In his days [Christ’s rule as King] the righteous will flourish, and peace will abound . . . He will have subjects . . . to the ends of the earth.”—Psalm 72:7, 8, 13, 14.

● “[God] is bringing an end to wars throughout the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear.”—Psalm 46:9.

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

● “They will build houses and live in them, and they will plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build for someone else to inhabit, nor will they plant for others to eat. . . . The work of their hands my chosen ones will enjoy to the full.”—Isaiah 65:21, 22.

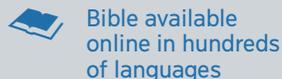
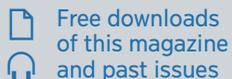
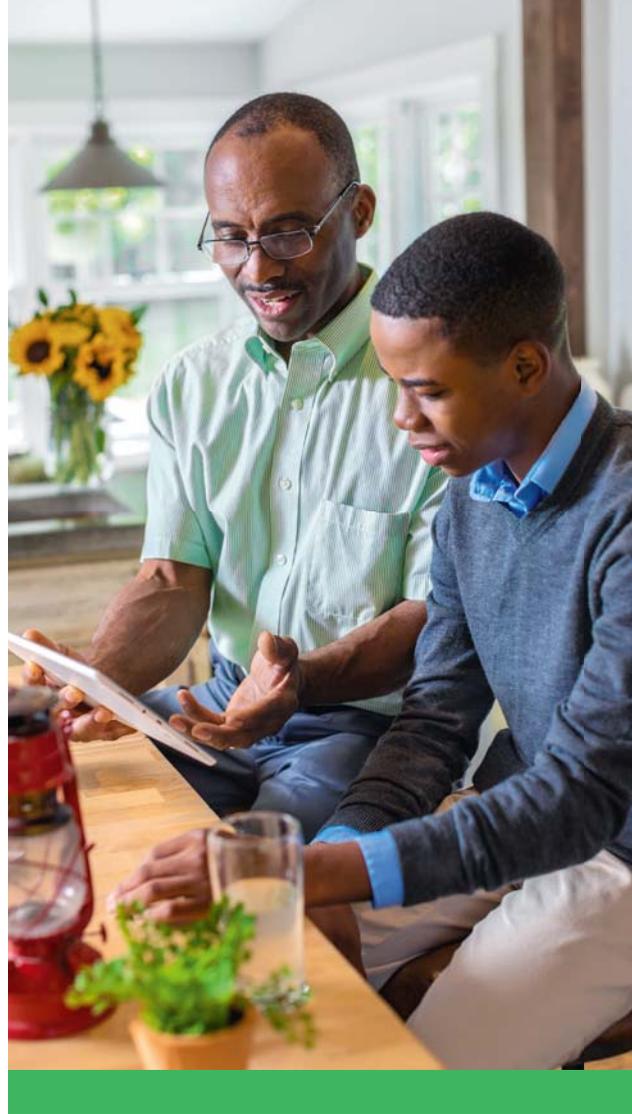
● “The tent of God is with mankind . . . He will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.”—Revelation 21:3, 4.

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- If God cares about us, why has he allowed evil and suffering to go on for so long?
- How can we be sure that we are living in the last days of the present world?
- How do we know that the Bible's promises about God's Kingdom will come true?
- Can the Bible help us make wise decisions in life now?

Because our Creator loves us, he has provided answers to those questions and many others. To help you find those answers, go to our website, www.jw.org, which is dedicated to Bible education.

On that website, you will find activities, articles, audio and video recordings, interviews, and a broad variety of publications, including the Bible. All are free of charge with no obligation.



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