

OCTOBER 1, 2014

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

GOD'S KINGDOM

WHAT CAN IT MEAN FOR YOU?



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.

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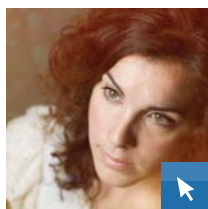
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Why Be Interested in God's Kingdom?

Millions of people around the world rest their hope on God's Kingdom. They follow the pattern set by Jesus, who taught his followers to pray: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth." —Matthew 6:10, *King James Version*.

Ironically, while many *people* are keenly interested in God's Kingdom, most *religions* seem to give little attention to it. In this regard, historian H. G. Wells noted how remarkable it is that Jesus gave "enormous prominence . . . to the teaching of what he called the Kingdom of Heaven" and yet, said Wells, this teaching has "comparative insignificance in the . . . teaching of most of the Christian churches."

Unlike those churches, Jehovah's Witnesses put great emphasis on God's Kingdom. Consider: Our main journal, which you are now reading, is published in 220 languages. Nearly 46 million copies of each issue are printed, making it the most widely distributed magazine in the world.

And what is this journal's principal message? Notice its full title: *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*.*

Why do Jehovah's Witnesses go to such great lengths to announce, or advertise, God's Kingdom? For one thing, we believe that God's Kingdom is the central message of the most important book in the world—the Bible. Moreover, we are convinced that God's Kingdom is the only real solution to the problems facing humans today.

In directing attention to God's Kingdom, Jehovah's Witnesses are endeavoring to follow the example of Jesus. While on earth, he made God's Kingdom the focal point of his life and ministry. (Luke 4:43) Why did the Kingdom mean so much to Jesus? And what can it mean for *you*? We invite you to consider the Bible's answers, as discussed in the following articles.

* Jehovah is the name of God as revealed in the Bible.

GOD'S KINGDOM

What It Means to Jesus

During his earthly ministry, Jesus spoke about many subjects. For example, he taught his followers how to pray, how to please God, and how to find true happiness. (Matthew 6:5-13; Mark 12:17; Luke 11:28) But the subject that Jesus spoke about more than any other—the subject closest to his heart—was God's Kingdom.—Luke 6:45.



As noted in the preceding article, Jesus centered his life on “preaching and declaring the good news of the Kingdom.” (Luke 8:1) He exerted himself, walking hundreds of miles throughout the land of Israel in order to teach people about God's Kingdom. Jesus' ministry was recorded in the four Gospels, which contain over 100 references to the Kingdom. Most of those references are found in the words of Jesus, and yet they must represent just a fraction of all that he said about God's Kingdom!—John 21:25.

Why did the Kingdom mean so much to Jesus when he was on the earth? For one thing, Jesus knew that God had selected him to be its Ruler. (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 22:28-30) But Jesus was not focused on achieving power or glory for himself. (Matthew 11:29; Mark 10:17, 18) He promoted the Kingdom for reasons far beyond his own interests. Primarily, Jesus was and is interested in God's Kingdom* because of what it will do for those whom he loves—his heavenly Father and his faithful followers.

* This article refers to Jesus' feelings in the present tense because Jesus is alive in heaven, and since his return to heaven, the Kingdom has undoubtedly remained close to his heart.—Luke 24:51.

WHAT THE KINGDOM WILL DO FOR JESUS' FATHER

Jesus has deep affection for his heavenly Father. (Proverbs 8:30; John 14:31) He admires his Father's endearing qualities, such as His love, His compassion, and His justice. (Deuteronomy 32:4; Isaiah 49:15; 1 John 4:8) Surely, then, Jesus must hate to hear the lies that are spread about his Father—lies such as that God is indifferent to human suffering and that God *wants* us to suffer. This is one reason why Jesus was eager to declare “the good news of the Kingdom”—he knew that in time the Kingdom would clear his Father's reputation. (Matthew 4:23; 6:9, 10) How will it do so?

Through the Kingdom, Jehovah will take drastic, positive action in behalf of the human family. “He will wipe out every tear” from the eyes of faithful humans. Jehovah will eliminate the *causes* of those tears, seeing to it that “death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.” (Revelation 21:3, 4) By means of the Kingdom, God will eliminate all human suffering.*

* For information regarding why God has allowed human suffering for a time, see chapter 11 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses. Also available at www.jw.org.



Little wonder that Jesus was eager to tell people about the Kingdom! He knew that it would reveal just how powerful and compassionate his Father really is. (James 5:11) Jesus also knew that the Kingdom would benefit others whom he loves—faithful humans.

WHAT THE KINGDOM WILL DO FOR FAITHFUL HUMANS

Long before he came to earth, Jesus lived in heaven with his Father. The Father used the Son to bring everything into existence—from the mind-boggling heavens with their countless stars and galaxies to our beautiful planet and the wildlife that inhabits it. (Colossians 1:15, 16) Out of it all, though, Jesus became “especially fond of” humankind.—Proverbs 8:31.

Love for humans characterized Jesus’ ministry. From the very start, he made it clear that he had come to earth to “declare good news” to those in need. (Luke 4:18) But Jesus did more than *talk* about helping people. Time and again, he *demonstrated* his love for humans. For example, when a large crowd gathered to hear him speak, Jesus “felt pity for them, and he cured their sick ones.” (Matthew 14:14) When a man

with a grievous disease expressed faith that Jesus could heal him if he really wanted to, Jesus was moved by love. He healed the man, compassionately telling him: “I want to! Be made clean.” (Luke 5:12, 13) When Jesus saw his friend Mary mourning the death of her brother, Lazarus, Jesus “groaned within himself,” “became troubled,” and “gave way to tears.” (John 11:32-36) Then he did the unimaginable—Jesus brought Lazarus back to life although Lazarus had been dead for four days!—John 11:38-44.

Jesus, of course, knew that the relief he offered then was only temporary. He realized that sooner or later, all whom he healed would get sick again and all whom he resurrected would die again. However, Jesus also knew that God’s Kingdom would bring a permanent end to such problems. That is why Jesus did not just perform miracles; he also zealously declared “the good news of the Kingdom.” (Matthew 9:35) His miracles demonstrated on a small scale what God’s Kingdom will soon do earth wide. Consider what the Bible promises regarding that time.

No more health problems.

“At that time the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. At that time the lame will leap like the deer, and the tongue of the speechless will shout for joy.” Additionally, “no resident will say: ‘I am sick.’”—Isaiah 33:24; 35:5, 6.



No more death.

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

“He will swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will wipe away the tears from all faces.”—Isaiah 25:8.



Those who have died will return to life.

“All those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out.”—John 5:28, 29.

“There is going to be a resurrection.”
—Acts 24:15.

No more homelessness or unemployment.

“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.



No more war.

“He is bringing an end to wars throughout the earth.”—Psalm 46:9.

“Nation will not lift up sword against nation, nor will they learn war anymore.”—Isaiah 2:4.



No more food shortages.

“The earth will give its produce; God, our God, will bless us.”—Psalm 67:6.

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

No more poverty.

“The poor will not always be forgotten.”—Psalm 9:18.

“He will rescue the poor who cry for help, also the lowly one and whoever has no helper. He will have pity on the lowly and the poor, and the lives of the poor he will save.”—Psalm 72:12, 13.



When you consider those promises regarding God’s Kingdom, can you see why the Kingdom means so much to Jesus? While on earth, he was eager to talk about God’s Kingdom to anyone who would listen, for he knew that the Kingdom would bring an end to all the distressing problems we see today.

Do the Bible’s promises regarding the Kingdom appeal to you? If so, how can you learn more about that Kingdom? And what can you do to make sure that you will benefit from its blessings? The final article in this series will answer those questions.



GOD'S KINGDOM

What Will It Mean for You?

You likely gathered from the preceding articles that God's Kingdom means a lot to Jehovah's Witnesses. And perhaps you were intrigued by some of the future blessings of God's Kingdom that were discussed. At the same time, you may wonder if such promises are too good to be true.

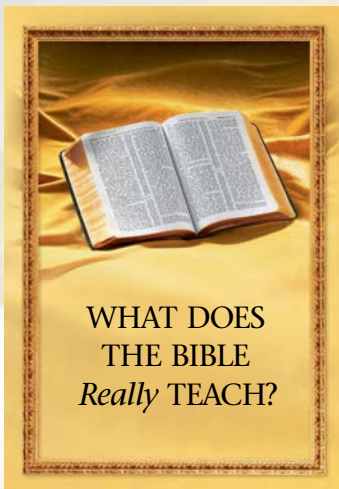
You are wise to be cautious instead of believing everything you hear. (Proverbs 14:15) In some ways, your caution could be compared to that of the ancient Bereans.* When they were first told about the good news of the Kingdom, the Bereans accepted what they heard, but not simply because they *wanted* it to be true. Rather, they

carefully examined the Scriptures "to see whether these things were so." (Acts 17:11) In other words, the Bereans compared the good news that they heard with what the Scriptures say. In time, they became convinced that the good news was in fact solidly based on God's Word.

Jehovah's Witnesses warmly invite you to do the same. By means of our free Bible study program, we offer you the opportunity to compare what Jehovah's Witnesses believe about God's Kingdom with what the Bible teaches.

In addition to your learning about God's Kingdom, your study of the Bible can help you to find answers to some of life's biggest questions.

* Berea was a city in ancient Macedonia.



Jehovah's Witnesses can use this publication to study the Bible with you. To request a free personal Bible study, ask any one of Jehovah's Witnesses or fill in the form at www.jw.org. (See REQUEST A BIBLE STUDY on the home page)

- Where did we come from?
- What is the purpose of life?
- Why does God allow suffering?
- What happens when we die?
- Will the earth be destroyed?
- What is the key to a happy family life?

Above all, studying the Bible will help you to “draw close to God.” (James 4:8) In turn, the closer you draw to God, the more you will see how God’s Kingdom can mean good things for you—not just now but forever. Jesus himself said in prayer to his Father: “This means *everlasting life*, their coming to know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ.”—John 17:3. ■

What God’s Kingdom Means to Her

Recently, a ten-year-old girl named Folake was assigned to write an essay for school on the subject “What I Love Most in This World.” Folake chose to write about why she loves telling others about God’s Kingdom.

“God’s Kingdom is a real government,” Folake explained. “But it’s invisible, so you can’t see it—even if you wear glasses!”

Folake went on to write about blessings of the Kingdom that she especially looks forward to. Mentioning some of the problems that the Kingdom will solve, she wrote, “I am sad when I see homeless people living on the streets” as well as “kids starving to death in all different parts of the world.” She added, “I’m happy again when I read Isaiah 65: 21.” Regarding humans who will live under the rulership of God’s Kingdom, that verse promises: “They will build houses and live in them, and they will plant vineyards and eat their fruitage.”

Folake said that she also looks forward to the time when God, by means of his Kingdom, will do away with all sickness. In her essay, she quoted Revelation 21:4, which says that God “will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.” She concluded by stating again that speaking about Jehovah and his Kingdom is what she loves most in this world. Clearly, God’s Kingdom has a special place in the heart of this young girl!



When Did God's Kingdom Begin Ruling?

—PART 1

The following is a typical conversation that one of Jehovah's Witnesses might have with a neighbor. Let us imagine that a Witness named Cameron has come to the home of a man named Jon.



“KEEP SEARCHING” FOR UNDERSTANDING

Cameron: Jon, I've really enjoyed the regular discussions we've been having about the Bible.* The last time we spoke, you raised a question about God's Kingdom. You asked why Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the Kingdom began ruling in the year 1914.

Jon: Yes, I was reading one of your publications, and it said that God's Kingdom started ruling in 1914. That made me curious because you say that you base all of your beliefs on the Bible.

Cameron: That's right, we do.

Jon: Well, I've read through the Bible myself. But I can't remember ever seeing a passage that mentioned the year 1914. So I went to an online Bible and did a search for "1914." Sure enough, the search engine said: "0 results."

Cameron: I have to commend you on two counts, Jon. First, that you've read through the entire Bible. You must really love God's Word.

Jon: I do. There's nothing like it.

Cameron: I agree. Second, I want to commend you for turning to the Bible when trying to find an answer to your question. You did exactly what the Bible encourages us to do: "Keep searching"

for understanding.* It's good that you are putting forth effort like that.

Jon: Thank you. I do want to keep learning. In fact, I dug around a little more and found some information about 1914 in this book we've been studying. It mentions a dream that a king had—it was about a big tree that was cut down and then grew back or something like that.

Cameron: Ah, yes. That's the prophecy recorded in Daniel chapter 4. It involves a dream that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had.

Jon: Yes, that's the one. I read the prophecy over and over. But to be honest, I still don't see what it has to do with God's Kingdom or the year 1914.

Cameron: Actually, Jon, even the prophet Daniel didn't understand the full meaning of what he was inspired to record!

Jon: Really?

Cameron: Yes. Here at Daniel 12:8, he says: "Now as for me, I heard, but I could not understand."

Jon: I'm not the only one then. That makes me feel a little better.

Cameron: The truth is, Daniel didn't understand because it was not yet God's time for humans to discern completely the meaning of the

* Proverbs 2:3-5.

* By means of their free home Bible study program, Jehovah's Witnesses often have systematic discussions about the Bible with their neighbors.

prophecies in the book of Daniel. But now, in our time, we *can* understand them more fully.

Jon: Why do you say that?

Cameron: Well, notice what we read in the very next verse. Daniel 12:9 says: “The words are to be kept secret and sealed up *until the time of the end*.” So these prophecies would only be understood much later, during “the time of the end.” And as we will soon discuss in our Bible study, all evidence indicates that we are now living in that time period.*

Jon: So, can you explain the prophecy in Daniel to me?

Cameron: I’ll do my best.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S DREAM

Cameron: To begin, let me briefly summarize what King Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream. Then we can talk about what it means.

Jon: OK.

Cameron: In the dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw an enormous tree that reached all the way to heaven. Then he heard God’s messenger command that the tree be cut down. However, God said for its rootstock to be left in the ground. After a period of “seven times,” the tree would grow again.[#] This prophecy initially applied to King Nebuchadnezzar himself. Although he was a prominent king—like the tree that reached clear to heaven—he was cut down for “seven times.” Do you remember what happened?

Jon: No, I don’t recall.

Cameron: That’s all right. The Bible shows that Nebuchadnezzar lost his sanity, evidently for seven years. During that time, he was unable to rule as king. But at the end of the seven times, Nebuchadnezzar regained his sanity and started ruling again.[△]

* See chapter 9 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses. Also available at www.jw.org.

[#] Daniel 4:13-17.

[△] Daniel 4:20-36.

Jon: OK, I’m with you so far. But what does all of this have to do with God’s Kingdom and the year 1914?

Cameron: In a nutshell, this prophecy has two fulfillments. The first fulfillment happened when King Nebuchadnezzar’s rulership was interrupted. The second fulfillment involved an interruption of *God’s* rulership. So it is this second fulfillment that is related to God’s Kingdom.

Jon: How do you know that the prophecy has a second fulfillment in regard to God’s Kingdom?

Cameron: For one thing, we find an indication in the prophecy itself. According to Daniel 4:17, the prophecy was given “so that people living may know that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind and that he gives it to whomever he wants.” Did you notice the expression “the kingdom of mankind”?

Jon: Yes, it says that “the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind.”

Cameron: Right. Who do you suppose is “the Most High”?

Jon: I guess that’s talking about God.

Cameron: Correct. So that tells us that this prophecy is not only about Nebuchadnezzar. It also involves “the kingdom of mankind”—that is, God’s rulership over mankind. And that makes sense when we look at the prophecy in its context.

Jon: What do you mean?

THE BOOK’S CENTRAL THEME

Cameron: Time and again, the Bible book of Daniel develops a central theme. It keeps pointing forward to the establishment of God’s Kingdom under the rulership of his Son, Jesus. For example, let’s turn back a couple of chapters. Would you please read Daniel 2:44?

Jon: OK. It says: “In the days of those kings 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.”

Cameron: Thank you. Would you say that this verse sounds as if it is referring to God’s Kingdom?

Jon: Hmm. I’m not sure.

Cameron: Well, notice that it says that this Kingdom “will stand forever.” That’s true of God’s Kingdom, but it’s not something that we can say of any human government, can we?

Jon: No, I guess not.

Cameron: Here’s another prophecy in the book of Daniel that points to God’s Kingdom. It’s the prophecy recorded at Daniel 7:13, 14. Regarding a future ruler, the prophecy says: “To him there were given rulership, honor, *and a kingdom*, that the peoples, nations, and language groups should all serve him. His rulership is an everlasting rulership that will not pass away, and his *kingdom* will not be destroyed.” Is there anything in this prophecy that sounds familiar?

Jon: It mentions a kingdom.

Cameron: That’s right. And not just any kingdom. Notice it says that this Kingdom would have authority over “peoples, nations, and language groups.” In other words, this Kingdom would have global rulership.

Jon: I didn’t pick up on that, but you’re right. It does say that.

Cameron: Also, notice what else the prophecy says: “His rulership is an everlasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom will not be destroyed.” That sounds a lot like the prophecy we just read at Daniel 2:44, doesn’t it?

Jon: Yes, it does.

Cameron: Let’s briefly review what we’ve discussed so far. The prophecy in Daniel chapter 4 was given so that people would know that “the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind.” This in itself indicates that the prophecy has a bigger fulfillment than just the one involving Nebuchadnezzar. And throughout the book of Daniel, we find prophecies about the establishment of God’s Kingdom under the rulership



of his Son. Do you think it’s reasonable to conclude, then, that this prophecy in Daniel chapter 4 also has something to do with God’s Kingdom?

Jon: I suppose so. But I still don’t see the connection with 1914.

“LET SEVEN TIMES PASS”

Cameron: Well, let’s go back to King Nebuchadnezzar. He was represented by the tree in the first fulfillment of the prophecy. His rulership was interrupted when the tree was chopped down and left for seven times—that is, when he lost his sanity for a period of time. That period of seven times ended when Nebuchadnezzar regained his sanity and resumed his rulership. In the second fulfillment of the prophecy, God’s rulership would be interrupted for a period of time—but not because of any deficiency on God’s part.

Jon: What do you mean?

Cameron: In Bible times, the Israelite kings who ruled in Jerusalem were said to sit on “Jehovah’s throne.”* They represented God in governing his people. So the rulership of those kings

* 1 Chronicles 29:23.

was really an expression of God's rulership. In time, however, most of those kings became disobedient to God and most of their subjects followed suit. Because of the Israelites' disobedience, God allowed them to be conquered by the Babylonians in 607 B.C.E. From that time on, no more kings represented Jehovah in Jerusalem. In that sense, then, God's rulership was interrupted. Are you with me so far?

Jon: I think so.

Cameron: So 607 B.C.E. marked the beginning of the seven times, or the period when God's rulership would be interrupted. At the end of the seven times, God would install a new ruler to represent Him—this time, someone in heaven. That's when the other prophecies we read about in Daniel would be fulfilled. So the big question is: When did the seven times end? If we can answer that question, we will know when God's Kingdom began ruling.

Jon: I see. Let me guess—the seven times ended in 1914?

Cameron: Exactly! You got it.

Jon: But how do we know that?

Cameron: Well, during his earthly ministry, Jesus indicated that the seven times had not yet ended.* So they must be a very long period of time. The seven times started hundreds of years before Jesus came to earth, and they continued until sometime after he returned to heaven. Remember, too, that the meaning of the prophecies in Daniel was not to become clear until "the time

* In his prophecy concerning the last days, Jesus said: "Jerusalem [which represented God's rulership] will be trampled on by the nations until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled." (Luke 21:24) So the interruption of God's rulership was still in effect in Jesus' time and would continue until the last days.

of the end."** Interestingly, during the late 1800's, sincere students of the Bible were moved to examine this and other prophecies very carefully. They began to discern that the seven times would end in the year 1914. And major world events since then confirm that 1914 was indeed the year that God's Kingdom began ruling in heaven. It was the year when this world entered its last days, or the time of the end. Now, I know this is probably a lot to digest . . .

Jon: Yes. I'm definitely going to have to go over this again to get it all straight.

Cameron: Don't worry. It took me a while to see how all the pieces fit together too. But at the very least, I hope our discussion has helped you to see that Jehovah's Witnesses do base their beliefs about the Kingdom on the Bible.

Jon: For sure. I've always been impressed with how you rely on the Bible for your beliefs.

Cameron: And I can see that you have a similar desire. As I said, this is a lot to take in all at once. You probably still have some questions. For example, we've established that the seven times relate to God's Kingdom and that they began in 607 B.C.E. But how, exactly, do we know that these seven times ended in 1914?#

Jon: Yes, I'm wondering about that.

Cameron: The Bible itself helps us to determine the precise length of the seven times. Would you like to examine that topic the next time I'm here?

Jon: That sounds good. ■

* Daniel 12:9.

See pages 215-218 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* Also available at www.jw.org.

The next article in this series will consider Bible verses that shed light on the length of the seven times.

Do you have a particular Bible subject that you have wondered about? Are you curious about any of the beliefs or religious practices of Jehovah's Witnesses? If so, do not hesitate to ask one of Jehovah's Witnesses. He or she will be pleased to discuss such matters with you.



AS TOLD BY **CHRISTOF BAUER**

YEAR BORN

1951

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

GERMANY

HISTORY

**PROUD, INDEPENDENT
ATTITUDE**



My life was all about me

MY PAST: For the first few years of my life, my family lived near Leipzig, East Germany, not far from the Czech and Polish borders. When I was six years old, my father's work took us abroad—first to Brazil and then to Ecuador.

At age 14, I was sent to a boarding school in Germany. Because my parents were far away in South America, I had to look out for myself. I became very self-reliant. I gave little thought to how my actions affected others.

When I was 17 years old, my parents returned to Germany. At first, I lived under their roof. But my independent attitude made it impossible for me to integrate back into the family. At the age of 18, I left home.

I became increasingly restless, searching for a purpose in life. After observing various lifestyles and movements, I became convinced that the best thing I could do with my life was to use it to explore this beautiful planet before humanity destroys it.

I left Germany, bought a motorcycle, and headed for Africa. Soon, though, I had to return to Europe for repairs to my motorcycle. Shortly thereafter, I found myself on a beach in Portugal. I decided to leave my motorcycle behind and find a floating means of transportation.

I joined a group of young people who were preparing to sail across the Atlantic Ocean. Among them I met my future wife, Laurie. First, we sailed to the islands of the Caribbean. Then, after a short stay in Puerto Rico, we returned to Europe. We hoped to find a sailboat that we could convert into a recreational boat. But after a short search of just three months, the project came to an abrupt end. I was drafted by the German military.

I spent 15 months in the German navy. During that time, Laurie and I got married and prepared to continue our traveling lifestyle. Shortly before my military service, we had purchased the hull of a lifeboat. While I was serving in the military, we progressively converted the hull

into a small sailing vessel. We planned to live in it and keep exploring this beautiful planet. It was at this point—after my military service but before finishing the vessel—that we were contacted by Jehovah’s Witnesses and began to study the Bible.

HOW THE BIBLE CHANGED MY LIFE: At first, I didn’t see the need to change much in my life. I was married to the woman with whom I was living, and I had already stopped smoking. (Ephesians 5:5) As for our plans to travel the world, I thought that devoting our lives to observing God’s marvelous creation was certainly a worthwhile endeavor.

In reality, however, I did need to make changes—especially to my personality. Being extremely proud and self-reliant, I was completely absorbed in my own abilities and accomplishments. My life was all about me.

One day, I read Jesus’ famous Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew, chapters 5-7) Initially, I was puzzled by the happinesses Jesus spoke about. For example, he said that happiness belongs to those who are hungry and thirsty. (Matthew 5:6) I wondered how being in need could make a person happy. As I continued to study, I came to realize that we all have a spiritual need but that we must humbly acknowledge that need before we can have it filled. It is as Jesus said: “Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need.”—Matthew 5:3.

After beginning our Bible study in Germany, Laurie and I moved to France, and later, to Italy. Wherever we went, we found Jehovah’s Witnesses. I was deeply impressed by their sincere love for one another and their unity. I saw that the Witnesses really are a global brotherhood. (John 13:34, 35) In time, Laurie and I were baptized as Jehovah’s Witnesses.

After baptism, I continued to make changes in my personality. Laurie and I had decided to sail

down the African coast and then across the Atlantic Ocean to the United States. It was out there on the ocean—just the two of us in a tiny boat surrounded by thousands of miles of water—that I realized how insignificant I am compared to our magnificent Creator. Having a lot of time on my hands (there isn’t much to do out in the middle of the ocean), I devoted myself to reading the Bible. I was especially moved by the accounts of Jesus’ life on earth. He was a perfect man with abilities far beyond anything I could imagine, yet he never promoted himself. His life was not about himself but about his heavenly Father.

As I meditated on Jesus’ example, I saw that I needed to put God’s Kingdom first in my life rather than fitting it in around the various things

I saw that I needed to put God’s Kingdom first in my life

that I wanted to do. (Matthew 6:33) When Laurie and I finally reached land in the United States, we decided to settle down there and focus on our worship.

HOW I HAVE BENEFITED: My former, egocentric lifestyle came with a large dose of uncertainty. Now, however, I have found a source of unerring wisdom to guide me. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) I have also gained a purpose in life that I never had before—worshipping God and helping others to learn about him.

By applying Bible principles, Laurie and I have strengthened our marriage substantially. We have also been blessed with a beautiful daughter, who has grown to know and love Jehovah.

It’s not that our life has always been smooth sailing. But with Jehovah’s help, we are determined never to give up or stop trusting in him. —Proverbs 3:5, 6. ■

Why pray for God's Kingdom to come?

God's Kingdom is a heavenly government. Jesus told his followers to pray for it to come because it will restore righteousness and peace to the earth. No human government can completely eliminate violence, injustice, or disease, but God's Kingdom can and will. God has chosen his Son, Jesus, to be King of the Kingdom. Jehovah has also chosen a group of Jesus' followers to be associate rulers with Jesus in the Kingdom.—**Read Luke 11:2; 22:28-30.**

Soon, God's Kingdom will take action against all opposers of God's rule. So the prayer for God's Kingdom to come is a request for God's government to replace all human governments.—**Read Daniel 7:13, 14; Revelation 11:15, 18.**

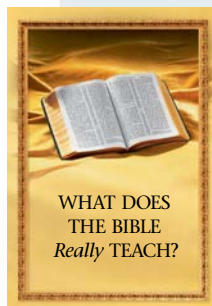
Why will God's Kingdom benefit people?

Jesus is an ideal King because he is compassionate. As God's Son, he also has the power to provide help for all who cry to God for aid.—**Read Psalm 72:8, 12-14.**

God's Kingdom will benefit all who sincerely pray for it to come and who bring their lives into harmony with God's will. You will never regret learning what the Bible says about God's Kingdom.—**Read Luke 18:16, 17; John 4:23.**



Do you want to know more about God's Kingdom and what it will accomplish?



For more information, see chapter 8 of this book, published by Jehovah's Witnesses. Also available at www.jw.org

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