

*"Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." – Jesus (Matthew 6:10)*

# IS A BETTER WORLD POSSIBLE?

A VISION OF THE FUTURE WORLD  
PROMISED BY GOD



“But as truly as I live, all the earth shall  
be filled with the glory of the LORD.”

– Numbers 14:21

# Is a better world possible?

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## **A Word to The Reader**

This is an unusual booklet. It is an imaginative journey, but it is not based on my imagination. It is based on actual promises made by God in the Bible of a world restored to what God intended from the moment of its creation (a world without violence and discord; a world completely at peace<sup>1</sup>). It is, in fact, the very time for which Jesus taught his disciples to pray in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:10).

It is not my intention here to provide reasons for believing the Bible is God's word, and is therefore trustworthy. This is addressed in other booklets in this series. (See link to other booklets on the last page.)

I am hoping that you, the reader, will come with me on this journey, if for no other reason than you might at least appreciate the Bible picture of this coming time, whether you are presently convinced of it or not.

What I hope you will see is this is not a magical or mystical picture of a paradise to come, but a real answer to the problems of the world we live in today. It is a picture that is meant to give us encouragement and hope that things can, and will, be better!

You can, in fact, test this for yourself. God once gave the world a foretaste of this future time by demonstrating His promises were not some idle dream. This foretaste was provided by His son, Jesus. When the Jewish men and women in Jesus' day experienced his powerful moral and spiritual teaching, and his compassionate healing, God was giving them a taste of this age to come when Jesus would be the king ruling the whole world.

If you have read anything about Jesus Christ, then you will at least admit he was a remarkable man. With Jesus as ruler of this world, perhaps, just perhaps, what you are about to see will help you appreciate what this world could actually be like.

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<sup>1</sup> The reader is encouraged to read the description for themselves in Genesis 1:27-31.

## Bible Language Used

The Bible uses a phrase to describe God's restored world—the Kingdom of God. The concept behind this phrase is simple: it describes a time when there will be one king (Jesus Christ) ruling over all the earth. The prophet Daniel talks about this coming reality:

*And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure. (Daniel 2:44-45)*

I will use the voice of God's own prophets to guide us on this journey.

## An End and A Beginning

*I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; and the heavens, they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, and all the hills moved back and forth. I beheld, and indeed there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens had fled. I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, and all its cities were broken down at the presence of the LORD, by His fierce anger. (Jeremiah 4:23-26)*

We begin our journey standing on the very threshold of this new period. This will be a difficult time for all the earth; this threshold marks the end of the world or age in which we have lived, and the beginning of a new age. Yes, it is a time of God's judgments in our earth; God is no longer silent over the destruction and evil so prevalent in our world.

The prophet Zechariah describes a massive earthquake that precipitates the dramatic situation Jeremiah describes above.

*Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. (Zechariah 14:3-4)*



**“I beheld the  
mountains, and  
indeed they trembled,  
and all the hills moved  
back and forth.”**

**Jeremiah 4:24**

The Mount of Olives stands to the east of Jerusalem. It was from this mountain that Jesus ascended into heaven after his resurrection (see Acts 1:11-12). The prophet is describing what happens when Jesus' feet return to that mountain.

Consider the magnitude of an earthquake that would be required to split a mountain in half! There is an earthquake fault that runs from this mountain down the Jordan valley and out into the Red Sea. This fault is connected to a major fault that runs through eastern Africa that is currently pulling eastern Africa into a separate continent.

The result of such an earthquake would generate considerable damage and disruption, most likely around the world. Other earthquakes and volcanoes would possibly be triggered. Events such as these in the past were capable of putting large volumes of dust and ash into the atmosphere.

Amazingly, Zechariah seems to speak of this very outcome:

*It shall come to pass in that day that there will be no light; the lights will diminish. It shall be one day which is known to the LORD—neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen that it will be light. (Zechariah 14:6-7)*

In the resulting shroud of debris, neither sun or moon or stars are seen, yet it is light. The whole atmosphere is aglow like at sunset; it is truly neither day nor night, just one long twilight.

This is what it will be like when God brings an end to those things that once formed the foundation of our lives and experiences. But it also marks the beginning when God will bring to birth His new age, a time when the social, political and environmental ills of our present world are healed by God's Kingdom on earth.



View of the Old City Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives

## A Fertile New World

What will this new world be like? The Jewish rabbis of old used to revel in describing the physical glories of God's kingdom on earth: fig tree and vine for all: a land of milk and honey: every delight imaginable for a person's eye and stomach.

How different the Jewish prophets! They do speak of an earth springing up with a fruitfulness and bounty unimagined, as it responds to the loving care and gentle ministrations of its inhabitants:

*There will be an abundance of grain in the earth, on the top of the mountains: its fruit shall wave like Lebanon. (Psalm 72:16)*

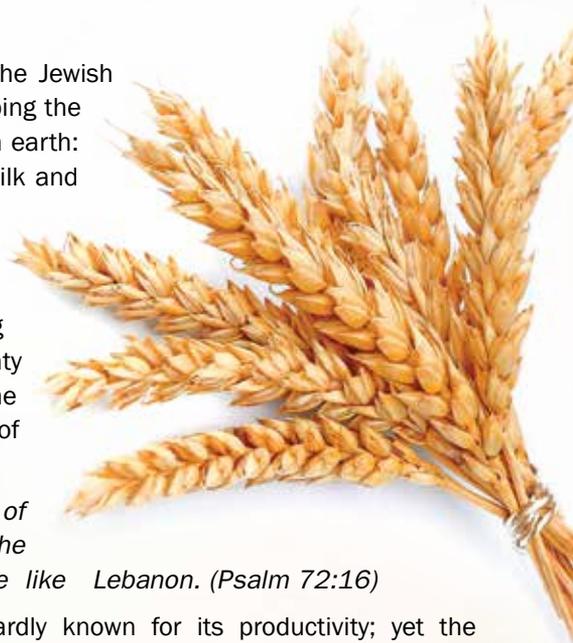
Imagine, grain sown on ground hardly known for its productivity; yet the abundance produced is as dense and stout as the forests of Lebanon—a forest of grain! How desperately in our old world did we look for ways to address the heart-wrenching famines that swept vulnerable areas due to political upheaval, and we found no answers. Now, those days of famine, hunger and destitution from political turmoil are forever gone:

*Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. (Amos 9:13)*

## New Principles of Living

Why are things so different? Because the principles by which this world is governed are unlike any we have ever experienced. Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, once wrote to the early Christians that "according to his promise, (we) look for new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet. 3:13).

Do you remember what it was really like in our old world? Do you recall how rampant unrighteousness was? How men and woman alike gloried in violence, brutality, and sexual license? Where those who achieved power and wealth were objects of admiration and envy; those who successfully exploited others applauded; those who practiced personal revenge held up as the super heroes of our age?



Remember, too, how every form of degraded behavior was not only glamorized, sanitized, and glorified by the marketers of man's imagination—Hollywood, but was actually championed by some churches? Anyone who didn't agree was given a label ending in “-phobic”?

It was a world upside down. Good was made to look as if it was weak or evil, and immoral behavior was simply called “an alternative lifestyle.”

Decent, moral behavior may not have been found very often in our former world, but here, right living, godly living, is the dominant feature. The reason why is not hard to discern. The prophet Isaiah foretold:

*Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; **He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.**” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:2-3)*

If the teaching of Jesus two thousand years ago had an impact so great it changed the lives of many men and women over all this time, can you see why this world will be so different? Here, Jesus, as king and ruler over the entire world, is teaching all nations God's way of living. What was once seen for only a short time during Jesus' ministry and then by the later lives of his immediate disciples, now is the dominant life in this world. The effects of this better way of living are absolutely breathtaking.

Let's follow the prophets and step across the threshold into this new world and allow them to show us its wonders and marvels...

***If the teaching of Jesus two thousand years ago had an impact so great it changed the lives of many men and women over all this time, can you see why this world will be so different?***

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“Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people;

**The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.**

No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.

They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands...

It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are speaking, I will hear.

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent’s food.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, says the LORD.”

Isaiah 65:17-25

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## The Effects of a Truly Just Rule

Look first into the faces of these kingdom inhabitants. Here you can see real joy and gladness. The bitter tears of the past have been banished. It is just as God said when the Messiah is here: He promised to “comfort all that mourn...give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” (Isaiah 61:3).

You can easily see why there is such gladness of heart.

Consider how they enjoy the labors of their hands. It is a return to the Garden of Eden when the earth responded with joy and plenty to the loving ministrations of the first man and woman. Recall the Psalm quoted earlier, “an abundance of grain. . . on the top of the mountains” (Psalm 72:16).

Even more remarkably, as Isaiah tells us, sickness and disease have been so curtailed that the days of these people are being compared to the life of a tree. One dying at a hundred is counted but a child (second paragraph in quote on page 7).

## Real Justice

Yet take an even closer look: God’s justice now is so complete, evil no longer has its day.

Do you remember our old criminal system? Remember how it worked, or rather, often didn’t work? In the old days, how often did we saw a criminal set free with the victim receiving little or no justice? Or the rich and powerful avoiding a conviction due to the skill of a highly trained lawyer, but poorer citizens, especially in certain racial groups, being punished, sometimes wrongly?

Now, those who persist in evil receive punishment not only just, but seen to be just; and, as God promised, the Messiah *is* delivering “the needy when he cries, the poor also and him that has no helper” (Psalm 72:12, v.4 too).

No surprise here since this is what Isaiah prophesied about the Messiah when he rules the world:

*His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist. (Isaiah 11:2-4)*

No wonder “in his days the righteous flourish” (Psalm 72:7)! But something even more wonderful is happening here.

## Gracious Quality of Life

Do you remember how it seemed the only thing people knew how to do was to hurt each other? When strife and debate and abuse seemed to permeate our society? When even brother fought against his own brother, and children had no use for their parents?

How different these days. Here is found a gracious, quiet way of life unspoiled by human selfishness, pride, violence or hatred. Here, even the beasts of the forest and wild beasts of the earth are friends! For in this world the foundation principle of God’s kingdom is already at work: “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain” (Isaiah 65:25).

In the beginning of God’s creation, people and animals lived at peace with each other; they didn’t eat each other either. Now, consider the imagery Isaiah used in an earlier, similar prophecy to describe the level of peace that prevails at this time over all humankind, as well as the animal world:

*The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. (Isaiah 11:6-8)*

Truly, they no longer hurt or destroy in all God’s domain. And the reason for this confirms what we have already learned: “For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

## Two Special Blessings

Isaiah has even more to show us:

*And in this mountain The LORD of hosts will make for all people, a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees.*

*And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.*

*He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken. (Isaiah 25:6-8)*

There are two blessings mentioned here brought about by the work and rulership of Jesus. They answer two of the greatest sorrows that affect our human experience: loneliness and mortality.

While the context of this blessing involves the people and nation God chose in the past (the Jewish descendants of Abraham), this blessing is not meant just for them, but for “all people”, “all nations”, “all faces”; in other words, for everyone living during the kingdom age.

In essence, the work of this kingdom age is to bring about the fulfillment of these two amazing promises of God.

## The Blessing of Family—God’s Family

Fellowship with the Living God of heaven and earth might seem foreign to the reader, but it is something desired by men and women in every age who have sought after God. Think of it as being in a close-knit family with a father who really cares for his children.

The Bible uses the image of a family meal to convey the warmth and love of this special relationship. In the time of Moses when the people of Israel were brought into a special family relationship with God, the leaders of the nation literally sat down for a meal with the God of Israel on Mount Sinai (where the Ten Commandments were given)—a token of this newly forged relationship. (You will find this in Exodus 24:9-12.)

In New Testament times this fellowship together in the family of God expanded to include all people, Jews and Gentiles. Consider a description of this family and the principles that governed their relationship with each other:

*For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, **being rooted and grounded in love**, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height – **to know the love of Christ** which passes knowledge; **that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.** (Ephesians 3:14-19)*

All men and women in this wonderful age are invited to become part of this divine family.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's hand reaching up towards a bright sunset over water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong lens flare and illuminating the hand and the person's hair. The background shows a calm body of water and a distant shoreline under a soft, golden sky.

He will swallow up death in victory;  
and the Lord GOD will  
**wipe away tears from  
off all faces...**

Isaiah 25:8

Here, love for each other is a fundamental and abiding norm; in this family all the “fullness of God”, all the qualities that move God himself, are seen in all their behavior. To be part of this family is a blessing indeed.

## An Even Greater Blessing

Isaiah adds one more dimension to this family meal of fellowship that makes it greater than anything we can ever hope for.

What does God serve at this family feast? The poetic language that speaks of “fat things full of marrow, wines on the lees well-refined” is language describing the very best of all God possesses.

In the New Testament, this feast is associated with the sacrifice of Jesus, something remembered every week by those who have sought to follow him. This sacrifice of Jesus, symbolized in bread and wine, spoke in the former times of the unmeasured blessing of the forgiveness of sins. What, then, does this mean when God’s family is invited to partake of wine “well-refined” and of fat things “full of marrow”? Does this not suggest that the very best part of the saving work of Christ is yet to be experienced?

*...in this family all the “fullness of God”, all the qualities that move God himself, are seen in all their behavior. To be part of this family is a blessing indeed!*

## The Last Great Enemy - Gone

The Apostle Paul echoed these words of Isaiah in a hope-filled passage:

*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. **The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.** (1 Corinthians 15:22-26)*

See how this echoes exactly what Isaiah has shown us:

*And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. **He will swallow up death in victory;** and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces. . . (Isa. 25:7-8)*

The blessing of forgiveness, and now, the end of death itself for those who belong to the family of God! What greater blessing could one ask for than this?

The Apostle Paul, writing of this blessing, exclaims,

*O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory? . . . thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:52-57, but the whole chapter is worth reading.)*

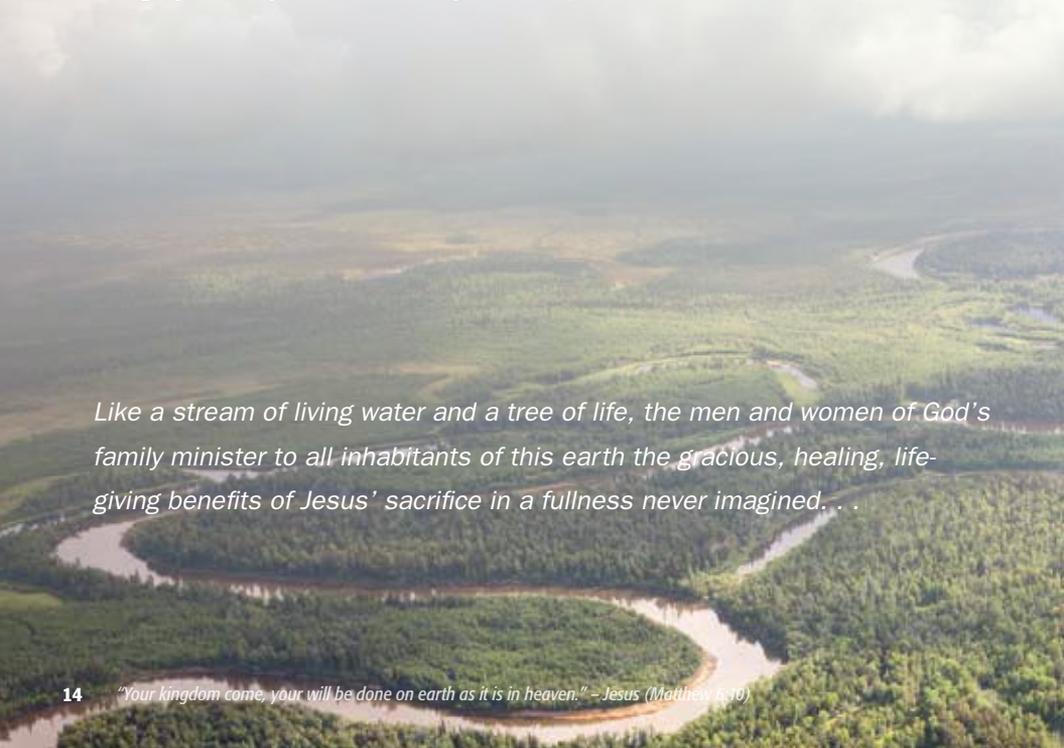
How can the experience of those who belong to God's family at this time be described? The Bible conveys this vision in terms of the absence of all our former experiences. Listen to Jesus' close disciple, John:

*No more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away. (Revelations 21:4)*

Perhaps there isn't any other way to describe this experience in terms we can understand than using the negation of all we have known before.

## **The Effects of God's Family in This New World**

The effect of having God's family working with the king, Jesus Christ, to bring these promised blessings into all the world is set before us in some powerful imagery used by John in the very next chapter in this final book of the Bible:

An aerial photograph showing a wide, winding river that meanders through a vast, dense green forest. The river's path is clearly visible as it curves through the landscape, which is covered in thick trees. The lighting is soft, suggesting a misty or overcast day, with the colors of the forest and water appearing slightly muted and ethereal.

*Like a stream of living water and a tree of life, the men and women of God's family minister to all inhabitants of this earth the gracious, healing, life-giving benefits of Jesus' sacrifice in a fullness never imagined. . .*

*And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

*In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

*And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. (Revelation 22:1-4)*

Like a stream of living water and a tree of life, the men and women of God's family minister to all inhabitants of this earth the gracious, healing, life-giving benefits of Jesus' sacrifice in a fullness never imagined. God's kindness and compassion, His slowness to anger, His covenant love and faithfulness that moves God to forgive and save, and His righteousness and justice in all judgment—this is the life that motivates and moves God's family on behalf of all people.

What we are seeing in the work of these servants of The Servant (Jesus Christ) is the gradual subduing and overcoming of all things that once "hurt and destroyed" in our present imperfect world.



## Epilogue

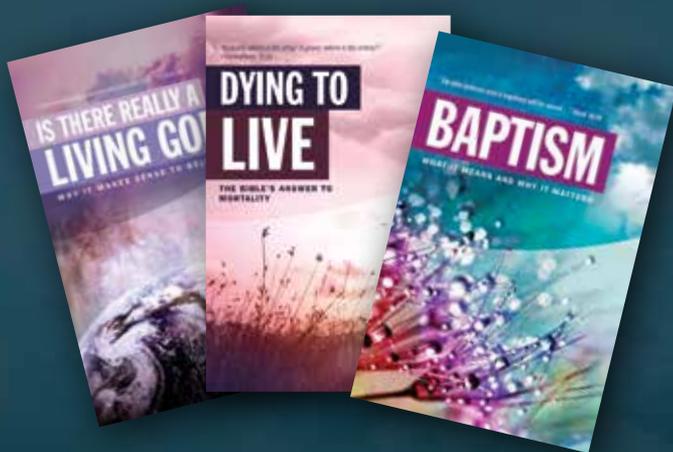
Is this all just a dream? Will it really happen? God's answer is, "Yes, it is as sure as my existence."

*But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD. (Numbers 14:21)*

The more important question then is this: Would you like to be part of this coming world?

You have seen many things on this journey. Perhaps they seem rather fantastic, and even far-fetched. But there exists an assurance of the truth of these promises. It is found in the real, historical person, Jesus of Nazareth. If he is real, and he really was raised from the dead, then his return to fulfill his full mission is certain. We invite you to explore more about these matters by reading your Bible daily. Check out the other booklets we have available to help with your explorations.

*~ Ted Sleeper*



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# IS A BETTER WORLD POSSIBLE?

## **A better world? Isn't this what motivates many people?**

Reforms of all kind continue to be tried. Many have sacrificed time, money, and even their lives in the pursuit of a better world, a world without poverty, without injustice and evil; a place where children can grow without fear of the devastations from war, of abuse and neglect, of poverty and malnutrition.

And yet, our world continues to be filled with all these things, seemingly impervious to the advances of science and government and other human interventions. Is this truly all we have to look forward to? Unfulfilled promises of grand change?

This is not the world God intended when He created this earth and filled it with life. Nor is it His intention for us to forever remain locked in this world we know. You are invited to listen to what the prophets of the Living God say as they describe a very different world, the better world for which we all yearn.

Will it really happen? Or is it just another utopian dream of misguided people? This will be for the reader to judge. But remember this one thing: what you will be reading rests on a fact of history, the existence and then resurrection of Jesus Christ.