

## “There was no way out”

On November 18, 1978, the whole world was shocked to learn that Jim Jones, leader of a religious sect, committed suicide along with more than nine hundred followers in Jonestown, Guyana. What motivated this man and his followers? In a previous interview, he had claimed that those in his inner circle of believers would *never die*. He did not credit his “mysterious healing powers” to God. “*It’s an inner power I have. I say it’s paranormal. It involves turning on inner powers I feel we all have.*”

On Wednesday, July 24, 2002, nine miners became trapped 240 feet underground in the flooded Quecreek Mine, fifty-five miles southeast of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. There was no way out. The large drill used for the rescue broke, causing hours of delay. After seventy-eight hours, the miners—shivering from the cold, having written their wills, with the water chin high and rising—expected to die. *The only help they could hope for was from above.* Said one of the miners, “We done a lot of praying—that was number one.” Then the drill broke through, and they were delivered!

Fundamentally, there are but two religions in the world: One seeks help from *within*, the other...

TRAPPED!

## FROM ABOVE

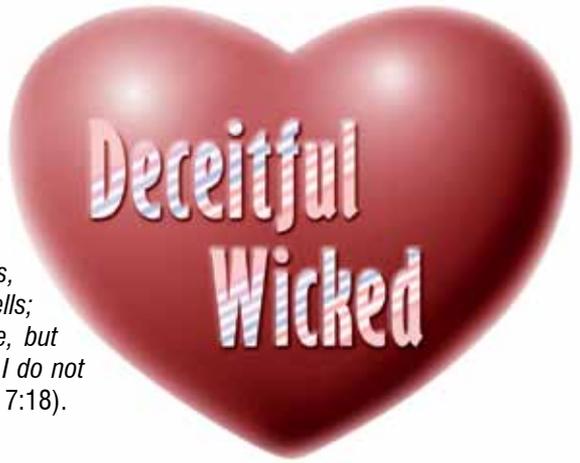
### 1. What exactly is our human situation?

*“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*  
*“The soul who sins shall die”*  
(Romans 3:23; Ezekiel 18:4). We may conclude, then, that we are all “on death row”!



**2. What disheartening conclusion did both the prophet Jeremiah and the apostle Paul come to?**

*“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”*  
*“For I know that **in me** (that is, in my flesh) **nothing** good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find”* (Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 7:18).

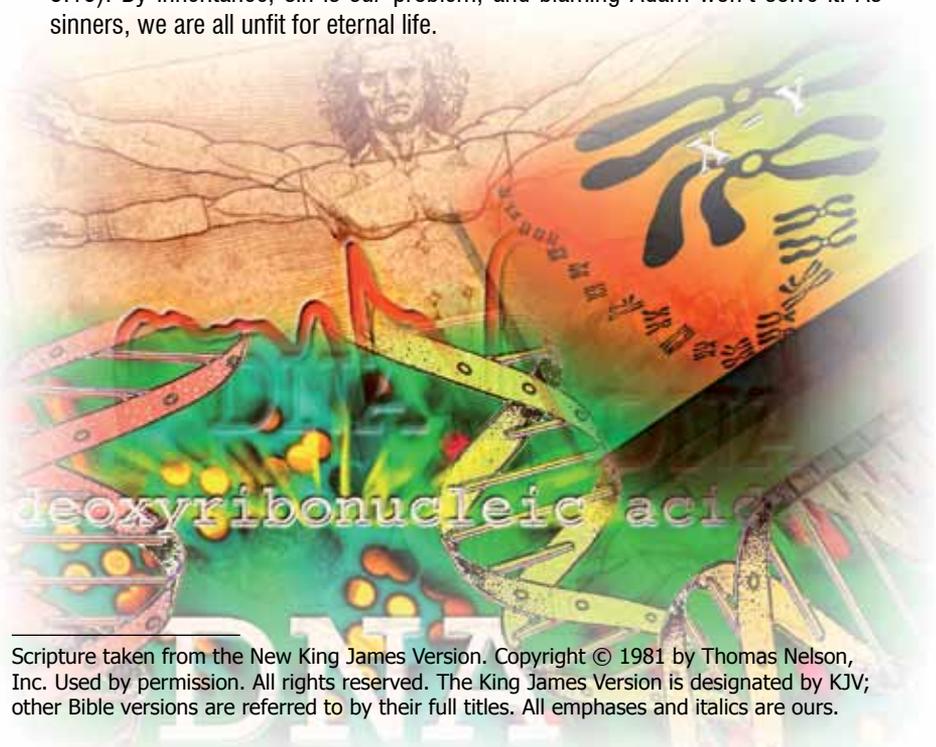


**3. What is the problem?**

*“I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me”* (Psalm 51:5). We have all inherited Adam’s sinful nature.

**4. But doesn’t God understand that this is Adam’s fault and so it should be his problem?**

*“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”*  
*“By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners”* (1 John 1:8; Romans 5:19). By inheritance, sin is *our* problem; and blaming Adam won’t solve it. As sinners, we are all unfit for eternal life.



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A photograph of a baby lying in a white crib, looking towards the camera. A woman's face is partially visible on the right side of the frame, leaning over the baby. The scene is brightly lit, creating a warm and tender atmosphere.

**“Every  
good gift  
and every  
perfect  
gift is from  
above.”  
James 1:17**

**5. Will our best intentions, self-help methods, and “turning on inner powers” set us right?**

*“The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be” (Romans 8:7). We are naturally at odds with our Creator. “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? **Not one!**” (Job 14:4). Training and willpower may produce correct outward behavior, but unfortunately they cannot change *the heart*.*

**6. Where can we get help?**

*“Every good gift and every perfect gift is **from above**, and comes down from the Father of lights.” “A man can receive **nothing** unless it has been given to him **from heaven**” (James 1:17; John 3:27).*

**7. What kind of help can we get from Heaven?**

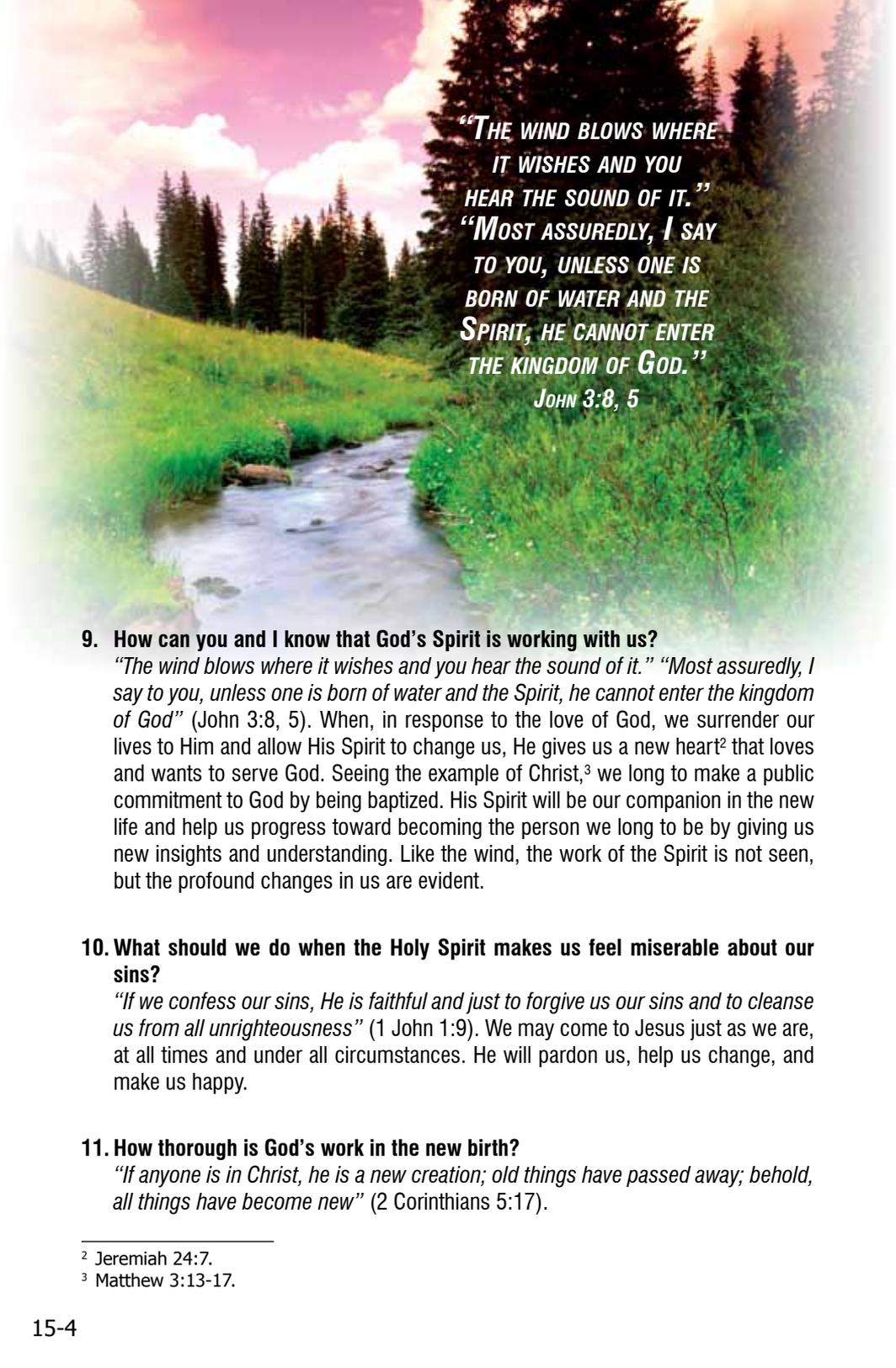
Jesus said, “*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born **from above**, he **cannot** see the kingdom of God.... Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born **from above**” (John 3:3, 7 KJV, footnotes).*

**8. How is one born from above?**

*“The wind blows where it wishes ... but [you] cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” “And when [the Holy Spirit] has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 3:8; 16:8). The Holy Spirit works upon the heart to change the individual from the inside out. Using the Word of God,<sup>1</sup> our consciences, our reasoning powers, and other means, He convicts us of His love and our sinfulness, makes us sad about our sinful state, and awakens in us a longing for righteousness.*

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 1:23.



***“THE WIND BLOWS WHERE  
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“MOST ASSUREDLY, I SAY  
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THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”***

***JOHN 3:8, 5***

**9. How can you and I know that God’s Spirit is working with us?**

*“The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it.” “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”* (John 3:8, 5). When, in response to the love of God, we surrender our lives to Him and allow His Spirit to change us, He gives us a new heart<sup>2</sup> that loves and wants to serve God. Seeing the example of Christ,<sup>3</sup> we long to make a public commitment to God by being baptized. His Spirit will be our companion in the new life and help us progress toward becoming the person we long to be by giving us new insights and understanding. Like the wind, the work of the Spirit is not seen, but the profound changes in us are evident.

**10. What should we do when the Holy Spirit makes us feel miserable about our sins?**

*“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9). We may come to Jesus just as we are, at all times and under all circumstances. He will pardon us, help us change, and make us happy.

**11. How thorough is God’s work in the new birth?**

*“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new”* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

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<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah 24:7.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 3:13-17.

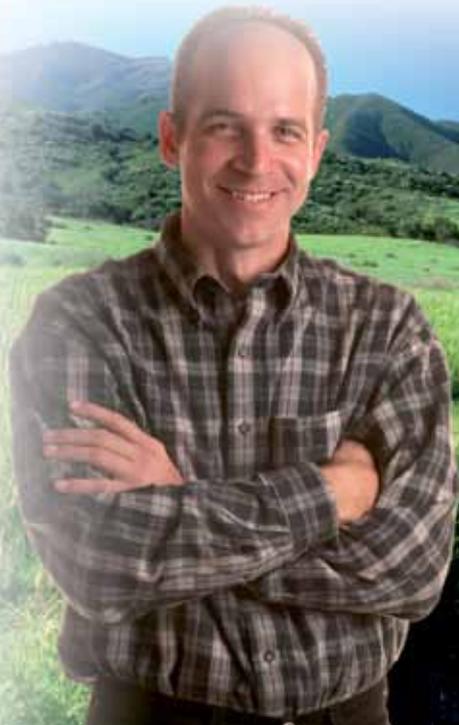
## 12. If the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit do all that, what is left for us to do?

Jesus said, *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:14-15). On one occasion when the Israelites rebelled, the whole camp was infested with venomous serpents. God instructed Moses to make a brass serpent, place it on a pole, and direct all who had been bitten to look at it. The serpent, a symbol of the devil, is universally hated. The Israelites must have wondered how looking at a detestable brass serpent could possibly save them from certain death. But everyone who in faith obeyed was instantly healed! Conversely, whoever refused to look died.

On the cross, Jesus, a “criminal,” was hated by many of the people who looked at Him. He also symbolized sin, hated by God. Yet Jesus, represented by that ugly brass serpent, is the *only* remedy for a world lost in sin! *His* sacrifice, *His* willingness to die on the cross, merits God’s forgiveness for *our* sins. Our part is to humble ourselves, in faith accept His help “from above,” and cooperate in His work for our salvation. But we may also, like the refusing Israelites, choose to resist.

## 13. How can we be sure God loves us?

*“If I am lifted up from the earth, [I] will draw all peoples to Myself”* (John 12:32). Only infinite love could have led the holy and almighty God to step down from His heavenly throne to become a lowly human and, at the hands of detestable sinners, die the torturous death of a criminal. *He didn’t have to do it.* Christ died in shame and agony to entitle us to the new birth. This demonstration of God’s love for sinners, like a magnet, attracts hearts and minds to Him as nothing else can.



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2 CORINTHIANS 5:17***

What about ...

## THE NEW BIRTH?

- **I have a hard time feeling like a “born-again” Christian. Any advice?**

The words “feel” and “feelings” are very popular in our society, but they are scarce in the Bible. Feelings just aren’t much of an issue. Good feelings are nice to have, but they have nothing to do with our acceptance by God. We are not His children because of good feelings but because of what He says! In fact, it is possible to be disobedient to God, and entirely off the right path, and yet feel good about it. Feelings are no criteria. God’s Word is! The promise in 1 John 1:9 is clear: If we confess our sins to our Father and, when called for, to our fellow humans, He will forgive and cleanse.

- **Scripture tells us to “put on Christ.” So, is Christianity a “put on”?**

Well, we might say that! Romans 13:14 and Galatians 3:27 tell us that it is, but not in the latter sense, meaning something that is fake. In the parable of the prodigal son, the robe that the father put over his son’s rags is a symbol of the righteousness of Christ, which covers the sins we confess (Luke 15:22). These examples just underscore the fact that we don’t deserve any credit but that everything good in us is a gift from above!

- **Is Christ really drawing every person to Himself?**

Yes, the Bible says so. Without the drawing power of Jesus’ love upon the heart, *“there is none who seeks after God”* (Romans 3:11). Deplorably, not everyone yields to that drawing. *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not ... of the will of man, but of God”* (John 1:12-13).

The new birth brings about a transformation not just in the mind and spirit but in one’s entire life. Lesson 16, “On Top—Physically and in All Other Areas of Life,” will introduce you to, among other things, the “merry-heart” medicine.

# REVIEW QUESTIONS



Please answer the following questions—and send them to us so we can help you with any misunderstandings. Note that multiple-choice questions may have more than one correct answer. *Circle the letters of all correct answers.*

1. “Fundamentally, there are but \_\_\_\_\_ religions in the world: One seeks help from \_\_\_\_\_, the other from \_\_\_\_\_.”
2. **The human heart ...**
  - a) is deceitful and desperately wicked.
  - b) is not naturally good.
  - c) will innately look for God.
3. **Training and willpower ...**
  - a) cannot change the heart.
  - b) will change the heart.
  - c) can produce correct behavior.
4. **What gifts does the Spirit offer every person?**
  - a) The right to break the moral law and be forgiven.
  - b) A new birth, new insights, a new heart, and a new life.
  - c) The desire to know, love, and serve God.
  - d) Love for righteousness, conviction of sin, repentance, and faith.
5. **The realization of sin and guilt ...**
  - a) is necessary, but we need not remain under condemnation.
  - b) is damaging to our self-esteem.
  - c) lays the foundation for repentance, forgiveness, and acceptance with God.
6. **When we confess our sins to God, He ...**
  - a) generously forgives us.
  - b) cleanses us from all unrighteousness.
  - c) not only pardons but also helps to change us.

**“BUT AS MANY AS  
RECEIVED HIM, TO THEM  
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(JOHN 1:12-13).**

7. “Only \_\_\_\_\_ love could have led the \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_ God to step down from His heavenly throne to become  
a \_\_\_\_\_ human and, at the hands of \_\_\_\_\_ sinners,  
die the \_\_\_\_\_ death of a criminal. *He \_\_\_\_\_ have  
to do it.*”

To receive your next free New Horizons Bible Correspondence Course lesson, include your name and address on the lines below. Then cut along the dotted line on the right and fold, insert into an envelope, and mail this answer sheet to the address below.

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