

Preface

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Preface

One day in March 1994, I was praying about the lack of a good contemporary English translation of the Holy Bible that can be distributed internationally in unlimited quantities, without payment of royalties, in electronic formats. All of the best contemporary English translations (and we are truly blessed with many good ones) carry copyright restrictions that preclude certain forms of ministry distribution that I intend to do. God clearly impressed on me that I was to start work on a new, accurate, contemporary English translation of the Holy Bible for the purpose of giving it away, with no royalties charged. Thank you, Father in Heaven, for your inspiration, direction, and provision. The first fruit of this labor of love is The Good News According to John, God's Living Word Translation. This book was written by John, chosen to be an Apostle by Jesus Christ, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. I have only acted as translator, praying in faith for the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit.

John writes as an eye witness to the facts he presents about Jesus. He introduces God's living message to us: the Word made flesh. John, who called himself "the disciple who Jesus sincerely loved," emphasizes Jesus and some of the most important things that He did and said. John makes it very clear that Jesus was, indeed, God's Son. John writes what we need to know to believe in God's Son and have everlasting life.

In God's service, // Michael Paul Johnson
An Introduction to The Good News According to John

You hold before you a key to the greatest Treasure of mankind.

People spend their lives in search of all kinds of treasure. Some spend all their time, all their youth, all their energy in a quest for money. They want big houses, impressive cars and all the things money can buy. In many cases, they are successful and become wealthy. When this happens, sometimes they are happy, sometimes they are not.

Other people want power. They use many different ways to get it. Some use guns, knives, or more powerful weapons. Most simply use words - persuading their families, their people, or their countries to give them the power they want.

Millions of others run hard after pleasure - not only the darker pleasures of "free" sex and drugs, but many other pursuits, innocent in themselves, which still consume the lives of those dedicated to pursuing them. For the

pleasure-seeking crowd, the enjoyment they get seems to be worth whatever portion of their life they've given to get it.

S till others exhaust themselves in a desperate search for someone - anyone - who will truly care for them as they are. Others look for meaning in religion and spiritual /mystical experiences.

Y et very often those who acquire money, power, pleasure, religion or "love" admit that these treasures are not enough to satisfy! It is certainly no secret how terribly miserable many of the world's richest, most powerful, most famous people are. So often, people get exactly what they want in life only to find themselves worse off than when they had nothing.

T he Sultan Abd-er-Rahman III, a 10th century ruler in Spain, may have said it best when he reflected back on his fifty years of victorious and peaceful rule. He'd been given absolute power over a whole kingdom. He was, he admitted, loved by his subjects, dreaded by his enemies, and respected by his allies. He had enjoyed all the riches and honor, power and pleasure that his heart could ever desire. For fifty continuous years, NOTHING had been lacking to him in any way. In that condition, he said, he had diligently counted the days in which he had been truly happy. Of these there had been... fourteen.

I f a man who for fifty years had absolutely everything the world had to offer him can confess that it only gave him fourteen days of true happiness, is there ANY treasure on earth which can really satisfy a person's deepest longings?

T HIS BOOK brings GOOD NEWS. It says that there IS a treasure which CAN satisfy your deepest longings, and YOU CAN FIND IT. You don't have to be a king or have lots of money, because the treasure is there for ALL - at least, for all who will lay hold of it. That treasure involves a real, person-to-person relationship with the Creator, the God who made you, me, this earth and the whole universe. This kind of true relationship with the God who created us is very different from simply following the rules of religion (which can be very empty indeed) and very different from a mere "spiritual experience."

T he Apostle John, who wrote down the words of this book under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit nearly 2000 years ago, describes God's treasure in a number of different ways and using a number of different images. He tells us:

G od has sent the true light which gives light to everyone.

W hoever truly believes will not perish, but will have everlasting life.

W hoever drinks this water will never get thirsty again, but will have a fountain of water springing up in him to eternal life.

T his treasure is freedom - of a kind which will make you truly free.

G od has sent the true bread from heaven, the bread of life - which is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

“ Can’t I find this treasure somewhere else?” you might ask. The message of the Bible, God’s Holy Word (of which this book is a part) is that you can not. It can’t be found just by doing good deeds or being a “good person,” as valuable as those things are. It can’t be found just by diligently following the rules of law or religion - as good as that is! It can’t be found just through a mystical or religious experience. This treasure can be found ONLY through truly meeting Jesus - the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One of God. And John’s book will help you to find Him.

A s you read this book, sincerely asking God to speak deeply to you through it, you may discover things that surprise you, even shock you. “Is this possible? Did these things really happen?” you might ask. The answer is yes, they did - John, who wrote them down, was an actual eyewitness. He saw the events of this book with his own eyes. The treasure John found was so great that afterward he gladly suffered torture and exile and yet continued to spread the Good News to others. And although John wrote nearly 2000 years ago, we know that his words have been accurately preserved for us today - hundreds of fragments of copies of this book (in the original Greek language) have survived from earliest times, confirming clearly that what you are about to read IS, in translated form, what the Apostle John actually wrote.

“ But is it for ME?” you may ask. John tells us that God’s Treasure is for “WHOEVER believes...,” for “WHOEVER practices the truth...” It is for YOU, for YOUR FAMILY, for your people to receive - from God. It doesn’t matter whether you are male or female, young or old, or what your philosophy, religion or understanding of the world is. It doesn’t matter what nation, people, language, tongue or tribe you belong to. All across the world, from the Americas, from Europe and Africa through the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, in literally EVERY nation on earth, large numbers of people are discovering TODAY the same great Treasure that John wrote about. My prayer, as you read this book, is that YOU also will truly find - and lay hold of - this Treasure.