

# Awake!

DECEMBER 2006

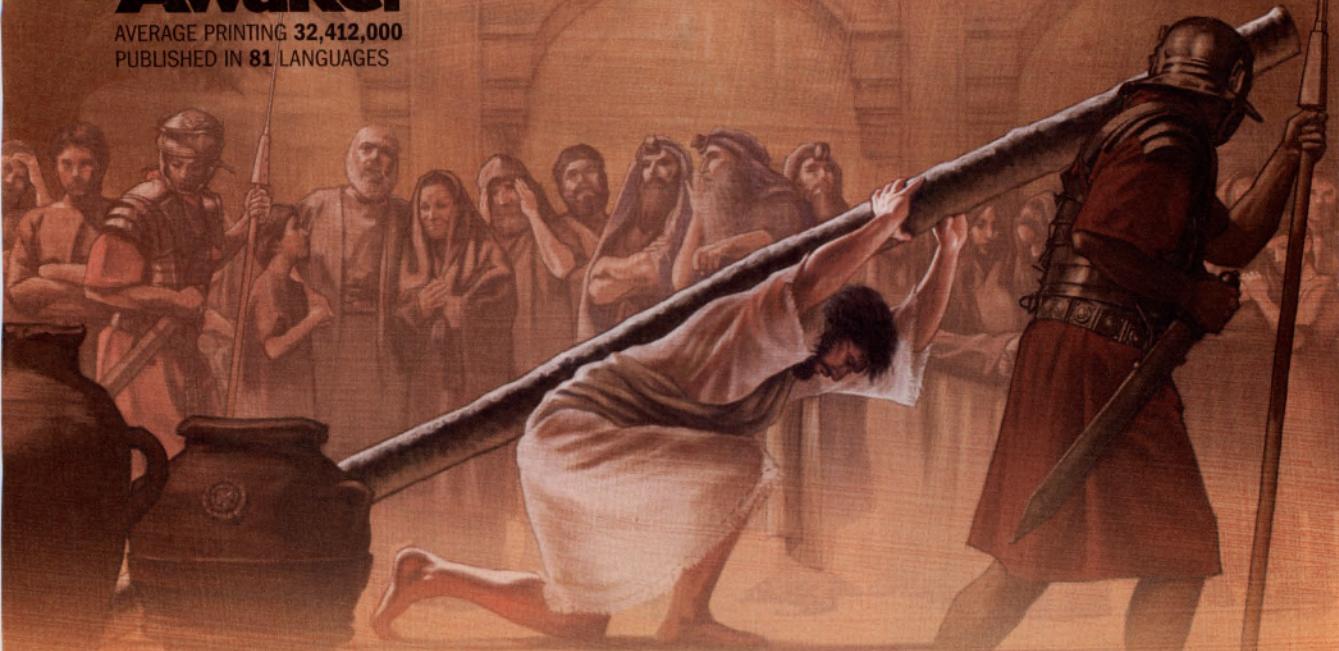
## JESUS WHO WAS HE?

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ALSO:  
IS IT WRONG  
TO DRINK  
ALCOHOLIC  
BEVERAGES?  
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# **Awake!**

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# The Greatest Man of All Time

**W**HOM would you pick as the greatest man who ever lived? Noah, who survived the Flood and became forefather to everyone now alive? (Genesis 7:1, 21, 22; 9:18, 19) Nebuchadnezzar, the ancient world ruler and builder of the splendid city that he called Babylon the Great? (Daniel 4:28-30) Perhaps Alexander the Great, noted even in Bible prophecy for his exploits? (Daniel 8:5-8, 21-22) Or what about Julius Caesar, the famous Roman ruler?

Within 45 years of the death of the Caesar just mentioned, a child named Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Did he become the greatest man of all time? About a hundred years ago, the reference work *The Historians' History of the World* observed: "The historical result of [Jesus'] activities was more momentous, even from a strictly secular standpoint, than the deeds of any other character of history. A new era, recognised by the chief civilisations of the world, dates from his birth."

To this day, interest in Jesus Christ remains intense. A few years ago, the prominent U.S. newsmagazines *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News and World Report* all featured cover stories about him at the same time. And, if anything, such interest in Jesus seems to have increased. "His spirit is alive in movies, music and fashion," noted the *Toronto Star* newspaper in 2004. "He has made it into our pantheon of heroes."

Strangely, however, in the not-too-distant past, some argued that Jesus never

existed. Bruno Bauer (1809-82) was a prominent teacher who made such a claim. One of his students was Karl Marx. Recently, Robert E. Van Voorst, in his book *Jesus Outside the New Testament*, wrote: "Marx would incorporate Bauer's ideas of the mythical origins of Jesus into his ideology, and official Soviet literature and other Communist propaganda later spread this claim."

Today, though, few deny that Jesus really lived. In fact, there is very little about which there is more agreement than that he was a real and very important person. The heading of a *Wall Street Journal* editorial in December 2002 stated: "Science Can't Ignore Jesus." Its writer concluded: "Most scholars, barring the stray atheist, have already accepted Jesus of Nazareth as a historical person."

But Jesus was much more than just a historical person. "It would require much exotic calculation," *Time* magazine reported, "to deny that the single most powerful figure—not merely in these two millenniums but in all human history—has been Jesus of Nazareth." It added: "A serious argument can be made that no one else's life has proved remotely as powerful and enduring as that of Jesus."

Still, the questions remain: Who *really* was he? From where did he come? What was his purpose on earth? And why is it so important that we know everything that we can about him?



# Why He Is So Important

**F**OR 2,000 years now, much attention has been focused on the birth of Jesus. According to the first-century physician Luke, a young virgin named Mary was told by an angel: "Look! you will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and you are to call his name Jesus." What did the angelic messenger say about Jesus? "This one will be great and will be called Son of the Most High," he said. "He [Jesus] will rule as king," and "there will be no end of his kingdom."—Luke 1:31-33.

Surely that is what mankind needs—a righteous world ruler to administer earth's affairs in a loving way! Indeed, long before Jesus' birth, the Bible foretold: "To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called . . . Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end."—Isaiah 9:6, 7, *New International Version*.

A righteous government and peace—what glorious prospects! But note that this government was foretold to

be on the shoulders of a prince—the "Prince of Peace"—revealing that the King over all, Almighty God, entrusts such rulership to His Son. So Jesus repeatedly called this government of which he would be Ruler "the kingdom of God."—Luke 9:27, 60, 62.

Early in his ministry Jesus said: "I must declare the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this I was sent forth." (Luke 4:43) Jesus even taught his followers to pray for God's Kingdom to come. (Matthew 6:9, 10) The journal *Christianity and Crisis* says that "the Kingdom was the dominant theme of [Jesus'] teaching," adding: "No other subject was so much on his mind or so central to his message. It is mentioned over a hundred times in the Gospel narratives."

## Questions for Consideration

In what way do you think of Jesus today? Commonly at this time of the year, he is depicted as a babe in a manger. And it is true that he was briefly a helpless baby. (Luke 2:15-20)

## Awake!®

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But is that how he should primarily be remembered? Think about it, *Why* was Jesus born as a human? *Really*, who was he?

"Was Jesus the Son of God, the promised Messiah of the Hebrew Bible?" the *Encarta Yearbook* of 1996 asked. "Or was he simply a man, an extraordinary one perhaps, but a man nonetheless?" Such questions deserve serious thought. Why? Because our very life and happiness depend upon how we view Jesus and act toward him. "He that exercises faith in the Son has everlasting life," the Bible says, but "he that disobeys the Son will not see life."—John 3:36.

### No Ordinary Man

After describing Jesus' activities at Jerusalem's temple when he was 12 years old, the Bible says that he returned home with Mary and her husband, Joseph, and "[Jesus] continued subject to them." (Luke 2:51, 52) But after Jesus grew up, it became clear that he was not an ordinary man.

When Jesus calmed a storm-tossed sea, a frightened friend exclaimed: "*Who really is this?*" (Mark 4:41) Eventually, Jesus was turned over to the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate on trumped-up charges. Certain of Jesus' innocence and moved by Jesus' dignity in the face of cruel, un-

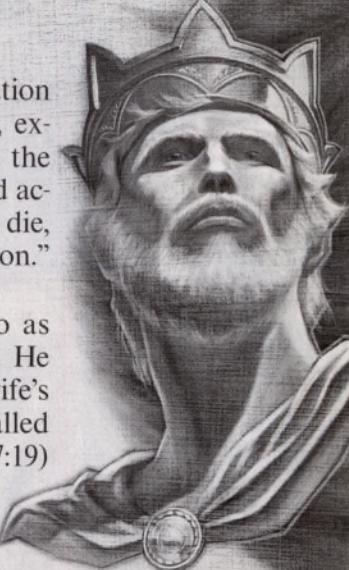
just treatment, Pilate in admiration presented Jesus to the crowds, exclaiming: "Look! The man!" But the Jews replied: "We have a law, and according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself God's son." —John 19:4-7.

At hearing Jesus referred to as "God's son," Pilate was fearful. He had earlier received word of his wife's dream about Jesus, whom she called "*that righteous man.*" (Matthew 27:19) So Pilate wondered who Jesus *really* was! Although knowing Jesus was from Galilee, Pilate asked: "Where are you from?" When Jesus refused to answer, the conversation soon ended.—John 19:9, 10.

Jesus clearly *was* a man, but he was unlike other men in that previously he had been a spirit person, known in heaven as the Word. Then his life was miraculously transferred by God to the womb of Mary. "The Word became flesh," the apostle John testified, "and resided among us."—John 1:1, 2, 14, 18; Revelation 3:14.

### Why a Divine Origin Necessary

Before the first man, Adam, fathered children, he succumbed to sin. A rebel angel, who came to be called Devil and Satan, succeeded in causing him to disobey God. As a



**In what way  
do you  
think of Jesus  
today?**



**Languages:** Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Croatian, Czech,<sup>#</sup> Danish,<sup>+</sup> Dutch,<sup>+</sup> English,<sup>#+o</sup> Estonian, Finnish,<sup>#+</sup> French,<sup>#+</sup> Georgian, German,<sup>#+</sup> Greek, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hungarian, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,<sup>#+</sup> Japanese,<sup>#</sup> Korean,<sup>#+</sup> Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Myanmar, Norwegian,<sup>+</sup> Polish, Portuguese,<sup>#+</sup> Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sesotho, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,<sup>#+</sup> Swahili, Swedish,<sup>+</sup> Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Ukrainian, Xhosa, Zulu

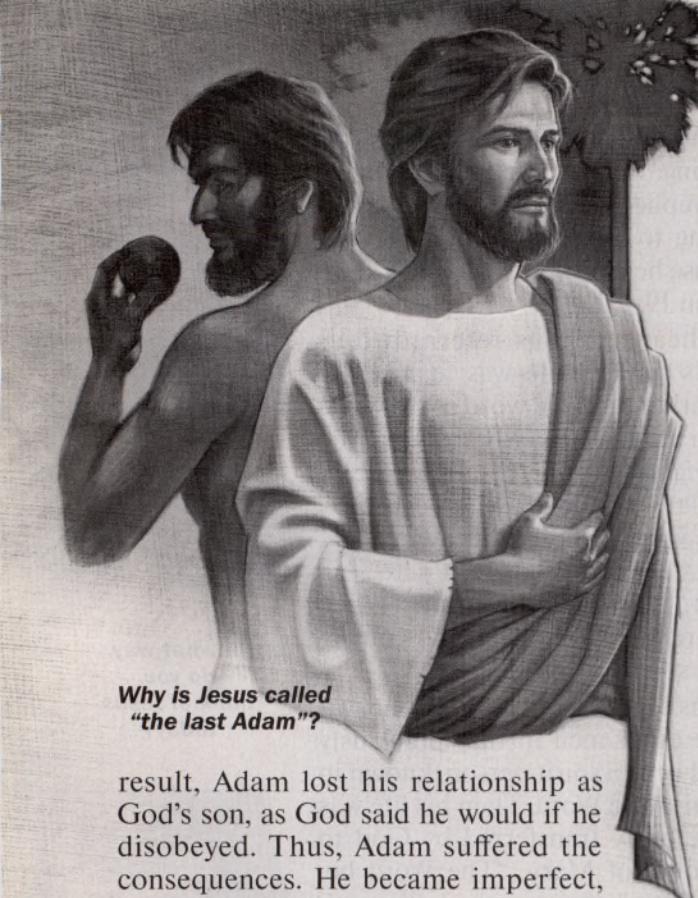
<sup>#</sup>Audiocassettes also available.

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### **Why is Jesus called “the last Adam”?**

result, Adam lost his relationship as God's son, as God said he would if he disobeyed. Thus, Adam suffered the consequences. He became imperfect, grew old, and eventually died.—Genesis 2:15-17; 3:17-19; Revelation 12:9.

Describing the effect that Adam's disobedience had on all of us, his descendants, the Bible explains: “Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned.” (Romans 5:12) Sadly, we all inherited sin from our forefather Adam, along with its dire consequences, namely aging and death.—Job 14:4; Romans 3:23.

Release from such consequences could only be realized by having a perfect father, one who had not inherited sin and its dreadful consequences. Consider how that new father, comparable to the perfect Adam, was provided.

### **The Needed One Provided**

The promised “Prince of Peace,” as you will remember, is also called “Everlasting Father.” (NIV) His human birth was foretold

this way: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son.” (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:20-23, NIV) Jesus did not have a human father, nor did Adam, the first man. In tracing Jesus' lineage back to the beginning of human history, the Bible historian Luke shows that Adam came into existence as a “son of God.” (Luke 3:38) But, as we have learned, Adam lost that relationship as God's son—for himself and for all of his offspring. So we all need, as it were, a new father who is perfect—one like Adam when he was created.

God sent his Son from heaven to be that new Adam to replace the first one. The Bible says: “The first man Adam became a living soul.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. The first man is out of the earth and made of dust; the second man is out of heaven.” (1 Corinthians 15:45, 47) Jesus, “the last Adam,” is like “the first man Adam” in that He was a perfect man, capable of fathering perfect offspring, who could live forever in perfection on earth.—Psalm 37:29; Revelation 21:3, 4.

Jesus, who fathered no children, remained faithful to God until his death, despite every attack of Satan. The perfect human life of integrity that Jesus sacrificed, or gave up, is called the ransom. “We have the release [from the sin and death inherited from Adam] by ransom through the blood of [Jesus],” the Bible explains. It also says: “Just as through the disobedience of [Adam] many were constituted sinners, likewise also through the obedience of [Jesus] many will be constituted righteous.”—Ephesians 1:7; Romans 5:18, 19; Matthew 20:28.

If we exercise faith in Jesus, he will become both our “Everlasting Father” and our “Savior.” He will exercise his princely rule in a marvelous way as he serves as Ruler of his Father's Kingdom. Let us next examine what it will be like to live under that rule and consider when we might expect to realize such grand blessings.—Luke 2:8-11.

# The Life He Makes Possible

**L**OOK! A king will reign for righteousness itself." Inspiring promises like this one regarding the Kingdom rule of Jesus are a feature of the Bible. Another such promise says: "He will deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper. He will feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one, and the souls of the poor ones he will save. . . . Their blood will be precious in his eyes."—Isaiah 32:1; Psalm 72:12-14.

Can anyone deny that people worldwide need such a righteous rule? Jesus urged his followers to keep the Kingdom of God close in mind. "Let your kingdom come," he taught them to pray. "Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth."—Matthew 6:9, 10.

## Evidence God's Kingdom Is Near

How can we know when that Kingdom will come in answer to that prayer? Jesus' early followers were curious and asked: "What will be the sign of your presence [as ruling King] and of the conclusion of the system of things?" Jesus answered: "Nation will rise against nation . . . , and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another. All these things are a beginning of pangs of distress." Also, he warned: "Because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off."—Matthew 24:3-12.

Another Bible prophecy says that "in the

last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power."—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

"His name  
will be called . . .  
Prince of Peace.  
To the abundance  
of the princely rule  
and to peace there  
will be no end."  
—Isaiah 9:6, 7

You may agree that this description of "the last days" fits exactly the times in which we live. Evidence is abundant that now is the time for the fulfillment of the following Bible prophecy: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Daniel 2:44.

The Kingdom rule exercised by the "Prince of Peace" will remove everything that would interfere with the peace of those who survive this world's end. (Isaiah 9:6) Bible prophecy promises: "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever." (1 John 2:17) This world's end will make way for doers of God's will to enjoy what was lost for the human family when our original parents, Adam and Eve, rebelled against God.

### The Life Near at Hand

"In the re-creation," Jesus explained, "the Son of man sits down upon his glorious throne." (Matthew 19:28) What is this "re-creation"? Another translation uses the expression "the renewal of all things." (*New International Version*) A parallel Bible account calls it "*the coming system of things.*" (Luke 18:30) At that time Jesus will exercise his God-given authority as the Prince of Peace by imparting everlasting life to all who exercise faith in his ransom sacrifice.—John 5:21.

In God's new system of things, people will enjoy the kind of life that God provided

Adam and Eve when he put them in the earthly Paradise. Recall that God instructed them to have children, yes, to "fill the earth and subdue it." Their assignment was to extend their Edenic Paradise earth wide! (Genesis 1:28) Similarly, in the re-creation the earth will be filled with survivors of this world's end, their children, and those who have died but have returned to life in the resurrection. The assignment of such ones will be to share in making the earth into a paradise, as God originally purposed.

Consider some of the blessings the Bible indicates people in that new world of righteousness will enjoy.—2 Peter 3:13.

### Homes and Work for Everyone

"They will certainly build houses and have occupancy . . . They will not plant and someone else do the eating."

—Isaiah 65:21, 22.

### Plenty of Food for All

"The earth itself will certainly give its produce."

"There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth."—Psalm 67:6; 72:16.

### Global Peace Will Affect Even the Animals

"The wolf will actually reside for a while with the male lamb, and with the kid the leopard itself will lie down, . . . and a mere little boy will be leader over them."

—Isaiah 11:6.





## War Eliminated, Peace Forever

"Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore." "To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end."—Isaiah 2:4; 9:7.

## Dead Loved Ones Resurrected

"The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear [Jesus'] voice and come out."—John 5:28, 29.

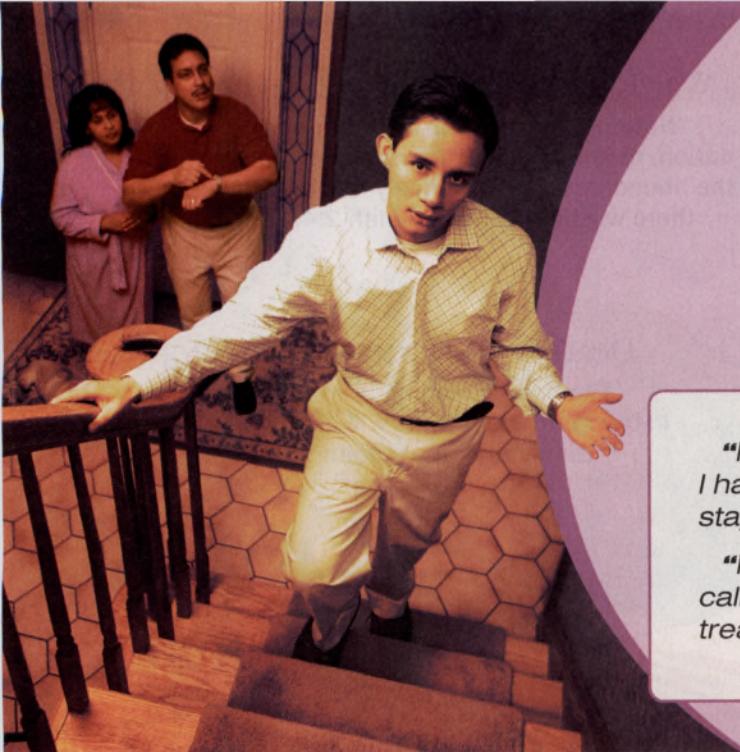
## No More Sickness or Death

"No resident will say: 'I am sick.'" "Death will be no more . . . The former things have passed away."—Isaiah 33:24; Revelation 21:3, 4.

While the promises illustrated on these pages may seem too good to be true, they are certain to be realized in "the coming system of things." Jesus, in prayer to God, described what is required for people to enjoy these blessings, saying:

"This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) May you be among those who humbly seek this life-giving knowledge.

# Why so many rules?



*"My curfew used to drive me crazy! I hated it when others were allowed to stay out later than I was."—Allen.*

*"It's horrible having your cell-phone calls monitored. I feel as if I were being treated like a child!"—Elizabeth.*

**D**O YOU feel overburdened with restrictions at home? Have you ever been tempted to sneak out of the house or to lie to your parents about your actions? If so, your feelings might be similar to those of one teenager who describes her parents as overprotective and says: 'They need to let me breathe a little!'

House rules, as they are sometimes called, are the dos and don'ts that your parents or guardians have set for you. These rules may include requirements about homework, chores, and curfews, as well as restrictions on your use of the phone, the TV, or the computer. They may extend beyond the walls of your

home to include your behavior at school and your choice of friends.

Many young people often find themselves on the wrong side of their parents' rules. Nearly two thirds of the adolescents interviewed in one study said that they had been disciplined for breaking house rules, making this by far the most common reason for punishment.

Most youths acknowledge, though, that some regulations are needed to prevent total chaos. But if house rules are really necessary, why are some of them so annoying? And if you feel suffocated by your parents' rules, how can you get some relief?

### **"I'm Not a Baby Anymore!"**

"How do I let my parents know I'm not a baby anymore and that they need to let me grow up?" asks a teen named Emily. Have you ever felt that way? Like Emily, you may chafe at rules because you feel that you're being treated like a helpless infant. Of course, your parents probably see things differently. Likely, they feel that their rules are vital to protect

#### **IN OUR NEXT ISSUE**

- Will Science Cure the World?
- Noah's Ark and Naval Architecture
- When Can I Start Dating?

you and prepare you for the responsibilities of adulthood.

Even if you have a measure of freedom, you might feel that the rules in your home have not grown up as much as you have. This can be especially painful if your siblings seem to have been given more lenient treatment. A youth named Marcy says: "I'm 17, with an early curfew. I get grounded for anything I do wrong, yet when my brother was my age, curfew was not an issue and being grounded didn't happen." Recalling his teen years, Matthew said of his younger sister and cousins, "The girls got away with 'murder'!"

### No Rules?

Understandably, you may long for a life out from under your parents' authority. But would you really be better off without their restrictions? You probably know youths your age who can stay out as late as they want, can wear anything they like, and can go with their friends whenever and wherever it suits them. Perhaps the parents are simply too busy to notice what their children are doing. In any case, this approach to child-rearing has not

proved successful. (Proverbs 29:15) The lack of love you see in the world is largely due to its being filled with self-centered people, many of whom were raised in homes without restraint.—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

One day you may think differently about a home without rules. Consider a study involving young women who grew up with few house rules and little or no parental supervision. Looking back, *none* of them viewed the absence of discipline positively. Instead, they saw it as evidence of their parents' lack of concern or capability.

Rather than envying youths who are allowed to do as they please, try to see your parents' rules as evidence of their love and concern for you. By enforcing reasonable limits, they are imitating Jehovah God, who says to his people: "I shall make you have insight and instruct you in the way you should go. I will give advice with my eye upon you."—Psalm 32:8.

For now, though, the rules may seem to be more than you can bear. If so, consider some practical steps you can take to make your home life more enjoyable.

## When a Rule Has Been Broken

*This scene may be all too familiar:*

*You have broken your curfew, failed to do your chores, or exceeded your permitted time on the phone. And now you are facing your parents! How can you keep a bad situation from getting worse?*

■ **Speak the truth.** This is no time to play the con artist; be honest and specific about details. (Proverbs 28:13) Tall tales may undermine any remaining trust your parents may have in you. Avoid justifying or minimizing what happened. Always remember that "an answer, when mild, turns away rage."—Proverbs 15:1.

■ **Apologize.** Expressing regret over the worry, disappointment, or extra work you caused is appropriate and may reduce the severity of your punishment. (1 Samuel 25:24) However, your sorrow must be sincere.

■ **Accept the consequences.** Your first response may be to dispute the punishment, especially if it seems unfair. (Proverbs 20:3) However, taking responsibility for your actions is a sign of maturity. (Galatians 6:7) Your best option may simply be to work at regaining your parents' confidence.



### Try to understand your parent's concerns

#### ■ Try to see your parents' point of view.

Tracy, a Christian youth in a single-parent family, has found this to be helpful. She says: "I ask myself, 'What is my mother trying to accomplish with her rules?' She's trying to help me become a better person." (Proverbs 3:1, 2) Such empathy may help you to share your perspective with your parents. For example, suppose they are reluctant to let you attend a certain gathering. Instead of arguing, you could ask, "What if a mature, trustworthy friend came along with me?" Your parents may not always grant your requests; but if you understand their concerns, you have a better chance of suggesting an acceptable option.

#### ■ Build your parents' confidence in you.

Earning your parents' trust is like accumulating money in a bank account. You can withdraw only what you have previously deposited. Overdrafts result in a fine, and multiple overdrafts can shut down your account altogether. Getting an additional privilege is like making a withdrawal; it will be approved only if you have built up a record of responsible behavior.

#### ■ Be realistic in your expectations.

Parents are responsible to exercise reasonable control over your actions. Thus, the Bible speaks of "the commandment of your father" and "the law of your mother." (Proverbs 6:20) Nevertheless, you need not feel that house rules will ruin your life. On the contrary, if you submit to your parents' authority, Jehovah promises that, in the long run, it will "go well with you!"—Ephesians 6:1-3.

### Communication That Works

Whether you want more freedom or just less frustration with the level of freedom you now have, the key is good communication. 'But I've tried talking to my parents, and it just doesn't work!' some might say. If that's how you feel, ask yourself, 'Could I improve my communication skills?' Communication is a vital tool that can help you either to (1) get what you want or (2) understand better why what you want is being refused. Really, if you want to receive grown-up privileges, it is only reasonable that you develop mature communication skills.

■ **Learn to control your emotions.** The Bible states: "All his spirit is what a stupid one lets out, but he that is wise keeps it calm to the last." (Proverbs 29:11) Good communication does not consist merely of complaining. This may only get you another lecture! So avoid whining, sulking, and childish tantrums. No matter how much you feel like slamming the door or stomping around the house when your parents restrict you, such behavior will probably lead to more rules—not to more freedom.

### TO THINK ABOUT

- Which rules do you find most challenging to obey?
- What points in this article will help you to cope with parental rules?
- How can you gain more of your parents' trust?

More articles from the "Young People Ask . . ." series can be found at the Web site  
**[www.watchtower.org/ype](http://www.watchtower.org/ype)**

# I Was a Prodigal Son

AS TOLD BY MEROS WILLIAM SUNDAY

*I was taught from infancy to love God; but when I was 18, I rebelled and left home. For 13 years I lived like the prodigal son of Jesus' parable. (Luke 15:11-24) I became a drug dealer and almost ruined my life. Let me tell you what led to my change in lifestyle and to my return.*

I WAS born in 1956 to Christian parents, the second of nine children. We lived in Ilesha, a town in southwestern Nigeria. My father had been raised a Catholic, but in 1945 his uncle gave him the book *The Harp of God*.<sup>\*</sup> After reading it, Dad looked for Jehovah's Witnesses. In 1946 he was baptized, as was Mom shortly afterward.

I still remember how real Jehovah was to me during my childhood and how zealously I shared with my parents in preaching. My father studied the Bible with me. Occasionally, Alice Obarah, whose husband was a traveling overseer in our area, did so as well. My parents wanted me to become a full-time minister. However, Mom suggested that I first obtain secondary school education.

As soon as I started, though, at age 16, I unwisely made friends with schoolmates who did not respect Bible principles. What a foolish mistake that was! Before long, I started to smoke and engage in immoral conduct. I realized that my new lifestyle was not compatible with the instruction I had received at Christian meetings, so I stopped attending meetings and sharing in the house-to-house ministry. My parents were in anguish, but I no longer cared about the feelings of others.

## I Leave Home

After only two years of secondary school, I moved out of our family house and started to live with friends in the neighborhood. I sometimes sneaked back home,

\* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses but now out of print.



As a  
rebellious  
teenager

grabbed whatever food I could, and ran away. Distressed, Dad stopped paying my school fees, hoping that I would change.

About the same time, however, I was awarded a scholarship. My sponsor sent my school fees from Scotland and sometimes also provided me gifts, including money. Meanwhile, two of my brothers also stopped associating with Jehovah's Witnesses, all of which brought untold misery to my parents. Several times Mom appealed to me in tears. Although that made me feel bad, I did not change my ways.

## In the Big Cities

After finishing school in 1977, I went to Lagos and got a job. Shortly thereafter, I obtained money illegally and bought a taxicab.

With more money now, I began using drugs and spending a lot of time in nightclubs and brothels. Soon I was bored with life in Lagos, and in 1981, I moved to London. From there I went to Belgium, where I took French classes and worked part-time in a restaurant. Much of my time, however, was spent shipping cars and electronic equipment to Nigeria.

Father wrote the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Belgium and asked that they contact me and try to get me involved in a Bible study. But whenever the Witnesses came to my house, I turned them away. I began attending a church where we would eat, drink, and play various sports after the service.

#### **Life as a Drug Pusher**

In 1982, I shipped an expensive luxury car to Nigeria and went to the port to clear it through myself. The Nigerian Customs discovered that the customs duty document was forged, so I was put in detention for about 40 days. My father bailed me out. Since I needed money to conclude the case, I returned to Belgium with some goods, including several pounds of marijuana. After I was acquitted of forging the customs duty document, I established myself in the drug trade.

On one trip I was arrested in the Netherlands. Immigration officers deported me, putting me on a Nigeria-bound plane. En route I met other drug pushers, and we formed a drug-trade partnership. In January 1984, I moved to another African country. Since I could speak French, the language spoken there, I was soon able to make friends with policemen, soldiers, and immigration officers. We thus managed to import thousands of pounds of marijuana into that country.

#### **Arrested and Jailed**

Then I ran into trouble again. I had arranged with an army captain to help me pass my goods through the airport in that country. But he arrived late, and I was arrested. The gendarmes beat me up and tortured me

so terribly that I lost consciousness. They took me to a hospital and left me there, expecting that I would die. But I lived and was later charged, convicted, and imprisoned.

By the time I got out of prison, a friend whom I had asked to look after my house had sold all my property and disappeared. To make a living, I immediately started selling marijuana. However, ten days later I was rearrested and imprisoned for three months. By the time I was released, I was so sick that I again almost died. Somehow, I was able to make it back to Lagos.

#### **In "Business" Again**

In Lagos, I met up with some of my partners, and we headed for India, where we bought heroin valued at about \$600,000. From Bombay (now Mumbai) we moved on to Switzerland, then to Portugal, and finally to Spain. We each realized considerable profit and returned to Lagos by different routes. Late in 1984, I sold another consignment of drugs. My dream was to make a million dollars and then settle down in the United States.

In 1986, I gathered all the money I had and bought some pure heroin in Lagos. I took it to another country, but there it ended up in the hands of a greedy dealer who never paid me for it. In fear for my life, I returned to Lagos without saying anything about what had happened. I was wrecked, both financially and emotionally. For the first time, I sat down and reflected on the purpose of life. 'Why do I have all these ups and downs?' I asked myself.

#### **Returning to God**

One night shortly afterward, I prayed to Jehovah to help me. Well, the next morning an elderly man and his wife knocked at my door. They were Jehovah's Witnesses. I calmly listened to them and obtained a magazine. "My parents are Jehovah's Witnesses," I explained. "Alice Obarah used to study the Bible with me."

The elderly man, P. K. Ogbanefe, replied: "We know the Obarahs well. They are now serving at our Nigeria branch office in Lagos." They urged me to see them. My meeting with the Obarahs gave me a lot of encouragement. After that, Brother Ogbanefe started a Bible study with me, and I soon began making changes in my immoral lifestyle. This was not easy because the longtime use of drugs was hard to overcome. Still, I was determined to clean up my life.

Yet, there were so many temptations and pressures! My so-called friends would come to my house and make tempting offers. For a time I even relapsed into smoking and immoral conduct. I poured out my heart to God in prayer. Soon I knew that since friends of the world had led me astray, they couldn't help me now. I realized that to progress spiritually, I had to leave Lagos. But I was ashamed to return home to Ilesha. Eventually, however, I wrote to my father and older brother and asked if I could come home.

Father assured me that I was welcome to return, and my brother said that he would assist me financially. So ten years after walking out on my parents, I returned home. I was received warmly. "Thank you, Jehovah!" Mother exclaimed. When Father arrived that evening, he said, "Jehovah will help you." With the whole family together, he prayed to Jehovah, asking Him to help me now that I had returned to do His will.

#### **Making Up for Lost Time**

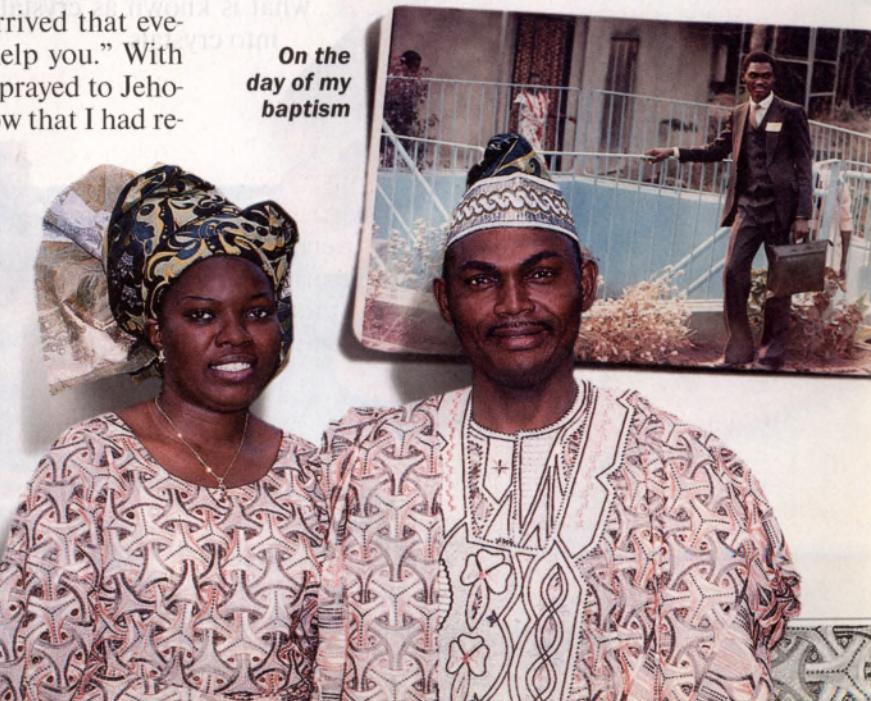
I resumed my Bible study and progressed rapidly; I was baptized on April 24, 1988. Immediately I became very active in the ministry. On November 1, 1989, I started serving as a pioneer—a full-time evangelizer. In 1995, I

was invited to attend the tenth class of the Ministerial Training School in Nigeria. Then, in July 1998, I was assigned as a traveling overseer, visiting congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. A year later, I was blessed with Ruth, who became my wife and traveling companion.

Other members of my family have progressed spiritually as well. One of my brothers, who had also stopped serving Jehovah, again took up true worship and was baptized. I am glad that Dad saw us return. He served happily as a ministerial servant in the congregation until his death in 1993 at 75 years of age. Mother continues to serve Jehovah zealously in Ilesha.

I traveled to a total of 16 countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa in search of riches. As a result, I stabbed myself all over with many pains. (1 Timothy 6:9, 10) When I look back, I deeply regret that I wasted so much of my early life on drugs and immorality. I regret the hurt I caused Jehovah God and my family. Yet, I am grateful that I survived long enough to return to my senses. My determination is to remain loyal to Jehovah and serve him forever.

*On the day of my baptism*



*With my wife, Ruth*

# "Born of the Purest Parents"

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN BRAZIL

**The salt harvester on a crystallizing pond**



**Salt before refining**



**Salt washing, rinsing, and storing area**

**SALT** has been described as being "born of the purest parents, the sun and the sea." That is certainly true of salt produced by solar evaporation from seawater.

The Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Norte, located on the northeast coast of Brazil, is famous for its salt-works. The hot climate, low rainfall, and constant dry winds make the area perfect for producing solar salt. From here some 95 percent of Brazil's crude and refined salt is obtained. One of these saltworks is located in the municipality of Areia Branca, a small coastal city.

## A Visit to a Saltworks

Solar saltworks are usually extensive, and the Areia Branca saltworks is no exception. As visitors approach Areia Branca along the highway, they are usually astounded by the size of the operation. The early morning sun reflects on the impounded waters, which seem to stretch as far as the eye can see. Nearly 90 percent of this confined area is used for evaporation; and the rest, for what is known as crystallization, where the salt forms into crystals.



Everything is covered by a white blanket of salt, which reflects the sun's glare. Sunglasses are a must on such tours. A preliminary concentration of salt results from allowing seawater to flow through a series of shallow ponds that are separated by dikes and wooden gates. There are a total of 67 such ponds. The tropical sun and the wind evaporate about 170 gallons of water every second! Yet, it takes about 90 to 100 days for the whole process of evaporation to take place.

Although evaporation leaves behind sodium chloride, seawater also contains traces of calcium carbonate, calcium sulfate, magnesium sulfate, and other salts. These salts precipitate, or separate, from the seawater at different times, forming layers on the bottom of the evaporating ponds.

From these ponds, the concentrated brine is allowed to flow into 20 crystallizing, or harvesting, ponds. In some of them, the seawater has almost entirely disappeared, leaving a solid mass of salt. A huge mechanical salt harvester is used to cut away the salt and load it onto trucks. The trucks carry the salt to what looks like a grain elevator, where the salt is washed. After the water is removed, the salt is rinsed with freshwater.

Eventually, the salt is taken in barges to the man-made island port of Areia Branca, which was built in the open sea some eight miles from the mainland. The island is rectangular in shape—about 300 feet by 540 feet—and it



can stock 100,000 tons of bulk salt. A conveyor belt moves the salt to a terminal in the open sea, where it is loaded onto oceangoing ships and transported to other parts of Brazil.

#### A Versatile, Vital Substance

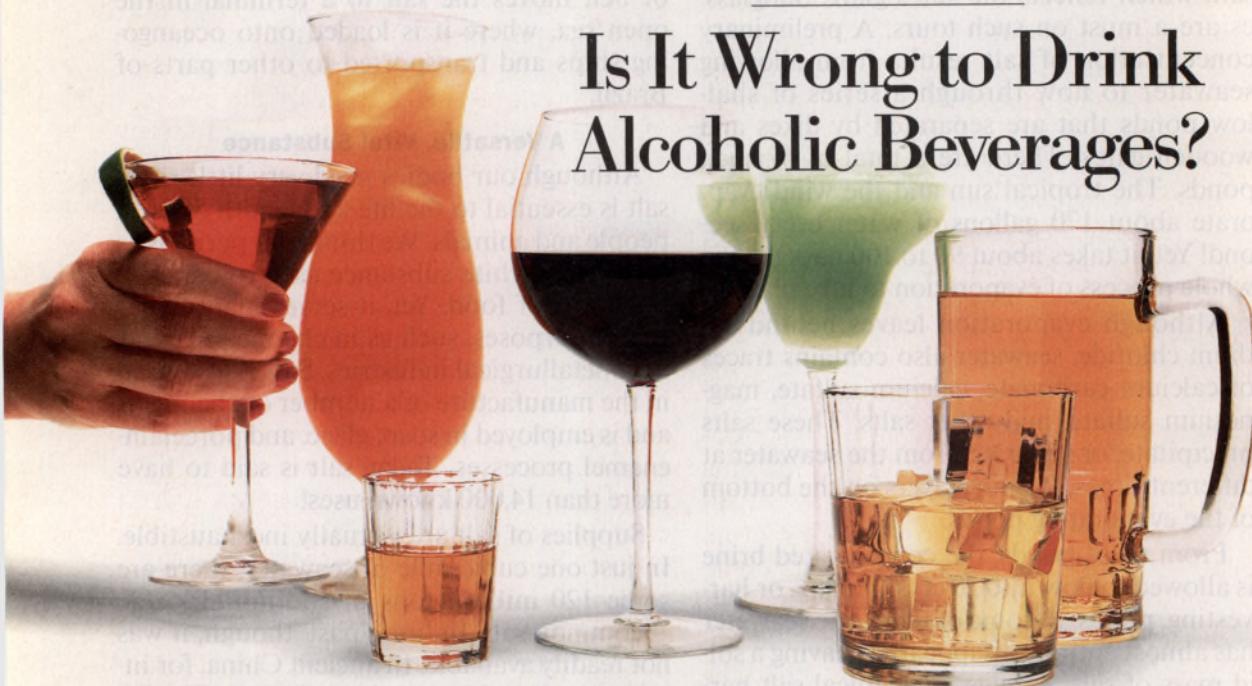
Although our bodies need very little of it, salt is essential to the life and health of both people and animals. We think of it perhaps as simply the white substance used to enhance the flavor of food. Yet, it serves many other useful purposes, such as in chemical, textile, and metallurgical industries. Salt is also used in the manufacture of a number of chemicals and is employed in soap, glaze, and porcelain-enamel processes. Today salt is said to have more than 14,000 known uses!

Supplies of salt are virtually inexhaustible. In just one cubic mile of seawater, there are some 120 million tons of sodium chloride—common salt! In times past, though, it was not readily available. In ancient China, for instance, only gold was more valuable. The Bible refers to salt dozens of times and indicates various uses of it.

Babies on occasion were rubbed with salt at birth, perhaps because certain medicinal or antiseptic values were attributed to it. (Ezekiel 16:4) The Bible also uses salt in a figurative sense. Jesus, for example, said that his disciples were “the salt of the earth,” referring to their preserving influence on others because of the life-giving message they bore. (Matthew 5:13) Salt also became a symbol of stability and permanence. Thus “a covenant of salt” was considered a binding agreement. —Numbers 18:19.

Our visit to the saltworks of Areia Branca helped us appreciate a little more fully just how essential and useful salt is and why it has been given such prominence throughout history. Indeed, we can be grateful that this product—which is “born of the purest parents, the sun and the sea”—is present in such abundance.

# Is It Wrong to Drink Alcoholic Beverages?



**“W**INE is a ridiculous, intoxicating liquor is boisterous, and everyone going astray by it is not wise.” Does this text, found in the Bible at Proverbs 20:1, indicate that it is wrong to drink alcoholic beverages? Some think so. As further evidence, they point to Bible accounts where bad acts resulted from the misuse of alcohol.—Genesis 9:20-25.

Then there are the disastrous results of overindulgence—ailments such as cirrhosis of the liver, tragic accidents, financial ruin, family abuse, and harm to the unborn. Probably because of such terrible consequences, “many religious denominations taught that drinking alcohol was immoral,” notes *The World Book Encyclopedia*. But is it immoral to drink alcoholic beverages? Does the Bible prohibit the drinking of all alcoholic beverages and in any amount?

## What Does the Bible Say?

The Bible does warn about the bad consequences of overindulgence in alcohol. Ephe-

sians 5:18 admonishes: “Do not be getting drunk with wine, in which there is debauchery.” Also, Proverbs 23:20, 21 exhorts: “Do not come to be among heavy drinkers of wine, among those who are gluttonous eaters of flesh. For a drunkard and a glutton will come to poverty.” And Isaiah 5:11 says: “Woe to those who are getting up early in the morning that they may seek just intoxicating liquor, who are lingering till late in the evening darkness so that wine itself inflames them!”

The Bible also mentions the pleasures and benefits of drinking moderately. For instance, Psalm 104:15 states that one of God’s gifts is “wine that makes the heart of mortal man rejoice.” And the reward for doing good works, says Ecclesiastes 9:7, is to “eat your food with rejoicing and drink your wine with a good heart.” Knowing medicinal benefits of drinking wine, Paul told Timothy not to “drink water any longer, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent cases

of sickness.” (1 Timothy 5:23) The ability of alcohol to help one to endure distress is noted in the Bible.—Proverbs 31:6, 7.

Clearly, the Bible does not prohibit the drinking of alcoholic beverages. What it does condemn, however, is drinking to excess and drunkenness. Therefore, Paul admonished Christian overseers, ministerial servants, and older women not to give themselves over “to a lot of wine,” and he advised Timothy to take only “a *little* wine.” (1 Timothy 3:2, 3, 8; Titus 2:2, 3) All Christians are reminded that “drunkards” will not “inherit God’s kingdom.”—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

Noteworthy is the fact that the Bible associates drunkenness with gluttony, directing that both be avoided. (Deuteronomy 21:20) If it were intended that we should not drink any alcohol at all, would that not also indicate that any eating of food is wrong as well? Rather, it is excess to the point of intoxication and gluttony that the Bible says is wrong—not eating and drinking in moderation.

#### What Did Jesus Do?

Christ left “a model for [us] to follow his steps closely,” says the apostle Peter. “He committed no sin.” (1 Peter 2:21, 22) So how did Jesus view alcoholic beverages? Well, his first miracle was that of changing water into wine. What kind of wine did Jesus turn the water into? “The director of the feast” complimented the bridegroom regarding this miraculously produced wine. He said: “Every other man puts out the fine wine first, and when people are intoxicated, the inferior. You have reserved the fine wine until now.”—John 2:9, 10.

Drinking wine was part of the Passover celebration, and Jesus used wine when he inau-

gurated the Lord’s Evening Meal. Handing a cup of wine to his disciples, he told them: “Drink out of it, all of you.” Knowing that his death was imminent, he added: “I will by no means drink henceforth any of this product of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father.” (Matthew 26:27, 29) Yes, people knew that Jesus drank wine.—Luke 7:34.

#### What Should We Do?

Although the Bible does not prohibit the drinking of alcoholic beverages, that does not mean that we have to drink them. There are many reasons to abstain. For instance, a former alcoholic knows the dangers of taking even one drink. A pregnant woman may abstain out of fear of harming her fetus. And knowing how alcohol impairs judgment and reflexes, a driver would refrain from doing anything that would jeopardize his life or that of others.

A Christian would not want to be a stumbling block to anyone whose conscience condemns drinking. (Romans 14:21) Wisely, he or she would refrain from the use of alcoholic beverages when engaging in the public ministry. It is noteworthy that under God’s Law to ancient Israel, the priests were forbidden to “drink wine or intoxicating liquor” when in official service. (Leviticus 10:9) Also, in lands where consuming alcohol is forbidden or restricted, a Christian would obey the law.—Romans 13:1.

While determining whether to drink or not, or how much to drink, are personal decisions, the Bible advocates moderation. It says: “Whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God’s glory.”—1 Corinthians 10:31.

#### HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- What warning regarding the use of alcohol is stated in the Scriptures?—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.
- Did Jesus Christ drink alcohol?—Luke 7:34.
- What guides true Christians in the matter of eating and drinking?—1 Corinthians 10:31.



# "Do You Observe Grandmother's Day?"

NATALIA GROBLA  
licealistka z Gorzowa Wielkopolskiego  
- Jestem świadkiem, że nie obchodzę tego dnia z babcią i uważam, że dzień jest dobry na podziękowanie za wszystko, bo my to robić tylko raz w roku.



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IT WAS a cold winter morning. Natalia, a 16-year-old girl in Poland, was waiting for a train when two journalists from a local newspaper approached her and asked, "Do you observe Grandmother's Day?"

In Poland, Grandmother's Day, Grandfather's Day, Mother's Day, Women's Day, and Teacher's Day are all special days. Young children commonly celebrate Grandmother's Day and Grandfather's Day by making greeting cards, while older children give presents or flowers to their grandparents.

At first, words failed Natalia when she was asked the above question. But after offering a silent prayer, she told the journalists, "I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and I do not observe Grandmother's Day." The journalists seemed surprised. Natalia then smiled and added: "I live with my grandmother, so I can bring her flowers, talk to her, and express gratitude for her kindness every day. Why should I honor her only once a year?"

That thoughtful expression impressed the journalists, as it might you as well. The next day the morning newspaper printed both Natalia's words and her photograph.

Does this example cause you to ask yourself whether you too are prepared to explain reasons for your beliefs and conduct, especially when unexpectedly questioned? True worshippers of God will seek to honor him by always being ready to provide reasons for what they believe and by willingly doing so whenever possible.—1 Peter 3:15.

# *She Loved What She Learned*

NOT long ago a letter was found that had been written by a woman just prior to her death from cancer in May 2004. She had not finished the letter, evidently because of a sudden turn for the worse in her health. Yet, those who later read that unmailed letter were moved to tears, and their faith in God was built up.

In the letter, the writer, Susan, described herself as having been a young teenager when she first telephoned a Christian elder of Jehovah's Witnesses in Connecticut, U.S.A. She went on to explain the situation she faced during those teen years. It was late last year that Susan's mother came into possession of that moving letter and sent a copy of it to the headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York.

Susan wrote that she had found the phone number of the elder in Connecticut in the telephone book in 1973. "That year was the year, at age 14," she explained, "that from reading copies of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* I decided this must be the truth. Never having met one of Jehovah's Witnesses, I looked for them in the phone book and chose the number that had the same prefix as mine. When Brother Genrich answered, he was surprised to learn that I had never met a Witness."<sup>\*</sup>

## **A Dramatic Problem**

Susan explained in her letter that when she was ten, she had been sent to live with her mother's sister in Connecticut. The stay was



**When Susan was ten years old**

supposed to be temporary, but after a while Susan told her mother, who lived alone in Florida, that she wanted to stay where she was. In her letter Susan wrote that her situation had resembled "what is called the Stockholm syndrome, where a person forms a bond with his oppressors."<sup>\*</sup> She was terribly mistreated.

"My aunt and her companion," Susan wrote, "were extremely abusive to me. Furthermore, few outsiders ever entered the house. When I was allowed to go to school, I was provided no lunch or decent clothes, even though Mom sent generous support money. I had only one set of underwear, while my aunt's two daughters, who were a few years younger than I, had everything." She related this to make it clear why she knew she would be in serious trouble when her aunt found out about her interest in learning more about the Bible.

\* Brother Genrich and his wife died in a tragic accident in 1993.

\* See *Awake!* of December 22, 1999, page 7.

## How Susan Grew in Bible Knowledge

"Brother Genrich introduced me to Laura, a mature Christian sister," Susan wrote, "and she spent a lot of time answering my many Bible questions, often meeting me at a laundromat." Susan explained that she had never made an independent decision about anything until then but that after these discussions and reading such Bible-based literature as the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, she did.

"It was a Friday night," Susan continued, "when I told my aunt that I had been talking with the Witnesses. She forced me to stay up all that night, standing in the middle of the kitchen. Afterward, I was more determined than ever to become a Witness."

From that time on, Brother Genrich kept Susan supplied with literature to help her understand the Bible. "The 1974 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses stands out in my mind," Susan wrote, "because it told about how the Witnesses in Nazi Germany endured persecution prior to and during World War II. . . . That is when I asked the elder to put the Kingdom songs on tape so I could learn them. Within a year I could sing in order all 119 songs in the 1966 songbook, '*Singing and Accompanying Yourselves With Music in Your Hearts.*'"

"In the meantime, Brother Genrich also left me tapes of Bible talks, dramas, and assembly programs. He would drop them off on Route 10 near a certain telephone pole, and I would retrieve them from there. . . . My situation now began to frustrate me because I'd made about as much progress as possible without going to even one meeting. So I guess I ran out of steam."

Susan said that the next couple of years were very hard. She had discontinued any contact with the only two Witnesses she knew. But then she said that "learning all the songs became a 'curse.'" Why? "Because the words of a song would come to me, such as

'Soldiers of Jah do not seek a life of ease.' I knew those words had been written by a Witness while in a German concentration camp during World War II, and this added to my misery. I felt like a coward and thought that Jehovah had given up on me."<sup>\*</sup>

## Freedom at Last

"The turning point was my 18th birthday. No Witness had called at our house for years because we were listed as a 'do not call.' But that day someone from another congregation visited the house, and I got to talk to her because there was no one else at home. That was the first time I could remember ever being alone at home on a Saturday. I took this as proof that Jehovah hadn't given up on me. So I phoned Brother Genrich, whom I had originally called, told him I was ready to leave, and asked him if he had any ideas. Eventually, I was helped to move out."

Susan moved to another location in April 1977. Her letter added: "During the next year, I was finally able to attend all the meetings and assemblies, and I began sharing in the ministry. I got in touch with my mother again. She hadn't realized how terribly I had been mistreated all those years and was devastated. She immediately stepped in and made sure I had everything I needed. Mom had moved to Alaska a few years earlier. Since she showed a lot of interest in Bible truths, I moved to Alaska in 1978 to be with her. She eventually became a Witness and has remained faithful to this day."

"After I started attending meetings, Brother Genrich planned a group trip to the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses

\* *Sing Praises to Jehovah*, Song 29, "Forward, You Witnesses!"

—LUKE 2:36-38.  
4. 66 C.E. 5. Zechariah.—LUKE 1:18-23. 6. Anna.  
♦ Most likely Satan. 2. 455 B.C.E. ♦ An unknown number.  
(September/October) 2 B.C.E. ♦ The month of Ethanim  
1. Bethlehem (Ephratha). ♦ The month of Ethanim  
ANSWERS TO PAGE 31



**Susan with her husband,  
James Seymour**

in Brooklyn, New York, and invited me to accompany the group. That was one of the most lasting gifts anyone has ever given me, for it sparked a lifelong appreciation for Jehovah's organization. Well, that's about it. This is condensed because I wanted to get this done in time."

The statements above are actually only excerpts from a single-spaced, six-and-a-half-page letter. Toward the end of what Susan had written, she said: "I had a very bad bout at the hospital last month and thought I was a goner for sure . . . I prayed to Jehovah that if I could just have two more weeks of good health, I would get some things in order. . . . I don't expect to be around much longer, but I've got to say that these years in the truth have been so wonderful, the best life anyone could ever expect."

There was no complimentary close or signature, nor was the letter ever mailed. Those who found it did not know to whom it should be delivered. But, as mentioned earlier, the letter was eventually sent to Susan's mother.

#### **Learning More About Susan**

After Susan's baptism on April 14, 1979, her mother returned to Florida. Susan stayed in Alaska, since she had formed a close relationship with those in the North Pole Congregation. She began the full-time minis-

try as a pioneer shortly afterward. Eventually, she moved to Florida and, in 1991, married a Christian elder and a fellow pioneer minister, who died shortly after Susan did.

Susan and her husband were a dearly loved couple who shared in the full-time ministry together right up until her illness made it impossible for them to continue. All told, she enjoyed over 20 years in the full-time ministry. Her funeral services in Florida were tied in with the North Pole Congregation.

Susan's letter can help us appreciate even more the spiritual blessings enjoyed by those who serve Jehovah and have the wonderful resurrection hope. (Acts 24:15) This life experience also makes it clear that God is near to *all* who draw close to him!—James 4:7, 8.

**"These years  
in the truth  
have been  
so wonderful,  
the best life  
anyone could  
ever expect"**



# Calypso

## Trinidad's Unique Folk Music

**W**HEN you hear of the twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, what comes to your mind? Many would think of the sounds of steel orchestras and the lively strains of calypso music. In fact, calypso's catchy rhythms and unmistakable style have become popular far beyond the birthplace of such music in the southern Caribbean Sea.\*

According to the book *Calypso Calaloo*, the name calypso can refer to "any song that after about 1898 was sung at Carnival time in Trinidad, either in the streets by revelers or in staged performances by semiprofessional and professional singers." Calypso may have been inspired by the historical African storyteller tradition that was brought to Trinidad by African slaves. Subsequently, cherished elements of African song, dance, and drumming, along with French, Hispanic, English, and other ethnic influences, formed a matrix from which calypso eventually emerged.

The origin of the name calypso is not certain. Some believe that it comes from the West African word *kaiso*, which was used in praise of a great performance. Even prior to the end of slavery in both Trinidad and Tobago in the 1830's, crowds gathered during the annual carnival celebrations to hear *chantuelles* (singers) extol their own virtues and deride one another in song. For greater effect, each calypsonian, as calypso singers are known, adopted his own sobriquet, or stage name, and an identifiable style.

### Its Style and Influence

Calypsonians have always been respected for their biting wit. Moreover, many calypso singers have developed the remarkable ability to conjure up several verses of flawless rhyme extemporaneously, often spicing them up

\* Steel bands often play calypso melodies, but the calypso singer is usually accompanied by such instruments as the guitar, trumpet, saxophone, and drums.

with word pictures that are astonishingly relevant to the topic of the song. In the early days, calypsonians were mainly Afro-Trinidadian and of the poorer social strata, but today they can be found in every race, color, and class.

Dr. Hollis Liverpool, former director of culture for Trinidad and Tobago, is a historian and also a calypsonian. Concerning the early calypso singers, he told *Awake!*: "Their forte was always humor, for people came to the [calypso] tent principally to be entertained, to hear the rumors, to confirm the events they had heard about. The upper classes, especially, came to hear what the lower classes were doing, while the governor and his entourage came to see how high or low their political ratings were."

Frequently, the calypsonians made officialdom and the upper classes of society the objects of their ridicule. As a consequence, calypsonians were revered as heroes and champions of the common people but considered problematic by those in authority. Calypsonians sometimes composed such stinging critiques that eventually the colonial government felt compelled to enact legislation designed to control them. The singers responded by employing double entendre, or double meaning, in their lyrics, developing this into a fine art. Double entendre continues to be a staple of calypso lyrics to this day.

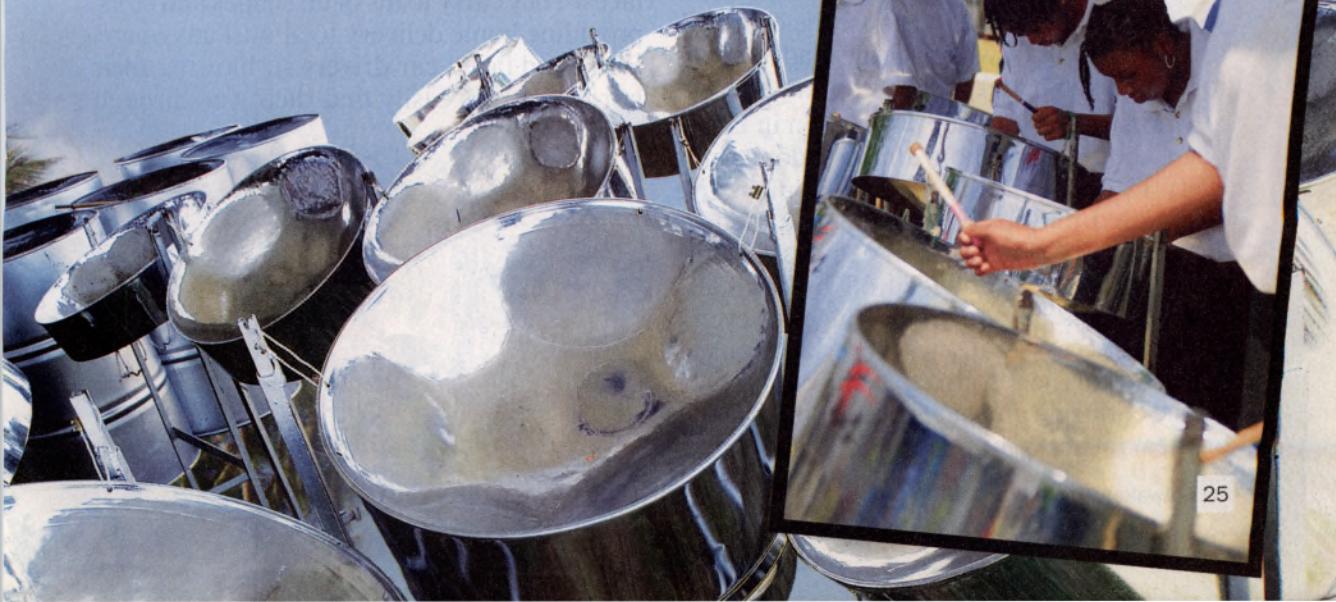
Calypsonians were not just users of language but creators of it. In fact, their contribution to the vocabulary of West Indian colloquial speech has been significant. Not surprisingly, many people, even some politicians, often quote calypsonians to emphasize a point.

### Modern Calypso

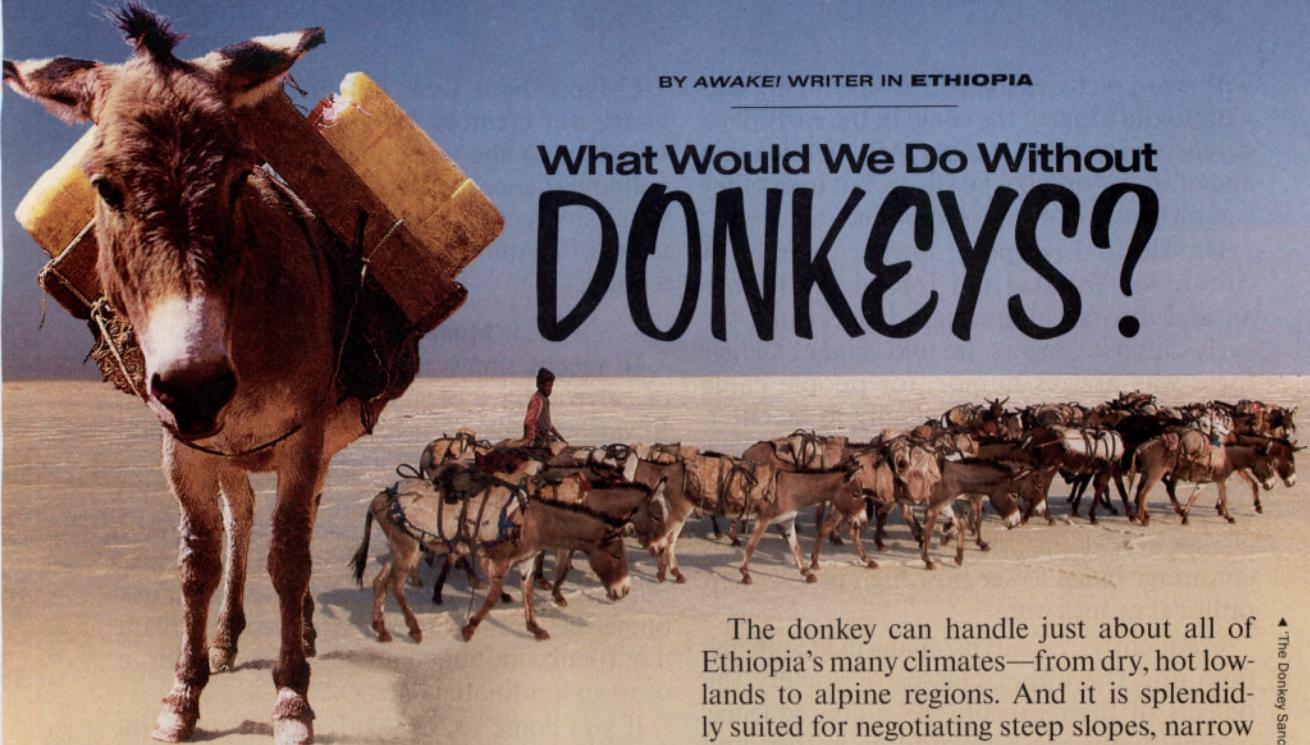
In recent times many genres and hybrids of calypso have been developed that appeal to various musical tastes. As with most other forms of music, the lyrics of some calypso songs reflect less than the highest moral values. Obviously, it is wise to be selective in regard to what kind of speech we expose ourselves to. (Ephesians 5:3, 4) We might ask ourselves, 'Would I be embarrassed to explain a particular double entendre to my children or to an uninitiated listener?'

If you come to Trinidad and Tobago, you will no doubt delight in the beautiful beaches and reefs and be fascinated by the islands' mixture of races and cultures. And you may also enjoy the steel orchestras and calypso—the lively, catchy sound that has captured the imagination of young and old around the world.

Steel drums



# What Would We Do Without DONKEYS?



**O**N THE streets of Addis Ababa—the capital city of Ethiopia, the 16th most populous country in the world—the donkey has long been an important form of transportation. Most drivers of automobiles have learned to adapt to them, aware that donkeys generally know where to go and do not lack determination. While donkeys do not fear heavy traffic, their wide loads are tricky, and they do not look back. So, if you don't want to brush against the charcoal, dried cow dung, or whatever the load happens to be, you had better move out of the way!

The estimated donkey population in Ethiopia is about five million, almost 1 donkey for every 12 people. Millions of Ethiopians live on isolated hilltops, which are separated by deep gorges. Sections of the country's large central plateau are divided off by countless small streams. To construct bridges or even unpaved access roads to these locations would strain the resources of any country. So the enduring and sure-footed donkey is an ideal means of transportation.

The donkey can handle just about all of Ethiopia's many climates—from dry, hot lowlands to alpine regions. And it is splendidly suited for negotiating steep slopes, narrow footpaths, stony riverbeds, muddy passages, and other uneven terrain. It can go where no horse or camel can. For millions of people, the donkey is the main means of transporting goods, especially in cities where many homes cannot be reached by motorized vehicles.

Donkeys are able to negotiate tight corners and wind their way through narrow, fence-lined access paths. They need no costly tires and rarely have problems on slippery surfaces. They carry loads of all shapes and sizes, providing home delivery to almost anywhere. While red-faced car drivers sit blowing their horns, donkeys easily find their way through

▲ The Donkey Sanctuary, Sidmouth, Devon, UK



traffic jams. No policeman would think of fining a donkey when it enters a one-way street from the wrong end. And parking is never a problem. A donkey may sell for about 50 dollars, but when you consider the cost of motorized transportation, there is no comparison!

### Donkeys in the Capital

In the morning, donkeys by the thousands travel to Addis Ababa—with a population of over 3,000,000—often from more than 15 miles away. Wednesdays and Saturdays are especially busy, as these are the weekly market days. The journey may take up to three hours, requiring departures before dawn. Sometimes their owners walk with them, but more often, they run behind them, hurrying to keep up.

Common loads are bags of grain, vegetables, firewood, cement, and charcoal, as well as metal drums of cooking oil and cases of bottled drinks. Some donkeys carry loads of 200 pounds or more. Long loads, such as bamboo or eucalyptus poles, are tied to their sides and are dragged behind them on the road. Perhaps the most picturesque loads are the high bundles of straw or pressed hay under which the animals almost disappear.

On their way to market in the morning carrying their heavy loads, donkeys may trot at quite a speed. Once the sales are completed and their burdens are gone, they return home at a more leisurely pace, even stopping to nibble on vegetation by the roadside. On their days off, donkeys are still used for their daily duties of fetching water and fuelwood. They may also be lent or rented out. Some even belong to "fleets" that are part of professional donkey-pack transport operations! In some places donkeys pull carts, or at times, a pair will pull a fair-size wagon.

### Worthy of Respect

Donkeys are relatively maintenance-free. They search out their own food and eat just about anything. When treated well, donkeys

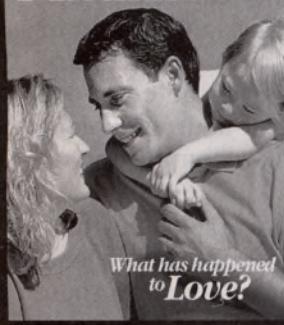
become attached to their masters. As to intelligence, they have been rated ahead of horses. They also have an excellent memory for directions. Unaccompanied, they can fetch water from locations over five miles away, only requiring that someone at each end load and unload them. They may even be equipped with bells so that people at addresses along the way can hear the donkey coming and accept its deliveries.

While donkeys are hard workers, they have firm opinions on the size of a maximum load, as well as when a pause is required. In these situations, or when the load has been positioned in a way that causes pain, they may just lie down. At such times they may be misunderstood and abused verbally or physically. You may recall the account in the Bible of this happening.—Numbers 22:20-31.

Donkeys deserve consideration and care. It is tragic when a load is not well secured and shifts, causing the donkey to fall into a ditch and break its legs. Sores, various parasites, foot rot, pneumonia, and other problems can weaken these diligent burden-bearers. In view of this, a modern donkey clinic has been established in Debre Zeyit, not far from Addis Ababa. It is equipped with computers, treatment rooms, vehicles for ambulatory treatment, and even a fine theater for donkey surgery. Thus, in 2002, about 40,000 donkeys received various forms of medical attention.

The patriarch Abraham crossed mountainous terrain with his donkey when on his way to Mount Moriah. (Genesis 22:3) Throughout the long history of the nation of Israel, the donkey was part of daily life. Even the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem was on a donkey.—Matthew 21:1-9.

In Ethiopia too the donkey has a long history. Yet, here it has not lost its importance in people's lives. While trucks and cars have changed over the years, the donkey is still the same model. And it is certainly deserving of respect!

**Awake!**

**What Has Happened to Love?** (March 2006) The world warps the meaning of love, and Satan wants to destroy it completely. Material such as this helps us to express love both actively and unselfishly. Thank you for sharpening my understanding of how Jehovah wants us to use this powerful force.

*Y. B., United States*

I felt lonely when two very close friends moved away to serve in a foreign-language congregation. However, just when my loneliness peaked, I received this magazine. Thank you for the reminder, "If you want to be loved, show love." From now on, I plan to "widens out" and show heartfelt love so that I can cultivate new friendships.—2 Corinthians 6:12, 13.

*M. T., Japan*

**Old Age—Meeting the Challenge** (February 2006) I sometimes feel that the elderly are left behind. I have been caring for my invalid husband for 11 years now. I still feel lonely at times. I reread the articles in this *Awake!* many times and listened to the audiocassette many times as well. This magazine was just what I needed. Thank you very much.

*S. T., Japan*

**Artificial Limbs** (February 2006) Thank you very much for your article on artificial limbs. When I was four months pregnant, we were told that our baby would be born without arms and legs and that he could be fitted with artificial legs when he reached one year of age. The article arrived the very month Daryl turned one year old. He is now learning to stand and to walk. My husband and I look forward to enjoying the time when Daryl "will climb up just as a stag does."—Isaiah 35:6.

*Y. A., France*

**Life Is Worth Living** (October 22, 2001) I've read the *Awake!* of October 22, 2001, over and over again, especially when feeling discouraged. Such information is like medicine to me, with the difference that it never goes out of date. The counsel and solutions to our prob-

lems it gives are really helpful. *Awake!* lifts my spirits, making me feel that you care for individuals like me. I am so happy and thankful that you are there to remind me that "life is worth living"!

*P. T., Madagascar*

**Pilgrims and Puritans—Who Were They?** (February 2006) I was aghast at the misrepresentation of the facts in this article. There is a fundamental reason why North American Indians don't celebrate Thanksgiving, and you just glossed over the facts.

*Name withheld, United States*

**"Awake!" responds:** Please note that the purpose of this article was not to discuss the detailed history of Thanksgiving Day. Several reference works, including the "Encyclopædia Britannica," report that in the fall of 1621, the Pilgrims celebrated for three days with their Indian friends. This is described in a letter by Edward Winslow, dated December 11, 1621. However, in the years that followed, thanksgiving holidays were kept to celebrate all kinds of events besides the harvest. The most infamous "thanksgiving" was proclaimed in 1637 by Governor John Winthrop of the Massachusetts Bay Colony after the massacre of hundreds of Pequot Indians. Therefore, we can appreciate why some readers may be offended by Thanksgiving Day.

## Centenarians on the Increase

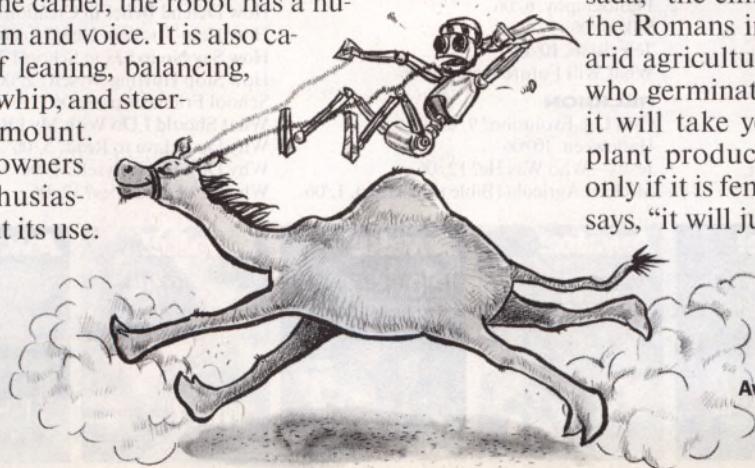
Living to age 100 is not so very unusual these days, says *New Scientist* magazine. Worldwide, there are now some 200,000 people who are centenarians. In addition, according to that magazine, 66 of them have reached their 110th birthday, becoming supercentenarians. *New Scientist* recognizes that validating extremes of longevity is at times difficult, but “the lack of reliable records also means that the actual number of supercentenarians alive today could be as high as 450.”

## Mystery Killer Identified

“DNA collected from teeth in an ancient Athenian burial pit has helped identify” an ancient killer, says Canada’s *Maclean’s* magazine. In his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Greek writer Thucydides mentions a plague that swept Athens in about 430 B.C.E. and gave rival Sparta the advantage in a war between the two cities. Thucydides’ description of the pestilence was not specific enough to identify it. Now, however, analysis of dental pulp, which can preserve pathogens for centuries, has reportedly enabled researchers to identify the mystery killer as typhoid fever.

## Robot Jockeys for Camels

The sport of camel racing, popular in countries of the Persian Gulf, was threatened when human rights groups criticized the use of children as jockeys. Yet, to optimize camel performance, say the experts, jockeys should weigh under 60 pounds, ruling out the use even of teenagers. The solution? Robot jockeys. Swiss designers have come up with a 59-pound, remote-controlled android, which can be strapped into a special camel saddle. So as not to spook the camel, the robot has a human form and voice. It is also capable of leaning, balancing, using a whip, and steering its mount. Camel owners are enthusiastic about its use.



■ “Up to half of all couples admit that they commit ‘financial infidelity’—lying to spouses about expenditures they’ve made.”—*THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*, U.S.A.

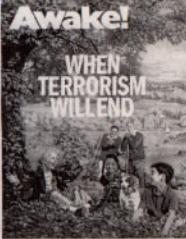
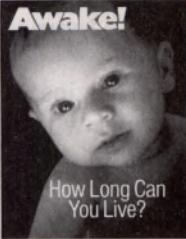
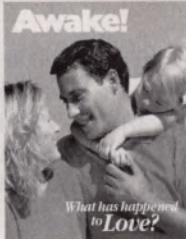
■ “An overwhelming 84 percent of Greece’s land is at risk of desertification and another 8 percent is already arid.”—*KATHIMERINI (ENGLISH EDITION)*, GREECE.

■ Lateu, on Tegua Island, in Vanuatu, Oceania, may be the first village to have been abandoned—or more precisely, relocated—because of the changing climate. Homes there had repeatedly been “swamped by storm surges and aggressive waves.”—*VANUATU NEWS*, VANUATU.

## Seed Sprouts After 2,000 Years

The ancient Judaean date palms, prized for their beauty, shade, and medicinal properties, were destroyed by the crusaders during the Middle Ages. But now, “Israeli doctors and scientists have succeeded in germinating a date seed nearly 2,000 years old,” reports *The New York Times*. “The seed, nicknamed Methuselah, was taken from an excavation at Masada,” the cliff fortress conquered by the Romans in 73 C.E. An expert on arid agriculture, Dr. Elaine Solowey, who germinated the seed, notes that it will take years before the young plant produces any fruit, and that only if it is female. “If it’s a male,” she says, “it will just be a curiosity.”

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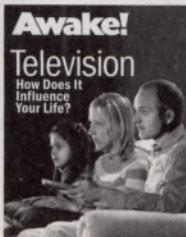
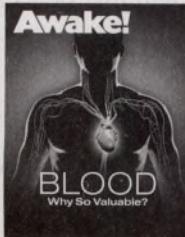
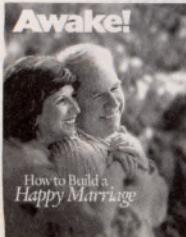
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## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?



### WHERE DID IT HAPPEN?

1. Where was Jesus born?

Circle your answer on the map.

♦ When, evidently, was Jesus born?

♦ How many astrologers visited Jesus?

♦ Who guided the star that led the astrologers to Jesus?

### For Discussion:

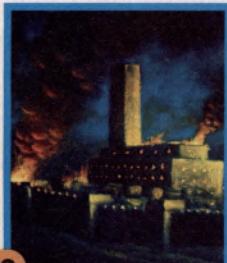
Would it be right to celebrate Jesus' birth on December 25? Why or why not?

### WHEN IN HISTORY?

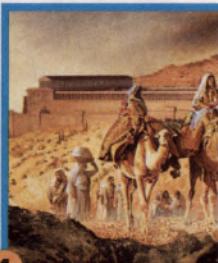
Draw a line connecting each event to the year closest to when it happened.



2 Nehemiah 2:5-8, 18



3 2 Kings 25:8-10



4 Luke 21:20, 21

607 537 455

706 B.C.E.

66 C.E. 70

(Answers on page 22)

### WHO AM I?

5. I was made mute because I doubted Gabriel.

### WHO AM I?

6. I was a prophetess who met Jesus at the temple.

Bottom circle: 'The Donkey Sanctuary', Sidmouth, Devon, UK



### Children's Picture Search

Can you find these pictures in this issue? In your own words, describe what is happening in each picture.

### FROM THIS ISSUE

Answer these questions, and provide the missing Bible verse(s).

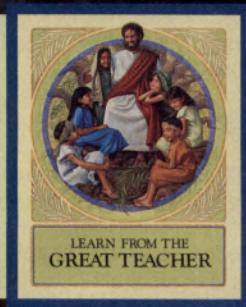
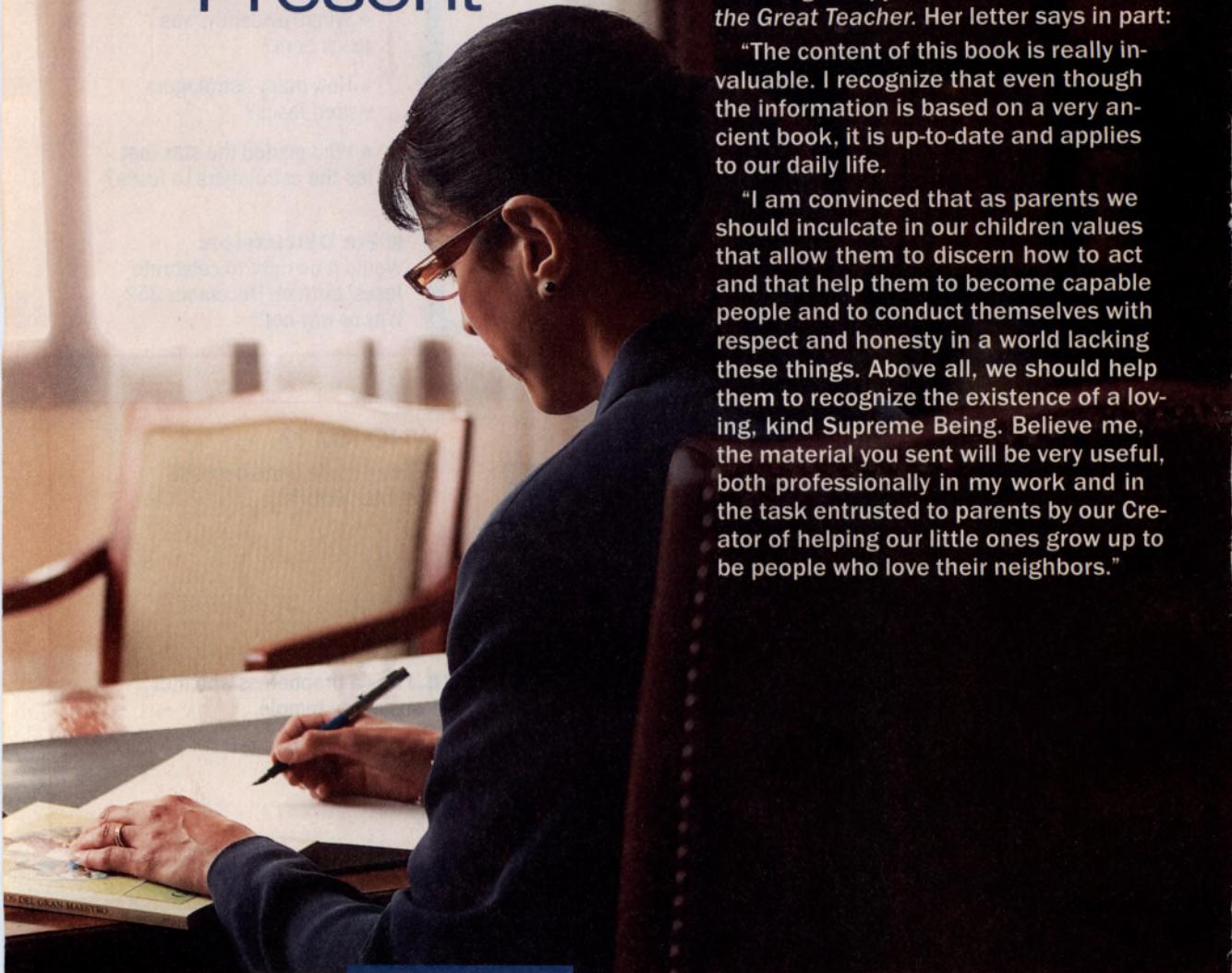
**Page 11** How do parents who enforce reasonable rules imitate Jehovah? (Psalm 32:\_\_\_\_)

**Page 12** What does a stupid one let out? (Proverbs 29:\_\_\_\_)

**Page 17** What substance was used as a symbol of a binding agreement? (Numbers 18:\_\_\_\_)

**Page 18** What is one reason why we should be cautious about the use of alcohol? (Isaiah 5:\_\_\_\_)

# A Greatly Appreciated Present



Both the giver and the receiver have joy when a present fills a need and when it is really appreciated. Not long ago, a high-ranking civil servant in Mexico wrote to the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses to express thanks for receiving a copy of the book *Learn From the Great Teacher*. Her letter says in part:

"The content of this book is really invaluable. I recognize that even though the information is based on a very ancient book, it is up-to-date and applies to our daily life.

"I am convinced that as parents we should inculcate in our children values that allow them to discern how to act and that help them to become capable people and to conduct themselves with respect and honesty in a world lacking these things. Above all, we should help them to recognize the existence of a loving, kind Supreme Being. Believe me, the material you sent will be very useful, both professionally in my work and in the task entrusted to parents by our Creator of helping our little ones grow up to be people who love their neighbors."