

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

APRIL 15, 2001

**Give
Attention to
God's
Wonderful
Works**

THE WATCHTOWER®

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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in God's now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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BEHOLD THE DOER OF WONDERFUL THINGS!

"Stand still and show yourself attentive to the wonderful works of God."—JOB 37:14.

THE archaeologist and the English lord had for years collaborated in searching for the treasure. Finally, on November 26, 1922, at the burial place of Egyptian pharaohs in the famous Valley of the Kings, archaeologist Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon located the prize—the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamen. Reaching a sealed door, they drilled a hole. Carter inserted a candle and peered inside.

Carter later related: "When Lord Carnarvon, unable to stand the suspense any longer, inquired anxiously, 'Can you see anything?' it was all I could do to get out the words, 'Yes, wonderful things!'" Among the thousands of treasures in the tomb was a solid gold coffin. You may have seen some of those "wonderful things" in photographs or at a museum exhibit. Yet, wonderful as those museum items may be, they are likely unrelated to your life. So let us shift to wonderful things that definitely are related to and of value to you.

1. In 1922, what amazing discovery was made, and what was the reaction?

³ For example, think of a man who lived many centuries ago, a man more noteworthy than any film star, sports hero, or member of royalty. He was called the greatest of all the Orientals. You will recognize his name—Job. An entire Bible book was written about him. Yet, one of Job's contemporaries, a young man named Elihu, felt obliged to correct him. In effect, Elihu said that Job was giving excessive attention to himself and to those around

him. In Job chapter 37, we find some other specific and wise advice that can be of real value to each of us.—Job 1:1-3; 32:1-33:12.

⁴ Job's three supposed friends pointed out at length areas in which they believed that Job had erred in thought or deed. (Job 15:1-6, 16; 22:5-10)

Elihu patiently waited till that dialogue was over. Then he spoke with insight and wisdom. He made many valuable points,

3. Where do we find information about wonderful things that can be of value to us?

4. What led up to Elihu's exhortation recorded at Job 37:14?



but note this key thought: "Do give ear to this, O Job; stand still and show yourself attentive to the wonderful works of God."—Job 37:14.

The One Who Did the Works

⁵ Observe that Elihu did not suggest that Job give attention to Job, to Elihu himself, or to other humans. Elihu wisely urged Job—and us—to be attentive to the wonderful works of Jehovah God. What do you think the phrase "the wonderful works of God" includes? Moreover, in view of concerns you may have about health, finances, the future, your family, workmates, and neighbors, why be attentive to God's works? Unquestionably, the wonderful works of Jehovah God involve his wisdom and his authority over the physical creation all around us. (Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 24:1; 104:24; 136:5, 6) To bring this into clear view, note a point in the book of Joshua.

⁶ Jehovah brought plagues on ancient Egypt and then parted the Red Sea so that Moses could lead the ancient Israelites to freedom. (Exodus 7:1-14:31; Psalm 106:7, 21, 22) There is a similar event related in Joshua chapter 3. Joshua, Moses' successor, was to lead God's people across another body of water and into the Promised Land. Joshua said: "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow Jehovah will do wonderful things in your midst." (Joshua 3:5) What wonderful things?

⁷ Well, the account shows that Jehovah opened a watery barrier, the Jordan River, so that many thousands of men, women, and children could pass over on dry ground. (Joshua 3:7-17) If we had been there watching the river open and all those people cross safely, we would have been struck by how wonderful an accomplishment this was! It displayed God's power over creation. Yet, right now—in our

5. What do "the wonderful works of God" to which Elihu referred involve?

6, 7. (a) Jehovah performed what wonderful works in the days of Moses and Joshua? (b) Had you witnessed either of those works in Moses' and Joshua's time, how would you have responded?

lifetime—there are things comparably wonderful. To see what some of these are and why we should give them attention, consider Job 37:5-7.

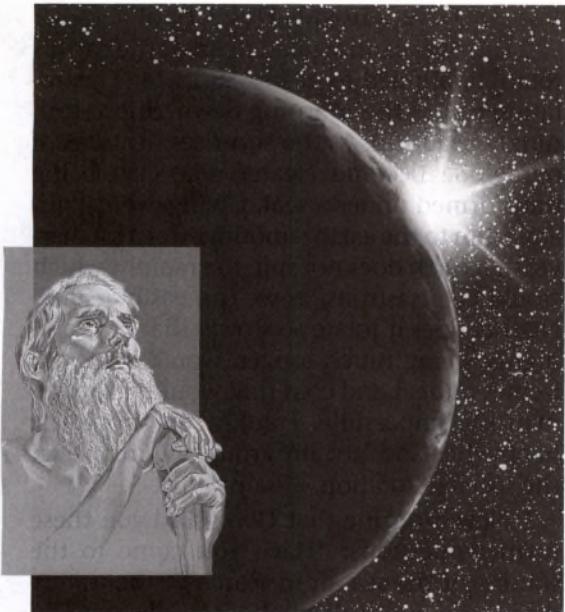
⁸ Elihu declared: "God thunders with his voice in a wonderful way, doing great things that we cannot know." What did Elihu have in mind about God's doing things in "a wonderful way"? Well, he mentions snow and downpours of rain. These would put a halt to the work of a farmer in his field, giving him time and reason to consider God's works. We may not be farmers, but rain and snow may affect us. Depending on where we live, snow and rain may interrupt our activities too. Do we take time to ponder who is behind such wonders and what this means? Have you ever done so?

⁹ Significantly, as we read in Job chapter 38, Jehovah God himself took up a similar line of thought, as he put meaningful questions to Job. Though our Creator directed these questions to Job, they clearly have a bearing on our attitude, our existence, and our future. So let us see what God asked, and let us think about the implications, yes, let us do what Job 37:14 urges us to do.

¹⁰ Chapter 38 opens: "Jehovah proceeded to answer Job out of the windstorm and say: 'Who is this that is obscuring counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins, please, like an able-bodied man, and let me question you, and you inform me.' " (Job 38:1-3) This set the tone. It helped Job to adjust his thinking to the reality that he was standing before the Creator of the universe and that he was accountable to him. That is also a good thing for us and our contemporaries to do. Then God touched on the sort of things that Elihu had mentioned. "Where did you happen to be when I founded the earth?"

8, 9. To what wonderful works does Job 37:5-7 point, but why should we think about these?

10. Job chapter 38 should have what effect on us, and what questions does it bring up?



Tell me, if you do know understanding. Who set its measurements, in case you know, or who stretched out upon it the measuring line? Into what have its socket pedestals been sunk down, or who laid its cornerstone?"—Job 38:4-6.

¹¹ Where was Job—where were any of us—when the earth came to be? Were we the architects who designed our earth and, from that design, laid out the dimensions as though with a ruler or straightedge? No, indeed! Humans were not even on the scene. As if our earth were a building, God asked: "Who laid its cornerstone?" We know that earth is at exactly the right distance from our sun for us to live and thrive. And it is the right size too. If earth were much larger, hydrogen gas would not escape our atmosphere and our planet would be inhospitable to life. Clearly, someone "laid its cornerstone" in the right place. Did Job deserve credit? Do we? Or does Jehovah God?—Proverbs 3:19; Jeremiah 10:12.

11. What realizations should Job 38:4-6 bring home to us?

What Man Has the Answers?

¹² God also asked: "Into what have its socket pedestals been sunk down?" Is that not a good question? We are probably familiar with a term that Job did not know—gravity. Most of us understand that the force of gravity from the huge mass of the sun keeps our earth in place, its socket pedestals sunk down so to speak. Still, who fully understands gravity?

¹³ A recently published book entitled *The Universe Explained* admits that 'gravity is the most familiar, yet the least understood, of nature's forces.' It adds: "Gravitational force seems to travel across empty space instantly, without any obvious means of doing so. In recent years, however, physicists have begun to speculate that gravity might travel in waves made of particles called gravitons . . . But no one is quite certain of their existence." Think about what that implies.

¹⁴ Science has advanced for 3,000 years since Jehovah posed those questions to Job. Still, neither we nor expert physicists can fully explain gravity, which keeps our earth in the right orbit, just the position it should have to allow us to enjoy life here. (Job 26:7; Isaiah 45:18) This is not to suggest that we all need to pursue an in-depth study of the mysteries of gravity. Rather, giving attention even to this one aspect of God's wonderful works should influence our view of him. Do you stand in awe of his wisdom and knowledge, and do you sense why we need to learn more about his will?

¹⁵ The Creator continued his questioning: "Who barricaded the sea with doors, which

12. The question found at Job 38:6 leads us to think about what?

13, 14. (a) What must be admitted about gravity? (b) How should we react to the situation that Job 38:6 highlights?

15-17. (a) On what did Job 38:8-11 focus, leading to what questions? (b) What must be admitted regarding knowledge about the oceans and their distributions on the globe?

began to go forth as when it burst out from the womb; when I put the cloud as its garment and thick gloom as its swaddling band, and I proceeded to break up my regulation upon it and to set a bar and doors, and I went on to say, 'This far you may come, and no farther; and here your proud waves are limited'?"—Job 38:8-11.

¹⁶ Barricading the sea involves the continents, the oceans, and the tides. How long has man observed and studied these? For thousands of years—and very intensively in the last century. You might imagine that most of what is to be known about them must be settled by now. Yet, in this year 2001, if you investigated that topic at huge libraries or used the vast research power of the Internet to locate the latest facts, what would you find?

¹⁷ In a widely accepted reference work, you could locate this admission: "The distribution of the continental platforms and ocean basins on the surface of the globe and the distribution of the major landform features have long been among the most intriguing problems for scientific investigation and theorizing." After saying this, the encyclopedia just quoted offered four *possible* explanations but said that these are "among the many hypotheses." As you may know, a hypothesis "implies insufficient evidence to provide more than a tentative explanation."

¹⁸ Does that not highlight the timeliness of the questions we read at Job 38:8-11? Surely we are not to be credited for arranging all these aspects of our planet. We did not place the moon so that its attractive power would help to produce tides that normally do not overwhelm our coasts or us personally. You know who did, the Doer of wonderful things.—Psalm 33:7; 89:9; Proverbs 8:29; Acts 4:24; Revelation 14:7.

18. To what conclusions does Job 38:8-11 lead you?

Give Jehovah Due Credit

¹⁹ Humans cannot take credit for the earth's rotation, alluded to at Job 38:12-14. This rotation causes the morning dawn, often stunningly beautiful. As the sun rises, features of our globe become clearer, like clay being transformed under a seal. Giving even slight attention to the earth's motion, we must marvel that earth does not spin too rapidly, which would be disastrous, as we can easily realize. Neither does it rotate so slowly that days and nights, being much longer, would bring extremes of heat and cold that would make human life impossible. Frankly, we should be happy that God, not any group of humans, set the speed of rotation.—Psalm 148:1-5.

²⁰ Now, imagine that God asked you these further questions: "Have you come to the sources of the sea, or in search of the watery deep have you walked about?" Not even an oceanographer could give a complete answer! "Have you intelligently considered the broad spaces of the earth? Tell, if you have come to know it all." (Job 38:16, 18) Have you visited and explored all regions of earth, or even most of them? Giving attention to the beautiful locations and wonders of our earth could occupy how many lifetimes? And what marvelous times those would be!

19. The poetic expressions at Job 38:12-14 direct our attention to what physical realities?

20. How would you respond to the questions posed at Job 38:16, 18?

How Would You Reply?

- The exhortation recorded at Job 37:14 leads you to think about what works of God?
- What are some things that are highlighted in Job chapters 37 and 38 that science cannot fully explain?
- How do you feel about the wonderful works of God, moving you to do what?



*Who barricaded the sea,
keeping it in its place?*

is yet able to explain fully God's works in this regard. We enjoy food and oxygen produced as plants respond to light. We can read, see the faces of our loved ones, gaze at sunsets, and on and on. As we do that, should we not acknowledge the wonderful

²¹ Look, too, at the profound questions at Job 38:19: "Where, now, is the way to where light resides? As for darkness, where, now, is its place?" You may be aware that for a long time, the view prevailed that light travels like a wave, like the ripples we can watch in a pond. Then in 1905, Albert Einstein explained that light acts like packets, or particles, of energy. Did that settle matters? Well, a recent encyclopedia asks: "Is light a wave or a particle?" It answers: "Seemingly, [light] cannot be both because the two models [waves and particles] are so different. The best answer is that light is strictly neither." Still, we keep on being warmed (directly and indirectly) by sunlight, even if no man

21. (a) The questions at Job 38:19 might bring up what scientific views? (b) The realities about light should move us to do what?

works of God?—Psalm 104:1, 2; 145:5; Isaiah 45:7; Jeremiah 31:35.

²² Is the objective of our meditating on Jehovah's wonderful works merely that we be impressed, as if awed or dumbstruck by it all? Hardly. The ancient psalmist admitted the impossibility of comprehending and commenting on all God's works. David wrote: "Many things you yourself have done, O Jehovah my God, even your wonderful works ... Were I inclined to tell and speak of them, they have become more numerous than I can recount." (Psalm 40:5) He certainly did not mean, though, that he would keep silent about these grand works. David proved this by his determination expressed at Psalm 9:1: "I will laud

22. How did David of old respond to God's wonderful works?

Who has visited all the beauty spots on our earth, which God created?



you, O Jehovah, with all my heart; I will declare all your wonderful works."

²³ Should we not be equally moved? Should not our sense of wonder over God's grand works move us to speak of him, of what he has done, and of what he will yet do? The answer is obvious—we should "declare among the nations his glory, among all the peoples

23. What is your reaction to God's wonderful works, and how can you help others?

his wonderful works." (Psalm 96:3-5) Yes, we can manifest our humble appreciation for the wonderful works of God by sharing with others what we have learned about him. Even if they grew up in a society that dismissed the Creator, our positive, informative expressions may awaken them to recognize God. More than that, it may move them to want to learn of and serve the one who "created all things," the Doer of wonderful works, Jehovah.—Revelation 4:11.



GIVE ATTENTION TO GOD'S WONDERFUL WORKS

"Many things you yourself have done, O Jehovah my God, even your wonderful works and your thoughts toward us; there is none to be compared to you."—PSALM 40:5.

WHEN you read the Bible, you can readily see that God did wonderful things for his ancient people, Israel. (Joshua 3:5; Psalm 106:7, 21, 22) Even if Jehovah is not presently intervening in that way in human affairs, we find around us abundant proof of his wonderful works. So we have reason to join the psalmist in saying: "How many your works are, O Je-

1, 2. We have what evidence of God's wonderful works, and what should this prompt us to do?

hovah! All of them in wisdom you have made. The earth is full of your productions."—Psalm 104:24; 148:1-5.

² Many today ignore or reject such clear evidence of the Creator's activities. (Romans 1:20) We, however, do well to reflect on them and to draw conclusions relative to our position before and duty toward our Maker. Job chapters 38 to 41 are excellent aids in this, for Jehovah there called to Job's attention cer-

tain aspects of His wonderful works. Consider some valid issues that God raised.

Works Powerful and Wonderful

³ At one point, God inquired of Job: "Have you entered into the storehouses of the snow, or do you see even the storehouses of the hail, which I have kept back for the time of distress, for the day of fight and war?" In many parts of our earth, snow and hail are part of life. God went on: "Who has divided a channel for the flood and a way for the thunderous storm cloud, to make it rain upon the land where there is no man, upon the wilderness in which there is no earthling man, to satisfy storm-stricken and desolate places and to cause the growth of grass to sprout? Does there exist a father for the rain, or who gave birth to the dewdrops? Out of whose belly does the ice actually come forth, and as for the hoarfrost of heaven, who indeed brings it to birth?"—Job 38:22, 23, 25-29.

⁴ Some who live in a fast-paced society and who must travel may view snow merely as an obstacle. Yet, countless others view snow as a delight, producing a winter wonderland that opens up opportunities for special activities. With God's question in mind, do you have an intimate knowledge of snow, even of what it looks like? Oh, we know what a *lot* of it looks like, perhaps from photos of snowbanks or be-

3. As recorded at Job 38:22, 23, 25-29, God asked about what things?

4-6. In what sense is man's knowledge of snow incomplete?



cause we have actually seen plenty of snow. But what of individual snowflakes? Do you know what they look like, maybe having examined them at their source?

⁵ Some men have spent decades studying and photographing snowflakes. A snowflake may be composed of a hundred delicate ice crystals in a variety of beautiful designs. The book *Atmosphere* says: "The endless variety of snowflakes is legendary, and although scientists insist that no law of nature forbids their duplication, two identical flakes have never been found. One search of epic proportions was conducted by . . . Wilson A. Bentley, who spent more than 40 years examining and photographing snowflakes through a microscope without ever finding two that were exactly alike." And even if, in a rare case, two appeared to be twins, would that really alter the wonder of the staggering variety of snowflakes?

⁶ Recall God's question: "Have you entered into the storehouses of the snow?" Many think of clouds as the storehouses of snow. Can you imagine going to these storehouses to inventory snowflakes in their infinite variety and to study how they came to be? A science encyclopedia says: "The nature and origin of the ice nuclei, which are necessary to induce freezing of cloud droplets at temperatures about -40°F (-40°C), are still not clear." —Psalm 147:16, 17; Isaiah 55:9, 10.

⁷ Or what about rain? God asked Job: "Does there exist a father for the rain, or who gave birth to the dewdrops?" The same science encyclopedia says: "Because of the complexity of atmospheric motions and the enormous variability in vapor and particle content of the air, it seems impossible to construct a detailed, general theory of the manner in which clouds and precipitation develop." In simpler terms, scientists have offered detailed theories, but they really cannot fully explain rain. Yet, you

7. How exhaustive is human knowledge about rain?



What do you conclude about the staggering variety of snowflakes and the awesome power of lightning?

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know that the vital rain falls, watering the earth, sustaining plants, making life possible and pleasant.

⁸ Would you not agree with the conclusion the apostle Paul came to? He urged others to see in these wonderful works testimony about the One behind them. Paul said of Jehovah God: "He did not leave himself without witness in that he did good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts to the full with food and good cheer." —Acts 14:17; Psalm 147:8.

⁹ There can be no question that the Doer of such wonderful and beneficial works has infinite wisdom and enormous power. As to his power, think of this: It is said that there are some 45,000 thunderstorms every day, more than 16 million a year. This means that about 2,000 are occurring at this very moment. The complex clouds of a single thunderstorm churn with energy equal to ten or more of the nuclear bombs dropped in World War II. You see some of that energy as lightning. Besides being awesome, lightning actually helps to produce forms of nitrogen that reach the soil, where plants absorb them as natural fertilizer. So lightning is displayed energy, but it also brings real benefits. —Psalm 104:14, 15.

What Effect on You?

¹⁰ Imagine yourself in Job's place, being questioned by Almighty God. You will likely agree that most people give little attention to God's wonderful works. Jehovah asks us the questions we read at Job 38:33-38. "Have you come to know the statutes of the heavens, or could you put its authority in the earth? Can you raise your voice even to the cloud, so that

8. Why are Paul's words recorded at Acts 14:17 appropriate?
9. How do God's wonderful works manifest his great power?
10. How would you answer the questions found at Job 38:33-38?

a heaving mass of water itself may cover you? Can you send forth lightnings that they may go and say to you, 'Here we are!'? Who put wisdom in the cloud layers, or who gave understanding to the sky phenomenon? Who can exactly number the clouds in wisdom, or the water jars of heaven—who can tip them over, when the dust pours out as into a molten mass, and the clods of earth themselves get stuck together?"

¹¹ We have touched on only a few of the points that Elihu raised with Job, and we have noted some questions that Jehovah called on Job to answer "like an able-bodied man." (Job 38:3) We say "some" because in chapters 38 and 39, God focused attention on other notable aspects of creation. For example, the constellations of the heavens. Who knows all their laws, or statutes? (Job 38:31-33) Jehovah directed Job's attention to some of the animals—the lion and the raven, the mountain goat and the zebra, the wild bull and the ostrich, the mighty horse and the eagle. In effect, God asked Job if he had given these varied animals their characteristics, allowing them to live and to thrive. You may enjoy studying these chapters, especially if you like horses or other animals.—Psalm 50:10, 11.

¹² You could also examine Job chapters 40 and 41, where Jehovah again asked Job to respond to questions about two particular creatures. We understand these to be the hippopotamus (Behemoth), prodigious in size and strong in body, and the formidable Nile crocodile (Leviathan). Each in its own way is a marvel of creation worthy of attention. Let us now see what conclusions we should reach.

¹³ Job chapter 42 shows us what effect God's questioning had on Job. Earlier Job gave too much attention to himself and others. But accepting the correction implicit in God's questions, Job changed his thinking.

11, 12. What are some things that prove that God is the Doer of wonderful works?

13. God's questioning had what effect on Job, and how should these matters affect us?

He confessed: "I have come to know that you [Jehovah] are able to do all things, and there is no idea that is unattainable for you. 'Who is this that is obscuring counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I talked, but I was not understanding things too wonderful for me, which I do not know." (Job 42:2, 3) Yes, after giving attention to God's works, Job said that these things were too wonderful for him. After reviewing these creative marvels, we should likewise be impressed with God's wisdom and power. To what end? Is it simply a matter of being impressed with Jehovah's enormous power and ability? Or should we be moved beyond that?

¹⁴ Well, in Psalm 86, we find related expressions made by David, who in an earlier psalm said: "The heavens are declaring the glory of God; and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling. One day after another day causes speech to bubble forth, and one night after another night shows forth knowledge." (Psalm 19:1, 2) But David went further. At Psalm 86:10, 11, we read: "You are great and are doing wondrous things; you are God, you alone. Instruct me, O Jehovah, about your way. I shall walk in your truth. Unify my heart to fear your name." David's awe of the Creator for all His wondrous works included a due measure of reverential fear. You can appreciate why. David did not want to displease the One who is able to perform these wonderful works. Neither should we.

¹⁵ David must have realized that since God has and controls tremendous power, he can direct it against any who merit his disfavor. For them, that is ominous. God asked Job: "Have you entered into the storehouses of the snow, or do you see even the storehouses of the hail, which I have kept back for the time of distress, for the day of fight and war?" Snow, hail, rainstorms, wind, and lightning are all in

14. How did David respond to God's wonderful works?

15. Why was David's reverential fear of God fitting?

his arsenal. And what staggeringly powerful natural forces they are!—Job 38:22, 23.

¹⁶ Probably you recall some local catastrophe caused by one of these—a hurricane, typhoon, cyclone, hailstorm, or flash flood. To illustrate, toward the end of the year 1999, a vast storm struck southwestern Europe. It surprised even weather experts. Gale winds reached 125 miles per hour, ripping off thousands of roofs, toppling electric-line pylons, and overturning trucks. Try to visualize this: That storm period uprooted or broke in half some 270 million trees, 10,000 in just the park of Versailles, outside Paris. Millions of households lost electricity. The death toll was near 100. All of that in one brief period. What force!

¹⁷ One might call storms freak, undirected, uncontrolled occurrences. What, though, could happen if the all-powerful One performs wondrous works by using such forces in a controlled, directed way? He did something like that back in the days of Abraham, who learned that the Judge of all the earth had weighed the wickedness of two cities, Sodom and Gomorrah. They were so corrupt that cries over them ascended to God, who helped all righteous ones to escape the condemned cities. History reports: “Then Jehovah made it rain sulphur and fire from Jehovah, from the heavens,” upon those cities. That was a wondrous work, preserving righteous ones and destroying the hopelessly wicked.—Genesis 19:24.

¹⁸ At a later time, God issued a judicial decision against the ancient city of Babylon, which may be the city referred to in Isaiah chapter 25. God foretold that a city would become a ruin: “You have made a city a pile of stones, a fortified town a crumbling ruin, a dwelling tower of strangers to be no city,

^{16, 17.} What illustrates the awesome power that God has, and how has he used such power in the past?

^{18.} To what wonderful things does Isaiah chapter 25 point?

which will not be rebuilt even to time indefinite.” (Isaiah 25:2) Modern-day visitors to the site of Babylon can confirm that this has proved to be so. Was Babylon’s destruction just a coincidence? No. Rather, we can accept Isaiah’s evaluation: “O Jehovah, you are my God. I exalt you, I laud your name, for you have done wonderful things, counsels from early times, in faithfulness, in trustworthiness.”—Isaiah 25:1.

Wonderful Works in the Future

¹⁹ God fulfilled the above prophecy in the past, and he will act wonderfully in the future. In this context, where Isaiah mentions “wonderful things” of God, we find a reliable prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled, just as the judgment on Babylon was fulfilled. What ‘wonderful thing’ is promised? Isaiah 25:6 says: “Jehovah of armies will certainly make for all the peoples, in this mountain, a banquet of well-oiled dishes, a banquet of wine kept on the dregs, of well-oiled dishes filled with marrow, of wine kept on the dregs, filleted.”

²⁰ That prophecy will assuredly be fulfilled in the new world of God’s promise, just ahead of us. At that time, mankind will be relieved of problems that now weigh so many down. In fact, the prophecy at Isaiah 25:7, 8 guarantees that God will use his creative power to

^{19, 20.} We can expect what fulfillment of Isaiah 25:6-8?

How Would You Reply?

- How do the questions posed to Job emphasize the limits of human knowledge?
- What examples of God’s wonderful works highlighted in Job chapters 37-41 impressed you?
- How should we respond after considering some of God’s wonderful works?



do one of the most wonderful works of all time: "He will actually swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces. And the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for Jehovah himself has spoken it." The apostle Paul later quoted from that passage and applied it to God's bringing dead ones back to life, resurrecting the dead. What a wonderful work that will be!—1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

²¹ Another reason why tears of sorrow will vanish is that humans will have their physical maladies removed. When Jesus was on earth, he cured many—returning sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, vigor to the disabled. John 5:5-9 relates that he healed a man lame for 38 years. Observers thought that this was a marvel, or wonderful work. And it was! Jesus, however, told them that more marvelous will be his resurrecting the dead: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life." —John 5:28, 29.

²² That is bound to occur because the one promising it is Jehovah. Rest assured that when he employs and carefully directs his great restorative power, the result will be wonderful. Psalm 72 points to what he will do through his King-Son. Then the righteous

21. What wonderful works will God do for the dead?

22. Why can the poor and afflicted look forward with hope?



Let God's wonderful works be a regular part of your conversation



one will sprout. Peace will be abundant. God will deliver the poor and afflicted. He promises: "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow. His fruit will be as in [ancient] Lebanon, and those who are from the city will blossom like the vegetation of the earth."—Psalm 72:16.

²³ Clearly, we have reason to give attention to all of Jehovah's wonderful works—what he did in the past, what he is doing today, and what he will do in the near future. "Blessed be Jehovah God, Israel's God, who alone is doing wonderful works. And blessed be his glorious name to time indefinite, and let his glory fill the whole earth. Amen and Amen." (Psalm 72:18, 19) That should regularly be a subject of our enthusiastic conversation with relatives and others. Yes, let us "declare among the nations his glory, among all the peoples his wonderful works."—Psalm 78:3, 4; 96:3, 4.

23. God's wonderful works should move us to do what?

Not Alone When Our FAITH WAS TESTED

Vicky was a lovely baby

girl—healthy, cute, and full of life.

Yes, when she was born in the spring of 1993, our happiness knew no bounds. We lived in a small town in the south of Sweden, and life was wonderful.

WHEN Vicky was one and a half years old, however, our world seemed to fall apart. She had not been well for some time, so we took her to a hospital. We will never forget the moment when the doctor told us that our daughter was suffering from acute lymphoblastic leukemia, a form of childhood cancer that affects the white blood cells.

It was hard to grasp that our little girl was stricken with this formidable malady. She had just started to become aware of the world around her, and now she could die. Trying to comfort us, the doctor said that a fairly successful treatment could be administered, in-

volving chemotherapy along with several blood transfusions. This was our next shock.

Our Faith Is Tested

We certainly loved our daughter and wanted the best medical care for her. Still, blood transfusions were entirely out of the question. We firmly believe God's Word, the Bible, which clearly states that Christians must 'abstain from blood.' (Acts 15:28, 29) We also knew that blood transfusions are themselves risky. Thousands have contracted diseases and have died from transfusions. The only alternative was high-quality treatment that did



not involve blood transfusions. In this respect, our fight for the faith now began.

What could we do? We contacted Hospital Information Services at the Sweden branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses to ask for help.* Immediately, faxes were sent to different hospitals around Europe in our search for a hospital and a doctor willing to administer chemotherapy without using blood transfusions. The zeal and love shown by our Christian brothers in their efforts to help us were very strengthening. We were not left alone in our fight for the faith.

Within hours, a hospital and a doctor were found in Homburg/Saar, Germany. Arrangements were made for us to fly there the next day to have Vicky examined. When we arrived, our Christian brothers from the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Homburg, as well as some of our relatives, were there to receive us. And a representative of the local Hospital Liaison Committee warmly welcomed us. He accompanied us to the hospital and gave us all the support possible. We felt comforted to see that even in a foreign country, we had spiritual brothers standing by our side.

When we met Dr. Graf at the hospital, we were again comforted. He was very understanding and assured us that he would do everything possible to treat Vicky without blood transfusions. Even if her hemoglobin level should drop to 5 g/dl, he would be willing to continue the treatment without blood transfusions. He also said that the early diagnosis and quick action taken to get Vicky there gave her a good chance for successful treatment. He admitted that this would be the first time he would administer chemo-

* Hospital Information Services supervises an international network of Hospital Liaison Committees. These, in turn, are made up of Christian volunteers who are trained to encourage cooperation between physicians and their Witness patients. There are more than 1,400 Hospital Liaison Committees assisting patients in over 200 lands.

therapy without the use of blood transfusions in a case like Vicky's. We were very thankful and admired Dr. Graf's courage and determination to assist.

Economic Problems

Now the question was, How were we to pay for Vicky's treatments? We were stunned when we were informed that two years of treatments would cost about 150,000 deutsche marks. We did not have anywhere near that much money, and yet it was imperative to start Vicky's treatments at once. Having left Sweden for treatments in Germany, we were not entitled to any public health insurance. So there we were with our very sick little girl and medical expertise ready to help, but we did not have enough money.

The hospital came to our rescue and told us that the treatments would start immediately if we made a down payment of 20,000 marks and signed a guarantee for the rest. We had some savings, and with loving help from friends and relatives, we were able to pay the 20,000 marks—but what about the rest?

Once again we were reminded that we were not alone in our fight for the faith. A spiritual brother, then unknown to us, was willing to assume responsibility for the balance. We did not need to use his generous offer, however, as we were able to make other arrangements.

Medical Expertise at Work

The chemotherapy started. Days and weeks passed. At times, it was very difficult and strenuous both for our little daughter and for us. On the other hand, we were extremely happy and thankful every time she showed signs of improvement. The chemotherapy lasted for eight months. The lowest hemoglobin level Vicky had was 6 g/dl, and Dr. Graf kept his promise.

Over six years have passed, and a final checkup of her spinal fluid shows no traces of leukemia. She is now a happy girl without

any signs of the malady. Yes, it seems like a miracle that Vicky has recovered so completely. We are aware that many children with this same disease die despite receiving chemotherapy and blood transfusions.

Our fight for the faith has been victorious, but not without help from our relatives, Christian brothers and sisters, and medical experts. Hospital Information Services gave us full support 24 hours a day. Dr. Graf and his colleagues applied their skills to help Vicky recover. For all of this, we are truly thankful.

Our Faith Has Been Strengthened

Most of all, though, we thank our God, Jehovah, for his loving care and the strength we received through his Word, the Bible. When looking back, we realize how much we have learned and how strengthening to our faith this tough experience in life has been.

Now our heartfelt desire is to maintain our close relationship with Jehovah God and to teach our daughter the value of living a life in harmony with his requirements. Yes, we want to give her a good spiritual heritage of everlasting life in the coming Paradise here on earth.—Contributed.

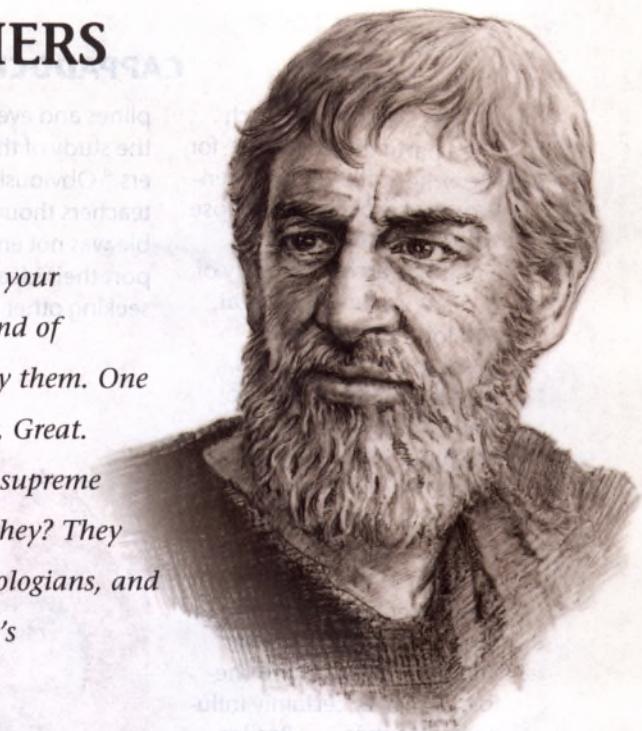


THE CHURCH FATHERS Advocates of Bible Truth?

Whether you profess to be a Christian or not, your perception of the God of the Bible, of Jesus, and of Christianity may well have been influenced by them. One of them was called Golden-Mouthed; another, Great. Collectively, they have been described as "the supreme embodiments of the life of Christ." Who are they? They are the ancient religious thinkers, writers, theologians, and philosophers who have shaped much of today's "Christian" thinking—the Church Fathers.

THE Bible is not the totality of God's word," claims Greek Orthodox professor of religious studies Demetrios J. Constantelos. "The Holy Spirit that reveals the word of God cannot be confined to the pages of a book." What could possibly be another reliable source of divine revelation? Constantelos asserts in his book *Understanding the Greek Orthodox Church*: "Holy Tradition and Holy Scriptures [are] viewed as two sides of the same coin."

The core of that "Holy Tradition" includes the teachings and writings of the Church Fathers. They were prominent theologians and "Christian" philosophers who lived between the second and fifth centuries C.E. How much have they influenced modern "Christian" thought? Did they hold fast to the Bible in their teaching? What should be the solid basis of Christian truth for a follower of Jesus Christ?



Historical Background

In the middle of the second century C.E., professed Christians were defending their faith against Roman persecutors and heretics alike. However, this was an era of too many theological voices. Religious debates regarding the "divinity" of Jesus and the nature and workings of the holy spirit caused more than just intellectual rifts. Bitter disagreements and irreparable divisions over "Christian" doctrine spilled over into the political and cultural spheres, at times causing riots, rebellion, civil strife, even war. Writes historian Paul Johnson: "[Apostate] Christianity began in confusion, controversy and schism and so it continued. . . . The central and eastern Mediterranean in the first and second centuries AD swarmed with an infinite multitude of religious ideas, struggling to propagate themselves. . . . From

CAPPADOCIAN FATHERS

"The Orthodox Church . . . has a particular reverence for the writers of the fourth century, and especially for those whom it terms 'the three Great Hierarchs,' Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil the Great, and John Chrysostom," states the writer Kallistos, who is a monk. Did these Church Fathers base their teachings on the inspired Scriptures? Regarding Basil the Great, the book *The Fathers of the Greek Church* states: "His writings show that he retained a lifelong intimacy with Plato, Homer, and the historians and rhetors, and they certainly influenced his style. . . . Basil remained a 'Greek.'" The same was true of Gregory of Nazianzus. "In his view the victory and the superiority of the Church would best be shown in its complete adoption of the traditions of classical culture."

Regarding all three of them, Professor Panagiotis K. Christou writes: "While they occasionally caution against 'philosophy and empty deception' [Colossians 2:8]—in order to be in harmony with the commandment of the New Testament—they, at the same time, eagerly study philosophy and the relevant disci-

ples and even recommend the study of them to others." Obviously, such church teachers thought that the Bible was not enough to support their ideas. Could their seeking other pillars of au-

thority mean that their teachings were foreign to the Bible? The apostle Paul warned Hebrew Christians: "Do not be carried away with various and strange teachings."—Hebrews 13:9.



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the start, then, there were numerous varieties of Christianity which had little in common."

During that era, writers and thinkers who felt that it was imperative to interpret "Christian" teachings using philosophical terms began to flourish. To satisfy educated pagans who were new converts to "Christianity," such religious writers relied heavily on earlier Greek and Jewish literature. Beginning with Justin Martyr (c. 100-165 C.E.), who wrote in Greek, professed Christians became increasingly sophisticated in their assimilation of the philosophical heritage of the Greek culture.

This trend came to fruition in the writings of Origen (c. 185-254 C.E.), a Greek author from Alexandria. Origen's treatise *On First Principles* was the first systematic effort to explain the main doctrines of "Christian" theology in terms of Greek philosophy. The Council of Nicaea (325 C.E.), with its attempt to explain and establish the "divinity" of Christ, was the milestone that gave new impetus to interpretation of "Christian" dogma. That council marked the beginning of an era during which general church councils sought to define dogma ever more precisely.

Writers and Orators

Eusebius of Caesarea, who wrote at the time of the first Council of Nicaea, associated himself with Emperor Constantine. For slightly more than 100 years after Nicaea,

theologians, most of them writing in Greek, worked out in a long and bitter debate what was to be the distinguishing doctrine of Christendom, the Trinity. Chief among them were Athanasius, the assertive bishop of Alexandria, and three church leaders from Cappadocia, Asia Minor—Basil the Great, his brother Gregory of Nyssa, and their friend Gregory of Nazianzus.

Writers and preachers during that age achieved high standards of eloquence. Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom (meaning "Golden-Mouthed") in Greek as well as Ambrose of Milan and Augustine of Hippo in Latin were consummate orators, masters of the most respected and popular art form of their time. The most influential writer of that period was Augustine. His theological treatises have pervasively shaped the "Christian" thinking of today. Jerome, the period's most distinguished man of letters, was chiefly responsible for the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible from the original languages.

However, important questions are: Did those Church Fathers adhere closely to the Bible? In their teaching, did they hold fast to the inspired Scriptures? Are their writings a safe guide to an accurate knowledge of God?

Teachings of God or Teachings of Men?

Recently, Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Methodius of Pisidia wrote the book *The Hellenic Pedestal of Christianity* in order to show that Greek culture and philosophy



Jerome

Garo Nalbandian

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA A CONTROVERSIAL CHURCH FATHER

One of the most controversial figures among Church Fathers is Cyril of Alexandria (c. 375-444 C.E.). Church historian Hans von Campenhausen describes him as "dogmatic, violent, and cunning, permeated by the greatness of his calling and the dignity of his office," and adds that "he never considered anything as right unless it was useful to him in the furtherance of his power and authority... The brutality and unscrupulousness of his methods never depressed him." While he was bishop

of Alexandria, Cyril used bribery, libel, and slander in order to depose the bishop of Constantinople. He is considered responsible for the brutal murder in 415 C.E. of a renowned philosopher named Hypatia. Regarding Cyril's theological writings, Campenhausen says: "He initiated the practice of deciding questions of belief not solely on the basis of the Bible but with the aid of appropriate quotations and collections of quotations from acknowledged authorities."



provided the infrastructure of modern "Christian" thought. In that book, he unhesitatingly admits: "Almost all the prominent Church Fathers considered the Greek elements most useful, and they borrowed them from the Greek classical antiquity, using them as a means to understand and correctly express the Christian truths."

Take, for example, the idea that the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit make up the Trinity. Many Church Fathers after the Council of Nicaea became staunch Trinitarians. Their writings and expositions were crucial to making the Trinity a landmark doctrine of Christendom. However, is the Trinity found in the Bible? No. So where did the Church Fathers get it? *A Dictionary of Religious Knowledge* notes that many say that the Trinity "is a corruption borrowed from the heathen religions, and ingrafted on the

Christian faith." And *The Paganism in Our Christianity* affirms: "The origin of the [Trinity] is entirely pagan."^{*}—John 3:16; 14:28.

Or consider the teaching of the immortality of the soul, a belief that some part of man lives on after the body dies. Again, the Church Fathers were instrumental in introducing this notion to a religion that had no teaching about a soul surviving death. The Bible clearly shows that the soul can die: "The soul that is sinning—it itself will die." (Ezekiel 18:4) What was the basis for the Church Fathers' belief in an immortal soul? "The Christian concept of a spiritual soul created by God and infused into the body at conception to make man a living whole is

* An in-depth discussion of the Trinity doctrine can be found in the brochure *Should You Believe in the Trinity?*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

the fruit of a long development in Christian philosophy. Only with Origen in the East and St. Augustine in the West was the soul established as a spiritual substance and a philosophical concept formed of its nature. . . [Augustine's doctrine] . . . owed much (including some shortcomings) to Neoplatonism," says the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. And the magazine *Presbyterian Life* says: "Immortality of the soul is a Greek notion formed in ancient mystery cults and elaborated by the philosopher Plato."^{*}

The Solid Basis of Christian Truth

After even this brief examination of the historical backdrop of the Church Fathers, as well as the origins of their teachings, it is appropriate to ask, Should a sincere Christian base his or her beliefs on the teachings of the Church Fathers? Let the Bible answer.

For one thing, Jesus Christ himself ruled out the use of the religious title "Father" when he said: "Do not call anyone your father on earth, for one is your Father, the heavenly One." (Matthew 23:9) The use of the term "Father" to designate any religious figure is unchristian and unscriptural. The written Word of God was completed about 98 C.E. with the writings of the apostle John. Thus, true Christians do not need to look to any human as the source of inspired revelation. They are careful not to 'make the word of God invalid' because of human tradition. Letting human tradition take the place of God's Word is spiritually lethal. Jesus warned: "If . . . a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."—Matthew 15:6, 14.

Does a Christian need any revelation besides the word of God as contained in the Bible? No. The book of Revelation cautions

* For a detailed discussion of the Bible's teaching on the soul, see pages 98-104 and 375-80 of *Reasoning From the Scriptures*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

against adding anything to the inspired record: "If anyone makes an addition to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this scroll."—Revelation 22:18.

Christian truth is embodied in the written Word of God, the Bible. (John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 John 1-4) The correct understanding of it does not hinge on secular philosophy. Regarding men who tried to use human wisdom to explain divine revelation, it is fitting to repeat the apostle Paul's questions: "Where is the wise man? Where the scribe? Where the debater of this system of things? Did not God make the wisdom of the world foolish?"—1 Corinthians 1:20.

Moreover, the true Christian congregation is "a pillar and support of the truth." (1 Timothy 3:15) Its overseers safeguard the purity of their teaching within the congregation, preventing any doctrinal pollutant from creeping in. (2 Timothy 2:15-18, 25) They keep out of the congregation 'false prophets, false teachers, and destructive sects.' (2 Peter 2:1) After the death of the apostles, the Church Fathers allowed "misleading inspired utterances and teachings of demons" to take root in the Christian congregation.—1 Timothy 4:1.

The consequences of this apostasy are evident in Christendom today. Its beliefs and practices are a far cry from Bible truth.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Helping Widows Through Their Trials

Spiritism and the Search for
True Spirituality

The Bible in a Single Volume



HOW TO COPE WITH NEGATIVE FEELINGS

- Asaph complained: “Surely it is in vain that I have cleansed my heart and that I wash my hands in innocence itself. And I came to be plagued all day long, and my correction is every morning.”—Psalm 73:13, 14.
- Baruch groaned: “Woe, now, to me, for Jehovah has added grief to my pain! I have grown weary because of my sighing, and no resting-place have I found.”—Jeremiah 45:3.
- Naomi lamented: “The Almighty has made it very bitter for me. I was full when I went, and it is empty-handed that Jehovah has made me return. Why should you call me Naomi, when it is Jehovah that has humiliated me and the Almighty that has caused me calamity?”—Ruth 1:20, 21.

THE Bible contains numerous examples of faithful worshipers of Jehovah who at times became overwhelmed with feelings of discouragement. The fact is that as imperfect humans all of us experience such feelings from time to time. Some of us may be more prone to discouragement—perhaps even with a degree of self-pity—than others because of having lived through tragic experiences.

Left unchecked, however, these emotions can ruin your relationship with others and with Jehovah God. One Christian woman who is prone to self-pity admits: “I have turned down many invitations to social activities because I felt that I was not a worthy associate for those in the congregation.” What a devastating effect such feelings can have on a person’s life! What can you do to counteract them?

Draw Close to Jehovah

In Psalm 73, Asaph wrote candidly about his perplexity. When comparing his own lot

with the prosperous life of the wicked, he became envious. He observed that the ungodly were haughty and violent, and they seemed to get away with this. Asaph then expressed doubts about the value of his pursuing an upright course in life.—Psalm 73:3-9, 13, 14.

Have you, like Asaph, observed the apparent success of the wicked who flaunt their wrongdoing? How did Asaph overcome his negative feelings? He continues: “I kept considering so as to know this; it was a trouble in my eyes, until I proceeded to come into the grand sanctuary of God. I wanted to discern their future.” (Psalm 73:16, 17) Asaph took positive steps by turning to Jehovah in prayer. To use language later employed by the apostle Paul, Asaph suppressed the “physical man” by awakening the “spiritual man” within himself. With renewed spiritual vision, he understood that Jehovah hated badness and that in due time the wicked would be punished.—1 Corinthians 2:14, 15.

How vital it is that you allow the Bible to help you focus on the reality of life! Jeho-

vah reminds us that he is not blind to what wicked people do. The Bible teaches: "Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap . . . So let us not give up in doing what is fine." (Galatians 6:7-9) Jehovah will put the wicked "on slippery ground"; he will make them "fall to ruins." (Psalm 73:18) Divine justice will always prevail in the end.

An unceasing program of spiritual feeding at Jehovah's table and wholesome association with God's people will help you to strengthen your faith and overcome discouragement or other negative feelings. (Hebrews 10:25) Like Asaph, by staying close to God, you can experience his loving support. Asaph continues: "I am constantly with you; you have taken hold of my right hand. With your counsel you will lead me, and afterward you will take me even to glory." (Psalm 73:23, 24) One Christian who was abused as a child learned the wisdom of these words. "Keeping in close association with the congregation," she says, "showed me a different side to life. I saw very clearly that the Christian elders were loving, that they were not policemen but shepherds." Yes, compassionate Christian elders play a vital role in dispelling damaging emotions.—Isaiah 32:1, 2; 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8.

Accept Jehovah's Counsel

Baruch, the secretary of Jeremiah the prophet, sighed because of the emotional stress of his assignment. However, Jehovah



kindly focused Baruch's attention on reality. "As for you, you keep seeking great things for yourself. Do not keep on seeking. For here I am bringing in a calamity upon all flesh," is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and I will give you your soul as a spoil in all the places to which you may go.'"—Jeremiah 45:2-5.

With forthright language Jehovah explained that Baruch's own selfish pursuits were the source of his frustration. Baruch could not find joy in his God-given assignment while at the same time seeking great things for himself. You too may find that a really positive step toward overcoming discouragement is to avoid distractions and embrace the peace of mind that comes from godly contentment.—Philippians 4:6, 7.

Widowed Naomi did not allow distress to immobilize her in Moab when her husband and two sons died. There is indication, however, that for a time she did have bitter feelings with regard to herself and her two

daughters-in-law. In sending them away, Naomi said: "It is very bitter to me because of you, that the hand of Jehovah has gone out against me." Again, when she reached Bethlehem, she insisted: "Do not call me Naomi ["My Pleasantness"]. Call me Mara ["Bitter"], for the Almighty has made it very bitter for me."—Ruth 1:13, 20.

Naomi, however, did not isolate herself in tents of bereavement—away from Jehovah and his people. In Moab she had heard that "Jehovah had turned his attention to his people by giving them bread." (Ruth 1:6) She understood that the best place for her was with Jehovah's people. Together with her daughter-in-law Ruth, Naomi thereafter re-

turned to Judah and skillfully guided Ruth as to how she should act toward their kinsman Boaz, her repurchaser.

Similarly today, loyal ones who have lost their mates in death are coping successfully with the emotional stress by keeping busy within the Christian congregation. Like Naomi, they keep applying themselves to spiritual matters, daily reading God's Word.

Benefits From Applying Godly Wisdom

These Bible accounts provide insight into how one can cope with the effects of negative feelings. Asaph sought help at Jehovah's sanctuary and patiently waited on Jehovah. Baruch responded to counsel and avoided materialistic distractions. Naomi kept active among Jehovah's people, preparing the young woman Ruth for her privileges in worship of the true God.

—1 Corinthians 4:7; Galatians 5:26; 6:4.

You can overcome discouragement and other negative feelings by dwelling on the divine victories Jehovah has given his people, individually and collectively. To that end, meditate on Jehovah's supreme act of love in providing the ransom for you. Appreciate the genuine love of the Christian brotherhood. Focus on your life in God's new world just ahead. And may you respond like Asaph: "As for me, the drawing near to God is good for me. In the Sovereign Lord Jehovah I have placed my refuge, to declare all your works."—Psalm 73:28.



You Can Succeed Regardless of Your Upbringing

NICHOLAS had a rebellious streak in him since his early childhood.* In time, his inner conflicts led him to drug abuse and heavy drinking. Nicholas explains: "My father was an alcoholic, and he caused my sister and me much suffering."

From all appearances, Malinda's parents were respectable churchgoing members of their community. But they were also deeply involved in a cult. "Some of their cult practices were abusive to me and destroyed my spirit as a child," laments Malinda, now in her 30's. She adds: "The sense of hopelessness and the feeling of worthlessness instilled in me have been a part of me for as long as I can remember."

Who can deny that the childhood of many has been marred by violence, abuse, parental neglect, and other negative factors? The wounds of an unhappy childhood can be deep. But do such hurts have to ruin forever one's likelihood of embracing the truth of God's Word and finding a considerable measure of happiness? Despite their upbringing, can Nicholas and Malinda succeed as people of integrity? Consider first the example of Judean King Josiah.

A Scriptural Example

Josiah ruled Judah for 31 years in the seventh century B.C.E. (659-629 B.C.E.) At the time of Josiah's enthronement, following the assassination of his father, conditions in Judah were very bad. Judah and Jerusalem were filled with Baal worshipers and those making sworn oaths by the principal Ammonite god,

Malcam. The Judean princes were "roaring lions," and the judges "evening wolves," said Zephaniah, a prophet of God at that time. Consequently, violence and deception were rife in the land. Many were saying in their heart: "Jehovah will not do good, and he will not do bad."—Zephaniah 1:3-2:3; 3:1-5.

What kind of ruler did Josiah prove to be? The Bible chronicler Ezra writes: "[Josiah] proceeded to do what was right in Jehovah's eyes and walk in the ways of David his forefather; and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left." (2 Chronicles 34:1, 2) Evidently, Josiah succeeded in doing what was right in God's eyes. But what was his family background like?

Nurturing or Abusive Childhood?

When Josiah was born in 667 B.C.E., his father, Amon, was only 16 years old, and his grandfather Manasseh was reigning over Judah. Manasseh was one of the wickedest kings ever to rule Judah. Setting up altars to Baal, "he did on a grand scale what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah." He made his sons pass through the fire, practiced magic, employed divination, promoted spiritistic practices, and shed innocent blood in great quantity. Manasseh also brought into the house of Jehovah the graven image of the sacred pole that he had made. He seduced Judah and Jerusalem "to do worse than the nations that Jehovah had annihilated from before the sons of Israel."—2 Chronicles 33:1-9.

Manasseh was so bad that Jehovah had him taken in fetters to Babylon, one of the Assyrian monarch's royal cities. While in captivity Manasseh repented, humbled himself,

* Some names have been changed.

and begged Jehovah for forgiveness. God heard his request for favor and restored him to the kingship in Jerusalem. Manasseh then instituted reforms with a measure of success.—2 Chronicles 33:10-17.

What effect did Manasseh's badness and his subsequent repentance have on his son Amon? He turned out very wicked. When Manasseh repented and put forth effort to cleanse the nation of the defilement that he himself had introduced, Amon did not respond. Upon inheriting the throne at the age of 22, Amon "proceeded to do what was bad in Jehovah's eyes, just as Manasseh his father had done." Instead of humbling himself before Jehovah, "Amon was one that made guiltiness increase." (2 Chronicles 33:21-23) Josiah was only six years old when Amon became king of Judah. What a dreadful childhood Josiah must have had!

Amon's wicked reign ended after two years when his servants conspired against him and put him to death. The people of the land, though, struck down the conspirators against Amon and made his son, Josiah, king.—2 Chronicles 33:24, 25.

Despite the negative circumstances of his early childhood, Josiah proceeded to do what was good in Jehovah's eyes. So successful was his reign that the Bible states: "Like him there did not prove to be a king prior to him who returned to Jehovah with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his vital force, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him has there risen up one like him."—2 Kings 23:19-25.

What an encouraging example Josiah proves to be for those who may have had to endure a terrible childhood! What can we learn from his example? What helped Josiah to choose the right course and stay on it?

Despite having a dreadful childhood, Josiah sought to know Jehovah and made a success of his life



Seek to Know Jehovah

A positive influence that held sway during the early years of Josiah's life was that of his repentant grandfather, Manasseh. How much contact the two had, and how old Josiah was when Manasseh corrected his ways, the Bible does not say. Since Jewish families were close, Manasseh may have tried to save his grandson from the corrupting influences around him by instilling in his grandson's heart some respect for the true God, Jehovah, and his word. Any seeds of truth that Manasseh was able to plant in Josiah's heart, perhaps combined with other positive influences, eventually bore fruit. In his eighth year on the throne of Judah, 15-year-old Josiah sought to know and do Jehovah's will.—2 Chronicles 34:1-3.

The only spiritual contact some people had in their childhood was a distant relative, an acquaintance, or a neighbor. Yet, if nurtured, the seeds thus planted can bear good fruits later. Malinda, mentioned earlier, had a grandfatherly neighbor who regularly brought the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines to her house. Remembering him with fondness, she says: "What impressed me the most about my neighbor was that he did not celebrate holidays. This was important to me because Halloween and some of the other holidays were occasions for ritualistic practices in my parents' cult." A decade later, when a friend invited Malinda to attend a Christian meeting at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, she remembered this neighbor and readily accepted the invitation. That helped her to search for the truth.

Be Humble Before God

Josiah's reign was marked by tremendous religious reforms in the land of Judah. After waging a six-year campaign against idolatry and cleansing the land of Judah, Josiah proceeded to repair the house of Jehovah. While that work was in progress, what a

valuable discovery High Priest Hilkiah made! He found the original copy of "the book of Jehovah's law." Entrusted by Hilkiah with this sensational find, Shaphan the secretary reported to the king what had transpired. Did such accomplishments make 25-year-old Josiah proud?—2 Chronicles 34:3-18.

"As soon as the king heard the words of the law," writes Ezra, "he immediately ripped his garments apart." This was a heartfelt expression of sorrow because he realized that not all of God's commands had been carried out by their forefathers. Indeed a sign of humility! The king immediately commissioned a five-man delegation to inquire of Jehovah through the prophetess Huldah. The delegation brought back a report to this effect: 'Calamity will come as a consequence of disobedience to Jehovah's Law. But because you, King Josiah, humbled yourself, you will be gathered to your graveyard in peace and will not see the calamity.' (2 Chronicles 34:19-28) Jehovah was pleased with Josiah's attitude.

Despite our background, we too can humble ourselves before the true God, Jehovah, and manifest a respectful attitude toward him and his Word, the Bible. Nicholas, mentioned at the outset, did this. He says: "Although my life was a mess because of drug abuse and heavy drinking, I had an interest in the Bible and longed to have a purpose in life. Eventually, I came into contact with Jehovah's Witnesses, changed my life-style, and embraced the truth." Yes, we can have a respectful attitude toward God and his Word regardless of our environment.

Benefit From Jehovah's Arrangement

Josiah also had deep respect for Jehovah's prophets. He not only inquired of the prophetess Huldah but was greatly influenced by other prophets of his day. For example, both Jeremiah and Zephaniah were busy proclaiming the denunciations of idolatry practiced in Judah. How paying attention to

Elders can help you to overcome a deep-rooted personality trait

their message must have energized Josiah as he waged his campaign against false worship! —Jeremiah 1:1, 2; 3:6-10; Zephaniah 1:1-6.

The "master," Jesus Christ, has appointed the body of his anointed followers—"the faithful and discreet slave"—to provide spiritual food at the right time. (Matthew 24:45-47) By means of Bible-based publications and the congregation arrangement, the slave class draws attention to the benefits of heeding Bible counsel and offers practical suggestions about applying it in our daily lives. How appropriate that we use Jehovah's arrangement to help us to overcome any deep-rooted unwholesome attitudes! From childhood, Nicholas had a strong dislike for authority. Even as he learned the truth of God's Word, this weakness held him back from serving Jehovah more fully. Changing this attitude was not a small challenge for him. But, in time, he succeeded. How? "With the help of two understanding elders," explains Nicholas, "I admitted my problem and began to apply their loving Scriptural counsel." He adds: "Although a little resentment occasionally flares up, I have now controlled my rebellious nature."

Malinda too seeks the advice of the elders when making important decisions in her life. In dealing with the sense of hopelessness and the feeling of worthlessness that trace back to her early years, what she finds especially invaluable are various articles in *The Watch-*



tower and Awake! She says: "Sometimes in an article there is just a paragraph or a sentence—just a morsel—that touches me. About nine years ago, I started saving such articles in a loose-leaf notebook so that I can readily turn to them." Today, her three notebooks contain some 400 articles!

No, people do not have to be permanent victims of a bad family life. With Jehovah's help they can succeed spiritually. Just as a good upbringing does not guarantee a person's integrity, a bad childhood does not prevent a person from becoming God-fearing.

After the discovery of the book of the Law during the temple repair work, Josiah 'proceeded to conclude the covenant before Jehovah to go following Jehovah and to keep obeying him with all his heart and with all his soul.' (2 Chronicles 34:31) And he did not waver from this resolve down to his last breath. Malinda and Nicholas are likewise determined to remain loyal to Jehovah God and to succeed as people of integrity. May you too be determined to stay close to God and serve him faithfully. You can be confident of success, for Jehovah promises: "Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not gaze about, for I am your God. I will fortify you. I will really help you. I will really keep fast hold of you with my right hand of righteousness." —Isaiah 41:10, 13.

"The Watchtower" and "Awake!" can help you to maintain integrity



Do You Remember?

Have you appreciated reading the recent issues of *The Watchtower*?

Well, see if you can answer the following questions:

- At Romans 5:3-5, why did the apostle Paul list hope at the end of a series?

Paul presented a series of things that Christians experience—tribulation, endurance, approved condition, and hope. This “hope” is not the initial hope that one gains from the Bible, but it is the strengthened, deepened, pervading hope that a Christian can gain over time.—12/15, pages 22-3.

- Why might a Christian today be interested in the athletic games held in ancient Greece?

Understanding the nature and customs of those games can shed light on quite a number of Bible verses. Some of those refer to ‘contending according to the rules,’ ‘putting off every weight and looking at the example of Jesus,’ ‘running the course to the finish,’ and gaining the crown, or prize. (2 Timothy 2:5; 4:7, 8; Hebrews 12:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 9:24, 25; 1 Peter 5:4)—1/1, pages 28-30.

- What new way to declare the good news came on the scene in January 1914?

The “Photo-Drama of Creation” was then released. It consisted of a four-part presentation incorporating motion picture segments and hundreds of colored glass slides, much of this being synchronized with or accompanied by phonograph recordings of explanatory talks. Twenty sets of this Drama were prepared and widely used to teach people the Bible’s message.—1/15, pages 8-9.

- How does the Governing Body differ from a legal corporation?

While directors of a legal corporation are voted into office by its members, the Governing Body is not appointed by any man but is appointed by Jesus Christ. There is no need for the directors of various corporations used by Jehovah’s Witnesses to be members of the Governing Body. At the recent annual meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, members of the Governing Body who were serving as its directors and officers voluntarily stepped aside from their positions. The vacancies were filled by mature brothers of the “other sheep.” (John 10:16) Thus the Governing Body can spend more time in preparing spiritual food

and in otherwise caring for the spiritual needs of the worldwide brotherhood.—1/15, pages 29, 31.

- What two Bible examples can we examine in learning how to cope with discouragement?

One is Hannah, the mother of Samuel. She could have allowed herself to become discouraged when she was misjudged by Eli, the high priest of Israel. Instead, she frankly but respectfully set out the facts for him. Further, Hannah did not hold a grudge against Eli. The second is Mark, who must have been discouraged when the apostle Paul did not want to include him on a missionary tour. Rather than being crushed over his loss of this privilege, he continued his active service, traveling with Barnabas.—2/1, pages 20-2.

- Why should Christians be careful about giving to others, or receiving from them, copies of computer software programs?

Most computer programs (including games) are covered by a license that limits the owner/user to installing the program on one computer. Usually it is a violation of the copyright law to make copies for others, even when we are giving them away free. Christians want to obey the law, ‘paying back Caesar’s things to Caesar.’ (Mark 12:17)—2/15, pages 28-9.

- Who were Cyril and Methodius, and what contribution to Bible study did they make?

They were two brothers born in Thessalonica, Greece, in the ninth century. They developed a written script for the Slavic languages and translated much of the Bible into Slavonic.—3/1, pages 28-9.

- What does the expression “the minding of the spirit” mean?—Romans 8:6.

It means being controlled, dominated, and impelled by Jehovah’s active force. We can let God’s spirit operate on us by reading and studying the Bible, by obeying God’s law wholeheartedly, and by praying for God’s spirit.—3/15, page 15.

- What can we do if we feel misunderstood?

It is important to seek to clarify the matter in a spirit of love. If that does not appear to succeed, do not despair. Ask for understanding and help from Jehovah, who “is making an estimate of hearts.” (Proverbs 21:2; 1 Samuel 16:7)—4/1, pages 21-3.

A Worldwide Association Caring for One Another

AS FAR AS the eye can see, there are people. Many are elderly, some of whom are so disabled that they can hardly walk. There are women heavy with child and young couples with small children in tow. They are all refugees—men, women, and children—who have been forced by civil war, natural disasters, or other circumstances to flee their homes to seek refuge in a neighboring country. Some have repeatedly been forced to leave their dwellings. At the first sign of civil unrest or of a natural disaster, they grab a few household articles, gather their children, and head for a safer haven. Then, when conditions get back to normal, many refugees return to rebuild their homes and start over again.

Over the years, the Central African Republic has opened its doors to refugees from a number of countries. Recently, thousands of people, including many of Jehovah's Witnesses, were obliged to flee the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo to the relative safety of the Central African Republic.

Brothers Come to the Rescue

Witnesses in the Central African Republic counted it a privilege to organize humanitarian aid. Accommodations were secured for arriving Christian brothers. At first, rooms were found in private homes, but as the number of refugees grew, it became evident that more substantial arrangements were needed. Some Kingdom Halls were transformed into dormitories. Local Witnesses set to work installing additional lighting, hooking up water pipes, and cementing floors for the comfort of those who were to be accommodated there. The refugees worked right along with the local brothers to establish these provisional dormitories. A full program of Christian meetings was arranged in the Lingala language so that the arrivals would be supplied with life-sustaining spiritual food. The close cooperation between local Witnesses and their guests showed that an international brotherhood is a reality.

Refugee families did not always arrive together. At times, family members who had got separated were reunited at their destination. A list of those who had arrived safely was

Three Kingdom Halls were turned into reception centers





Kitchen facilities were immediately installed

More and more arrived

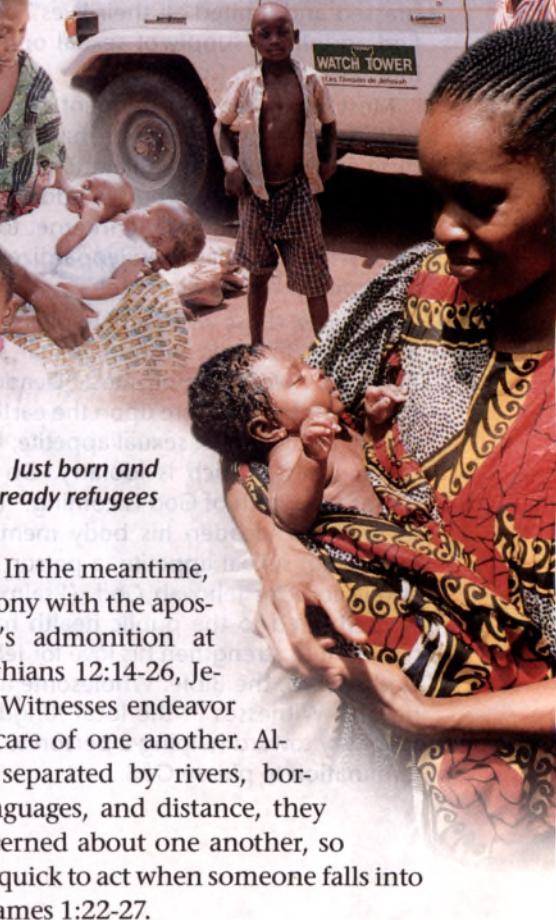


kept at each Kingdom Hall. Arrangements were made to locate those still missing. The branch office that directs the work of Jehovah's Witnesses in the country dispatched three vehicles per day to assist Witnesses who were still en route and to search for any who might be lost. These vehicles were identified by a large sign, which read "WATCH TOWER—Jehovah's Witnesses."

Imagine the joy experienced when a group of seven refugee children who had been separated from their parents spied a van owned by Jehovah's Witnesses. They immediately ran to the vehicle and identified themselves as Witnesses. The brothers helped them into the van and took them to a Kingdom Hall, where they were eventually reunited with their families.

What has enabled these sincere Christians to cope with such circumstances, not just once, but repeatedly? They are absolutely convinced that we are living in the last days as foretold in the Holy Scriptures.—2 Timothy 3:1-5; Revelation 6:3-8.

Hence, they know that Jehovah God will soon put an end to wars, hate, violence, and strife. The refugee problem will be a thing of



Just born and already refugees

the past. In the meantime, in harmony with the apostle Paul's admonition at 1 Corinthians 12:14-26, Jehovah's Witnesses endeavor to take care of one another. Although separated by rivers, borders, languages, and distance, they are concerned about one another, so they are quick to act when someone falls into need.—James 1:22-27.

"A Hidden Public Health Hazard"

AN AMAZING third of adult Internet users in the United States have visited some type of sexual site, a recent survey on on-line sex revealed. Vast numbers of people are now giving in to their sexual urges through the Internet. "This is a hidden public health hazard exploding, in part, because very few are recognizing it as such or taking it seriously," says Dr. Al Cooper, the psychologist who conducted the survey.

Who are especially vulnerable to such cybersex? "Those users whose sexuality may have been suppressed and limited all their lives" but who "suddenly find an infinite supply of sexual opportunities" on the Internet, says Dr. Cooper.

Most of those who frequent sexual sites, however, consider the practice to be harmless. Is it? Just as a drug addict develops a tolerance for the drug on which he is hooked, many cybersex addicts seek an increased "dose" of sexuality on the Internet to gratify their cravings. Why, they may even jeopardize their job and their relationship with their mate!

However, those who want to please God have an added reason to avoid visiting sexual sites on the Internet. God's Word admonishes: "Deaden, therefore, your body members that are upon the earth as respects fornication, uncleanness, sexual appetite, hurtful desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of those things the wrath of God is coming." (Colossians 3:5, 6) In order to 'deaden his body members' with regard to unclean sexual appetite, a person needs to cultivate strong love for Jehovah God. (Psalm 97:10) If he finds himself lured to the public health hazard of cybersex, he ought to strengthen his love for Jehovah by studying God's Word, the Bible. Wholesome association with Jehovah's Witnesses at the local Kingdom Hall can go a long way toward helping a person to strengthen his determination to please God.

