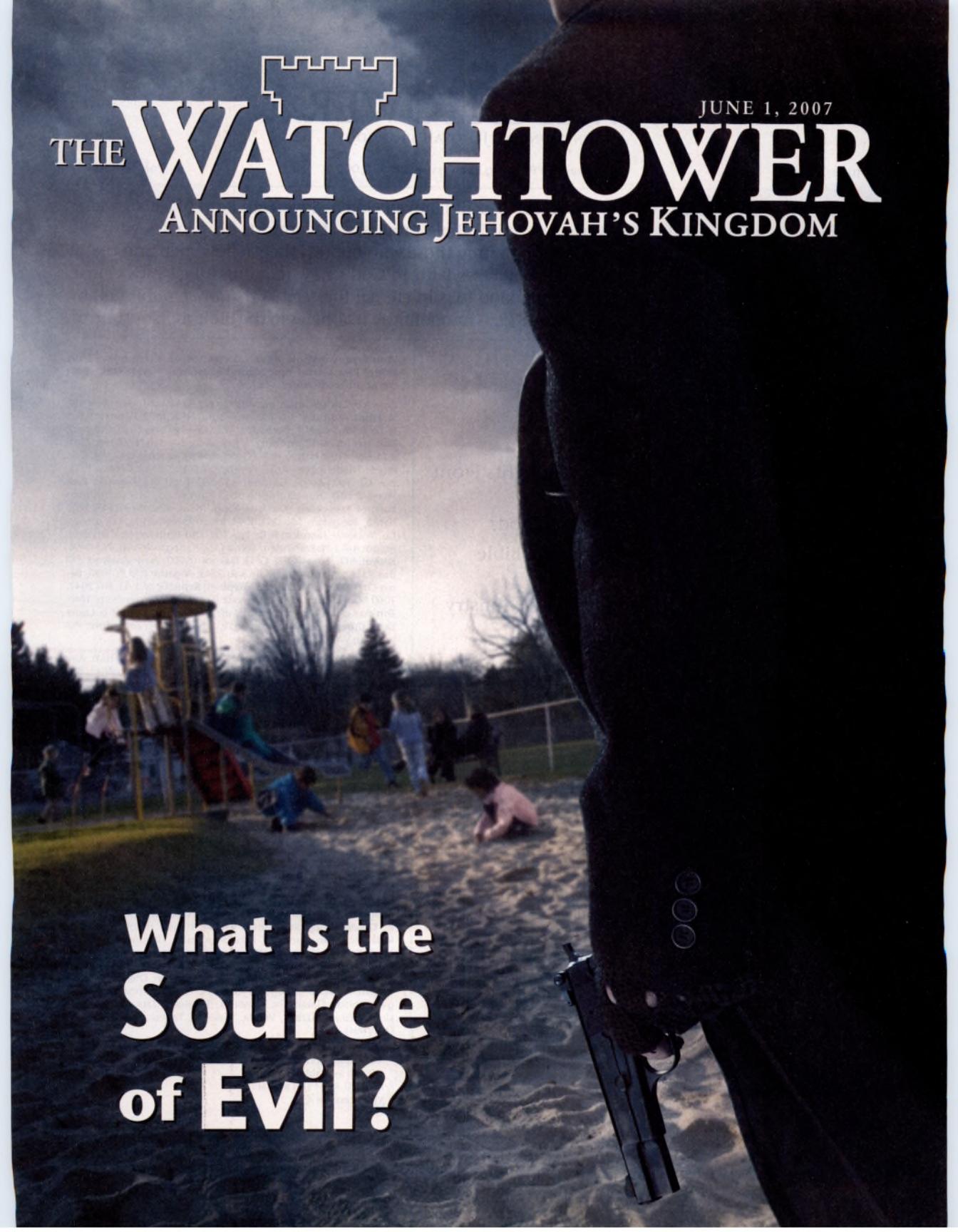


THE WATCHTOWER

JUNE 1, 2007

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



A composite image on the cover. The left side shows a playground with children playing on a slide and climbing structures under a cloudy sky. The right side is a dark, high-contrast silhouette of a person's profile, facing right. The person is holding a rifle with a bayonet fixed, pointing downwards. The magazine title and date are overlaid on the top left of the image.

**What Is the
Source
of Evil?**



THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

June 1, 2007

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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 fellow men 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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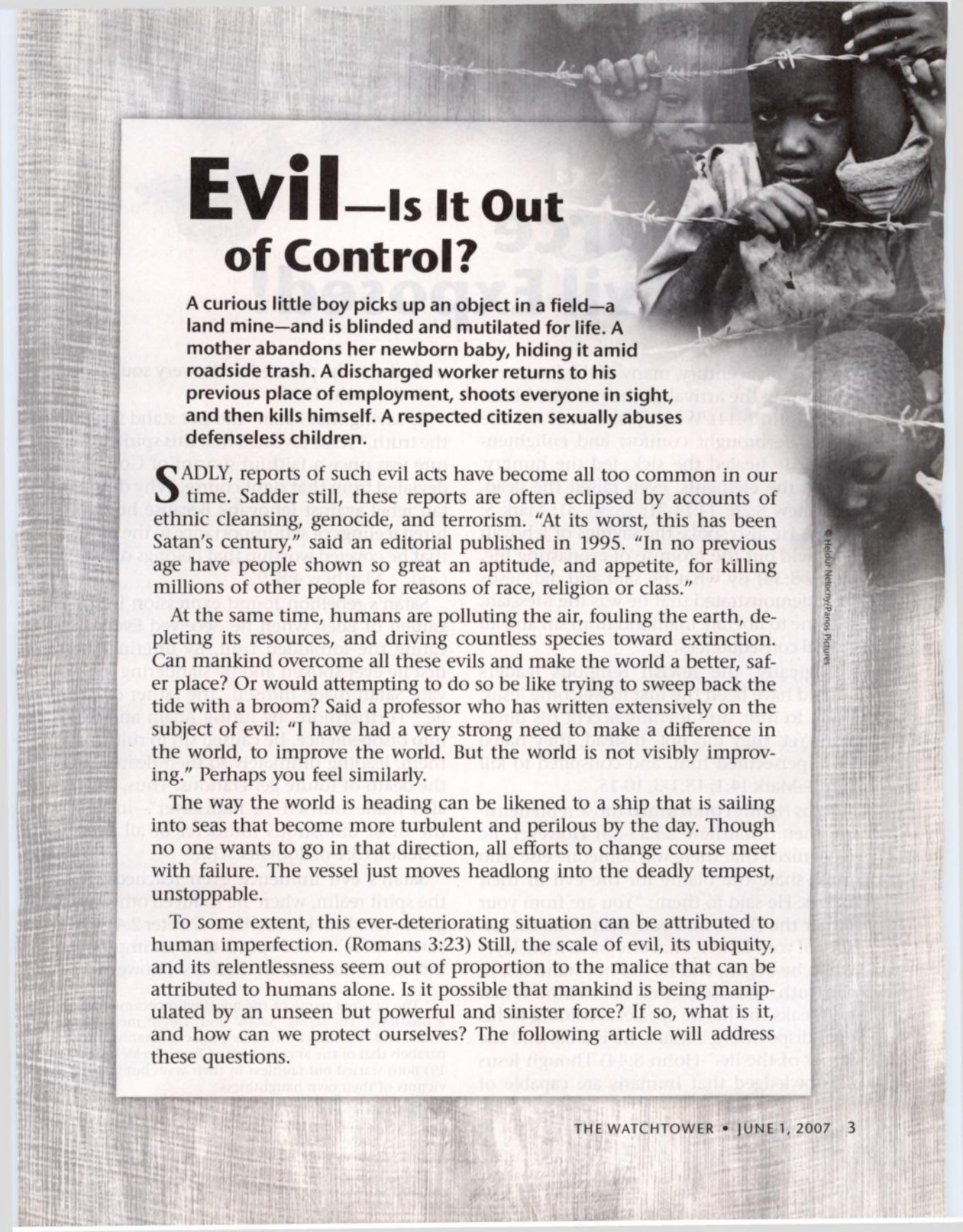
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Evil—Is It Out of Control?

A curious little boy picks up an object in a field—a land mine—and is blinded and mutilated for life. A mother abandons her newborn baby, hiding it amid roadside trash. A discharged worker returns to his previous place of employment, shoots everyone in sight, and then kills himself. A respected citizen sexually abuses defenseless children.

SADLY, reports of such evil acts have become all too common in our time. Sadder still, these reports are often eclipsed by accounts of ethnic cleansing, genocide, and terrorism. "At its worst, this has been Satan's century," said an editorial published in 1995. "In no previous age have people shown so great an aptitude, and appetite, for killing millions of other people for reasons of race, religion or class."

At the same time, humans are polluting the air, fouling the earth, depleting its resources, and driving countless species toward extinction. Can mankind overcome all these evils and make the world a better, safer place? Or would attempting to do so be like trying to sweep back the tide with a broom? Said a professor who has written extensively on the subject of evil: "I have had a very strong need to make a difference in the world, to improve the world. But the world is not visibly improving." Perhaps you feel similarly.

The way the world is heading can be likened to a ship that is sailing into seas that become more turbulent and perilous by the day. Though no one wants to go in that direction, all efforts to change course meet with failure. The vessel just moves headlong into the deadly tempest, unstoppable.

To some extent, this ever-deteriorating situation can be attributed to human imperfection. (Romans 3:23) Still, the scale of evil, its ubiquity, and its relentlessness seem out of proportion to the malice that can be attributed to humans alone. Is it possible that mankind is being manipulated by an unseen but powerful and sinister force? If so, what is it, and how can we protect ourselves? The following article will address these questions.

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The Source of Evil Exposed!

IN THE first century, many of the Jews were awaiting the arrival of the promised Messiah. (John 6:14) When Jesus came on the scene, he brought comfort and enlightenment. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, **tamed** the elements, even raised the dead. (Matthew 8:26; 14:14-21; 15:30, 31; Mark 5: 38-43) He also spoke the sayings of Jehovah and held out the promise of everlasting life. (John 3:34) By what he said and did, Jesus fully demonstrated that he was the Messiah, the one to liberate mankind from sin and all its evil consequences.

Logically, the Jewish religious leaders should have been the first to welcome Jesus, listen to him, and joyfully accept his direction. Yet, they did not. Instead, they hated him, persecuted him, and conspired to kill him!—Mark 14:1; 15:1-3, 10-15.

Jesus rightly condemned those reprehensible men. (Matthew 23:33-35) However, he recognized that there was someone else who must share the blame for the evil in their hearts. He said to them: “You are from your father the Devil, and you wish to do the desires of your father. That one was a manslayer when he began, and he did not stand fast in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaks the lie, he speaks according to his own disposition, because he is a liar and the father of the lie.” (John 8:44) Though Jesus acknowledged that humans are capable of

wicked acts, he pointed to the very source of evil—Satan the Devil.

By saying that Satan “did not stand fast in the truth,” Jesus revealed that this spirit creature was once a faithful servant of God but deviated from that right course. Why did Satan rebel against Jehovah? Because he nurtured feelings of self-importance to the point that he coveted worship that belongs only to God.*—Matthew 4:8, 9.

Satan’s rebellion found expression in the garden of Eden when he deceived Eve into eating the forbidden fruit. By uttering the first lie ever spoken and by slandering Jehovah, Satan made himself “the father of the lie.” Furthermore, by luring Adam and Eve into disobedience, he caused sin to rule over them, leading ultimately to their death and the death of future generations. Thus, Satan also made himself “a manslayer”—indeed, the most monstrous murderer of all time!—Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 5:12.

Satan’s evil influence even reached into the spirit realm, where he induced other angels to join him in rebellion. (2 Peter 2:4) Like Satan, these wicked spirits took an improper interest in humans. In their case, however, it

* The original name of the angel who became Satan is unknown. The terms “Satan” and “Devil” mean “Resister” and “Slanderer.” In some respects, Satan’s course parallels that of the ancient king of Tyre. (Ezekiel 28:12-19) Both started out faultless in their ways but became victims of their own haughtiness.

was a perverted sexual interest, with disastrous, evil consequences.

Evil Fills the Earth

The Bible tells us: "When men started to grow in numbers . . . and daughters were born to them, then the sons of the true God began to notice the daughters of men, that they were good-looking; and they went taking wives for themselves, namely, all whom they chose." (Genesis 6:1, 2) Who were those "sons of the true God"? They were spirit creatures, not humans. (Job 1:6; 2:1) How do we know? For one thing, marriage between humans had been taking place for some 1,500 years and warranted no special mention. So by drawing attention to the sexual union of "the sons of the true God" who materialized and took "the daughters of men," the account clearly refers to something unprecedented, abnormal.

This abnormality is confirmed by the kind of offspring that resulted from these unions. Called Nephilim, they were hybrids who grew up to be giants. They were also vicious bullies. In fact, "Nephilim" means "Fellers," or "those who cause others to fall down." These brutes are described as "the mighty

*The traits of the
Nephilim are seen
in people today*



ones who were of old, the men of fame."

—Genesis 6:4, footnote.

The Nephilim and their fathers took wickedness to new lows. "The earth came to be ruined in the sight of the true God and . . . became filled with violence," notes Genesis 6:11. Yes, humans adopted the violent, depraved ways of the newcomers in their midst.

How did the Nephilim and their fathers exert such a powerful evil influence on humans? By appealing to mankind's sinful inclination and desires. The result? "All flesh . . . ruined its way on the earth." Finally, Jehovah destroyed that world in a global Deluge, sparing only righteous Noah and his family. (Genesis 6:5, 12-22) The materialized angels, however, returned to the spirit realm in disgrace. As debased demons, they continued to oppose God and his righteous family of loyal angels. It appears that from that time on, God forbade these wicked spirits to materialize. (Jude 6) Nevertheless, they have remained a potent force in human affairs.

The Evil One Is Fully Exposed!

The extent of Satan's evil influence is revealed at 1 John 5:19, which states: "The *whole world* is lying in the power of the wicked one." The Devil is maneuvering mankind into a tempest of increasing woes. In fact, he is more determined than ever to do harm. Why? Because he and the demons were evicted from heaven after God's Kingdom was established in 1914. Regarding this eviction, the Bible foretold: "Woe for the earth . . . , because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time." (Revelation 12:7-12) How, then, does Satan wield his influence over mankind today?

Satan does so primarily by promoting a spirit that governs the way that people think

and act. Accordingly, Ephesians 2:2 calls the Devil “the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit [or, dominant attitude] that now operates in the sons of disobedience.” Instead of encouraging godly fear and goodness, this demonic “air” breeds rebellion against God and his standards. Satan and his demons thus promote and aggravate the evil perpetrated by humans.

“Safeguard Your Heart”

One manifestation of this “air” is the plague of pornography, which inflames improper sexual desires and makes aberrant behavior appear to be appealing. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5) Rape, sadism, gang rape, bestiality, and the sexual abuse of children are some of the subjects that pornography features as entertaining. Even in its less noxious forms, pornography can be highly addictive and harms those who view it or read it, turning them into habitual voyeurs.* It is an evil that damages both human relations and one’s relationship with God. Pornography reflects the debased mentality of the demons who promote it—rebels whose improp-

er sexual desires date back to the pre-Flood world of Noah’s day.

For good reason, the wise man Solomon admonished: “More than all else that is to be guarded, safeguard your heart, for out of it are the sources of life.” (Proverbs 4:23) In practical terms, safeguarding your heart from the snare of pornography may mean changing TV channels or turning off the computer should salacious images appear, and it is important to act swiftly and decisively! Think of yourself as a soldier trying to ward off a missile aimed at your heart. Satan targets your figurative heart—your seat of motivation and desire—and seeks to corrupt it.

You also need to shield your heart from the love of violence, for the Devil knows that “anyone *loving* violence [Jehovah] certainly hates.” (Psalm 11:5) Satan does not have to turn you into a bloodthirsty villain to make you an enemy of God; he simply needs to nurture within you a *love* of violence. It is no coincidence that violence, often with occult themes, saturates the popular media. The Nephilim are dead and gone, but their traits and behavior are very much alive! Does your choice of entertainment show that you resist Satan’s schemes?—2 Corinthians 2:11.

* See the series “Pornography—Harmless or Harmful?” in the July 22, 2003, issue of *Awake!* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Legends With a Kernel of Truth

Stories about demigods, giants, and a cataclysmic flood are found in ancient mythologies worldwide. For example, the Akkadian Epic of Gilgamesh mentions a flood, a ship, and survivors. Gilgamesh himself was described as a lustful, violent demigod, or part god, part man. Aztec mythology tells of an ancient world inhabited by giants and of a great deluge. Norse legend describes a race of giants and a wise man named Bergelmir who constructed a large boat and saved himself and his wife. The combined testimony of all such legends corroborates the Bible’s testimony that all humans have descended from the survivors of a deluge that destroyed an ancient wicked world.



Tablet inscribed with the Epic of Gilgamesh

How to Resist Satan's Evil Influence

The forces of evil can appear formidable. The Bible points out that those striving to please God "have a wrestling . . . against the wicked spirit forces," in addition to a struggle with their own imperfect flesh. To win the struggle and to have God's favor, we need to take advantage of the many provisions from God.—Ephesians 6:12; Romans 7:21-25.

These provisions include God's holy spirit, the most powerful force in the universe. The apostle Paul wrote to first-century Christians: "We received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God." (1 Corinthians 2:12) Those led by God's spirit grow to love what God loves and hate what he hates. (Amos 5:15) How can one receive holy spirit? Primarily through prayer, Bible study—the Bible itself being a product of holy spirit—and wholesome association with those who truly love God.—Luke 11:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 10:24, 25.

By taking advantage of these divine provisions, you make a start in putting on "the complete suit of armor from God," the only sure protection against "the machinations of the Devil." (Ephesians 6:11-18) Making full use of these provisions is more urgent now than ever before.

How so?

Accurate knowledge fortifies us against evil influences

Evil Has Had Its Day!

"When the wicked ones sprout as the vegetation and all the practicers of what is hurtful blossom forth, it is that they may be annihilated forever," says the psalmist. (Psalm 92:7) Yes, as in Noah's day, the present proliferation of evil is evidence that God's judgment is impending, not just against wicked humans but also against Satan and his demons, who will be hurled into an abyss of inactivity as a prelude to their eventual destruction. (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10) Who will execute that judgment? None other than Jesus Christ, about whom we read: "For this purpose the Son of God was made manifest, namely, to break up the works of the Devil."—1 John 3:8.

Do you yearn for an end to evil? If so, then you can take comfort in the promises contained in the Bible. No other book exposes the very author of evil, Satan, and no other book shows how he and all his wicked works will finally be eradicated. We urge you to take in accurate knowledge of the Bible so as to protect yourself against Satan's evil influences now and to secure the hope of living in a world free from evil.—Psalm 37:9, 10.



Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Book of Lamentations

THE prophet Jeremiah sees the fulfillment of the judgment message that he has been uttering for 40 years. How does the prophet feel when he personally witnesses the destruction of his beloved city? "Jeremiah sat down weeping and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem," says the Greek *Septuagint* in its introduction to the book of Lamentations. Composed in 607 B.C.E. while the memory of the 18-month-long siege followed by the burning of Jerusalem is still fresh in the prophet's mind, the book of Lamentations vividly expresses Jeremiah's heartfelt anguish. (Jeremiah 52:3-5, 12-14) No other city in history has been lamented in expressions so touching and heart-rending.

The book of Lamentations is a collection of five lyrical poems. The first four are laments, or dirges; the fifth is a petition, or prayer. The first four songs are acrostics, successive verses beginning with a different letter in the order of the 22-character Hebrew alphabet. Although the fifth song has 22 verses to correspond to the number of letters of the Hebrew alphabet, it is not arranged alphabetically.—Lamentations 5:1, footnote.

'MY EYES HAVE COME TO THEIR END IN TEARS' (Lamentations 1:1-2:22)

"O how she has come to sit solitary, the city that was abundant with people! How she has become like a widow, she that was populous among the nations! How she that was a princess among the jurisdictional districts has come to be for forced labor!" Thus begin the lamentations of the prophet Jere-

miah regarding Jerusalem. Giving the reason for this calamity, the prophet says: "Jehovah himself has brought grief to her on account of the abundance of her transgressions."—Lamentations 1:1, 5.

Personified as a widow bereaved of husband and children, Jerusalem asks: "Does there exist any pain like my pain?" Concerning her enemies, she prays to God: "May all their badness come before you, and deal severely with them, just as you have dealt severely with me on account of all my transgressions. For my sighs are many, and my heart is ill."—Lamentations 1:12, 22.

Deeply distressed, Jeremiah says: "In the heat of anger [Jehovah] has cut down every horn of Israel. He has turned his right hand back from before the enemy; and in Jacob he keeps burning like a flaming fire that has devoured all around." Depicting his profound sorrow, the prophet laments: "My eyes have come to their end in sheer tears. My intestines are in a ferment. My liver has been poured out to the very earth." Even those passing by have expressed amazement, saying: "Is this the city of which they used to say, 'It is the perfection of prettiness, an exultation for all the earth'?"—Lamentations 2:3, 11, 15.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

1:15—How had Jehovah "trodden the very winepress belonging to the virgin daughter of Judah"? In destroying the city, described as a virgin, the Babylonians shed blood in such quantity that it was comparable to the squeezing of grapes in a winepress. Jehovah foretold this and allowed it to hap-

pen, so it can be said that he had ‘trodden the winepress.’

2:1—How was ‘the beauty of Israel thrown down from heaven to earth’? Since “the heavens are higher than the earth,” the abasement of exalted things is at times represented by their being “thrown down from heaven to earth.” “The beauty of Israel”—the glory and power it enjoyed while Jehovah’s blessing was upon it—was thrown down with the destruction of Jerusalem and the desolation of Judah.—Isaiah 55:9.

2:1, 6—What is Jehovah’s “footstool” and his “booth”? The psalmist sang: “Let us come into his grand tabernacle; let us bow down at his footstool.” (Psalm 132:7) Hence, the “footstool” of Lamentations 2:1 refers to Jehovah’s house of worship, or his temple. The Babylonians ‘burned the house of Jehovah’ as if it were a booth, or a mere hut, in a garden.—Jeremiah 52:12, 13.

2:16, 17—Should not the 16th verse begin with the Hebrew letter *ayin* and the 17th begin with *pe* to follow the order of the Hebrew alphabet? While composing poems in this style, inspired writers usually followed the alphabetical order. However, they did not do so at the cost of sounding artificial or unnatural. The matter of thought content was considered more important than the adherence to a literary device that merely served as a memory aid. The reversal of the same two characters is also found in songs 3 and 4 of Lamentations.—Lamentations 3:46, 49; 4:16, 17.

2:17—What particular “saying” did Jehovah accomplish in connection with Jerusalem? The reference here is apparently to Leviticus 26:17, which states: “I shall indeed set my face against you, and you will certainly be defeated before your enemies; and those who hate you will just tread down upon you, and you will actually flee when no one is pursuing you.”

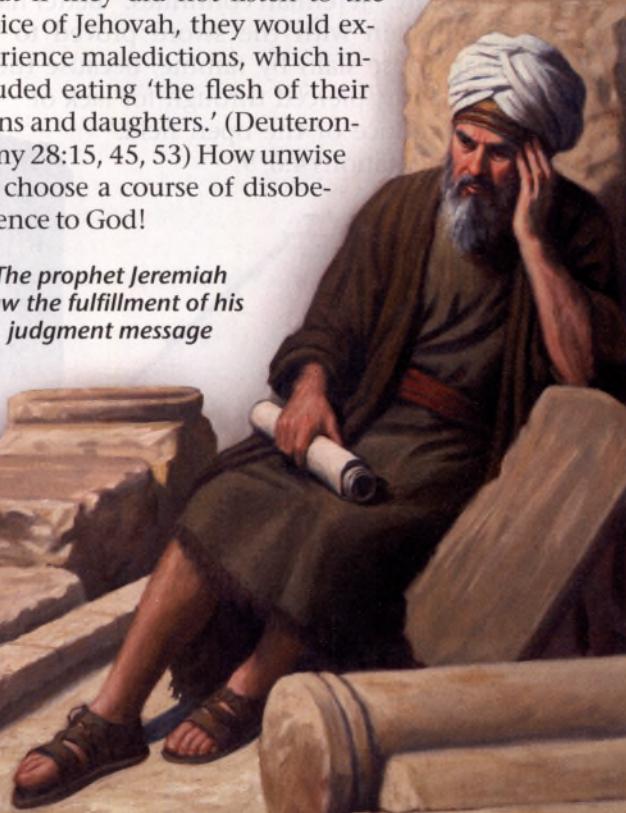
Lessons for Us:

1:1-9. Jerusalem weeps profusely during the night, and her tears are upon her cheeks. Her gates lie desolate, and her priests are sighing. Her virgins are grief-stricken, and she herself has bitterness. Why? Because Jerusalem has committed outright sin. Her uncleanness is in her skirts. The fruitage of transgression is not joy; it is tears, sighing, grief, and bitterness.

1:18. In punishing transgressors, Jehovah is always just and righteous.

2:20. The Israelites were warned that if they did not listen to the voice of Jehovah, they would experience maledictions, which included eating ‘the flesh of their sons and daughters.’ (Deuteronomy 28:15, 45, 53) How unwise to choose a course of disobedience to God!

The prophet Jeremiah saw the fulfillment of his judgment message



"DO NOT HIDE YOUR EAR TO MY RELIEF" (Lamentations 3:1–5:22)

In Lamentations chapter 3, the nation of Israel is spoken of as "the able-bodied man." Despite experiencing adversity, this man sings: "Good is Jehovah to the one hoping in him, to the soul that keeps seeking for him." In prayer to the true God, he requests: "My voice you must hear. Do not hide your ear to my relief, to my cry for help." Asking Jehovah to give attention to the reproach of the enemy, he says: "You will give back to them a treatment, O Jehovah, according to the work of their hands."—Lamentations 3:1, 25, 56, 64.

Jeremiah pours out his feelings over the terrible effects of the 18-month siege of Jerusalem and laments: "The punishment for the error of the daughter of my people also becomes greater than the punishment for the sin of Sodom, which was overthrown as in a moment, and to which no hands turned helpfully." Jeremiah continues: "Better have those slain with the sword proved to be than those slain by famine, because these pine away, pierced through for lack of the produce of the open field."

—Lamentations 4:6, 9.



The fifth poem portrays the inhabitants of Jerusalem as speaking. They say: "Remember, O Jehovah, what has happened to us. Do look and see our reproach." As they recount their afflictions, they petition: "O Jehovah, to time indefinite you will sit. Your throne is for generation after generation. Bring us back, O Jehovah, to yourself, and we shall readily come back. Bring new days for us as in the long ago."—Lamentations 5:1, 19, 21.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

3:16—What is suggested by the expression: "With gravel he makes my teeth get broken"? One reference work states: "The Jews, on their way into exile, were compelled to bake their bread in pits dug in the ground, so that their bread was mixed with grit." Eating such bread could break off part of one's teeth.

4:3, 10—Why does Jeremiah compare "the daughter of [his] people" to "ostriches in the wilderness"? The ostrich "does treat her sons roughly, as if not hers," states Job 39:16. After the eggs are hatched, for example, the hen goes off with other hens while

the male assumes the responsibility of caring for the young. And what happens when they come face-to-face with danger? Both male and female birds flee from the nest, abandoning their young. During the Babylonian siege, the famine in Jerusalem became so severe that mothers who would normally have been compassionate became cruel to their own offspring,

*The faith of these
Korean Witnesses was
tested for their stand
on the issue of
Christian neutrality*

like ostriches in the wilderness. This was in stark contrast to the maternal care exhibited by jackals.

5:7—Does Jehovah hold people accountable for the errors of their forefathers? No, Jehovah does not directly punish people for the sins of their ancestors. “Each of us will render an account for himself to God,” says the Bible. (Romans 14:12) However, consequences of errors can linger on and be experienced by later generations. For example, ancient Israel’s turning to idolatry made it difficult even for the faithful Israelites of later times to adhere to the course of righteousness.—Exodus 20:5.

Lessons for Us:

3:8, 43, 44. During the calamity that befell Jerusalem, Jehovah refused to listen to the cry for help of the city’s inhabitants. Why? Because the people had been disobedient, and they remained unrepentant. If we want Jehovah to answer our prayers, we must obey him.—Proverbs 28:9.

3:20. Jehovah, “the Most High over all the earth,” is so exalted that he condescends in order “to look on heaven and earth.” (Psalm 83:18; 113:6) Yet, Jeremiah was well-aware of the Almighty’s willingness to bow low over the people, that is, to come down to their level in order to encourage them. How glad we can be that the true God is not only all-powerful and all-wise but also humble!

3:21-26, 28-33. How can we endure even intense suffering? Jeremiah tells us. We should not forget that Jehovah is abundant in acts of loving-kindness and that many are his mercies. We should also remember that our being alive is reason enough not to give up hope and that we need to be patient and wait silently, without complaining, upon Jehovah for salvation. Moreover, we should “put [our] mouth in the very dust,” that is, humbly submit to trials, recognizing that

what God allows to happen is permitted for good reason.

3:27. Facing up to tests of faith during youth may mean enduring hardship and ridicule. But it is ‘good for an able-bodied man to carry the yoke during his youth.’ Why? Because learning to bear a yoke of suffering while young prepares a person to deal with challenges in his later years.

3:39-42. ‘Indulging in complaints’ when suffering for our sins is not wise. Rather than complain about reaping the consequences of wrongdoing, “let us search out our ways and explore them, and do let us return clear to Jehovah.” We are wise to repent and correct our ways.

Make Jehovah Your Confidence

The Bible book of Lamentations reveals how Jehovah viewed Jerusalem and the land of Judah after the Babylonians burned the city and laid the land desolate. The expressions of acknowledgment of sin recorded therein make it clear that from Jehovah’s standpoint, the reason for the calamity was the error of the people. This book’s inspired songs also contain lyrics that express hope in Jehovah and the desire to turn to the right course. While these were not the sentiments of most people in Jeremiah’s day, they represented those of Jeremiah and the repentant remnant.

Jehovah’s evaluation of Jerusalem’s situation as expressed in the book of Lamentations teaches us two vital lessons. First, Jerusalem’s destruction and the desolation of Judah urge obedience to Jehovah and serve as a warning not to ignore the divine will. (1 Corinthians 10:11) The second lesson is from Jeremiah’s example. (Romans 15:4) Even in a seemingly hopeless situation, the deeply grieved prophet looked to Jehovah for salvation. How vital that we place our complete trust in Jehovah and his Word and make him our confidence!—Hebrews 4:12.



Circumcision

A SIGN OF MANHOOD?

IN MANY parts of the world, circumcision is performed on baby boys as a health measure. In other parts of the world, it is customary for males to remain uncircumcised throughout their life. To some, such as Jews and Muslims, circumcision is more than a health measure; it has religious significance.

In certain nations, however, a circumcision ritual is performed when a boy reaches manhood. This usually involves sending the boy away to a traditional school, where he is circumcised and kept separate from the community for a number of weeks until he recovers from the operation. During this time, the boy is to follow specific rituals and is taught to be a man. Is this type of circumcision necessary to prove that a boy has reached manhood? Let us consider what the Bible says about God's view of the matter.—Proverbs 3:5, 6.

God's View of Circumcision

Some people in ancient times, such as the Egyptians, practiced circumcision, that is, the cutting away of the foreskin of the male sex organ. Abraham, however, was not born into such a culture. In fact, for most of his life, Abraham was uncircumcised. Moreover, in his uncircumcised state, Abraham proved himself to be a valiant man. With a small band of men, he pursued and vanquished the armies of four kings who had captured his nephew Lot. (Genesis 14:8-16) About 14 years later, God commanded Abraham to get

circumcised and to circumcise his entire household. Why did God do so?

It was certainly not a sign that Abraham had advanced from boyhood to manhood. Why, he was 99 years old! (Genesis 17:1, 26, 27) God gave the reason for the command, saying: "You must get circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it must serve as a sign of the covenant between me and you." (Genesis 17:11) That Abrahamic covenant included God's promise that through Abraham, great blessings would eventually come to "all the families of the ground." (Genesis 12:2, 3) Thus, in God's eyes, circumcision had nothing to do with manhood. It was performed to indicate that a person belonged to the Israelite descendants of Abraham, who were privileged to be "entrusted with the sacred pronouncements of God."—Romans 3:1, 2.

In time, the nation of Israel proved unworthy of that trust by rejecting the true Seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ. Hence, they were rejected by God, and their state of circumcision ceased to have any meaning in God's eyes. However, some Christians in the first century C.E. insisted that circumcision was still a requirement of God. (Acts 11:2, 3; 15:5) Because of this, the apostle Paul sent Titus to "correct the things that were defective" in various congregations. To Titus, Paul wrote about one defect: "There are many unruly men, profitless talkers, and deceivers of the mind, especially those men who adhere to the circumcision. It is necessary to shut the

mouths of these, as these very men keep on subverting entire households by teaching things they ought not for the sake of dishonest gain."—Titus 1:5, 10, 11.

Paul's counsel is still applicable. It would certainly be contrary to the Scriptures for a true Christian to suggest that someone else's child be circumcised. Instead of being "a busybody in other people's matters," a Christian leaves such personal decisions for parents to make. (1 Peter 4:15) Moreover, Paul was inspired to write about circumcision according to the Mosaic Law: "Was any man called circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Has any man been called in uncircumcision? Let him not get circumcised. Circumcision does not mean a thing, and uncircumcision means not a thing, but observance of God's commandments does. In whatever state each one was called, let him remain in it."—1 Corinthians 7:18-20.

What About "Circumcision Schools"?

What if Christian parents should decide to have their male children circumcised? Would it be in harmony with the Bible to send their sons to the so-called circumcision schools described earlier? Attendance at such schools involves much more than the surgical removal of the foreskin. For a number of weeks, the one attending will live in close association with boys and teachers who are not worshippers of Jehovah. Many things taught at these schools are contrary to the Bible's high moral standards. The Bible warns: "Bad associations spoil useful habits."—1 Corinthians 15:33.

Increasingly, there is also physical danger involved in attending these schools. In 2003 the *South African Medical Journal* warned: "Horrifying circumcision outcomes have been observed again this year, with reports of the deaths and mutilations being beamed across the world by all the major news services. . . . In short, many of the so-

called 'circumcision schools' of today are fake, and deadly."

In addition to the possible damage to a youth's physical well-being, there is an even greater spiritual danger. The teachings and practices at circumcision schools are closely connected with spiritism and the worship of dead ancestors. For example, instead of admitting that careless surgeons and unhygienic conditions were responsible for the damage done, many believe that bewitchment or the displeasure of dead ancestors is the cause of these tragedies. Regarding connections with false religion, the Bible commands: "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness? . . . 'Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves,' says Jehovah, 'and quit touching the unclean thing'; 'and I will take you in.'" (2 Corinthians 6:14-17) In view of this counsel, it would be most unwise for Christian parents to send their male children to a circumcision school.

What Makes a Christian Manly?

Whether a Christian man is circumcised or not is no reflection on his manhood. The main concern of true Christians is to be pleasing in the eyes of God, not "to make a pleasing appearance in the flesh."—Galatians 6:12.

To be pleasing to God, however, a Christian must undergo a 'circumcision of the heart.' (Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Matthew 5:8) That is done, not by cutting with a knife, but by rejecting wrong desires and prideful thoughts, such as the belief that being circumcised in the flesh makes one superior to others. By enduring trials and standing "firm in the faith," a Christian can prove himself manly whether he is circumcised or not.—1 Corinthians 16:13; James 1:12.

FROM SCROLL TO CODEX

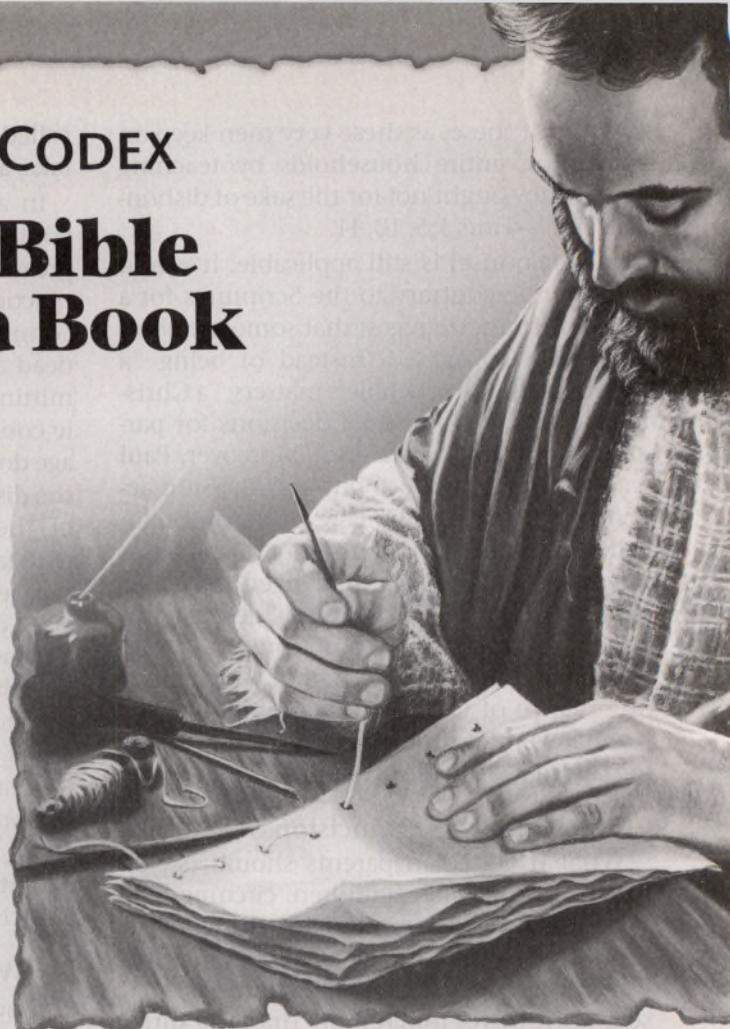
How the Bible Became a Book

OVER the centuries, people have preserved information in many ways. In times past, writers recorded their words on monuments, stone or wood tablets, leaves of parchment, and other materials. By the first century, in the Middle East, the accepted and established format for the written word was the scroll. Then came the codex, which in time replaced the scroll and became the universal means of storing written material. It also contributed greatly to the distribution of the Bible. What was the codex, and how did it come into use?

The codex was the prototype, or earliest form, of today's book. It consisted of sheets that were folded, assembled, and tied together along the fold. The pages were written on both sides and protected by a cover. The early codex did not look much like the books of today, but as with most other inventions, it was developed and modified according to the needs and preferences of those who used it.

Wood, Wax, and Parchment

Initially, codices were often made of wax-coated wooden tablets. Written waxed polptychs, or tablets hinged together on their long side, were found at Herculaneum, a town destroyed along with Pompeii by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 C.E. Eventually, rigid tablets were replaced by sheets of



foldable material. In Latin, these codices, or books, were called *membranae*, or parchments, after the leather generally used for their pages.

Some codices that have survived were made of papyrus. The oldest known Christian codices, which were preserved in the dry climate of certain areas of Egypt, are papyri.*

Scroll or Codex?

It appears that Christians used mainly the roll, or scroll, at least until about the end of the first century C.E. The period from the

* See the article "The Early Christian Codex," in the August 15, 1962, issue of *The Watchtower*, pages 501-5.

end of the first to the third century C.E. witnessed a struggle between advocates of the codex and those of the scroll. Conservatives, accustomed to using the scroll, were reluctant to give up well-established conventions and traditions. Consider, however, what was involved in reading a scroll. A scroll was usually made up of a standard number of sheets of papyrus or parchment glued together to make a long strip, which was then rolled up. The text was inscribed in columns on the front face of the scroll. To read it, the user unrolled the scroll to find the passage that he wanted. After the reading, he rolled it up again. (Luke 4:16-20) More than one scroll was often needed for a single literary work, making it even more cumbersome to use. Although Christians from the second century on evidently preferred to copy the Scriptures into codex form, use of the scroll continued for centuries. Still, experts believe that the Christians' use of the codex played a significant role in its widespread acceptance.

The advantages of the codex are obvious—the capacity, the convenience, and the ease in carrying. Even though some in the early days noted these advantages, the majority were slow to give up the use of the scroll. Over the span of several centuries,

however, various factors gradually led to the ascendancy of the codex.

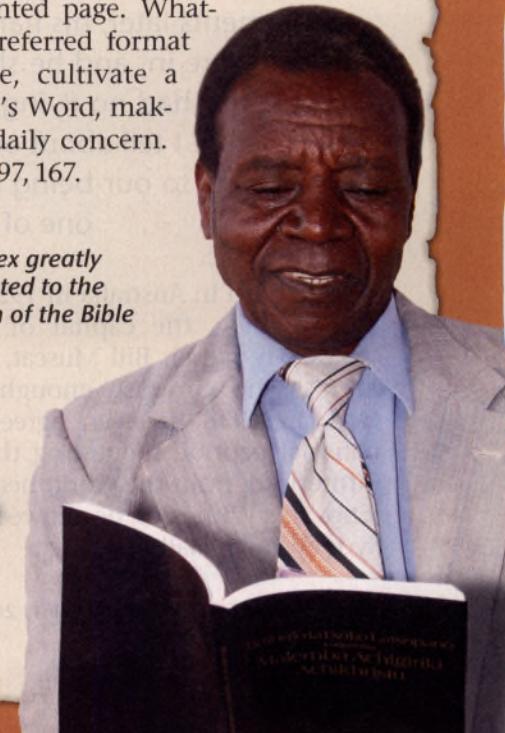
Compared with the scroll, the codex was more economical. Both sides of a page could be written on, and several books could be bound in the same volume. According to some, the ease with which specific passages could be located in the codex was fundamental to its success among Christians and such professionals as lawyers. For Christians, compact texts—or simply a handy list of Bible quotations—were extremely useful for the evangelizing work. Furthermore, the codex had a cover, often made of wood, so it was more durable than the scroll.

Codices were also practical for personal reading. By the end of the third century, parchment pocket Gospels were in circulation among professed Christians. Since then, literally billions of copies of the complete Bible or parts of it have been produced in codex form.

Today, many tools have opened the way for quick and easy access to the divine wisdom contained in the Bible. It can be found on computers, audio recordings, and the printed page. Whatever your preferred format of the Bible, cultivate a love for God's Word, making it your daily concern.

—Psalm 119:97, 167.

The codex greatly contributed to the distribution of the Bible





DETERMINED TO ACCOMPLISH OUR MINISTRY

AS TOLD BY
LENA DAVISON

"I'm losing my vision. I can't see," said our pilot in a slurred voice. Moments later, his hands slipped from the controls of the small plane we were in, and he slumped in his seat, unconscious. My husband, who had no flying experience, tried desperately to rouse him. Before I tell about our narrow escape, let me explain what led up to our being in that plane over Papua New Guinea, one of the remotest parts of the earth.

I WAS born in Australia in 1929 and raised in Sydney, the capital of New South Wales. My father, Bill Muscat, was a Communist who, curiously enough, believed in God. In 1938 he even agreed to sign a national petition requesting that Joseph F. Rutherford, from the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, be allowed to preach at Sydney Town Hall.

"He must have something good to say," Dad told us at the time. Eight years later, we learned the substance of that message. Dad invited Norman Bellotti, a full-time pioneer minister of Jehovah's Witnesses, to our home to discuss the Bible. Our family quickly accepted Bible truth and soon became very active in the Christian ministry.

In the mid-1940's, I left school to help my mother, who was chronically ill. I also did dressmaking for a living. On Saturday nights, my sister Rose and I accompanied a group of pioneers and did street witnessing outside Sydney Town Hall. In 1952 my older brother, John, graduated from the Gilead missionary school in the United States and was assigned to Pakistan. I too loved the ministry and wanted to follow his example. So the following year, I became a regular pioneer.

Marriage and Missionary Work

Soon afterward, I met John Davison, who worked at the Australia branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses. His humility, quiet determination, and strength of character impressed me. During World War II, he had been imprisoned three times for maintaining his Christian neutrality. Together we decided to make the Christian ministry our lifework.

John and I were married in June 1955. We bought a bus with the intention of converting it into a mobile home. Our goal was to use it as a base for preaching in remote areas

With John at a convention
in Lae, New Guinea, 1973



of Australia. The next year, a call went out for Witnesses to move to New Guinea, the northeastern part of a large island north of Australia.* The Kingdom message had not yet been preached in this part of the world. We immediately volunteered.

At the time, the only way to enter New Guinea was on a full-time work contract, so John set about finding a job. He soon secured a contract with a sawmill in New Britain, a much smaller island that is part of New Guinea. Several weeks later, we set off for our new assignment, arriving in Rabaul, New Britain, in July 1956. There we waited six days for a boat to take us to Waterfall Bay.

Our Ministry in Waterfall Bay

After several days of rough sailing, we arrived at Waterfall Bay, a large inlet about 150 miles south of Rabaul. Here a huge sawmill was situated in a clearing in the jungle. That evening when all the workers were seated around the dinner table, the manager said, "By the way, Mr. and Mrs. Davison, it is the policy of this company that all employees state their religion."

We were quite sure that there was no such policy, but since we had declined to smoke, they were evidently suspicious. In any case, John responded, "We are Jehovah's Witnesses." An awkward silence followed. The men were World War II veterans and were prejudiced against the Witnesses because of their neutral stand during the war. From then on, the men looked for every opportunity to make things difficult for us.

* At that time, the eastern part of the island was divided into Papua in the south and New Guinea in the north. Today, the western part of this island is called Papua, a part of Indonesia, and the eastern part, Papua New Guinea.



Map and globe: Based on
NASA/Visible Earth imagery

First the manager refused to give us a refrigerator and a stove, although we were entitled to both. Our perishable food spoiled, and we were forced to cook on a wrecked stove that we salvaged from the jungle. Next the local villagers were forbidden to sell us fresh produce, so we survived on any vegetables that we could find. We were also branded as spies and were carefully watched to see if we taught anyone the Bible. Then I contracted malaria.

Nevertheless, we were determined to accomplish our ministry. So we asked two young native mill workers who spoke English to teach us Melanesian Pidgin, the national language. In turn, we taught them the Bible. On weekends we wandered far and wide on "sightseeing" expeditions. Along the way, we discreetly witnessed to any villagers we could find; our Bible students served as translators. We crossed rivers with strong currents and enormous crocodiles sunning themselves along the banks. Barring one narrow escape, we were rarely troubled by those forbidding predators.

Making Tools for Teaching

As our ministry expanded, we decided to type out simple Bible messages to distribute

to interested ones. Our Bible students at the mill helped us to translate the first of these. We spent many nights typing out hundreds of tracts and distributed them to villagers and passing boat crews.

In 1957, John Cutforth, an experienced traveling minister, paid us an encouraging visit.* He suggested that the use of pictures might be an effective way to teach Bible truths to people who could not read. He and my husband devised a series of simple drawings, or stick figures, to explain basic Bible teachings. Later, we spent countless hours copying these picture sermons into school exercise books. Each Bible student received a copy, which he used to preach to others. This teaching method was eventually used throughout the country.

After two and a half years at Waterfall Bay, we completed our work contract and were approved to stay in the country. So we accepted an invitation to take up the special pioneer ministry.

Back to Rabaul

Sailing north to Rabaul, our boat stopped overnight at a copra and cocoa plantation at

* See *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1958, pages 333-6, for the life story of John Cutforth.

Wide Bay. The owners, an elderly couple who wanted to retire to Australia, offered John the job of managing the plantation. The offer was very tempting, but when we talked the matter over that night, we agreed that we had not come to New Guinea to pursue material riches. We were determined to accomplish our ministry as pioneers. So the next day, we informed the couple of our decision and reboarded the boat.

After arriving at Rabaul, we joined a small group of Witnesses from other countries who had moved into the area. The local people showed much interest in the Kingdom message, and we started many Bible studies. Meanwhile, we held Christian meetings in a local rented hall, and up to 150 people attended. Many of these accepted the truth and helped spread the good news of God's Kingdom to other parts of the country.

—Matthew 24:14.

We also visited Vunabal, a village some 30 miles from Rabaul, where a group of people showed keen interest in Bible truth. They soon attracted the attention of an influential local Catholic. With a group of his church cronies, he broke up our weekly Bible study and drove us out of the village. When we learned that there would be more trouble the following week, we asked the police to accompany us.

That day the road was lined for miles with jeering Catholics. Many were ready to stone us. Meanwhile, a priest had assembled hundreds of tribesmen at the village. The police assured us that we had the right to hold our meeting, so they opened a path through the crowd. However, as soon as we started our meeting, the priest whipped the mob into a frenzy. The police were unable to restrain the horde; hence, the police chief urged us to leave and quickly led us to our car.

The mob swarmed around us, swearing, spitting, and shaking their fists, while the priest stood with folded arms and smiled. After our escape, the police chief admitted that it was the worst situation he had ever seen. Although most of the people in Vunabal were intimidated by the mob violence, one Bible student courageously took his stand for Kingdom truth. Since then, hundreds of others throughout New Britain have taken their stand.

New Guinea Opens Up

In November 1960, we were reassigned to Madang, a large town on the northern coast of New Guinea, the main island. Here John and I were inundated with offers of full-time employment. One company urged me to manage their clothing store. Another wanted me to do clothing alterations. Some expatriate women even offered to set me up in my own dressmaking shop. Keeping in mind our objectives, we politely turned down these and other offers.—2 Timothy 2:4.

The territory in Madang was fruitful, and a thriving congregation soon developed. We hiked and traveled by motorbike to outlying villages on preaching expeditions that lasted several days. In abandoned huts along the way, we slept on layers of grass cut from the bush. Canned food, biscuits, and a mosquito net completed our simple provisions.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

A Year in "the Good Land"

Saul Meets Old Friends
and Former Enemies

We Are "Wonderfully Made"

On one expedition, we visited a group of interested ones in Talidig, a village about 30 miles north of Madang. As the group made spiritual progress, the headmaster of the local school prohibited them from studying the Bible on public land. Later, he incited the police to destroy their houses and drive them into the bush. A neighboring chief, however, allowed the group to live on his land. In time, this kindly chief accepted Bible truth, and a modern Kingdom Hall was built in the area.

Translation and Traveling Work

Just two years after our arrival in New Britain in 1956, John and I were invited to translate various Bible publications into Melanesian Pidgin. This work continued over the years. Then in 1970, we were invited to the branch office in Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea, to serve as full-time translators. We also taught language classes there.

In 1975 we returned to New Britain to serve in the traveling ministry. For the next 13 years, we flew, paddled, drove, or walked to nearly every part of the country. We had many narrow escapes along the way, including the incident described at the beginning of this article. On that occasion, our pilot collapsed from severe gastritis while we were approaching Kandrian airstrip in New Britain. With the plane on autopilot, we circled helplessly above the jungle while John desperately tried to rouse the unconscious pilot. Finally, he regained consciousness, and his vision cleared enough for him to make a rough landing. He then collapsed again.

Another Door of Activity Opens

In 1988 we were reassigned to Port Moresby to care for the growing translation needs at the branch. About 50 of us lived and worked as a family at the branch, where we

also trained new translators. All of us were accommodated in modest one-room apartments. John and I decided to leave our door ajar to encourage family members and visitors to stop by and get acquainted. We thus drew very close to our family and were able to give one another much love and support.

Then, in 1993, John died of a heart attack. I felt as though a part of me died too. We had been married for 38 years and had spent all that time together in the ministry. Still, I was determined to continue, in Jehovah's strength. (2 Corinthians 4:7) My apartment door remained open, and young ones continued to visit. Such wholesome association helped me to maintain a positive outlook.

In 2003 my declining health led to my being reassigned to the branch office in Sydney, Australia. Today, at age 77, I still serve full-time in the Translation Department, and I also keep busy in the preaching work. My friends and spiritual children and grandchildren bring me constant joy.

The door to my room at Bethel still remains open, and I have visitors most days. In fact, when my door is shut, people often knock to see what is wrong. As long as I draw breath, I will remain determined to accomplish my ministry and to serve my God, Jehovah.—2 Timothy 4:5.

*At the branch
in Papua New
Guinea, 2002*



THRIVING SPIRITUALLY DURING GRAY-HEADEDNESS

"Those who are planted in the house of Jehovah . . . will still keep on thriving during gray-headedness."—PSALM 92:13, 14.

OLD AGE—what does that expression bring to your mind? Wrinkled skin? Poor hearing? Feeble limbs? Or another aspect of “the calamitous days” depicted in vivid detail at Ecclesiastes 12:1-7? If so, it is important to bear in mind that the description found in Ecclesiastes chapter 12 portrays aging, not as what the Creator, Jehovah God, originally intended, but as the consequence of Adamic sin on the human body.—Romans 5:12.

² Aging *in itself* is not a curse, for continued existence requires the passing of years. In fact, growth and maturity are desirable characteristics of all living things. The ravages of six thousand years of sin and imperfection that we see around us will soon be a thing of the past, and all obedient humans will enjoy life as it was intended, without the pain of old age and death. (Genesis 1:28; Revelation 21:4, 5) At that time, “no resident will say: ‘I am sick.’” (Isaiah 33:24) Elderly ones will return to the days of their “youthful vigor,” and their flesh will “become fresher than in youth.” (Job 33:25) For the present, however, all



must contend with the Adamic inheritance. Yet, servants of Jehovah are blessed in special ways as they move into their older years.

³ God’s Word assures us that “those who are planted in the house of Jehovah . . . will still keep on thriving during gray-headedness.” (Psalm 92:13, 14) In figurative language, the psalmist set out the fundamental truth that faithful servants of God can continue to progress, flourish, and prosper spiritually, even if they are declining physically. Many Biblical and modern-day examples bear this out.

“Never Missing”

⁴ Consider the first-century prophetess Anna. At 84 years of age, she was “never missing from the temple, rendering sacred service night and day with fastings and supplications.” As a woman whose father was a non-Levite “of Asher’s tribe,” Anna could not literally live at the temple. Imagine what it must have taken for her to be at the temple daily from the time of the morning service to the time of the evening service! For her

1, 2. (a) How is old age often described? (b) What do the Scriptures promise with regard to the effects of Adamic sin?

3. In what ways can Christians “keep on thriving during gray-headedness”?
4. How did aged prophetess Anna show her devotion to God, and how was she rewarded?

devotion, however, Anna was richly rewarded. She was privileged to be on hand when Joseph and Mary brought the infant Jesus to the temple to be presented to Jehovah according to the Law. At the sight of Jesus, Anna "began returning thanks to God and speaking about the child to all those waiting for Jerusalem's deliverance."—Luke 2:22-24, 36-38; Numbers 18:6, 7.

⁵ Many aged ones among us today are like Anna in their regular meeting attendance, their earnest supplication for the advancement of true worship, and their irrepressible desire to preach the good news. A brother in his 80's who attends Christian meetings regularly with his wife said: "We have cultivated the custom of going to the meetings. We don't want to be anywhere else. Where God's people are, that's where we want to be. That's where we feel comfortable." What an encouraging example for all!—Hebrews 10:24, 25.

⁶ "If anything spiritual comes my way and I can be a part of it, I want to do so." That is the motto of Jean, a Christian widow in her 80's. "Of course, I have my sad moments," she continues, "but why should everybody around me be sad when I am?" With eyes gleaming, she expressed the joy of visiting other lands for upbuilding spiritual occasions. On a recent trip, she told her companions, "I don't want to see any more castles; I want to go out in the field ministry!" Although she did not know the local language, Jean was able to arouse people's interest in the Bible's message. In addition, for a number of years, she worked with a congregation that needed assistance, even though this meant learning a new language and traveling an hour each way to the meetings.

5, 6. In what ways are many aged ones today manifesting a spirit like that of Anna?

Keeping the Mind Active

⁷ Experience in life comes with the passing of time. (Job 12:12) Spiritual advancement, on the other hand, does not come automatically with age. Therefore, rather than merely relying on a reserve of knowledge acquired in the past, loyal servants of God strive to "increase in learning" as the years go by. (Proverbs 9:9) When Jehovah commissioned him, Moses was 80 years old. (Exodus 7:7) By his day, living to that age was evidently considered unusual, for he wrote: "In themselves the days of our years are seventy years; and . . . because of special mightiness they are eighty years." (Psalm 90:10) Still, Moses never felt that he was too old to learn. After decades of serving God, enjoying many privileges, and carrying weighty responsibilities, Moses pleaded with Jehovah: "Make me know, please, your ways, that I may know you." (Exodus 33:13) Moses was ever desirous of growing in his relationship with Jehovah.

⁸ The prophet Daniel, likely in his 90's, could still be found poring over the holy writings. What he discerned through his study of "the books"—possibly including Leviticus, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, and Amos—moved him to seek Jehovah in fervent prayer. (Daniel 9:1, 2) That prayer was answered with inspired information regarding the coming of the Messiah and the future of pure worship.—Daniel 9:20-27.

⁹ Like Moses and Daniel, we can strive to keep our mind active by focusing on spiritual matters for as long as we are able. Many are doing just that. Worth, a Christian elder in his 80's, endeavors to keep up-to-date

7. During his advanced years, how did Moses express his desire to grow in his relationship with God?

8. How did Daniel keep his mind active into his 90's, and with what results?

9, 10. What have some done to keep the mind active?

with the spiritual food dispensed by “the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matthew 24:45) He says, “I’m just absolutely in love with the truth, and I’m thrilled to see how the light of truth gets brighter and brighter.” (Proverbs 4:18) Similarly, Fred, who has spent more than 60 years in the full-time ministry, finds it spiritually stimulating to initiate Bible discussions with fellow believers. “I have to keep the Bible alive in my mind,” he says. “If you can make the Bible live—make it meaningful—and if you can fit what you are learning into ‘the pattern of healthful words,’ then you don’t just have isolated pieces of information. You can see how each piece sparkles in its proper place.”—2 Timothy 1:13.



*Aged Daniel discerned by “the books”
the duration of Judah’s exile*

¹⁰ Being advanced in age does not necessarily preclude the learning of new and difficult concepts. People in their 60’s, 70’s, and even 80’s have overcome illiteracy or have learned new languages. Some of Jehovah’s Witnesses have done so with the objective of sharing the good news with people of different nationalities. (Mark 13:10) Harry and his wife were in their late 60’s when they decided to assist in the Portuguese field.

“Let’s face it,” says Harry, “any task in life becomes more difficult with age.” Still, with effort and persistence, they were able to conduct Bible studies in Portuguese. For many years now, Harry has also given district convention talks in his new language.

¹¹ Of course, not everyone has the health or circumstances to take on such challenges. Why, then, consider what some older ones have accomplished? It is certainly not to suggest that all should strive to achieve the same things. Rather, it is in the spirit of what the apostle Paul wrote to the Hebrew Christians concerning faithful congregation elders: “As you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith.” (Hebrews 13:7) When we contemplate such examples of zeal, we can be encouraged to imitate the strong faith that impels these older ones in their service to God. Explaining what motivates him, Harry, now 87 years of age, says, “I’d like to use my remaining years wisely and be as useful as possible in Jehovah’s service.” Fred, mentioned earlier, finds great satisfaction in caring for his Bethel assignment. He observes, “You have to find how you can best serve Jehovah and stick to it.”

Devoted Despite Changing Circumstances

¹² Coming to grips with physical changes can be difficult. Nevertheless, it is possible to demonstrate godly devotion despite such changes. Barzillai the Gileadite is a fine example in this regard. At 80 years of age, he showed extraordinary hospitality to David and his army, providing them with food and lodging during Absalom’s rebellion. When David was returning to Jerusalem, Barzillai

11. Why consider the accomplishments of faithful older ones?

12, 13. How did Barzillai display godly devotion despite his changed circumstances?

escorted the entourage to the Jordan River. David offered to make Barzillai a part of his royal court. Barzillai's response? "I am eighty years old today. . . . Could your servant taste what I ate and what I drank, or could I listen anymore to the voice of male and female singers? . . . Here is your servant Chimham. Let him cross over with my lord the king; and you do to him what is good in your eyes."—2 Samuel 17:27-29; 19:31-40.

¹³ In spite of his changed circumstances, Barzillai did what he could to support Jehovah's appointed king. Though he recognized that his sense of taste and of hearing were no longer what they had been, he was not bitter. Instead, by unselfishly recommending that Chimham receive the benefits offered, Barzillai revealed the kind of man that he was at heart. Like Barzillai, many aged ones today display a spirit of unselfishness and generosity. They do what they can to support true worship, knowing that "with such sacrifices God is well pleased." What a blessing to have loyal ones in our midst!—Hebrews 13:16.

¹⁴ Though David's circumstances changed many times over the years, he remained convinced that Jehovah's care for his loyal servants never changes. Toward the end of his life, David composed the song known today as Psalm 37. Just imagine David in a reflective mood, accompanying himself on the harp and singing these words: "By Jehovah the very steps of an able-bodied man have been made ready, and in his way He takes delight. Although he may fall, he will not be hurled down, for Jehovah is supporting his hand. A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread." (Psalm 37:23-

14. How does David's advanced age add meaning to the words recorded at Psalm 37:23-25?

25) Jehovah saw fit to include reference to David's age in this inspired psalm. What depth of feeling that adds to those heartfelt words!

¹⁵ The apostle John is another fine example of faithfulness despite changed circumstances and advanced age. After serving God for close to 70 years, John was exiled to the isle of Patmos "for speaking about God and bearing witness to Jesus." (Revelation 1:9) Yet, his work was not finished. In fact, all the writings in the Bible that were penned by John were written in the final years of his life. While on Patmos, he was given the awe-inspiring vision of Revelation, which he carefully put down in writing. (Revelation 1:1, 2) It is generally thought that he was released from exile during the reign of Roman Emperor Nerva. Thereafter, by about 98 C.E., when he was probably 90 or 100 years of age, John wrote the Gospel and the three epistles bearing his name.

An Unfading Record of Endurance

¹⁶ Limitations can come in many forms and in different degrees. Some individuals,

15. How did the apostle John set a fine example of faithfulness despite changed circumstances and old age?

16. How can those who have become impaired in their ability to communicate demonstrate their devotion to Jehovah?

How Would You Answer?

- What fine example did Anna set for elderly Christians today?
- Why is age not necessarily a limiting factor in what one can accomplish?
- How can aged ones continue to demonstrate godly devotion?
- How does Jehovah view the service rendered to him by older ones?



Many older ones are exemplary in their regular meeting attendance, zealous preaching, and eagerness to learn

for example, have become impaired even in their ability to communicate. However, they still cherish fond memories of God's love and undeserved kindness. Though limited in what they can say with their mouth, in their heart they are saying to Jehovah: "How I do love your law! All day long it is my concern." (Psalm 119:97) Jehovah, for his part, knows those who are "thinking upon his name," and he appreciates how different such ones are from the vast majority of mankind, who show no concern for his ways. (Malachi 3:16; Psalm 10:4) How comforting it is to know that Jehovah finds pleasure in the meditation of our heart!—1 Chronicles 28:9; Psalm 19:14.

¹⁷ Not to be overlooked is the fact that those who have been serving Jehovah faithfully for decades have achieved something that is truly unique and that cannot be acquired in any other way—an unfading record of endurance. Jesus said: "By endurance on your part you will acquire your souls."

17. What have longtime servants of Jehovah achieved that is truly unique?

(Luke 21:19) Endurance is essential for gaining everlasting life. Those of you who have "done the will of God" and have proved your loyalty by your life course can look forward to receiving "the fulfillment of the promise."—Hebrews 10:36.

¹⁸ Jehovah treasures your whole-souled service regardless of how much or how little you can do. Despite what may be happening to 'the man outside' as one ages, 'the man inside' can be renewed from day to day. (2 Corinthians 4:16) There is no doubt that Jehovah appreciates what you have accomplished in the past, but it is eminently clear that he also appreciates what you are doing right now for his name. (Hebrews 6:10) In the following article, we will consider the far-reaching effects of such faithfulness.

18. (a) What is Jehovah delighted to see with regard to older ones? (b) What will we consider in the following article?

ELDERLY ONES —A BLESSING TO THE YOUNG

"Even until old age and gray-headedness, O God, do not leave me, until I may tell about your arm to the generation, to all those who are to come, about your mightiness." —PSALM 71:18.

A CHRISTIAN elder in West Africa visited an aged anointed brother and asked him, "How are you doing?" The brother responded, "I can run, I can skip, I can jump, and I can hop," attempting to act out his words as he said them. "But," he added, "I cannot fly." His intent was understood. 'What I can do, I am glad to do, but what I cannot do, I do not do.' The elder who made that visit is now in his 80's, and he fondly remembers that brother's sense of humor and his loyalty.

² The godly qualities that an older person manifests can make a long-lasting impression on others. Of course, age alone does not automatically produce wisdom and Christ-

1, 2. What should elderly servants of God appreciate, and what will we now consider?

like qualities. (Ecclesiastes 4:13) The Bible states: "Gray-headedness is a crown of beauty when it is found in the way of righteousness." (Proverbs 16:31) If you are advanced in years, do you appreciate just how your words and actions can affect others beneficially? Consider some Bible examples that show the extent to which aged ones have been a real blessing to younger ones.

Faith With Far-Reaching Effects

³ The faith and steadfastness of Noah produced benefits that are felt even to this day. Noah was approaching 600 years of age

3. How has Noah's faithfulness affected all those now living?

Abraham's endurance had a powerful effect on Isaac



when he built the ark, gathered the animals, and preached to his neighbors. (Genesis 7:6; 2 Peter 2:5) Because of his godly fear, Noah, along with his family, survived the great Flood and became the ancestor of all people living on earth today. True, Noah lived when life spans in general were longer. Yet, even in his most advanced years, Noah remained faithful, and that resulted in significant blessings. How so?

⁴ Noah was nearly 800 years old when Nimrod began engineering the Tower of Babel in defiance of Jehovah's command to "fill the earth." (Genesis 9:1; 11:1-9) Noah, however, had no part in Nimrod's rebellion. Thus, it is probable that his language was not changed when the rebels had their language confused. Noah's faith and steadfastness, seen not only in his old age but also throughout his long life, are truly worthy of imitation by God's servants of all ages.—Hebrews 11:7.

Influence on the Family

⁵ The influence that elderly ones can have on the faith of their family members can be seen in the lives of the patriarchs after Noah. Abraham was about 75 years old when God said to him: "Go your way out of your country and from your relatives and from the house of your father to the country that I shall show you; and I shall make a great nation out of you and I shall bless you."—Genesis 12:1, 2.

⁶ Imagine being told to leave your home, your friends, the country of your birth, and the security of your extended family to go to a land that you do not know. Abraham was told to do just that. He "went just as Jehovah

4. How has Noah's steadfastness benefited God's servants today?

5, 6. (a) When Abraham was 75 years old, what did Jehovah tell him to do? (b) How did Abraham respond to God's command?

had spoken to him," and for the rest of his life, he lived in tents as an alien and a migratory resident in the land of Canaan. (Genesis 12:4; Hebrews 11:8, 9) Though Jehovah had said that Abraham would become "a great nation," he died long before his offspring became numerous. Sarah, his wife, bore him but one son, Isaac, only after Abraham had sojourned in the land of promise for 25 years. (Genesis 21:2, 5) Yet, Abraham did not grow weary and return to the city from which he had come. What an example of faith and endurance!

⁷ Abraham's endurance had a powerful effect on his son Isaac, who spent his entire life—180 years—as an alien resident in the land of Canaan. Isaac's endurance was based on faith in God's promise, faith that was instilled in him by his aged parents and later reinforced by Jehovah's own word to him. (Genesis 26:2-5) Isaac's steadfastness played a key role in the fulfillment of Jehovah's promise that a "seed" for the blessing of all mankind would come through the family of Abraham. Hundreds of years later, Jesus Christ, the primary part of that "seed," opened the way for all who exercise faith in him to be reconciled to God and to enjoy everlasting life.—Galatians 3:16; John 3:16.

⁸ Isaac, in turn, helped his son Jacob to cultivate strong faith that sustained him into his old age. Jacob was 97 when he wrestled with an angel all night long for a blessing. (Genesis 32:24-28) Before he died at the age of 147, Jacob summoned enough strength to bless each of his 12 sons. (Genesis 47:28) The prophetic words that he uttered, now recorded at Genesis 49:1-28, proved true and are still undergoing fulfillment.

7. What effect did Abraham's endurance have on his son Isaac, and with what result to mankind?

8. How did Jacob demonstrate strong faith, and with what effect?

⁹ Clearly, aged loyal servants of God can have a wholesome influence on their family members. Scriptural instruction combined with the voice of experience and an example of endurance can make a real difference in determining whether a young person will grow up with solid faith. (Proverbs 22:6) Older ones should never underestimate the powerful force for good that they can be to their family.

Influence on Fellow Worshippers

¹⁰ Older ones can also be a good influence on fellow believers. In his old age, Jacob's son Joseph performed a simple act of faith that had a profound effect on millions of true worshippers who lived after him. He was 110 when "he gave a command concerning his bones," namely, that when the Israelites finally left Egypt, they were to take his bones with them. (Hebrews 11:22; Gene-

9. What can be said about the influence that spiritually mature older ones have on their family?

10. What was Joseph's "command concerning his bones," and what was its effect?

Moses'
mature counsel
encouraged
Joshua

sis 50:25) That command served as an added ray of hope for Israel during the many years of hard slavery that followed Joseph's death, providing assurance that their deliverance would come.

¹¹ Among those nourished by Joseph's expression of faith was Moses. When Moses was 80, he was privileged to carry Joseph's bones up out of the land of Egypt. (Exodus 13:19) About that time, he came in contact with Joshua, who was much younger. For the next 40 years, Joshua served as Moses' personal attendant. (Numbers 11:28) He accompanied Moses up Mount Sinai and was on hand to meet Moses when he descended from the mountain with the tablets of the Testimony. (Exodus 24:12-18; 32:15-17) What a wellspring of mature counsel and wisdom aged Moses must have been to Joshua!

¹² Joshua, in turn, imparted encouragement to the nation of Israel for as long as he lived. Judges 2:7 tells us: "The people continued to serve Jehovah all the days of Joshua and all the days of the older men who extended their days after Joshua and who had seen all of Jehovah's great work that he did for Israel." With the death of Joshua and the other older men, however, there began a 300-year period of vacillation between true worship and false, leading up to the days of Samuel the prophet.

Samuel "Effectuated Righteousness"

¹³ The Bible does not say how old Samuel was when he died, but events in the book of First Samuel cover about 102 years, and Samuel witnessed most of them. At Hebrews 11:32, 33, we read that upright judges and

11. What influence did aged Moses likely have on Joshua?

12. How did Joshua prove to be a force for good to the nation of Israel for as long as he lived?

13. What did Samuel do to 'effect righteousness'?

prophets “effected righteousness.” Yes, Samuel influenced some of his contemporaries to avoid or abandon wrongdoing. (1 Samuel 7:2-4) By what means? He was loyal to Jehovah throughout his life. (1 Samuel 12:2-5) He was not afraid to give strong counsel even to the king. (1 Samuel 15:16-29) In addition, Samuel, having “grown old and gray,” proved himself exemplary in praying with regard to others. He declared it “unthinkable . . . to sin against Jehovah by ceasing to pray” in behalf of his fellow Israelites.—1 Samuel 12:2, 23.

¹⁴ All of this highlights an essential way that aged ones can exert an influence for good on fellow servants of Jehovah. Despite limitations imposed by health or other circumstances, those advanced in years can pray in behalf of others. Older ones, do you appreciate just how much your prayers benefit the congregation? Because of your faith in Christ’s shed blood, you enjoy an approved standing before Jehovah, and because of your record of endurance, your faith has acquired a “tested quality.” (James 1:3; 1 Peter 1:7) Never forget: “A righteous man’s supplication, when it is at work, has much force.”—James 5:16.

¹⁵ Your prayers in support of Jehovah’s Kingdom work are needed. Some of our brothers are in prison on account of their Christian neutrality. Others have fallen victim to natural disasters, wars, and civil strife. Still others, right in our own congregations, are facing temptations or opposition. (Matthew 10:35, 36) Those taking the lead in the preaching work and in overseeing congrega-



Your prayers in behalf of others can accomplish much good

tions also need your regular prayers in their behalf. (Ephesians 6:18, 19; Colossians 4:2, 3) How good it is that you mention fellow believers in your prayers, as Epaphras did!—Colossians 4:12.

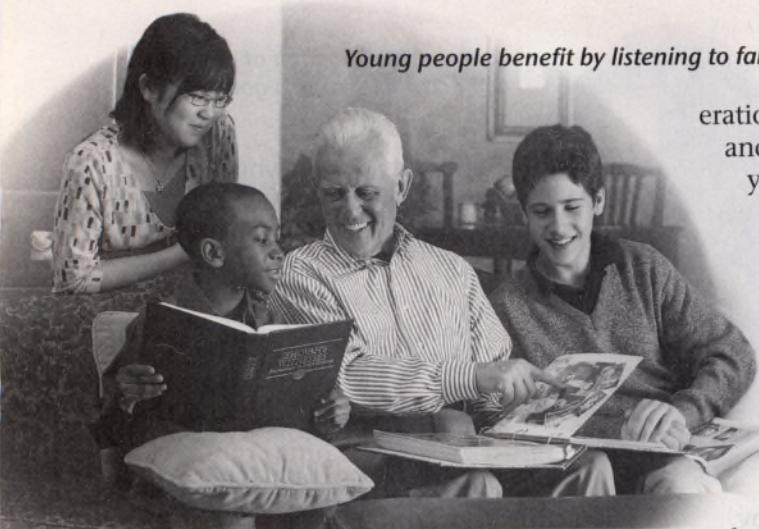
Teaching the Generation to Come

¹⁶ Association with faithful ones of the “little flock,” those with the heavenly calling, has provided essential training for those of the “other sheep,” who have the hope of living forever on earth. (Luke 12:32; John 10:16) This was foretold at Psalm 71:18, which reads: “Even until old age and gray-headedness, O God, do not leave me, until I may tell about your arm to the generation, to all those who are to come, about your mightiness.” Spirit-anointed ones have been eager to train their other sheep companions for increased responsibilities before leaving them to be glorified along with Jesus Christ.

¹⁷ In principle, what Psalm 71:18 says about instructing “those who are to come” could also be applied to the other sheep, who have received instruction from God’s anointed ones. Jehovah has entrusted older ones with the privilege of testifying about him to those who are now embracing true worship. (Joel 1:2, 3) The other sheep feel blessed for what they have learned from anointed ones and are impelled to share their Scriptural education with still others who desire to serve Jehovah.—Revelation 7:9, 10.

14, 15. How might elderly ones today imitate Samuel in the matter of prayer?

16, 17. What was foretold at Psalm 71:18, and how has this come true?



Young people benefit by listening to faithful older ones

¹⁸ Older servants of Jehovah, both anointed ones and those of the other sheep, are a living link to important historical events. A few still living were on hand for the original showings of the "Photo-Drama of Creation." Some personally knew the brothers taking the lead who were imprisoned in 1918. Others participated in broadcasts on the Watchtower radio station, WBBR. Many can tell about the time when cases involving the religious freedom of Jehovah's Witnesses were fought in the highest courts. Still others stood firm for true worship while living under dictatorial regimes. Yes, older ones can relate how the understanding of truth has been progressively revealed. The Bible encourages us to benefit from this wealth of experience.—Deuteronomy 32:7.

¹⁹ Elderly Christians are urged to be good examples to the younger ones. (Titus 2:2-4) Perhaps now you do not see the effect that your endurance, prayers, and counsel has on others. Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and others could not possibly have known the full impact of their faithfulness on the gen-

18, 19. (a) What precious information can many older servants of Jehovah impart? (b) Of what should elderly Christians be confident?

erations to come. Yet, their legacy of faith and integrity mattered greatly; so does yours.

²⁰ Whether you are preserved through the "great tribulation" or you are brought back by resurrection, what a delight it will be to experience "the real life"! (Matthew 24:21; 1 Timothy 6:19) Imagine the time during the Thousand Year Reign of Christ when Jehovah will reverse the effects of old age. Rather than experiencing relentless deterioration of our bodies, we will

awaken each day to progressive physical improvements—more energy, sharper vision, keener hearing, better looks! (Job 33:25; Isaiah 35:5, 6) Those who are blessed to live in God's new world will always be young in comparison with the eternity yet to be experienced. (Isaiah 65:22) May all of us, therefore, maintain our hope firm to the end and continue to serve Jehovah whole-souled. We can be confident that Jehovah will fulfill all that he has promised and that what he will do will far exceed any expectations we may have.—Psalm 37:4; 145:16.

20. What blessings await those who maintain their hope firm to the end?

How Would You Answer?

- How did the steadfastness of aged Noah result in blessings for all mankind?
- What effect did the faith of the patriarchs have on their descendants?
- In their advanced years, how did Joseph, Moses, Joshua, and Samuel strengthen fellow worshippers?
- What legacy can older ones pass on?

Questions From Readers

Does Proverbs 22:6 guarantee that if Christian children are properly trained, they will not depart from the way of Jehovah?

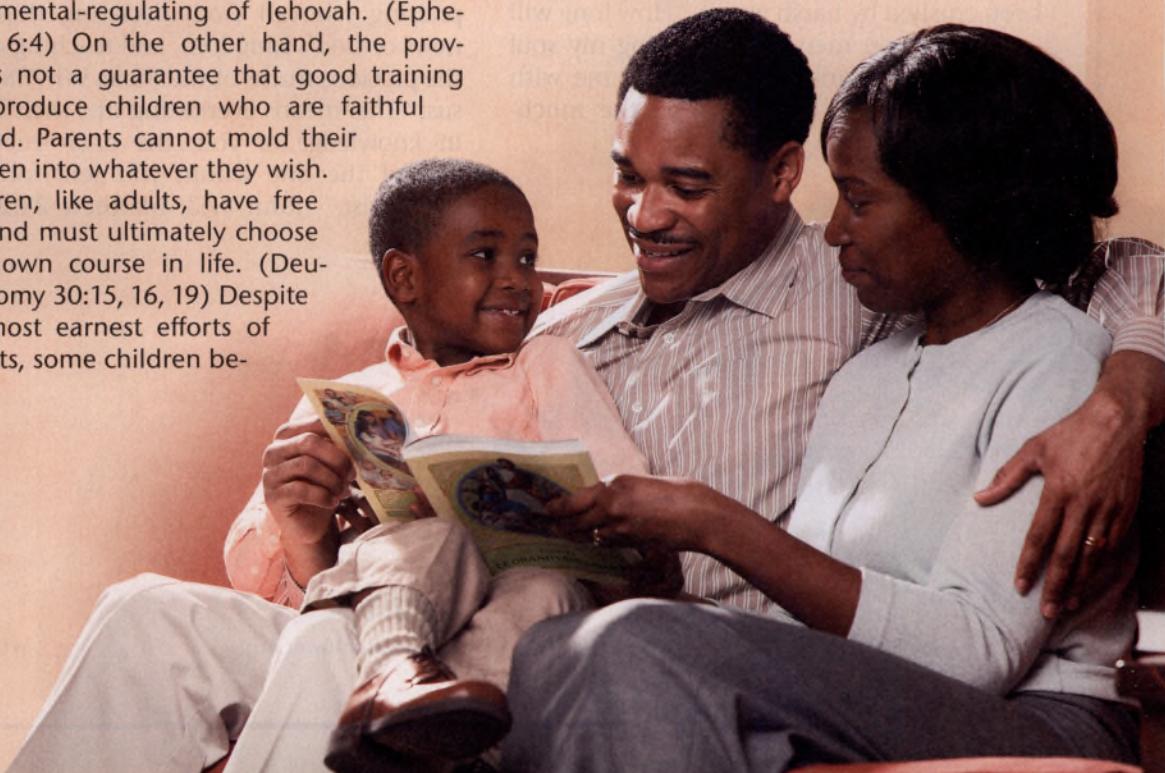
This verse reads: "Train up a boy according to the way for him; even when he grows old he will not turn aside from it." Just as the bending of a twig influences its growth into a tree, children who are properly trained are more inclined to continue to serve Jehovah when they grow up. As every parent knows, such training takes considerable time and effort. To make Christian disciples of their children, parents must carefully instruct, admonish, encourage, and discipline them as well as set a good example. They must do this consistently and lovingly for many years.

Does this mean, though, that if a child does turn away from serving Jehovah, parental training is at fault? In some cases, parents may have been deficient in their efforts to bring their children up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah. (Ephesians 6:4) On the other hand, the proverb is not a guarantee that good training will produce children who are faithful to God. Parents cannot mold their children into whatever they wish. Children, like adults, have free will and must ultimately choose their own course in life. (Deuteronomy 30:15, 16, 19) Despite the most earnest efforts of parents, some children be-

come unfaithful, as did Solomon, who wrote the verse we are considering. Even Jehovah had sons who proved unfaithful.

Thus, this scripture does not mean that in *every case* a child "will not turn aside from it" but that *generally speaking* this would be the result. What an encouragement this is to parents! Parents should take heart from knowing that their earnest efforts to train their children in the way of Jehovah will produce good results. Since their role is important and their influence is great, parents are encouraged to take their role seriously.—Deuteronomy 6:6, 7.

Even when children turn aside from serving Jehovah, parents who have been conscientious in training their children can entertain the hope that their children will come to their senses. Bible truth is powerful, and parental training is not quickly forgotten.
—Psalm 19:7.



The POWER of the TONGUE

THE tongue of the giraffe measures up to 18 inches long and is agile and powerful enough to pluck leaves off tree branches. The blue whale's tongue weighs as much as an elephant. Imagine the strength needed just to move it!

The human tongue pales in comparison in size, weight, and strength. Yet, it is far more powerful. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue," says the Bible of this small member of the human body. (Proverbs 18:21) Indeed, how many times have we heard of the human tongue's death-dealing power being wielded in fabricating lies and false testimonies that have brought ruination, even death, to innocent victims?

Likewise, longtime friendships have been dashed by hurtful remarks. Emotions have been crushed by harsh words. "How long will

you men keep irritating my soul
and keep crushing me with
words?" cried the much-

maligned Job. (Job 19:2) The disciple James gave a vivid picture of the destructive power of the unbridled tongue: "The tongue is a little member and yet makes great brags. Look! How little a fire it takes to set so great a woodland on fire! Well, the tongue is a fire."

—James 3:5, 6.

On the other hand, the power of the tongue can also be life-giving. Empathetic and consoling words have rescued some from depression and suicide. Sound advice, when heeded, has saved many drug abusers and street thugs from untimely death. Truly, the fruitage of a righteous one's tongue is "a tree of life," and "as apples of gold in silver carvings is a word spoken at the right time for it."

—Proverbs 15:4; 25:11.

The best use of the tongue, however, is in praising Jehovah God, declaring the good news of God's Kingdom, and teaching others the precious truths of the Bible. Why? Said Jesus: "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; Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20.

