

Awake!

JANUARY 2008

A close-up, profile photograph of a woman's face. She has long, dark brown hair and is looking down with a somber expression. Her chin is propped up by her hand, which is resting on her cheek.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

What Is the Bible's View?

**ALSO: WHAT DOES
HEADSHIP IN MARRIAGE
REALLY MEAN? PAGE 28**

Awake!

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By courtesy of
the Salzburg
Marionette
Theatre



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Many electronic games highlight violence and sexuality. How can a Christian discern which games are fit to play? How much time should he spend on them? Is there an alternative?

Where Puppets Perform Operas 8

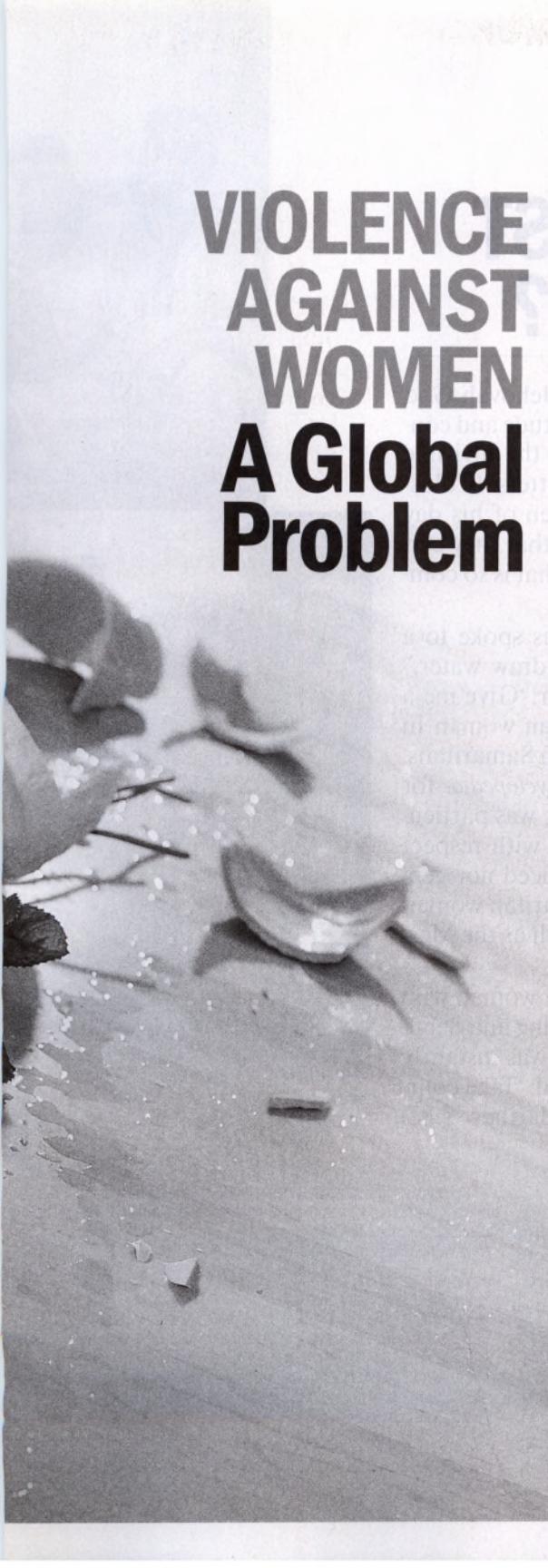
Come with us to Salzburg, Austria, to learn about puppet theater.



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

What Is the Bible's View? 3-7

Worldwide, women suffer violence and discrimination. Some religions even justify injustices against women. But what is God's viewpoint?



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN A Global Problem

NOVEMBER 25 is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This day was recognized by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1999 with a view to raising public awareness of violations of the rights of women. Why was this step deemed necessary?

In many cultures women are viewed and treated as inferior or as second-class citizens. Prejudices against them are deep-rooted. Gender-based violence in all its forms is an ongoing problem, even in the so-called developed world. According to former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, "violence against women is global in reach, and takes place in all societies and cultures. It affects women no matter what their race, ethnicity, social origin, birth or other status may be."

Radhika Coomaraswamy, former UN Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, says that for the vast majority of women, violence against women is "a taboo issue, invisible in society and a shameful fact of life." Statistics issued by a victimology institution in Holland indicate that 23 percent of women in one South American country, or about 1 in 4, suffer some form of domestic violence. Likewise, the Council of Europe estimates that 1 in 4 European women suffers domestic violence during her lifetime. According to the British Home Office, in England and Wales in one recent year, an average of two women each week were killed by current or former partners. The magazine *India Today International* reported that "for women across India, fear is a constant companion and rape is the stranger they may have to confront at every corner, on any road, in any public place, at any hour." Amnesty International describes violence against women and girls as today's "most pervasive human rights challenge."

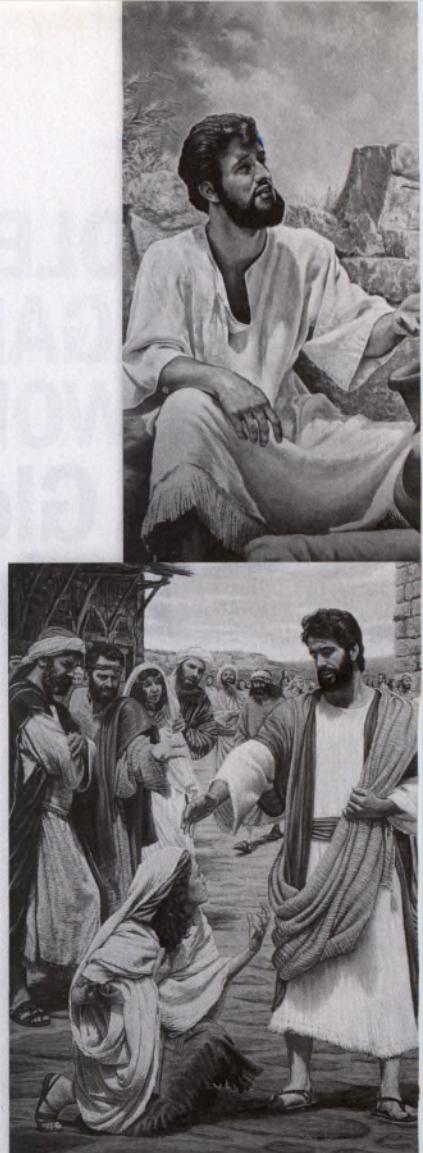
Do the statistics mentioned above reflect God's attitude toward women? This question will be discussed in the next article.

HOW DO GOD AND CHRIST VIEW WOMEN?

HOW can we have a complete picture of how Jehovah God views women? One way is to examine the attitude and conduct of Jesus Christ, who is “the image of the invisible God” and who reflects perfectly God’s view of matters. (Colossians 1:15) The dealings Jesus had with the women of his day show that Jehovah and Jesus respect women and that they certainly do not approve of the oppressive treatment that is so common in many lands today.

Consider, for example, the occasion when Jesus spoke to a woman at a well. “A woman of Samaria came to draw water,” says John’s Gospel account, and “Jesus said to her: ‘Give me a drink.’” Jesus was willing to talk with a Samaritan woman in public, even though most Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. According to *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, for Jews “conversation with a woman in a public place was particularly scandalous.” Jesus, however, treated women with respect and consideration and was neither racially prejudiced nor gender prejudiced. On the contrary, it was to the Samaritan woman that Jesus for the first time plainly identified himself as the Messiah.—John 4:7-9, 25, 26.

On another occasion Jesus was approached by a woman who for 12 years had been suffering from an embarrassing and debilitating flow of blood. When she touched him, she was instantly healed. “Jesus turned around and, noticing her, said: ‘Take courage, daughter; your faith has made you well.’” (Matthew 9:22)



An ailing
woman

Awake!®

THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today’s problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator’s promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

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A Samaritan woman



Mary Magdalene

According to the Mosaic Law, a woman in her condition was not supposed to be in a crowd of people, let alone touch others. Yet, Jesus did not berate her. Rather, he compassionately comforted her and addressed her as “daughter.” How that word must have put her heart at ease! And how happy Jesus must have been to cure her!

After Jesus was resurrected, his first appearance was to Mary Magdalene and another of his disciples, whom the Bible refers to as “the other Mary.” Jesus could have appeared first to Peter, John, or one of the other male disciples. Instead, he dignified women by allowing them to be the first eyewitnesses of his resurrection. An angel instructed them to inform Jesus’ male disciples about this astonishing event. Jesus said to the women: “Go, report to my brothers.” (Matthew 28:1, 5-10) Jesus was certainly not affected by the prejudices common to Jews of his day, according to which women could not serve as legal witnesses.

So, far from being biased against women or condoning chauvinistic attitudes toward them in any way, Jesus showed that he respected and appreciated women. Violence against them was completely contrary to what Jesus taught, and his attitude, we can be sure, was a perfect reflection of the way his Father, Jehovah, sees things.

Women Under Divine Care

“Nowhere in the ancient Mediterranean or Near East were women accorded the freedom that they enjoy in modern Western society. The general pattern was one of subordination of women to men, just as slaves were subordinate to the free, and young to old. . . . Male children were more highly esteemed than female, and baby girls were sometimes left to die by exposure.” That is how one Bible dictionary describes the prevailing attitude toward females in ancient times. In many cases, they were almost put on the same level as slaves.

The Bible was written at a time when customs reflected this attitude. Even so, divine law as expressed in the Bible showed a

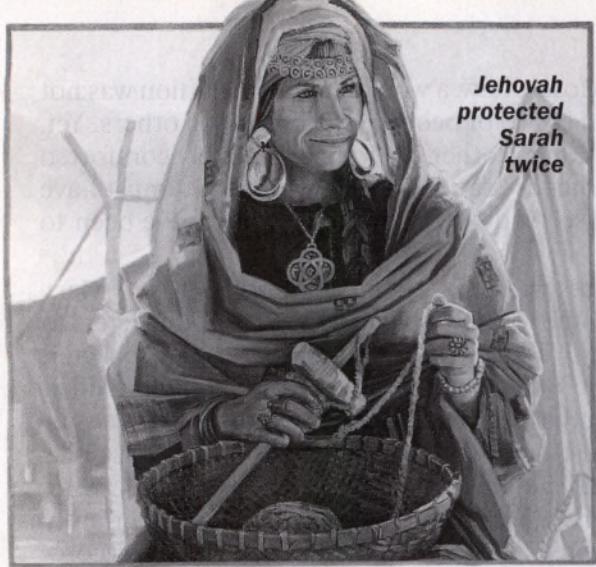
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[#] Audiocassettes also available.

⁺ CD also available.

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high regard for women, which was in marked contrast with the attitudes of many ancient cultures.

Jehovah's concern for the welfare of women is evident from the several instances in which he acted in behalf of his female worshippers. Twice he intervened to protect Abraham's beautiful wife, Sarah, from being violated. (Genesis 12:14-20; 20:1-7) God showed favor to Jacob's less-loved wife, Leah, by 'opening her womb,' so that she bore a son. (Genesis 29:31, 32) When two God-fearing Israelite midwives risked their lives to preserve Hebrew male children from infanticide in Egypt, Jehovah appreciatively "presented them with families." (Exodus 1:17, 20, 21) He also answered Hannah's fervent prayer. (1 Samuel 1:10, 20) And when the widow of a prophet faced a creditor who was about to take her children as slaves to pay off her debt, Jehovah did not leave her in

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

- Will We Ever Be Free of Crime?
- Does God Forgive Serious Sins?
- From Military Commander to "Soldier of Christ"

the lurch. Lovingly, God enabled the prophet Elisha to multiply her supply of oil so that she could pay the debt and still have sufficient oil for her family. She thus preserved her family and her dignity.—Exodus 22:22, 23; 2 Kings 4:1-7.

The prophets repeatedly condemned the exploitation of women or the use of violence against them. The prophet Jeremiah told the Israelites in Jehovah's name: "Render justice and righteousness, and deliver the one that is being robbed out of the hand of the defrauder; and do not maltreat any alien resident, fatherless boy or widow. Do them no violence. And do not shed any innocent blood in this place." (Jeremiah 22:2, 3) Later, the rich and powerful in Israel were condemned because they had evicted women from their homes and mistreated their children. (Micah 2:9) The God of justice sees and condemns as evil such suffering caused to women and their children.

The "Capable Wife"

An appropriate view of a capable wife is presented by the ancient writer of the Proverbs. Since this beautiful description of the role and the status of a wife was included in Jehovah's Word, we can be sure that he approves of it. Far from being oppressed or being viewed as inferior, such a woman is appreciated, respected, and trusted.

The "capable wife" of Proverbs chapter 31 is a vigorous and industrious worker. She works hard at what is "the delight of her hands" and engages in trade and even real estate transactions. She sees a field and proceeds to buy it. She makes undergarments and sells them. She gives belts to the tradesmen. She is vigorous in her strength and activity. Moreover, her words of wisdom and her loving-kindness are greatly appreciated. As a result, she is highly esteemed by her husband, by her sons and, most important, by Jehovah.

Women are not to be the oppressed victims of men who take advantage of them, mistreat

them, or subject them to abuse of any kind. Instead, the married woman is to be the happy and accomplished “complement” of her husband.—Genesis 2:18.

Assign Them Honor

When writing to Christian husbands about how they should treat their wives, the inspired writer Peter urged husbands to imitate the attitudes of Jehovah and Jesus Christ. “You husbands, continue . . . assigning them honor,” he wrote. (1 Peter 3:7) Assigning *honor* to a person implies that one values and respects such a one highly. Thus, the man who honors his wife does not humiliate her, downgrade her, or treat her violently. Rather, he demonstrates by his words and his deeds—in public and in private—that he cherishes and loves her.

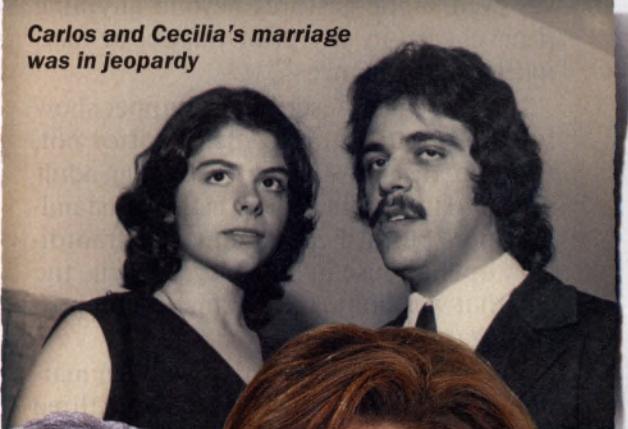
Honoring one’s wife certainly contributes to happiness in a marriage. Consider the example of Carlos and Cecilia. At a certain point in their married life, they often found themselves arguing without ever coming to a conclusion. At times, they just stopped talking to each other. They did not know how to resolve their problems. He was aggressive; she was demanding and proud. When they began studying the Bible and applying what they learned, however, things began to improve. Cecilia observes: “I realize that Jesus’ teachings and the example he left have transformed my personality and also my husband’s. Thanks to Jesus’ example, I have become more humble and understanding. I have learned to seek Jehovah’s help in prayer, as Jesus did. Carlos has learned to become more tolerant and show more self-control—to honor his wife as Jehovah desires.”

Their marriage is not perfect, but it has stood the test of

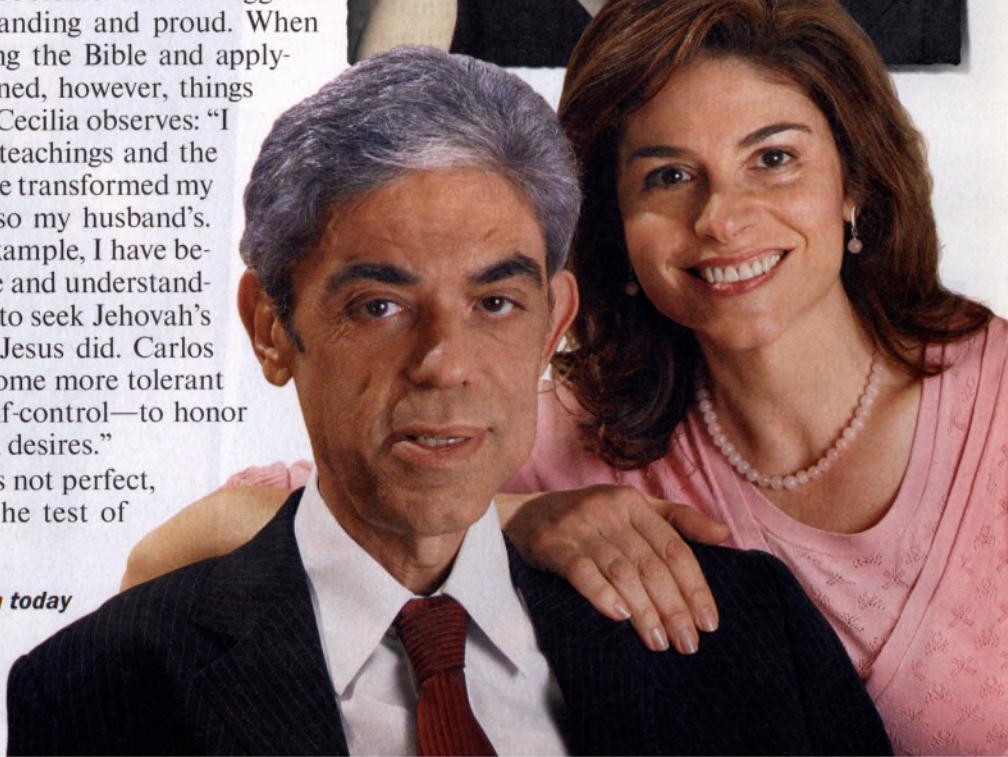
time. In recent years they have had to face serious difficulties—Carlos lost his job and had to undergo surgery for cancer. Yet, these upheavals have not shaken their marriage bond, which has grown even stronger.

Since mankind’s fall into imperfection, women in many cultures have been treated dishonorably. They have been physically, mentally, and sexually abused. But that is not the treatment Jehovah intended for them. The Bible record clearly shows that no matter what cultural views may prevail, all women should be treated with honor and respect. It is their God-given due.

Carlos and Cecilia's marriage was in jeopardy



Carlos and Cecilia today



WHERE PUPPETS PERFORM OPERAS

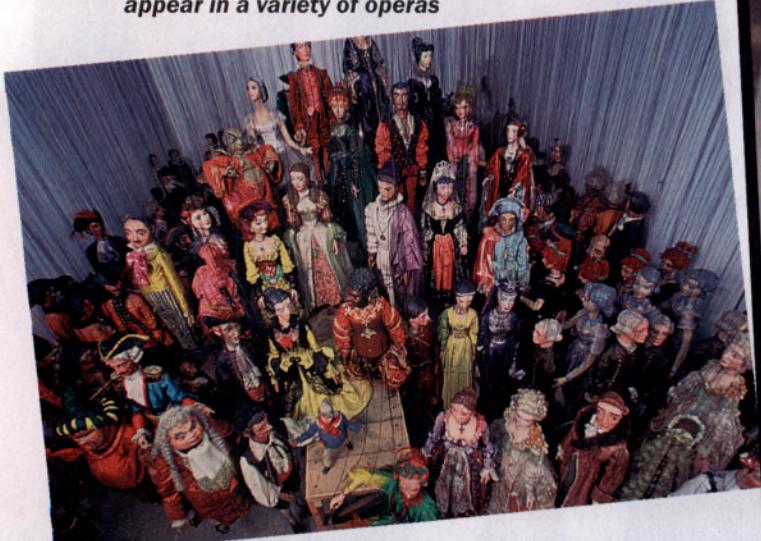
BY AWAKE! WRITER IN AUSTRIA

“YES, the music was beautiful, but the puppetry technique was amazing. The marionettes are able to convey even subtle gestures beyond anything [I have] seen in any prior puppet or marionette performances!"

Is the speaker describing a puppet show for young children? No. Believe it or not, those are the enthusiastic words of an adult visitor to the opera. Where is this outstanding opera performed? At a most extraordinary opera house in Salzburg, Austria, the city that was home to the famous composer Mozart.

But have you ever heard of wooden marionettes that are between two and three feet tall performing operas? The puppets of the Salzburg Marionette Theatre do just that. When they start dancing onstage, they

A full cast of marionettes are ready to appear in a variety of operas



inevitably enchant the audience, transporting them into another world—one of fantasy and captivating music.

A Fusion of Reality and Fantasy

As the overture plays and the curtain rises for the first act, the audience is sometimes taken aback by what they see. Are those really wooden marionettes crossing the stage and gesticulating as if they were singing arias? And what about all those



All photos on pages 8 and 9: By courtesy of the Salzburg Marionette Theatre





thin threads above the heads of the puppets? Some visitors may not be able to contain their disappointment, thinking, 'Everything is too visible—we can see it all!' What is more, the orchestra pit with its musicians is missing. The idea of simply playing prerecorded opera music seems to be bordering on bad taste. The inveterate opera visitor might well think indignantly, 'How awful!' But wait a minute! Slowly, almost imperceptibly, the audience undergoes a transformation.

Once the audience overcomes its initial skepticism, the marionettes begin to exercise their captivating charm. A fascinating fusion of reality and fantasy takes place. The silk threads that give life to the puppets are no longer noticed. The spectators are thrilled not only by the performance but also by the unusual idea of having marionettes onstage in a small opera house. Soon the idea no longer seems absurd, and the audience quickly forgets that they are watching lifeless marionettes. Yes, the puppets have the wondrous ability to thrill even skeptical spectators, whisking them off into the puppets' own little world.

Onstage and Backstage

The action backstage is almost as fascinating as that onstage. The real artists are the puppeteers behind the stage—or, better stated, above the stage—where they work from a bridge. While the puppeteers twist and turn their hands as if speaking a kind of sign language, the marionettes sing, cry, fight duels, or curtsey—just the way real opera singers would.

The New York Times once explained what makes this art so fascinating: "Backstage, the humans are free to take on any role of any age, of either sex; they must have only one quality, and that one in great measure: skill." And the skill with which the Salzburg puppeteers bring their marionettes to life is truly incredible.

The Salzburg Marionette Theatre



Puppets Instead of Lifeless Figures

The Salzburg Marionette Theatre has been a success for over 90 years—since 1913, when the company performed one of Mozart's operas for the first time. The founder of the theater was Anton Aicher, a sculptor. Aicher served his apprenticeship in Munich and then made marionettes that could perform exceptional true-to-life movements. He soon noticed that working with marionettes was much more enjoyable than carving motionless altar figures.

**Anton Aicher,
the founder**

By courtesy of the
Salzburg Marionette
Theatre



It did not take long before the rest of Aicher's family was enthralled by this kind of entertainment. His family eagerly helped to sew the clothes for the marionettes and assisted with the musical and speaking parts. So great was their success that the repertoire was soon enlarged. And from 1927 on, guest performances were given in other countries. These days the marionettes appear regularly in several countries, such as Japan and the United States. The public in all cultures appreciate marionette entertainment.

Entertainment for You?

Opera has been defined as “a drama set to mus[ic] to be sung with instr[umental] accomp[animent] by singers usually in costume.” (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music*) Opera librettos, or texts, have been based on mythology, history, Biblical accounts, and fiction. They can be tragic, romantic, or comic. Those performed in this marionette theater are usually in German or Italian. Therefore, it is wise to check a translation of the synopsis to determine if you would enjoy the work.

How can a Christian decide if a certain opera is worthy of his attention? Should he judge only by the fame of the singers? Or by the beauty of the music? Or by the story line that is the basis for the libretto?

Surely, as with all entertainment, the best way for a Christian to decide whether to listen to or watch an opera is to compare the synopsis with the criteria that the apostle Paul expressed: “Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue *there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is*, continue considering these things.”—Philippians 4:8.

HOW A FISHING VILLAGE BECAME A Metropolis

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN JAPAN

ON A beautiful summer day in August 1590, Ieyasu Tokugawa (right), who later became the first Tokugawa shogun,* set foot in the fishing village of Edo in eastern Japan. At that time "Edo had only a few hundred wretched houses, consisting of peasant and fishermen's cottages," notes the book *The Shogun's City—A History of Tokyo*. In the vicinity stood a neglected fortress built more than a century earlier.

This village, which was buried in obscurity for centuries, would not only become Tokyo, the capital of Japan, but also grow into a bustling megalopolis—over 12 million people live in the Tokyo metropolitan prefecture. Tokyo would go on to become a global force in technology, communications, transportation, and commerce, as well as the home of leading financial institutions. How did such an amazing transformation take place?

From Fishing Village to Shogun's City

For a century after 1467, warring feudal lords divided Japan into a number of fiefdoms. Finally, Hideyoshi Toyotomi, a feudal lord of humble origin, partially reunited the nation, becoming imperial regent in 1585. Initially, Ieyasu fought against the powerful Hideyoshi, but he later joined forces with him. Together, they laid siege to and captured

* The shogun was the hereditary commander of the Japanese army and exercised absolute rule under the leadership of the emperor.

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the castle at Odawara, the stronghold of the powerful Hōjō clan, and thus conquered the Kanto region in eastern Japan.

Hideyoshi granted Ieyasu the vast territory of eight provinces of Kanto, mostly former Hōjō domain, moving Ieyasu eastward from his original dominion. This was apparently a calculated move to keep Ieyasu far from Kyoto, where the emperor—the figurehead of Japan—lived. In spite of that, Ieyasu agreed, and he arrived in Edo as described at the outset. He set out to transform this humble fishing village into the center of his domain.

After the death of Hideyoshi, Ieyasu led a coalition of forces, mostly from eastern Japan, against forces from the west, and in 1600, within a day, he claimed victory. In 1603, Ieyasu was appointed shogun, becoming the de facto ruler of the nation. Edo now became the new administrative center of Japan.

Ieyasu ordered feudal lords to supply men and materials to complete a mammoth castle. At one time some 3,000 vessels were employed to carry the huge pieces of granite that had been quarried from the cliffs of the Izu Peninsula, about 60 miles to the south. When the granite was unloaded at the port, a team of a hundred men or more hauled the pieces to the construction site.

The castle, by far the largest in Japan, was completed 50 years later, during the reign of the third shogun, and it was an impressive symbol of the overpowering Tokugawa rule. Samurai, or warriors, who served the shogun settled around the castle. The shogun required that the feudal lords maintain mansions in Edo in addition to castles in their own domain.

To fill the needs of the core population of samurai, burgeoning groups of merchants and artisans gathered from around the country. By 1695—about a century after Ieyasu entered the area—Edo's population had grown to one million! It became the world's largest city of the time.

From the Sword to the Abacus

So effective was the shogunate government in keeping peace that the warrior class had

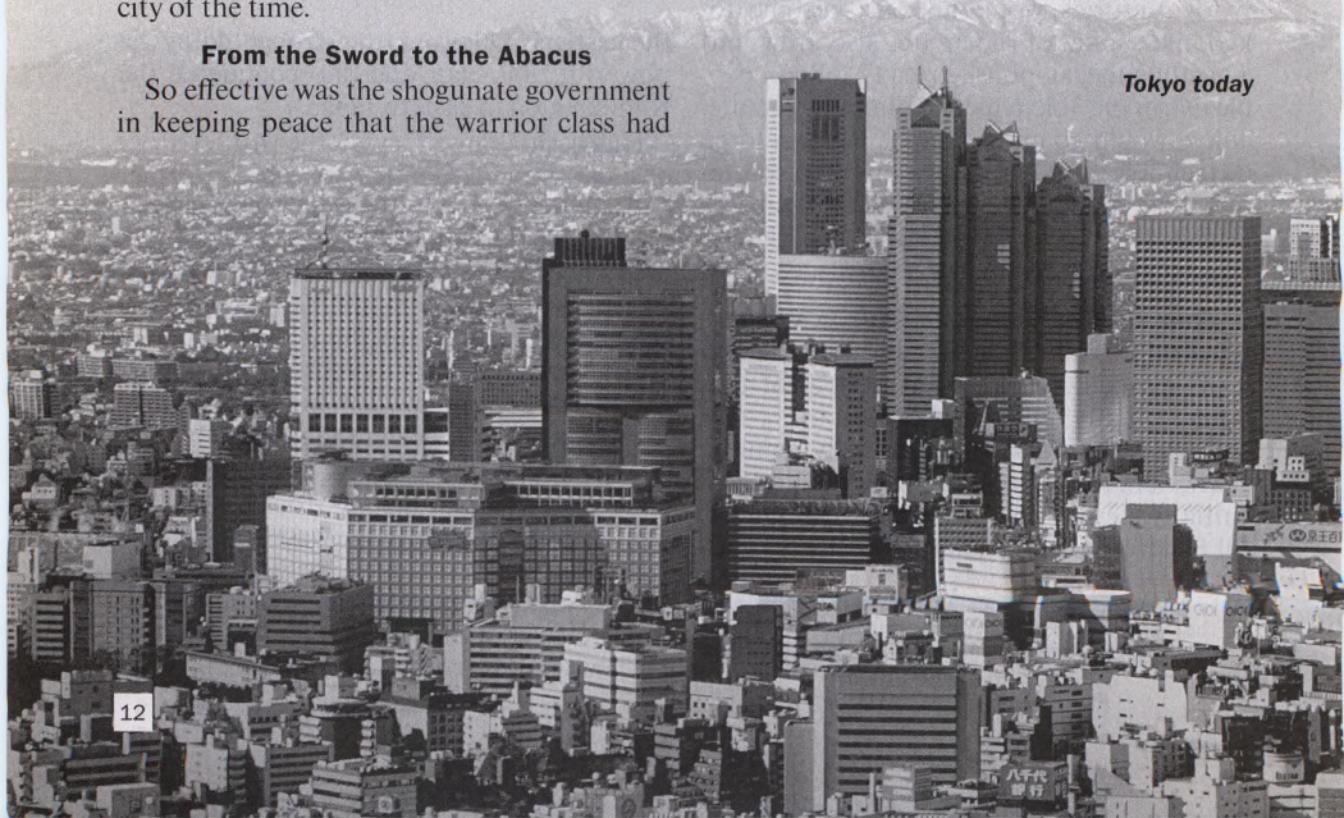
less to do. Of course, the samurai still boasted of their profession, but the power of the sword slowly gave way to that of the abacus, the manual calculator popular in the Orient. For more than 250 years, a period of peace continued. Civilians in general, especially the merchants, prospered materially and enjoyed greater independence. A unique culture developed.

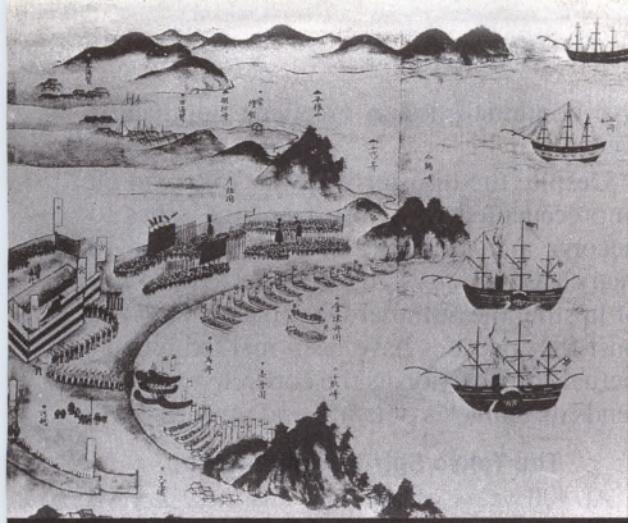
The population indulged in the famous Kabuki plays (historical dramas), Bunraku (puppet theater), and *rakugo* (comical storytelling). During the hot summer evenings, people gathered on the banks of the cool Sumida River, on which Edo was situated. They also viewed fireworks, a popular tradition that continues to this very day.

Edo, however, remained unknown to the rest of the world. For over 200 years, the nation was banned from having contact with foreigners with the exception of—on a very limited basis—the Dutch, the Chinese, and the Koreans. Then, one day,

Ken Usami/photodisc/age fotostock ▾

Tokyo today





The Mainichi Newspapers

an unexpected event changed the nature of the city and the nation.

From Edo to Tokyo

Off the coast of Edo, strange-looking vessels billowing black smoke suddenly appeared. Stunned fishermen thought that they were floating volcanoes! Wild rumors spread in Edo, resulting in a mass exodus.

Those vessels, a fleet of four ships led by Commodore Matthew C. Perry of the U.S.

Navy, cast anchor in Edo Bay on July 8, 1853 (left). Perry requested that the shogunate government open Japan for trade with his country. Through Perry's visit, the Japanese came to see how far Japan had lagged behind the rest of the world in military and technological development.

This triggered a chain of events that led to the downfall of the Tokugawa regime and the restoration of imperial rule. In 1868, Edo was renamed Tokyo, meaning "Eastern Capital," denoting its location as seen from Kyoto. The emperor moved his residence from the palace in Kyoto to the Edo castle, which was later converted into the new Imperial Palace.

Under the influence of Western culture, the new government embarked on the project of modernizing Japan. There was much catching up to do. Some refer to this period as miraculous. In 1869 a telegraph service between Tokyo and Yokohama was inaugurated. Soon, this was followed by the laying of the first railway line linking the two cities. Brick buildings suddenly sprang up amid the wooden houses. Banks, hotels, department stores, and restaurants were built. The first universities were established. Paved streets replaced



dirt roads. Paddle steamers sailed up and down the Sumida River.

Even the people looked different. The majority wore traditional kimonos, but more and more Japanese tried Western clothing. Men with mustaches took to top hats and walking sticks, while some of the women, in elegant dresses, learned to dance the waltz.

Beer joined sake as a favorite drink, and baseball came to compete with sumo wrestling as the nation's favorite sport. Tokyo, like a giant sponge, absorbed the cultural and political ideas of the day and made them its own. The city kept growing and growing—until one day disaster struck.

Rising From the Ashes

On September 1, 1923, while many were preparing their lunch, a violent earthquake rocked the Kanto area, followed by hundreds of minor quakes, including a severe tremor 24 hours later. Although the damage from the earthquake itself was devastating, even more destructive were the resulting fires that burned much of Tokyo to the ground. In all, over 100,000 people died, 60,000 of them in Tokyo.

The people of Tokyo took up the enormous task of rebuilding their city. After recovering to a certain extent, the city suffered additional major blows—air raids during World War II. Particularly devastating were the estimated 700,000 bombs that fell on the night of March 9/10, 1945, from midnight till about three in the morning. The buildings were mostly wooden, and the bombs—napalm and new incendiary devices containing magnesium and jellied gasoline—set fire to the overcrowded downtown area, killing more than 77,000 people. It was the single most destruc-

tive bombing mission involving nonnuclear weapons in history.

Despite the disaster postwar Tokyo, in an unprecedented way, rose from the ashes to become a city rebuilt. By 1964, less than 20 years later, the city had recovered to the point of hosting the Summer Olympic Games. The past four decades have been marked by perpetual construction as the concrete jungle extends its tentacles outward and upward.

The Tokyo Spirit to the Rescue

At 400 years of age, the city now known as Tokyo is by no means old when compared with other major cities of the world. Although there are some sections of the city that retain an air of bygone days, for the most part, very little remains of buildings and structures reflecting the past. A close look at the city, however, reveals a pattern that was conceived in the days of old Edo.

In the center of the metropolis is a huge plot of greenery. The Imperial Palace and its surrounding grounds now stand in the very same spot as the original Edo castle did. From here, radiating out like the strands of a spider's web, are the main roads leading from the city, reflecting the basic pattern of Edo. Even the haphazard layout of the streets forming a labyrinth throughout the city evokes images of the old Edo. In fact, the majority of the streets are not even named! In place of the gridlike pattern of blocks found in other major cities of the world, Tokyo has numbered lots of different shapes and sizes.

But more than anything else that remains is the Tokyo spirit—the ability to absorb what is new, especially foreign, and the resilience and determination to move forward in spite of earthquakes, a prolonged economic recession, and the challenges of overpopulation. Come and see for yourself the vibrant spirit of Tokyo—the small fishing village that has risen from obscurity to international prominence.

6. Jared—Luke 3:37.
7. sling. 4. Seth—Luke 3:38. 5. Enoch—Luke 3:38.
1. Goliath's sword. 2. Goliath's spear. 3. David's

ANSWERS TO PAGE 31

Gabon

A HAVEN FOR WILDLIFE

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN GABON

CAN you imagine a tropical beach where elephants graze by the seaside, hippos swim, and whales and dolphins gather offshore? On the African coast, there are 60 miles of beaches where such scenes are still common.

For such scenes to be enjoyed in the future, this unique coastal area would clearly need to be preserved. Happily, this conservation priority was addressed on September 4, 2002, when the president of Gabon announced that 10 percent of Gabon—including stretches of pristine coastline—would be set aside as national parks.

These wilderness areas, covering some 10,000 square miles—equivalent to the size of Belgium—have much to offer. “Gabon has the potential to become a natural mecca, attracting pilgrims from the four points of the compass in search of the last remaining natural wonders on earth,” noted President Omar Bongo Ondimba.

What makes these reserves so important? Some 85 percent of Gabon is still forested, and as many as 20 percent of its plant species are found nowhere else on earth. Furthermore, its equatorial forests offer a haven for lowland gorillas, chimpanzees, forest ele-

phants, and many other threatened species. The recently created parks will convert Gabon into an outstanding custodian of African biodiversity.

Loango—A Beach Like No Other

Loango National Park is possibly one of the most outstanding wildlife destinations in Africa. It conserves miles of unspoiled beaches fringed by freshwater lagoons and dense equatorial forest. But what really make Loango’s beaches unique are the animals that walk along the sand—hippos, forest elephants, buffalo, leopards, and gorillas.

Why does the beach attract those animals of the forest? Lining Loango’s white, sandy beaches are pastures where hippos and buffalo can graze. Rônier palm trees, which grow alongside the beach, produce abundant fruit that attracts forest elephants almost as much as ice cream attracts children. But most important of all is the solitude. The only footprints on the sand are those of animals.

The absence of human intrusion encourages the endangered leatherback turtles to choose these lonely beaches as a place to lay their eggs. Rosy bee-eaters have similar nesting tastes, and they excavate their colonial nests in the sand just a few yards above the high-water mark. During the summer months, over a thousand humpback whales congregate in Loango’s undisturbed waters to mate.

Two immense lagoons separate the beaches of Loango from the equatorial forest, and they provide an ideal habitat for crocodiles and hippos. Fish are plentiful in these inland

Robert J. Ross ▼



Humpback whale and an aerial view of Loango

seas, whose banks are lined with mangrove forests. African fish eagles and ospreys scour the open water of the lagoons, while several species of colorful kingfishers search for fish in the shallow waters. Elephants, who love water, happily swim across the lagoons to reach the beach and gorge on their favorite fruit.

Inside the equatorial forest, monkeys scamper along the upper branches of the canopy, while colorful butterflies glide around the sunny clearings. Fruit bats roost in their favorite trees during the day and then, during the night, go about their vital work of spreading seeds throughout the forest. At the forest edges, glittering sunbirds sip nectar from flowering trees and bushes. Understandably, Loango has aptly been described as "a place where you can experience the mood of equatorial Africa."

Lopé—One of the Gorillas' Last Stands

Lopé National Park includes large tracts of virgin rain forest, along with a patchwork of savanna and gallery forest in the north of the park. It is an ideal place for nature lovers who would like to observe gorillas, chimpanzees, or mandrills in the wild. There are between 3,000 and 5,000 gorillas roaming the 2,000 square miles of protected area.

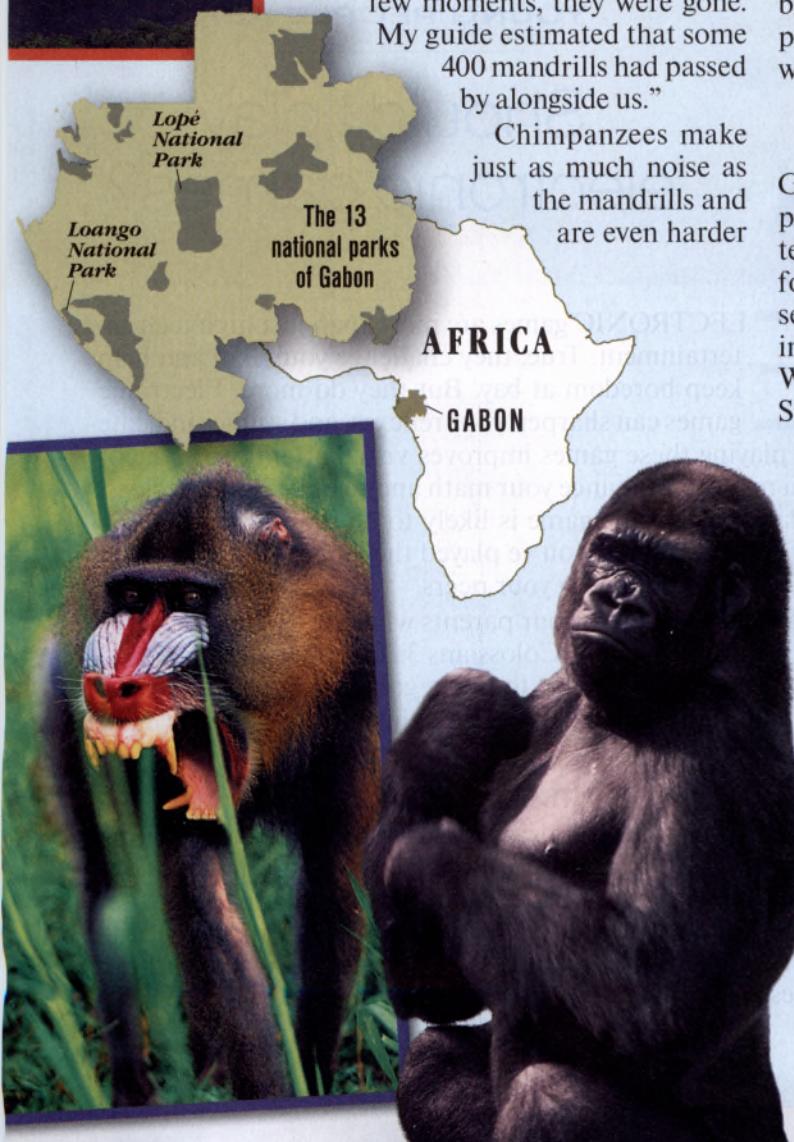
Augustin, a former park official, remembers a unique encounter with gorillas in 2002. "While walking in the forest, I came upon a family of four gorillas," he recalls. "The male, a huge silverback about 35 years old, towered over me. He must have weighed at least three times as much as I did. Following the recommended procedure, I immediately sat down, lowered my head, and looked at the ground in a sign of submission. The gorilla came and sat alongside me and put his hand on my shoul-



der. Then he got hold of my hand, opened it, and examined my palm. Once satisfied that I was no threat to his family, he ambled off into the jungle. On that memorable day, I discovered the fascination of coming into contact with animals in their natural habitat. Although people kill gorillas for bush meat or in the misguided belief that they are dangerous, they are peaceable animals that deserve our protection."

In Lopé, mandrills, large baboons, congregate in huge groups that occasionally number over a thousand animals. This is one of the largest gatherings of primates in the world, and it is certainly a noisy one. A visitor from Cameroon describes his experience with one of these huge groups.

"Our guide detected the mandrills, thanks to the radio collars that several animals wear. We moved ahead of the group, quickly erected a camouflaged blind, and awaited their arrival. For 20 minutes we listened to the music of the forest, performed by a host of birds and insects. This tranquillity was abruptly broken when the mandrill troop drew near. The sound of snapping branches and loud calls gave me the impression that a big storm was approaching. But when I spotted the [lead-



ers], they looked more like the advance guard of an army. The large males took the lead, walking briskly along the forest floor, while females and juveniles leaped from branch to branch above. Suddenly, one of the large males halted in his tracks and looked around suspiciously. A young mandrill that was moving along in the canopy had spotted us and sounded the alarm. The whole group accelerated its march, and the noise got even greater as they angrily shouted their annoyance. Within a few moments, they were gone. My guide estimated that some 400 mandrills had passed by alongside us."

Chimpanzees make just as much noise as the mandrills and are even harder

to spot as they move briskly through the forest in a constant search for food. On the other hand, visitors invariably see putty-nosed monkeys that sometimes bound along in the savanna bordering the forest. Perhaps the most reclusive resident of Lopé is the sun-tailed monkey, an endemic species that was only discovered about 20 years ago.

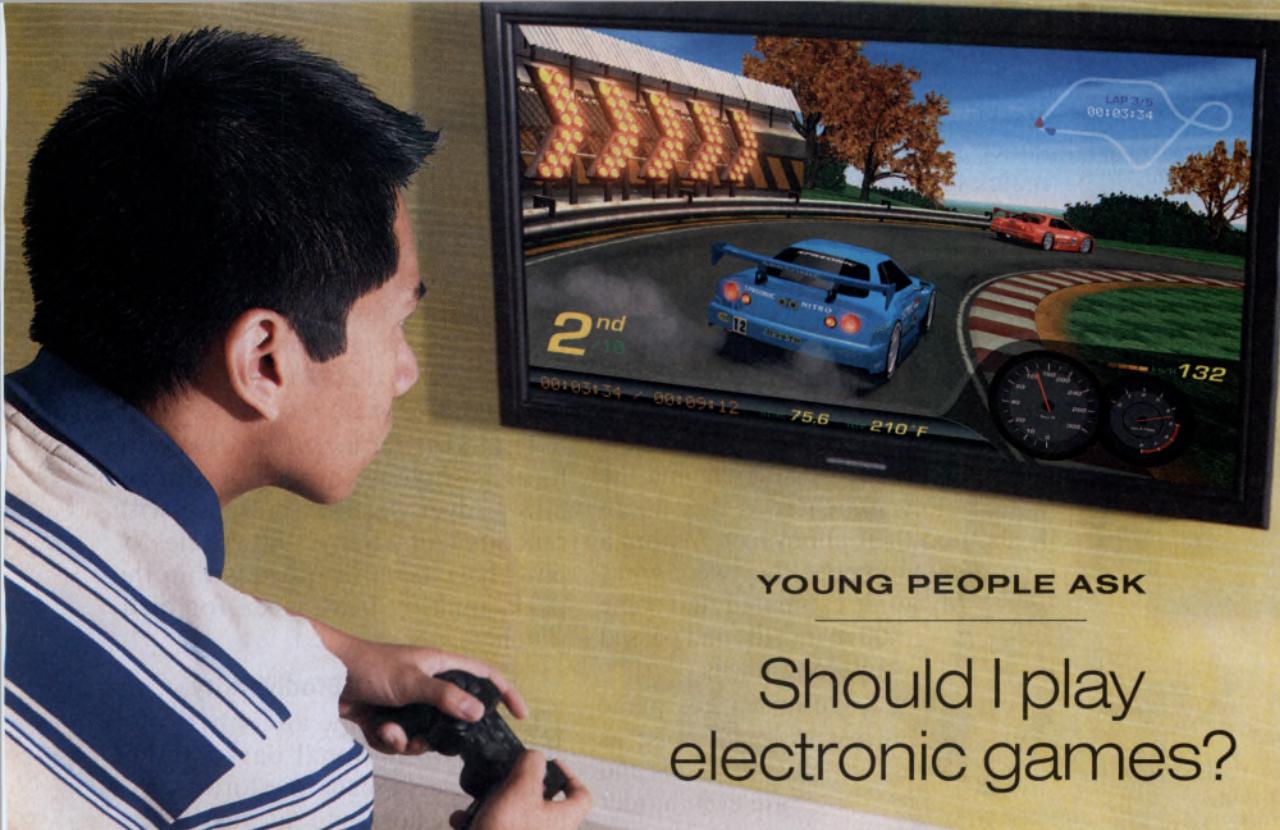
The large, colorful birds of the forest—such as turacos and hornbills—advertise their presence with raucous calls. Some 400 species of birds have been recorded within the park, making it a mecca for bird-watchers.

A Haven of Biodiversity

Loango and Lopé are only two of Gabon's 13 national parks. Other parks preserve mangrove forests, protect unique flora, and safeguard areas for migratory birds. "Gabon has set aside the best ecosystems found in the entire country," explains Lee White of the Wildlife Conservation Society. "It is not just the size but the quality of the areas conserved that matters. In 2002, they created overnight an optimum national park system, one that captures all the biodiversity of the country."

Of course, many challenges remain, as President Bongo Ondimba freely admits. "We are talking about a world-wide operation," he says, "that will doubtless involve both long and short term sacrifices, to enable us to achieve our ambition of leaving these wonders of nature to future generations."

A mandrill (left) and a gorilla (right)



YOUNG PEOPLE ASK

Should I play electronic games?

How often do you play electronic games?

- Rarely
- Once a week
- Every day

How much time do you spend when you play a game?

- A few minutes
- An hour or less
- More than two hours

What type of games do you like most?

- Car racing
- Sports
- First-person shooter
- Other

Write here the name of an electronic game that you know would *not* be good for you to play.

ELCTRONIC games are more than just high-tech entertainment. True, they challenge your skill and help keep boredom at bay. But they do more. Electronic games can sharpen your reflexes, and studies indicate that playing these games improves visual attention. Some of them may even enhance your math and reading skills. Besides, the latest electronic game is likely to be the topic of school-yard conversation. If you've played the game, you have something to talk about with your peers.

Of course, it's up to your parents whether you're allowed to play electronic games. (Colossians 3:20) If they permit you to do so, you should be able to find a game that is both exciting and morally acceptable. Why, though, do you need to be especially cautious?

Their Dark Side!

Sixteen-year-old Brian says, "Computer games are exciting and cool." But as you likely already know, not all games are harmless. Brian admits, "You get to do things in the game that you would never actually do in real life—not without getting into serious trouble, that is." What type of behavior do these games encourage?

Many games blatantly promote immorality, profanity, and violence—all condemned by the Bible. (Psalm 11:5; Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:8) Some games glorify occult practices. Adrian, 18, describes one popular game as featuring “gang wars, drug use, explicit sexual content, foul language, intense violence, blood, and gore.” And each new release seems to make previous games look tame in comparison. James, 19, says that the most popular of these games can be played live on the Internet. This ability takes gaming to a whole new level. “From your home computer,” says James, “you can challenge people who live on the other side of the world.”

Role-playing games have become hugely popular. In these, participants create online characters—whether human, animal, or a blend of both—that inhabit a computer-generated world populated by thousands of other players. This online world contains shops, cars, homes, dance clubs, brothels—in essence, it is a replica of the real world. The players in these games are able to instant message one another as their computer-generated characters, called avatars, interact.

What goes on in those virtual worlds? “Ordinary people indulge in activities they never would, or could, do in real life,” says one journalist. He adds: “Sex is commonplace, as is prostitution.” Just by pressing a few buttons, the players can make their avatars engage in sex acts while the real-world participants talk about sex via instant messaging. In addition, those worlds are “full of virtual crimes, Mafia men, pimps, extortionists, counterfeiters and assassins,” says the journal *New Scientist*. Another magazine reports that “critics have raised concerns about activities that would be illegal in the real world, such as the brothel that features rape fantasies, or people who indulge in sex acts using avatars that resemble children.”

Why Your Choice Matters

Those who play those violent or sexually graphic games may say: “No harm done. It’s not real. It’s just a game.” But don’t be fooled by such false reasoning!

The Bible says: “Even by his practices a boy makes himself recognized as to whether his

Choosing to play violent or immoral games is like choosing to play with radioactive waste—the damaging effects may not be immediately obvious, but they are inevitable

activity is pure and upright.” (Proverbs 20:11) If you make it a practice to play violent, immoral electronic games, could you be described as being pure and upright in mind? Studies repeatedly show that watching violent entertainment increases aggression in those who view it. *New Scientist* recently stated: “The interactive nature of video games means they have a stronger effect than TV.”

Choosing to play violent or immoral games is like choosing to play with radioactive waste—the damaging effects may not be immediately obvious, but they are inevitable. In what way? Exposure to high doses of radiation can destroy the lining of the stomach and allow bacteria from the intestines to invade the bloodstream, resulting in sickness. Similarly, exposure to graphic sex and hideous violence can damage your “moral sense” and allow fleshly desires to dominate your thinking and actions.—Ephesians 4:19; Galatians 6:7, 8.

What Game Should I Choose?

If your parents allow you to play any electronic games, how can you know which to choose and how much time to devote to them? Ask yourself the following questions:

■ **Will my choice offend Jehovah?** The type of game you choose can affect the way

God feels about you. "Jehovah himself examines the righteous one as well as the wicked one, and anyone loving violence His soul certainly hates," states Psalm 11:5. Regarding those who engage in occult practices, God's Word says: "Everybody doing these things is something detestable to Jehovah." (Deuteronomy 18:10-12) If we want to be friends of God, we need to follow the advice at Psalm 97:10: "You lovers of Jehovah, hate what is bad."

■ How will the game affect my thinking?

Ask yourself, 'Will playing this game make it easier or harder for me to "flee from fornication"?' (1 Corinthians 6:18) Games that expose you to sexually arousing images or conversations will not help you to keep your mind on things that are righteous, chaste, and virtuous. (Philippians 4:8) Amy, 22, says: "Many games desensitize you to things like violence, foul language, and immorality and can cause you to let down your guard in other aspects of life. You have to be very careful what you choose to play."

■ How much time will I spend playing the game?

Deborah, 18, says: "I don't think all computer games are bad. But they can be very time-consuming, almost addictive." Even the most innocent electronic games can consume a lot of time. So keep a log of how much time you spend gaming and then compare that with the amount of time you spend in other more essential activities. Doing so will help you to keep your priorities in order. —Ephesians 5:15, 16.

The Bible doesn't require that you spend your whole life studying or working. It re-

minds all of us that there is "a time to laugh . . . and a time to skip about." (Ecclesiastes 3:4) It is worth noting that the expression "to skip about" implies not only play but also physical activity. So why not use some of your free time to play games that involve physical activity instead of limiting yourself to sitting in front of a computer screen?

Choose Wisely

Without a doubt, playing electronic games can be fun, especially if you get good at it. And herein lies the very reason for you to choose your games wisely. Ask yourself, 'What subjects do I do best in at school?' Aren't they usually the ones that you enjoy? In fact, it often follows that the more you enjoy a subject, the greater the impression it makes on you. Now ask yourself: 'What electronic game do I enjoy the most? What moral lessons is this game teaching me?'

As a guide, why not write a brief review of each of the games you want to play, outlining the goal of the game and the methods used to achieve that goal? Compare your review with the Bible principles mentioned in this article, and then determine if the game is suitable.

Rather than playing a game just because your peers play it, have the strength to make your own informed choice. Most important of all, apply the Bible's advice: "Keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord." —Ephesians 5:10.

More articles from the "Young People Ask" series can be found at the Web site
www.watchtower.org/ype

TO THINK ABOUT

- What would you say if a friend invited you to play a violent or immoral electronic game?
- How can you make sure that playing electronic games doesn't interfere with more important activities?

A NOTE TO PARENTS

As you may have concluded after reading the preceding article, electronic games have come a long way since you were a teen. As a parent, how can you help your child identify the potential dangers and avoid them?

Little good will be accomplished by condemning the entire industry or by dogmatically asserting that electronic games are a complete waste of time. Remember, not *all* games are bad. However, they can be addictive and time-consuming. So take time to analyze the amount of time your child spends playing these games. Also, consider the type of games to which your child seems attracted. You could even ask your child such questions as these:

- **Which game is the most popular among your classmates?**
- **What happens in the game?**
- **Why do you think the game is so popular?**

You might find that your child knows more about electronic games than you thought! Perhaps he or she has even played games that you feel are objectionable. If that is the case, do not overreact. This is an opportunity for you to help your child develop perceptive powers.—Hebrews 5:14.

Ask questions that will help your child determine *why* the attraction to objectionable games

exists. For example, you could ask a question like this:

- **Do you feel left out because you aren't allowed to play that particular game?**

As brought out on the first page of the preceding article, youths may play a certain game so that they will have something to talk about with their peers. If this is so with your child, you will likely not address the situation the way you would if you found that your child was attracted to games containing gory violence or sexual overtones.—Colossians 4:6.

But what if your child *is* attracted to the negative elements of a game? Some youths may quickly insist that they aren't affected by computer-generated gore. 'Just because I do it onscreen doesn't mean I'll do it in real life,' they reason. If that's how your child feels, draw his or her attention to Psalm 11:5, as quoted on page 20. As the wording of the scripture makes clear, it is not just *being* violent that merits God's disapproval but *loving* violence does too. The same principle applies to sexual immorality or any other vice that God's Word condemns. —Psalm 97:10.

Some experts recommend the following:

- **Do not allow electronic games to be played in a secluded area, such as the bedroom.**
- **Set ground rules (for example, no games before finishing homework or dinner or some other essential activity).**
- **Emphasize the value of alternative activities that require physical exertion.**
- **Watch your children play their electronic games—or, better yet, play with them at times.**



Of course, to guide your children in the matter of entertainment, you need to have freeness of speech. So ask yourself, 'What kind of TV shows and movies do I watch?' Make no mistake—if you have a double standard, your children will know it!

THE Bridge THAT KEPT COMING BACK

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN BULGARIA

STRADDLING the Osüm River in north-central Bulgaria is the covered bridge of Lovech. Much like the people it serves, this magnificent structure has a rich history.

One of the first to draw attention to the bridge was Austrian geologist Ami Boué, who visited Lovech during the first half of the 19th century. He wrote about "a stone bridge, covered and decorated with small shops." Yes, this unique bridge was part of Lovech's transportation system, connecting the two parts of the town, and it also served as a market! As such, it was a landmark of the community.

Originally, the covered bridge of Lovech was built, not of stone, but of wood. Over the years, however, the span was repeatedly damaged by floodwaters and had to be rebuilt. Finally, in 1872, the bridge was completely washed away, depriving the townspeople of this vital link.

Restoring the bridge would not be easy. Therefore, the famed Bulgarian builder Kolyo Ficheto was hired to design and build a new and stronger bridge.

An Innovative Design

Ficheto decided to stick with the original concept and design a covered bridge with small shops on it. To support the 275-foot-long by 33-foot-wide bridge, he added elliptical piers. These 15-foot-high footings,

whose narrow edges pointed upstream, had an innovative feature. Situated at midpoint and extending up near the top of the piers were openings to allow floodwaters to pass through the piers. On top of the piers, Ficheto laid solid oak beams and planks. The remainder of the structure, including the 64 shops arranged on both sides of the street, was made of beech. The roof was likewise made of beech and lined with sheet iron.

Another interesting feature of Ficheto's design is that he preferred to connect the bridge's support beams with wooden plugs and joints rather than with iron fittings and forged nails. The street was finished by paving the wood subfloor with stone and then overlaying it with gravel. During the day, small side windows and openings in the roof allowed natural daylight to filter in. During the evening, gas lanterns were lit. Altogether, the design and construction of the new bridge took about three years to complete [1].

Life on the Bridge

What was life like on the bridge? Notice the description by one eyewitness: "Sellers, passersby, and onlookers, who were rarely disturbed by a passing car, horse cart, or loaded donkey, mixed their voices with the noise from the tinsmiths . . . and the cries of the vendors, who offered their wares with loud voices. The bridge had its own inner life. The many colorful little shops, filled to the



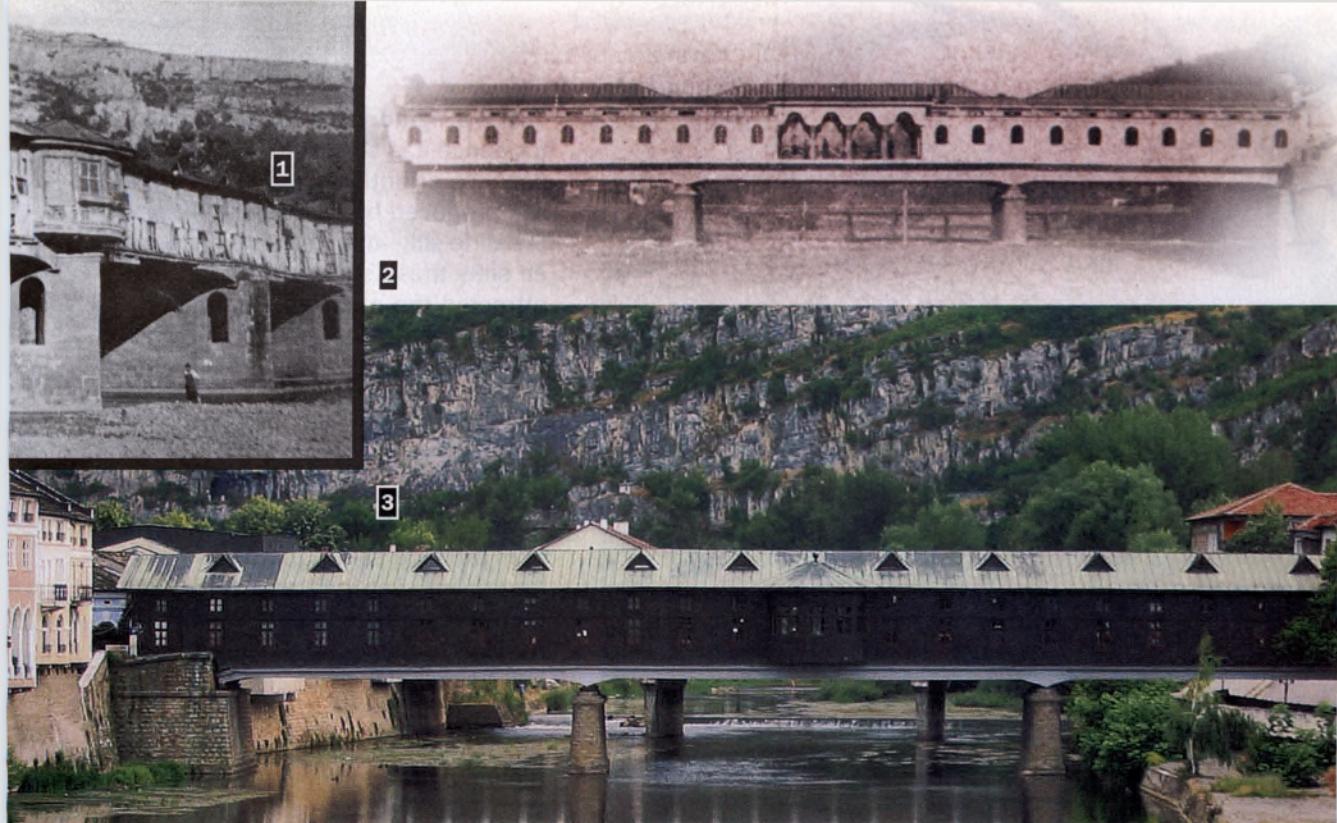


Photo 2: From the book Lovech and the Area of Lovech

brim with woolen braiding, beads, and various goods, had their own rhythm and traditions."

Besides doing their shopping on the covered bridge, people gathered there for entertainment, since many storekeepers doubled as musicians. The eyewitness quoted earlier added: "In the barber shop, there were five or six barbers who, besides being barbers, were also good musicians, primarily playing stringed instruments. They often found some free time to play, and the patrons were pleased to wait for them to finish." Following the first world war, some of the barbers became the founders of the so-called Barber's Orchestra.

Tragedy Strikes

For half a century, Ficheto's covered bridge endured floods, wars, and other calamities. But on the night of August 2/3, 1925, huge flames lit up the sky around Lovech as the town's picturesque bridge caught fire and was

reduced to ashes. How did it happen? To this day no one is certain whether the fire was the result of negligence or arson. Whatever the case, Lovech was once again without a bridge to connect its shores.

In 1931 a new covered bridge was completed, along with small shops and workshops that bordered the street [2]. However, rather than fashion the bridge out of wood and stone, the new builder used steel and concrete. The overall design was very different from Ficheto's. The roof was made of glass, and a section of the center span had no outside walls. In 1981/82, the bridge was rebuilt according to Kolyo Ficheto's original design [3].

The covered bridge of Lovech is a symbol of the town and an expression of an artisan's achievement. Today the bridge continues to attract the interest of residents and visitors alike as they walk on the bridge that is lined with shops.



WAS IT DESIGNED?

Spider Silk

■ It is lighter than cotton, yet ounce for ounce it is stronger than steel. For decades scientists have studied the silk produced by orb-weaving spiders. Dragline silk—the strongest of the seven silks these spiders can spin—has attracted the most attention. It is tougher and more waterproof than silkworm strands, which are commonly used in clothing.

Consider: The manufacture of industrial fibers such as Kevlar requires high temperatures and the use of organic solvents. In contrast, spiders produce silk at room temperature, using water as a solvent. Furthermore, dragline silk is tougher than Kevlar. If enlarged to the size of a football field, a web of dragline silk could stop a jumbo jet in flight!

Not surprisingly, researchers are intrigued by the toughness of dragline silk. "Scientists would like to exploit that property in items ranging from bulletproof vests to suspension cables for bridges," writes Aimee Cunningham in *Science News* magazine.

But replicating dragline silk is not easy, for the material is made inside the spider's body and the process is not yet fully understood. "It's humbling to realize that a lot of very smart people are trying to replicate what the spiders in our basements can do naturally," says biologist Cheryl Y. Hayashi, quoted in *Chemical & Engineering News* magazine.

What do you think? Did the spider and its strong-as-steel silk come about by chance, or is this the work of an intelligent Creator?



**Microscopic view
of spider silk being
secreted**

Copyright Dennis Kunkel
Microscopy, Inc.

IT IS the saltiest, the lowest, the deepest and, for some, the most healthful body of water on earth. Over the centuries it has been called the Stinking Sea, the Devil's Sea, and the Lake of Asphalt. The Bible calls it the Salt Sea and the sea of the Arbah. (Genesis 14:3; Joshua 3:16) A tradition confirmed by many scholars maintains that the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah are deep under its waters. So it is also known as the Sea of Sodom or the Sea of Lot, who was a Bible character involved in the ancient drama of those cities.—2 Peter 2:6, 7.

Some of those names do not exactly conjure up the idea of a pleasant place to visit. Yet, each year thousands of people are drawn to this unusual body of water, today commonly known as the Dead Sea or Salt Sea. Why is it so salty? Is it really dead, and are its waters healthful at the same time?

The Lowest and Saltiest Sea

The Dead Sea is situated on the northern part of the Great Rift Valley fault line, which extends southward into East Africa. The Jordan River snakes its way down from the north until it reaches the lowest surface point on earth—approximately 1,370 feet below sea level. There the inland sea is flanked by the rift walls—the Judean hills to the west and the mountains of Moab in Jordan to the east.

But what makes the Dead Sea so salty? Salts—mainly magnesium, sodium, and calcium chlorides—are washed into the Dead Sea in water flowing from the Jordan River and other smaller rivers, streams, and springs. It is estimated that the Jordan River alone deposits an incredible 850,000 tons of salt each year. Because the sea is at such a low point, the water cannot drain out; the only way for it to escape is by evaporation. On a hot summer

A SEA OF SUPERLATIVES But Dead!

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN ISRAEL



day, an enormous seven million tons of water evaporates, which explains why the volume of the lake does not increase. Although the water disappears, the salts and the minerals are left behind. This results in the saltiest sea on earth, with a salinity of about 30 percent, several times saltier than the oceans.

From antiquity, people have been intrigued by the unique characteristics of the Dead Sea. Greek philosopher Aristotle heard that the Sea was “so bitter and salt[y] that no fish [lived] in it.” The unusually high concentration of salt results in a density that creates increased natural buoyancy, making it easy for even nonswimmers to stay afloat. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus tells of how Roman General Vespasian put this phenomenon to the test by throwing his prisoners of war into the sea.

At this point you may be wondering how this body of water can be dead and yet healthful.

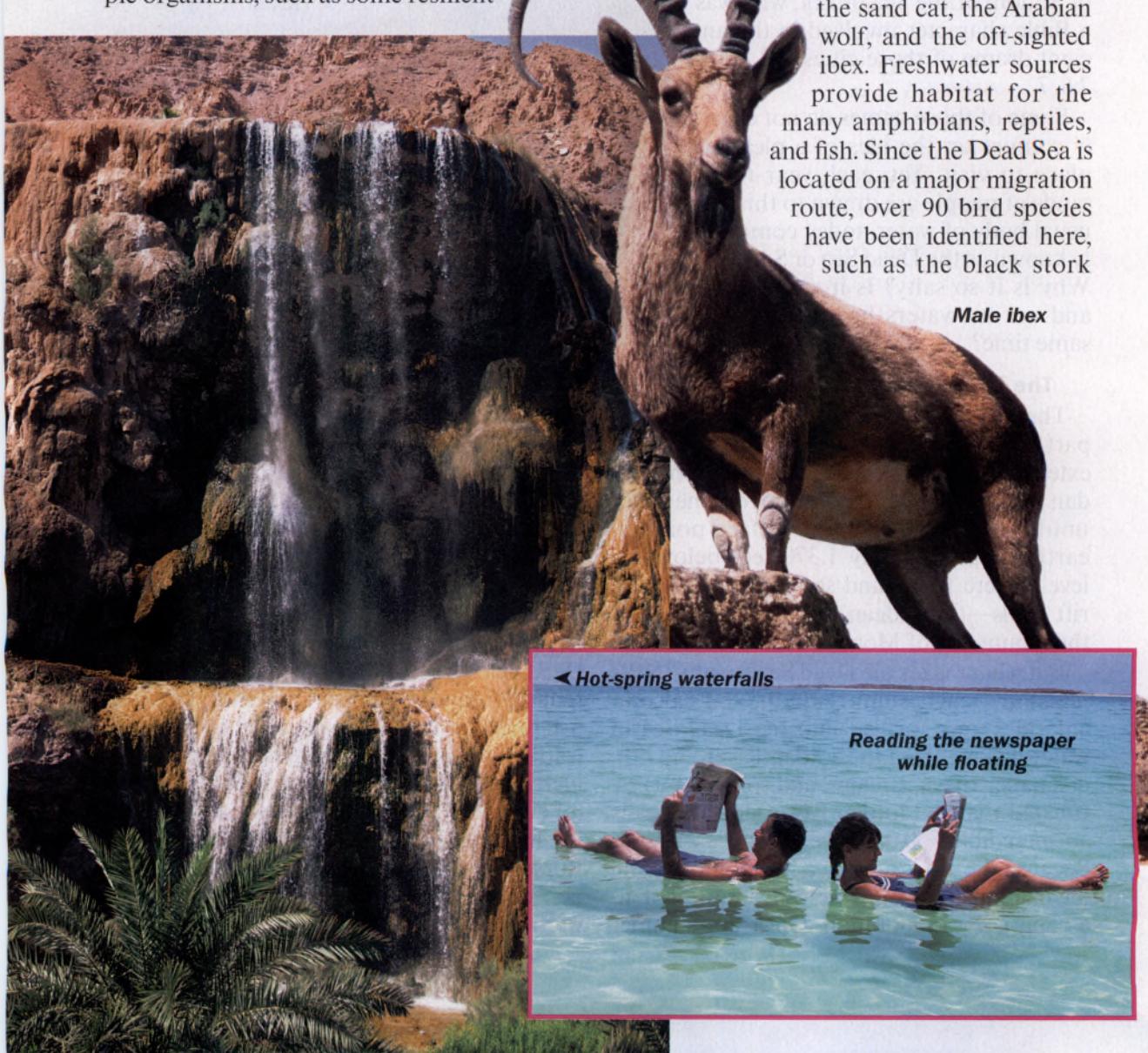
The Most Healthful Sea?

Medieval travelers brought home tales of a sterile sea with no birds, no fish, and no vegetation. It was even thought that the smelly vapors from the lake were deadly. This, of course, propagated the idea of a stinking sea that was dead. It is true that because of its high salinity, only simple organisms, such as some resilient

forms of bacteria, can survive in its waters and any unfortunate fish that are swept into the sea with incoming water quickly expire.

The sea is unable to support life, but the same cannot be said of the surrounding region. Though much of the area is barren, there are pockets of land that stand out as lush oases with waterfalls and tropical plants. The region is also recognized as a flourishing wildlife habitat. There are 24 species of mammals living near the sea, including the sand cat, the Arabian wolf, and the oft-sighted ibex. Freshwater sources provide habitat for the many amphibians, reptiles, and fish. Since the Dead Sea is located on a major migration route, over 90 bird species have been identified here, such as the black stork

Male ibex



◀ Hot-spring waterfalls

Reading the newspaper while floating

and the white stork. The griffon vulture and the Egyptian vulture can also be spotted here.

But how is the Dead Sea the most healthful body of water? In ancient times people were said to drink the water, believing that it had curative properties—something that is obviously not recommended today! More reasonably, the salt water is said to have a cleansing effect on the body. The therapeutic benefits of the whole region are also highly extolled. The low altitude creates a naturally oxygen-enriched atmosphere. The high concentration of bromide in the air is said to have a relaxing effect, and the mineral-rich black mud and hot sulfur springs along the shores are both used to treat a number of skin ailments and arthritic disorders. Furthermore, balsam, a tree that used to grow in the area, has always been valued and used for cosmetic and medicinal purposes.

Asphalt From the Sea

One of the strangest phenomena of the Dead Sea is its discharge of bitumen (asphalt), which has occasionally been seen floating to the surface in lumps.* In 1905 the periodical *The Biblical World* re-

* Petroleum-derived bitumen is also called asphalt. However, in many places asphalt refers to bitumen mixed with mineral aggregates such as sand or gravel, often used in the paving of roads. For the purpose of this article, we have used bitumen and asphalt interchangeably to indicate the crude product.

ported that a piece of bitumen weighing about 6,000 pounds had floated ashore in 1834. Bitumen has been described as "the first petroleum product ever used by the human race." (*Saudi Aramco World*, November/December 1984) Some people used to think that earthquakes caused chunks to break away from the bed of the Dead Sea and then float to the surface. It is more likely that the asphalt filters up through diapirs or cracks and reaches the sea bottom together with salt rock structures. Then, when the salt rocks melt, blocks of asphalt surface.

Over the centuries bitumen has been used in various ways—as waterproofing for boats, in construction, and even as an insect repellent. It is thought that about the middle of the fourth century B.C.E., Egyptians started to make abundant use of bitumen for mummification, although this belief is challenged by some experts. At that time the Nabataeans, an ancient nomadic people who settled in the area of the Dead Sea, monopolized the trade in the region. They brought the bitumen ashore, cut it up, and then took it to Egypt.

The Dead Sea is truly a sea of superlatives. It is no exaggeration to describe this sea as the saltiest, the lowest, the deadliest, and perhaps the most healthful sea. Certainly it is one of the most interesting seas on our planet!

Photograph © Israel Museum, Courtesy of Israel Antiquities Authority ▼

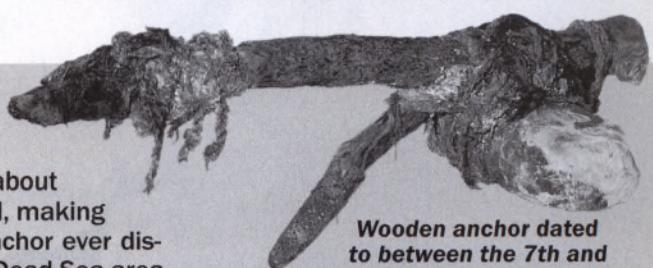
PRESERVED IN BRINE

Historians report that the Dead Sea was once a bustling trade route—a claim that has been backed up by the recent discovery of two wooden anchors.

These anchors were found on the receding shores of the Dead Sea, close to where the ancient harbor of En-gedi was once located. One anchor is

thought to be about 2,500 years old, making it the oldest anchor ever discovered in the Dead Sea area. The second one is thought to be about 2,000 years old and is believed to have been crafted with the best Roman technology of the time.

Wooden anchors usually decompose in normal seawater,



Wooden anchor dated to between the 7th and the 5th centuries B.C.E.

and the metal ones last. Yet, the lack of oxygen in the Dead Sea and its salinity have preserved the wood and attached ropes, which are in remarkably good condition.



What Does Headship in Marriage Really Mean?

IN MANY lands wedding ceremonies traditionally include the exchanging of vows in which the bride promises to obey her husband. Still, many women chafe at the idea of male headship in marriage. Consider what the Bible teaches about this topic. You will find that its position is balanced and practical.

Headship as Defined by God

The Bible's basic description of headship is found at Ephesians 5: 22-24: "Let wives be in subjection to their husbands as to the Lord, because a husband is head of his wife as the Christ also is head of the con-

Headship exercised according to Christ's example leads to joy and satisfaction for both partners

gregation . . . In fact, as the congregation is in subjection to the Christ, so let wives also be to their husbands in everything." As the "head of his wife," the husband is to take the lead in the family, with the wife following his lead and respecting his headship.—Ephesians 5:33.

A husband's authority is limited by his own subjection to God and Christ. He is not empowered to direct his wife to break God's laws or to compromise her own Bible-trained conscience. Within these limitations, however, God has assigned him the responsibility of making important decisions for the family.—Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 11:3.

The Bible commands the husband to exercise his headship unselfishly, putting his wife's benefit ahead of his own. Ephesians 5:25 says: "Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it." A husband who follows Christ's supreme example of love rejects a self-centered exercise of headship.

Further, the Bible instructs a man to dwell with his wife "according to knowledge." (1 Peter 3:7) This involves more than a mere awareness of the physical and emotional differences between men and women. He should gain an understanding of his wife's needs.

"She Is Your Partner"

Does a wife's subjection require her to be completely passive? Consider Sarah, cited in the Bible as an example of obedience to her husband, Abraham. (1 Peter 3:5, 6) She subjected herself to him in matters large and small, from leaving a comfortable home for a nomadic life in tents to preparing a meal on

short notice. (Genesis 12:5-9; 18:6) In connection with a serious matter, however, she repeatedly expressed a view contrary to Abraham's. This occurred when she wanted him to dismiss his concubine, Hagar, and his firstborn son, Ishmael, from the household. Instead of reproving Sarah, God told Abraham to "listen to her voice." Meanwhile, Sarah continued to subject herself to Abraham by waiting for him to act instead of trying to drive out Hagar and Ishmael herself.—Genesis 21:8-14.

Sarah's example shows that rather than merely living in her husband's shadow, the wife is to be her husband's "partner," holding a place of honor. (Malachi 2:14) As his partner, she provides valuable input concerning family decisions and is given a measure of authority in the family, often managing many household and even some financial matters. Of course, as the family head, the husband is responsible for making final decisions.—Proverbs 31:10-31; 1 Timothy 5:14.

Respect for the Author

Jehovah God created man and woman, and he created marriage as a sacred union between them. (Genesis 2:18-24) He also specified roles for husband and wife that will bring them the greatest joy.—Deuteronomy 24:5; Proverbs 5:18.

As the Originator of marriage, Jehovah has both the right and the ability to set standards for the marital arrangement. Marriage mates who fulfill their respective roles and follow God's headship arrangement, not just for its practicality but also out of respect for his divine authority, receive his favor and support.

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- Who set the perfect example of headship?—Ephesians 5:25.
- Does God limit a husband's authority?—1 Corinthians 11:3.
- What is the purpose of marriage and the headship arrangement?—Proverbs 5:18.

More Harm Than Good

A few years ago, Dutch politicians and environmentalists thought that they had found the key to sustainable energy—running generators on biofuel, notably palm oil. Their hopes became “an environmental nightmare,” says *The New York Times*. “Rising demand for palm oil in Europe brought about the clearing of huge tracts of Southeast Asian rainforest and the overuse of chemical fertilizer there.” Plantations were created by draining and burning peatland, sending “huge amounts” of carbon gases into the atmosphere. As a result, says the *Times*, Indonesia fast became “the world’s third-leading producer of carbon emissions that scientists believe are responsible for global warming.”

“Doomsday Clock” Advances

The doomsday clock, conceived by the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists (BAS)* to illustrate how close mankind is to nuclear disaster, has been advanced two minutes, to read five minutes before midnight—the “figurative end of civilization.” The clock has only been reset 18 times in its 60-year history. The last change was in February 2002, after the World Trade Center attacks in New York. Continued development and presence of nuclear weapons as well as failure to make nuclear materials secure are “symptomatic of a failure to solve the problems posed by the most destructive technology on Earth,” said a *BAS* statement. Moreover, it continued, “the dangers posed

■ “The average six-year-old child in Britain will have spent a full year watching television and more than half of three-year-olds have a TV in their bedroom.”—*THE INDEPENDENT, BRITAIN*.

■ In China, 31.4 percent of people above 16 years of age who were polled described themselves as religious. If that is representative of the whole nation, this finding would indicate that “about 300 million are religious . . . in sharp contrast to the official figure of 100 million.”—*CHINA DAILY, CHINA*.

by climate change are nearly as dire as those posed by nuclear weapons.”

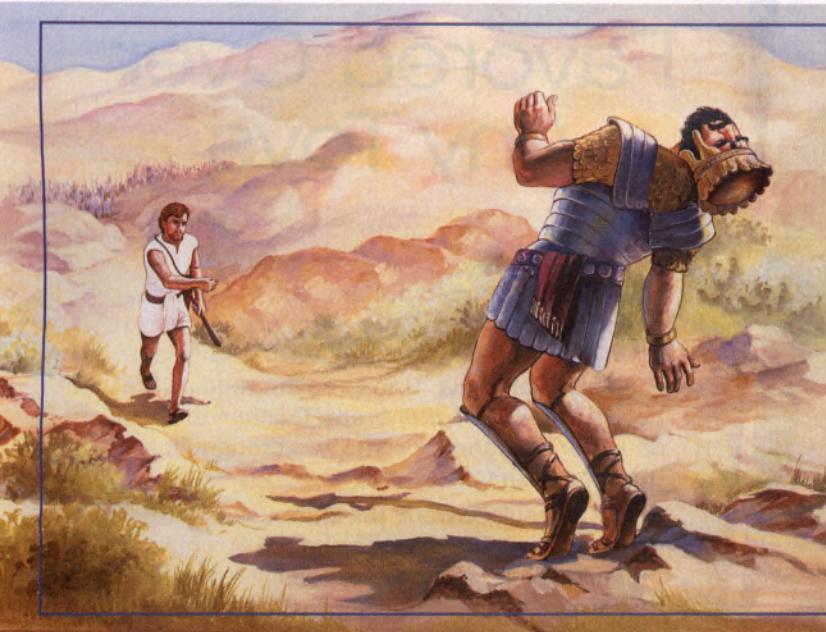
Stress During Pregnancy

Stress experienced by a pregnant woman as a result of arguments with or violence by a partner can adversely affect her unborn child’s mental development, according to recent research. Professor Vivette Glover, of Imperial College, London, says: “We found that if the woman had a partner who was being emotionally cruel to [her] while [she was] pregnant it had a really significant effect on [her] baby’s future development. The father has a big part to play.” The state of the parents’ relationship “affects the hormonal and chemical balance in the mother’s body, which in turn affects the development of the child’s brain,” she explained.

Commuters on Autopilot

Commuters who drive the same route each day often do so without using the part of their brain where conscious thinking takes place, says traffic scientist Michael Schreckenberg of the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany. On familiar routes, instead of concentrating on traffic, drivers become occupied with other things. As a result, it takes longer to recognize dangers. Schreckenberg encourages commuter drivers to keep reminding themselves to stay alert and not let themselves be distracted from the road.





What Is Missing From This Picture?

Read 1 Samuel 17:38-51. Now look at the picture. What elements are missing? Write your answers on the lines below, and complete the picture by drawing the missing items.

- 1
- 2
- 3

FOR DISCUSSION:
Why was David able to beat Goliath? How can this account give you confidence when you face problems?

From This Issue

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

PAGE 7 What should husbands continue assigning their wives? 1 Peter 3:_____

PAGE 20 When choosing a computer game, what should we make sure of? Ephesians 5:_____

PAGE 29 Why should wives be in subjection to their husbands? 1 Corinthians 11:_____

PAGE 29 What should husbands continue doing?
Ephesians 5:_____



Children's Picture Search

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

Who Is Part of Jesus' Family Tree?

Consider the clues. Look up the scriptures. Then write the correct names in the spaces provided.

4
CLUE: I was said to be a son in the likeness of Adam, "in his image."

Read Genesis 5:3.



5
CLUE: In my day, "a start was made of calling on the name of Jehovah."

Read Genesis 4:26.

6
CLUE: My grandson was the only human on record to live longer than me.

Read Genesis 5:18-21, 27.

Favored Over Any Toys

Can small children prefer a book to toys? Indeed they can if parents introduce books to them from infancy. Mebrahtu and Angela, a couple in California, U.S.A., began reading the book *Learn From the Great Teacher* to their daughter from the time she was brought home from the hospital.

"As a result," wrote the parents, "she has come to *love* the Teacher book. At only 12 months of age, she began verbally requesting that we read her what she called the Jesus book. Julianna is now three years old and anxiously awaits the cozy sessions she has with Mom or Dad each day. It is not an exaggeration to say that our daughter favors this book over *any* toys. The pictures and illustrations are helpful teaching tools in themselves. We, as her parents, learn a lot too."

