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THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



WHY DO BAD THINGS
HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE?

THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, honors Jehovah God, the Ruler of the universe. It comforts people with the good news that God's heavenly Kingdom will soon end all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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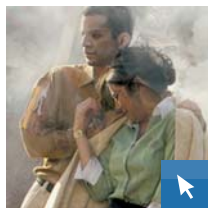
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Bad Things Abound!

Smita,* a 35-year-old woman in Dhaka, Bangladesh, had the reputation of being a loving and caring person. People knew her as a hardworking and happy young wife who wanted to help others know what she had learned about God. How shocked her family and friends were when Smita suddenly contracted an illness that claimed her life in less than a week!

James and his wife, a young couple in their 30's, had a reputation similar to that of Smita. One springtime, they went to visit their friends on the West Coast of the United States. They never returned to their home in New York. While away, they were involved in a fatal automobile accident, leaving a tremendous void in the lives of their loved ones and coworkers.

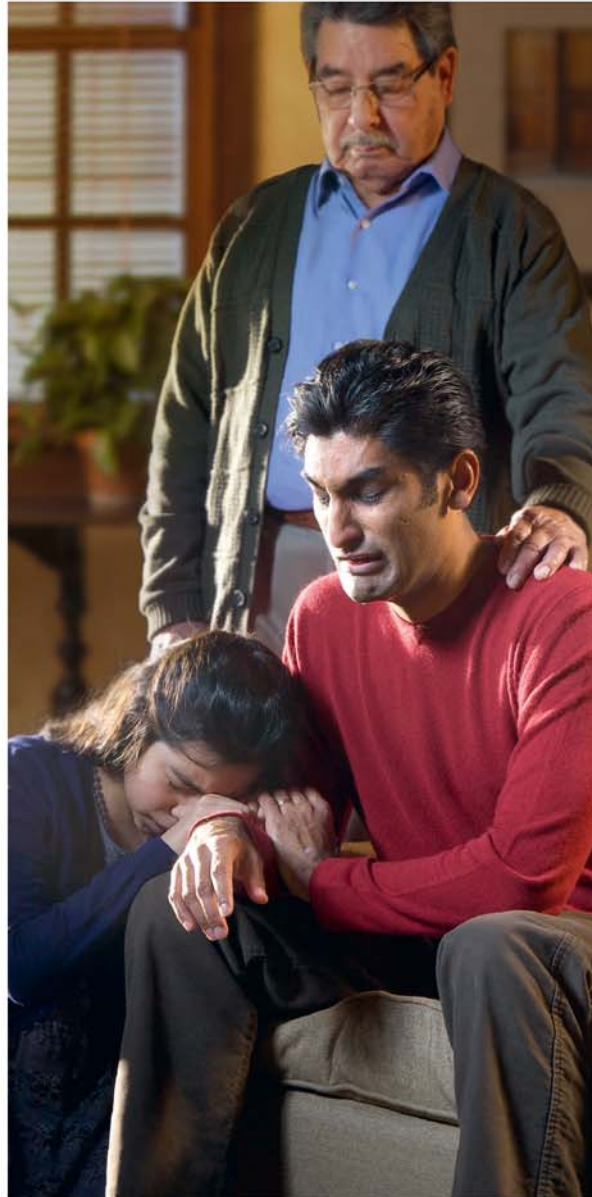
You do not have to look far to see that evil and suffering abound today. Wars kill civilians as well as soldiers. Crime and violence victimize innocent people. Deadly accidents and crippling illnesses occur irrespective of a person's age or status in life. Natural disasters wipe out communities indiscriminately. Prejudice and injustice are widespread. Perhaps you have personally suffered as a victim.

It is only natural to ask questions like these:

- Why do bad things happen to good people?
- Is God to blame for such things?
- Are calamities random occurrences, or are they man-made?
- Could it be Karma, that is, the result of one's actions in a past life, that causes personal suffering?
- If there is an almighty God, why does he not protect good people from harm?
- Will life ever be free of evil and suffering?

To answer those questions, we need to understand the answer to these two basic questions: Why do bad things happen at all, and what will God do?

* Names have been changed.



Bad Things Happen to Good People

Why?

Since Jehovah God* is the Creator of all things and is almighty, many people may be inclined to hold him responsible for everything that takes place in the world, including all that is bad. However, consider what the Bible says about the true God:

- “Jehovah is *righteous* in all his ways.”—Psalm 145:17.
- “All his [God’s] ways are *justice*. A God of *faithfulness* who is never unjust; *righteous* and *upright* is he.”—Deuteronomy 32:4.
- “Jehovah is very *tender in affection* and *merciful*.”—James 5:11.

God does not cause bad things to happen. Does he, though, incite others to commit vile deeds? Not at all. “When under trial,” state the Scriptures, “let no one say: ‘I am being tried by God.’” Why? Because “with evil things God cannot be tried, nor does he himself try anyone.” (James 1:13) God does not try, or test, anyone by inciting him to behave badly. God neither causes bad things to happen nor incites others to do what is bad. Who or what, then, is to blame when bad things happen?

BEING IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME

Identifying one reason why humans suffer, the Bible states: “Time and unexpected events overtake them all.” (Ecclesiastes 9:11) When unanticipated events or accidents happen, whether someone is affected or not depends to a large extent on where he is at the time they occur. Nearly 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ spoke of a calamity involving 18 people who were killed when a tower fell on them. (Luke 13:1-5) They did not be-



Why does God not keep good people out of harm's way?

come victims because of the way they had lived their lives; they were simply under the tower when it happened to fall. More recently, a devastating earthquake struck Haiti in January 2010; the Haitian government says that over 300,000 lives were lost. All those lives were claimed without regard for who the individuals were. Illnesses too can strike anyone at any time.

Some might ask: ‘Could not God prevent such deadly calamities from happening? Could he not shield the good people from the calamity?’ For God to intervene in such ways, it would mean that he knows about bad things before they happen. While God certainly has the ability to foreknow the future, the question we need to consider is this: Does God choose to exercise to a limitless extent his power to foreknow such things?—Isaiah 42:9.

The Scriptures say: “God is in the heavens; he does whatever he pleases.” (Psalm 115:3) Jehovah

* Jehovah is the name of God as revealed in the Bible.

Humans have committed horrendous acts and caused immense suffering

does what he deems necessary to do—not everything he is capable of doing. That applies also to what he decides to foresee. For example, after wickedness became prevalent in the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, God told the patriarch Abraham: “I will go down to see whether they are acting according to the outcry that has reached me. And if not, *I can get to know it.*” (Genesis 18:20, 21) For a time, Jehovah chose not to know the extent of the wickedness in those cities. Similarly, then, Jehovah can choose not to foreknow everything. (Genesis 22:12) In no way is this an indication of imperfection or weakness on his part. Since “perfect is his activity,” God balances his ability to foreknow the future with his purpose; he never forces humans to follow a certain course.* (Deuteronomy 32:4) What, then, may we conclude? Simply this: God’s exercise of foreknowledge is selective and discretionary.

ARE HUMANS RESPONSIBLE?

Part of the blame for wickedness lies with humans. Notice how the Bible describes a process that can lead to harmful acts. “Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire. Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin; in turn sin, when it has been carried out, brings forth death.” (James 1:14, 15) When individuals act on improper desires or give in to wrong cravings, they are bound to suffer bad consequences. (Romans 7:21-23) As history shows, humans have committed horrendous acts and caused immense suffering. Moreover, wicked men can influence others to become corrupt, thus perpetuating badness.—Proverbs 1:10-16.

* To learn why God has let wickedness continue, see chapter 11 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.



Why does God not protect good people from crime?

Should God intervene and prevent people from doing bad things? Consider how man is made. The Scriptures say that God created man in God’s own image, that is, in God’s likeness. Thus, humans have the ability to reflect God’s qualities. (Genesis 1:26) Humans have been given the gift of free will and can choose to love God and stick to him by doing what is right in his eyes. (Deuteronomy 30:19, 20) If God coerced people into following a certain course, would he not be nullifying the gift of free will? Why, humans would be reduced to nothing more than machines, doing exactly what they were programmed to do! The same would be true if fate, or Kismet, dictated what we do and everything that happens to us. How glad we can be that God dignifies us by allowing us to choose our own course! This does not mean, though, that the harm caused by human error and bad choices will forever plague mankind.

IS KARMA A CAUSE OF SUFFERING?

If you were to ask someone from a Hindu or Buddhist background the question posed on the cover of this magazine, you would likely hear this answer: “Bad things happen to good people because of the law of Karma. They are reaping the fruitage of what they did in their previous lives.”*

Regarding the teaching of Karma, it is helpful to note what the Bible says about death. In the garden of Eden, where humankind originated, the Creator said to the first man, Adam: “From every tree of the garden you may eat to satisfaction. But as for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will certainly die.” (Genesis 2:16, 17) If Adam had not sinned by disobeying God, he would have lived forever. Death came about as a penalty for disobedience to God’s command. Then, when children were born, “death spread to all men.” (Romans 5:12) Thus, it can be said that “the wages sin pays is death.” (Romans 6:23) The Bible also explains: “The one who has died has been acquitted from his sin.” (Romans 6:7) In other words, people do not keep paying for their sins after death.

Millions of people today explain that the problem of human suffering involves Karma. A believer usually accepts his own suffering as well as that of others without getting too disturbed by it. But the fact remains that this concept holds out no hope of stopping bad things from happening. It is believed that the only relief offered to an individual is liberation from the cycles of rebirth through socially acceptable behavior and special knowledge. These ideas, of course, are far different from what the Bible says.†

* To learn about the origin of what is called the law of Karma, see pages 8-12 of the brochure *What Happens to Us When We Die?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

† As to what the Bible teaches about the condition of the dead and the hope for those who have died, see chapters 6 and 7 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*



Did you know that the main cause of suffering is “the ruler of the world”—Satan the Devil?—John 14:30

THE PRIMARY CAUSE!

The primary cause of wickedness, though, is not man. Satan the Devil, originally a faithful angel of God, “did not stand fast in the truth” and brought sin into the world. (John 8:44) He instigated a rebellion in the garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:1-5) Jesus Christ called him “the wicked one” and “the ruler of the world.” (Matthew 6:13; John 14:30) Mankind in general follow Satan by heeding his urgings to ignore the good ways of Jehovah. (1 John 2:15, 16) “The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one,” says 1 John 5:19. There are other spirit creatures who have turned wicked and have joined Satan. The Bible indicates that Satan and his demons are “misleading the entire inhabited earth,” causing “woe for the earth.” (Revelation 12:9, 12) Thus, the principal blame for wickedness has to be placed on Satan the Devil.

Clearly, God is not responsible for bad things that happen to people; nor does he make them suffer. On the contrary, he has promised to eliminate badness, as the following article will show.

What God Will Do About Badness

The Bible clearly tells us what Jehovah and his Son, Jesus Christ, will do about the suffering caused by Satan the Devil. “For this purpose the Son of God [Jesus] was made manifest,” declares the Bible, “to break up the works of the Devil.” (1 John 3:8) The present system of things based on greed, hatred, and wicked deeds will be broken up. As for “the ruler of this world”—Satan the Devil—Jesus promises that he “will be cast out.” (John 12:31) Without Satan’s influence, a righteous new world will be established, and this earth will become a peaceful place.—2 Peter 3:13.

What about those who stubbornly refuse to change their ways and who insist on doing bad things? Reflect on this straightforward promise: “Only the upright will reside in the earth, and the blameless will remain in it. As for the wicked, they will be cut off from the earth, and the treacherous will be torn away from it.” (Proverbs 2:21, 22) Gone will be the influence of wicked humans. Under such peaceful conditions, obedient humans will gradually be set free from inherited imperfection.—Romans 6:17, 18; 8:21.

In that new world, how will God eliminate badness? Not by nullifying the gift of free will and making humans robots. Rather, he will teach

obedient humans his ways, helping them to turn around from harmful thoughts and actions.

What will God do about unforeseen calamities? He has promised that his Kingdom government will shortly take control of the earth. The God-appointed King of that Kingdom is Jesus Christ, who has the power to cure the sick. (Matthew 14:14) Jesus also has the power to control the forces of nature. (Mark 4:35-41) Hence, gone will be the suffering caused by “time and unexpected events.” (Ecclesiastes 9:11) Under Christ’s rulership, no calamity will befall mankind.—Proverbs 1:33.

What about the millions of innocent people who have suffered tragic deaths? Shortly before bringing his friend Lazarus back to life, Jesus said: “I am the resurrection and the life.” (John 11:25) Yes, Jesus has the power to resurrect, or bring back to life, those who have died!

If the idea of living in a world where bad things will *not* happen to good people appeals to you, why not make it your aim to learn more about the true God and his purpose by studying the Bible? Jehovah’s Witnesses in your area will be happy to help you to gain that knowledge. You have our warm invitation to contact them locally or to write to the publishers of this magazine. ■

God will remove all causes of suffering





AS TOLD BY
ANNUNZIATO LUGARÀ

YEAR BORN

1958

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

ITALY

HISTORY

VIOLENT GANG MEMBER



I never went anywhere without my gun

MY PAST: I was born and raised in the suburbs of Rome, in an area made up of the poor working class. Life was tough. I never knew my real mother, and I didn't have a good relationship with my father. I grew up learning the rules of the streets.

By the time I was ten years old, I had already started stealing. At age 12, I ran away from home for the first time. On more than one occasion, my father had to pick me up at police headquarters and take me home. I argued with people constantly—I was violent and angry with the whole world. When I was 14, I left home for good. I started taking drugs and living on the street. Not having anywhere to sleep, I would break into a car and stay in it until the early morning hours. Then I would look for a water fountain so that I could wash up.

I became really good at stealing—anything from bag snatching to robbing apartments and villas during the night. I started to gain a bad reputation and was soon invited to join a notorious gang, which allowed me the “opportunity” to upgrade to robbing banks. Because of my aggressive personality, I was soon a respected member of the gang. I never went anywhere without my gun; in fact, I slept with it under my pillow. Violence, drugs, stealing, foul language, and immorality became my way of life. The police were constantly on my heels. I was arrested several times, and I spent years in and out of prison.

HOW THE BIBLE CHANGED MY LIFE: On one occasion when I was let out of prison, I decided to go and visit one of my aunts. Unbeknownst to me, my aunt and two of my cousins had become Jehovah's Witnesses. They invited me to attend a meeting of the Witnesses. Out of curiosity, I decided to go with them. When we arrived at the Kingdom



Hall, I insisted on sitting near the door so that I could keep an eye on those who came in and out. Of course, I was armed.

That meeting changed my life. I remember thinking that I must be on a different planet. I was greeted by people with warm, friendly smiling faces. I still have a vivid picture in my mind of the kind, honest look the Witnesses had in their eyes. This was certainly a million miles away from the world I was used to!

I started to study the Bible with the Witnesses. The more I learned, the clearer it became that I had to change my lifestyle completely. I took to heart the words recorded at Proverbs 13:20: “The one walking with the wise will become wise, but the one who has dealings with the stupid will fare badly.” I realized that I needed to distance myself from the gang. That was not easy to do, but with Jehovah’s help, I succeeded.

I also cleaned myself up physically. With much effort, I stopped smoking cigarettes and using drugs. I cut my long hair, got rid of my earrings, and stopped using bad language. For the first time in my life, I started to have control over my actions.

I had never enjoyed reading and studying, so it was a real challenge to concentrate and apply myself to Bible study. However, as I made the effort, I gradually came to love Jehovah, and something started to change inside me—my conscience began to bother me. I often had negative feelings about myself, doubting that Jehovah

could ever forgive me for all the bad that I had done. In those moments I found a lot of comfort in reading about Jehovah forgiving King David after he had committed serious sins.—2 Samuel 11:1–12:13.

Another challenge was sharing my faith with others in the door-to-door ministry. (Matthew 28: 19, 20) I was terrified that I would meet someone

For the first time in my life, I started to have control over my actions

whom I had hurt or wronged in some way in the past! But gradually I was able to overcome my fear. I began to find real satisfaction in helping others learn about our wonderful heavenly Father, who forgives so abundantly.

HOW I HAVE BENEFITED: Learning about Jehovah saved my life! Most of my former companions are dead or in prison, but I have a truly satisfying life and a future to look forward to. I have learned to be humble and obedient and to control my volcanic temper. As a result, I enjoy better relationships with the people around me. I am happily married to my beautiful wife, Carmen. Together, we find great joy in helping others learn about the Bible.

Oh, and I now do honest work—it sometimes still involves banks, but instead of robbing them, I clean them! ■

How Should You Discipline Your Children?

“I listened impatiently to the sound of every passing car. This was the third time that Jordan had broken his curfew. ‘Where is he?’ I wondered. ‘Is he in trouble? Does he even care that we are worried?’ By the time he arrived, I was about to explode.”—GEORGE.

“My daughter let out a scream, which sent a wave of panic through me. I turned and saw her clutching her head and crying. Her four-year-old brother had just hit her.”—NICOLE.

“‘I didn’t steal the ring. I found it!’ said Natalie, our six-year-old daughter, her big blue eyes pleading her innocence. Her persistent denials cut us so deeply that we wept. We knew she was lying.”—STEPHEN.

IF YOU are a parent, can you relate to the emotions expressed in the opening statements? When confronted with similar situations, do you wonder how—or even if—you should discipline your child? Is it wrong to discipline your children?

WHAT IS DISCIPLINE?

In the Bible, the word for “discipline” is not merely another word for punishment. Discipline primarily relates to instruction, education, and correction. It is never connected with abuse or cruelty.—Proverbs 4:1, 2.

Parental discipline may be likened to gardening. A gardener prepares the soil, waters and feeds the plant, and provides protection from pests and weeds. As the plant grows, the gardener may need to prune the plant in order to help it keep growing in the right direction. The gardener recognizes that a careful combination

of various techniques will help him to produce a healthy plant. Similarly, parents care for their children in many ways. But at times they need to give discipline—which, like pruning, may correct wrong inclinations early on and help their children to grow in the right direction. Pruning, however, must be done carefully, or a plant can suffer permanent harm. Likewise, parental discipline needs to be given with loving care.

The God of the Bible, Jehovah, sets a beautiful example for parents in this regard. The discipline that he gives his obedient earthly worshippers is so effective and desirable that they actually come to *love discipline*.¹ (Proverbs 12:1) They “hold on to discipline” and “do not let it go.” (Proverbs 4:13) You can help your child to respond positively by imitating closely three key elements of God’s discipline: It is (1) loving, (2) reasonable, and (3) consistent.

LOVING DISCIPLINE

Love is both the foundation of and the motivation for God's discipline. The Bible says: "Those whom Jehovah *loves* he reproves, just as a father does a son in whom he delights." (Proverbs 3:12) Furthermore, Jehovah, is "merciful and compassionate, slow to anger." (Exodus 34:6) For this reason, Jehovah is never abusive or cruel. Neither does he resort to harsh words, constant criticism, or hurtful sarcasm, all of which can injure "like the stabs of a sword."—Proverbs 12:18.

Granted, it is not possible for parents to imitate fully God's perfect example of self-control. Sometimes your patience will be stretched to the limit, but during the particularly difficult times, always remember that anger-based punishment is usually oppressive, excessive, and counterproductive. Furthermore, punishment motivated by anger or frustration is not discipline at all. It is simply a loss of self-control.

On the other hand, when you discipline with love and self-control, you are likely to get better results. Consider how George and Nicole, two of the parents quoted at the outset, handled matters.

"When Jordan finally arrived, my wife and I were burning inside, but we maintained control while we listened to his explanation. Since it was so late, we decided to discuss the matter in the morning. We all prayed together and went to bed. The next day, we were in a much better position to discuss the situation calmly and reach our son's heart. He willingly complied with our restrictions and accepted responsibility for his behavior. Thankfully, we realized that a quick response when people are upset is counterproductive. When our first step was to listen, things usually worked out for the best."
—George.

"I was outraged when I saw the senseless hurt my son had inflicted on his sister. Instead of reacting immediately, I sent him to his room because I was just too angry to make a rational decision. Later, when I was composed, I sternly explained that violence is not acceptable and showed him how he had hurt his sister. This approach worked well with him. He apologized to his sister and hugged her."—Nicole.

Yes, proper discipline, even when it includes punishment, is always motivated by love.

LISTEN



PRAY



TALK



Bible-Based Discipline Is . . .

Loving: Effective discipline is founded on love, not anger. When faced with a particularly difficult situation, postpone discipline until you are calm.

Reasonable: Endeavor to take into account all the circumstances, including the child's limitations and abilities.

Consistent: If you have warned your child that a certain form of discipline will result if he misbehaves, be sure to follow through.

REASONABLE DISCIPLINE

Jehovah's discipline is always administered "to the proper degree." (Jeremiah 30:11; 46:28) He takes all the circumstances into account, including what is not obvious. How can parents do likewise? Stephen, quoted in the introduction, explains: "Although we felt so hurt and could not understand Natalie's insistent denials about the ring, we tried to take into account her age and degree of maturity."

Nicole's husband, Robert, also tries to consider all the circumstances. When the children misbehave, he repeatedly asks himself: 'Is this a one-time incident or an ongoing negative trait? Is the child tired or not feeling well? Is this conduct a symptom of another problem?'

Reasonable parents are also mindful that children are not miniature adults. The Christian apostle Paul acknowledged that fact when he wrote: "When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, to think as a child." (1 Corinthians 13:11) Says Robert: "One thing that helps me keep things in per-

spective and avoid overreacting is to remind myself of what I used to do when I was a boy."

It is vital that you be realistic in your expectations and, at the same time, not justify or condone wrong conduct or attitudes. By taking into account your child's abilities, limitations, and other circumstances, you will ensure that your discipline is balanced and reasonable.

CONSISTENT DISCIPLINE

"I am Jehovah; I do not change," says Malachi 3:6. Servants of God rely on this truth and feel secure in this knowledge. Children also need the security of consistent discipline. If your standards change depending on your mood, your child may become confused and frustrated.

Recall that Jesus said: "Let your word 'Yes' mean yes, your 'No,' no." Those words well apply to parenting. (Matthew 5:37) Think carefully before giving ultimatums you have no intention of carrying out. If you warn your child that a certain form of discipline will result if he misbehaves, be sure to follow through.

Good parental communication is essential to consistent discipline. Robert explains: "If our children manage to get me to agree to something that my wife told them they could not do, when I become aware of it, I reverse my decision to back up my wife." If parents disagree about how to handle a situation, it is best that they discuss those differences privately and reach a united decision.

DISCIPLINE IS ESSENTIAL

If you imitate Jehovah's loving, reasonable, and consistent discipline, you can be certain that your efforts will benefit your children. Your loving direction may help your children to develop into mature, responsible, and balanced adults. As the Bible says: "Train a boy in the way he should go; even when he grows old he will not depart from it."—Proverbs 22:6. ■



LIQUID BITUMEN LIKE THIS WAS
PLENTIFUL IN BIBLE LANDS

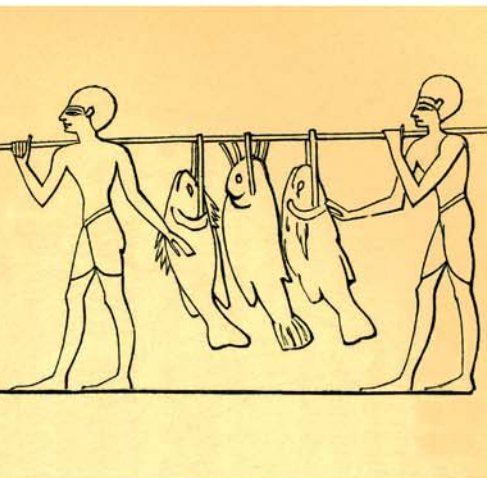
How did ancient shipbuilders waterproof their vessels?

Lionel Casson, an expert in ancient ships, explains what shipbuilders in Roman times did after caulking the seams in their vessels' planking. It was common for them "to smear the seams or even the whole exterior hull with pitch [bitumen] or pitch and wax, and to spread a layer of pitch on the interior." Long before the Romans, the ancient Akkadians and Babylonians also used bitumen to waterproof their vessels.

The Hebrew Scriptures make reference to a similar technique at Genesis 6:14. The Hebrew word here translated "tar" evidently refers to bitumen, a naturally occurring petroleum substance.

Natural bitumen comes in two forms—liquid and solid. Ancient shipbuilders used the liquid form; they would apply it directly to their vessels. Once applied, the liquid bitumen dried and hardened to form a waterproof coating.

Bitumen was plentiful in Bible lands. The Valley of Siddim, in the Dead Sea area, "was full of bitumen pits."—Genesis 14:10. ■



WOODCUT DEPICTING ANCIENT
EGYPTIAN FISHERMEN

From the book *A Popular Account of the
Ancient Egyptians* (1871)

What methods were used to preserve fish in antiquity?

Fish has long been an important food item. Before beginning to travel with Jesus, some of his apostles were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. (Matthew 4:18-22) At least a part of the catches taken there were processed in "factories" located nearby.

The technique for fish preservation likely used in ancient Galilee is still used in some places. The fish are first gutted and washed in water. The book *Studies in Ancient Technology* describes the steps that follow: "Coarse salt is then rubbed into the gills, mouth and scales. Alternate layers of salt and fish are covered by dry matting. After standing from 3-5 days the pile is turned over to stand for a similar period. During this drying the body fluids drain away and salt solution penetrates the fish. After this drying they are firm and hard."

It is not known how long fish would keep when preserved in this manner. However, the fact that the ancient Egyptians exported cured fish to Syria indicates that the methods used worked reasonably well. ■



Can You See the Invisible God?

GOD is a Spirit,” invisible to human eyes. (John 4:24) Yet, the Bible reports that some people have, in a sense, seen God. (Hebrews 11:27) How is that possible? Can you really see “the invisible God”?—Colossians 1:15.

Compare our situation to that of a person who is blind from birth. Does his blindness completely prevent him from understanding the world around him? Not entirely. A blind person receives information in various ways that enable him to perceive the people, objects, and activities that surround him. “Vision isn’t in the eyes,” said one blind man. “It’s in the mind.”

In a similar way, although you cannot use your physical eyes to see God, you can use “the eyes of your heart” to see him. (Ephesians 1:18) Consider three ways that you might do so.

“CLEARLY SEEN FROM THE WORLD’S CREATION”

A blind person often has heightened senses of hearing and touch, which he employs to perceive the things he cannot see. Similarly, you can use your physical senses to examine the world around you and to perceive the unseen God who created it. “His invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world’s creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made.”—Romans 1:20.

For example, think about our home. Earth is uniquely designed for us not merely to eke out an existence but to enjoy life. When we feel a gentle breeze, bask in the warmth of the sun, taste a succulent fruit, or hear the soothing song of birds, we are delighted. Do these gifts not re-

veal our Creator’s thoughtfulness, tenderness, and generosity?

What can you learn about God from what you see in the physical universe? For one thing, the heavens reveal God’s power. Recent scientific evidence suggests not only that the universe is expanding but also that it is doing so at an ever faster rate! As you look up at the night sky, consider: What is the source of this energy driving the expansion and acceleration of the universe? The Bible *tells* us that the Creator has “vast dynamic energy.” (Isaiah 40:26) God’s creation *shows* us that he is “the Almighty”—the One “great in power.”—Job 37:23.

“THE ONE WHO HAS EXPLAINED HIM”

A mother of two visually impaired children says: “Speech is one of the most important aspects of their learning. Tell them everything you see and hear, [and] be prepared to give a running commentary. You are their eyes.” Likewise, although “no man has seen God at any time,” God’s Son, Jesus, “who is at the Father’s side is the one who has explained Him.” (John 1:18) As God’s first creation and only-begotten Son, Jesus became our “eyes” for peering into the heavens. He is the best source of information about the invisible God.

Note a few of the things that Jesus, who spent aeons with his Father, explained about God:

God works tirelessly. “My Father has kept working until now.”—John 5:17.

God knows our needs. “Your Father knows what you need even before you ask him.”—Matthew 6:8.



God graciously provides for us. “Your Father who is in the heavens . . . makes his sun rise on both the wicked and the good and makes it rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous.” —Matthew 5:45.

God values us individually. “Two sparrows sell for a coin of small value, do they not? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father’s knowledge. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. So have no fear; you are worth more than many sparrows.” —Matthew 10:29-31.

A HUMAN WHO REFLECTED THE INVISIBLE GOD

People who are blind often grasp concepts in ways that are different from those of people with sight. A blind person may perceive a shadow, not as a dark area without sunlight, but as a cool area shielded from the sun’s warmth. Just as a person who is totally blind cannot see shadow or sunlight, we cannot understand Jehovah on our own. Therefore, Jehovah provided a human who perfectly mirrored His qualities and personality.

That human was Jesus. (Philippians 2:7) Jesus not only *talked* about his Father but also *showed* us what God is like. Jesus’ disciple Philip asked: “Lord, show us the Father.” In reply, Jesus said: “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father also.” (John 14:8, 9) What can you “see” about the Father through Jesus’ actions?

Jesus was warm, humble, and approachable. (Matthew 11:28-30) His refreshing personality drew people to him. Jesus felt the pain others felt, and he shared their joys. (Luke 10:17, 21; John 11:32-35) As you read or hear Bible

accounts about Jesus, engage your senses and make the events come alive in your mind. If you meditate on the way Jesus dealt with people, you will be able to see God’s wonderful personality more clearly and be drawn to Him.

FITTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Regarding the way a blind person experiences the world, one author states: “He or she receives information in bits and pieces, from several sources (touch, smell, hearing, and so forth), and somehow has to put that information together into a whole.” Similarly, as you observe God’s creative works, read what Jesus said about

**‘If you search for Jehovah, he will
let himself be found by you’**

his Father, and analyze the way Jesus reflected God’s qualities, a beautiful picture of Jehovah will emerge. He will become more real to you.

Job, who lived in ancient times, had that very experience. At first he spoke “without understanding.” (Job 42:3) But after carefully considering God’s marvels of creation, Job was moved to say: “My ears have heard about you, but now I do see you with my eyes.” —Job 42:5.

The same can be true for you. “If you search for [Jehovah], he will let himself be found by you.” (1 Chronicles 28:9) Jehovah’s Witnesses will be glad to help you to search for and find the invisible God. ■

Why should we pray?

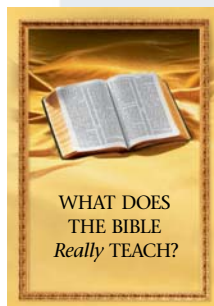
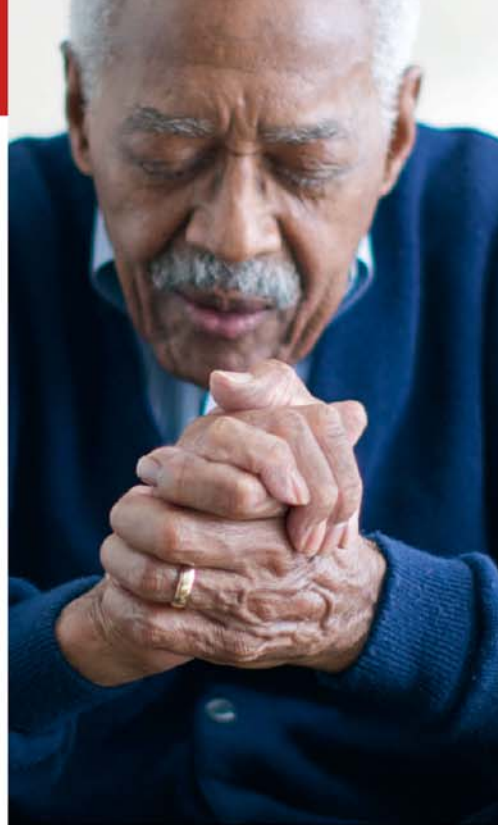
Jehovah God wants us to feel free to speak regularly to him about our concerns. (Luke 18:1-7) He listens because he is interested in us. Since our heavenly Father kindly *invites* us to pray, why would we not accept his invitation?—**Read Philip-
pians 4:6.**

Prayer is not simply a way to ask for help. Rather, prayer helps us to draw close to God. (Psalm 8:3, 4) When we regularly express our feelings to God, we develop a closer friendship with him. —**Read James 4:8.**

How should we pray?

When we pray, God does not want us to use showy words or to repeat memorized prayers. Neither are we required to adopt a special posture. Jehovah invites us to pray from the heart. (Matthew 6:7) For example, in ancient Israel, Hannah prayed about a distressing family problem. Later, when her anguish turned to joy, she thanked God in heartfelt prayer.—**Read 1 Samuel 1:10, 12, 13, 26, 27; 2:1.**

What a wonderful privilege we have! We can approach the Creator with our concerns. We can also praise him and thank him for what he does. Surely we should not neglect such a precious privilege. —**Read Psalm 145:14-16.**



For more information, see chapter 17 of this book, published by Jehovah's Witnesses Available at www.jw.org

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